

Transcript of Interview with Preston Potter by Mikel Baxter

Interviewee: Preston Potter

Interviewer: Mikel Baxter

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Location (Interviewee):

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Abstract: This interview shares the perspective of not only a college student learning during the pandemic, but also a student athlete. Preston Potter strives to maintain his job, his grades, and also stay in athletic shape, while also trying to keep a sense of team brotherhood while staying safe. We explored how he tried to juggle all of this, stay sane, and lead a normal life. Preston gives a positive outlook on the struggles and challenges he faces, focused solely on achieving a dream career of being a professional baseball player. It is a unique look into how different students are handling the many balls they have in the air between work, school and practice.

Mikel Baxter 0:00

Okay, we're recording. Alright, so please state your name, your age, and if you want to give it, the school you're going to.

Preston Potter 0:07

Hi, my name is Preston Potter, I'm 20 years old, and I currently attend [unclear] Junior College.

Mikel Baxter 0:12

All right. And you prefer he/him pronouns, just to be clear?

Preston Potter 0:19

Yeah, [unclear].

Mikel Baxter 0:20

Okay. So prior to the pandemic, did you take your classes online, in person, or did you do a mix of both?

Preston Potter 0:28

I did, I did a little mix of both. I started out in class, in class. And then because I was, I'm a student athlete as well. And so taking online classes was a better fit for me, because I was able to balance athletics and school a lot easier.

Mikel Baxter 0:48

So you don't, you don't meet up with Zoom meetings or anything like that, so the change from a mix to solely online, that wasn't difficult? There's, there hasn't been any difficulty in the transition?

Preston Potter 1:04

There hasn't been a huge adjustment for me, because I was already online. So I was kind of already was kind of used to it, but it's, it's definitely a lot different from home, and whatnot.

Mikel Baxter 1:17

Right. So what was, what was the most difficult part of changing if there was one, so there...

Preston Potter 1:29

I said, the most difficult part was probably like, working, doing school from home because you find like, I found myself like, less motivated sometimes just to like, do my work, and just kind of be productive, like I would be if I was at school, because you kind of get into a routine. And it's just to me, it was a little, that's a little difficult from home. But it's definitely manageable, and definitely getting it done.

Mikel Baxter 1:55

Okay. So do you feel like you suffer from tech overload? Or tech fatigue between social media, classwork, and then taking all your classes online? Is it... Do you feel like it's too much?

Preston Potter 2:17

Yeah, I say I do get kind of fatigued and whatnot. If I'm sitting behind the computer for like too long, my mind starts to kind of get like overwhelmed, and whatnot. So I got to kind of just stop and take my mind off it and do, do something else for however long I need. And then just come back to it and finish and then just kind of carry on as I need to.

Mikel Baxter 2:38

Okay. So far, in this semester, what has been the biggest challenge for you? And how are you overcoming it, if you are overcoming it?

Preston Potter 2:53

My biggest challenge for me is just kind of like for, like I said earlier, like relearning my schedule. And just kind of for a while, I was stuck in the same routine of like getting in the process of getting my work done and whatnot. And then, now that I'm working from home and working a full time job, and the training for, for baseball, I have to kind of relearn a new schedule, and just kind of learn a new process. And it's just kind of, it's obviously, it takes some time and you gotta adjust to that, but...

Mikel Baxter 3:28

So do you feel like it's a process of overcoming or it's something that you're constantly learning like, it's not "okay, I know how to do this, jump that hurdle."

Preston Potter 3:36

It's definitely like something I was like still learning because it's like each day's kind of different. You got different stuff that pops up here and there, but like, it's definitely, I'm still managing it and working through it.

Mikel Baxter 3:48

Good. Okay. So if this is how we're going to be doing classes until we get like a vaccine, or if we are able to get things into manageable, if we're not able to get things under manageable numbers, how are you going to adapt to future semesters of online only classes?

Preston Potter 4:10

I would say I would just definitely, because the longer we do it, the longer, the more we spend doing online classes, we'll, I'm sure we'll, everybody, including myself, will be able to kind of become more comfortable with it and more used to it. And so just as long as the internet, everything like, stays no issues with computers or anything like, it will probably fine.

Mikel Baxter 4:38

Do you prefer online classes? Why, or if you don't, why not?

Preston Potter 4:45

Uh, to me, it depends on the class because some classes are easier online, and some classes are easier in person. It just like depends on the workload. And then like, I, I'm personally a hands on learner and so like just scrolling on a computer or typing on a computer, just sometimes it doesn't work for me. And so it just depends on the class.

Mikel Baxter 5:08

All right. Let's talk about baseball for a minute. So you're... you mentioned you're a student athlete. How is that working out for you this semester? Like, how are you staying in touch with your teammates? Are you able to maintain that sense of brotherhood and camaraderie that comes with a normal season of baseball?

Preston Potter 5:31

We have, like a group like, a team like group chat and whatnot. And we're always just kind of just chatting and just saying what's up and whatnot. Because obviously, we don't get, we don't see each other every single day like we would normally. But like, we definitely meet up and practice together and whatnot. We'll hang out here and there. And obviously, we still try to be safe and whatnot, just so we could, hopefully help bring this to an end. But like, we definitely keep in touch and just keep kind of things as, as normal as we can.

Mikel Baxter 6:04

Right. So you still feel like you're able to be a team even though you can't be a team all the time?

Preston Potter 6:10

Right, yeah.

Mikel Baxtor 6:13

So how do you, how do you stay sane, you know, when you, you work in a grocery store, and then you go home and you do your online classes? It's, it's a lot. I mean, this is a crazy world, a crazy year, how do you keep yourself sane and just not rocking in a corner?

Preston Potter 6:35

I like to run. Running, kind of, I've always been a runner all my life. And like, it just kind of is so relaxing. It's free, just like feel the wind in your face and whatnot. And then, obviously, I love baseball. And so any thing I get to do that involves baseball, it's kind of like my escape, and it just kind of like relieves stresses or anything I'm experiencing.

Mikel Baxter 6:59

So it, so that's what you do for fun or relaxation is, is baseball?

Preston Potter 7:05

That's exactly what I do, yeah.

Mikel Baxter 7:05

Do you do anything else or...

Preston Potter 7:07

I like to hunt and then like, I like I'm involved in cars, like I love cars, working on cars and stuff. So it's kind of just, kind of do anything outside, as it's nice and relaxing to me.

Mikel Baxter 7:20

So what is one thing that you didn't expect to encounter in online learning?

Preston Potter 7:27

I didn't expect how time consuming, like doing your work would be because normally like on a class setting, like, I find it easier and quicker to get work done, and whatnot. But like working from home, you're, a lot of distractions, and just kind of the motivation, if it's not there, I tend to take a little longer to get stuff done longer than usual. And so it's just kind of a big headache.

Mikel Baxter 7:59

Um, and what's the best thing and the worst thing about online learning that you, that you feel...?

Preston Potter 8:07

The best thing would be getting more sleep. Sleep is very important, especially if you're a student athlete and whatnot, but like, the worst thing I feel like would just be... I don't feel like I'm learning as much as I would in person. And so it's just kind of, obviously, there's pros and cons to everything. Those are probably the two things for me.

Mikel Baxter 8:29

Do you have any other thoughts about the semester or learning online or anything else? I mean, being a student athlete, that maybe not everyone might consider, any other thoughts about the combination of all those things that you're doing in addition to surviving a pandemic year?

Preston Potter 8:50

I'd say, just like, for me, just kind of finding a balance with everything and just kind of making school kind of go smoothly, and then be able to still put 100% into both sides, baseball and school, because obviously school is very important. And then also preparing yourself for school and baseball.

Mikel Baxter 9:16

All right, well, I think that wrap, will wrap things up for us. Thank you, Preston.

Preston Potter 9:23

You're very welcome.

Mikel Baxter 9:23

And we'll see you back out on the sales floor.