

PROTECTING YOUR POSSIBILITIES PODCAST WITH LUKE FEDLAM

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Luke: I'm sports attorney Luke Fedlam, and welcome to the Protecting Your Possibilities podcast. Each conversation we focus on sharing information and having conversations around how athletes can best educate and protect themselves or their life outside of their sports.

Thank you so much for tuning in to the protecting your possibilities podcast. I'm your host, Luke Fedlam. And I am so pumped for our guests today. Dr. Melita Moore. What is good with you.

Dr. Moore: What's good.

Luke: How is everything going?

Dr. Moore: Life is great.

Luke: I know it is. I know it's gonna be great for you because you are one of the busiest people I know. And let me give our listeners a little bit of background. So Dr. Moore is a sports and eSports, medicine physician, founder of Levels Unlocked. She's an entrepreneur, business owner, and she helps athletes and gamers both on the medical and branding sides of their careers. Now that's a whole lot like like, that just blows my mind when I even kind of think about that. So break that down for us. What does that mean? What do you do?

Dr. Moore: Luke, what don't I do, that is question. First of all, thank you so much for having me on your podcast, it has been inspirational to listen to some of your previous recordings and what you're doing. It's amazing. And I think you might be a little bit busier than I am.

So what do I do? Well, as you said, I'm a sports medicine and a sports medicine physician. So just a little bit of background. I've been taking care of professional athletes for over a decade, that's really my career as a Board Certified physician. So physical medicine and rehabilitation is really like my background, and then sports medicine. And then I also have a brain injury medicine certification. So concussion is really where my work was focused for most of my career, and then lifestyle medicine. So I currently have had the opportunity to be one of the first black female physicians and the NBA teams back in 2011, and just kind of continued throughout this time. And two years ago, I started taking care of a professional eSports team and people say what the heck is that? And, you know, two years ago, I had no idea. The branding side, you know, we have a great company Levels Unlocked enterprises. And we've been around for a little over a year. And so we focus on we are a boutique, multicultural, female owned and operated company. And we really focus on building brand and marketing opportunities in the esports sports and health space.

Luke: Okay, this Okay, we have so much, usually these episodes are about 20 minutes or so we're gonna go over, I can tell that already. There is so much to break down just based on what you just said. And I think I want to highlight this because I think, you know, our listeners might have missed what you said, when you first started talking there that you are quadruple board certified, I mean, you just you just wanted to keep getting more and more certification school like wasn't enough.

Dr. Moore: I mean, look, as you know, you know this, our profession is you are lifelong learners. And, you know, every job that I've had, I was a head team physician at University of California Davis. And so I was taking care of all 23 sports teams, 12 athletic trainers reporting into me and working together. And during that time I was doing, I'm covering football. And because of brain injury, concussion is so prevalent, obviously, in a lot in collegiate sports, like I said, Well, why not get my brain injury medicine, certification helps to give me credibility, it gives me more knowledge. So I did that. And now moving on, fast forward a couple of years, you know, practicing in California, we really kind of treat patients holistically. So we always are talking about so if you're coming to my office and say, Hey, I have knee pain in my arthritis, I'm still counseling him your you know, your exercise, your nutrition, your high blood pressure, things like that. And so that's kind of what's called lifestyle medicine, and now has a name to it. So I said, well, heck fire, why not get a board certification in that. So you know, your experiences, I think helped shape you and continue to push you to grow and to learn. And that's certainly what my experience would have done for me.

Luke: That's fantastic. Now, I mean, that truly is awesome. So let's, let's talk eSports for a little bit. I think that's something where, you know, I have to admit, I was really blown away. And I've known you for a while now. And I was blown away by the medical side, the medicine side of Esports. Not something that I'd even thought about. As a quick side note to all of our listeners, there's a great article in Forbes about Dr. Moore, and you can just go ahead and find it. I'll link to it in the show notes so that you can easily access that article. It is amazing, but it will really open your eyes and open my eyes to even some of the challenges from a medicine perspective that come with eSports. Can you just elaborate a little bit more? What is that? What type of medicine are you performing on gamers? And what is what does that look like?

Dr. Moore: We have kind of come up with this new title called eSports medicine. It is certainly very new. There are not that many physicians here in the US that are really kind of doing eSports medicine. You know, there's one that really sticks out that I've worked with for a while Her name is Dr. Lindsay Migliori known as the Gamer Doc. And so you know, she and a few others. When I was voluntold by my hospital system at a time to take care of our professional NBA 2K League, I had no idea what eSports was. I mean, of course, I know 2k, but I didn't know about eSports and eSports is really professional, competitive video gaming. And so when they told me to take their team position, I said, what could a gamer possibly need a doctor for? And it's the same thing that you know, my NBA and WNBA players said why are you taking care of them like you take care of us. And it's really interesting, because the layers of what gamers need from a medical perspective, are D, just like you would think of any other athlete, you know, professional sports athletes, they train you need their own, you know, on screen playing strategizing 10 to 16 hours a day. If you're a basketball player, and you're in the gym, practicing 10 and 16 hours a day, in the esports medicine space, everyone says what do you do, treat carpal tunnel? It just drives me insane, because that's like the least of our worries, right? Mental health is actually a huge part of gamers and gamers health. And not necessarily just because they have traditionally been known to kind of be like isolated or depression or anxiety is really more of that like that team position that sports psychology part of the mental health of getting in the zone, how to be a great teammate, how to be in front of a camera those kind of things where

you're not used to being isolated and playing solo. So mental health is huge. Vision health is the other one that nobody ever thinks about. And so we all are on computers. Now we are tele working and distance learning. So the average corporate America worker prior to COVID is on a computer seven hours a day. So it's kind of like a game where you're on a screen. So vision health is huge.

There's something called computer vision syndrome or digital eyestrain. And then we talked about kind of the sedentary lifestyle of gamers your six hours a day. So lack of exercise, poor nutrition is when you eat something quick and keep grinding. That's kind of what it's called in eSports. When you just keep playing, it's grinding. So we talked about that, we talked about sleep, we talk about stress management, and then we talk about like upper extremity stuff like hand pain, wrist pain, back pain. So it is comprehensive. And so it sounds like we have the we put together medical team, that my previous hospital that was combined 12 specialists, 12 medical specialists, we have six players. So you know, but this is the same level of care that we give to our NBA and WNBA players.

Luke: That is so fascinating to me, to even just think about, I hadn't thought about even the mental health and wellness aspect of things. And I can say as I sit here, looking at a computer screen with my glasses on because this past year has wreaked havoc on my eyesight being in the screen all the time. I can only imagine now, I will try to make sure that my son does not hear this interview because he'll say well, dad, that your friend the doctor said that I can be on for 10 to 16 hours a day when I'm playing Fortnite so I'm gonna have to keep that keep him away from this episode.

Dr. Moore: That's for the pros, that's for the pros.

Luke: But no, this is it. That's really fascinating. So you got involved in the in this health side of working with gamers and in the esports space? How did that grow? How did it go from there? So you said you know, you started off? You said two years ago or so you weren't that familiar with eSports. And obviously now, not only are you just in it, you are actively in it, you're helping gamers with their branding, you are on a global eSports Federation board globally for eSports. Like, what was that transition for you even beyond the medical side of gaming? What does that look like for you?

Dr. Moore: Yeah, so when someone gives me a task, I just I go to work, and if you're going to ask me to do something, I do it 100% and so when researching about what gamers would need, I just really saw that there was a void of you know, medical research, a void of anyone really focusing on them. And so being asked to be part of the Global eSports Federation really has been a game changer for me. The Global eSports Federation has been founded allow a little more over than a year and we really have become the really the world's leading place to convene eSports athletes, federations. And so having that kind of platform, not only a board member, but to be the chair of the Health and Wellness Commission has really taken me to a different stratosphere. And so with that, I'm now able work to able to work with UNESCO, United Nations when they're oldest foundations, with UNESCO on some very active eSports events. From the branding perspective. It's a unique story, if I may tell it.

Luke: Of course

Dr. Moore: Let me run it back. So actually, with the Washington Mystics, we were in the middle of our championship run. So I previously been a team physician for the Washington Mystics WNBA. We were in Las Vegas we had just won and we're in the locker room, and the ladies are

teasing Aerial Power saying, Oh, we know she's just gonna go up and stream as she wraps her computers and bubble wrap. And you know, I was thinking, I was like, oh, Ariel, you know, are you a gamer? She was like, Yeah, I stream on Twitch. And I said, Oh, that's cool. I'm actually speaking at Twitchcon next week, and she was like, hold on, what are you doing right Twitch and Twitchcon, that's one of the biggest eSports events. And from that conversation, we sat down at that time, that was like in the like, October of 2019. And she was just saying how much she has been in gaming her entire life, how she really wanted to do more in the esports space, she had noticed that I had been building my brand, as a level up doctor in the esports space. And she said, you know, Malita, I would love to do more.

We went on to win the championship, of course. And then she went overseas to play basketball in China. Last year in January, she came home. And of course, then COVID came and so she didn't go back. And she reached out and said Malita hey, I'm back countryside. I want to do more eSports, can you help me? She and I went to a conference in Houston in March 2020. And out of that came, Hey, can I build a brand management company to help support Aerial? I called a few of my girlfriend's I said, Hey, Can y'all can let me do this. They said yes, the next morning I said Aerial Levels Unlocked enterprises is happy to represent you for your brand. Really just have received so many blessings in this past year. And anyone who is following eSports DE&I and eSports women in gaming and eSports you see Ariel Powers name, and our company, we're just really proud of what we've been able to do for her and getting her international and national sponsorships and branding opportunities. Along with me, I'm a client of our company to the left.

Luke: You should be with all the things you have going on. Absolutely. So you know, thanks for sharing the story. I think it's helpful for folks to understand kind of how all of this has happened so fast for you, but is built on a lifetime of professional work that brought you to this place, right, it wasn't just like you just came up out of nowhere. You've been you've been in this in this, you know, in the medical profession and in sports medicine for so long. So, I have to ask, though, eSports, I don't talk too much about it on the podcast. But I get involved in a lot of different conversations, especially when speaking to law students in their sports and entertainment Law Society and other other groups where eSports will come up.

And I think eSports this is my personal opinion. And from some, you know, things that I've read and my analysis of the industry, I think that eSports is going to end up growing faster than any of our traditional sports and take over in ways that we can only imagine. I think that we're seeing real estate, you know, being built where instead of just using traditional arenas and tried and trying to fit them to work for eSports events and opportunities, I think we're starting to see some that are going to be built directly for those opportunities. I think we're seeing a lot more "mainstream activities" happening in the esports space. Where do you see eSports? going?

Dr. Moore: Listen, Luke, if you're not part of Esports Now is the time. I mean, if we talk about eSports, it's not in its infancy. It is as far as it being mainstream. eSports has been around since the 90s. If not even earlier than that, but mainstream. In here in the US, there are around 135 million gamers or people who identify as gamers as usually aged 18 to 34. 46% of those are women. When you talk about worldwide there's around 3 billion gamers. During COVID. the gaming industry has popped. I mean, if anything that has to do with gaming, it's skyrocketed during COVID eSports.

The competitive side actually took a hit during COVID because like you said they are competing in person, their selling price. And so eSports took a bit of a hit financially, but gaming industry is booming. So when we were talking about eSports You know, there are a lot of financial

opportunities for it. Like you said, there are arenas being built and your overactive media in Toronto is getting ready to build a state of the art arena, just specifically for eSports. We have one here in Washington, DC. This is definitely the trend that we are seeing. You know, there was an article that came out last week that for Gen Z, the Gen Z years of the world, they prefer to game over watching streaming, like watching, things like that. So that's an article that came out last week, an article that came out yesterday. This is where the game changer comes. The International Olympic Committee, the IOC announced yesterday that virtual sports will now be part of the Tokyo 2021 Olympics.

Luke: wow.

Dr. Moore: This is really we are on the precipice. We are on the beginning of where the Olympic Committee the IOC is now embracing eSports and deploying it verb like in virtual sports, like baseball, or rowing, skiing, like that's what we call active sports or active eSports, which makes sense. And Global eSports Federation, we're sitting right there in the middle to be that kind of convening group to kind of help coordinate from the IOC into the esports space. So if you haven't heard about it, read about it, learn about it, it is here. And this is kind of where it is now just going to take off.

Luke: Yeah, absolutely. I you know, it's it is interesting, because we're seeing college, colleges have majors around eSports and gaming. We know Learfield IMG got involved in creating kind of this eSports League, if you will, at the college level. So we're seeing it more and more. And I think, you know, from my perspective, I think one of the biggest differences or differentiators that eSports has over traditional sports is the traditional sports are, you know, NFL, NBA, Major League, baseball, hockey, etc. They are always trying to globalize. So we have you know, the NBA played its game, a first game in Paris, you know, last year before COVID. The NFL for years have been doing games in London and added Mexico City A few years ago, to always try to grow the brand.

And when you even think about, you know, basketball, just generally, you have this moment back in 1992 with the dream team, and Olympics and we said, okay, we're gonna let our pro athletes and NBA play in the Olympics and represent the US Olympic team for basketball. And it was really this coming out party for the NBA on the global stage. Right? Do you see kind of a watershed moment for eSports? coming? Like, is it was it this past year of COVID? And kind of quarantine? Or is there something else you see on the horizon coming that's gonna say, Hey, this is gonna take you know, eSports to just a whole new level.

Dr. Moore: Oh, it's coming. You know, I think we got it. We got a taste. We got a tease during COVID when the NBA shut down, all sports were shut down. We were watching NBA 2Kt. My team Wizards District Gaming, we won the world championship in 2020. We were watching them play on ESPN. We were watching NASCAR, you were standing. You were watching. This is what we had, we had eSports to watch to help to give us that fill that void of missing the sports. So that's that was a taste, at least here in the US. Now that virtual sports is going to be part of the Olympics. Now this is the movement. This is our time for eSports.

I think this is going to be that turning point where it's no longer saying Oh, what is it? Everyone will know. So that it is coming back to just kind of briefly which we were talking about colleges, people will be done. If you don't know that you can go to college on a scholarship and a gaming scholarship. There are well over 100 colleges just here in the US that offer scholarships for gaming. So yeah, your son might be on their platform right now, he may get a full ride to college, you know, in a couple of years. So it's just so interesting that right now parents need to be more

educated about what gaming is, you know, how their kids can be involved. It's certainly as a great pathway to stem. You know, there's an HBCU eSports league that is out, you know, run being run by Ryan Johnson and community which is huge. There's so much curriculum that is now being brought into colleges, because there's just that you think about sports eSports it's just the exact same the same verticals, marketing, right? entertainment, law, game development, music, artistry, all those things are found in eSports. So when you talk about in the collegiate space, it's the same thing. You're just putting an E in front of the sport.

Luke: That's right. That's right. Well, I'm glad you brought that up. Because the verticals, that's something that I've been thinking about right, which is sharing with people this idea that just like you said there are accounting issues, there cybersecurity issues, technology issues as legal issues, marketing issues, I mean, the actual player representation side and some of the work that you're doing and branding and all that comes with that. And I think it's interesting too, because you can have gamers who are minors who are great at what they do, but they're also minors, and it's this idea, they can be a professional, but you can't sign a contract, right? It's not legally enforceable against a minor. So then, parents have to be involved and parents have to be not knowledgeable on all of this as well. And the reason why I'm so glad that you're here and we're having this conversation is because the podcast is protecting your possibilities and there are so many possibilities, I believe in Esports in gaming, I mean just just even hearing about the medical side, right and I'm sure that we're going to start seeing and you could probably speak to this, but I'm sure we're gonna start seeing at medical school and everything where now you're gonna start seeing specialties and probably certifications that are specific to the needs of gamers

Dr. Moore: You are correct and I will be leading that charge. But it just even like the Fortnite winner a couple of years ago, he was 16 years old, he won \$3 million in the world Fortnite tournament. So just like you were saying he's a minor, his parents now have to be involved. You know, I'm at currently in the process of writing a handbook for parents on how to raise a healthy gamer/egamer. So but I think now part two, it might be Malina and Luke, and how to protect all these things, right, expecting your commodity, which is your child, but also in this competitive space. I never would have seen this as my career. Of course, I mean, I'm a diehard clinician tried and true. Being a sports medicine physician is what gets me out of bed every day. And now I'm talking about eSports is what gets me out of bed every day, being an entrepreneur is now what's getting me out of bed. It's just, you know, you don't know where your career is gonna go. And it's just, eSports has been a career changing opportunity and moment for me, and I'm just getting started. That's the scary and the best part about it.

Luke: That is so exciting. And such a great place to wrap up our conversation for the day, because you and I could talk all day long. So we will definitely be having you back for more conversations. But you can check out the show notes you can find, I'll make sure we put all of her social media contact information, the article that I referenced about Dr. Moore in Forbes will be listed in there. Melinda, thank you so much for joining us today.

Dr. Moore: Thank you, Luke.

Luke: And to our listeners, thank you so much for tuning into protecting your possibilities podcast. Thank you for your comments for reaching out to me. With topics that you want to hear more about, please do feel free to share this podcast with others in your circle. And I can't wait to have Dr. Moore back with us for another conversation in the future because as you can see, she's got a lot of information and she's doing some great cutting edge work that we definitely want to share with our listeners. So again, thanks for tuning in. Have a great day.

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