

Hannah Miller

COM 333

Profile

STUDENT ATHLETE'S POSITIVITY LIFTS SPIRITS

Late July, Kortney Turner drove into her driveway after getting take-out from one of her favorite restaurants. She shifted the car into park, when her phone lit up with a message. She picked up her phone and saw a preview of a message that read, "I wanted to update you all and make you aware that all classes for the fall semester have been moved online," Kaila Evenoff, Crimson Girls coach at Washington State University said. Turner was shocked by the message from her coach and placed her half-eaten burger down and dialed a fellow teammate to discuss her fear of what this means for their 2020-21 season for the Crimson Girls.

Turner, 19-year-old WSU Crimson Girls co-captain, adapted her leadership style and kept a strong mentality during the difficult parts of the pandemic.

Turner grew up in Corona, California and is a second-year member of the Crimson Girls. In August, she moved back to her apartment in Pullman, Washington. Turner is a sophomore and studying Strategic Communications with a focus in Public Relations.

In previous years, the Crimson Girls reported to Pullman by mid-July to be medically examined and cleared to participate and dance for their season by the WSU Athletic Department, Turner said. They would practice daily to perfect routines and sideline dances for the upcoming football season. The schedule stayed the same every year, up until this season, according to Turner. Due to the pandemic, the report date changed to early August.

"Although the delayed startup sounded like just a bump in the road, I had faith that our season would be similar to the year before," Turner said.

The Pac-12 Conference was the last NCAA College Conference to decide if the 2020-21 football season would start during fall semester or post-poned to the spring semester.

Amidst all the uncertainty, Turner kept a positive mindset and provided ideas to her fellow captains. All of the captains worked together to choreograph half-time routines for the football season, Turner said.

Rebecca Turner, 49 year old and Kortney's mother, explained her daughter as always having a positive and optimistic attitude. That is her most standout trait and it is a gift and I think many should be spreading positivity all around like her during these troubling times, Rebecca said.

Turner's optimistic outlook on life stemmed from her difficult childhood. Growing up, Turner dealt with her parent's divorce, a loss in her family, and having to be strong for her mother and her younger brother. This caused her to grow up fast and taught her that happiness is found within, according to Turner. Turner found positivity by learning about herself more and found that she is happiest when she became happy with who she is and making a positive impact on others. Some strategies she used were journaling her thoughts, staying active, devoting time to reading and waking up early, Turner said. Turner has become a great role model for her teammates and wants to share her optimistic outlook to other athletes who may be struggling in these turbulent times.

Turner's mentality became stronger after the Pac-12 Conference announced to begin the football season in late October or early November. She immediately brainstormed team-building activities, trust exercises and games because she knew how far positivity could take this team, Turner said.

A few weeks prior to the first football game, Nikki Baker, 19-year-old Crimson Girls member at WSU and Turner's best friend, began to put out a negative energy due to the uncertainty of when their dance season would start, Baker said.

"Kortney would always call or come check up on me and get me out of the house to keep my spirits up. She always brings new ideas to keep my mentality optimistic and help me deal with the anxiety of uncertainty. Without her, many teammates would be in a lower headspace and she has been reaching out to other girls on dance teams within the Pac-12 conference to help spread positivity to others," Baker said.

Evenoff announced that the WSU Athletic Department would not clear the dance team to participate in any events until possibly January 2021, Turner said.

"Although the season is not turning out the way I thought, I am thankful to be surrounded by a great group of girls and hopeful to see where the rest of our season may take us," Turner said.

###

Contact Info:

Kortney Turner:

Email: kortneyturner450@gmail.com

Phone Number: (951) 764-9756

Nikki Baker:

Email: nikki.baker33@gmail.com

Phone Number: (949) 491-2211