To play or not to play? That is the question.

By Meredith Brown and Michael MacVane
EXECUTIVE PRINT COPY EDITOR & STAFF WRITER

What would you do if you had an injury, but needed to play in a game? Would you sit it out or would you push through the pain and play anyway? For some, the answer might seem obvious. For others, there might be extenuating circumstances that make it nearly impossible to decide what's "right."

Kendall Marshall faced the same question in the now-famous case where he decided to sit out after receiving surgery for a broken wrist, leading to the University of North Carolina's devastating loss against the University of Kansas, 80-67.

Marshall had to make a tough decision: play and risk further injury to his still-healing wrist, or sit out and let himself heal, and risk causing his team to lose out in the NCAA championships.

"Without Marshall's superior composure and court savvy, the Tar Heels were a shell of their normal selves, and his absence showed most glaringly in the closing minutes of their loss to the Kansas Jayhawks in last weekend's Elite Eight," according to Jimmy Grappone of the Bleacher Report.

The reason behind his decision soon became clear. Just after Carolina's loss and subsequent removal from the championship, Marshall announced his declaration for the NBA draft.

To many, it seemed as if this player sold out his current team in the hopes of being able to use his talent — and healed body — as a tool in the future to play pro.

But, again, what would you do? If your dream was to play pro basketball and the only way to do that was to be healthy and whole, would you really risk further injuring yourself in a college-level game that is realistically just a stepping stone for your future career?

Of course, UNC's team isn't just any team, and the NCAA championships aren't just any game, but the question remains.

On the other hand, there will always be injuries. This decision of choosing a potential future over team loyalty could set a precedent among other athletes, encouraging college players to sit out for injuries they could easily play on.

Jared Siglin, assistant athletic trainer at Guilford, said that he and the coaches often assess the extent of an injury before allowing a player back on the field.

"When it's an injury that they can push through, we actually encourage that," said Siglin.

The idea that playing through a mild injury can be good for you and can toughen you up is a valid one, as well as an old one. "Walking it off" is an idea that came from sports and, to be honest, playing through sore muscles makes them stronger in the long run, and makes the athlete able to endure more in a game.

"…there's two things that have to happen," said the Tar Heels Head Coach Roy Williams to USA Today. "One, he has to feel comfortable that he's not hurting. And then two, I have to decide: Can he be effective in the game with his situation?"

Obviously, playing through a concussion or a broken leg is extremely inadvisable. If something like that happens, the best thing to do is sit out and get some rest so that the injury doesn't severely worsen.

But, if it's a small injury, like a pulled muscle or a jammed finger, there generally isn't any harm in playing through that injury.

"In my own playing career, if I felt like I wasn't going to do further damage by playing and it just hurt, you just play," said Tom Carmean, head men's lacrosse coach.

In the case of Marshall, clearly he chose to sit out. Of course, there has been and will continue to be much speculation about whether or not he could have played, and whether or not that would have changed Carolina's fate in the championships. But, all the speculation won't change the facts: he had a broken, recently operated-upon wrist and chose to sit out in order to not injure it any further, followed closely by Carolina's defeat two games later.

So, again, the question remains. What would you do?

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> **Tom Carmean, head coach of the men's lacrosse team**

Got food? Why some sporting events don't sell concessions

By Kate Gibson
STAFF WRITER

As the third quarter of a Quaker football home game begins, your stomach starts growling. No problem — head on over to the concessions stand. But for baseball and lacrosse games, and a few other sports too, you might be out of luck.

"It's hard to do concessions if you're going to have only 50 people show up to the game," said Tom Palombo, athletic director and head men's basketball coach. "For them to put a staff out there, cook food, set up and do all that, you're probably losing money … unless you can get numbers out there."

Because of the popularity of football, sizeable crowds are a given. As such, college food provider Meriwether Godsey serves up burgers as well as typical candies and sodas to the fans at football games, and sometimes at well-attended soccer games.

Bryan Jones, coordinator for sports marketing, largely attributes the lively ambiance at football games to the work of Vice President for Administration Jon Varnell.

"At football, it's not just concessions — they'll have two or three flat screens with other college football games in a tented area, and (Varnell will) have some cornhole boards out there," Jones said. "For football, (Varnell) makes it an atmosphere."

But for other sports, the workforce for concession stands comes largely from volunteers. Men's lacrosse raises money by running the food setup at basketball games; at softball games, players' parents raise funds for the team by selling snacks.

And then some teams, like women's lacrosse, are left out altogether.

"We actually never have concessions served at the women's lacrosse games," said sophomore lacrosse player Courtney Morsberger in an email interview. "I wish they would sell concessions so more people would come. My parents, for example, come to the games from out of town and they always have to stop to get food before the games."

Pulling in bigger crowds is complicated and involves much more than a team's success. Crowd sizes depend greatly on the team match-up and the day of the week — a rivalry game on Saturday brings in the masses better than a friendly weekday match. Time of day plays a role, too, and some sports do not have an easy way around these scheduling conflicts.

"The big thing is, baseball and softball can't play at night," said Jones, noting that their stadiums do not have lights yet. As a result, games are scheduled for the afternoon when many people are at work or in class.

Fickle North Carolina weather drives fans away as well.

"During basketball season, sometimes the weather is bad," said Palombo. "It's cold, you're playing on Wednesday night, and there are classes (and) other obligations for students as well."

"Weather's a big thing in the spring, and we don't have the huge concourses in the stadium that a lot of other places do," said Jones. "If it rains, the crowd for the most part bails, unless they're parents of students."

Ultimately, the stands must be packed if fans want munchies available at all of their sporting events, and it's up to students to make that happen.

"With a small school like ours, what we have to rely on (are) the students to come out and support the teams," said Palombo. "We're a Division III school, so we're not going to be on TV or anything like that, so the local community will come out some and parents of players will come out, but we need the students to be our crowds."