

I exchanged my football pads for a career in medicine in 2018. While keeping an open mind during my medical school rotations, I soon realized that my ideal medical career must be visually stimulating, team-based, welcoming, and, most importantly, allow for leadership development. After rotating with the chief pathologist at my transitional year residency program, I knew this field fulfilled these vocational qualities, and that pathology residency would be my next football team.

Throughout my pathology rotation, I was able to better understand pathology's big picture role in helping patients and other physicians. I frequently saw the chief surgeon at my transitional year residency program stop by the pathologist's office to discuss shared patients. During tumor board, I witnessed the trust and respect that the pathologist had developed among her radiology, oncology, and surgery colleagues as they worked together to navigate challenging cases. It reminded me of how I learned to trust my teammates, coaches, and supporting staff as we worked together each day for the goal of winning football games. Now with a goal of helping doctors and patients during sign out, I am excited to build this same trust at my future pathology residency and beyond.

Recognizing pathologic processes grossly and under the microscope is like recognizing football plays on a whiteboard or on the field. In football, different players are positioned in relation to each other and move together in-sync on each play. Players' movement relative to one-another suggests different play-types, like how cellular architecture suggests different disease processes. Although subtle, these small histologic changes play an incredible role in patient care. This motivates me to establish competency and proficiency in recognizing these patterns while in residency, just as I learned how to recognize hundreds of plays during my football career.

After my football career was over, I worried that I may never experience the sense of community and focus of a team again. These concerns diminished when I was introduced to the pathology interest group at my alma mater. I was greeted with open arms, and their appreciation of me as a friend and colleague sparked my interest in investigating how pathology is viewed among other peers. Through my early studies, I learned that pathologists often come from many walks of life and embrace each other's differences, like how players on a football team form a brotherhood that supersedes all backgrounds.

The warmth I felt at my alma mater resonated online as well, especially on #PathTwitter. Social media outlets like Twitter provide free platforms for pathologists, students, and trainees worldwide to virtually share in each other's experiences. When I submitted an editorial on observations of this community, the overwhelmingly positive feedback from the reviewers brought me to tears. The support I have from the diverse pathology community has ignited my passion to become a leader in this field through continued outreach, advocacy, education, and research. It is my mission, now, to pursue pathology "with an enthusiasm unknown to mankind", just like how I pursued football.

When I envision how I want to practice medicine, I cannot imagine being a part of any other team than pathology. It is a specialty where we are encouraged to unify multiple disciplines and varying generations of health providers to promote comprehensive patient care. With the right training environment, and the skills of communication and team-building that I learned in football, I am confident I will be a great pathologist.