

WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM SPORTS  
THE ELLE WORD  
BY DANIELLE KUEHNEL

I am not a sports person.

I never have been, and I'm pretty sure I never will be. Call me bitter: I was the kid in kindergarten who couldn't hit the softball, so I got the tee; the one (in seventh grade) who slipped on a tennis ball and broke her wrist; and the one who made JVII volleyball, but never varsity. Yeah, you could say that sports aren't really my thing, and I've sort of avoided them all through college, too.

Recently, though, I've tried to take some interest, as a few of my friends compete in track.

And, surprisingly, being around some of the best of Western's athletes has taught me a few things that I never expected it could:

1. **Be humble.** Too often, I think, sports get a bad rap because of the stereotypical cocky jock who flaunts his stuff and gets the ladies. People underestimate the power of humility. There's no reason to deny talent or belittle oneself, but there's also no reason to go completely overboard, and be utterly self-absorbed and arrogant. Accept compliments, enjoy the spotlight, but never forget yourself, which brings me to...
2. **Be genuine.** Never lose your integrity; always strive for your personal best. There's always room for improvement, whether that be in the sporting world or the personal arena. But also remember what Shakespeare said: "To thine own self be true." Never try to be someone you're not, simply to try to fit in a certain socially constructed mold. *And finally...*
3. **Stay positive.** I went to part of the Great Northwest Athletic Conference (GNAC) for track last weekend, and I was lucky enough to see some of my friends compete. Western's mood, unfortunately, though, was overwhelmingly lethargic, as several people claimed to be having an "off" day. But as I asked sophomore Sarah Barker, 20, how she felt after running the 100-meter hurdles, she said, beaming, "Well, despite performances, we're really pulling together as a team." Now only if we all could find the silver lining in the cloud of life so easily.

So, maybe sports aren't my cup of tea, as it were, but over the past few weeks, I've definitely learned some invaluable life lessons in a place that I expected to be very unlikely. And I truly believe that these are things that we can all learn: To be humble, to be true and to—no matter the circumstances—stay positive.