

sports

Sports management majors get a taste of NFL football before the Super Bowl

GRACIE WILSON
AU-Live Managing Editor

Students majoring in sports management traveled to Tampa, FL, two weeks ago, prior to the Superbowl game played between the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Kansas City Chiefs.

While they did not attend Super Bowl LV, they did have a chance to partner with the NFL to bring the football experience to children as well as network for future job opportunities.

“Going into it, I didn’t really know what to expect because we were doing so much,” Kristen Ogle, Senior Sport Management major said.

“It was overall a really good networking opportunity and we got to dive deeper into what our program has to offer and job opportunities that we could have after graduation.”

The students who went on the trip helped in a program called the NFL experience which gives kids the chance to participate in a mini football camp.

There were a bunch of kids running around to different stations run by volunteers from the community who led them in mini games, Ogle said.

“The program, NFL 360, has a lot to do with getting the youth involved with football from early on,” Mia Rader, a junior Sport Management major said.

The program was community focused, and all the volunteers made sure to make the event as special as they could for everyone involved.

“We just wanted to make the experience as best as we could for the community,” Ogle said.

Not only did the group get to participate in a special experience in the Tampa Bay community, they also got to build professional relations and network with other organizations for employment opportunities after graduation.

“Obviously networking is important in every field,” Rader said. “But this was definitely [a way] to meet people from different backgrounds. That’s how you build real

world connections that get you to the goal you want to accomplish.”

The students also realized how broad their options were and how many employment options they can have after graduation with a degree in sport management.

“We got to kind of look into what we could be doing after graduation whether that be working at a YMCA or planning things like the NFL Experience,” Ogle said.

Many students at Ashland University have had their travel plans dampened by the Coronavirus pandemic, but that was not the case on this trip as there was a noteworthy number of precautions in place.

“That was [a] big experience for the community. It was free for everyone [and] it was cool to see an event that big follow all the COVID protocols,” Ogle said.

The safety of the students was taken into consideration on this trip and that allowed them to make the trip out of state to be a part of the NFL Experience.

“We were working with the NFL, they were going to be way more strict than even Ashland University was going to be so that gave us a lot of confidence in going,” Rader said.

In addition to working side by side with the NFL, the students on the trip also got to see notable sporting event locations as well as hospitality sites.

The second half of the trip was spent visiting places such as Orlando and parts of the Walt Disney World property.

“We went to different sport facilities like Raymond James Stadium,” Ogle said. “We got to take pictures outside of that which was really cool knowing that the big game was going to be held there in a few days.”

The AU students were not alone in their excitement either, as Rader highlights one of her favorite memories was the atmosphere of the city that week.

“The Tampa Bay Bucs fans were out, and they were excited and crazy, and I think I will always remember that...because of the ex-



Photo submitted by: Mia Rader

Home of Super Bowl LV pictured above.

citement around the city,” she said.

The electric atmosphere of the city was only heightened for sports fans coming off of wins in 2020.

“With recent wins in the Tampa Bay area such as the Rays baseball team winning the World Series and the Lightning hockey team

winning the Stanley Cup, sports are huge there right now,” Rader said.

Overall, the students claim this experience has set them up for success after graduating through networking opportunities and real-world experience in the field.

“This experience is something you’re not going to get in a classroom and so I am very grateful that Ashland University has offered up opportunities like this,” Rader said.



Photo submitted by: Mia Rader

Members of sports management pictured at the Super Bowl experience.

AU football welcomes new secondary football coach



Photo retrieved from goashlandeagles.com

Devin Holiday pictured above.

JORDANN LOPATA
Sports Editor

Former division 1 football player at the University of Arizona has been hired by head football coach Lee Owens, to serve as a secondary coach.

Devin Holiday, originally from San Diego, California, played as a true freshman at the University of Arizona all four years and then coached at Ohio Wesleyan University. He now comes to Ashland to serve as the safeties coach.

Holiday will also assist with game planning, recruiting, special teams, and possibly kickoff. With a Northeast Ohio recruiting area, his time at Ohio Wesleyan, will help him assist with recruitment as well.

Through his connections at Ohio Wesleyan, he met assistant football coach at Ashland, Dominick Orsini and they became friends. “He went to school with another coach that I coached with so we were buddies. We built our relationship ever since then, kept in touch, and then once the job opened up, Dom reached out and I thought it would be a great situation for me,” Holiday said.

Holiday understands that Ashland football has a good reputation, and that is part of the reason he chose to come here.

The football program at Ashland has won three GLIAC conference titles in the past nine years and despite the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, are looking ahead to a season this spring.

“This is a traditionally good program when it comes to football and stuff like that, so I was very excited about the opportunity and I feel very blessed and fortunate to get

the opportunity,” Holiday said.

“I came up here for my interview and loved what I saw. The big thing that stood out to me is the athletic faculty, well really everybody. It seemed like everyone around campus knew who [Dom] was, he was saying hi to everybody, so it was like a family atmosphere and I loved it.”

As far as building a relationship with the team, Holiday is prepared to be there for the players no matter what.

“I kind of let them into my life as they do me as well, and I think that’s the most important thing, building that trust. When you can build that trust with a player, I think that goes a long way with them because you never know what they could be going through off the field,” he said.

Holiday will be able to relate to a lot of his players because he has stood in their shoes before. He reflected on a time in college, when he broke his foot and needed some reassurance from one of his coaches.

“I say that was probably the hardest experience, is getting hurt because I hadn’t been hurt going throughout high school, so that was the most difficult thing. On top of that, however, that experience is what got me into coaching, my defensive backs coach being there for me and building that relationship with me. That is why I take the approach that I take when it comes to coaching as well.”

Holiday is ready to fill the position and get started with building that trusting relationship with the players. He knows that AU football runs like a family, and he is excited to start this new journey.