

CARA SIMPSON | FAU TRACK & FIELD

Hi everyone My name is Cara Simpson I am from Florida Atlantic University and I run track and field The most important things I focused on in training to get to the next level was definitely the reps that I put in for each practice Um being sure that um every time I went out to practice I gave 100 and 10% Um cause that definitely separates you from your competition and anyone else that is trying to get recruited So that was definitely important for me I would say the best advice that I received um in my sport is to never compare yourself to what is on paper So an example of that is comparing yourself to someone else's personal record Um at the end of the day when you get to attract me it doesn't matter what their record is or what they currently run It only matters what you can do at that time on the line So um one of my high school coaches actually told me that and I I still think about that to this very day just to calm the nerves and just to know that I belong in that environment with top competitors So that's definitely some advice that I've kept and I hope others will keep as well I would say the biggest challenge or one of the challenges that I've definitely faced is injuries Um Such like all athletes um injuries are you know it's a hit or miss it comes and goes and it's just something that comes with the game and just being a part of your sport Um I would say overcoming it is definitely tapping in more mentally You have to be more mentally focused if you are going through an injury So it's just about being patient at that time and just um knowing that you're always gonna come back better than you were before And that's definitely what got me through all the injuries that I have um overcame Yeah absolutely So um recruitment for me um it definitely looked different Um it looks different for all athletes but for me um I was originally a lock on for my current um college Um so with that being said during recruitment you I got coaches calling and emailing However there were a few coaches in colleges that I just wasn't interested in So as far as going to the school that you wanted to go to I reached out to that direct school um I went and met with those coaches and ultimately I just asked for an opportunity to earn that scholarship So um I was certainly ok with being a walk on knowing that I already had that drive and that edge and that ambition to get that scholarship So at the end of the day that was all I needed was just an opportunity which is what they provided me with Yeah absolutely Um the best advice I would give someone going through that process would just be to give your all every day You're gonna have some athletes out there that are slacking however they

could already be on scholarship So learn to just separate yourself from that crowd from those people and just show those coaches that you are different and that you bring more to the table whether it's um through your athletics or academics or even your personality you just have to show the coach is that you are different in that sense So um the biggest thing is to separate yourself from the crowd and remember why you're there and what your goal is and what you want to get to Uh yeah I would say I elevated um my performance um at this level through putting in that extra work Um One thing that all coaches can say about me is car is definitely one that's hard working Um like I feel like my work ethic is crazy Um One rep is never enough for me Like if you're given five reps I'll do 10 And that for me just tells me that I'm more fit I'm ready and like competition at the end of the day doesn't mean much to me and I feel like all athletes should have that mentality going into their competitions or um facing their competitors because you want to be different you wanna separate yourself from them So at the end of the day yeah I just put in more reps and um it definitely paid off So I'm happy about that So balancing academics and athletics in college um hasn't been hard for me being that I did it in high school Um One thing about me I will always put my academics first because without the academics you really you can't go too far in your athletic journey because schools need your GPA S you need those certain grades So for me it was never um difficult doing that Um advice in that area would be um organizational skills I would definitely say that organization is very big as far as balancing your athletics and your academics um as a student athlete But yeah just remembering that academics is gonna take you where you need to be um because athletics won't always do that for you Yeah absolutely Um Personal goals for the future would definitely just to continue with um this track journey that I have going on continue on to the professional level Um But aside from myself I also want to um implement a mentorship program that helps kids in high school or even college to continue to pursue their dreams And their sports Um If they don't have that um support that they need or that mentor in their life I'm hoping that my program can help them and um you know motivate them to continue to pursue their dreams and go after all their goals Um I would say my number one piece of advice would be to never count yourself out I know it's easy to do that especially if you're comparing yourself to others and their progression and maybe you're not you're not feeling like you're progressing However at the end of the day if you put in the work I promise you it will all pay off Um I know me especially being a walk on athlete to now earning a

full ride and then soon pursuing my professional career Um I just want to say that it is possible So whatever dreams you have they're not big enough So definitely dream bigger My nil experience honestly has been a journey It's definitely um helped me figure out different areas in my life that I didn't even know I was interested in Um So I've worked with about maybe over 70 different companies but starting out when I was first um introduced I was working with a company that um initially just wanted me to host like a podcast but then that transitioned into like graphic designing for them And I I never even knew like I was interested interested in graphic designing So allowing them allowing me to do that opened up a new area in my life that I honestly didn't know I was I had talent in which is cool Um But the advice honestly that I would give athletes in that area as far as Nil goes um definitely go after the deals pursue them Um as you know you don't get paid in college for performing Um And I do believe that Nil is an excellent thing that was introduced because um athletes bring in a lot of money for universities however you don't get paid for your performance So if there's any companies that an athlete wants to work with I would just advise you to reach out to them you can definitely initiate those conversations Um they're looking for athletes that are willing to initiate the conversations and to um you know go after it and and definitely wanna work with them So that that would be my advice