McEvoy will begin a new position as a full professor of sport management within the prestigious David B. Falk Center for Sport Management at Syracuse University.

McEvoy leaves ISU to take position at Syracuse

This fall, for the first time in a decade, Chad McEvoy will not be directing the Illinois State sport management program. Instead McEvoy will begin a new position as a full professor of sport management within the prestigious David B. Falk Center for Sport Management at Syracuse University.

"Chad has been the face and driving force behind this program for a long time," said new program coordinator Nels Popp. "He is certainly one of the top professors in our field and has had a major influence on the careers of many of our students, as well as myself. He will definitely be missed around here."

Several former ISU sport management students echoed Popp’s remarks upon learning that McEvoy would be leaving the program.

"Chad’s leadership in the classroom and as my advisor during my two years in the program were instrumental to my success at that time and to this day," said Matt Hawkins ’05, current sport marketing manager with the Bloomington-Normal CVB. "I truly appreciate the guidance that he’s been able to give me, as well as his effort to keep alums connected to the program once they graduate. I think of him for his honesty, compassion for his students, his vast knowledge of the industry, and his love for the program."

“I owe a great deal of gratitude to Dr. McEvoy,” reflected Alan Morse ’04, an assistant professor of sport management at Mississippi State University. “Still to this day, I consider him my mentor and friend. Illinois State is a better place because of his hard work and dedication.”

McEvoy started at Illinois State in 2002 and has been instrumental in building the ISU sport management program. During his tenure he has been responsible for three major curriculum revisions, securing a new faculty line, helping to institute class trips and program symposiums, and marketing the program. In addition, he has mentored scores of students and has been an innovator in the classroom, incorporating unique classroom activities such as his popular Moneyball/NBA Draft project, a case study competition, and mock collective bargaining agreement exercises. During his time at ISU, McEvoy has taught a variety of courses, including Sport Finance, Sport Law, Sport Marketing, Introduction to Sport Management,

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Dear ISU Sport Management Alumni, Students, and Friends,

As many of you know, this summer has been one of transition, both for our sport management program and me personally. This spring I accepted a faculty position at Syracuse University. As you might expect, this has brought about conflicting emotions of excitement about the new position as well as sadness of leaving ISU.

I’ve been blessed to have 10 great years at Illinois State. Our program has grown from just a handful of students and only a couple course offerings to one of the top sport management programs in the Midwest. As part of this process, we developed, and subsequently revised, a strong curriculum based on exposing our students to best practices in the sports industry, and we’ve established relationships with industry leaders both locally and nationally. We’ve also gone beyond what many programs do to create opportunities for students to travel on class trips, interact with top executives through our annual symposium, and to get involved in real-world projects.

Having had some time to reflect, what I’ve found to be far more important than the accomplishments listed above are the people involved. It’s been a pleasure and honor to work alongside my friends Nels Popp and Brent Beggs in helping lead our program. I’ve truly enjoyed developing both professional relationships and personal friendships with so many great sports industry people here in Central Illinois and beyond. Above all, I’ve had an incredible opportunity to work with so many talented students in our program over the past ten years. Seeing students learn and grow while in the program for two years, and then continue to develop into industry professionals and leaders, has unquestionably been the most rewarding part of this job.

I hope that you will continue to stay in touch, even if I’m wearing orange instead of red to work. While I won’t be involved with the program at ISU any longer, I would love to maintain relationships as colleague, teacher, mentor, and friend. Best wishes to you and your families.

Regards,

Chad McEvoy
cmcevoy@syr.edu
(315) 443-0364

I was fortunate to have Dr. McEvoy as a faculty mentor during my undergraduate and graduate coursework at Illinois State,” said current Indiana law student Scott Krapt ’11.

“I always enjoyed his innovative approach to teaching through practical projects and opportunities to seek personal development outside of the classroom. All the best to Dr. McEvoy and his family in their next endeavor.”

“I wanted to congratulate Dr. McEvoy on his new position at Syracuse University. ISU is going to miss him,” said Mike Lucas ’04, general manager of the Windy City Thunderbolts minor league baseball team. “I’ve told many people my initial reason for going to grad school was to extend the start of my student loan payments. However, when I enrolled in Chad’s classes, it made me realize that I made the right choice. He made class fun, but most importantly practical. Thanks for everything and good luck.”

McEvoy will be joining a department with nine other full-time faculty members and will be teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses at Syracuse. One of his assignments this fall will include developing a partnership with the New York Yankees for ticket sales training. ISU’s School of Kinesiology and Recreation has contracted three adjunct instructors to help cover McEvoy’s course load this upcoming school year.

Notes from the program director

Advanced Topics, and Research Methods and he has been advisor to dozens of students.

“Chad constantly challenged our class, but always found ways to channel our inner competitors through class projects such as the NBA draft simulation and the collective bargaining agreement exercise,” said ISU Athletics Director of Marketing L.B. Nagle ’10. “Both projects were fun and got heated at times which I think he enjoyed because it required him to jump in and ‘referee.’ Thanks, Chad, for making graduate school so much fun and managing to make sure we learned a few things along the way too.”

“I wish Chad the best of luck,” said Kristin Scott ’06, current director of Development with the University of Minnesota athletic department. “I remember having the most interesting case studies in his class. His support and encouragement sincerely helped me continue my career in athletics.”

“Chad was a great mentor and teacher,” said Brian Nyström ’11, marketing coordinator for University of Minnesota-Duluth athletics. “He truly enjoyed seeing his students do well in and out of the classroom. Competing in his annual NBA Draft stats project was a highlight even though he rigged it so my team lost in the finals after dominating up to that point. I wish the McDaddy the best of luck at Syracuse even though he won’t need it.”

In addition to his classroom work, McEvoy has been a prolific researcher during his time at Illinois State, examining issues related to revenue generation for sport organizations, with particular emphasis on college athletics. His work has been published in many academic journals and he has coauthored two textbooks. He has also been cited as a sport management expert in numerous popular media outlets, including USA Today, ESPN.com, Sports Illustrated, The Wall Street Journal, and The New York Times. He has appeared regularly on local talk radio station WJBC to discuss the business of sports and has been interviewed by several other television and radio outlets, including a live national television appearance this past fall on the PBS program, NewsHour, with Jim Lehrer. McEvoy has also been an academic journal editor and has presented research at numerous conferences and workshops, including appearing in front of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, at the National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators Conference, and at the Big Ten Conference marketing meetings. During the 2010-2011 academic year, he was awarded ISU’s College of Applied Science and Technology Researcher of the Year award.

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1. How would you describe your job?
I am responsible for the continued growth, development, and implementation of all facets of IMG College’s operation as the exclusive multimedia rightsholder for University of Cincinnati Bearcats Athletics—a heavy concentration on managing the revenue generation, fiscal responsibility, personnel and development of key local, regional, and national relationships.

2. What are some of the unique opportunities you have had with your job?
I’ve had the opportunity to work with and meet some exceptional coaches and administrators who have made significant contributions to intercollegiate athletics while representing their institution(s). I’ve also enjoyed getting to know the many student-athletes that have represented Bearcats Athletics over the years. It’s been exciting to work with leaders of respective companies that support our corporate partnership efforts through an association with Bearcats Athletics. As a diehard sports fan, it’s also been enjoyable to visit many other stadiums and arenas to experience their gameday festivities and traditions.

3. What is the toughest part of your job?
Continuing to identify and maximize revenue streams, which help both Bearcats Athletics and IMG College compete at the highest level. With the ever-changing landscape (i.e. conference realignment) of the sports industry and the big money involved, it’s important to continue to strengthen your brand and competitive differential.

4. What are some of your favorite memories from your time at Illinois State?
Avanti’s. Joking aside, I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to pursue a master’s degree in athletics administration while also getting hands on work experience as a marketing assistant in the Athletics Department. I remember enjoying the many courses around the business of sports that really shaped what I wanted to pursue as a career. I will be forever indebted to the many great people in the sport management/recreation program and Athletics Department who helped me follow my dreams of working in the sports industry.

5. What advice or recommendations would you give to current ISU sport management students trying to break into the sport industry?
In the sports industry, it’s extremely difficult to get your foot in the door for that “first” full-time position; therefore, my advice would be to participate in internship opportunities that afford great hands-on experience and also help identify what areas might be the best fit for your passion, talents, and strengths. My advice would also be to offer to tackle many different areas within an internship opportunity so that you may find out where your passion lies. For example, one of my first internship experiences was with the Peoria Chiefs minor league baseball team, and we were involved with almost every aspect (ticket sales, marketing, event management, corporate sponsorship, etc.) of the business. By getting a taste of each area, it really helped me identify that my passion and strengths were best suited for sales and business development positions.
Illinois State sport management updates

- ISU sport management professor Chad McEvoy earned some national exposure last fall as major media outlets sought experts in NCAA punishments following college athletics scandals at Miami, USC, Ohio State, and others. McEvoy, who has done research on the impact of NCAA sanctions on football programs, was quoted on the front page of a piece in The New York Times on August 20 and appeared on national television, alongside ESPN commentator Kevin Blackistone, during the September 2 PBS NewsHour with Jim Lehrer.

- ISU sport management students had the opportunity to hear from two of sports top broadcasters this past school year without leaving campus. On November 9, NBA Hall of Famer and former ESPN/ABC basketball analyst Bill Walton spoke at the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council, sharing stories from his career and an inspiring message for attendees. Nearly 600 people attended the event, including several current and former ISU sport management students such as L.B. Nagle ’10, Matt Lyons ’10, Matt Hawkins ’05, Paul Kabbes ’12, and Sean Johnson ’13, as well as sport management professors Brent Beggs and Nels Popp. On April 27, Fox Sports personality Joe Buck came to town, speaking to a group of students and media members at ISU’s Redbird Arena before heading to a Red Cross fundraising event. Second-year student Hannah Deutsch and Popp were on hand to hear Buck discuss breaking into sports media and working events such the Super Bowl and World Series.

- Several sport management students and McEvoy met outside of the classroom to attend the Bloomington-Normal premiere of the Academy Award-winning movie Moneyball in September. McEvoy uses the book as required reading during his Advanced Topics course.

- In November, the sport sales class undertook a new project to sell tickets to a Redbird men’s basketball game. Working in conjunction with athletic department personnel, student teams competed to see who could sell the most tickets to ISU registered student organizations. Teams drafted the RSOs they wanted to approach, then had several weeks to contact those RSOs and discuss the benefits of buying tickets. By the December 3 game versus UNC-Wilmington, the class of 14 students sold 424 tickets, generating more than $2,000 in new revenue for the athletic department.

- This past school year, ISU sport management faculty continued their trend of bringing guest speakers to the classroom via video conferencing (Skype). Students in the sport industry class received resume and interviewing advice from Buffy Filippell, founder of Teamworkonline. Students in sport law heard from Mountain West Associate Commissioner (and ISU alum) Dan Butler about conference realignment issues, and the sport marketing class had a fun exchange with GMR Marketing VP Steve Dupey. And in the sport sales class, Cleveland State sales and marketing director and former account executive with the Atlanta Hawks, Carrie Neville, shared her tips on procuring and landing group sales.

- This January, ISU sport management alum Andrea Mosher ’08 launched a new business with partner Ira Childress called Childress Sports Consulting. The company “provides informative, innovative, and inspiring educational programs for student-athletes, professional athletes, and athletic professionals...help(ing) others succeed on the court, in the classroom, and off-the-court. From career development workshops to social media training to recruiting coaching, Childress Sports Consulting provides a comprehensive but focused array of services.” For more information on the company, check our childresssports.com.
Left–ISU sport management alum Chris Mallen ’11 holding a 2” x 2” piece of the original floor from the Hershey Sports Arena. Center–Rich Eckert ’12, Paul Kabbes ’12, and Don Vedeen ’12, take registrations at the second annual Uncle Bill’s Storage/COW’s Miracle League Golf Scramble this spring. Right–As her culminating experience, sport management student Stephanie Barnes ’12 conducted the first Marfan Mad Dash 5k Race.

• In February, sport management assistant professor Nels Popp travelled to Indianapolis to be a volunteer for Super Bowl XLVI. Super Bowl XLVI volunteers were chosen nearly two years prior to the event and went through training sessions before the big game. Popp worked at a check-in desk at a Super Bowl Host Committee party the Saturday prior to the event as well as working “security” shifts at the NFL House, a high-end gathering place for NFL and sponsor executives and guests. Popp was fortunate enough to see a handful of former NFL greats, such as Lynn Swan, Steve Young, and Rodney Hampton and watched the ESPN football crew of Mike Ditka, Chris Carter, and Keyshawn Johnson film segments outside of Lucas Oil Stadium on game day in Indy. He did not, however, get to watch the game until seeing a replay upon his return to Normal. Popp also caught up with sport management alums Jack Schmitz ’10 and Tim Kelly ’10 while enjoying the Super Bowl festivities in downtown Indianapolis.

• To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Wilt Chamberlain’s 100-point game, the Philadelphia 76ers developed a unique fan giveaway, and ISU sport management alum Chris Mallen ’11 was right in the middle of it. Fans attending this year’s March 2 game received a 2” x 2” piece of the original floor from the Hershey Sports Arena, where the “Big Dipper’s” historic game took place in 1962. Team personnel, including Mallen who is a part of Philadelphia’s marketing staff, found the nearly forgotten floor in a warehouse before the team had it appraised and purchased it. While traipsing around the storage garage, Mallen said they “felt like Indiana Jones finding the Ark of the Covenant. A very cool experience.”

• This past March, alum Brian Nyström ’11 was recognized by Brian Gainor’s Partnership Activation for showing “creativity in the sports marketplace.” Nyström, who is the athletics marketing director for the University of Minnesota-Duluth, attached a GoPro camera to the department’s Quad Ice Car, which races during intermission of Bulldog hockey games. The live video feed from the camera can be displayed on AMSOIL Arena’s video board for all fans to watch. See video of this promotion by searching “Quad Racing at UMD Men’s Game” on YouTube.

• This spring, student Dustin Hall ’12, completed his culminating experience research project examining the relationship between newspaper sports editors and college athletics media relations staff. Hall and his advisor, Nels Popp, then presented their findings at the Fifth Summit on Communication and Sport held in Peoria at the end of March. Hall was a graduate assistant for media relations with ISU athletics.

• Second year student Rich Eckert ’12, assisted by several other ISU sport management students and faculty, directed the second annual Uncle Bill’s Storage/COW’s Miracle League Golf Scramble this spring. Held this year on April 27 at the prestigious Bloomington Country Club, the outing raised approximately $8,000, which went toward the Miracle League of Central Illinois. Eckert and his crew attracted 112 golfers for the scramble. The event included lunch, dinner, and an auction featuring items such as a Phil Mickelson autographed U.S. Open flag, a basketball autographed by LeBron James, Dwight Howard, and Kevin Durant, and Cubs rooftop tickets.

• This spring, publisher Human Kinetics launched a new sport management journal called Case Studies in Sport Management. The brainchild of Chad McEvoy, CSSM features peer-reviewed case studies from the field of sport management, which can be used by professors in the classroom. McEvoy is the journal’s founding editor.

• This past May, ISU alum Clint Warren ’08 participated in graduation at the University of Minnesota after earning his Ph.D. in Sport Management there. While in Minneapolis, Warren, who is now a faculty member at Eastern Illinois, caught up with fellow alumni John Morris ’08, who now works in fundraising for the U of M, and Britt Erps ’12, who is working for TCF Stadium, home of Golden Gopher football. Kristin Scott ’06 is also working for Minnesota athletics but was unable to meet up with the Redbird crew.

• The sport management program enjoyed a small reunion in Dallas this summer at the National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators conference. Attending the event were Corey Ansfeld ’11, now at Utah State; Bryan Nyström ’11, now at the University of Minnesota-Duluth; and Kelby Weeter ’12, who just landed a position at Old Hat Creative. They were joined in Big D by sport management faculty Chad McEvoy and Nels Popp, who were in town to give a research presentation regarding ticket sales efforts by college athletic departments.

• As her culminating experience, sport management student Stephanie Barnes ’12 conducted the first Marfan Mad Dash 5k Race at Tipton Trails in Bloomington on June 23. Barnes sold numerous sponsorship packages and attracted nearly 100 runners for the event, which raised $6,500 for the National Marfan Foundation. Barnes, who was an NCAA Division III national champion pole vaulter, has a brother, David, with Marfan Syndrome. Stephanie, who is now an assistant track coach at ISU, hopes the race will become an annual event.
Down under, it’s everyone’s game: Reflections from a professional practice abroad

By Andrea Travelstead ’12

My final graduation requirement for my Sport Management master’s degree has led me to an internship 15,000 miles and three plane trips away at Kilsyth Basketball Club, located just outside of Melbourne, Australia. It has been a great experience and I would like to share some of what I have learned so far.

I was prepared for the obvious differences that accompany an experience abroad, and in Australia there are plenty of them: cars drive on the left side of the road, roundabouts are more common than traffic lights, kangaroos can be spotted in the wild, Aussie Rules Footy and Cricket are the kings of sport, and while they claim to speak English here, I am constantly lost in conversations filled with slangs and sharp accents.

What I wasn’t expecting were all the differences in the administration of sport. After being involved with sport across many spectrums, as a player, coach, and intern in collegiate athletic departments and conference offices, I couldn’t picture an athletic structure different from the system we are used to in the Unites States. But Down Under, nothing is the same.

Kilsyth and Mountain District Basketball Association is a nonprofit sport organization overseeing more than 500 games a week between three facilities and 15 courts. Basketball competitions are available for all ages and ability levels, from ages 6-60; and in 2011 Kilsyth Basketball was awarded the largest basketball association in Australia with more than 1,050 teams registered in its competitions. The American sport system combines athletics with academics, while the Australian system separates the two structures. Elite sport is conducted through outside club systems where athletes move up the ranks to professional levels, while the Australian system separates the two structures. Elite sport is conducted through outside club systems where athletes move up the ranks to professional levels.

Associations such as Kilsyth administer three different kinds of competitions: after-school programs, domestic competition and representative ball. In addition to these competitions, Kilsyth Basketball also provides various developmental programs and camps to teach kids at an early age the fundamental skills of the sport. After-school programs cater to younger kids and are run through the schools, but as more of a gym class than a competitive program. What I wasn’t expecting were all the differences in the administration of sport. After being involved with sport across many spectrums, as a player, coach, and intern in collegiate athletic departments and conference offices, I couldn’t picture an athletic structure different from the system we are used to in the Unites States. But Down Under, nothing is the same.

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For top players, Kilsyth Basketball also has representative teams for U12, U14, U16, U18, and U20 boys and girls teams as well as a developmental league and semi-pro men’s and women’s teams. The representative teams wear the Kilsyth Cobras team name and are coached by Kilsyth staff. They train at least twice a week and play in the Victorian Junior Basketball League, traveling across the state. The senior men’s and women’s semi-pro teams participate in the South East Australian Basketball League (SEABL), which is the second highest level of competition available in the country behind the fully professional National Basketball League (NBL).

My primary duties during my internship include being appointed as the coordinator for the 2012 Australian Schools Championships (ASC), organizing our first ever 3-on-3 fundraiser tournament, starting a brand new program named Queens of the Court to stimulate interest in basketball among young girls, and being in charge of the operation of our Kilsyth Basketball website. In addition to these principle projects, I also have a hand in the marketing and game day operations department, being responsible for all the news articles that go up on our website, including game previews and wrap ups for our SEABL competitions, press releases about upcoming events, awards, and other general news stories relevant to the club and our teams. I create all the posters and flyers to advertise upcoming games and game day programs for SEABL games.

Outside of the office, I participate as a coach for our Snakebites program (a basic skills program), run school clinics at local primary schools, set up camps during the school holidays, and lead academy sessions which are private small group sessions for our representative players that give them an extra hour of intense skills work. I am also an assistant coach for our Cobras women’s D-League team.

Since arriving here, I’ve been asked one question more than any other: What’s the biggest difference between sports in Australia and America? My answer: options.

At virtually any age and skill level, you can always find a team to play on. And not just a pick up league that plays in a dimly lit gym, but well organized competitions with referees, official uniforms, and stat sheets that record your performance game to game. Want to get your child active in sports without the huge time commitment of traveling miles and miles to weekend tournaments? No worries. Put them on a local domestic team with games once a week at your local association. Tried to make the top representative team for your age group but didn’t make the cut? Most age groups have four or five different teams, so if you didn’t make the 1s team, chances are still good you can be on the 2, 3, 4, or 5 team. Have a busy full-time job and are looking for a way to exercise and stay in shape? Form a senior domestic team with coworkers and friends, and play full 40-minute games once a week. Whatever continued on page 6
In the world of sports, future career opportunities often come down to the people one meets and the connections made along the way. ISU sport management graduate students had the chance to build the foundations of relationships with professionals in the sports industry on a class trip to Chicago this past fall.

The trip started at 7:30 a.m. as graduate students loaded Reggie mini-buses and headed north to the Windy City. Students were fortunate enough to experience life at the Big Ten Conference office and at the home of the Chicago White Sox, U.S. Cellular Field.

The first stop was at the Big Ten Conference office where students interacted in small discussion groups covering revenue generation, game-day experience, and marketing and industry issues. The first panel ranged from Big Ten Conference administrators, athletic directors, and marketing and game day staff. Speakers included Shon Morris, senior associate A.D. for Northwestern Athletics; Myndee Kay Karsen, associate commissioner for the Summit League; Daron Jones, event management for Wisconsin Athletics; Ben Fraser, director of guest services for Wisconsin Athletics; Avery Robins, VP of marketing partnerships for the WNBA’s Chicago Sky; Keri Lockett, consumer marketing team for the Big Ten Network; Wendy Fallen, associate commissioner-championships for Big Ten Conference; Andrea Williams, associate commissioner-football and basketball operations for the Big Ten Conference; and Chad Hawley, associate commissioner-compliance for the Big Ten Conference.

Students then had the opportunity to further network with the panelists over lunch in a more informal setting. Panelists stressed the importance of building and fostering relationships. An important lesson in relationship-building is to not only communicate with contacts when you need something, but to generate a more personal connection. Relationship building takes time and effort, and as Lockett from the Big Ten Network relayed, “People are much more willing to help out someone they share a personal relationship with.”

After lunch, students departed for U.S. Cellular Field and their daily routines during the games and on a regular work day. Panelists shared details about their personal experiences, memorable sports moments they’ve been involved in, as well as insights on how to break into the field.

To continue the learning about business development options, students heard from a third panel discussing sport sponsorships. Panel members Todd Fisher, manager of national sponsorships at State Farm Insurance; Gail Tucker, director of corporate sponsorship activation for the Chicago White Sox; Scott Sonnenberg, senior director of corporate partnerships with the Chicago Bulls; and Chris Todd, member of business development for Navigate Marketing led students through how sponsorship negotiation to understand the value of sponsorships, developing brands, and how it affects the overall production of a business.

After the last panel, the class was given a tour of U.S. Cellular Field and had the chance to catch fly balls at the White Sox’s batting practice. To conclude the day, students were able to interact with industry professionals in a more causal setting, watching the Chicago White Sox take on Justin Verlander and the Detroit Tigers from a pair of luxury suites. Several industry personnel from pro teams, college athletic departments, and agencies joined the Redbirds in the suites.

As the class learned, one of the of the most valuable tools to a successful career in the sports industry is the ability to develop connections along the way. The foundations they made laid the groundwork for future career opportunities.

Continued from page 5

your situation, if you want to play, there’s a team for you. A stark contrast from the overly competitive American system where once you hit junior high or high school if you don’t make the varsity or jayvee squad, you find some other hobby to fill your time.

Basketball Australia markets the sport as “everyone’s game” and this motto is upheld to the highest degree. Whether you are able bodied or disabled, no matter what your gender, age, or religious beliefs, a competition or program can be found here for you. In all the FIBA categories, Australia, with a population of 23 million people, is ranked in the top three nations in the world for men, women, youth, wheelchair, intellectually disabled, and deaf.

I am 25 years old and had a successful collegiate playing career, but with graduation came my retirement from basketball. Like the majority of collegiate athletes who don’t make it into the pros, at 22 my competitive run had ended. There would still be shoot arounds, occasional pick-up games, or 1 on 1 with a friend, but competitive 5 on 5 basketball properly officiated and with a first place finish at stake was over. Had I been Down Under, my career may have just been beginning.

While it is easy to pick up on this difference, what is far more difficult is to decipher which structure works the best. With all these opportunities available to aspiring athletes in Australia, sport takes more of a leisurely and carefree attitude. With such a high supply of available teams, there is less of a competitive drive to make the cut. In the United States, sport has a more cut-throat or win-at-all-costs nature. So what is better, developing a nation of active individuals where everyone plays and everyone has a chance to win, or funneling down the talent pool to produce elite athletes while leaving the larger majority of the population to only spectate? What I do know is that the true value of my experience is being able to appreciate these differences between cultures and be entrusted with so much responsibility to contribute to the successful operation of Kilsyth Basketball. Just like language, food, music, religion, or anything else, there is no one universal way to conduct sport. Sport is a means of self-expression, satisfaction, fitness, confidence, and healthy competition. Wherever you are and however you play, making the game possible is the only thing that matters.
ISU alum McCarty makes Final Four run with Kansas

Last April, ISU sport management alumnus Kevin McCarty ’10, the athletic Web designer for the University of Kansas Athletic Department, was in tow for the Jayhawks run at the NCAA Men’s Basketball Division I championships. While Kansas came up one game short in New Orleans, McCarty had a once-in-a-lifetime experience. He shared some of his thoughts on the experience of being involved in a Final Four during an interview for News from the Sidelines:

What will you remember most about the Final Four experience?
Lots of memories for sure. Kentucky’s Anthony Davis leaping off the court and into our section of the media area will be memorable. I learned over to Sports Illustrated’s Andy Staples and told him it was OK that he ducked out of the way and said surely no one would notice, with a smile. Fifteen seconds later his twitter feed was full of jeers from people watching on TV and he leaned over and said, “Oh, they noticed.” The magnitude of the Final Four is something that can’t be fabricated, or fully understood until you’re there. Everyone tries to re-create the experience with their conference tournaments and so on, but there’s something in the air that makes the Final Four a truly special event. One of the true highlights of the entire tournament was watching Norfolk State knock off Missouri, for obvious reasons because of my employer but also because that another reason the tournament is special—a zero can rise to hero status.

What were your primary responsibilities for KU while in New Orleans?
I essentially became a video news reporter during the tournament, covering the team for our website, KUAthletics.com. During the games I handled the miscellaneous game notes, but after I’d put my press cap on and shoot postgame interviews, etc., before they walk out of the site. In the evenings we usually picked a cool spot to eat and tried to make it to a couple of the free concerts in the riverfront area. We spent most of our days inside the arena, running to the next media availability to cover it. After spending a week in New Orleans, I’m thankful that I didn’t have any brushes with the law. Outside of the insane talent on the court, there were plenty of stars along the way. I got a creeper-over-the-shoulder photo of Samuel L. Jackson, saw Jay Z and of course Ashley Judd perform the anthem, even though most of America hated their rendition. I felt big time when Craig Sager asked for my phone number in the SID meeting in Omaha, in case he needed any KU info and couldn’t get to the six other people who were more important than me. For you media relations nerds out there, I got a photo with Mike Ranieri, one of the minds behind StatCrew software.

Can you take us through a little bit of the KU operations team itinerary and how you handled the demands from media and fans?
We timed our arrival at each site to be there before the team bus because once the team hits the tunnel and the lights go on. It’s a mental and physical gauntlet and it takes a tough team, with a little bit of luck, to make it all the way. If you ever get the chance, go. It’s well worth it.

Did you get to enjoy any of the spectacle of a Final Four, or was it all work while you were there?
We spent most of our days inside the arena, either eating dry pretzels in the media room or running to the next media availability to cover it for the site. In the evenings we usually picked a cool spot to eat and tried to make it to a couple of the free concerts in the riverfront area. We walked through the KISS concert and stood outside for Jimmy Buffet.

Did you get to enjoy any of the behind the scenes at the Final Four that we might not realize when we watch the event on television?
When you flip on the TV you just see the game, but there were literally days of interviews, video shoots, practices, appearances, more interviews, etc., before they walk out of the tunnel and the lights go on. It’s a mental and physical gauntlet and it takes a tough team, with a little bit of luck, to make it all the way. If you ever get the chance, go. It’s well worth it.

Was there a moment where the enormity of the experience really sank in?
Wow, I still don’t think the entire experience has had a chance to settle. I love getting to the arena early, no matter what event it is. I enjoy the calm before the storm, and in the calm before Kentucky-Louisville tipped off the entire weekend, I got to think about all of the other athletic department staff members at the hundreds of institutions across the country that might not ever get to experience something of this magnitude, and here I am, just a kid in the dawn of my career, courtside at the Final Four. I’ll always remember that reflection time. A nice reminder to work hard and enjoy the time you owe it to the ones who can’t be there, or the people who helped get you there.

Did you have any “brushes with fame” while you were at the Final Four?
After spending a week in New Orleans, I’m thankful that I didn’t have any brushes with the law. Outside of the insane talent on the court, there were plenty of stars along the way. I got a creeper-over-the-shoulder photo of Samuel L. Jackson, saw Jay Z and of course Ashley Judd at the Final Four. I was excited to hear the Fray perform the anthem, even though most of America hated their rendition. I felt big time when Craig Sager asked for my phone number in the SID meeting in Omaha, in case he needed any KU info and couldn’t get to the six other people who were more important than me. For you media relations nerds out there, I got a photo with Mike Ranieri, one of the minds behind StatCrew software.

Can you tell us anything else that goes on behind the scenes at the Final Four that we might not realize when we watch the event on television?
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After hosting a highly successful inaugural sport management symposium in 2011, the ISU sport management program followed up in 2012 with a second outstanding program that attracted 240 students from six different states to hear a wide variety of sport business leaders. Keynote speaker and sport marketing expert Dan Migala offered an inspiring keynote address, while panelists from sport organizations such as ESPN, IMG, the St. Louis Rams, and the Big Ten Network offered students advice and motivation, while sharing frontline details about some of the latest industry trends.

The event was sponsored by minor league basketball team the Central Illinois Drive and indoor football team the Bloomington Edge. Unlike the initial symposium, the 2012 event was held off-campus as the DoubleTree Hotel and Conference Center in Bloomington played host. Student organizers Britt Erps and Kelby Weiter put together a strong agenda that attracted record number of attendees for the February 24 date. Also new to the program was a networking social hour on the Thursday evening before the symposium, open strictly to ISU sport management students and friends of the program.

The symposium began with a panel consisting of St. Louis Rams Marketing Manager Lisa Boaz, IMG Vice President of Ticket Solutions Matt DiFebo, General Manager of Badger Sports Properties (Learfield) Jeff Jurgella, and Associate Athletic Director for Marketing at Iowa State Mary Pink. After the morning panel, attendees broke for lunch, then returned to hear the keynote address from Migala. After lunch, a second panel consisting of ESPN Sports Business reporter Kristi Dosh, Big Ten Network Vice President for Marketing Erin Harvego, Illinois State Director of Athletics Gary Friedman, and Executive Director of the Illinois High School Association Marty Hickman took the dais. The emcee for the event was ISU communications professor Lance Lippert, who also took questions from the audience and via Twitter hashtag #ISUSMsymposium.

Following the second panel, attendees had the opportunity to speak with several sport organizations during an internship fair. Agencies represented including IMG College, the St. Louis Rams, the Kansas City Chiefs, Red Frog Events, the Bloomington Blaze Hockey Team, the Peoria Chiefs, Normal CornBelters, and Windy City ThunderBolts minor league baseball teams, the athletic departments from the University of Illinois and Illinois State, and the Central Illinois Drive/Bloomington Edge.

Several attendees suggested Migala was the highlight of the day. A former front office executive with the San Diego Padres, Migala is one of the country’s top sport marketing minds. It was Migala who developed the idea of the Chicago White Sox starting their home games at 7:11 as part of a partnership with 7-Eleven convenience stories and it was his concept to turn the right-field foul pole at Petco Park in San Diego into the world’s tallest TaylorMade Driver. Migala was also involved in developing the Chicago Bears original team website, and he has consulted with industry partners throughout the world on sponsorship and marketing strategies. The Migala Report, a monthly sport marketing newsletter, is one of the best sport marketing tools in the industry. Migala shared with the audience many humorous and touching lessons he has learned in his extraordinary career, captivating his audience for nearly an hour.
Part of the curriculum at ISU for Sport Management graduate students involves taking a class called “Sports Industry.” This class is designed to give us all a look at what segments of the industry there are and to open our eyes to possible jobs we didn’t even know existed. When I was assigned a project in the class to present on a professional conference, I chose the Mount Union Sports Sales Workshop because I was working in sales at ISU. I wasn’t sure what exactly the conference was, nor did I envision myself attending or finding it of much value outside of trying to get a good grade on a presentation. While researching, I found the Mount Union Sports Sales Workshop is a one-of-a-kind experience for young people looking to break into the sports sales industry. The conference is held annually in Cleveland, OH at QuickenLoans Arena and Progressive Field. There are three different training sessions with industry professionals, networking opportunities during breakfast and lunch, and pre-scheduled interviews for countless jobs. After learning all of that information from the website, and being someone who sees themselves with a future in sports sales, I decided I had to see this firsthand. So, a group of students led by Dr. Popp took off for Cleveland on Feb. 9. Our group consisted of Mark Steiner, Don Vedeen, Marcus King, Kyle Brant and myself.

We arrived in Cleveland on Thursday night and checked into the hotel, a half block from the Cavaliers’ arena and Indians’ field, and set off to explore the area. Don and Kyle were meeting us a little later due to teaching obligations, so Mark and I headed out. While there weren’t a great deal of things to do in downtown Cleveland, Mark and I did get to enjoy our first ever bison burgers at the Hairy Buffalo. I could tell you how good they were, but the fact I had to tell Mark not to order a second one should cover that. We also witnessed (pun intended) what used to be the LeBron James banner right next to the arena. The night concluded with all of us sharing information while we did some research for the next day’s activities. The week before, we were given a list of teams that would be available to meet with. After sending out resumes to some of those teams, we all landed several interviews.

We arrived at the arena right around 7 a.m. eager to get started. I personally interviewed with the Detroit Red Wings and Murray Cohn (VP of Team Ticket Sales for the NBA) before I even sat down for breakfast. Our itinerary for the rest of the day was as follows: breakfast, opening address, walk to Progressive Field, training session #1, lunch in the club level of Progressive Field, training session #2, break, training session #3, and then four hours of pre-scheduled interviews. I know it sounds like a busy day, but there was no busier man than Marcus King, Crowned by us as “The King of Networking.” Marcus showed an incredible ability to connect with those at the workshop. We joked that he only left after knowing every person in the room. What seems like a long day on paper flew by with the amount of knowledge we absorbed. We were split into small groups of random students and the training sessions were run by sales directors from all major sports leagues. We covered topics ranging from how to get a gatekeeper to help you schedule an appointment to how to close a sale in person. The training sessions blended seamlessly throughout the day by taking us through all steps of how to make a sale. The interviews were by far my favorite part of the day. Broken down into 15-minute segments, each of us had at least seven interviews to get through. Some scheduling techniques were called into question as Don somehow managed to line up eight interviews in a row. I went with the spread-out maneuver, allowing me to discuss things with Dr. Popp and Kyle in between meetings. I will try not to overlook anyone, but here is a list of all the teams each of us met with: Atlanta Hawks, Charlotte Bobcats, Chicago Sky, Cleveland Cavs, Columbus Blue Jackets, Detroit Red Wings, Lake Erie Monsters, NBA Office, New York Mets, Orlando Magic, Phoenix Suns, Pittsburgh Pirates, San Diego Padres and Syracuse University.

As Dr. Popp said at the end of the day, we went from a ten to a twelve. The day was already wrapping up to be an incredible experience, but then each of us left the conference with a job offer. The excitement didn’t stop there. We were invited to watch the Cavaliers-Bucks game in a luxury suite. To those that don’t think a Cleveland-Milwaukee NBA game sounds exciting, you’ve never seen Omri Casspi do battle with Ersan Ilyasova in person! We even met Len Komoroski, president of the Cleveland Cavaliers. On the van ride home the next day, we made an impromptu stop in South Bend and visited the Joyce Athletic Complex on Notre Dame’s campus. Viewing their rich history and taking a picture with the Heisman Trophy seemed like an appropriate ending. It was truly an amazing trip, an experience that will prove to be both memorable and valuable far down the road.

When I was standing in Dr. Popp’s class in September talking about the Mount Union Sports Sales Workshop and Job Fair, I was discussing a website. I was relaying online information and had almost no idea how much it accurately reflected this conference. Upon returning, I can honestly say that anyone who has a desire to work in sports needs to get there. The networking, training, interview practice and overall trip are one of the best experiences I’ve had in my short time in the sports industry. Without the guidance of our faculty, none of this would have been possible. I left with an increased camaraderie with the gentlemen I went on the trip with, and can’t thank each of them enough for making the trip that much more fun. I can only imagine what next year has in store.