

Oral History Transcript: Athletic Training Team

Blake Hatt

Brittany Davis

Brigid Harma

Samantha Pearson

Blake Hatt 0:04

Let's go on.

Okay, so my name is Blake Hatt and I'm here today with the athletic trainer team at St Mary's University. You guys can go around the room and introduce yourselves, and tell me a little bit about what you do.

Brittany Davis 0:21

I'll go first. Brittany Davis head athletic trainer, I've been here for seven years, started as a GA became assistant and then became the head, shortly after. I'm originally from San Antonio, Texas, born and raised went to Corpus for my undergrad and a little bit of what I do I, on my side of athletic training is take care of my men's and women's teams across the board, and then a lot of insurance a lot of paperwork, a lot of stuff on the back end dealing with compliance dealing with NCAA and dealing with all of the regulations have to deal with medical Redshirts all of that jazz. So a lot of hats I wear in that category, along with taking care of my teams. That's just a simple overview.

Blake Hatt 1:09

Awesome. Thank you.

Brigid Harma 1:12

I'm Bridget Harma I'm

the Graduate Assistant athletic trainer here. I'm originally from north of Chicago, Illinois. That's where I went to college as well. I live in San Antonio for about three years now, and I've been St Mary's since August, um,

my role here is kind of different since we don't really have a lot of athletics going on so TBD.

Samantha Pearson 1:35

My name is Samantha Pearson, I'm the assistant athletic trainer here this is my third year, my first year as a full time I was here for. As a graduate assistant and then I got hired on full time. My job description is kind of the same as Brett, but I just don't do as many much insurance stuff. But I do the drug testing here. I was military so I moved around a lot, so I'm not from San Antonio, but I've been here for 13 years so it's it's home. Other than that, you know, just take care of athletes were some do many things.

Blake Hatt 2:13

Yeah, it sounds like you guys play important roles in the lives of athletes here, and wear many hats, as you mentioned, Britt, um, so before COVID-19 happened on campus. What would a normal day look like for you guys.

Brittany Davis 2:29

It depends on if we're talking about fall sports or spring sports. Both of them are very long hours. It would go from if you're talking about fall sports we have men's, women's soccer and volleyball, so there's three sports right there, and then spring a little bit heavier, we have baseball, softball, basketball, tennis, golf, everything else. So, spring is a little bit more crazier for us but a day, the daily, I guess, routine is coming in. Whether you have morning practice or afternoon practice. Sometimes you have morning practice you get here an hour, an hour and a half before practice treatments, so you do basic maintenance on everybody if someone got hurt the day before you'll do an evaluation, so you'll get someone's in a day or their ankle whatever else go through a normal practice which is usually runs, if they're shorter sports two hours, it's longer sports maybe four hours. That's something I know in softball or baseball though run longer because have individual trainings and then a full team training. Because there's only three of us here we do cover multiple practices so it's not just one and done and then some treatments after that, we'll cover maybe two or three practices throughout the day. So, um a normal day would probably start before 6am, and in around five or six in the afternoon. So 12 hour days. Usually, the average, sometimes look a little bit shorter on game days. That's why we love game days so much game days usually just have a three hour game and then you're in and out. But it's a long day for us in here, so we call that flight trainer our second home. But other than that. Other than that, it's long hours. So that's everything from fall to spring, and then summer is basically our, our time off to kind of relax and catch our breath,

Blake Hatt 4:22

so awesome. Okay. And does that differ for you guys or is it more or less the same.

Samantha Pearson 4:29

It's pretty much the same. you know, before COVID even then we were still trying to rotate ours was a little bit more set in our sports. So you would just cover your individual sports but now in the COVID era, we kind of just rotate times, so we'll be here from a set time and just cover whatever's going on in that time. Other than that's quite the same for all three of us. Okay,

Blake Hatt 4:57

good. Um, and I know they you Sammie and you, Brittany you were here during the start of the shutdown. What did that sort of look like. Was it sort of all of a sudden or the kind of like trickle down where there's whispers

of it is

Samantha Pearson 5:14

all very quick, very sudden, we had just gotten back from the woman's basketball tournament. So basketball had just ended. We were actually all Brittany and Kenzy your former ga we're all

at baseball practice, the day before and then the next day it was done. So that was the last time we saw the guys and, yeah, most everybody else, actually, that was the last time we've seen them. So last time I saw the basketball girls, was when we got home from the conference tournament because then they went home for spring break, and then I didn't see them again until August. We were on a spring break for baseball, softball. And so we were going through our normal practices no

Brittany Davis 5:56

classes and saw our teams every day for the set time, and all of a sudden we got told okay we're going to an extended spring break, we're taking two weeks off instead of one week off for classes. And so it was a little strange for us because we're like okay like great we don't have to do like as many office hours now we just have to cover practices. And then all of a sudden on like that second Thursday, during spring break, they're like, don't come back. Just don't come back and we'll see like everything will just be determined. You know, take the four days off and then we'll let you know come Monday, what we're going to do. And then after that we didn't see anybody. So we were not allowed to come back on campus you weren't allowed to see our athletes we weren't allowed to do any kind of treatments on one on ones. Basically it was just like everything else to stop. It was very strange for us from going a full 12 hour day, and then just being like, okay, don't come into work and don't see anybody. So it's very weird for us,

Samantha Pearson 6:52

It's different for me and Kenzy because we lived on campus at the time, and we were told, you need to get out of the dorms. So, I mean I lived in San Antonio so it was easy my parents just came helped me pack up and then I moved all my ba stuff back into their house, but for Kenzy we had load up her car. She drove home to Wyoming, and just we finished up classes virtually.

Blake Hatt 7:14

So, just all of a sudden just out of the blue just. Yeah. Wow. Interesting and then like during the shutdown, were you guys able to communicate with athletes and sort of work with them online or what did that sort of look like,

Brittany Davis 7:28

yeah, once we got a plan together from administration and they kind of told us that this was lasting a little bit longer than we thought we were concerned about our athletes well being, especially some people just had surgery people who were going through, you know injuries wherever else we're like yeah like we just want to keep in touch with these athletes. Um, we did phone techs, that kind of stuff I never did a. I never did a zoom call, or any kind of FaceTime call, or FaceTime. That was kind of easier way to just check in with people like hey how's your rehab going, all that kind of stuff we didn't want to, except for our athletes because we sent them home. And they're in the middle of a six month recovery, how are they going to be able to take care of themselves what are they supposed to do, you know, plus they can't go to PT because everything shut down. So we would send them up, I would say my athletes like updates of like, Okay, this is what you're doing for these two weeks, I will talk in another week, tell me how you feel, you know, and stuff then we'll kind of go from there. Whereas, we went

from like an everyday check in to a weekly check in or bi weekly check in. So it's different. It's very different, but that's what we managed.

Samantha Pearson 8:35

It was also kind of difficult because we had to get creative. Like with what they had in their house because gyms were shut down. Yeah, so they couldn't go and lift weights, especially those athletes that were further along that should have been in the gym, like actually like getting power and stuff we had to be like, okay, what's the heaviest thing you have in your house. What can you lift and stuff like that so

Brittany Davis 8:57

how many books do you have

Samantha Pearson 8:59

we had to get very creative with that kind of stuff. That was interesting,

Brittany Davis 9:04

that's also like okay are you at a safe place to where you can go out and do a run. Are you in a safe place where you can, you know, are you comfortable going out in public to a park and doing you know sprints, you know, that kind of stuff so you have to work around athletes along with everything for city rides and things have to be creative.

Blake Hatt 9:23

Interesting. Yeah I know it was, it was difficult for me to get my lifts and when it first started I was using like towels and books I had done on a backpack whole bit. So now that we've kind of established a routine to deal with COVID-19. What are like the biggest changes for you guys and how does that affect like your day to day schedule. Now, or do you find that there's a big difference, other than you know maybe just wearing a mask.

Brittany Davis 9:51

I think the biggest change is once someone develops symptoms, or any kind of sickness symptoms. Normally in our line of work it's like okay we go through like what what are your symptoms okay I have a cough okay well it's allergy season. Let's look at all of this, or okay it could be strep now it's immediately everybody runs to COVID, and it's like okay like let's take a step back, let's look at all of these kind of symptoms and checklists and let's see if it actually is that kind of symptom, or if we're dealing with something as small as a cold, but what sucks for our athletes is, even if it is a cold we have to be so precautious that it's their shut down for a couple of days until we figure out what's going on. So that's what's so different. I guess for me in dealing with every day like care because usually you'd have someone come in, you're like hey we don't feel good, like okay take your temperature kind of go throughout the day. Okay, let's see how you feel. Let's get through a little bit of weight let's get through this. See if you're able to do some stuff and if it is, you know, a cold, then we go from there. But if it's COVID, it's highly contagious and now we can't have them around. So the protocol is just completely different

Samantha Pearson 11:02

thing it's a little different first, because at first they had to make appointments to come see us. But that's kind of changed to like walk ins now. I mean, other than that, it's really just more of the general medical stuff that's really changed everything else, pretty much.

Obviously masks.

Blake Hatt 11:21

Okay, has it affected your guys's scheduling I know you mentioned that you work like set hours more so now you rotate those hours. Is it more difficult now that teams have like split up their sessions into like separate practices where you're required to be there more I know CJ and I have noticed that with like smaller groups and us being having to be like in the weight room more often it's kind of difficult and difficult to see all the athletes, is it similar for you guys.

Brittany Davis 11:45

yeah I see similar a lot, because normally you'd have basketball go, and they'd all come in here get all their stuff done. But now it's like they have to come in and split appointments split times and then everybody is basically offseason right now so everybody wants the same care across the board, and then you're trying to give them adequate medical care. And so you're trying to do as much as you can, with the amount of time that you're set, because we don't want to be here 12 hour days when we don't have full on games and everything else, especially since next semester is going to be so stressful. We're trying to manage our time, and mental health, while we can right now, before next semester just gets crazy.

Blake Hatt 12:27

And do you guys feel like you guys are gonna be sort of cut thin next semester when like you know you're traveling with teams going on the road and that leaves only two of you here. And there's pretty much a game every night, how do you guys think that you're gonna deal with that in the future?

Brittany Davis 12:43

very well planning.

Samantha Pearson 12:46

We're getting a fourth person. Okay. Temporary at. She was here last year. So, that's going to help a lot. But, it's going to be very carefully planned and one thing that all three of us are going to have to realize is, we're just gonna have to be flexible because things are going to change with a drop of a hat. So I think that's gonna be the biggest thing is we're gonna be like, Oh yeah, we have the site plan and then all of a sudden one team shut down so that opens up this up, but now you're here for this other sport and said, and

Brittany Davis 13:19

since it's gonna, like, I'm already planning right now. So January's coming quicker than you can say, and we are trying to plan practices along with games every single night, there's only four of us. So you're covering across the board, 11 contact sports, that need medical care and coverage, there's only four of us so, like, it's very well planned schedule, and then there have to be adaptable and flexible when things change or when things go wrong. So,

Blake Hatt 13:50

I know you mentioned having one other person come in. Is there anything else like in the future, maybe just even looking forward to next semester, that you would like to hope see maybe restriction loosened or like a change on campus to be made in order to sort of help your guys's job and help you, you know, do the best you can. I mean within like the realms of reality of course I mean like in the perfect world, you know, there'd be a vaccine and, you know, we, you know, be able to do really as we were before but

Brittany Davis 14:23

I think with us in doing testing on all of our student athletes and everything I think it'll, it'll become a little bit more smoother because we'll know for sure like okay we tested everyone on Tuesday everyone's negative okay go about your normal business people will be in a panic mode on if if or when they're going to get sick now it's hey you're tested twice a week, you know, we'll let you know you'll at least have a confirmation and if you don't feel well what's going on. So it's all questionable I think that helps a lot. But as for our job i don't think i don't think it changes in hours or hours or increase yeah I mean in a perfect world, we'd love to have another full time athletic trainer to kind of just break the ice of coverage but, I mean, in the medical realm of COVID there's really not a lot. We have control over. I mean, we just tell athletes on a day to day wash your hands don't share your drinks, you know have common sense don't go in public places where you don't know a lot of people. If you are where your mouths have socialness and seeing that kind of stuff just be smart about your, your around your surroundings and me we're dealing with 19 to 22, year olds, so of course you're dealing with a high population who like to social gather and have a social life and everything else but it's just you know where's that fine line of, you know, being smart and responsible and just taking care of yourself. But just keeping them high not highly educated keeping them, educated on just daily self care of not getting around a bunch of people who either have a cough or don't feel well or that kind of stuff. So,

Blake Hatt 16:04

anything else you guys would like to add?

Samantha Pearson 16:08

I would like to not wear a mask anymore.

Blake Hatt 16:11

Yeah. Well, hopefully in the future. I heard before yesterday at there's a new vaccine being tested it's like 90% effective. Yeah, so that's exciting.

Brittany Davis 16:23

Yeah, I just think the whole thing just opened our eyes to like what our life was before. And what you take for granted. Truly, people. Yeah, you know, being able to go out to a grocery store and, you know, not be scared or run into somebody or you know whatever else. Taking care of our athletes on a daily basis seeing people practice without a mask, you know, that kind of stuff really opened your eyes to what it was.

Athletes look like. Yeah.

Brigid Harma 16:55

I don't even know what they look like if I saw them without it I don't think

Blake Hatt 17:00

I'm in the same boat. It's funny when like you see them take their mouse down take a drink of water or something like that you're like, I was like you generate a picture of the face of what you expect them to look like and then you see, like, you know, that's one way you look.

Brittany Davis 17:17

Yeah,

Blake Hatt 17:20

it's it's funny. Yeah. Well, thank you guys for doing this. Appreciate it. Awesome. Thank you. Oh yeah. Okay. Yeah, and the only thing I have left.

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