

BBC SOUNDS

**GIRLS DO SWEAT: A
WOMEN'S FITNESS
PODCAST**

POST PRODUCTION SCRIPT

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TIMECODE	SPEAKER	DIALOGUE / GFX CAPTION
10:00:00		PRE-TITLES
00:00:00	KIM	I'm Kim.
00:00:00	LILY	And I'm Lily. And this is the Girls Do Sweat podcast from the BBC where we meet inspiring humans and try out new sports.
00:00:07	KIM	So this week on the podcast, we got the opportunity to speak to Sophie Byers. Now, Sophie is a cheerleader. She is part of Coventry Dynamite and she's involved in the ParaCheer world.
00:00:17	LILY	Which is a world that we've not dived into before.
00:00:20	KIM	No, we've done cheerleading.
00:00:21	LILY	[LAUGHING]. We have.
00:00:22	KIM	However, we weren't very good at it, at all.
00:00:25	LILY	Sophie would have put us to shame.
00:00:26	KIM	We were lucky enough to meet Sophie in person. She came into the studio and Sophie is deaf so she was able to lip read us, for an hour of us talking.
00:00:34	LILY	Insane. Insane.
00:00:34	KIM	It was insane. But it was fascinating to hear how she uses her disability to her advantage and how she works around that in order to be part of the team...
00:00:45	LILY	Yeah.
00:00:45	KIM	... in order to keep in time, in order to dance to the music. And honestly, our admiration for this girl...
00:00:51	LILY	Yeah.
00:00:52	KIM	... is beyond anything.
00:00:52	LILY	She is literally doing amazing things. She's been to America with this cheer team and yeah, as we said, just to see the inclusivity within the team and it's something that we've not dived into before. So it was so amazing to meet her in person and yeah, lip reading us the whole time. Insane.
00:01:07	KIM	Exactly. And Sophie is at the top of her game. She is two time world champion, but as always, we started it off with a little game of 'Who Are You?'
00:01:16		[8 SECOND PAUSE]

00:01:23	KIM	Three, two, one, go.
00:01:27	LILY	If you could live anywhere, where would it be?
00:01:28	SOPHIE BYERS	America.
00:01:29	LILY	What's your biggest fear?
00:01:30	SOPHIE BYERS	Oh, um—oh, I don't—I don't really know. I don't have one.
00:01:35	LILY	Okay, we'll move on. What did you want to be when you were younger?
00:01:38	SOPHIE BYERS	Er, actress.
00:01:40	LILY	If you had to describe yourself as an animal, which one would it be?
00:01:42	SOPHIE BYERS	A dolphin.
00:01:43	LILY	What's your favourite holiday?
00:01:45	SOPHIE BYERS	America.
00:01:45	LILY	Who was your first crush, celebrity or real if you can tell us?
00:01:49	SOPHIE BYERS	Um, Liam Hemsworth.
00:01:51	LILY	Er, on a scale of one to ten, how funny would you say you are?
00:01:54	SOPHIE BYERS	Hilarious.
00:01:54	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:01:55	LILY	Favourite show to binge on Netflix. Three, two, one.
00:01:57	SOPHIE BYERS	Er, oh... <i>Sweet Magnolias</i> at the moment.
00:02:01	KIM	Mm.
00:02:01	LILY	I've never seen that.
00:02:02	KIM	No, I haven't either.
00:02:03	SOPHIE BYERS	You should watch it. The new one—new season's coming out.
00:02:03	LILY	Oh really? I love how you had—you obviously like America then, 'cause you said America.
00:02:09	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah, I've always been America obsessed. I think that might kind of link in with the acting thing because obviously L.A., America, like is a big one, acting.

00:02:18	KIM	And obviously before we actually started recording you told us that you auditioned to be in Harry Potter.
00:02:23	SOPHIE BYERS	I did.
00:02:23	KIM	And you were so close to being in it, like that's amazing.
00:02:27	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah. It was kind of sad though because I didn't get it but it was an amazing process because I got so far, so I got to do so many different things within it.
00:02:31	LILY	Yeah.
00:02:35	SOPHIE BYERS	But yeah, I was a little bit salty that I didn't get it.
00:02:37	KIM	That's amazing. What a little fun fact there.
00:02:39	LILY	I know.
00:02:39	KIM	You could be like, 'Oh tell us about yourself...', 'Well'...
00:02:41	LILY	I would—I would go around screaming, like 'I could have been in...'
00:02:43	KIM	Yeah.
00:02:44	SOPHIE BYERS	I just keep it in the pocket and you know, I just throw it out at random occasions.
00:02:48	LILY	Yeah, when you're on a date. Who did you audition for?
00:02:50	SOPHIE BYERS	Lavender Brown.
00:02:51	LILY	I think she kissed Ron.
00:02:53	KIM	No—oh...
00:02:56	SOPHIE BYERS	I think that sounds about right, yeah.
00:02:57	LILY	I think she kissed Ron.
00:02:58	KIM	Oh yeah, all she does in that film was snog.
00:02:58	LILY	She was Ron's... is snog.
00:03:01	SOPHIE BYERS	Damn it!
00:03:02	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:03:04		[3 SECOND PAUSE]
00:03:08	KIM	Could you tell everyone a little bit about the squad that you're in at the minute?

00:03:12	SOPHIE BYERS	So I've done ParaCheer for three years. It's basically 50% disabled athletes, 50% non-disabled athletes working together, figuring out ways around things. You get some wheelchair users, you get some deaf, we've had blind. You get all different sorts of disabilities all working together, making adaptations to make it work.
00:03:33	KIM	Perfect. And what is your role in the squad? Are you a flyer are you the base person?
00:03:36	SOPHIE	My feet stay firmly on the floor.
00:03:38	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:03:41	KIM	I don't blame you. We tried out...
00:03:42	LILY	Oh gosh!
00:03:43	KIM	We tried out cheerleading, what about three months ago now.
00:03:46	LILY	Oh my gosh.
00:03:46	KIM	It was embarrassing. 'Cause the thing is, when you're young, you do like cartwheels and handstands, like you don't even think about it.
00:03:50	LILY	You have no fear.
00:03:52	KIM	When you're in your 20s and you're asked to do it, you're like... what is this?
00:03:54	LILY	I know, well we actually had to do a—we went—you went in the air a bit.
00:03:57	KIM	I went in the air.
00:03:58	LILY	She went in the air a bit. But we had to do like a routine and it was a lot of like—there was a lot of bouncing and like...
00:04:03	KIM	Just different timing. Someone was going up when someone was down.
00:04:06	LILY	It was a lot.
00:04:06	KIM	We're not made for it are we?
00:04:08	SOPHIE BYERS	Well a lot of people just assume it's like your side line on a football game, like chants and stuff like that and it's not. It's throwing people up in the air, doing flips.
00:04:17	KIM	It is a mix of dance and gymnastics I would say.
00:04:20	SOPHIE	Yeah, dance, gymnastics, acrobatics, that kind of stuff.

00:04:23	LILY	Yeah, so before you—before the—‘cause you said three years you’ve been this ParaCheer. Were you cheerleading before? Have you always had a passion for sort of like dance and that kind of thing?
00:04:32	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah, so I’ve done cheerleading for around about 10 years now, um but most of it’s been just regular teams not disabled—um, I’ve been doing it for about 10-ish years.
00:04:43	LILY	Right.
00:04:43	SOPHIE BYERS	And then ParaCheer was formed and I did that and that took me to America to compete in the World Championships and we won twice.
00:04:51	LILY	Wow.
00:04:52	SOPHIE BYERS	The third one Covid.
00:04:53	LILY & KIM	[GROAN]
00:04:54	SOPHIE BYERS	Covid got in the way. Um but yeah, I’m still cheerleading, I’m with Coventry Dynamite at the moment.
00:04:59	KIM	Yeah, amazing.
00:04:59	LILY	And—and from cheerleading um in the non-para team to cheerleading in the para team, what have you seen like a big difference in maybe your performance or other people’s? Like what is the big—yeah, what is the difference for you?
00:05:11	SOPHIE BYERS	Um, I think you just get that extra confidence boost when you’re on that team where people are there because they want to help. So the non-disabled athletes are there because they have a passion to include the disabled athletes. And the disabled athletes love the sport and they’ve finally got a way to do it so they’re passionate about doing the best they can.
00:05:31		I think you just get that extra confidence of, if I need help, I can get it, whereas where you’re on a regular team, you’re kind of like, can I ask? Is it—is it causing a problem? Which, it shouldn’t be like that but it’s just how it is really isn’t it?
00:05:44	KIM	Yeah. And like you said, so it’s a range of different disabilities on the team. How is that kind of integrating and—I guess working with everybody’s strengths and weaknesses and mixing it into the group to obviously compete and win championships like you have.
00:05:59	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah, I mean there’s all different types and obviously you’re grouped in what is going to work because sometimes there might be things that are just, you know, too different that it can’t work in that format. Um but it’s just amazing to see how the coaches kind of really think about all the details to make it work.
00:06:19	LILY	Mm.

00:06:20	SOPHIE BYERS	It's—it's cool and I gained so much confidence from my time with ParaCheer. Like I think it's really given me a boost.
00:06:28	LILY	Mm hm.
00:06:29	KIM	So can we go into a little bit of your disability? So you are deaf...
00:06:32	SOPHIE BYERS	I am.
00:06:33	KIM	Do you have any level of hearing or none at all?
00:06:35	SOPHIE BYERS	Um, I have very, very minimal but what I do have I've also got a processing problem so it kind of goes in and it just like doesn't really make sense, so.
00:06:45	KIM	So are you lip reading us today or...
00:06:46	SOPHIE BYERS	I am [LAUGHS].
00:06:47	KIM	That's amazing isn't it?
00:06:48	LILY	Oh my gosh.
00:06:50	KIM	That is amazing.
00:06:51	LILY	No.
00:06:51	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah. So I wasn't born deaf. I wasn't born with any disabilities or anything. It was when I turned 16 that they all started to creep in. So in school I was very active, I played netball, I did dance at GCSE, I was very active and sporty and I'd always be in the garden with the boys playing football and the next door neighbours. But it was accessible but I didn't have the disabilities then. It was later on that I had them.
00:07:18	KIM	So what was that time like when you noticed your hearing decrease? That must have been quite scary?
00:07:22	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah, it was scary because you don't know your surroundings as much. It's then suddenly hard to keep up. I was always a very social person, being into acting, I was always—my mum would always joke that I could go to a shop and I'd have like a 20 minute conversation with the person on the till.
00:07:38		So it was—it was scary and it made things very difficult because I wasn't used to it, I had to almost relearn how to communicate.
00:07:47	KIM	So were you—have you only got into cheerleading since you've lost your hearing or were you into that before?
00:07:53	SOPHIE BYERS	So I started before but when I did start cheerleading I had a feeding tube. So I had one of the ones that come out of your nose. So I had some of my other disabilities but the hearing, I think, started maybe a

		few years in and then it would slowly like decrease as the years have gone on.
00:08:11	LILY	Right.
00:08:12	KIM	And along with the hearing, like you said then, you had a feeding tube. What was that like, being active when you're not obviously feeling very well and not at your best?
00:08:21	SOPHIE BYERS	Um, it's hard because obviously, cheerleading and just social in general, it takes a lot of energy.
00:08:28	LILY	Mm.
00:08:29	SOPHIE BYERS	Um so it was hard but I've always been quite competitive and when people tell me I can't, I'm like, 'No, no, I will.'
00:08:34	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:08:36	SOPHIE BYERS	Like, just sit there and watch me and I will do it and I'll do more than you even think. I would pay for it the next day but to me it was worth it.
00:08:45	KIM	Yeah, what limits would that have when it came to say you going to a cheer class? Would it just be like your low energy? What would be some of the things that would make you kind of not be able to keep up the same as somebody else?
00:08:57	SOPHIE BYERS	Um, sometimes it would be low energy, sometimes it would be pain levels. Sometimes it would be a mixture. Just really depended on the day. Sometimes it's easier to push through, sometimes it's not. Just varies.
00:09:08	LILY	Yeah. Those—those days where like you were so low and you didn't have the energy and you just wanted to get out there but you physically couldn't, how did you cope with that mentally?
00:09:18	SOPHIE BYERS	Um, in the moment I go into that competitive mindset [LAUGHS] and I'm like, I'm going to do this. And then I'll get home and I'll crash and I'll—it takes you down that mental health spiral because you want to do it so badly and then you feel like you can't keep up or you can't do it. And you do have those moments where people going 'you can't' does kind of leak into your mind, that you're not so like, 'No I will.' There's always that time.
00:09:44		But good times, bad times, but like I always push through because I like to prove people wrong. [LAUGHS].
00:09:49	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:09:50	KIM	Good for you.

00:09:50	LILY	And it seems like your competitive spirit is like the driving force of like—no, I'm gonna do it. Like, don't worry about me. And that's amazing. Like, yeah, it's amazing.
00:10:00	KIM	So I'm guessing when you would go to your cheer classes and all this, would that be your sense of escapism?
00:10:06	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah, that's always been my escape, my like release. It's got me through a lot for sure. Like that's my time where I can just forget the world.
00:10:17	KIM	And when it comes to cheer and you're in the group, I guess a lot of cheer you are dancing to music and keeping in time and it is all about time and keeping to the beat, making sure—okay, we need to be here to lift this person in the air then. And it is a lot down to safety as well. How is that for you, I guess not being able to use the music the same way as the majority of your team would?
00:10:39	SOPHIE BYERS	So, I can feel it to some degree obviously it depends how far the stage or the mat is to the music and how loud. So sometimes I can feel it but a lot of it is muscle memory and I'll always find something visual that happens at a certain time. So I know when that thing or that person is there, this is where we are.
00:10:57	KIM	Mm hm.
00:10:57	SOPHIE BYERS	And then often, whoever I'm basing with, so the other person that's under it with me will count as well. So then I can see them counting, so I'll always find little ways.
00:11:05	KIM	Ah!
00:11:06	LILY	That's amazing.
00:11:07	KIM	Do you find yourself counting in your head as everything is going on as well?
00:11:10	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah, everyone is singing to the music and I'm there counting but it looks the same so it's fine.
00:11:15	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:11:15	SOPHIE BYERS	No-one needs to know.
00:11:16	LILY	Yeah.
00:11:17	SOPHIE BYERS	Um but yeah, no I can't hear it so I just go off of count. So I'll—or visual cues. So I just kind of do a mixture.
00:11:24		[8 SECONDS PAUSE]
00:11:32	LILY	Have you seen some bad accidents in your time?

00:11:34	SOPHIE BYERS	Um, mostly broken bones.
00:11:37	KIM	Mostly broken bones? What else is worse than a broken bone?
00:11:39	SOPHIE BYERS	A lot of—a lot of—a lot of concu—concussion.
00:11:43	LILY	In competitions or like in training?
00:11:45	SOPHIE BYERS	Um, I've seen it at competition but never on my own team, touch wood. [LAUGHS].
00:11:48	LILY	Okay.
00:11:50	SOPHIE BYERS	Touch wood. Um, 'cause we've got one this weekend, so touch wood.
00:11:53	LILY	[LAUGHS]
00:11:54	SOPHIE BYERS	Um but yeah, not on my own team but a lot of broken bones, concussion as well a lot is a big one.
00:11:58	LILY	Gosh. Have you ever broken a bone? Have you...
00:12:02	SOPHIE BYERS	I've broken fingers.
00:12:04	LILY	Ooh!
00:12:05	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah, there was one time that we were doing like a twisting up skill but my finger kind of went with it.
00:12:11	LILY	Ugh! No, no.
00:12:12	KIM	Ugh!
00:12:12	SOPHIE BYERS	Everyone heard it obviously but me and they all looked at me and went, 'Are you okay?' I was like...
00:12:17	KIM	And you were like, 'Fine'.
00:12:19	SOPHIE BYERS	I—I taped it up and carried on.
00:12:21	LILY	Of course you did. [LAUGHS].
00:12:21	KIM	Good for you girl. Good for you.
00:12:22	SOPHIE BYERS	It was si—it was six weeks before we going to America, like I wasn't stopping. So I just taped it. [LAUGHS].
00:12:27	KIM	You can't be like, 'I'm throwing in the towel, I've got a broken finger.'
00:12:28	LILY	Yeah, I'm getting on that plane. With or without a finger.
00:12:30	SOPHIE BYERS	I just wrapped that bad boy up. Yeah. Yeah.

00:12:33	LILY	Tell us about America. Because as I said at the beginning, you've obviously been, you love it there. Tell us about that first experience of going to America to do cheer.
00:12:40	SOPHIE BYERS	Oh, it was incredible. I had some of my family there as well and my best friend and it's just a whole other thing to what it is here.
00:12:48	KIM	So did you go there to compete in the championships?
00:12:51	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah.
00:12:51	KIM	And this is where you've won twice?
00:12:53	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah. So I went to the world championships. There's two different versions. There's ICU, which is like your nation's team, so you're Team England, Team USA, which is what I've done twice. And then there's the All Star, so like club team one which I've done once.
00:13:07	LILY	Mm hm.
00:13:08	SOPHIE BYERS	Um, which—I came fourth in the world in All Star and won twice in the Team England ParaCheer.
00:13:13	KIM	Amazing.
00:13:13	LILY	Wow.
00:13:15	KIM	What was that atmosphere like walking out because I like competed in cheer like maybe two weeks if that [LAUGHS].
00:13:21	LILY	[LAUGHS]. At the ripe age of seven.
00:13:23	KIM	But I gave up 'cause I just couldn't do it. But um a lot of my friends, they like recorded themselves at the big competitions and like they fill out arenas. Like it is a crazy atmosphere. The crowds go wild. So like walking out on that stage and seeing all them faces looking at you; what is that like?
00:13:43	SOPHIE BYERS	I mean to me it's like performing so it's like almost like a different version of acting for TV and film but it's on a stage.
00:13:49	LILY	Do you have like an alter ego that you go into?
00:13:51	SOPHIE BYERS	Oh yeah. Way more sassy, like...
00:13:52	LILY	[LAUGHS]. What is her name, who is she?
00:13:55	SOPHIE BYERS	Oh yeah. Way more sassy. I should probably give myself another name but no.
00:13:59	KIM	Yeah, like Sasha Fierce, like Beyoncé's, like...
00:14:01	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah.

00:14:02	KIM	Yeah, you should do—I would.
00:14:03	SOPHIE BYERS	But no, it's—it's incredible and you just—you just feel—feed of that energy. You can feel it and you just feed off of it and obviously in America you've got people from all over the world as well, which is incredible in itself because you can kind of learn about cheer in different countries as well.
00:14:19	LILY	So when you're going to that competition and it's the ParaCheer competition and you're seeing people around you with so many different inclusivities and diversities, how is it for you to like look around and be like—this is—everyone's here to see us?
00:14:31	KIM	It's inclusive.
00:14:33	LILY	Yeah.
00:14:33	SOPHIE BYERS	I think what's even more amazing is it's not a competition specifically for ParaCheer, it's just a division within the nation's competition itself.
00:14:41	LILY	Wow.
00:14:43	SOPHIE BYERS	So you get teams that aren't on para teams watching and you're like, oh they actually care to like make the time to look.
00:14:50	LILY	Yeah.
00:14:52	SOPHIE BYERS	And then comment and talk after and trying to understand it. Whereas you kind of expect it to be very...
00:15:00	LILY	Separate.
00:15:00	SOPHIE BYERS	... separate. But it's actually not, it's very included and it's—it's nice because then it's like inclusion on inclusion.
00:15:06	LILY	Yeah and it's kind of—it's almost a thing of, it's not what makes you different if that makes sense. It's kind of like, we're all here together, we all love cheer. We're just doing this bit and you're doing that bit but we're all together as opposed to being like, this is one competition, this is another.
00:15:20	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah. And it's just—ParaCheer has grown so much. It started with just your—your nation, so your Team England, Team USA, Team Wales. And it is coming into All Star now as well. So there's All Star teams that are having ParaCheer divisions within, which is amazing as well.
00:15:36	LILY	That's amazing.
00:15:36	KIM	Yeah, that is amazing. When it came to you finding cheer, I guess because like you're travelling to America to do these big competitions and obviously cheer in America is like a completely different league...

00:15:48	SOPHIE BYERS	Mm.
00:15:48	KIM	Like it is still quite underrated in England and there is more clubs but there's not loads and like the big competitions I guess don't really get a big seeing and like a big platform. One; like how did you—like, why cheer? And I guess second, how did you find getting into cheer in this country because it isn't as big?
00:16:10	SOPHIE BYERS	So I nearly joined when I was in Year 9 and my mum said no because of GCSEs coming up.
00:16:15	LILY AND KIM	[LAUGH]
00:16:16	LILY	Thanks mum.
00:16:18	SOPHIE BYERS	So I had always kind of had the idea in my mind I think because I was so America-obsessed, it was something that would just—I'd see a lot. And then when I started having all my health stuff and people telling me, 'Oh you can't do this, you can't do that' and I was like, 'No, I'm gonna do it' and now's the time to do it and like, watch me. And ten years later I'm still doing it.
00:16:39	KIM	Look at you now! [LAUGHS].
00:16:40	LILY	Still doing it.
00:16:40	SOPHIE BYERS	Still doing it [LAUGHS].
00:16:42	LILY	When you started obviously you were in cheer and then you moved onto ParaCheer. Did you move to ParaCheer in a—like did you choose to do that or did your kind of cheer career—you were getting to a point you thought, I'm gonna try something new? Like why did you make that change?
00:16:55	SOPHIE BYERS	So I actually did both at the same time. I was still on an All Star non-para team. I decided to do it because obviously it was another platform to show that I can do it and it was a way that I could go to America and experience that at the time as well. And obviously, with all of my health stuff, I don't know how long I'm gonna be able to keep going. So I was like, I'm gonna take this opportunity and I'm just gonna try.
00:17:21		I actually was going to go for it the year earlier but ended up in hospital the day of try-outs so I didn't. So the next year I was like, 'I am going. I don't care what happens.'
00:17:29	LILY	No-one stop me.
00:17:31	SOPHIE BYERS	'I'm going'. But yeah. So I—I still did All Star like non-ParaCheer on the—on the side as well.
00:17:38	LILY	Gosh, you must have a busy schedule to do all of that. What's—what was that like?

00:17:39	KIM	Very busy.
00:17:41	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah.
00:17:41	LILY	Trying to juggle like what two teams, choreo...
00:17:44	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah, it was a lot. By my All Star team wasn't a super-high level or another world team so I wasn't competing that in America, it was just UK competitions, one training a week, maybe two if I decided to go and have a play with stunts.
00:18:00		But I think now I wouldn't have necessarily been able to do that and like an All Star world team because is intense.
00:18:08	LILY	Intense.
00:18:09	SOPHIE BYERS	And I did struggle at times and I would often pay for it for a day or two after but again it was—I loved it.
00:18:16	LILY	Something you loved, yeah.
00:18:17	SOPHIE BYERS	And even if I had those few hours of escape from the world, it was enough to just kind of cleanse my mind a bit.
00:18:24		[5 SECONDS PAUSE]
00:18:29	KIM	When it comes to a full cheer routine, do you have a favourite part in a sense? Is it the more dancey side, is it the more um tricks and flips side of things?
00:18:39	SOPHIE BYERS	The stunts.
00:18:40	KIM	Stunts.
00:18:41	SOPHIE BYERS	Throwing people up in the air. So this team I'm—this team that I'm on with Coventry Dynamite is a non-tumble team, so there's no tumbling. It's just all stunting.
00:18:48	LILY	Wow!
00:18:48	KIM	No backflips [LAUGHS].
00:18:48	SOPHIE BYERS	And then dance and jumps. But there's no backflips or anything like that, so it's just full stunting, which is like my favourite thing in the world.
00:18:53	LILY	Wow.
00:18:56	KIM	Yeah [LAUGHS].
00:18:57	SOPHIE BYERS	That's what I love.
00:18:58	KIM	And I think people, when people watch cheerleaders do stunts, they kind of think, oh all the hard work is in that flyer but I used to be a base

		for them two weeks that I done cheer and the bruises on my arm from lifting people up. Like I've never bruised so much in my life. The pain was ridiculous.
00:19:17	SOPHIE BYERS	Well, I've got a condition called Ehlers-Danlos which causes like—you bruise easy.
00:19:21	LILY	Wow.
00:19:22	SOPHIE BYERS	So there's some sessions that I come out and like the entire way down my arm there's like—or my leg, and I'm like, I don't even know how...
00:19:28	LILY	Yeah.
00:19:29	SOPHIE BYERS	I don't even know how it happened but like I'm more bruise than non-bruise.
00:19:33	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:19:34	KIM	And also the trust as well.
00:19:36	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah.
00:19:36	KIM	Like you literally—these people, they come to you and you're like, 'Yeah, let's do it' and as I said at the beginning, that moment, if you're not thinking about it, you're like, why have I done this? Have you ever had that, where you've just kind of had a brain fart during a throw and you think...
00:19:49	SOPHIE BYERS	Oh yeah, yeah. Or sometimes like I'll forget what count we're on or I just—I'm there and I'm like, wait, what are we doing? [LAUGHS]. Like, I do—I think everyone has those moments.
00:20:01	LILY	Yeah.
00:20:01	SOPHIE BYERS	Like sometimes you just—or you're thinking about the next thing, rather than being present in what you're doing.
00:20:07	KIM	I guess you guys have your outfits and your uniforms as well. What's that side of it like? Dressing up and getting ready and the prep side.
00:20:13	LILY	Oh, I'd love to do that. I'd love that.
00:20:15	SOPHIE BYERS	It is exciting, it's just—it gives you that extra little boost really and our coaches always say like, 'Put in the effort to your hair, put in the effort for make-up because the better you feel, the better you'll perform.' Um so it is, it's just—and then you just, you really feel like a team and—not that you don't anyway. But you know, when you're wearing the same and you're all dressed up and you've got that adrenaline. It's just—it's exciting.
00:20:38	LILY	Yeah.

00:20:39	SOPHIE BYERS	Besides when you have to do it at about five in the morning.
00:20:41	KIM	Oh! Not so fun when you have to get up that early.
00:20:43	SOPHIE BYERS	Then that's not so fun.
00:20:43	LILY	Oh gosh when you've got to do all your make-up and slick your hair.
00:20:45	SOPHIE BYERS	Our meet time on Sunday is 7:30 in the morning.
00:20:48	LILY	Oh no.
00:20:48	KIM	Is that 7:30 in the morning and you've gotta be prepared—dressed and ready.
00:20:50	SOPHIE BYERS	Yep.
00:20:51	KIM	[GASPS]
00:20:52	SOPHIE BYERS	Yeah.
00:20:53	KIM	So how have you been preparing for this week's competition? Like how long do you kind of give yourself to learn the routine and things like that?
00:21:00	SOPHIE BYERS	So we have the same routine from the beginning of the season. So the choreo is usually September, October time. Obviously, some things change, they upgrade things. But it's—like the skeleton of it is the same, with just maybe upgrades and different motions or stuff.
00:21:16		So we've had it for like a good amount of time.
00:21:18	KIM	Yeah.
00:21:19	SOPHIE BYERS	And obviously we came back from America at the beginning of May so we'd been training every day out in America. And then we've had a few changes here and there since but it's...
00:21:27	LILY	But you know it.
00:21:28	SOPHIE BYERS	...we know it and it's just going and doing it.
00:21:31	KIM	Yeah.
00:21:31	LILY	That's so exciting!
00:21:32	SOPHIE BYERS	Final one of the season, so...
00:21:33	LILY	Oh, is it?
00:21:34	KIM	Do you get nervous at all or is it pure excitement?

00:21:37	SOPHIE BYERS	It's like a nervous excitement because—it's because like I want to do the best I can more than nervous. It's like, I want to do the best I can and I'm excited to go do it. Because I love performing, I love cheer, I love throwing people in the air. [LAUGHS].
00:21:51	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:21:52	SOPHIE BYERS	But—yeah. So it's kind of a mixture. I don't think I get as nervous as I used to because I've been doing it for so long that I suppose that there's a certain element that you're kind of a bit more used to. But you still get nervous but if you still care, you're gonna get nervous 'cause you want to do the best you can.
00:22:06	LILY & KIM	Yeah.
00:22:07	LILY	And your friends and family will be watching you on Sunday or?
00:22:11	SOPHIE BYERS	My—some of my friends on my other teams will. Er, my family won't, it's actually my brother's stag do, so my other half is on the stag do.
00:22:16	KIM	Oh! Priorities.
00:22:19	LILY	Priorities.
00:22:19	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:22:21	SOPHIE BYERS	So I don't think he'll be, you know...
00:22:23	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:22:24	SOPHIE BYERS	... ready to go at half seven in the morning. [LAUGHS].
00:22:26	KIM	Come on mate!
00:22:27	SOPHIE BYERS	But they have all been to this competition in—in the past.
00:22:30	LILY	Okay. And they're super supportive and like—what was their reaction when you were like, 'I'm gonna go and throw myself into cheer.'?
00:22:37	SOPHIE BYERS	Um my parents were supportive because they knew what I was like. They knew that if they said no, it was only gonna make me do it 100%.
00:22:44		They obviously had their concerns but I remember the first day that I went to cheerleading, I very nearly didn't went because I was anxious, I was like, er maybe it's not the right thing. Maybe—like what if people, you know, laugh 'cause I had the feeding tube and stuff. And I ended up being about 15 minutes late 'cause I kept putting it off. And then my dad was like, 'Right are we going or are we not going?'
00:23:03		I was like, 'Oh—okay, let's go.' And he was like, 'Let's go then.' 'Cause I didn't know the parking so he drove me for that first session, so he was kind of like pushing. I think if he hadn't been pushing, I probably just would have been like—'Maybe next week.'

00:23:16	KIM	Yeah. And then never done it.
00:23:16	LILY	And then it probably never would have happened.
00:23:17	SOPHIE BYERS	And then it never would have happened. But he was kind of like, 'Right, are we going? Yes or no?' And I was like, 'Okay'.
00:23:24	KIM	What would you be doing now if you never went to I guess that first cheer session and a life without cheer? Like can you even imagine it?
00:23:32	SOPHIE BYERS	I—like I said, cheer has got me through so much, so I can't imagine how I would have got through all the different stages of my health stuff without it because that was my escape, that was my purpose and my focus I suppose you could say. And that's kind of what stresses me out now is like there's a time that I'm gonna have to stop because it is expensive and obviously as you get older priorities change and stuff.
00:23:54		And I'm like, but then what do I do? [LAUGHS].
00:23:56	LILY	Yeah.
00:23:57	SOPHIE BYERS	Then—then what?
00:23:57	LILY	Would you go into sort of like coaching or teaching? Have you ever thought about that?
00:24:00	SOPHIE BYERS	I have done some coaching. I enjoyed it but I'm very much like a—a do person so I like, I would always be like, 'Let me—let me just show you how to do it.'
00:24:10	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:24:10	SOPHIE BYERS	Let me show you.
00:24:11	KIM	Let me just jump in here.
00:24:12	SOPHIE BYERS	But I'm also—yeah, but...
00:24:12	KIM	I'll just do it for you. You know what? Let me just take your spot.
00:24:15	SOPHIE BYERS	...well, I'm also quite like a perfectionist. Like I wanna hit the stuff and I want to hit it well, I don't want it just to kind of hit. So then when you're coaching and especially obviously you start at the lower levels, I'm like, 'Yeah, but this is how you do it.'
00:24:29	LILY	For someone listening now that is maybe deaf or blind and is thinking, cheerleading, I can never do that, it's not for me, what would you have to say to them?
00:24:37	SOPHIE BYERS	There's always a way around it. If you want to do it, then find people that will help you and support you and work with you. And if you find a team that you know, aren't interested in doing that, then it's not the right

		team for you. But there will be the right team—or in anything, just in general. Like find people that will work with you and work to support you to do what you want to do.
00:24:57	KIM	Socials—if people want to find you on social media, where can they go?
00:24:59	SOPHIE BYERS	Um, so I'm on Instagram and it's @sophiemattes. So, M-A-T-T-E-S. I think it also comes up as Byers as well, 'cause married name, so.
00:25:08	LILY & KIM	[LAUGHS]
00:25:08	SOPHIE BYERS	It—it will come up under one of those but my picture is cheerleading, so it's easy to find.
00:25:12	LILY	Okay.
00:25:12	KIM	They'll know it's you.
00:25:12	LILY	Just look for the cheerleader.
00:25:14	LILY & KIM	[LAUGH]
00:25:14	LILY	Thank you so much.
00:25:15	KIM	Thank you.
00:25:16	SOPHIE BYERS	Thank you for having me.
00:25:16	KIM	It's been an absolute pleasure.
00:25:17	LILY	Thank you so much for listening to this week's podcast episode. For more Girls Do Sweat podcasts, use all podcast streaming platforms, that's every Wednesday for a brand new Girls Do Sweat.
00:25:26		END OF PODCAST