
Leave it all on the Field: College Admission Essay Sample

Date of birth: eleven seven eighty eight. Sex: male. Grade: eleven. Social security number: 606261790... "No, that's not right," I mumbled to myself. How could I forget my social security number? "I'm just nervous for the SAT," was my first thought. I tried to convince myself that this was true, but when I looked down at the sheet of paper, my vision blurred. My hands scrubbing my eyes, my mind flashed to the previous night. "Red sixty seven, red sixty seven - set - hit!" The ball was snapped; I trampled the blocker like a bull and sprinted towards the running back. My cleats dug into the moist grass to make the tackle and -

The next thing I remember is sitting on the sidelines with a flashlight burning my eyes. Could this be the reason why I had forgotten my social security number? At that moment, I was in a dilemma. Was the sport that I love going to harm my future?

The severity of my head injury would sideline me for at least two weeks. When I first heard this news I was stunned, because two weeks would mean missing two vital games. Yet if I returned too early, permanent brain damage could result. This changed my entire view of the injury; suddenly, the game that I lived and breathed was not as important. Was returning to football worth the risk? Focusing in class, in a conversation, or even in a movie theater had never been a struggle. But during the recovery I found my mind wandering in and out of subjects. I wanted to perform athletically and academically, but with my brain traumatized, I knew a sacrifice had to be made.

My teammates' ongoing question "When are you coming back?" haunted me daily. The idea of not "coming back" troubled me because of the amount of time, energy, and focus I had put into football throughout my life. I did not want my decision to disappoint my teammates or affect our companionship. But I was certain I wanted to prolong my education, not just my football career, after high school. By continuing the season I would run the risk of serious head trauma, which could possibly shatter personal academic and career goals. More concerned about the future, rather than the present, I made the decision not to complete the remainder of the football season. The pressure from my teammates to return to play felt like the force of a fire hose, but I was able to endure it and stick to my decision. As I saw my teammates suited up at the next game, I felt uncomfortable on the sidelines in my incongruous blue jeans and sweatshirt. But I needed to rise above the feeling of regret and focus on the positive aspects of my decision.

Instead of putting my body through merciless practices, it was time for my brain to do the work. My lack of concentration forced me to take fifteen minute breaks after every half hour of homework. The transition from breezing through my homework to taking over twice the time was

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demanding. Slowly but steadily, I worked my mind back to where it was before the injury. This significant event was a vital learning experience for me on how to cope with sacrifice and loss. Making that tough decision alone strengthened my character and made me realize just how tough I can be - and not just on the field.

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