

The loss hurt more than the pain: Blake Esichen's next chapter

ITHACA, N.Y. – Blake Esichen is a Graduate Senior on the Ithaca Men's Lacrosse team for one more month, but his decision to come back and represent the Bomber Blue did not go as planned.

During a practice in October, Esichen was doing what he's always done, running with his stick and making cuts on Higgins Field, but as he ran over midfield his right knee failed. Esichen tore his ACL and he knew it at that very moment.

"When I went down I remember the pain," said Esichen. "Something I have never encountered in my life physically."

However, this pain was not just physical, it was the pain of knowing something was over. The pain of loss.

"I yelled out loud, 'Not like this, not like this,'" said Esichen. "Cause I knew I was not going to be able to play with my guys ever again."

Esichen started playing lacrosse in middle school and his passion for the sport led him to Ithaca where he scored 31 goals in his five-year career. Now, however, that game as he knows it has been taken from him, and that has not been an easy thing to process.

This month has been very overwhelming," said Esichen. "It's just wrestling with the fact that I won't be able to do it again and play with my best friends."

Those best friends have led the Bombers to a 7-6 record this season and they are the people that have made the loss of Lacrosse for Esichen so much easier.

"I am so lucky to be surrounded by such an amazing team and friends to help me work through it," said Esichen. "They are my rock right now."



Instead of competing on the field this spring, Eischen is competing with himself during his recovery. Something he did not imagine doing during his 5th year at Ithaca, but it is what is keeping him going.

“Physical therapy was a saving grace for me because it gave me control to get back after it,” said Eischen.” “My goal is to get back to being myself and being able to have an active lifestyle again.”

Eischen’s goal was to be winning games for the Bombers, but the life-altering change has given him new goals and most importantly, a new perspective.

“It is all about keeping that self-faith that I know I’m going to heal,” said Eischen. “Just being patient with myself and knowing not every day is going to be a 10/10.”

Eischens' advice for getting through this battle is to make sure to have two important things: a positive outlook and a supportive group.

“There is a lot more to be happy about and grateful for than upset about,” said Eischen. “ I am grateful for the people I have helping me get through this.”

The fifth-year captain does not know what is next, but he knows what he has in his life now, and that is what matters to him most.

“I just want to get my full physical strength back,” said Eischen.

“I am just being grateful every day for what I do have in my life.”

