

Dr. Madeline Barlow Speaks on Life After Sport

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On Monday, Feb. 3, Dr. Madeline Barlow came to St. Norbert College to speak to student-athletes about finding their identities outside of sport and navigating life after athletics. Dr. Barlow works as a Life After Sport Specialist and Director of Programming for The Hidden Opponent, an organization that focuses on mental health awareness and support for student-athletes. Members of The Hidden Opponent chapter at St. Norbert College were able to arrange for Dr. Barlow to lead an informational session and workshop for student-athletes on campus.

The topic of life after sport is particularly important to Dr. Barlow because it is something she struggled with after swimming her final race in college. Like many athletes, Dr. Barlow had put immense time and effort into her sport and built many friendships along the way. No longer being able to compete in swimming left Dr. Barlow feeling like she lost a significant part of her identity.

In those next few years, Dr. Barlow spent time reflecting and rediscovering her identity by picking up new hobbies, such as going for walks and DJing. She eventually went on to earn her PhD in Psychology of Human Movement, wrote multiple books, and served as the Mental Performance Coach at Drexel University.

During her talk, Dr. Barlow had SNC athletes reflect on their own identities, answering the question, “Who am I?” Additionally, she had them brainstorm their strengths, things they cannot control, and things they can control. Dr. Barlow encouraged all athletes to start thinking about what their lives will look like after sport and to remember: your sport is what you do, not who you are.