

Signal Mountain, Tennessee, sophomore Lucy Newbold has suffered seven concussions in her lifetime, yet still perseveres. Newbold spoke to a journalism class in Castellaw Thursday afternoon.

Playing soccer, basketball, and lacrosse have contributed to Newbold's concussions. Although the first few concussions did not faze her, over time, she said she senses the toll of the concussions on her daily life.

When describing her third concussion, Newbold said she "fell on the gym floor and her friend heard it from across the gym."

After her fourth concussion, Newbold's family sought medical advice at Vanderbilt Medical Hospital. The damages of her concussions led to medical discussions about her long-term side effects. At the hospital, Newbold completed an "impact test" that measured the functionality of her brain. "The test was a baseline for where her brain functionality was at," she said. Doctors assessing the results suggested that she discontinue one of her three sports and suggested that she play sports cautiously, Newbold said.

By the fifth concussion, she said she took things slowly. She went back to school for partial days and excused herself from practices. Simple things, such as talking with her friends, became exponentially more difficult. Screens, bright lights, and loud noises all seemed like simple tasks that grew into grudgingly difficult activities, Newbold said.

Concussion protocol has changed throughout Newbold's life. At first, it was to wait two weeks and then resume school and sports in full speed. Gradually, the protocol changed to measuring how the individual feels, she said.

There are still exercises that Newbold will never be able to do without pain, she said. After the fifth concussion, she has worn a helmet while playing lacrosse.

Months after Newbold's fifth concussion, she completed another baseline test and there showed a capacity gap between her last baseline test and the most recent current test. Her original brain functionality could potentially be lost forever, she said.

Concussion rehab is still yet to be explored to the extent of other physical injuries. After every additional concussion, Newbold said that the lasting side effects grow worse.

What keeps Newbold going is that she said that she does not know life without athletics. Sports have shaped her life and it is what brings her joy, she said. Newbold is still actively involved in sports as she plays for the Baylor lacrosse club team. There is always a possibility that she could reach her eighth concussion.

However, she continues to fulfil her athletic endeavors at Baylor and strives to bring the team to victory.

Lucy Newbold continued to pursue athletics with fearless determination.