

## **Virtual reality helps Tulane student-athletes**

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With this one-of-a-kind method, a virtual reality headset is used to help immerse Tulane athletes in a more relaxed state when preparing for — or even during — a game or competition. (Video by Roman Vaulin)

The Tulane University School of Social Work and Tulane Athletics have teamed up to support athletes' training and mental health through virtual reality-based mindfulness.

With this one-of-a-kind method, a virtual reality headset is used to help immerse athletes in a more relaxed state when preparing for — or even during — a game or competition. Some players of the Tulane Football team utilized the headset during their magical 2022 season — to help them when overheated, when experiencing muscle cramps and when rehabilitating from injuries.

"We use the virtual reality to help calm some of the hyperexcitability of the nervous system," said Dr. Gregory Stewart, team physician and the W. Kennon McWilliams Professor in Sports Medicine at Tulane.

The method adds a new approach to athletic training.

"For many years, we've often thought of training for this sport as weight training, doing practices," said School of Social Work Dean Patrick Bordnick. "Now, we're really getting in tune with the behavioral health of the athlete."

The guided virtual reality-based mindfulness is intended to be done about 8-10 minutes a day, Bordnick said. He added that the model has been expanded to the Tulane cross-country, baseball and sailing teams.

"We're there to help our athletes become the best people they can be," Bordnick said.

Watch how Tulane athletes have used virtual reality-based mindfulness at [Tulane's YouTube page](#).