
Tyler Gaffney

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ARE YOU **BALANCED?**

Few students have to balance as many major activities as Stanford's Tyler Gaffney, a starting outfielder in baseball, a key running back in football and a 3.0 student at one of the most academically challenging universities in the nation. What's his secret?

"I live and die with my planner," said Gaffney, a 6-foot-1, 215-pound junior. "When I was a freshman, I tried to memorize everything I had to do, and that got me into trouble. Not big trouble, but I missed a meeting or things like that.

"Now I have this planner, and I write everything down, old-school style."

Gaffney, who is majoring in sociology with a minor in psychology, would love a career in which he can talk for a living, whether it's lobbying, broadcasting or inspirational public speaking.

He's certainly been an inspiration to Stanford baseball fans, who have watched him become a starter since his freshman year. He has been amazingly consistent, hitting .328 as a rookie and .327 as a sophomore, helping the Cardinals reach the postseason each year.

In football, he's scored 15 touchdowns and gained 949 yards from scrimmage in 34 games. Stanford has had the Heisman Trophy runner-up in each of the past three years, and Gaffney was part of that same backfield with running back Toby Gerhart (2009) and quarterback Andrew Luck (2010, 2011). Coincidentally, Gerhart also played outfield at Stanford as part of a Cardinal football-baseball tradition that includes Hall of Famers John Elway and Ernie Nevers as well as ex-Pro Bowl safety John Lynch and several others.

Gaffney says the fact he could play both sports was a big reason why he picked Stanford.

"Other schools were shaky about letting me do both,"

Gaffney said. "Stanford spoke with their actions."

Gaffney is open to playing either sport professionally. In the meantime, he is enjoying college, thanks to his time-management skills.

"In college, nobody is going to baby you," said Gaffney, who also ran track and played basketball as a prep star in San Diego. "They aren't going to call you 30 minutes before practice to see if you are going to make it. You have to get organized."

KEYS TO MAINTAINING BALANCE

STUDY: Not film, your books. When a college coach visits a prospect's high school, the first thing he checks is the player's grades. If the grades aren't there, the college is going to have a hard time recruiting you.

DIVERSIFY: Burnout is a possibility in any sport and maybe even more so in baseball because of the long season. Find other interests. No one can concentrate on baseball 100 percent of the time. Take a break once in a while.

INNER CALM: By nature, baseball players must have a competitive streak. But remember this streak ends when you walk off the field. Use baseball as your release. Don't wear it as your personality.

HUMOR: Don't take yourself so seriously. The ability to laugh at yourself or your mistakes will help achieve a healthy perspective on what you are trying to accomplish.

PATIENCE: You cannot have everything at once and you should not try to get everything at once. Understand that you will work toward your goal at a natural pace.