

Transcript of Interview with Julian Dziuda by Carly Bagley

Interviewee: Julian Dziuda

Interviewer: Carly Bagley

Date: 10/24/2020

Location (Interviewee): San Antonio, Texas

Location (Interviewer): Utah

Transcriber: Carly Bagley

Abstract: This is an interview with Julian Dziuda. He is a student athlete (soccer) with St. Mary's University.

Note: This interview took place during a soccer training, thus the background noises. Also there was an interruptions at 5:51 and 8:09 and you can see in the transcript.

Carly Bagley 0:01

Okay, all right. I am with Julian and today is October 24, 2020. It is 10:05am, Mountain Standard Time for me because I'm in Utah. 11am in San Antonio. And I'm with Julian. Julian, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Julian Dziuda 0:32

Hi, my name is Julian. I'm originally from Calgary, Alberta, Canada. I came to St. Mary's in early 2019 in January to play soccer. I'm a bio major. My goal is to become a vet in the near future. I lived in Poland for a few years when I was 15. So when I was 15, I moved out there. I lived there for about four years and that's when I came to St. Mary's after that. Yeah, that's a little bit about me.

Carly Bagley 1:05

Can you, and then also you're student athlete as well...

Julian Dziuda 1:10

Yes, of course.

Carly Bagley 1:10

Can you tell me about what you do?

Julian Dziuda 1:12

So I play soccer for St. Mary's. When I moved to Europe, that's the reason I went. I went to play, like, try to play pro over there. It didn't really work out. So I went to university and now I got some of my school paid for which is great. And I'm studying here at a great school. So, the training is good. The school is good. So, I'm enjoying it so far. It's been a good experience. Sadly, COVID kind of cut that, this year, short a little bit, which sucks. But we're looking forward to the future. So, yeah.

Carly Bagley 1:46

How so did it cut it short? Do you want to tell me a little bit about that?

Julian Dziuda 1:50

So we were supposed to have our season in the Fall semester. Because of COVID, sadly, it got canceled. So our conference games got canceled, our conference tournament got canceled, the National Tournament got canceled. And because St. Mary's isn't testing, we aren't allowed to play games right now. So we've just been training. One of the worst parts was that COVID hit in, like what, March it was, and then I went home back to Canada. And then for two months, we couldn't really do anything. I was doing a little bit on my own, but I had to quarantine when I got home. So I couldn't really do much at home, except like home workouts and stuff. So it really kind of killed that progress. And then another thing that how it's affecting us, is that we have such a long way to the season. It's kind of like, it's difficult to stay motivated, I'd say. Just because, especially during the summer months, we didn't know what was happening with the season. We didn't know if we were going to have a season or not. So it was just kind of like blind training like, we were just training, just in case. And like, if the worst happened, we don't have a season. If we do have a season, we have a season. But there's a lot of uncertainty, which for me, like, that frustrates me a lot. I like to have my plan set out and COVID really kind of messed with that a lot. Just like threw everything out of whack, I say.

Carly Bagley 3:20

Yeah, can you explain what your routine or life was like as a student athlete before COVID?

Julian Dziuda 3:34

So before, like, we go to regular classes. So I have a bit of a tougher major being a biology student than some of my teammates. So my schedule, like daily schedule, looks a little different. But I usually have classes in the morning, from about 8am to maybe 11, depends on the day. And then after that, I'd usually come back. I'd usually take a quick nap and then I have training. And then after training, I'd come back to my dorm and like be studying. And that was basically like every day. So it'd be like school, nap, and then training and then back to studying. And then after COVID, it really changed because like for one, I was at home. So the first maybe two months of me being at home, it was just really stressful. A lot of my teachers were unorganized because of COVID. Like it threw them out of whack like it threw us out of whack. And so they had a really like difficult time. Like my April was full of stuff. I had like four exams, bunch of projects to do. Just because after spring break, people didn't know what we were gonna do like, how school is gonna be. It just really threw me out of whack athletically. Yeah, I was just focused on my school just because there's just so much, and I couldn't really cope with it. And then when school ended, just because everything was closed back home and everything, life kind of like, I want to say, really slowed down. I didn't really have anything to do. My friends were staying home. I was staying home away from everybody. I don't really play video games anymore because I don't have time because of school. So I didn't have something like that to keep me occupied. So I was basically just sitting at home not doing anything. And then we started back for summer training, the first of June. And then I started to develop kind of more of a training routine. So I'd go, I'd wake up around like eight, I'd go to training, I train. [to someone outside of the interview] Oh, this is the girl. I'm doing an interview for her.

Carly Bagley 5:54

Hi.

Julian Dziuda 5:56

I'd be training from like eight or nine to like noon. And then I'd come home, I'd eat. I'd go dip in the river. And then again, because everything was closed, I'd have the rest of the day to just kind of like, I want to say, just not do anything. And then now that we're back in school, everything's online again. So it's been kind of easier to balance school and soccer too. Because of this new way we're doing it right now. I found that I have more time to focus on my training just because the way I learn like, I learn by myself. So classes for me, kind of like, like, I don't really do anything in class. Like, they don't really help me. But if you contrast my routine from March to now is just completely different. Some good, some bad. Obviously it's tough for some classes to learn by yourself. For some, it's easier. But I mean, I would say overall, for me the change has been pretty positive. Just because I had more time to focus on myself and what I need to improve on with regards to training and my studies. And those areas I was struggling, especially tough classes like, I had a cell biology last semester. I have genetics this semester. And I found that like the tougher classes where I can like put more work into it because I have like more time for it, I have better grades in. And then earlier before when we had to go to class, I kind of felt like the class would take away from that time that I would give to myself to study. Because we'd have to go at the pace of the class, not at my pace, right? But overall, it's been, it's been an interesting change. Definitely tough to adjust, especially with not being around people. For me, that was probably the hardest. I definitely lost some people skills over the five months or six months that we were quarantined. [background talking] But yeah, overall interesting change. Definitely, definitely tough. Tough in some aspects, easy in others, but mixed feelings about it overall.

Carly Bagley 8:21

Yeah. Yeah, of course. Do you want to talk a little bit more about how your social relationships have changed because of COVID?

Julian Dziuda 8:31

So my girlfriend lives in Texas, and I live in Canada. So there's about a 3,000 mile difference between us. And we had to be apart for, I believe, six months. So that was really challenging. It was a lot of FaceTime and Zoom calls. And it was really tough to have that same connection like we did when we were together, right?

Carly Bagley 8:58

Mmhmm.

Julian Dziuda 8:59

And then also, I noticed that like, I was a shy person before I came to college. And when I came here, I kind of like forced myself to get out there and stuff. And COVID kind of put me back into that shell. Like it took me maybe a month or two to kind of get back out of it. And then doing like my teammates do, I didn't train in a team for six months, so it was definitely different. For me, it was really healthy for me to get back into the team environment just because I feel like I struggled just being by myself for so long and training by myself. I would train with one of my old friends and then an old coach over the summer. It was good and like we worked hard and everything; it's just some days like you didn't know if the season was gonna happen. You didn't know what was gonna happen in the next month, and that was really mentally draining. My relations with talking with people over the phone got a little worse over the break. I had to really work on that again. Just like it's really hard right now like, when I greet people like do I go

up, give them a handshake? Do I give him a hug? I was raised by my parents when I meet someone, you know, shake their hand like that. And now it's like I remember I was at the golf course with my dad, and we were playing with someone and my dad even went up to him shake his hand. And the guy was really cautious about it. So stuff like that has changed for sure. And then you know people's boundaries have changed as well. But it's definitely been tough getting back into like being around people and getting back into the team environment. And then with all these restrictions we have too, it's kind of tough. We have to be six feet apart training. That's really difficult to do, especially like, soccer is a physical sport, so there's going to be contact and stuff. Some of my relationships with my friends definitely got better over this COVID break. Some of my friends back home, we got a lot closer because the only thing to do was go hang out in one of my friends' garages, or go do something outside, go hiking or something like that. So with some certain people, I got closer over the break. With certain people, I distanced myself over the break. Big crowds were definitely something to get used to. Canada handled their COVID a little differently. So when I came back to San Antonio, I went to eat with some of my friends like, the group of people outside the restaurant were more than I'd been around in like five or six months. So it was a little weird kind of getting used to that again. But I mean, I want things to go back to normal. I just think things are better like that. I hope we soon can get back to that normal again. I just know I have friends who have younger siblings who are struggling with school online. I definitely think that we need schools to develop our social skills, because those are important as well. Like you can be smart, like crazy smart, but if you don't have social skills how are you going to use that, right? So overall, again, my life has changed as a student athlete. Relationships have also kind of changed, for the worst, and for the better. Kind of depends what relationships we look at. But definitely, definitely big change in my young life to have to go through this.

Carly Bagley 12:55

Yeah, yeah, of course. Yeah, I totally relate. Is there anything else that you'd like to add? Last question, is there anything else that you'd like to add about your experience with St. Mary's and COVID-19?

Julian Dziuda 13:11

Oh, no, I think I just like to give props to my coaches. They've really been trying to keep us safe. And training to get that aspect of, you know, safety but as well like we're working hard and we're, we're trying to improve and stuff. So I give them big props for that because I know it's not an easy thing to do right now. I know like our AD (athletic director) and stuff is really getting on our coaches just to keep us safe and everything. So yeah, just again, shout out to them for that. I really appreciate it because I mean I was really missing the team and missing the interactions with my teammates and stuff. So it's a good change. So definitely, definitely a good change to six months of isolation. So yeah, that's about everything.

Carly Bagley 14:03

Awesome. Thank you so much, Julian.

Julian Dziuda 14:06

Hey, no worries.

Carly Bagley 14:09

I'm going to stop the recording now.