Newsletter of Sport Management at Illinois State University

News from the Sidelines

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Popp leaves ISU to take position at UNC-Chapel Hill

In January of 2014, Nels Popp left his post as sequence coordinator for the sport management program at Illinois State to become assistant professor of sport administration at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Nels spent the previous five years helping to bring the ISU sport management program to new heights by building relationships with regional sports executives, helping students connect and network within the industry, and initiating community efforts like the Miracle League golf outing fundraiser.

Several former ISU sport management students reflected on their time with Nels upon hearing of his departure. "The biggest impact Nels made for my class and the class below me was that he genuinely cared about all of us and our career development. When we were in the program, Nels never made it seem like he was focused on us getting a degree and getting out the door. He helped everyone, myself included, immensely in catering his teaching and his advice to your career specifically. He was a great teacher, but more importantly, I could drop by his office and talk for an hour about anything that came up and really enjoy it. I wouldn't be where I am without Nels and I'm very fortunate I chose ISU and that I am able to stay in touch with him still today", said Sean Johnson '13, current director of annual giving at Illinois State University Athletics.

"I really enjoyed my time as one of Nels Popp's students here in the Sport Management Program. From the very beginning, Nels was very enthusiastic and approachable and made my transition to ISU an easy one. Through his knowledge in the classroom and vast connections throughout the sports world, I was able to take valuable steps forward in my young career in the sports industry. The Sport Management Program here at Illinois State is one of the best in the country, and Dr. Popp is a big reason for that", said Andrew Evans '15, current graduate marketing assistant for Illinois State University Athletics.

A Note from Nels:

My experience at ISU was absolutely wonderful and I am very proud of all that was accomplished within the sport management program during my time in Normal. By far the best memories for me are

connecting with so many incredible students who are now doing some great things throughout the sport industry. When I reflect on all the success past students have had and are still having, it is very rewarding. I also am extremely proud of all the initiatives we were able to develop at ISU over my time there; things like class trips, the symposium, the Miracle League Golf Outing, even the newsletter. I am glad to see those traditions are continuing and I really enjoying knowing that I was able to play a small role in continuing to advance the program."

I know Illinois State will continue to attract some of the best masters students in the country because of the great program and people in place there, as well as the terrific relationship the program has

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Sport Managment students had the opportunity to visit Indianapolis and tour Banker's Life Fieldhouse.

The annual sport managment symposium attracted big name sports' professionals from across the Midwest. First and second-year sport management students had the opportunity to network.

School of Kinesiology and Recreation
Illinois State University

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Or you can send us your updated information or accomplishments to Clint Warren (cjwarre@ilstu.edu) with your latest achievements and contact information.

Sport Management faculty

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Warren joins Illinois State sport management faculty as program director

This past year, the Illinois State sport management graduate program welcomed a new faculty member, Dr. Clint Warren. He began in the fall of 2014 as both an assistant professor and the program's new sequence coordinator. Warren is a graduate of the Illinois State sport management graduate program so his transition into the department felt much like coming home.

"As a graduate of the Illinois State Sport Management program almost 8 years ago, I'm extremely excited to have the opportunity to come back and continue moving the program forward", said Warren

After earning his masters degree in sport management here at Illinois State in 2007, Warren went on to work for the Minnesota Timberwolves as a sales executive before eventually earning his Ph.D at the University of Minnesota. He has previously served as a sport management professor at both Eastern Illinois University and the University of Iowa.

Warren's research interests are primarily in ticket sales and ticket sales management. Warren focuses his research in soccer and professional sports and looks forward to studying the soccer as it continues to grow in the United States.

"The previous program coordinators, Chad McEvoy and Nels Popp, have truly left the program in an excellent position to take the next step in helping our students make immediate impacts in the sport industry. I am particularly excited to continue developing hands-on, practical learning opportunities to help our students continue to connect with the industry, solve sport industry problems, and serve our central Illinois community through sport."

Warren is married to Tamie, and they reside in Bloomington with their two children Jackson (4) and Lucy (2).

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established with ISU's athletic department and all the local sport organizations around Bloomington-Normal. The more students I meet from around the country, the more I am convinced that ISU students are second to none. Having alums with major league teams, national governing bodies, and some of the top NCAA Division I athletic departments in the country assures me that ISU students can chase their dreams anywhere. I hope current students realize what is available to them and that they continue to pursue the positions for which they are most passionate.

Coming to UNC has been an incredible experience for me. The opportunities here are limitless. As with ISU, we have a great relationship with our athletic department here, which opens up so many doors for collaborations. In addition, we have access to an NHL team in the Carolina Hurricanes, a AAA baseball team in the Durham Bulls, Wasserman Media Group, the Atlantic Coast Conference, USA Baseball, and tons of other great partners. There is even another university over in Durham which is rumored to have a pretty strong athletic department. My family and I are really enjoying this part of the country, particularly during last year's brutal winter. Another nice surprise has been connecting with so many ISU alums who make their way out to North Carolina now and then. In just my first six months on the job, I've had office visits from Brendan Reilly, Kelby Weiter, and Andrea Travelstead. Michelle Kirchel works just down the road work in the Elon athletic department. This past summer I made it to NACDA, where I was lucky enough to catch up with a ton of ISU folks. I also managed to see Liz Sattler, Clint Warren, and Chad McEvoy at the North American Society for Sport Management conference in Pittsburgh, which was awesome. It is really great to be part of such a big family.

Nels announcing Pat Williams, keynote speaker , at the annual ISU sport management symposium.

Nels with former sport management students Casey Richards and Matt Johnson in St. Louis for a Rams game.

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Tracking the Redbirds—alumni update

Alumni Spotlight: Bryan Nystrom '11

Employer: University of Minnesota Duluth Athletics
Position title: Director of Marketing & Corporate Relations
Location: Duluth, Minn.

1. How would you describe your day-to-routine at your job?

My daily routines are always changing in my position. The main priorities are focused around revenue generation, sponsorship activation, and branding. Creating new ways to communicate to our fans with innovative marketing concepts or game day promotions, along with staying up to date on email communications and social media are daily routines. Each day brings a new challenge but also improving upon normal duties with marketing, events, video production, and community relations.

2. What are some of the unique opportunities you've had with your job?

I have been part of some great opportunities such as overseeing an NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Frozen Four, leading redesigns of our athletic webpage, leading the installation on a $250,000 video board, and sport administration oversight of athletic programs.

3. What is the toughest part of your job?

Toughest part of my job is to consistently create new sources of revenue for our department. External Revenue is so important in college athletics in today's world and by finding new sources of revenue we can help create a better environment for our student athletes.

4. What are some of your favorite memories from your time at Illinois State?

Some of my favorite memories include working basketball games in Redbird Arena, fishing Lake Bloomington with Grad School friends, PUB II adventures, and being part of a great program with better classmates.

5. What advice or recommendations would you give current ISU sport management students trying to break into the sport industry?

The best advice someone once told me was, "Work hard but work smart and good things will happen. Make yourself irreplaceable by creating revenue." and "Work for someone or someplace that needs you and where you can make a difference."

WHERE ARE THEY?

Over the past 12 months, several Illinois State sport management graduates have been hired or have been promoted within the sport industry. Below is a list of a few of these individuals listed by their positions.

- Tim Kelly '10 - Offensive quality control coach, Houston Texans
- Mike Schulte '10 – Assistant director of ticket sales and development, Illinois State University athletics
- Nicole Lewis '10 – Academic coordinator, University of Missouri
- Jenn (Jorgensen) Watson '14 – Operations associate, Illinois State University athletics
- Matthew Stone '14 – Manager of business development, U.S. Olympic Training Centers
- Elliot Charles '07 – Associate director of athletics for compliance, University of South Florida Athletics
- Ashley Schrader '14 – Marketing and public relations manager, dare2tri Paratriathlon Club
- DJ Haurin '13 – Assistant communications director, University of Kansas Athletics
- Paul Kabbes '12 – Associate athletic director for external operations, University of Illinois-Springfield Atheltics
- LB (Nagle) Lyons '10 – Assistant athletics director of marketing, Illinois State University Athletics
- Tessi Taylor '04 – Grant-In-Aid specialist, University of Illinois Athletics
- Tiffany Prager '14 – Assistant softball coach, Dayton University Athletics
- Sean Johnson '13 – Director of annual giving, Illinois State University Athletics
- Shannon Nicholson '10 – Head softball coach, University of Illinois-Springfield Athletics
- Maggie Ahern '14 – Events and sponsorship producer, Chicago Tribune Media Group
- Matt Johnson '14 – Assistant director of development, Army Athletics
- Adam Kopp '14 – Assistant director of Redbird Productions, Illinois State University Athletics
- Keenan Wimbley '14 – Academic Coordinator, Illinois State University Athletics
- Erin Brown '14 – Director of Football Operations, Illinois State University Athletics
- Zach Schroeder '14 – Assistant director of marketing & promotions, Illinois State University Athletics
- Cody Meincke '14 – Production assistant, Campus Insiders
- Kayle Gray '14 – Client services coordinator, Chicago Wolves
- Quincy Henderson '14 – Assistant men's basketball coach, West Texas A&M Athletics
- Dani Kabbes '14 – Events coordinator, Peoria RiverFront
- Britt Erps '12 – Assistant women's soccer coach, Grand View University Athletics
- Jennifer Madgiak '11 – Coordinator, Student-Athlete Academic Support Program, Purdue University-Calument Athletics

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Left–ISU students prepare hockey presentation. *Center*–Matt Johnson (2013) celebrated his wedding with sport management friends at Target Field. *Right*–Matt Steckling (2014) worked for the Chicago White Sox for the 2013-14 season and Marissa Olberding and Veronica Cardenas show support at U.S. Cellular Field

Illinois State sport management updates

Erin Brown ('14) left her position in compliance to take on the role of Director of Football Operations.

Shannon Nicholson ('10), Tiffany Prager ('15), Nicole Lewis ('11) and Bailey Brenner ('10) reunite in Horton Fieldhouse.

- Former sport management adjunct instructor and State Farm executive, Todd Fischer, left Bloomington-Normal in the fall of 2014 for a position with GMR Marketing, a sports-marketing agency based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Fischer is now the Vice President for Client Engagement, a role that allows him to work with an international roster of properties in sport and business. Fischer has maintained a close connection to the ISU sport management program, serving as a panelist at the 2014 Symposium in February and Skyping in to share career advice with first year sport management students enrolled in KNR 430: Sport Industry.
- Second year student and Coordinator of Special Programs for the Illinois High School Association, Kayode Adegoke '15, was selected to the National Federation of State High School Associations Track and Field Rules Committee. This committee is made up of eleven individuals who represent a geographical region of the country and Adegoke represented section 4. In addition, he attended the National Federation of High Schools 95th annual summer meeting in Boston, Massachusetts.
- In January, several sport management students attended the NCAA Emerging Leaders Conference, held at the NCAA headquarters in Indianapolis. The Emerging Leaders Seminar (ELS) is a 3-day, annual professional development event providing leadership, educational and transitional programming for graduate assistants and interns from NCAA membership institutions, conference offices and affiliate organizations. Matt Steckling '15, Veronica Cardenas '15, Erin Brown '14, Nikki Miller '15, Zach Schroeder '14, and Keenan Wimbley '14 attended this year's conference.
- In October, former sport management faculty and sequence coordinator, Chad McEvoy, received the 2014 William A. Sutton Award at the Sport Marketing Association (SMA) conference in Philadelphia. The award is given to a distinguished academic and practitioner recognized for their visionary leadership connecting the sport marketing academic discipline to the industry. On hand to see McEvoy accept the award were former faculty, Nels Popp, current sequence coordinator Clint Warren, and former students Liz Sattler and Alan Morse.
- In the fall, Erin Brown '14, left her position in compliance to take on the role of director of football operations for Illinois State athletics. As director, Brown is in charge of travel arrangements for road games, coordinating recruiting visits and also serves as the football staff's liaison with several departments across Redbird athletics. Brown is believed to be just one of five women to hold the position among the 250 Division I football programs in the nation. News of her new position garnered local attention when she was featured in an article in the Pantagraph in September.
- Over the summer, Clint Warren and Brent Beggs worked with sports executive and consultant, Steve DeLay, to purchase "The Ultimate Toolkit to Sell the Last Seat in the House" for the ISU sport management program. The Toolkit, written by DeLay and Jon Spoelstra, is a collection of workbooks with tested concepts for training staff and implementing successful ticket sales campaigns. Purchased and implemented by dozens of professional and collegiate sports teams (including ISU athletics), Illinois State was the first sport management program in the country to purchase and implement the Toolkit in the classroom. Warren utilized the Toolkit in his sales course in the fall of 2014, and plans to continue implementing it across the sport management program in the future.
- In May, Zach Schroeder '14, and Matt Johnson '14, were selected as recipients of the Mike Cleary Convention Stipend, an $800 award that funded their attendance to the 2014 National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators (NACMA) convention in Orlando, Florida. With just 10 student stipends awarded across the nation, the recipients chosen were considered to be "top emerging leaders in the industry".

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FRIDAY.20.FEB.
ILLINOIS STATE

SPORTS MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

MARRIOTT HOTEL - NORMAL

REGISTRATION COST - $40
LUNCH INCLUDED
10 A.M. - 3:15 P.M.

3:15-INTERNSHIP & NETWORKING

FEATURING
BARRY GIBSON
VP MARKETING AND SALES INDIANA PACERS

BRETT **BURCHETTE** BRADLEY

KELLY **SMITH** WILSON SPORTING GOODS

TRACIE **HITZ** NCAA

MARCIE **AHERN** INDIANA SPORTS CORP

SCOTT **HUTCHISON** GILT EDGE SOCCER

JOHN **ALTHOFF** STATE FARM

ERIN **MCDERMOTT** UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

ANUCHA **BROWNE** NCAA

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#ISUSYM15

Mooney Attends Mount Union Sales Workshop

By Conner Mooney '15

Whether you are a basketball fan or not, imagine having the opportunity to spend the night at Michael Jordan's house. Well fortunately, I was able to have this experience when I was a freshman in high school and trust me, I did have to pinch myself more than once. Six NBA titles, five MVPs, 10 scoring titles, 14 All-Star appearances, and many other feats posterized on my childhood bedroom wall, Michael Jordan's legacy on the basketball court is unmatched. We have all seen the "I want to be like Mike" Gatorade commercial and growing up, I would imagine waking up and having MJ's abilities for just one day. The ability to take off and soar to the hoop Like Mike. To be the best basketball player in the world for a few hours Like Mike. Ironically, 23 years after its original release (summer 1991), Gatorade's "Be Like Mike" commercial is still one of my all-time favorites. Anytime I hear that marketing jingle, I immediately want to grab a basketball and work on my game. I know at this point I won't be like Michael Jordan on the court, but I have a goal of one day joining the NBA on the business side, just Like Mike. I am a dreamer then and now.

Although I am still a dreamer, I have gotten older and realized that a dream doesn't become reality through magic. Instead, it takes sweat determination and hard work. With that being said, I was in Dr. Popp's sales class last fall and he had mentioned to the whole class that there was a Sports Sales Workshop in Cleveland and that it was one of the best in the country. The workshop would potentially be hiring for positions in the major leagues such as the NBA, MLB, NFL, and NHL. Dr. Popp had my immediate attention especially speaking so highly of the event after attending the event himself in years past. Without hesitation, I registered for the event at the early bird special and never looked back even when I realized I was the only Illinois State University student who was going to make the 460 mile journey to Cleveland, Ohio.

Once I arrived in Cleveland, I was anxious and nervous both at the same time realizing this could be my one opportunity to follow my dream. The workshop took place at Quicken Loans Arena where the Cleveland Cavaliers of the NBA play their home games and also at Progressive Field where the Cleveland Indians of the MLB play their home games. The workshop started off with an overview of valuable insights and proven successful sales techniques from some of the most successful professionals in the industry. Soon after, there were several small training sessions led by sport business professionals that taught the students anywhere from opening up a conversation with a potential client all the way to closing a big deal. I received nearly four hours of personalized sport sales training from high end sport industry executives. Although I was anxious and nervous, Dr. Popp had me extremely prepared without me even knowing that I was. Everything I learned in Popp's sales class was almost of a review in nature when it came to the training sessions. Then to end the day off, there were several networking opportunities and job interviews that were conducted. These interviews provided a unique opportunity to explain my dream and let the NBA teams see my ability to not only sell sports tickets, but instead myself.

As a result of the event, I can truly say that it changed my life and in the near future, my career path. Once I left the event, my phone wouldn't stop ringing with voicemails and emails for follow-up conversations. Although I was fortunate enough to receive several job offers from the NBA, I decided I was going to finish my degree at Illinois State University realizing that I wouldn't have had this opportunity if it weren't for Illinois State University and ultimately Dr. Popp. When I think about it, it seems as if Dr. Popp will have a sales representative in all 50 states soon.

Although I had a life changing experience in Cleveland, the main objective of this write-up isn't trying to get you to go to the Mount Union Sales Workshop (unless you are interested in sport sales) or hear about how great this event was for my particular circumstance. This isn't saying that if you attend an event similar to that of Mount Union you will automatically leave having a job in the sport industry. Instead, this write-up is encouraging anyone, student or not, who is looking to get into the sport industry to make the decision to attend a networking event in your field of interest. This decision could help you take a step in the direction that is going to help you achieve your goal and eventually your dream. As I learned, every journey begins with a single step and my step was deciding to go to the Mount Union Sport Sales workshop in Cleveland. This was my step towards becoming Like Mike. So the only two questions I have for you is, what is your dream? And what are you doing to achieve that dream?

Participants at the Mount Union Sales Workshop that Mooney attended.

Coonor Mooney ('15) attending Mount Union Sales Workshop. Through the workshop, received a job offer from the Portland Trailblazers.

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Students have fun at the interactive displays at the NCAA headquarters in Indianapolis.

Students get a front row seat to the Pacers versus Bulls pregame warmups.

Veronica Cardenas ('15) and Erin Brown ('14) snap a photo courtside at Bankers Life.

Students tour Bankers Life Fieldhouse prior to the game at night.

Redbirds travel to Indy for sport business field trip

By Marissa Olberding '15

Networking. Otherwise referred to as what us sport management students should be doing on a monthly, weekly, or if you are a stud at mixing with people in the sports industry, daily basis.

Networking. Also known as the chance to meet industry professionals, aka those rare people with the almighty job in the sport industry. However, due to that sweaty, shaky hand, you probably did not make the best first impression.

Networking. Sounds fun, right?

Not too long ago I had the opportunity to volunteer for the NCAA Division III Swimming and Diving Championships. Crammed in a natatorium, listening to rival schools banter back and forth, while trying to block out my sixth-grade volunteer group singing the latest song released by One Direction, was, needless to say, an adventure.

Along with my friend and fellow sport management peer, Veronica, we packed up the car and traveled east to Indianapolis for three days to volunteer for this swimming and diving event. Despite the scratchy voices of our sixth-graders, it was one of the most memorable volunteer experiences I have had the opportunity to be a part of. Working hand-in-hand with the Indiana Sports Corp, we spent three days betting who would slip first on the pool deck, but in all seriousness, we spent three unforgettable days volunteering in the industry we love.

Up next on the volunteer list, the pair of us will travel to Indy for the Big-Ten Championship game, followed by the 2015 Final Four. Pretty cool, huh?

The Indiana Sports Corp is a non-profit organization that brings national and international attention to Indiana. With events such as the Big-Ten Championship football game, the Final Four and Super Bowl XLVI, the Indiana Sports Corp is a pretty neat operation. Living in Normal, Illinois, you may ask how on earth did I get involved with a company two-and-a-half hours east, with an organization that was involved with a Super Bowl?

Back to networking. Sounds fun now, right? I'll get to that soon.

I really did not understand the importance of networking until I came to grad school. Yes, I heard it almost every day from my professors, but as a second-semester senior in undergrad, senioritis kind of kicked in, and the idea was in one ear and out the other.

I stepped foot on the Illinois State campus Tuesday night for my first sports business class, the Industry of Sport, to be exact. I guess you could say the light bulb finally clicked on. Networking. Otherwise referred to as how to get a job in sports.

Networking. It was officially engrained in my sports-minded brain. In November 2013, our sports management grad program had the opportunity to travel to Indianapolis, Indiana, for the annual class trip. As a first-year grad student, I did not really know what to expect from the trip. I was handed an itinerary and told to bring paper, pen and questions for the panels.

I woke up at 5 a.m. It was raining, and the combination of waking up hours before the sun decides to make its way to Illinois and a torrential downpour, while dressed in business professional attire, is well, not the way you want to start your day. Don't worry. It gets better.

With a bus full of sports management students, the only appropriate movie to watch is Old School. So after watching a Will Ferrell classic, we were basically in the Circle City. Still raining.

After navigating what seemed as though the back roads to get to the city, our faded white buses with a giant (and I mean giant) Reggie Redbird head on the side, pulled into the NCAA headquarters parking lot. We toured the building, first seeing all the NCAA affiliated schools who won a championship in 2013. We played interactive soccer games, shot basketballs on the antique court and took pictures lining up like a track athlete in the starting lane.

Our self-guided tour ended, and we made our way to a room for the first panel of the day. Lee Dicklitch, Associate Director Champs & Alliances – NCAA; Julie Cromer, SWA – Indiana University; Tracie Hitz, Director of Business Operations – NCAA and Elliot Hopkins, Director of Sports – NFHS, made up the first board of speakers. An array of lecturers taught us the importance of experience, volunteering and networking. Ah, there is that word again.

We got to mingle with the group after their session of Q & A, and I realized, right then and there, the industry I entered into my freshman year of undergrad is the best choice I have made as a twenty-something.

After a nice, filling buffet lunch from Rock Bottom, it was time for the keynote speaker. Ironically, during lunch, she sat at our table. Sitting pensive in my seat, I was trying to think of state-of-the-art questions that made me seem very knowledgeable of the sporting industry. However, she was first to jump the gun.

Question – if you could have any job in the world, your dream job, what would it be?

I knew my answer right away. I was like a little kid with her hand raised, shaking feverishly in the air waiting for her teacher to call on her. We went around the table, and I finally got to answer the question.

Tom Rinaldi because who wouldn't want to be on College Gameday? But more specifically, because his pieces of work are some of the most inspiring and well produced segments on sports television. I will always remember my answer because it is something I have thought about for a lot of my life (then again who hasn't), but what I will explicitly remember is how genuinely interested this keynote speaker was in each and every one of our responses.

This keynote speaker was Marcie Ahern – VP of Event Management of the Indiana Sports Corp. I assume you have now maybe, just maybe, caught on to how this ties into my idea of networking.

Ahern spoke directly to us about her life as an undergrad, her experience in the industry and what she loves about her job now. She addressed the hardships of working in sports, but also the benefits of being a

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Fourth Annual Uncle Bill's Self Storage Miracle League of Central Illinois Golf Outing

By Zach Schroder '14

Another one of the great culminating experience opportunities for second year students is the Miracle League of Central Illinois charity golf outing. This has become an annual project for students looking to work with a charity and gain great experience organizing a high-class event from start to finish.

The fourth annual golf outing was held on Friday April 25th at Weibring Golf Club on the campus of Illinois State University with over 80 golfers supporting the Miracle League, which gives physically and mentally challenged kids a safe and spirited program in which they can play on a baseball field and be a part of a team. Their slogan is "Every child deserves a chance to play ball."

Students were responsible for obtaining a host golf course, securing sponsorships, setting up and operating the registration website, soliciting donations for the silent auction, designing marketing materials, and facilitating the event.

Prior to releasing the golfers to start the shotgun outing, Miracle League players Abbie and Tommie Knudsen kicked off the day in grand fashion by hitting honorary baseballs in front of all the golfers. Then at dinner, Abbie got a chance to speak in front of all the golfers to tell her story and explain what the Miracle League means to her. Abbie and Tommie, and the rest of the Miracle League kids are the reason that we continue to put this on event.

The first three years of the golf outing was incorporated into a class for the graduate students. With Nels Popp leaving Illinois State, Brent Beggs entrusted Zach Schroeder, Adam Kopp, Cody Meincke, Matt Johnson and Matt Stone to plan the event without a formal class. Liz Sattler was also a huge help getting details finalized and supervising the outing.

In addition to the tournament organizers, Recreation Management undergraduate and first year Sport Management graduate students volunteered on the day of the outing to help facilitate check in/registration as well as the on-course activities.

Through sponsorships, golfer registration, hole games, and the silent auction, $8,159 was donated to the Miracle League of Central Illinois to go towards the funding of their own adapted baseball diamond.

Moving forward this golf outing will continue to be a great event for the Sport Management program. We hope program graduates consider playing in this outing in the coming years to give to a worthy cause!

A big thanks go out to this year's golf outing sponsors including: Uncle Bill's Self Storage, Maggie Miley's, Sonic, Brad Barker Honda, Fast Signs, Heartland Bank, Copper Top Lounge, IHSA, Drake Orthodontics, DaZyBiCo, Trunk Bay Construction, The Olive Bin, Downstate Shockwave, Ron Smith Printing, Apartment Mart, and the Normal Cornbelters. We would also like to thank Laura Provost and the entire staff at Weibring Golf Club for facilitating a great event.

Students volunteers at the check-in of the annual Miracle League Golf Outing.

Coordinators of the outing, Cody Meinecke ('14), Adam Kopp ('14) and Zach Schroeder ('14), pose in front of the sponsorship banner.

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being a part of this world-wide phenomenon that is sport. She talked about resumes, and how the first thing she, as a vice president, looks at on your one-page story of careers, which is your extra circulars and volunteering efforts, if you are interested in knowing, not your GPA or school attended. It was her who inspired me to go the extra mile.

Ahern made her closing remarks, and the sport management students went on to the mini panel portion of the day. Speakers ranged from Indiana Pacers' employees to the VP of Marketing for Indy Car. There was a variety for all different industries of sports, and it was basically a game of 21 questions for the panel groups. The kind of 21 questions where hopefully the perfect job is the final answer. the perfect job is the final answer.

Panels and speakers had concluded, and if I am being honest, the coolest part of the trip was next. We had the opportunity to tour Bankers Life Fieldhouse. Yes, we even got to go courtside, and yes, I did pull out my iPhone to Snapchat pictures of the Pacers shoot-around, making all of my friends back home jealous.

After the tour, we made our way to the upper bowl to watch the hometown team play the Chicago Bulls, quite the matchup for our group with Normal being only a two-hour drive to Chicago. It was the perfect way to end the best class trip I have ever been on, even better than the days as a third-grader when Science City was all the rage.

We hopped (more like dawdled) on the giant Bird buses and made our way back to the home of Illinois State University. Tired and still wet because it did not stop raining, I learned that the opportunity I currently have as a grad student in sports management at Illinois State is one-in-a-million.

Networking. It is now something I do because I enjoy meeting people in the sports industry, regardless of what sector they work in. It is how I became friends with Marcie Ahern and a part of the Indiana Sports Corp. It is how I have met professionals in the industry that I love, and it all began on a rainy day two-and-a-half hours east of Normal, Illinois.

KNR Sports Newsletter UPDATE.indd 8 1/26/2015 11:23:24 AM

ISU Sport Management Symposium attracts big names, many students

By Dani Kabbes '14

By far, the best thing about the Illinois State Sports Management program is the incredible amount of hands-on experience and networking with industry professionals we, as students, are afforded. Taking ownership of our education by putting the fundamental lessons and ideas of the "sports biz" into action not only enhances our time in the classroom, but also better prepares us for life post-ISU.

One such hands-on opportunity is the planning of the ISU Sport Management Symposium. Maggie Ahern, Erin Brown and I were lucky enough to have the opportunity to plan the 2014 Symposium, which brings students and professors from around the Midwest to campus to hear from successful, established sports industry professionals. The panelists engage with the students and professors in lively discussion regarding best practices, innovative ideas and career advice.

Planning this event was truly a labor of love. Kayle Gray and I began meeting on a regular basis as early as June of 2013 to discuss our grand plans for the future of the symposium and the improvements we wanted to make upon the already incredible event from years past. Not long after we began the planning, Kayle was hired to work with the Learfield team at the KFC Yum! Center in Louisville, KY. While it was sad to see Kayle go, Maggie and Erin dove in headfirst and hit the ground running with the event planning.

This year's event was held at the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Uptown Normal—a new venue for the Symposium. The location had changed a few times over the years, but we knew that we wanted a new, upscale facility that had the room for the symposium to grow in the future. Next on the agenda was our lineup of speakers, which proved much more difficult to organize than was originally anticipated. After phone calls, emails and even overnight mailing bags of M&Ms and a rubber chicken (yes, a rubber chicken. If you'd like an an explanation, ask Nels Popp!) to potential keynote speakers, we had assembled an amazing group of business-minded professionals.

Our first panel included Todd Fischer of GMR Marketing, Justin Reckamp from State Farm, Jorie Sax, representing both MillerCoors and WISE, and Brian Bowsher from the University of Miami. The second panel featured Erin Harvego from the Big Ten Network, Lisa Boaz of the St. Louis Rams, Vince Cicero CEO of the Western & Southern Open, and Mike Ernst from the Chicago Fire. Topics discussed ranged from marketing and sale to sponsorship and activation to career advice. With the bases loaded after two informative and insightful panels, Steve DeLay stepped up to the plate and knocked a grand slam out of the park with his keynote address about sales and marketing and his new book: "The Ultimate Toolkit to Sell the Last Seat in the House."

To make the event even more interactive, a Symposium Twitter account was created and implemented to market the event and engage potential attendees in the months leading up to the event. Attendees at the event could also tweet their questions and comments for the panelists. Sports Business Education Network again was able to livestream the symposium for those unable to attend. Without the help of Cody Meincke and Adam Kopp, that online broadcast or the USA-Canada Olympic hockey game viewing during lunch would not have been possible!

Overall, the 2014 Sport Management Symposium was a success and a true testament to the growth of this program and the increasing respect for its professors and students around the sports industry. I know I took away a lot of great lessons from the panelists that day and consider myself very lucky to have gotten the chance to work with Maggie, Erin, Nels, Dr. Beggs and Liz Sattler on such a premier educational event. I cannot wait to see what the co-chairs have in store for the 2015 symposium.

Keynote speaker Steve Delay and other panelists.

Jorie Sax, Todd Fischer, Justin Reckamp and Brian Bowsher speak to students about the business of sports.

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