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Tiffin University Athletics Internship

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**Introduction**

The first impression I received at the first meeting we had is that they were really just looking for extra hands to help at the games. I didn’t expect to gain a lot of new experiences or knowledge, I just assumed I would be doing things that someone that is uneducated could do. I was partially wrong about this, this internship has taught me new things and helped me to gain experience.

The internship was with the Tiffin University Athletics with the Communications Department. I spent the semester under the supervision of Ty Blake and Joe Wilkins. Ty Blake works in the communications department and is in charge of all of the equipment used to broad cast the games. He is the one I reported to the most throughout the fifteen weeks. Ty also did most of my training for the position. He also assigned my duties and would text me when he needed me to work. Joe Wilkins is the pitching coach for the Tiffin University baseball team. He was the commentator for all of the basketball games as well. Joe also gave me a few duties throughout the internship process.

Going into the internship I expected to learn many new things about the collegiate sports industry. I expected to learn things behind the scenes that just I couldn’t learn if I just went to the games as a fan. I also expected to get a better understanding of the communications department from this internship. The main goal I wanted to gain from pursuing this internship with Tiffin University Athletics was experience.

The environment of this internship was very laid back. My supervisors were very kind and energetic towards career and me. They were also very understanding of my schedule and my lack of experience. With this environment I feel as if I learned and got more out of this internship experience.

My duties consisted of setup and teardown of the equipment, controlling the video camera, writing bios, and doing office work. Each duties I was assigned to taught me something different. Every sports team was also different from the others. With all of the different opportunities I learned something new each time.

I have learned many things throughout this internship process. Some positive and others negative, but I wouldn’t change anything about the experience. Each task will help in the future someway. Working for the Communications department has expanded my knowledge of the sports industry in many ways.

**Learning Expectations**

At the start of the internship I did not know what to expect or what was expected of me, but after the first meeting things started to become clearer. My supervisors expected me to write the player bios for the baseball team and control the broadcasting equipment at the home games. I was expected to bring a positive attitude and a good work ethic throughout the internship. I know I was expected to abide by the hours and the times they would ask me to work.

Other than the duties of setup, controlling the equipment, teardown, Good morning World taping, and writing bios I wasn’t expected to do much more. They expected me to follow the rules and regulations of any company, including dress policy at games or events, absentee and miss work policy, honesty policy and behavior rules. My supervisors were very laid back about our positions so it was hard to know exactly what was expected of me or the other interns. The mainly expected us to help them as much as possible at the games. Joe is the baseball coach so he is unable to be at in the press box at the games or any other sports besides basketball. Ty is the softball assistant coach so he too would not be able to attend most baseball and other sports depending on their schedule.

I expected to learn more about the sports industry. I will be working in the press box of most games, so I expected to learn about the sport as well as how things work in the press box. I wanted to gain a better understanding of the communications department at Tiffin University. I also wanted to gain more experience with sports communication. I also expected that my skills and knowledge I learned in the classroom would be applied to this position. I also expected to be challenged more at this position.

Although this position was not challenging and I did not apply my classroom knowledge I gained learning through the hands on experiences in the press box of the different sports. I learned many things, and hand opportunities regarding Tiffin Athletics that I would not have had if I were not an intern. I know more about behind the scenes at a sporting event than the classroom would ever be able to teach.

**The Organization and the Internal and External Environment**

The environment and attitudes while around my supervisors Ty and Joe were always fun and energetic. They were able to laugh and joke around but still take the job seriously. Ty was always so nice and kind to me. While my first few weeks of working basketball and he couldn’t be there he would text me to make sure everything was okay and how I was doing. During exam week Ty also texted me just to talk to see how I was handling the stress of exams and the end of the semester cramming. He was always so laid back to, and never got upset or panicked if something wasn’t working properly. Ty was also very understanding about the other things going on and was willing to work around my scheduling conflicts with the Saturday’s games because I usually have a track meet. So to get my hours he would give me other things that needed to be done and I can gain experience from.

The environment at the basketball games were laid back. We would sit at the top of the gym with the equipment watching the games, and listening to Joe commentate every play. We would talk and joke around during the media timeouts, team timeouts, halftime, and in between the men’s and women’s games.

At the softball field it was a little stricter and serious environment compared to the laid basket basketball games. Shane and his help are not as laid back as Ty or Joe. So when I worked with him it was less interactive and more focus on the game being played. Shane, his help and I have nothing in common so it’s harder to interact with them on things outside of the softball. There are also fewer breaks in softball compared to basketball, making less time for small talk.

At the lacrosse games the environment is faster paced. The game is a fast moving game with a lot of changes of the plays with the ball. This adds more excitement to the press box. The commentator has a lot more to say than at a softball game. Also working the camera is more movement and using zoom to try to get the plays on the far side of the field. Those commentating the game are just having fun with it. Ty is usually working the games and his personality helps to relax the setting. There is also another guy who takes stats named Mike, who too is very outgoing and I can easily make small talk with him.

In the press box of the baseball games the environment is very laid back and casual. It is completely different than the press box at any other sports. There are usually four of us working different duties of the baseball game. The commentator and the announcer are both JV baseball players and the one taking stats is Mike. Mike is always interacting with us or joking about how slow the live stats work. The two players are also talking about things usually related to baseball. I am usually included in most of the small talk between innings. We all joke around or pick on each other. Mike is always saying that I am the boss up there and I tell the boys what to do. I’m not sure if that really happened but I would ask them to do small tasks for me when I wouldn’t be able to because I was working the camera, and they listen.

Working in the office was just to get more hours, and to get the experience of the behind the desks setting. I spent most of the time I just did random tasks for Ty. I would either do some sort of paperwork, something with player bios or just observe him on the computer. The environment in the office is the typical office setting, maybe a little more relaxed. Only being in the office for about an hour once a week it is hard to see the full atmosphere, but while there everyone was kind and considerate to me for being new and having no experience. The dress policy was business casual, and on Fridays the workers are allowed to wear just casual clothes like jeans. As an intern they didn’t require me to follow the dress code. But I would typically wear jeans to work and not sweats.

I like how there is no policy regarding dress during the games. It doesn’t matter too much because no one else really sees us when we are in the press box. Being at sporting events and especially baseball games, wearing business formal dress would not be necessary or be productive during this time. Basically it was dress for the occasion. If we were at a game we could wear casual clothes or even sweat pants if we wanted to.

However if I was working at Good Morning World there was a dress policy for business casual. I always wore black pants and some type of dress shirt. Good Morning World is very business formal setting. The guest come to eat breakfast then listen to a speaker. Usually the men are in suits and females are in business dress of some sort (we have more options). While working I would say a few things to President Marian and the speaker when putting the mic on his jacket. Otherwise I usually just observe in the back of the room behind the video camera.

Of all the environments I worked in I enjoyed the baseball press box the most. It was where I had the most fun and I liked the laid back work setting. It makes going to work enjoyable for me because I knew I wouldn’t get nagged on for something small all the time. I also enjoyed the interaction with my coworkers more compared to other tasks I was assigned to.

**Tasks: Intended and Unintended**

Setup includes setting up all of the equipment needed to broadcast the games. I learned the setup at the third week in to the internship, at a home basketball game. It’s a pretty simple task, just remember the order of the equipment and that the connecting cords go out to in. Each sport has a little different set up, but the connecting cords order is always the same. The setup is very important because if it is not done properly the connection will not work and the AmericaOne.com network will be unable to control the monitor to live stream the game. It is a very simple job once you remember the order of the equipment and cords.

Teardown was very similar to the setup. Just in the opposite order. Each piece of equipment has a specific bag it goes into. Like setting up it is a very easy process, you just need to remember what goes where. After the game is over and the DVD is done processing we start to tear down all of the equipment. I just start to turn off all of the machines then unplug them and then put them in the correct bags to take them back to the office.

 After the set up of I would have a different duty at each sport. During the basketball games I just had to watch the monitor to make sure that the internet connection is working properly and the monitor does not freeze. I also listened to the volume of the commentator to make sure it wasn’t too loud or too quiet for those listening.

 I had the same duty at some of the lacrosse games. While other games I was in charge of working the video camera. For this I had to stand outside the press box and follow the ball with the camera to get the best show for those watching on Americaone.com network. This is also a simple tasks, but can be challenging sometimes because as a fast moving pace games it’s hard to tell who has the ball, especially when you trying to view it on the small screen. Other than that its simple to work the camera.

At the softball games, I spent most of my time watching the monitor making sure the connection was working and no other errors or mishaps occurred. Basically doing what I did at the basketball games. Sometimes I would work the camera but that was when the other intern was unable to work.

Baseball is where I spent most of my time during this internship. At the games I had the tasks of set up, working the camera, as well as making sure the connections worked properly. Every time I worked I never had a problem with the internet connection or the setup procedure. Working the camera is very simple too. It is much easier than at the lacrosse games because it is not as fast paced. The only difficultly is trying to follow the ball into the outfield after it has been hit. Mike would give me complements on how well I worked the camera and followed the ball and players using the zoom features. I was also in charge of the teardown after the game was over.

During my office work hours I had the duties of anything that Ty told me, most of the time they were unintended random jobs that he needed to be done. I would file papers for Ty some days. Others I would just observe them whatever they were working on at the time. I watched Ty edit the videos from the past games. I also watched Mike write a press release from the previous game. I learned how the formatting is for the website. One day I also edited the Players bios in to a text box so when it is put on the webpage it is formatted correctly with even spaces at the end each line, basically making sure that each line flowed and no words were split between the line and the next.

 When I would work the Good Morning World, my duties consisted of setting up the video camera, placing our special microphone on the speaker, recording and taping the speakers, and tear down. The camera set up is very simple I just setup the tripod in the back of the room near an outlet. Then place the camera on the tripod making sure that it is a good view of the podium, then connect the microphone receiver into the camera. With the camera set up I then go tell the speaker my reasoning behind having him wear our microphone and also the regular microphone for the audience to hear. I then go back to the camera and wait for the speech to start. Recording here is also very simple I barley move the camera. However if he has a PowerPoint visual aid I alternate showing him and the visual aid. After he is done speaking I give him a few minutes while I am tearing down the camera before I go up to ask him for the microphone. This is also a very simple job, it’s only downfall is getting up early to be there by 7:30am.

 Writing Bios was a major tasks I was assigned to during this internship. Although writing player bios are simple it took me time to do research on how to write bios. Looking at different teams there are so many different types of formats of bios. The bios took a lot of effort to make them all similar in formats of the players. I learned so much through writing the bios, from improving my grammar and sports writing skills, abbreviations of the sport baseball, to things about each player on the Tiffin University Baseball Team.

All of the tasks at hand were very simple and sometimes I felt were a waste of my time. For instance sitting and staring at the monitor to make sure no errors occurred felt very pointless, the person who was broadcasting check occasionally to make sure it was working. I also felt that my education was not applied throughout a majority of my tasks. I did not need to go to school to learn how to setup, teardown, or use a video camera.

**Relation of Internship to Academic Coursework**

I didn’t apply very much of my knowledge from this class on this job. For all of the duties I was assigned to I did not apply thing I have learned at Tiffin University the last three years. Everything that I needed to know Ty or Joe taught me on the job, or it was common sense. Ty showed me how to setup and teardown a few weeks into the position. He also explained all of the office to me the day that I needed to do it. Working the video camera did not take any academic coursework either. That was just common knowledge from past experience of running a video camera.

From writing the Players Bios I had to use writing, grammar, and researching skills that I learned with attending classes. I had to research how to write a baseball players bio. I needed to have good writing and grammar skills because it would be embarrassing if I had mistakes that would go on the website for everyone to notice. However the Sports Management coursework was not applied during the internship.

**Relation of Internship to Career Preparation**

Although I do not think I will pursue a position in the communications department when I graduate to find a career, I know that this experience will still be beneficial. If I were to pursue a career as a general manager, I will need to know how ever department works. This internship provides me with the experience in the communications of four different sports, as well as helped me to see the writing side of the sports industry through the bios.

Being in my current position I am not sure where I will find a career after graduation, therefore this position has help me to gain more experience behind the schemed in the sports industry at the collegiate level. I am now familiar to what it is like to be in the press box of baseball, softball, or lacrosse games. Having experience is what will get you a job in the future, so with this internship it provides me with an experience I wouldn’t of had if I turned down the position.

The internship has helped me to decide that I do not want to go into to just the communications side of sports. I do not want to spend the rest of my life writing bios, articles, or a webpage for the team. Although I do like running the camera and interacting with different players so maybe I will pursue that after graduation.

**Learning Outcomes: Intended and Unintended**

 From this internship position I learned many new things about what the communications side of the sports industry at the collegiate level. I learned more about Tiffin University Athletics. Before the internship I was unaware of the process that goes on during game days.

Every sport has their similarities and differences. I also learned more about each sport. Before working at the lacrosse games I was unaware of the rules involved with the sport, but now I know that if the ball goes out of bounce the team that is closest to the ball gets possession. I also know the penalties involved as well as the rules regarding how a player can handle the ball. After working at baseball I know what the abbreviations represent and the strategies to the game. On the line-up form each position has a number to represent it to make it easier than writing out the position each time. Working up near those who take stats, and also copying it over when the printer wasn’t working I know now what each position’s number is, which is something I would not have thought I would have learned before starting.

 I am now a better writer from this internship. After researching and then applying my knowledge to write over 50 baseball player bios I know that my writing skills have improved. Having to apply researching skills, I know that I gained more knowledge of sports writing, and more specifically writing player bios. This internship has also helped me with my organization. With 50player bios I needed to stay organized so I didn’t lose or forget about someone’s information. To do this I made folders on a flash drive that was specifically for this internship. With so many different games at different time this internship forced me to keep a agenda book on what I needed to do and when. Using the book helped me greatly with my time management.

 I learned more about the players and the teams of Tiffin University. From working at each sport I know the key players, the starters, and each player’s positions. Because I wrote the baseball players bios and I spent more time working at baseball than the other sports I know more information about each player on the team. I would be able to tell you their hometown, position, their achievements on the field, and grade level. I can also tell you each of the players walk song when they are up to bat, which is something I did not intend to learn before starting the internship.

 I learned how to properly setup and teardown the equipment used to broadcast the games. I know how to use the equipment correctly and what each piece of equipment does and why it is needed to broadcast the games on the AmericaOne.com Network. Each piece of equipment plays a different part in creating the best sound and picture for the game. From observing the commentators of each sport I learned how to broadcast a game and some things that should be said. Each person is different as well as each sport needs to be commentated differently. Comparing baseball to lacrosse as an example, baseball mainly covers who is at bat and the player stats in between the pitches; whereas lacrosse is a play by play action with less breaks in between.

**Conclusion**

This internship position had many positives and negatives involved. But overall my experience with the internship was a positive one. I learned a lot of new things and information about the communications in sports. I also really enjoyed those I worked with. Especially at the baseball games, they players doing the announcing are outgoing talk more than those who worked the softball games.

Even though sometimes I felt as if I was wasting my time because all I did was monitor the screen to make sure noting went wrong, I still gained the experience that few people at Tiffin University has the opportunity to. It has helped me to further my knowledge of the importance of communications to the sports industry. This internship has taught me many things related to the sports industry. From the rules of lacrosse to the abbreviations to baseball, every day I worked I was always learning something new.

I enjoyed every task and environment associated with this internship, some more than others. Working in the press box at the baseball games was probably my favorite place to work from the internship. I just had more fun there, and I love the sport of baseball so being able to be behind the scenes and get an understanding of what happens was a great experience for me.

My supervisor, Ty was satisfied with my work during the internship that he asked me to work for him next year. I accepted the position because any experience is worth my time. I look forward to attending the games and working in the press box next year as well.