

Making an Impact

Throughout my life, athletics have always played a significant role in my development. Hard work, commitment, perseverance and the sacrifice to put the team before one's self are lifelong principles that have stuck with me long after I have left the field. My four years as a member of the Illinois Baseball team left me a stronger person in every aspect of life. Through baseball I became stronger physically, tougher mentally, more compassionate as a teammate and friend emotionally, and adept socially. As my dreams of playing beyond college faded, I knew I yearned for a career that would impact others the same way athletics had impacted me.

Upon entering graduate school, a main goal of mine was to better myself as a coach and future administrator by building an educational foundation in learning and teaching. Prior to enrolling, I had no previous background in education or teaching. Gaining knowledge in these fields along with practical skills and eventual degree would enable myself to become a legitimate candidate for athletic administration positions.

The courses I have taken throughout my graduate program have refined my ability to teach skills as well as develop a better understanding of large teaching concepts and the learning process as a whole. However, as I begin my last semester in my Masters of Education (MAED) program at Michigan State University, my professional goals have altered slightly to those I entered with in 2015. I am still striving to work in athletics, but my scope of potential professional careers has expanded to include other athletic avenues. My experiences in the MAED program and those happening concurrently in my professional life have only reinforced this shift over the past two years. When entering graduate school, I was specifically interested in interscholastic athletic administration. However, my exposures to intercollegiate dealings as a coach and the multiple scandals that have plagued athletics across the nation have altered my perceptions of the athletic director position. Positions in recreational athletics and youth recreation have begun to appeal to me after working with adolescents in my coaching positions. These positions work directly with youth and are not as publicly scrutinized or high profile as administration positions.

Staring down graduation this spring, I will continue to pursue my goal of working in athletics. The lifelong benefits that coaches and administrators have afforded me through sports continue to drive me in this profession. Today's

youth deserve the same opportunities to learn physical skills and lifelong values through athletics that will serve them throughout their professional careers and personal lives as I did. My academic experience through the MAED program, my professional experience and my personal life has helped tweak my main professional goal of working in athletic administration. Going forward, my goal is to work in a profession that will help teach, develop and inspire adolescents through athletics.