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### Purdue Football Freshman Takes Lessons from Krannert and the Field

Have you ever wondered what it is like to be a student athlete playing on the football team for Purdue University? I sure did, so I talked with Andrew Sowinski, freshman wide receiver at Purdue, and learned the requirements of being a student athlete never end. Whether having good time management skills or preparing for the big game, being a student athlete is serious business.

My first question for Andrew was, “How do you balance your football and school responsibilities so you can succeed at both?” He said that one of the biggest things about being a successful student athlete is time management. In the early day, it’s all about academics. Doing schoolwork, taking tests and studying is job one. For the middle of the day, it’s football practice, where hard work will pay off and help make big team wins. Andrew said that Purdue football is special because of trying to get those big wins. They may not win every game but when it matters, they can take it home. For example, when Purdue faced Michigan State everyone thought it was going to be a blow out, but Purdue shocked the world and won the game. In the final parts of the day, he studies more and gets as much sleep as possible for the next day. Andrew manages his time with a planner which he uses to write down his schedule and keep himself organized. He does this instead of working with tutors, which he sees as stressful, because it would require following other people’s schedules. Also, Monday is his free day with no football practice, and that is when he catches up on schoolwork and anything else he needs to do.

My next question was, “How do you prepare during game week and on game day?” He says another part of being a student athlete is preparing for the big game each week while managing his studies. Andrew said that the coaches prepare the game plan on Monday, then on Tuesday they brief the players on offense, defense, and how to beat the opposing team. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the football team practices and reviews plays. On Friday, it’s time for the walk through, where the team uses repetition to know the game plan, then travel if the game is not in West Lafayette. Through the week Andrew still must keep up with school, which is difficult but manageable. On the big day, Andrew’s schedule is to wake up early, eat, walk through the game plan, relax, eat again, review the plan one last time, onto the bus and then SHOWTIME!

In the end, there are lots of different parts to being a student athlete at Purdue, with lessons from Andrew's schoolwork and Purdue football forming a bridge and bringing a lot to the table for both. Talking to Andrew, I learned that time management, preparation and practice are the keys to his success in academics and football. These tools will help him in his career in marketing, which is his major at Purdue. Being a student athlete is stressful and challenging, but all the things that Andrew learns at Purdue will help him later in life when he needs it most.