

Student's Name

Professor's Name

Course Name/Code

Date

Autobiography of a High School Athlete

My name is Zoe Martin, and I am seventeen years old. I am a junior at Lincoln High School in Columbus, Ohio, where I play varsity soccer and varsity basketball. I have played both sports since I was six years old, which means that for eleven years my life has been organised around practices, games, early mornings, and the particular exhaustion of a body that has been asked to do a great deal. I would not change any of it.

I grew up in a sports household. My mother ran track at Ohio State in the late nineties and still runs half marathons on weekends. My father played college basketball for two years before a knee injury ended his playing career and redirected him toward coaching youth leagues, which he has done every Saturday morning for as long as I can remember. Sport was never something my parents pushed me toward — it was simply the water I swam in. By the time I was old enough to choose, I had already chosen.

Soccer came first. I joined my first team at six and have played every season since. I am a central midfielder, which means my job is to be everywhere at once — defending when the other team has the ball, building play when we do, reading the game two or three moves ahead and positioning myself accordingly. It requires a kind of sustained attention that I find both exhausting and deeply satisfying. My club coach told me two years ago that my greatest asset was not my speed or my technique but my ability to stay calm when the game was not going well. I have thought about that observation more than almost anything else anyone has said to me.

Basketball came later and differently. I picked it up seriously at thirteen, later than most of the girls I now play with, which meant my first two years were spent catching up. There is a particular kind of learning that happens when you are behind — you pay closer attention, you ask more questions, you cannot afford to coast on natural ability because you do not have the luxury of assuming your natural ability is enough. Basketball taught me how to be a deliberate student of something, which turned out to be a skill that transferred well beyond the court.

Balancing two varsity sports with academics is not simple, and I will not pretend otherwise. My weeks are structured to a degree that most of my non-athlete friends find either admirable or alarming. I am usually up by five-thirty. I do my most demanding schoolwork in the hour before school and the hour after dinner, because those are the windows I can count on. I carry a B-plus average, which I work for in a way that I suspect is different from students who have more time. I have learned to be efficient with concentration in the same way I have learned to be efficient with energy on the field — you use what you have, when you have it, and you do not waste it.

My goal is to earn a soccer scholarship to a Division I programme and to compete at the highest level I am capable of reaching. I am realistic about what that requires and about the fact that not everything is within my control. What I can control is how I prepare, how I respond to setbacks, and whether I show up fully every day. My coaches have given me more than tactics and fitness — they have modelled what it looks like to invest completely in something you believe in. My teammates have shown me what it means to depend on other people and to be someone they can depend on in return.

I do not know exactly where sport will take me. I know it has already taken me further than I could have gotten alone, and I intend to find out how far that is.