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Student Athletes in STEM Majors

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INTRODUCTION
It is a rare combination for a Division 1 student-athlete to be pursuing a STEM degree owing to the rigor needed to pursue these degrees. Pursuing a STEM major is also very strenuous and often leaves limited time outside of their studies and has not been favored by athletes. Due to the rarity of this combination of individuals, there isn’t a lot of information regarding how the experience of these student-athletes is during their college career.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. What support structures help students progress in their academic endeavors?
2. What skills are enhanced through your participation in sports and translate to a STEM classroom and vice versa?
3. How are your roles as a student and athlete balanced/connected?

“When you talk to a STEM student athlete, they have two things –
(1) a strong passion for sport
(2) an impeccable commitment to academics.”
–Brooke Pahukoa, BroncoLife

STUDENT-ATHLETE SURVEY
A 15 question survey was sent to all 49 student-athletes with a declared STEM major. We received 10 responses. Below are some of the results.

SUPPORT STRUCTURES
Overall, student athletes found support from athletic and STEM faculty to be ‘good’ or better. Some of the structures in place that the student-athletes mentioned were the tutoring services in athletics and the BroncoLife program.

SKILL ENHANCEMENT
Results for time management are shown below. Problem solving was the other skill discussed in the survey, this skill showed similar results but were not as enhanced as time management was through sport.

Balancing both roles
Results showed that this is arguably the hardest part of being a student-athlete in a STEM major. Both roles require being the priority and there is not enough time to prioritize both. Student-athletes also expressed that the roles do not mix and often people within the athletic world do not understand the demands of their academics and vice versa.

CONCLUSION
Balancing the roles as student and athlete is challenging, however, both roles prove to be extremely rewarding. Through different programs at Boise State, STEM student-athletes are supported and encouraged to achieve excellence both in the classroom and in competition.

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