

spotlights

Alumni spotlight: Sean Robbins

Sean Robbins jumping through life since leaving AU as an eagle in 1996

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Alumni from a university are an intriguing group of people because they are all different. After their time at Ashland University, each individual goes their separate ways to begin the rest of their life.

Some people jump right into a full-time job in their field, others are adventurous for a few years that jump around before settling down and then there is Sean Robbins, who after his time at AU literally continued to jump for a living.

As a premiere long jumper at Ashland from 1991-1996, Robbins won five Division II long jump national titles and was a 10-time D-II All-American. He still holds the sixth (indoors) and eighth (outdoors) best jumps all-time in Division II.

When asked what his fondest memory of Ashland was, you would expect it to be winning a national championship or the blood, sweat and tears he dedicated to track and field, but it was none of that. Instead it was one simple thing.

Cookies and cream ice cream. “There was a guy that worked at convo and every time I was there I got cookies and cream; before he would see me walk up there, he would look at me and have my bowl ready for me,” Robbins said, “he always apologized when they didn’t have it.”

Robbins graduated in 1996 and earned his Bachelor’s degree in sports medicine and recreation administration.

Less than two months after graduation, Robbins was in Atlanta competing in the Olympic trials for a spot as an Olympian long jumper.

Sporting an Ashland uniform, Robbins came up just short and was placed as an alternate.

“One thing that I really proved at that Olympics is I beat a lot of Division I athletes in that field, the only guys that beat me in that Olympic trials were professionals,” Robbins said. “I put it all out there and you



SUBMITTED BY SEAN ROBBINS

Robbins assisting with the assessment tests at an NFL officials combine.

can’t really ask for anything more.”

It also turned out that of the three athletes who had beaten Robbins at the trials, two of them finished on the podium for the long jump at the Olympics. In fact, Robbins’ trial jump would have earned him a silver medal that year at the Olympics.

Fast forward to four years later, and Robbins is preparing for the trials until he pulled his groin in a competition three weeks before, marking the start of a long rehabilitation journey.

Although still competing at the 2000 Olympic trials, he also blew out his hip which sidelined Robbins for all of 2001. After coming back for the 2002 season and competing, Robbins had the same exact hip injury occur, on the other hip, which put him back on the sidelines for all of 2003.

Coming back for redemption once again, Robbins competed in the 2004 Olympic trials and was named an alternate once again.

“Being able to climb that ladder after having two years taken out of my career, I learned from it,” Robbins said. “I thank God I don’t have any issues with my body, my back and my knees from that.”

Robbins continued to compete after the 2004 Olympic trials, but at a meet in 2006, he knew it was time

to hang it up.

“I was running down the runway and I jumped and thought it was like a 27-foot jump, I’m like ‘yes I’m back I’m back.’ I turned around and it was like 25-foot something and after that I was like ‘okay I’m done,’” Robbins said.

After retiring from jumping, Robbins also wrapped up his six-year coaching stint at AU in which he had been an assistant coach since 2000.

Once running and college coaching seemed to have run its course, what was next for Sean Robbins?

Back in 1998, Robbins had become a personal trainer, so by the time 2006 rolled around, he had grown a solid client base and started up his own company, Fitness and Sports Excelled.

Robbins and his company provides quality fitness and sports training that is inclusive to all of his clients, including sports officials: professional, collegiate and amateur.

Robbins said that his biggest break in the business was in 2012 when he was training John Parry, an NFL official. Last year, Parry was the head official in Super Bowl LIII for the second time in his career.

Parry felt like Robbins had the skills to work with and train other

officials, so he introduced Robbins to the head supervisor of the Big Ten officials.

“I went to their clinics and I did a presentation for them and they were like ‘we want you,’” Robbins said.

Before you know it, Robbins was working with the officials for football of the Big Ten, Mid-American Conference and the Missouri Valley Conference.

“I go to the games and am on the field. I videotape them and I make sure their movements are efficient and make sure they’re not hurting themselves through injuries and stuff like that. Then I send them evaluations after the game,” Robbins said.

Robbins added that he loves this line of work because it gives him a

their combines. With this sort of schedule, Robbins keeps busy in the summer with traveling all over the country to work with officials.

“It has really opened up a lot of opportunities to get those guys healthy, to get them injury free and making sure they have their particular workouts... if they get hurt, then they can’t work,” Robbins said. “They’re athletes just like anybody else and they make mistakes just like anyone else.”

Even with his busy lifestyle and all the training he is doing, Robbins wants to make sure he gives back.

“People think making a lot of money is going to fill you, but giving back is going to be huge,” Robbins said.

For the last 12 years, Robbins has



SUBMITTED BY SEAN ROBBINS

Robbins atop the podium, winning the 1996 outdoor national championship in the long jump.

different perspective on officials, and he has also been able to corner a market nobody else is pursuing.

In addition to the three conferences above, in the past few years Robbins has been hired to assist with the assessment tests for PAC-12 officials and NFL officials at

found his way of giving back to be every week at Victory Gallup, an equestrian rehabilitation center for children with special needs.

Read the rest on AU-Live.com

Department chair spotlight

Dr. Lance Kaltenbaugh: Chair of marketing/hospitality management/fashion merchandising/sports management within the college of business

CHRISTINE JENKINSON
News Editor

In the third part of our COBE series, we focus on the marketing, hospitality management, fashion merchandising and sport management department.

Dr. Lance Kaltenbaugh, associate professor of sport management and chair of this department, has been the chair for two years.

“Students pursuing degrees in these four majors will develop their potential through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and dispositions that will facilitate and enhance their opportunities to successfully acquire and execute careers within their respective industry,” Kaltenbaugh said.

Marketing students will learn and demonstrate skills in advertising, market research, digital marketing, promotion and sales.

“The marketing program helps you put the principles you learn into practice with American Marketing Association (AMA) certification opportunities and real-world experiences that includes internships, hands-on projects,

seminars and national competitions,” Kaltenbaugh said.

Students studying hospitality management will learn how to run hotels, resorts and restaurants. They will also learn how to manage conferences, private events and entertainment venues.

“The hospitality management program equips students with key competencies within the industry by implementing the ManageFirst Program, created by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) into the curriculum,” Kaltenbaugh said.

Fashion merchandising students will learn and understand fashion design, retail merchandising and buying from apparel manufacturers. The program prepares students to study at the Paris Fashion Institute or in New York City at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

“This program is designed to help students hone in their sense of fashion, expand their creativity, and develop the business skills needed to learn market trends and consumer needs,” Kaltenbaugh said.

Sport management students will

learn how to manage events and facilities, promote sporting events, analyze sport operations and manage people. Faculty work closely with students to provide a quality “real world” learning experience.

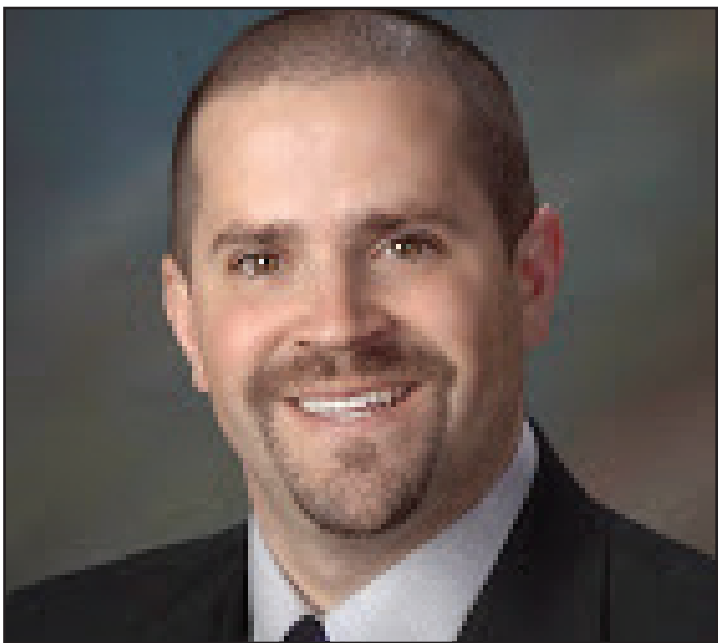
The future for students in this department is very bright.

“The Bureau of Labor Statistics is predicting an increase of 5% (on average) on all four majors through 2024,” Kaltenbaugh said. “This statistic is just one factor that represents the current increase in enrollment of the department majors at AU.”

Sports management and fashion merchandising made their appearance at AU in 2012. Then, in 2014, they teamed up with marketing and hospitality management.

Kaltenbaugh came to AU in 2000 where he taught in the therapeutic recreation and recreation programs. In 2005, he transitioned into the new sport management program and became internship coordinator of the sport management major.

“Many of the department alumni are currently attending graduate school and/or are working in their



SUBMITTED BY LANCE KALTENBAUGH

Dr. Lance Kaltenbaugh: Chair of marketing/hospitality management/fashion merchandising/sports management within the college of business.

respective fields,” Kaltenbaugh said.

Past undergraduate students have worked in the following places: Cleveland Cavaliers, Cleveland Indians, Walt Disney World, Cedar Point, Coach, Hollister, American Greetings, Proctor and Gamble, The Ohio State University, Hyatt

Corporation, Under Armor and Abercrombie & Fitch.

Questions about these programs can be directed to Kaltenbaugh at lkaltenb@ashland.edu.

If you have a story idea or want event coverage, you can email Zach Read at zread@ashland.edu