



By Trinity Cates

At the University of West Alabama, music plays a key role in helping athletes improve their performance, stay focused, and connect with their teammates.

The music we listen to in our younger years is often the most memorable, tied to important experiences that shape who we are.

For the women's basketball team, music is more than just background noise—it helps them stay motivated during games.

Music also helps athletes relax after tough days. Kiona McCallister, another player on the women's basketball team, turns to music to calm down when things get difficult. "It's my go-to to calm myself down. Let's say I had a bad day at practice—I'm automatically going to music. Then I can focus on the music and not on what is weighing me down," she explained. Listening to music helps her let go of stress and refocus for the next challenge.

McCallister also uses music to help her keep a good pace when she's running. Upbeat pop songs give her the energy she needs to keep going. "When I run, I like to listen to more upbeat songs to help my pace. If I'm not listening to music while I'm running, I feel as though I'm slower," she said. The rhythm of

the song can be the difference between an average run and a great one.

Music also brings athletes together as a team. Ellis Williamson, a member of the men's soccer team, shared how music helped his team bond. "My first year here we had a song that had to be played. It was almost like a good luck charm. Always after we win a game, we play 'We Like to Party' by the Vengaboys," he said.

Beyond the team, each athlete has personal songs that hold special meaning. For McCallister, Don Tolliver's "Bandit" reflects her athletic career. "It's very upbeat and makes you feel like you're on top, like you can't be touched," she said.

Williamson, on the other hand, finds comfort in songs from his childhood. Billy Joel's "Scenes from an Italian Restaurant" is a family favorite that reminds him of home. "The song brings me a sense of home and reminds me of my roots, even when I'm far away," he shared.

For athletes at West Alabama, music is more than just something to listen to—it's a tool that drives their success, helps them focus, and strengthens their bond as a team. Music is the key that athletes use to reach their full potentials.