

2020

## An Intervention to Support Collegiate Student-Athletes in the Transition to Meaningful Lifetime Physical Activity

Melinda Smith

*Messiah University, mbsmith@messiah.edu*

Diane L. Gill

*University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

Erin J. Reifsteck

*University of North Carolina at Greensboro*Follow this and additional works at: [https://mosaic.messiah.edu/hnes\\_ed](https://mosaic.messiah.edu/hnes_ed)Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Sports Sciences Commons](#)Permanent URL: [https://mosaic.messiah.edu/hnes\\_ed/45](https://mosaic.messiah.edu/hnes_ed/45)

### Recommended Citation

Smith, Melinda; Gill, Diane L.; and Reifsteck, Erin J., "An Intervention to Support Collegiate Student-Athletes in the Transition to Meaningful Lifetime Physical Activity" (2020). *HNES Educator Scholarship*. 45.

[https://mosaic.messiah.edu/hnes\\_ed/45](https://mosaic.messiah.edu/hnes_ed/45)

### Sharpening Intellect | Deepening Christian Faith | Inspiring Action

Messiah University is a Christian university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. Our mission is to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23

An Intervention to Support Collegiate Student-Athletes in the Transition to Meaningful Lifetime  
Physical Activity

24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45

### **Abstract**

Former student-athletes (SAs) experience unique barriers to maintaining their physical activity, such as loss of team support, less motivation without specific goals, and identity-related changes. Informed by a self-determination theory framework, we developed a six-week Pilates-based intervention to support the physical and psychological wellness of SAs by fostering self-determined motivation and basic psychological needs satisfaction as they make the transition to physically active alumni. In this case study, we outline the development and implementation of the program with final-year SAs ( $n = 12$ ) at a Division III institution. Feasibility was demonstrated through high adherence and positive participant feedback suggesting they valued their experiences in the program and felt more confident in pursuing new forms of physical activity beyond college sports. To extend this type of programming at other institutions, we recommend sport psychology professionals consider unique institutional barriers and opportunities for supporting SAs in their transition to meaningful lifetime activity.

*Keywords:* athletes, transition, physical activity, Pilates, self-determination theory

46 **An Intervention to Support Collegiate Student-Athletes in the Transition to Meaningful**  
47 **Lifetime Physical Activity**

48 Transitioning to sustainable lifetime physical activity following the end of a competitive  
49 sport career can feel daunting after years of focused training for a single sport. As student-  
50 athletes (SAs) enter this transition, learning to integrate physical activity within new life  
51 commitments can be frustrating when compared to the priority placed on training during college  
52 (Plateau et al., 2017). Being a SA does not necessarily predict greater involvement in physical  
53 activity in the future (Sorenson et al., 2015). In reality, former SAs may experience unique  
54 barriers to maintaining their physical activity after college, including loss of team support  
55 (Fuller, 2014; Reifsteck & Brooks, 2018) and less motivation without specific goals (Plateau et  
56 al., 2017). Year-round training for a specific sport can also contribute to difficulty in  
57 transitioning to other forms of physical activity beyond graduation (Sorenson et al., 2015). A  
58 highly salient athletic identity may compound transitional challenges if SAs have not developed  
59 self-perceptions rooted in broader physical activity beyond their sport (Reifsteck et al., 2016).

60 In line with these potential challenges, research suggests former SAs experience declines  
61 in their physical activity (Sorenson et al., 2015) and health-related quality of life (Simon &  
62 Docherty, 2014), which may have long-term implications. Alternatively, maintaining regular  
63 physical activity across the lifespan is associated with a variety of positive health outcomes, such  
64 as reduced mortality, decreased risk for cardiovascular disease, increased muscular strength,  
65 preserved bone mass, reduced risk of falling, improved psychosocial well-being (e.g., decreased  
66 depression and anxiety), and enhanced cognitive function and quality of life (CDC, 2020; Garber  
67 et al., 2011; WHO, 2020). Supporting self-determination among transitioning SAs may empower

68 them to seek meaningful opportunities to be physically active beyond competitive sports  
69 participation and enhance their future well-being overall.

70         During college, many SAs become driven by extrinsic motivators like scholarships,  
71 playing time, and competition. Extrinsic motivation arises from the desire to obtain rewards or  
72 avoid punishment and can include aspects such as social recognition, wealth, and image  
73 (Ingledeew et al., 2009). When extrinsic factors are the primary source of motivation, it can be  
74 difficult for SAs to reframe the purpose of physical activity after college athletics conclude. This  
75 could have important implications for future physical activity participation, as extrinsic  
76 orientations are less predictive of well-being and task persistence in comparison to more intrinsic  
77 orientations (Ingledeew et al., 2009; Ryan et al., 2009).

78         While extrinsic motivation is tied to performance of a behavior for attainment of a  
79 separate outcome, intrinsic motivation involves participation in an activity for the inherent  
80 satisfaction of involvement (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SA alumni have reported struggling with  
81 intrinsic motivation for physical activity without the specific goals that they relied on during  
82 their college training programs (Plateau et al., 2017). Further, experiencing a controlling and  
83 rigid sport environment can undermine individual interest in and enjoyment of participation  
84 (Ryan et al., 2009). Alternatively, the development of more self-determined, autonomous  
85 motivation is associated with greater feelings of ownership of physical activity behaviors  
86 (Vlachopoulos & Michailidou, 2006). Despite the unique challenges faced by SAs, few  
87 intervention programs integrate self-determined approaches that emphasize physical activity  
88 transition support for SAs (Reifsteck & Brooks, 2018).

89 **Context**

90           As former collegiate SAs and current faculty in the field of kinesiology, we were  
91 intrigued by the challenges that many SA alumni face during their transition out of competitive  
92 sports. We recognized the need for new strategies to support meaningful physical activity beyond  
93 the structure of college athletics. The development of the intervention outlined in this case study  
94 was informed by previous research on sport transitions, a self-determined theoretical approach to  
95 promoting meaningful physical activity, and reflections from our own personal experiences.  
96 Additionally, Author 1 is an experienced group exercise instructor, while Authors 2 and 3 have  
97 prior experience with developing transitional programming for SAs.

98           As kinesiologists, we place high value on promoting sustainable physical activity for  
99 diverse individuals, which drives our research and applied work. As former SAs (Authors 1 and  
100 3), we also bring our own unique transition experiences and awareness of college athletics  
101 culture that influence our personal understandings of the topic. During the process of program  
102 development and evaluation, it was important for us to recognize our own positionality while  
103 remaining open to the unique experiences of program participants by engaging in purposeful  
104 reflexive practice throughout the process (Creswell, 2014). For example, Author 1 completed  
105 and reviewed written reflections of her experiences and questions after implementing each  
106 program session with SAs. This enabled her to reflect on her personal growth through facilitating  
107 the program, as well as note ways in which previous assumptions were challenged through direct  
108 experiences with SAs. The consistency of Author 1's involvement through all phases (i.e.,  
109 development, facilitation, and evaluation) combined with the research team's previous  
110 experiences both as former SAs and professionals who have worked closely with SAs, added  
111 important context. This contributed to a deeper understanding of participant feedback and  
112 informed culturally relevant program recommendations (CDC, 2011; Ryba et al., 2013).

113 Self-determination theory (SDT) offered a valuable framework for developing our  
114 physical activity transition program for final-year SAs. SDT explains human motivation through  
115 exploring personality, goals, energy, behavior, well-being and social environment (Deci & Ryan,  
116 2008). SDT emphasizes conditions that foster intrinsic motivation, which is characterized by  
117 interest, enjoyment, and inherent satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Fulfillment of the basic  
118 psychological needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness enhances intrinsic motivation,  
119 which significantly predicts physical activity enjoyment and adherence (Barbeau et al., 2009;  
120 Ryan et al., 2009; Teixeira et al., 2012; Vlachopoulos & Michailidou, 2006). While these needs  
121 may have been fulfilled in specific ways during college athletics, innovative transitional  
122 strategies may be needed for former SAs to experience physical activity satisfaction (Smith et al.,  
123 2018).

124 Competence involves self-efficacy in mastering challenging tasks (Ryan & Deci, 2000).  
125 Competence may fade when SAs are no longer training for and competing in their specific sport.  
126 Autonomy refers to self-directed choice for personally endorsed and meaningful activities (Ryan  
127 et al., 2009). If their sport-specific training involved few choices, SA alumni may feel  
128 unprepared to navigate their newfound physical activity autonomy. Relatedness emphasizes  
129 belonging and connection, as individuals feel both included and cared for by others (Ryan et al.,  
130 2009). The natural disbanding of teams can lead SAs to fear that the camaraderie and social  
131 support that they experienced will not be replicated in the future (Fuller, 2014). These factors  
132 were central considerations in designing the core features of a Pilates-based intervention to  
133 support SAs in transition. Effective support during their final year in college may empower SAs  
134 to seek opportunities for enjoyable physical activity beyond graduation.

135 Author 1 is a certified Pilates instructor who has worked specifically with SAs during the  
136 past three years. We identified Pilates as a form of lifetime physical activity that would interest  
137 SAs and could form the foundation of a transition program that supports their psychological  
138 needs. In addition to training core muscular fitness, flexibility and balance, Pilates emphasizes  
139 personal responsibility, active self-care, and an experience of daily wellness (Siler, 2006). Pilates  
140 classes can create reflective environments for purposeful physical activity. Instruction  
141 emphasizes body alignment and breathing awareness, which foster mindfulness and well-being  
142 (Caldwell et al., 2013). Mindful physical activity can promote satisfaction of basic psychological  
143 needs (Chang et al., 2015; Hodgins & Knee, 2002). Autonomy and competence support are  
144 woven into Pilates training, as participants choose how to complete movements and receive  
145 constructive feedback.

146 With a theoretical foundation in SDT and evidence for Pilates as a mindful lifetime  
147 activity, we designed the *PILATES Connect* program for final-year SAs. Research highlights the  
148 barriers that SAs face in the transition to physically active lifestyles beyond college athletics. As  
149 we merged our own personal experiences with the growing body of research evidence, we  
150 identified the need for an effective intervention that prepares final-year SAs to transition to  
151 meaningful lifetime physical activity. Therefore, the *PILATES Connect* program was developed  
152 to support physical and psychological wellness as SAs transition to active alumni. The program  
153 fosters self-determined motivation and basic psychological needs satisfaction through a Pilates-  
154 based curriculum. The purpose of this case study is to describe the development, implementation,  
155 and evaluation of the *PILATES Connect* program to equip sport and exercise psychology  
156 professionals with effective strategies for supporting SAs as they transition to alumni.

## 157 **The Case**



158           The *PILATES Connect* program was implemented at a Division III institution with a  
159 group of final-year SAs. Prior to implementing the program, discussions with athletics  
160 department administrators, coaches, and SAs at the institution affirmed interest in offering a  
161 short-term physical activity transition program. Author 1 had built relationships over the past  
162 three years by regularly offering Pilates classes to SAs, providing feedback on class effectiveness  
163 to coaches, and attending athletics department meetings at least once each year. During that time,  
164 Author 1 was also consulted by various coaches for creation of individualized training plans and  
165 team Pilates workouts.

166           A three-week pilot of the *PILATES Connect* program was then implemented to further  
167 gauge interest and feasibility, as well as refine program content. Based on positive feedback from  
168 participants and lessons learned in the pilot, a six-week version was implemented with another  
169 group of SAs the following semester. After obtaining Institutional Review Board approval,  
170 recruitment of final-year SAs occurred during the beginning of the fall semester. Participants  
171 were recruited through an email that clarified the research purpose and criteria for involvement.  
172 SAs who completed the *PILATES Connect* program received a free yoga mat as an incentive. A  
173 description of program activities and outcomes are described below.

#### 174 ***Intervention***

175           *PILATES Connect* met once each week for 60 minutes. Two class times were offered  
176 (morning or afternoon) to accommodate SAs' schedules and included 35 minutes of Pilates  
177 training, 15 minutes of reflection and discussion, and 10 minutes of evaluation. This structure  
178 provided sufficient time for individual progression in Pilates training and was a manageable  
179 commitment for SAs with full schedules. The program consisted of body weight training for two  
180 weeks and then incorporated small medicine balls for weeks three through six. Author 1's

181 instructional style emphasized attention to the present, enjoyment, improvement, self-awareness  
182 of movement, and opportunities to connect with other participants. Pilates principles of control,  
183 precision, fluidity, center, concentration, breath, imagination, and integration formed the  
184 foundation for the classes (Siler, 2006).

185 Pilates was selected for this intervention, as a form of physical activity that few SAs had  
186 consistent training in previously. Through the introduction of this activity, SAs were also  
187 encouraged to consider other modes of exercise that would be personally meaningful for them in  
188 the transition to alumni. Although it was anticipated that some SAs would be interested in  
189 continuing Pilates after the conclusion of the program, the broader objective was to support  
190 proactive reflection and dialogue regarding personal interests. Through enhancing competence in  
191 a new form of activity, SAs were empowered to extend this learning into new physical activity  
192 avenues of their own choosing after graduation.

193 Pilates trains participants toward enhanced personal control by focusing on the quality of  
194 movements and deep engagement of core musculature. Pilates was founded on coordinating the  
195 body, mind and spirit (Adams et al., 2012). Throughout the intervention, SAs were encouraged  
196 to advance or modify components to meet their personal needs and goals. In contrast to highly  
197 structured training in college, Pilates offers an opportunity for SAs to individually progress in a  
198 new form of physical activity alongside peers from other sports. Self-controlled pacing and  
199 intensity allow SAs to engage in the movements with focus and attention to the present. It is void  
200 of comparison, competition, or physical pain from pushing beyond individual capabilities. In  
201 addition, Pilates was deemed an accessible form of physical activity for SA alumni who might be  
202 interested in continued participation after graduation. Pilates is offered as a common form of  
203 group exercise throughout many fitness centers. With no need for equipment, Pilates also

204 provides opportunities for at-home training with accessible, free online videos or self-designed  
205 workouts. Resources for continued Pilates training were shared with SA participants after  
206 conclusion of the final program session.

207 SAs received individual reflection and discussion guides for use within *PILATES*  
208 *Connect*. Discussion topics included future physical activity goals, action steps, self-confidence,  
209 social support and program experiences. Each session incorporated three questions to encourage  
210 journaling reflection and to enhance dialogue among participants. The Pilates training,  
211 reflections, and discussions were designed to provide final-year SAs with competence,  
212 autonomy, and relatedness support as they prepared to transition to lifetime physical activity (see  
213 Table 1 for description of program components).

#### 214 ***Program Evaluation***

215 We took a pragmatic approach (Creswell, 2014), utilizing different methods to evaluate  
216 effective support for SAs as they transition to lifetime physical activity. We triangulated  
217 information from a variety of data sources (i.e., attendance, survey ratings, open-ended  
218 responses, and participant feedback provided during focus groups) to evaluate the program and  
219 inform practical recommendations. Attendance was taken at each class to track program  
220 adherence. To evaluate the program, feedback forms were administered at the end of each  
221 session, and focus groups were conducted at the end of the program. After each session,  
222 participants used a 7-point scale (1 = Not at all true, 7 = Very true) to rate three statements  
223 adapted from the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CSDT, 2020). Statements assessed participants'  
224 perceived physical activity competence (*I think I'm pretty good at this activity*), autonomy (*I did*  
225 *this activity because I wanted to*), and relatedness (*I felt like I could really trust these people*) in

226 that session. SAs also provided brief written feedback on strategies that they found most helpful,  
227 as well as how they would improve sessions.

228         At conclusion of the final class, participants completed a program evaluation survey  
229 using the same 7-point scale to assess competence, autonomy, and relatedness support overall  
230 (*Because of PILATES Connect... I feel more confident in my ability to transition to meaningful*  
231 *physical activity after the conclusion of college athletics; I feel like I have greater control over*  
232 *my physical activity choices after the conclusion of college athletics; I feel more connected to*  
233 *other student-athletes who participated with me*). SAs also provided ratings for statements on  
234 program recommendation (*I would recommend PILATES Connect to other student-athletes*) and  
235 their interest in participating in future group exercise (*I would consider doing Pilates, or another*  
236 *type of group exercise, again in the future*). SAs gave feedback on components of *PILATES*  
237 *Connect* that were most helpful, as well as recommendations for improvement. Session and  
238 program ratings were analyzed descriptively for means and frequency of responses.

239         SAs were then invited to participate in one of two brief focus groups that occurred two  
240 days after program completion. The focus groups were conducted to add context to survey  
241 responses and capture SAs' views as key stakeholders related to psychological needs support  
242 provided in the program (*What elements of PILATES Connect enhanced your confidence in a*  
243 *new form of physical activity? What elements of PILATES Connect empowered you to make your*  
244 *own choices? What elements of PILATES Connect facilitated connection with other final-year*  
245 *student-athletes?*) and program strengths and improvements (*How has PILATES Connect*  
246 *influenced your view of the transition out of college athletics? What suggestions do you have for*  
247 *improving PILATES Connect?*). Focus group responses were audio-recorded and transcribed.

248            Reflexive thematic analysis was performed to systematically identify and organize  
249 meaningful patterns across the various data sources (Braun et al., 2016). Reflexive thematic  
250 analysis, which is a theoretically flexible method for descriptive, practical-oriented research,  
251 provided a framework to recognize commonalities and offer insight regarding participants'  
252 shared experiences and interpretations relevant to the program (Braun et al, 2016). Our analysis  
253 reflected the interaction of our various data sources, our own positionality as researchers, and the  
254 environmental context in which our program was implemented. We were actively involved with  
255 the data by listening to the focus group recordings, engaging in multiple readings of the  
256 transcripts and program evaluations, and making reflective notes of areas pertinent to the goals  
257 of the project. We took a deductive approach to evaluate program feasibility through the  
258 theoretical lens of SDT, which was instrumental in the program design. This process enabled us  
259 to triangulate different data sources to evaluate the *PILATES Connect* program. Focus group  
260 responses and written participant statements from session and program evaluations were coded to  
261 form the primary evaluation themes of 1) components of *PILATES Connect* supported basic  
262 psychological needs satisfaction, 2) components of *PILATES Connect* could be improved to  
263 sustain participation and 3) future physical activity interests. Emphasis was placed on evaluating  
264 perceived basic psychological needs support (i.e., competence, autonomy, relatedness) through  
265 program participation, as well as evaluating program strengths and areas to improve. Open-ended  
266 responses and focus group feedback were organized into sub-themes within the larger program  
267 evaluation themes to develop an overall interpretation of participants' experiences in the  
268 program.

269            Participant quotes included throughout this case study were purposely selected to be  
270 inclusive of the perspectives of male and female SAs' across multiple sports. Program

271 participants were the primary stakeholders in this research and the selected quotes give them a  
272 voice to share their own experiences. Further, these quotes provide transparency into our process  
273 of interpreting the data; they were chosen to illustrate the identified sub-themes and represent the  
274 blending of our research interpretation with the exact words of program participants. Quotes are  
275 presented in conjunction with the participants' written feedback and survey responses to provide  
276 deeper insight into the main evaluative themes.

### 277 ***Program Outcomes***

278         Twelve final-year SAs (5 men, 7 women;  $M$  age = 21.3,  $SD$  = .49) participated in the six-  
279 week program. Eight SAs attended the morning sessions and four SAs attended the afternoon  
280 sessions, which promoted effective small group exercise and discussion. Eleven participants  
281 identified as white, with one SA choosing not to respond. Participants were injury-free and  
282 represented women's soccer, men's baseball, women's field hockey, men's lacrosse, and men's  
283 track and field. Outside of class, participants were physically active three to four times each  
284 week ( $n = 4$ ) or five or more times each week ( $n = 8$ ). A few participants had moderate  
285 experience with Pilates ( $n = 3$ ), while most had little to no experience ( $n = 9$ ). Participants  
286 consistently attended program sessions, with an overall adherence rate of 94.4%. Participants  
287 from both the morning sessions ( $n = 7$ ) and afternoon sessions ( $n = 3$ ) attended the focus groups,  
288 as well. Focus groups were brief (lasting approximately 20 minutes), as they were designed to  
289 elicit specific feedback on the program while accommodating SAs' busy schedules. Program  
290 evaluation themes and sub-themes are presented in Table 2, with key findings summarized  
291 below.

292         **Program Components Supported Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction.** *PILATES*  
293 *Connect* was viewed as supportive to basic psychological needs satisfaction throughout the

294 program (Table 3), which was identified as a primary theme. Ratings of perceived autonomy and  
295 relatedness remained consistently high throughout the six sessions. Perceived competence  
296 increased from the first to sixth sessions, suggesting that participants experienced progress in a  
297 new form of physical activity within a relatively short time. At program conclusion, participants  
298 strongly recommended *PILATES Connect* to other SAs ( $M = 6.8$ ) and would consider doing  
299 Pilates or other group exercise in the future ( $M = 6.8$ ).

300 The sub-theme of competence support through progressive new physical challenges was  
301 identified. As evidence of this perceived support, SAs enjoyed learning to move more fluidly  
302 through Pilates training. A men's baseball player reflected on his personal growth in different  
303 exercises through participation in *PILATES Connect*. He stated, "I thought it was nice to see how  
304 you progressed every week in some of the exercises. I mean, whether it be the first week and  
305 your knees are shaking and stuff like that. But then you start to develop strength through the  
306 movements." In written feedback after *PILATES Connect* sessions, SAs valued the fitness  
307 benefits of Pilates, including flexibility, core stability, and controlled movement ( $n = 10$ ).  
308 Competence increased, as participants recognized how the training progressions and new  
309 challenges were helpful in their growth ( $n = 11$ ).

310 The sub-theme of autonomy support included the perceived benefits of personal choice  
311 with exercise intensity, pacing and the inclusion of movement modifications or challenges. In  
312 written feedback after the sessions, SAs appreciated a relaxed environment to clear their minds  
313 ( $n = 5$ ). The *PILATES Connect* instruction and environment supported SAs in making choices  
314 regarding their own physical activity within the class. A women's soccer player reflected on the  
315 opportunity to adapt her training during each class. She noted that participants could make the

316 choice of “whether or not to try the more advanced movements, depending on how you felt that  
317 day.”

318 A sub-theme of relatedness support through group exercise and discussions with peers  
319 was also recognized. In written feedback after sessions, participants highlighted the benefits of  
320 sharing the group exercise experience with other final-year SAs and the opportunity to talk in  
321 small groups ( $n = 7$ ). During a focus group, a men’s baseball athlete shared about the benefits of  
322 learning from his peers’ ideas. He noted, “I think the reflection questions we had at the end of  
323 each session helped to get to know like what other student athletes think.” Participants  
324 experienced relatedness support during the class, with designated time to slow down and think  
325 about their future physical activity choices with other final-year SAs. A women’s soccer player  
326 expressed feeling greater affirmation for her own feelings of ambiguity as she approached the  
327 transition. She stated, “It’s just nice connecting with other people and be like, yeah, your  
328 thoughts are okay. It’s okay to be scared right now, like what you’re doing. But you’ll figure it out  
329 and you will make the transition.” In summary, participants enhanced their competence in  
330 Pilates, enjoyed autonomy to modify or advance exercises, and experienced relatedness as they  
331 exercised and shared ideas with other SAs during the sessions. Evaluation rating means and  
332 related focus group responses regarding basic psychological needs support are provided in Table  
333 4.

334 **Program Components Could Be Improved to Sustain Participation.** Participants  
335 provided feedback on components that could be improved to sustain participation in the program,  
336 a second primary theme. When evaluating ways to improve the program, we identified a sub-  
337 theme of extending programming time. Specifically, participants recommended that *PILATES*  
338 *Connect* meet more often or for longer times. A men’s baseball player expressed that additional



339 class time would be helpful for his growth. He stated, “I thought it might be beneficial to maybe  
340 do it twice a week or to just have a little bit longer session”. Participants suggested continuing  
341 *PILATES Connect* for more than six weeks for continued progression and support.

342 Participants also highlighted the perceived benefits of recruiting more SAs for the  
343 program, a second sub-theme. A women’s soccer player recognized the value of learning from  
344 the ideas of numerous participants. She noted, “It’s valuable to have one or two people who had  
345 different opinions. But I mean the more you have, the more connected you can be with people  
346 about how they’re feeling.” When discussing program recruitment, SAs thought that it would be  
347 helpful to have previous participants reach out to other SAs to encourage future involvement.  
348 Participants would tell other SAs that Pilates transfers to sport-related training. A men’s baseball  
349 player recognized the benefits of Pilates training for sport performance, as well as health. He  
350 stated, “It really helps with your overall core strength and flexibility. Those two things are  
351 extremely important no matter what sport you play. I think it’s just good for your overall health.”  
352 A women’s soccer player agreed that she often found connections between Pilates training and  
353 the movements required within her sport. She summarized, “There were multiple times where we  
354 were doing a movement and I was like, this is a movement I will make in my sport. So I think  
355 there are moments where the movements are really applicable.”

356 SAs within the *PILATES Connect* program would also recruit future participants by  
357 encouraging them to try something new. A women’s soccer player valued the opportunity to  
358 learn a unique form of exercise that she could continue to enjoy after the conclusion of college  
359 sports. She noted that she appreciated “the time to be calm and just a different way to train when  
360 a lot of people haven’t done it before... And especially for senior athletes, like it’s maybe another  
361 possibility for the future. I would tell them that. Just you never know until you do it.” Another

362 women's soccer player agreed about the benefits of trying something different within a  
363 supportive class structure. She stated, "I would just say be an advocate for something new, do  
364 something different. And don't be intimidated by it. It was a really welcoming environment  
365 obviously, too." Equipping SAs, who are the primary stakeholders, to effectively advocate for  
366 program participation among peers strengthens transition support. By offering this program when  
367 final-year SAs are either in-season or approaching their season, the training benefits of Pilates  
368 may provide initial motivation to participate. Once involved in the program, SAs have  
369 opportunities to reflect on future physical activity beyond sport and learn from the ideas of their  
370 peers.

371 **Future Physical Activity Interests.** Through participation in *PILATES Connect*, final-  
372 year SAs identified a variety of future physical activity interests, a third primary theme. While  
373 recognizing the challenges of transition, participants also expressed greater openness to  
374 considering new forms of physical activity for future participation, which was identified as a  
375 sub-theme. A men's baseball player discussed his willingness to explore different forms of  
376 exercise. He shared, "Since I did Pilates, who knows what could happen! I think it gave me more  
377 openness to find new things." SAs talked about redefining physical activity after college sports,  
378 with novel ideas that interested them. A women's soccer player recognized an expanded view of  
379 physical activity options that she might find enjoyable. She remarked, "I think it changed my  
380 view a little bit of what I might be interested in after college because at first, I always thought,  
381 oh, I have to go to the gym every day to get my exercise in when I don't have soccer. I think  
382 going through this made me realize that I'm going to look into classes like this in the future, that  
383 are fun and not the gym." A men's baseball participant looked forward to making his own  
384 exercise choices to promote health. He stated, "There are a bunch of different realms of physical

385 activity that we could get involved with. It's just good for the transition that we're going to be  
386 able to do what we want and stuff like that instead of constantly beating up our bodies, doing the  
387 same thing every day at practice.” Throughout the program, SAs progressed in recognizing a  
388 broader view of future physical activity options.

389         As the program progressed, participants were able to identify specific forms of personally  
390 meaningful physical activity that they would consider pursuing after college sports. This second  
391 sub-theme was expressed through the diverse physical activity interests of individual  
392 participants. SAs suggested future physical activity options including cycling, running, Pilates,  
393 yoga, lifting weights, barre, skiing and snowboarding. Only one SA, a women’s soccer player,  
394 specifically expressed interest in a recreational league to participate in the sport that she played  
395 during college. This was an interesting contrast to the other participants who expressed stronger  
396 interest in pursuing new forms of physical activity or returning to activities that they were not  
397 able to pursue during college. SAs expressed greater optimism about the transition as they  
398 anticipated having more activity choices. A men’s baseball player shared about his excitement to  
399 become involved in new recreational sport opportunities. He looked forward to “having the  
400 freedom to pick and choose what you want to do now. Like now I can play church-league  
401 softball if I want to.” These comments reflect SAs’ perceptions of how *PILATES Connect*  
402 positively impacted their views of the upcoming transition to physically active alumni.

### 403 **Reflections**

404         Based on our findings in this case study, we determined that offering a six-week  
405 *PILATES Connect* program was feasible at this institution. This was demonstrated by high  
406 adherence rates and positive feedback among both in-season and off-season final-year SAs.  
407 Participants noted the benefits of a scheduled time to slow down, experience a new mode of

408 mindful physical training, and spend time with their peers. Consistent with the SDT-informed  
409 framework used to develop the program (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wilson et al.,  
410 2008), participants agreed that the program supported their competence, autonomy, and  
411 relatedness in physical activity as they approached the transition to alumni.

412 *PILATES Connect* was intentionally designed for the fall semester of the SAs' final year  
413 of collegiate competition. This timing was implemented to encourage SAs to proactively think  
414 about the transition before it was imminent. The program was created to help participants begin  
415 planning action steps toward personally meaningful physical activity before graduation. Pilates  
416 training provided a medium for SAs to experience progression in a lifetime activity while  
417 exploring ideas and challenges related to future physical activity participation beyond college  
418 sports. *PILATES Connect* was designed to offer a space for SAs to try something new without a  
419 specific expectation for performance. Participants were encouraged to take the discussions from  
420 the program back to their teammates and continue conversations on how physical activity is  
421 relevant to their future as alumni.

#### 422 *Challenges and Future Directions*

423 Recruitment remains a key issue when implementing programming for SAs.  
424 Communication with athletics departments is important for coordinating schedules to ensure that  
425 programs are offered at times that work for SAs. Ideally, transition programs would be integrated  
426 within the overall framework of SA support at an institution. This requires educating coaches  
427 and administrators on the significance of physical activity transition support. With full academic  
428 and athletic schedules, programming must be viewed as adding value to the SA experience rather  
429 than one more commitment. To support recruitment efforts, SAs in this study recommended  
430 having program participants encourage upcoming final-year SAs to try something new, as they

431 highlighted the benefits for both performance and transition preparation. Empowering SAs to  
432 serve as champions of these opportunities enhances our transition support, as the participants  
433 themselves take ownership of the programming.

434 Resources contributing to the feasibility of offering the program included the availability  
435 of a group exercise room in the institution's fitness center and Author 1's interest in teaching the  
436 class. Thus, *PILATES Connect* provided tailored resources for final-year SAs with limited costs  
437 to the institution. Athletics coaches supported the initiative and recommended the program to  
438 their own SAs, which enhanced participation. In addition, the institutional culture promotes  
439 holistic wellness support for their undergraduate students. Reflecting on these experiences,  
440 stakeholder buy-in is critical to sustained success of any SA development program (Andrassy et  
441 al., 2014). In this case, conversations with athletics department colleagues and previous SA  
442 involvement in Pilates training created an ideal environment to implement this intervention.  
443 There was participant interest in the mode of training, institutional belief in the value of this  
444 work, and ample resources to follow through with program implementation.

445 To extend this type of programming to other institutions, sport psychology professionals  
446 should consider unique institutional barriers and opportunities for supporting final-year SAs in  
447 their transitions to lifetime activity. Additional modes of exercise may be relevant within other  
448 settings, and program facilitators may have different areas of instructional expertise. Supportive  
449 programming for final-year SAs could incorporate other lifetime group activities such as yoga,  
450 tai-chi, taekwondo, high-intensity interval training, Zumba, indoor cycling, or aquatics (Smith et  
451 al., 2018). In this case study, the foundation for *PILATES Connect* was built on a lifetime  
452 physical activity that was deemed valuable by coaches and SAs. The Pilates training brought  
453 final-year SAs together, creating intentional space for transition discussions that may not have

454 occurred otherwise. Evaluating the impact of the SAs' training status (i.e., before, during, or after  
455 the final season) could provide greater context for effective timing of interventions.

### 456 *Limitations*

457         There were several limitations evident in our case study. Our sample size was small and  
458 represented only five collegiate sports from one predominantly white Division III institution.  
459 This may limit generalizability of the implications and recommendations for other final-year SAs  
460 and institutions. Additional research that spans Division I, Division II, and community colleges  
461 would help broaden future application for SA transition support. It is also important to further  
462 explore the experiences of SAs of diverse cultural, racial, gender, and socio-economic  
463 backgrounds as they transition to lifetime activity.

464         Though Pilates was selected as the physical activity mode for this intervention for a  
465 variety of reasons, it is possible that this form of activity may not have interested some final-year  
466 SAs, limiting program participation. In the future, the program could be expanded to provide  
467 opportunities for SAs to self-select options for physical activity during the intervention itself.  
468 After introducing an example activity like Pilates, SAs could be exposed to other exercise  
469 options available at the institution during the times the class meets. With the encouragement to  
470 reflect on physical activity options that are personally motivating, and then opportunities to take  
471 initial action steps toward self-selected participation, SAs could further prepare for the transition.

### 472 *Conclusion*

473         Through our implementation of *PILATES Connect*, we gained valuable insight regarding  
474 the type of transition support that final-year SAs find meaningful. Participants noted that  
475 *PILATES Connect* served as a stepping-stone toward building personal confidence in new forms  
476 of activity beyond college sports. Participants especially valued their autonomy within the

477 program and enjoyed the time to discuss the transition with their peers. SAs recommended  
478 longer programming and recruiting more participants to sustain interest and participation at the  
479 institution.

480         After completing the program, SAs were able to verbalize specific ways in which the  
481 program positively affected their view of the transition. They discussed their upcoming personal  
482 transitions with greater confidence and clarity. This case study affirmed the importance of  
483 supporting final-year SAs as they explore ideas for their own unique future physical activity. For  
484 example, the variety of interests verbalized by participants in this study included physical  
485 activities such as cycling, running, yoga, and snowboarding. SA alumni have their own unique  
486 experiences, interests and redefined goals, which will influence their physical activity journeys  
487 after college sports conclude. Recognizing the various ways in which SAs define personally  
488 meaningful future physical activity is central.

489         Future work could emphasize a core curriculum that can then be customized by  
490 additional institutions. A similar approach has been used in the development of other transitional  
491 programming for SAs (Brooks et al., 2019; Reifsteck & Brooks, 2018; Shriver et al., 2019).  
492 Investigating the ideal length and timing of the program and focusing on effective recruitment  
493 will enhance sustainability. Supporting SAs as they transition to physically active lifestyles  
494 beyond graduation is an interdisciplinary issue. Continued success will require collaboration  
495 between relevant stakeholders such as athletics departments, coaches, SA alumni, educators, and  
496 sport and exercise psychology professionals. This will enhance support for final-year SAs, as  
497 they explore ideas for physical activity that they feel inherently motivated to adopt into their  
498 future lifestyles.

499

## 500 References

501

502 Adams, M., Caldwell, K., Atkins, L., & Quin, R. (2012). Pilates and mindfulness: A qualitative  
503 study. *Journal of Dance Education*, 12(4), 123–130.

504 <https://doi.org/10.1080/15290824.2012.636222>

505 Andrassy, E. J., Svensson, P., Bruening, J., Huml, M. R., & Chung, M. (2014). The role of  
506 organizational capacity in student-athlete development. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*,  
507 7(2), 218–244. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jis.2014-0103>

508 Barbeau, A., Sweet, S. N., & Fortier, M. (2009). A path-analytic model of self-determination  
509 theory in a physical activity context. *Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research*, 14(3),  
510 103–118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9861.2009.00043.x>

511 Braun, V., Clarke, V. & Weate, P. (2016). Using thematic analysis in sport and exercise research.  
512 In B. Smith, & A. C. Sparkes (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport*  
513 *and exercise* (pp. 191-205). Routledge.

514 Brooks, D. D., Reifsteck, E. J., Powell, S. M., & Gill, D. L. (2019). Moving beyond college  
515 sports: Participants' views of the Moving On! transition program. *International Journal*  
516 *of Kinesiology in Higher Education*, 3(1), 2–11.

517 <https://doi.org/10.1080/24711616.2018.1489743>

518 Caldwell, K., Adams, M., Quin, R., Harrison, M., & Greeson, J. (2013). Pilates, mindfulness and  
519 somatic education. *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, 5(2), 141–153.

520 [https://doi.org/10.1386/jdsp.5.2.141\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jdsp.5.2.141_1)

521 Center for Self-Determination Theory. (2020). *Intrinsic Motivation Inventory*.

522 <https://selfdeterminationtheory.org/intrinsic-motivation-inventory/>



- 523 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). *Developing an effective evaluation plan*.  
524 <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/cdc-evaluation-workbook-508.pdf>
- 525 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, February 25). *Benefits of physical activity*.  
526 <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/index.htm>
- 527 Chang, J. H., Huang, C. L., & Lin, Y. C. (2015). Mindfulness, basic psychological needs  
528 fulfillment, and well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *16*(5), 1149–1162.  
529 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9551-2>
- 530 Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*  
531 *approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Sage.
- 532 Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human  
533 motivation, development, and health. *Canadian Psychology*, *49*(3), 182–185.  
534 <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012801>
- 535 Fuller, R. D. (2014). Transition experiences out of intercollegiate athletics: A meta-synthesis.  
536 *The Qualitative Report*, *19*(46), 1-15. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol19/iss46/1>
- 537 Garber, C. E., Blissmer, B., Deschenes, M. R., Franklin, B. A., Lamonte, M. J., Lee, I. M.,  
538 Nieman, D. C., & Swain, D. P. (2011). American College of Sports Medicine position  
539 stand. Quantity and quality of exercise for developing and maintaining cardiorespiratory,  
540 musculoskeletal, and neuromotor fitness in apparently healthy adults: Guidance for  
541 prescribing exercise. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, *43*(7), 1334–1359.  
542 <https://doi.org/10.1249/MSS.0b013e318213fefb>
- 543 Hodgins, H., & Knee, C. (2002). The integrating self and conscious experience. In E. L. Deci, &  
544 R. M. Ryan (Eds.), *Handbook of self-determination research* (pp. 87–100). University of  
545 Rochester Press.

- 546 Ingledew, D. K., Markland, D., & Ferguson, E. (2009). Three levels of exercise motivation.  
547 *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, *1*(3), 336–355.  
548 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-0854.2009.01015.x>
- 549 Plateau, C. R., Petrie, T. A., & Papatomas, A. (2017). Exercise attitudes and behaviours among  
550 retired female collegiate athletes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *29*, 111–115.  
551 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2017.01.001>
- 552 Reifsteck, E. J., & Brooks, D. D. (2018). A transition program to help student-athletes move on  
553 to lifetime physical activity. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action*, *9*(1), 21–31.  
554 <https://doi.org/10.1080/21520704.2017.1303011>
- 555 Reifsteck, E. J., Gill, D. L., & Labban, J. D. (2016). “Athletes” and “exercisers”: Understanding  
556 identity, motivation, and physical activity participation in former college athletes. *Sport,*  
557 *Exercise, and Performance Psychology*, *5*(1), 25–38. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spy0000046>
- 558 Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic  
559 motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 68–78.  
560 <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- 561 Ryan, R. M., Williams, G. C., Patrick, H., & Deci, E. L. (2009). Self-determination theory and  
562 physical activity: The dynamics of motivation in development and wellness. *Hellenic*  
563 *Journal of Psychology*, *6*, 107–124.
- 564 Ryba, T. V., Stambulova, N. B., Si, G., & Schinke, R. J. (2013). ISSP position stand: Culturally  
565 competent research and practice in sport and exercise psychology. *International Journal*  
566 *of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *11*(2), 123–142.  
567 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2013.779812>

- 568 Shriver, L. H., Reifsteck, E. J., & Brooks, D. (2019). Moving On!: A transition program for  
569 promoting healthy eating and an active lifestyle among student-athletes after college.  
570 *Journal of Nutrition Education & Behavior*, 51(1), 112–115.  
571 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2018.08.004>
- 572 Siler, B. (2006). *Your ultimate Pilates body challenge*. Broadway Books.
- 573 Simon, J. E., & Docherty, C. L. (2014). Current health-related quality of life is lower in former  
574 Division I collegiate athletes than in non-collegiate athletes. *The American Journal of*  
575 *Sports Medicine*, 42(2), 423–429. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0363546513510393>
- 576 Smith, M., Reifsteck, E., & Gill, D. (2018). Moving into an active future: Supporting lifetime  
577 physical activity for student-athletes. *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*, 22(4), 10–15.  
578 <https://doi.org/10.1249/FIT.0000000000000404>
- 579 Sorenson, S. C., Romano, R., Azen, S. P., Schroeder, E. T., & Salem, G. J. (2015). Life span  
580 exercise among elite intercollegiate student athletes. *Sports Health*, 7(1), 80–86.  
581 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1941738114534813>
- 582 Teixeira, P. J., Carraça, E. V., Markland, D., Silva, M. N., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). Exercise,  
583 physical activity, and self-determination theory: A systematic review. *International*  
584 *Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 9(78), 1-30.  
585 <https://doi.org/10.1186/1479-5868-9-78>
- 586 Vlachopoulos, S. P., & Michailidou, S. (2006). Development and initial validation of a measure  
587 of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in exercise: The Basic Psychological Needs in  
588 Exercise Scale. *Measurement in Physical Education & Exercise Science*, 10(3), 179–201.  
589 [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327841mpee1003\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327841mpee1003_4)

590 Wilson, P. M., Mack, D. E., & Grattan, K. P. (2008). Understanding motivation for exercise: A  
591 self-determination theory perspective. *Canadian Psychology*, 49(3), 250–256.

592 <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012762>

593 World Health Organization. (2020). *Physical activity and adults*.

594 [http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet\\_adults/en/](http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_adults/en/)

595

596

597

598

599

600

601

602

603

604

605

606

607

608

609

610

611 Table 1

612 *Program Components and Strategies*

Component	Objectives	Program strategies	Reflection questions
Autonomy	Encourage personal choice in Pilates training	Modify or advance Pilates exercises at a self-selected pace	Session 1: What was your experience with Pilates like today? What personal goals do you have for <i>PILATES Connect</i> ? As you look ahead, what do you believe will be most challenging about the transition out of college sports?
	Develop initiative for choosing future physical activity options	Reflect on personal goals and motivators for future activity	Session 2: What forms of physical activity could you see yourself enjoying after college sports conclude? What personal physical activity goals do you have for the future? What do you believe will motivate you to be active after college sports conclude?
Competence	Develop competence in Pilates, a lifetime activity	Progress in physical activity skills outside of college sports	Session 3: In what ways are you growing and progressing in <i>PILATES Connect</i> ? How does being a student-athlete influence your personal confidence? In addition to being a student-athlete, what are two other areas of your life that give you confidence?
	Strengthen self-efficacy for future physical activity	Reflect on individual growth in Pilates and future action steps	Session 4: What fears or concerns do you have regarding physical activity beyond college sports? What excites you most about future physical activity? What action steps will help you emphasize regular physical activity in your future?
Relatedness	Develop connections with peers who are approaching transition	Participate in group exercise and small group discussions with peers	Session 5: What do you value most about being part of a college sports team? What do you believe will be most challenging when you are no longer part of a college sports team? What has it been like to participate in <i>PILATES Connect</i> with other student-athletes?
	Consider strategies for physical activity support after college	Reflect on social support strategies for physical activity as alumni	Session 6: How has <i>PILATES Connect</i> influenced your view of future physical activity? What people or groups could provide physical activity support for you in the future? What resources or information would be most helpful to you in preparing for meaningful physical activity after college sports?

613

614

615

616

617

618

619 Table 2

620 *PILATES Connect Program Evaluation: Themes and Sub-themes*

Theme	Sub-themes	621
		<del>622</del>
Components of <i>PILATES Connect</i> supported basic psychological needs satisfaction	Competence support: progressive Pilates challenges	623
	Autonomy support: choice of personal effort, pacing, and modifications	624
	Relatedness support: small group exercise and discussion with peers	625
		<del>626</del>
Components of <i>PILATES Connect</i> could be improved to sustain participation	Longer sessions or more sessions	627
	Recruit additional participants	628
		629
Future physical activity interests	Openness to new ideas for what is personally interesting	630
	Activity variety (i.e. cycling, running, Pilates, yoga, lifting, barre, skiing, snowboarding, recreational sport league)	631
		632
		633
		634
		635

636 *Note.* Sub-themes identified through session evaluations, program evaluations, and focus groups

637

638

639

640

641

642

643

644

645

646

647

648

649

650

651

652 Table 3

653 *Session Evaluations of Basic Psychological Needs Support*

<b>Evaluation Component</b>	<b>Session 1 <i>M</i></b>	<b>Session 2 <i>M</i></b>	<b>Session 3 <i>M</i></b>	<b>Session 4 <i>M</i></b>	<b>Session 5 <i>M</i></b>	<b>Session 6 <i>M</i></b>	<b>Session 7 <i>M</i></b>
I think I am pretty good at this activity. (Competence)	4.1	4.2	4.5	5.0	5.4	5.7	6.5
I did this activity because I wanted to. (Autonomy)	6.6	6.6	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.8	6.8
I felt like I could really trust these people. (Relatedness)	6.0	6.0	6.5	6.5	6.7	6.5	6.4

*Note.* 7-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all true, 7 = Very true)

666

667

668

669

670

671

672

673

674

675

676

677

678

679

680

681 Table 4

682 *Summary of SA Feedback on Basic Psychological Needs Support*

Item	Mean Rating	Participant Description	683
Because of <i>PILATES Connect</i> , I feel more confident in my ability to transition to meaningful physical activity after the conclusion of college athletics. (Competence)	5.5	<p>“By the end I was like, ‘Okay, I feel more smooth and purposeful with movement without having to really think what am I doing.’ So I think that was good from a confidence perspective... Like I can translate in different environments.” (women’s soccer)</p> <p>“This whole experience for me was completely 100% new, I’ve never done anything like this. But I’ve always wanted to, I’ve just never done it. So it was good to just try new things and I guess it did give me some confidence and this is like my first step into something that isn’t [sport]. And that isn’t for my team, I guess.” (women’s soccer)</p> <p>“I think the training was good because it helps me realize that I’m athletic besides just doing [sport]. And I’ll be able to do different activities than [sport]. I’m like, ‘Oh I can do this, I feel strong.’ So I think that confidence to do other activities is really good.” (women’s soccer)</p>	
Because of <i>PILATES Connect</i> , I feel like I have greater control over my physical activity choices after the conclusion of college athletics. (Autonomy)	5.9	<p>“You had the choice of whether or not you really want to push yourself to the limit or not go as hard.” (men’s baseball)</p> <p>“I think it also reflects on the weighted balls we use, like how heavy did you want to use? What would be best for you? You had the choice.” (men’s baseball)</p> <p>“Also knowing that we’re sore and tired, too, sometimes, so hey, if your back hurts today be wise, be smart. I didn’t feel pressured to train, like to go all out and kill myself trying to.” (women’s soccer)</p>	
Because of <i>PILATES Connect</i> , I feel more connected to other student-athletes who participated with me. (Relatedness)	6.0	<p>“It was nice to be in a class where other people are learning the same thing and so you recognize that you’re not alone in this situation. That everyone else is going through the same thing, so being able to relate to other people is really helpful.” (women’s soccer)</p> <p>“The discussions after, I liked that a lot. Just hearing other people’s point of views. And realizing that most of ours were super similar. I think that was cool.” (women’s soccer)</p> <p>“I think it was a good way to do something different that’s not like a sport and it’s not like school. So it’s like a good way to kind of like connect with other people.” (women’s field hockey)</p>	

Note. 7-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all true, 7 = Very true)