

Tsegball: A New PE Course Bringing Two Sisters Together

By: Hallie Shepps

Micayla Flores is a sophomore at MIT, and has played basketball since she was seven years old. She spent her freshman year playing for the MIT varsity basketball team, until an injury prevented her from continuing. Her sister, Hayley, is just beginning her freshman year.. The sisters had played team sports together since age six, but with basketball out of the picture, they sought a new sport to enjoy together.

Enter TsegBall, a game in which two teams of six or twelve attempt to score goals by passing the ball up the court toward the goal opposite them. The catch? Players in possession of the ball can't move and can only hold the ball for three seconds, making it crucial for teammates to move quickly and always anticipate a pass. "TsegBall is really fun, especially for anyone who has played on a team sport" Hayley said.

TsegBall is also new to MIT's physical education program. "It's a team sport that includes ultimate frisbee game concepts with regards to movement, passing, dribbling, throwing, and catching. It combines handball, basketball and volleyball, and is a non-contact co-ed sport that depends on the use of strategy and teamwork," said physical education instructor Matt Breen. "It's only been around for one year, but the students love it, and I've had a lot of people take the course multiple times."

Both Hayley and Micayla agreed that the most important, and sometimes hardest, skill they learned in TsegBall was teamwork. "At the start of the class, it was a bit challenging because none of us knew the rules of the game, and we all had to learn together and start at square one. But with a little persistence and hard work, we were able to come together and work as a team to successfully play the sport," Micayla said.

Breen also emphasized the importance of teamwork in TsegBall. "In order to play the game, you need proper communication. We build on these skills in class by doing teamwork drills, switching up the teams, and having students develop strategies together before the start of the game," he said. "This way, once they are playing the game, they can effectively communicate with each other."

Micayla also noted that TsegBall taught her how to think in a new way. For example, she is very competitive and at times wanted to throw the ball as hard as she could, but this would prevent her own teammate from being able to catch the ball. Instead, she had to use her problem solving skills and focus on strategy rather than strength to achieve success. Learning to expand your mind and change your way of thinking is an important skillset to have at MIT when solving problems.

Hayley has been able to incorporate the teamwork skills she learned during TsegBall in her academic life. "Teamwork is essential for getting through p-sets at MIT. Most times, you need the help of others, and vice versa, in order to complete a p-set. Collaboration is key, and people have different learning styles, so it's really important to know how to work together as a team to get the job done."

"Tsegball is a simple and fun game. . .you don't realize at the time that you are getting a lot of physical activity in," mentioned Breen. "You're just focused on playing the game, following the ball, and working with teammates."

Tsegball was a great opportunity for the sisters to spend time together, build their teamwork skills, get a great workout, and most importantly, have fun. It is offered during Quarters 1, 2, and 4, so check it out if you're interesting in playing this new sport!