



## **#IdahoStrong Volume 5: This Century Diamond May Have Broken Her Back, But Never Her Spirits**

When Rebecca Towner was experiencing back pain throughout her freshman year of cheering at Century High School, she had no idea that she had been practicing and competing with a broken back and that it had been broken for years. She was quickly diagnosed with Isthic Spondylolisthesis, which means that her back break had caused her bones to slip apart over time and getting better would require extensive surgery. Two rods, four screws, and a bone fusion, to be more specific. The surgery took place the summer between her freshman and sophomore year, and she was not cleared to compete until February- just in time for 2020 State Dance and Cheer.

Of course, we all know the fate of high school competition after COVID-19 swept the nation, but this setback was not even close to the “setback” Rebecca had faced in the last two years. Her coach and #IdahoStrong nominator, Meagan Brockett, doesn’t quite feel right calling Rebecca’s back injury a setback, though, because one would never know that this girl had been dealt an unfortunate hand. She attended every practice, cheered on her teammates, and “showed the world how resiliency and positivity make a huge difference in your challenges”.

Meagan’s most favorite thing about coaching Rebecca is simply her drive. She is always willing to try anything with all of her effort both physically and mentally. Her optimism is contagious, she’s funny and positive and always a joy to be around. Of course, while she was rehabilitating from her injury, she was incredibly antsy to get back to tumbling, but she did not let her frustrations show once the entire time she was getting better. She never missed a practice, she cheered her teammates on, and she was there for the Diamondbacks every step of the way. When she was finally able to compete and State got cancelled, her attitude didn’t change once.

The Diamondbacks cheer team have a team group chat and when COVID hit, Rebecca was at the helm sending positive messages and keeping spirits up. She even took it upon herself to run and workout with her family while everyone was on lockdown, bringing her workout ideas to the team group chat to try. Not only was she instrumental in boosting her team morale, but she kept it up in the classroom as well. Rebecca has a 4.0 GPA, and loves to draw and to paint. She used this passion to get her through the times when she was unable to get around physically and bear weight on her lower extremities.

The most remarkable thing about Rebecca is her passion for life. She is constantly smiling, and she brings this energy and optimism to everyone around her, including her coach.

Coach Brockett had read the other articles in the #IdahoStrong series and immediately thought of Rebecca. It seems to be more than simply the obstacles that Rebecca has faced that is so inspiring, however.

We all see struggles, especially in the year 2020. We have seen unprecedented times in many walks of life, and with a pandemic, protests against racism, and a recession looming, it is easy to feel down and uninspired. Students like Rebecca, who are constantly radiating optimism, are eager to meet new people, and who aren't afraid to stand up for themselves and those near them, are the part of the bright future that can make us all feel better about what is to come. Rebecca's passion for cheer and her zest for life are the kind of things that will continue to make the world a better place. Just like Rebecca has overcome her struggles with contagious energy and optimism, we will all overcome these uncertain and chaotic times. Just like Rebecca, we will all continue to be #IdahoStrong.

*Just look at that smile! Rebecca Towner's pride for her school and optimism is contagious to all around her!*

