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## **Lindenwood's Pride Grant Fuels Esports Performance Research**

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Associate Professor of Exercise Science Dr. Petey Mumford played a significant role in helping graduate student Connor Gaige's thesis be published in the American College of Sports Medicine Journal, "Exercise, Sport, and Movement."

Mumford's work titled "[Effects of Exercise on Esports Performance](#)" earned a grant through Lindenwood's PRIDE Fund in 2022. That grant funded Gaige's thesis, published last November in the international, open-access, peer-reviewed journal.

Lindenwood's [PRIDE Fund](#) provides faculty with support for projects promoting research, scholarship, and creative activity. Mumford's innovative work is a commitment to service, and it provides his students with the highest quality of experience.

"One of the most rewarding aspects of my career in academia is the opportunity to teach and mentor the next generation of researchers and professionals," Mumford said. "Being able to support and guide students like Connor on their academic and professional journeys is not just a responsibility; it's a privilege that echoes the invaluable mentorship I received during my formative years.

"Seeing Connor's thesis work, a blend of innovative research in esports and exercise science, receive recognition and acceptance for publication in the prestigious 'American College of Sports Medicine Journal' is a moment of immense pride and joy for me. His dedication, motivation, and genuine passion for esports research have been the driving force behind this study. My role was to facilitate this journey, offering guidance and support, but the credit for this groundbreaking work rightly belongs to Connor."

Gaige exemplifies how Lindenwood students can pursue innovation through education.

Gaige graduated from Lindenwood University in May 2022 with his master's in health sciences. His thesis, "[Pedaling to Performance: Exploring the Effects of Pre-Tournament Cycling on Rocket League Esports Performance](#)" explored the impacts of exercise on Esports – a form of competition using video games.

“The sense of accomplishment in my thesis work with Dr. Mumford, coupled with the generous support from Lindenwood's PRIDE Grant, has played a pivotal role in funding my recently accepted thesis work,” Gaige said. My study, recently published in the ‘Exercise, Sport, and Movement’ journal, is truly gratifying. This achievement represents a culmination of hard work, dedication, and the unwavering support of those who believed in the research.

In his thesis, Gaige selected 20 healthy males from the local community, as well as Lindenwood to participate in his study. Each participant partook in a 20-minute cycling exercise followed by 20 minutes of rest before competing in an Esports tournament.

Participants’ cognition and gameplay mechanics were assessed before and after each tournament.

Gaige’s thesis concluded that “a single bout of cycling exercise completed before Rocket League 1 vs. 1 tournament had no negative effects on performance or wins. It did, however, lower perceived match performance and fatigue at the beginning of the tournament while improving goal percentage during the last series.”

“Being a part of this process, helping to fund and mentor a project that not only advances an individual's career but also contributes significantly to our understanding of the interplay between physical exercise and esports performance, is an incredibly fulfilling experience,” Mumford said. “It reinforces my commitment to academic mentorship and my belief in the power of research to forge new paths and possibilities in both traditional and emerging fields.”