

# HEALTHY HIGHLIGHTS

## Soccer star learns to adapt as a pro

At 16, Quinn Sullivan became a professional soccer player for Major League Soccer's Philadelphia Union.

It was a big step for the teenager who grew up in Northeast Philadelphia. He had to learn how to build relationships with his teammates, including some who were much older than he was.

"It's hard for a 16-year-old to hang out with a bunch of 30-year-olds," said Quinn, who is now 22.

His teammates were always welcoming, he said, but he was "not up to the level to start. So there were a lot of things I needed to improve, both socially and on the field."

To connect with the other players, he asked them a lot of questions. "It was about learning from them and saying, 'I need to work on this thing,'" he said.

Off the field, he found other ways to connect. He would go bowling and golfing with teammates. "In my fourth and fifth year, I really started to be out there more and try to involve myself socially," he said.

Last September the midfielder faced a new chal-

*(Please see **Learning** on Page 2)*



Illustration by Tajah Freeman

## *Sullivans are brothers first and foremost*

Picture this: Two brothers who are on the same professional soccer team compete against each other for a starting spot.

That may happen because Quinn and Cavan Sullivan are both midfielders for the Philadelphia Union.



each other."

Quinn said he has competed against Cavan, who is six years younger, since they were boys practicing

"It's going to be really interesting," said Quinn, the older brother. "It's going to be a fun little household competition. And you know, we will still love each other at the end of the day, and we'll be happy for

in the basement of their family home. They also have twin brothers who play college soccer.

The family competition motivated Quinn and helped him improve. "Because," he said, "you can't let your brother beat you at anything. You know what I mean?"

Quinn said he always dreamed about playing on the same professional team as one of his brothers. "But I didn't think that it would happen this quickly," he said.

He said the best part about being on the same team with Cavan is that they drive to and from the



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# Learning how to connect with others

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lenge. He tore the ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) in his left knee and hasn't been able to play during his recovery. He said his team has been "super-supportive throughout my injury."

He said most of his teammates visited him in the gym every day, asking how he was doing and about how his recovery was going. Off the field, he said, his relationships with other Union players have grown.

Learning how to connect with other people is something professional soccer players need to do. They can be transferred from one team to another

almost overnight.

If he had to move to another team, Quinn said, he would put himself out there with new teammates. He'd suggest that they go bowling or golfing or do another activity, using his experiences forming friendships at the Philadelphia Union.

Because wherever he plays, he said, "growing together off the field is super-important to grow together on the field."

—By McKenzie Salmon, Amarisa Frimpong, Damien Robertson, Layanni Watson, Kaseem Walker, and Autumn Dover

## Develop ways to cope with anxiety

Headaches and sleep issues may be signs that you are experiencing anxiety, said Mrs. Kathleen Carpenter, a CCSA counselor.

"Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness. It might cause you to sweat, feel restless and tense, and have a rapid heartbeat," say researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health.

In a recent interview, Mrs. Carpenter said people can use different strategies to cope with anxiety such as exercising, taking deep breaths, drawing, walking, and writing how you feel. "When you have a bunch of strategies, it will help you cope when you start to feel anxiety," she said.

If people continue to struggle with anxiety, they can seek help from a therapist, according to institute.

Mrs. Carpenter has a master's degree in school counseling and her studies gave her knowledge about anxiety. At CCSA, she helps high school students prepare for college and jobs, including creating resumes.

The following interview with Mrs. Carpenter has been shortened and lightly edited.

**Q: How do you define anxiety?**

**Mrs. Carpenter:** When a kid has to worry or stress and deal with something, your body starts to feel off. It can make it hard to focus.

**Q: Does anxiety affect a child's mental health?**

**Mrs. Carpenter:** It affects your mental health by making you feel negative feelings. You can start to feel worried and it makes it hard to focus or make decisions.

**Q: Does anxiety affect your physical health?**



Illustration by Amiarisa Frimpong

**Mrs. Carpenter:** Anxiety can affect your sleep and make your belly hurt or make you feel like jelly. It also can give you headaches, hurt your brain and feel aches and pains throughout your body. Your sleep can be affected too. You might sleep too much or too little. Anxiety messes up the way you process things.

**Q: What should kids and families know about the impact of anxiety on health and education?**

**Mrs. Carpenter:** Anxiety can come anytime. It can get rid of your ability to focus and think. It can affect focus and concentration. Many things can cause anxiety. Do you get anxious before a test? You can use your strategies to help you,

**Q: Is there anything you would like to add?**

**Mrs. Carpenter:** It's okay and normal to feel anxiety. There's nothing wrong with experiencing anxiety as long as you use your strategies. It's important to ask for help when you deal with it.

# Brothers first!

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stadium together. They talk “about what’s going on with the team, all the little things that you get to share with someone that I never got to do” before Cavan joined the team in 2024.

Quinn admires Cavan, especially his determined focus. He wants to do better all the time. From a young age, Cavan always tried new moves, worked hard, and learned by watching a lot of soccer videos, Quinn said.

“As a brother, the best thing about Cavan is that he’s honest. He can take criticism and not get upset about it. I don’t think a lot of people can do that,” Quinn said. “It’s impressive.”

Quinn has accomplished a lot as well. He has been a member of the U.S. Men’s Soccer Team and he was ranked sixth among all Major League Soccer players under 22 in 2025. Union fans also voted him the 2025 Independence Blue Cross player of the year.

Quinn and Cavan likely will go their separate ways late next year. When Cavan turns 18, he will move to England to play for Manchester City, one of the top soccer teams in the world.

If he ever played against his brother, Quinn said he would try his hardest. And he said he is “100 percent” sure he would win. —*Story by Kendall Shaw, Jayden Alonzo, Sekou Jarbah, Na’Kai Weldon, Albert Payne, Ava Berry, and Mia Padilla*  
*Soccer illustrations on Page 1 by Tajah Freeman*



Top picture shows Quinn Sullivan (right) with his teammate and brother, Cavan. The bottom picture shows Quinn in action. Quinn started his professional soccer career when he was 16. Photos are courtesy of the Philadelphia Union.

## How Quinn handles a lot of attention

Philadelphia Union soccer star Quinn Sullivan gets a lot of media attention. He said he tries to ignore it.

While it’s great to receive compliments, he said, “It’s really important to focus on yourself and on how you can improve.”

Sometimes people say unkind things about him when he doesn’t play well. He still stays focused. He looks at the film from the match and asks himself, “How can I do better?”

Quinn adds that he “always tries to keep a super-positive outlook in terms of talking to the media and showing myself to the fans.”

But he said it’s impossible to make everyone happy. “Someone’s not going like you because of any given reason, and someone’s not going like me because of what I do on the field.”

Quinn has had a tough year. Last fall he tore the ACL, the anterior cruciate ligament that connects the thighbone and the shinbone in his left leg.

“In terms of dealing with my emotions, it’s hard,” he said. “It’s hard going through an injury.”

But he said he has received a lot of support from his teammates, his family, and his physical therapist.

He also discovered a way to help himself deal with his emotions. He started writing in a journal about his recovery from the injury.

“It’s not a ton of writing, just checking in every once in a while with myself,” he said. “I want to be able to look back on my time during my injury and say, ‘I could barely walk in month one and now I’m running.’” —*By Lailah Saunders, Cedar Tibbels, Carl Gethers, Robert Cornish, Moise Delevry, Khasir Mills, and Trey Kirkland*

# How reporters deal with anxiety

Sometimes when I am nervous, or experiencing anxiety, I go to God and ask him to take away all my stress. Sometimes I just take a moment to get calm and breathe. When I'm playing hide and seek or when there's a test day, I take a moment to take a breather or I just go somewhere calm, like my bed or my couch. I'll just lie down and then I will watch a movie or play Roblox.

When I'm in big, big trouble, I play with my dog or take care of my lizards. I find something to distract me from my problems. Sometimes I build a pillow fort on my bed and watch my favorite show or YouTuber. Sometimes I'll call my friend and play some games with them. But sometimes when I try to just take a nap or go to sleep, it's even harder because when I close my eyes to go to sleep, my problems are the only things that I think about.

—Jayden Alonzo

I experienced anxiety during my championships in sports that I played in. It made me feel worried and my head was hurting. So my coaches told me to take deep breaths and stay calm....There's a lot of ways I can manage my anxiety. I can even read a book, play my electronic games, or go for a walk.

—Albert Payne

I've experienced anxiety before I'm about to do government tests (like PSSA). Some things I use as strategies to cope and that you could do too are:



- \* Studying, this is the ultimate way to not flunk the test and feel confident.

- \* Doing your homework is another way to study too.

- \* You can ask your teacher for help before the test (because they cannot help you during the test).

- \* Get all the sleep you can before the test.

There are ways to communicate and to cope with anxiety and even build relationships, like studying with your classmates or even asking your parents for help in studying.

You can also go out with your friends to take off some of that stress. Or, you can take advice from people you know (only take the good and relevant advice). These are great ways to cope with anxiety when you're about to take a test and good ways to build relationships while doing it.

—Moise Delevry



Illustrations on this page by Tajah Freeman (above) and Mehkiyra Wilson (left)

I have experienced anxiety when I got in trouble at school. I did not use any strategies. Anxiety made me feel mad and anxious. The strategies I recently learned about are taking deep breaths, watching something or drawing anything to get my anxiety off my mind. I might try deep breaths or roller coaster fingers (one finger moves up and down the fingers of the other hand).

—Robert Cornish

### CCSA Healthy Highlights

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