

# *Our State...Our Department*

## **Sport Administration and Sport Studies Newsletter**



## Mississippi State University

*Department of Kinesiology*

Spring 2014

### A message from the program

Greetings to alumni, students, faculty, and other friends of our program. As the 2013-14 academic year comes to an end, we are pleased to be able to share many notable achievements with you. In this edition of the newsletter, you will find updates about the career achievements of a number of our alumni, including a feature story on three who are currently working in athletics at Louisiana Tech University. You will also find information about some current students gaining experience by working in media relations on campus at MSU. This type of practical experience is crucial in helping students position themselves to enter the highly-competitive sports industry, and media relations is just one of many areas in which we currently have students working on campus. You will also find a number of other announcements about points of pride from the program. This newsletter serves an important role in helping us connect with our alumni. If you have any updates or information to share, or if there is anything we can be of help with, please feel free to contact any of our faculty members. Go Bulldogs!

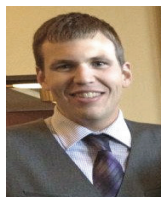
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# Reconnected:

## Three Bulldogs find themselves working together after their time at MSU

While college acts as a time for students to meet new people and become close friends for four or five years, rarely do those friendships continue in the years after college. Jobs and families take students and move them all over the world after graduation.

However, Mississippi State University sport administration graduates Tyson Baldwin and Gary Wilbert and soon-to-be-graduate Ross Rastede were able to take their maroon and white spirit to the same place — Louisiana Tech University. Baldwin graduated in December of 2011, and

Wilbert finished in May of 2012, both earning their master's in sport administration. Rastede, on the other hand, still takes classes online and will receive his master's in May of 2015.

Although Baldwin works in a different building than Wilbert and Rastede at La. Tech, he said he has enjoyed working at the same college with fellow Bulldogs.

"Me and Gary had every class together, so that was cool having him come back," Baldwin said.

"It's great to have both of them here; they both work in Thomas Assembly Center, and I work at the Marbury Alumni Center, but I see them quite frequently at sporting events especially."

Wilbert added he talks to Baldwin on the phone daily and worked side by side with Rastede for about six months while Rastede interned with the Aspire Group.

All three Bulldogs initially started out at La. Tech working with the Aspire Group, which is a global sports firm that works with organizations to maximize revenue, particularly in ticket sales. Baldwin said his time at MSU prepared him for his current job at La. Tech.

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Baldwin



Former Mississippi State Bulldogs Tyson Baldwin, Gary Wilbert and Ross Rastede (from left to right) work together for the Louisiana Tech Bulldogs. Although they all started with jobs for the Aspire Group, the three now work in different areas for La. Tech Athletics.

# Reconnected:

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“The classes themselves definitely prepared you for practical application when you get in sales and marketing and, in my case, development and fundraising,” he said. “I am the director of the Louisiana Tech Athletic Club. I oversee all the annual fund operations, and I also coordinate all our events we do that are member-based benefits. I also oversee all of our sport-specific based mail-outs to their family and friends and people who support individual programs.”



Wilbert

Now the senior ticket sales consultant as of April 1, Wilbert works in the fan relationship management center. He said his main task is to generate revenue for the university through ticket sales.

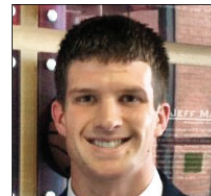
“The first thing I do when I come in is typical prep work obviously, but I try to find new business as far as generating new avenues for season ticket holders.

Also, renewing season tickets — the main focus right now is football, but basketball season tickets go on sale in the next month or two, so it will be better with more than one product to sell,” he said. “Putting money in the cash register is basically what my job entails.”

During his time at MSU, Wilbert worked with the Bulldog Club for six months in addition to doing a teaching internship. He said his experiences in the Bulldog Club, specifically working with the NeuLion ticket system, paved the way for his job at La. Tech.

“Getting familiar with that ticket software system at Mississippi State helped me transition here at La. Tech with the ticket software and

becoming computer literate,” Wilbert said. “Also being around high-level donors at Mississippi State — I would communicate with them through phone or face-to-face at athletic events, and I’ve had that opportunity here at La. Tech so that helped me. When you’re talking to someone who has 12 million or more in their bank account, it can be intimidating, so you want to make a good impression so that helped me transition over here because La. Tech has some high-profile donors.”



Rastede

The youngest of the three, Rastede interned for the Aspire Group last summer and now works in internal operations. He said with this job he handles game management duties, including coordinating student workers and event staff.

“Throughout my internship, I continually would volunteer for more responsibilities. Whenever I got granted a special task, I performed it at the best of my ability, and then asked for more,” Rastede said. “In my final days at Aspire right before I was going to come back to State, one of my current bosses, Brian White, stopped into the office, and asked to speak to me. He asked me when I was going back to Starkville. I told him I was going back in three days. He then proceeded to tell me he was going to attempt to prevent me from doing that. So we discussed the opportunity, and after talking to a lot of my mentors and family, I stayed in Ruston, and moved into my current role.”

For Baldwin, Wilbert and Rastede, their Bulldog pride from MSU has continued at La. Tech, where they have taken skills and knowledge from Starkville to assist the Bulldogs in Ruston.



It’s great to have both of them here... I see them quite frequently at

sporting events especially.”

-Tyson Baldwin,  
director of the Louisiana  
Tech Athletic Club



# Student SIDs

## Sarah Layne and Brett Pund gain experience through media relations

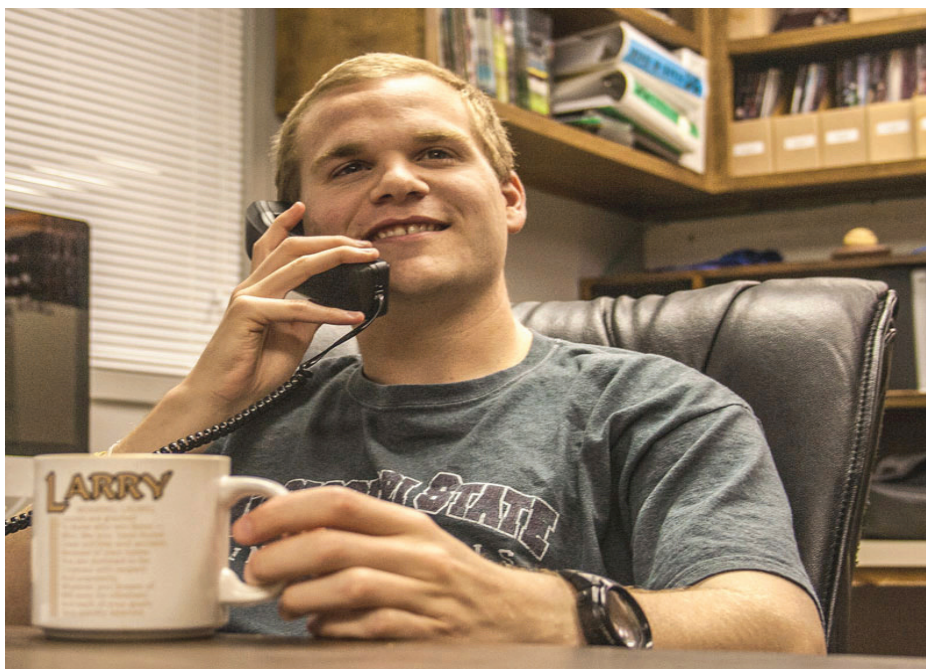
Balancing schoolwork with a social life presents a big enough challenge for college students, especially ones who go to an SEC school and love sports. Add the extra task of being a sports information director for one of those sports, and you get the lives of current sport studies student Brett Pund and sport administration graduate student Sarah Layne, who are two of numerous sport studies students working for the MSU athletic department.

Pund works as the SID for women's golf but assists with sports such as football, men's and women's basketball and baseball. In his time with the MSU media relations department, he has worked SEC Media Days for football, the SEC women's basketball tournament and the SEC men's basketball tournament more recently this year.

He said balancing work and school has been hectic, especially when golf tournaments fall on weekdays while he has class.

"In the fall a lot of the tournaments ran into each other, so that was rough. Most of the time you have to be really organized and have a schedule and make sure you're not forgetting stuff," Pund said. "With each tournament you have to write an advance that goes out the day before. From then on you do a recap everyday (usually tournaments are three days with a round per day.) Rounds are anywhere from four to five hours, so as it's going on you get the player scores every three holes through Golfstat or BirdieFire, which are two websites, so you update Twitter as much as you can."

Pund, who interned with the Washington Redskins this past summer,



**Senior Brett Pund works at his desk in the Humphrey Coliseum. Pund serves as the sports information director for the women's golf team.**

only travels with the team during the postseason, but he writes press releases for the team constantly, especially with standout golfer Ally McDonald placing in the top five of numerous tournaments. Also, Pund has had the added responsibility of updating the record book multiple times this year with the team finishing so well.

Pund also has to abide by MSU compliance policies as he is considered a student-athlete since his job rewards him with a scholarship. He said several of his classes have helped prepare him to be an SID.

"A lot of the communication classes helped like advance newswriting. Globalization helped because we had to write a lot and keep up with current events. Sport ethics because as an SID you have to be ethical in the stats you keep up with because you could easily

mess something up, or with golf you don't get monitored that much so you could easily make some stuff up and get away with it which is bad," Pund said.

Gregg Ellis, associate director of MSU media relations, oversees the graduate and undergraduate student workers. He said the work they put in is crucial for the media relations staff.

"There is no question we rely on our GAs and student assistants more than anyone in the SEC due to our staff size. They are invaluable, and we require a lot from them," Ellis said. "The hours they put in, plus managing school and a personal life, can be very cumbersome. But Sarah and Brett have done an excellent job at finding that perfect balance."

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# Student SIDs

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While Pund oversees matters with the women's golf team, Layne, who will graduate in May with her master's in sport administration, serves as the SID for men's and women's cross country as well as men's and women's track. Layne will be finishing her second year on the job this semester and said she hopes to pursue a career in sports communication.



Layne

"The most rewarding part of my job is being able to promote our student-athletes. Working with them on a daily basis, I'm able to watch them succeed both in the classroom and on the track. It's exciting to show the public how determined and hard-working they are," she said. "The most challenging part of my job is learning to maintain a balance between work and school. In addition to serving as the SID for cross country and track, I also assist with home football, basketball and baseball games. My schedule can be packed full most weeks, but I've quickly learned to adapt."

Internships with the Baltimore Orioles and Indiana Pacers have opened Layne's eyes to the world of professional sport as well. She said working in pro sports is a goal of hers, although working in compliance or athletic academics would be enjoyable, too.

Balancing graduate school and practically a full-time job has provided Layne with invaluable experience the past two years. She said when she is not in class, most likely she is in the office.

"Each day is different, but an ideal day might include updating stats, writing press releases and scheduling interviews with athletes, coaches and media. I also maintain contact with SEC headquarters regarding updates and news surrounding my sports," Layne said. "During the fall, I spend a lot of time working on the track and field media guide that goes online in January. Some days may consist of photo and video shoots, and various weekends are spent traveling with the team to meets."

Layne and Pund both agreed work ethic is the most important aspect of their jobs. But with the experience they have gained both at MSU and through internships, these SIDs are graduating with impressive resumes that will attract the eyes of potential employers.

## Updates and Announcements

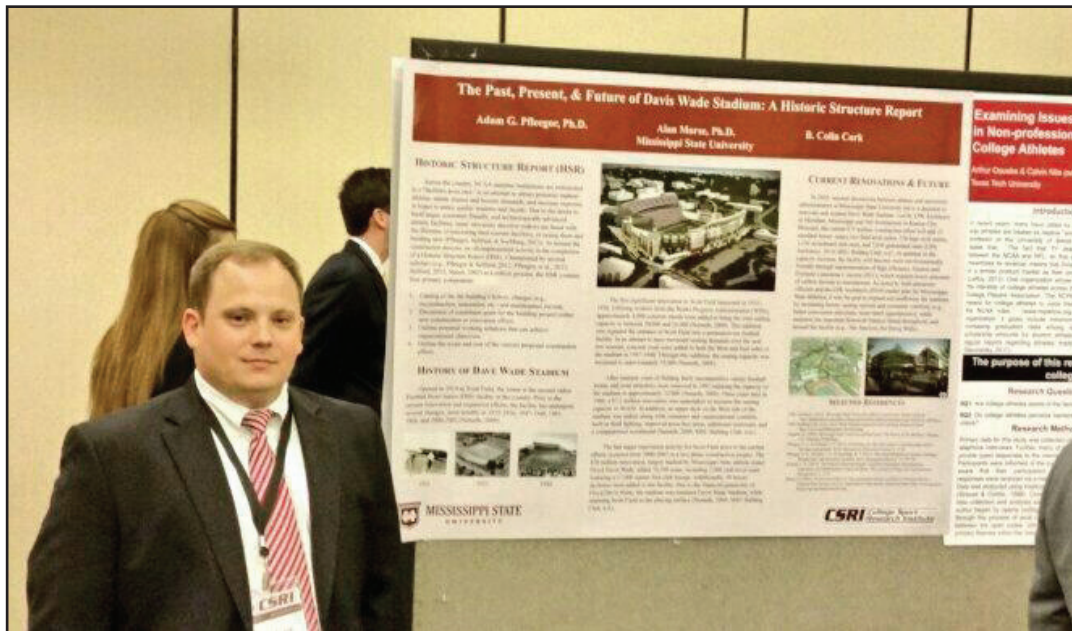
Congratulations to Youngha Kim, a recent sport administration graduate, who is beginning work on his Ph.D. in sport management at Indiana State University. Youngha received his master's degree in sport administration in December 2013 after successfully defending his thesis entitled "The Role of Sporting Event Attendance in the Adjustment of International Students."



While in Nashville to attend the Southern Sport Management Conference, Dr. Adam Love (center) was able to catch up with recent MSU Sport Studies graduates Nick Pounder (left) and Zach Preston (right). Both Pounder and Preston are currently working as Sales Associates with the Nashville Predators.



# Updates and Announcements Continued



Current sport administration student Colin Cork (pictured) traveled with Dr. Adam Pfleegor to the College Sport Research Institute conference, held in Columbia, SC in April 2014, to present a research project that involved a historic structure report of Davis-Wade Stadium. In addition, Cork, along with Dr. Pfleegor and Dr. Alan Morse, will present a research study entitled “A Happy Marriage? The Honeymoon Effect and the New Wave of Sport Facility Construction” at the North American Society of Sport Management conference in Pittsburgh, PA this June. Cork, who will complete his master’s degree this May, plans to pursue his doctorate in sport management at the University of Arkansas beginning in the fall.

## Alumni Updates

### Where Are They Now?

**Erin Ambrose** (M.S. in Sport Administration with a minor in Communication Studies, 2008) is the Partner Services Coordinator for IMG College at Texas Christian University. She supports the sales staff and seeks to decrease attrition through sponsorship activation and contract fulfillment as well as acting as a liaison between TCU, corporate partners, local, regional and national staff.

**Tim Bisantz** (M.S. in Sport Administration, 2012) is the Coordinator of Campus Recreation for Southern New Hampshire University. He oversees the campus recreation department, managing all Aquatics, Club Sports, Group Exercise, Fitness and Intramurals programs along with three full-time and about 75 student staff.

**Michael Draper** (B.S. in Sport Communication, 2008 ) is the Program Director II for the YMCA of Middle Tennessee. He supervises over 20 staff members, forecasts the budget, and arranges schedules for aquatics, camp and sports departments. He encourages students to develop their own “brand” by making sure there is always a positive connotation associated with their names.

# Alumni Updates Continued

**Aaron Epstein** (M.S. in Sport Administration with a minor in Marketing, 2008) is the Assistant Director for Athletics Development at James Madison University. He assists with the day to day operations of the Duke Club and Athletics Annual Giving Operations while providing administrative oversight of all Duke Club social media initiatives and supplying web-based marketing and promotional content for the university's website.

**Kirk Gatlin** (B.S. in Sport Communication, 2009) is the Development Assistant for the Army A Club at the United States Military Academy. After graduating from MSU, he worked as sport staff for Royal Caribbean International and witnessed first-hand the difference between globalization and glocalization, taking what he learned in the classroom into real life experiences.

**Hunter Harrington** (M.S. in Sport Administration, 2010) is the Account Executive for Bulldog Sports Properties at Mississippi State University. She works through Learfield Sports to help clients grow their business by integrating their brand with MSU's brand. Harrington encourages students to build relationships with as many people as possible, leaving lasting impressions on potential employers.

**Matthew Hay** (M.S. in Sport Administration, 2011) is the Coordinator of Athletic Ticket Sales at Texas State University. Working as a graduate assistant in the MSU marketing department gave him beneficial experience for his job of being in charge of ticket sales for the seven ticketed sports at Texas State University.

**Matthew Hicks** (B.S. in Sport Communication with a minor in Public Relations, 2005) is the Sports Information Director for all 13 teams at the University of Mobile. He said the hands-on assignments he worked on while at MSU prepared him for working with things like photography, marketing, layout and design among other duties.

**Kristin Long** (B.S. in Sport Studies, 2012) is the Account Executive at Mocs Sports Properties at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. She maintains sponsor relationships for the university athletic program and advises students to not give up in searching for the right internship and job.

## Stay Connected

Network with MSU Sport Administration and Sport Studies students and alumni by visiting the program on social media:

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groups?gid=4012990](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4012990)



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*Special thanks to Kristen Spink (B.S. in Sport Communication, 2014) for her work in creating this newsletter.*