

Episode 61 – Shownotes

How to Cope with Home Sickness as an International Student Athlete

Homesickness is almost inevitable. Its going to happen. It happened to me (Jacob), it happened to you (Matt), it still happens to you and it still happens to me. The best and worst thing I (Jacob) got from this whole experience is the fact that no matter where I am in the world now I am always homesick.

When can you expect it to happen?

- There is what we like to call the 10 week wall, which is usually the first time you will experience homesickness, after the season if you are competing in a fall sport, during thanksgiving and closer to Christmas.
- That usually when we first hear from athletes in the US
- It makes sense that it would happen around this time. People are going home to their families, and spending time with someone else's family over the breaks can be hard.

Things that can bring on home sickness

- The holidays. Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, the summer break if you end up staying. Not so much spring break because it's only a week and you usually spend it with your mates.
- Sitting on social media in your room. Looking at what all your mates are doing back home.
- Constantly messaging family and friends back home, or skyping and calling.
- Staying in your room and not going out and experiencing what college is all about.
- Things aren't going your way with sport. Maybe not starting straight away or you have had a few bad training sessions or an injury.
- The Change in the weather, in both locations. Which is a big one. Winter there is summer here in Australia. You are freezing and your mates are at the beach.
- When the athletic season finishes, and things start to slow down. You have a bit of a break from your sport and its just school.

What makes it worse, what amplifies these feelings?

What would be one of the first things you do when you are homesick?

- call home and speak to the family. Now we are not saying that is bad, but don't do it too much. Because it only makes it worse.
- And parents, grandparents, guardians, brothers, sisters if you are reading. This is just as important for you as it is the athletes in the US.
- Be strong. Don't say, "well home is here just come home if you aren't enjoying it" don't do that.
- Depending on the attitude of the people you are speaking with it will only make it worse. So parents, be tough. They will get through it.

Another thing that will certainly make it worse is social media. When you are feeling homesick a lot of the time you just want to be alone until it passes. You will sit in your room, watch tv, play the xbox or playstation.

- Don't just sit on social media. Looking at photos of all your mates and family doing different things back home. That will not make it better it will only make it worse. Get out there. Go

make new friends and family. It will not get better by sitting in your room. Looking through social media and/or calling home.

How you can combat it and deal with it.

- I will use myself as an example: first off, I did get homesick but it was never to the point where I just wanted to pack my bags and go home. It was never that bad.
- I dealt with it by always being around people. I was never alone. And that was pretty easy considering I was in a room with 5 other dudes for my first two years. And after the first year or so it didn't come back too often. That is the best way to deal with those feelings. Don't let yourself be alone.
- Don't sit on social media. Go to events that the school has on. Whether it be a sporting event, a hypnotist night for example.
- Travel during the breaks, go see different parts of the country, it's not that expensive to be honest.
- Don't stay couped up in your room.
- If it gets bad, talk to someone about it...other than people back home. Talk to your mates on the team, talk to the coaching staff, talk to your international advisor or the school's counsellor.