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Maple '22 Examines Injury Prevention Technique for Athletes

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — While there are countless tips for preventing sports injuries, Tyler Maple '22 dedicated part of his summer to research the effectiveness of a specific method through his Eckley Scholarship at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Maple, a biology and Hispanic studies major, [was one of six IWU students named 2022 Eckley Scholars](#). He was given a stipend to pursue his project titled “The Effects of Reflexive Performance Reset on Performance of Elite High School Athletes: A Preliminary Study.”

“This topic is important to me because I have experienced many injuries throughout my high school and collegiate career. RPR (Reflexive Performance Reset) is a form of injury prevention that does not have a lot of published research, so I wanted to bring another voice into the topic that may help with further research,” said Maple, who played football and track and field at IWU.

The RPR method is a muscle activation technique that acts as a warm up to create a better mind-muscle connection. Maple said the main purpose of this method is to prevent injury, with its foundation relying on proper belly breathing.

Maple was assisted in his research by Todd Lower, head men’s track and field coach and head strength and conditioning coach at IWU, who provided Maple with resources, support and connections to high school athletes at IWU’s summer track camp.

Despite facing a few hurdles while leading his first major research project, Maple chose to view the challenges as a learning experience.

“I ended up with just enough numbers to give me meaningful findings, so I found a way around the mistakes and adversities that had occurred during the process,” he said. As many researchers experience, “even if my results were not what I had hoped for, I believe it was still a major learning success that will lead me into better opportunities later on in my career.”

Moving forward, Maple plans to hone his research methods and conduct further studies featuring collegiate athletes. He hopes that by observing any clinically suggested benefits, his findings could give athletes the confidence to use the RPR technique more broadly.

“The Eckley Fellowship project impacted my college experience by giving me a chance to put what I’ve learned in the classroom and my passions into a project that would be meaningful for me,” said Maple. “I have read countless research and primary literature, and it was a fun and inspiring experience to be able to produce my own. It has created more opportunity for me to find where my passions are and how I can best fulfill them in future work.”

[Established by the late IWU President Emeritus Robert Eckley and his wife Nell](#), the recognition provides a stipend of \$4,000 for each scholar to spend the summer conducting academic research or artistic activity under the mentorship of a faculty member. The program is designed to develop and deepen a student’s creative and research competencies.

Read about other 2022 Eckley Scholars:

- [Maria Harmon '23 — “Investigating Poetry’s ‘Well-Made’ Surprises”](#)



Tyler Maple '22

By Julia Perez