

Application Essay Example (Common App): Sisterhood

Beginning when I was little and “executed” a clumsy somersault on a gymnastics mat, I became addicted to sports. My current obsession is pole vaulting, a unique and very technical event within track and field. Thanks to pole vaulting, I have traveled around the country, got to train with elite pole vaulters, and have even been coached by former Olympians. However, the best gift I have ever received from pole vaulting is my best friend, Kolby.

Kolby and I trained at the same pole vaulting club. In 2018, Kolby lost her little sister in a tragic accident. Unfortunately, I could somewhat relate to how Kolby was feeling, because my own sister was across the sea serving in a seemingly never-ending war. We both had a piece missing from our lives, making our friendship serendipitous. As we supported each other through our ups and downs, a strong bond formed - a sisterhood. While leaning on each other, pole vaulting became our therapy.

Then COVID happened in 2020, causing the world to quickly go into lockdown mode, and for the first time in five years we could not pole vault. We had lost our therapy. I did what I could to work out, but I longed for the euphoric feeling of flight. I was used to putting all my sadness and frustration into a pole, so the loss I felt was beginning to consume me. The inactivity I felt made me believe I could never return to the athletic levels I had previously achieved. However, that did not compare to the loss I felt from being separated again from another “sister” - my pole vaulting partner- Kolby.

Thankfully, my best friend saved me. When restrictions began to relax just a bit, we were able to see each other, and she told me she had been researching powerlifting meets. She begged me to sign up for one with her, which I was extremely hesitant to do considering neither of us had ANY powerlifting experience! Since we still could not pole vault together, I reluctantly agreed.

My personal trainer taught me the basics of the sport. It felt awkward at first, but I gradually got the hang of it. The more time I spent powerlifting, the less I worried about being unable to pole vault. Powerlifting became my substitute therapy.

My best friend and I did reasonably well at our first meet, and we decided to attend the Illinois State Meet. I deadlifted 214 pounds, a personal best and a state record for my age and weight class, shocking me as well as the officials. I felt like an athlete again, and, more importantly, I got to do it with Kolby.

Pole vaulting and powerlifting brought Kolby and me together through the darkest of times. Eventually, my sister came home from her deployment, and I felt like the missing piece of my heart was back in place. However, I also realize Kolby's sister will never come home. Although our times spent together powerlifting and pole vaulting have now passed, our closeness has not diminished.

Last year, I had the pleasure of watching Kolby flourish during her first year in college. I cheered for her from afar as she did well in competitions, and I consoled her when she had difficult days. I know she will do the same when I embark on my own college experiences, because that is what sisters do for each other.

It is ironic. When the world shut down, I had to give up pole vaulting for several months but acquired a new therapy in powerlifting. I temporarily "lost" a sister to war but gained a kindred spirit in Kolby. I am sure I will face more temporary setbacks in college, but I am confident I will come out ahead in the end. After all, with Kolby in my corner, the sky is the limit...just like in pole vaulting!