

Personal Narrative

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Background

To me, there is no greater rush than the adrenaline of competition. Sports taught me a lot about how to handle adversity. Being a military kid you get taught discipline growing up, but sports made me understand what made discipline so important. Throughout my childhood, I have always been an athlete and competitor. I played various sports growing up including football, basketball, baseball, and soccer. I was very good at all of these sports and was consistently the best in my grade growing up. In the end, I ended up focusing solely on football and became a great player. During my youth football years, my team stuck together because we all wanted to surround ourselves with other talented kids. Luckily, I had great coaches around me who understood the importance of being humble. Teaching us that no matter how much talent we have, hard work is what truly separates us in this world from others. They would put us in leagues against kids one or two years older than us so that we could learn how to battle. I am forever grateful for them teaching us how it felt to lose because all of our lives up til that point was only filled with victory. So when I entered high school and joined a new program that was not the best in our area I already knew how to carry myself. I became a two-way varsity starter by my sophomore year and was a captain for my following junior and senior years. Stepping into that leadership role, especially in a lower-tier program came with very tough duties like keeping morale high and bringing hope to the team. During my high school career, I garnered a lot of interest from some division-1 programs due to my occasional Virginia-leading stats on offense. However, due to my highly taxing roles in both offense and defense, I became very injury-prone. Despite the inability to continue my football career, the leadership experience I gained from this has been vital for me. As well as developing the mental fortitude to deal with whatever life throws at you. I broke bones, tore ligaments, and pulled muscles, and bringing myself back from

these situations mentally and physically taught me how to truly dig down. Also, I had an e-sports career on the side during my middle school to early high school years. I was a competitive Rocket League player during the football offseason and I was very close to officially becoming a semi-pro player. Also, this is when I began to develop my networking skills since the game has a very close community base. However, I ultimately decided that focusing completely on football was the best choice at the time. Especially because I had some college interest after my first season on varsity. This also helps to show that I always try to reach the heights of anything I put my mind on. I believe that developing my skills in leadership, discipline, and ability to handle adversity makes me a great candidate for any position.

Extracurricular

When I realized that I couldn't continue playing football, I decided to pursue my second interest which was computers. I decided to study cyber security as a nod to my football career because I loved playing defense the most, so cyber security felt like the best mix of interests to me. Being from the NOVA area, I had two main college choices when it came to pursuing a cybersecurity degree, Old Dominion or George Mason University. I chose Old Dominion based on its reputation for having a great cyber security program with a dedicated building. Also, I wanted to join an extracurricular e-sports program to continue my hobby. I became the captain of the ODU Rocket League team after my first semester and have been ever since. From the start, our program has never been the best but this is where I was able to put my ability to tackle adversity and leadership skills to use. While being a part of this program I have continuously worked to improve the varsity and junior varsity players so we can remain a competitive school. Under my leadership, we have made it to two national championship events which allowed us to travel to Texas to compete. These experiences have only made us stronger and led to more

recruiting prospects for the future. I believe that this role has allowed me to showcase my skills and the results that I bring to the table.

Academics

I think that my discipline is best shown in my academic successes. During my three years at Old Dominion, I have been on the dean's list every semester. I have and will always take pride in my grades because I know that earning a degree takes a lot of time and dedication. I even applied myself enough in my studies to be able to graduate a semester earlier than I thought. Then, during the summer leading into my junior year, I landed my first IT internship. This internship was at Apple Federal Credit Union as an internal service desk technician. This was one of the most critical moments in my academic and professional career. This was because I got my first taste of working in the technology field and the office setting. During my summer there I was able to develop my core troubleshooting skills as well as my experience with various technologies. After a month-long ramp-up period, I was trusted to work in the same capacity as the other full-time contractors to the best of my ability. My manager and team were all very supportive of my inexperience and I am forever grateful for how much knowledge they were able to give me. By the end, I was capable enough of branch visits, remote help, in-office help, and working with vendors and other third-party organizations to resolve tickets. I also used my networking skills to get some career advice from the cybersecurity team. Overall, I think my ability to remain humble and use all the resources I could while I was there made a big impact on how much I was able to gain from that opportunity. After that summer I started to take my career more seriously and to do that I wanted to get my CompTIA Security+ certification before I graduated. I ended up spending substantial time this summer leading into my senior year to focus

on this goal. So after spending about two months of daily self-studying and preparation, I was able to successfully pass my certification exam on the first try.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the skills and traits that I developed throughout all the phases of my life have led me to become a great prospect. My leadership skills have been proven through my multiple captain roles as well as the results of these opportunities. I've battled adversity throughout my competitive career and I have learned and improved myself due to these events. Lastly, my strong discipline has resulted in dean's list recognition, internship opportunities, and technical certifications. So in the future, I hope that these qualities prove to be the keys to my success in the cybersecurity field. According to Nguyen's paper, "The framework of mimesis offers an approach to viewing a student's ePortfolio experience through a lens of past understandings, present experiences, and future hopes." I hope that writing this narrative in a mimesis format has helped you understand just how I have become the man I am today.

References

Nguyen, C. F. (2013). The ePortfolio as a Living Portal: A Medium for Student Learning, Identity, and Assessment. <https://www.theijep.com/pdf/IJEP116.pdf>