The Role of Event Operations in Collegiate Athletics: A Reflection of My Internship with University of Arkansas Event Management

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Citation
The Role of Event Operations in Collegiate Athletics: A Reflection of My Internship with University of Arkansas Event Management

by

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An Honors Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of Science in Recreation and Sport Management with Sports Administration Concentration

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Introduction

Sport Management History

Today, millions of people throughout the globe are taking part in sport, either through active participation or through watching athletes. According to the State of the Industry Report from the Sports & Fitness Industry Association and Sports Marketing Surveys USA, 232.6 million Americans participated in sports and fitness activities during 2021 (Broughton, 2022). Add to this number the millions of people who do not participate but are regular attendees or viewers at sport events, and it is staggering to realize how society's interest in sport has increased. Thus, the need for more informed sport managers in the public, nonprofit, and commercial sector has led to an increase in the need for Sport Management as a career. Schwab et al. (2020) assert that "applying management skills in a sport-related setting" (p. 202) is on the rise. According to Wintemute (2022), the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates over 900,000 combined sports and entertainment and management occupations will be added between 2020 and 2030.

In answer to the need, "the first academic program in sport management was started at Ohio University in 1964" (Schwab et al., 2020, p.197). According to the North American Society for Sports Management, as of 2012, there are "well over 300 such degree programs in the United States" (Schwab et al., 2013, p.17). Typical sport management programs cover the business side of sports, including “brand management, event planning, facility management, and the legal aspects of sports and athletics” (Seiter, 2023). The diverse coursework prepares students for a variety of careers in the sport management arena “within professional, collegiate, and amateur athletic organizations” (Wintemute, 2022, para.4).
Although the surge in the popularity of sport has occurred in the modern day, sport management was a part of the ancient world. Someone had to plan and oversee the many early sporting events held at Mt. Olympus and in the Roman Colosseum. Remains of ancient stone courts belonging to the Mayans and the Aztecs also serve as examples of older cultures where sport was important and where management was necessary (Fried & Kastel, 2021). Thoroughbred racing, which began officially in 16th Century England, called for additional management skills as wagering became a major part of the sport. The creation of the modern Olympic games in 1896 required additional duties for managers, which meant even stronger management techniques were needed. With the increased number of participants and viewers in the modern era, especially in both professional and intercollegiate athletic contests and in organized youth programs, there is a need for additional and more intense management techniques (Schwab et al., 2013). According to Covell and Walker (2017), "athletic administration is FAR less about theory, concepts, and scholarship of the administrator and much more about practice...communication, hard work, and organization” (p. xii).

**Personal Background**

From an early age, my passion for sports was evident. As soon as I was old enough, I started playing youth organized sports such as soccer, baseball, basketball, and football. I had always dreamed of playing football at the collegiate level, but that came to an abrupt halt early in my athletic career. A broken back in the 8th grade forced me to sit on the sidelines throughout my whole 9th grade year. I was very excited to return to the sport in the 10th grade. However, it became obvious that my back injury was going to prevent me from being able to give it my best. I could not envision a future where I did not play sports. Accepting these adversities, I began to search for other options that would not be as daunting on my body. I was on the varsity
tennis and bowling teams during my final two years of high school, and our bowling team even
won the state title. During these years, it became clear to me how important it is for athletic
programs to offer multiple sports to support a diverse athlete population.

It was also during the 10th grade that our high school curriculum started offering classes
in sports medicine, and I was fortunate to enroll in both Sports Medicine I and II. By the end of
high school, my love for sports coupled with my experiences in non-traditional sports programs
helped guide me to a clear future for my education and desired career path. Once I was certain
about the direction of my future, the choice of selecting an institution was an easy one.

In addition to the amazing athletic programs and special traditions that are an important
part of the university, I was drawn to the University of Arkansas because of the dedication to the
student body. Since the College of Education and Health Professions offers both undergraduate
and graduate programs in sport management, I can complete all my education at one university.
Because competition for jobs in the sport industry is rigorous, the hands-on experience and
networking opportunities through the practicums and internships is invaluable.

*Internship Acquisition*

I began working for the University of Arkansas Event Operations department in the fall
of 2022 and was fortunate the department was willing to host my internship for the Spring 2023
semester. Event Operations plays a huge role in the overall success of the athletic department, as
we must ensure all athletic facilities on campus are prepared for events. Because my ultimate
career objective is to work in an administrative or support capacity in collegiate athletics, this
internship provided me with a great introduction into the magnitude of a Division I athletic
department.
Objectives

Internships provide students with practical work experience related to a field of study or career interest. Peretto Stratta (2004) states “the internship experience is one of the most critical components . . . that leads to employment in the sport industry” (p.25). Internships provide students with practical work experience. No longer learning through lectures and readings, an intern is actively involved in a program where there is an opportunity to provide input and make decisions in an actual work environment. Research has shown these work experiences provide students with skills that prepare them for a career in sports management (Brady et al., 2018).

An internship also helps establish a network of professional contacts. According to Schwab et al. (2020), “It’s what you know AND who you know…that will open career doors in sport management” (p. 214). Before I started the internship, I was eager to experience these benefits. After discussing my ultimate career objective with my supervisor and better understanding the role I would play throughout the semester, I decided on the following personal learning objectives:

- Develop valuable work experience that will strengthen my knowledge of a collegiate athletic department
- Cultivate interpersonal and communication skills through daily interactions with a diverse population
- Expand my network of professional contacts, as having a strong network is vital in collegiate athletics

Athletic Department Structure

Division I athletic departments play a huge role in creating connections across the campus community while also promoting the entire institution. In order to meet the expectations
of the university’s stakeholders, athletic departments must ensure its culture and mission are consistent with that of the institution (Covell and Walker, 2017). Not only must the University of Arkansas athletic department base its policies and operating principles on that of the overall institution, but it must also factor in the expectations of the NCAA and the Southeastern Conference.

College athletics is a big business, which is evident when we watch athletic programs compete to have the biggest and best facilities and amenities. An athletic director is responsible for the ultimate oversight of the department and has a huge responsibility in balancing the “macro-level operations—how the strategic plan is put into action in the organization—with the micro-level—how individual events and activities are planned and executed on a daily basis” (Covell and Walker, 2017, p. 84). Athletic Director Hunter Yurachek has the challenge of cultivating principles and philosophies consistent with the NCAA and SEC while also furthering the mission of the University of Arkansas.

The Arkansas Athletic Department is a separate unit within the university system and is run like an individual business. As with any business, the athletic department is comprised of multiple functional areas. With over 350 employees, the department relies on these individuals to focus on their area of expertise but to coordinate with one another to carry out the mission of the department. A visualization of this structure is presented in Figure 1.
Weekly Journal

During my internship, I had the opportunity to work on special projects and was also heavily involved in setting up and breaking down facilities for athletic events and for third-party rentals. The following is a written reflection of what I worked on each week and the knowledge and skills gained.

Week of January 23

The first official week of my spring internship afforded me the opportunity to work on events for several athletic programs, and I quickly realized the spring semester is extremely busy for athletics. The men’s basketball team hosted LSU on Monday night, and I helped set up the bike rack barricades to help with crowd control outside of Bud Walton. This was not as easy as it sounds, as I discovered we have multiple different styles of these racks, so the interlocking hooks
are not in the same place. These racks are all stored by the loading dock of Smith Football Center, so when we pull out the racks needed for an event, we have to arrange them so the styles that fit together are lined up next to each other.

The gymnastics team also hosted LSU this week, and it was my first of many times to help set up and break down the gymnastics meet. Throughout the week, the volleyball team practices in Barnhill while the gymnastics team practices in the Bev Lewis Center. Therefore, the event operations staff must completely set up and tear down for each home gymnastics meet. This was my first glimpse into the detailed deliberation that goes into balancing the scheduling of athletic practices and events. We have 19 NCAA teams on campus, so that translates into hundreds of practices and competitions each year. While almost every sport has its own dedicated competition facility, some teams might share practice space.

This week, the track teams hosted the Razorback Invitational at the Tyson Indoor Track and Fowler Center. Before the Fowler Center was completed, throwing events were held offsite. Now the Fowler Center is not only home for baseball training but also serves as the check-in space, warm-up area, and hosts the throwing events for indoor track. The turf is safe for shotput and discus and makes it much easier to read the distances. For each indoor meet, we set up about 200 stanchions between the two facilities to corral athletes and guide them to their team’s designated location. We also set up chairs for athletes on the infield of Tyson and tables for judges. This was my first experience at an indoor collegiate meet, and I enjoyed not only learning about the event preparations but also watching the athletes.

*Week of January 30*

Since baseball season starts in about three weeks, the event operations department started preparing Baum Walker Stadium for upcoming games. This week, we worked together with the
facilities and grounds departments to bring the Razorback Boxes into the Hog Pen. These boxes are repurposed shipping containers that are used throughout the season as additional box seats. Since a forklift was going to bring the containers in, we had to protect the grass from any track marks. To do this, we laid a hard plastic floor over the grass. To add a layer of difficulty, a surveying crew had done some work to prepare for underground pipe. Therefore, we had to work around all the survey crew’s markings and flags. It was a little bit of a maze, but we successfully got the boxes set up in their place.

Friday was the first of two gymnastics meets that would be held in Bud Walton Arena. During the 2022 season, the Gymbacks had one meet in Bud Walton, and it broke the all-time attendance record for a home gymnastics meet. Since it was such a success, I learned the administration decided to host two meets in Bud Walton during the 2023 season. As I discovered during my first week, the schedule must be carefully planned so there is enough time to transform Bud Walton for gymnastics meet.

Even though the men’s basketball game was on Monday and the gymnastics meet on Friday, our department had to start preparing Bud Walton as soon as the basketball game was over. Within 30 minutes after the completion of the basketball game, we were moving all media tables, courtside chairs, and basketball goals into storage. After clearing out all the equipment, we laid down carpet to protect the floor of Bud Walton. On Tuesday, we rented U-Haul trucks to transport the gymnastics equipment from Barnhill to Bud Walton. It took most of the day to get the equipment loaded, transported, unloaded, and moved into Bud Walton. The remainder of Tuesday and all day on Wednesday were spent setting up the four apparatuses in their entirety so the gymnastics team could do a walk-through and practice on Thursday morning. All the preparation and work led to a new attendance record as 11,031 fans attended the meet on Friday.
Week of February 6

I was tasked with a project that took me the whole week to complete. One of our large storage closets in Barnhill was an absolute disaster, so Justin asked me to organize and inventory the closet. My mom had told me about the 5S philosophy, which is a methodology used in manufacturing to organize workspaces. Each “S” stands for an important step in the process – Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain (What is 5S). As I started looking at more information about this methodology, I quickly decided this approach could be used to organize the storage room.

I started by pulling everything out that was easy to move and worked from the back to the front of the room. I worked with Justin to determine the items that were not needed and threw these items in the trash. This helped tremendously with decluttering the space. Now that the clutter was gone, next I worked on the best way to organize and group the items. We bought shelves and storage bins so I could arrange the room and make sure everything had an assigned space. We also purchased a label maker so the proper location for an item can be quickly identified. I am very proud that the cluttered and confusing space, shown in Figures 2 and 3, is now an organized room where everything has an assigned place, shown in Figures 4 and 5.
To prepare for the upcoming gymnastics meet, Justin asked me to find the fastest way to put up the gymnastics banner. This had been one of the longer and more tedious tasks that had to be
completed during gymnastics setup. It typically requires six people to put up the banner because each person had to stand at a post. I quickly realized the way they had been putting up the banner was very inefficient. I determined that we only needed four posts, so this immediately reduced the manpower required to put up the banner from six to four. By having fewer people trying to synchronize, this also reduced the time required to erect the banner by about 20 minutes. Figure 6 shows the assembled banner.

Figure 6

Gymnastics Banner After Restructured Assembly

Week of February 20

This was by far the busiest week for our department since I started working. In addition to some special events, our campus hosted four baseball games, the SEC indoor track championships, gymnastics meet, men’s basketball game, and women’s basketball game. During weeks like this, it is extremely vital that all sub-departments are in constant communication because there are so many moving parts. I had not really considered the necessity of not only collaborating but also having a clear understanding of each department’s role. There must be a mutual understanding between these areas to ensure these events run smoothly. During this week, it was very evident that I need to capitalize on any opportunities to work or experience other areas of the athletic department. With my career goal of working in an administrative role,
I need to have an awareness of the different areas within the department because it will help in collaborating and communicating with other leaders.

I was given my first opportunity to serve as the lead at an event breakdown. Justin reached out to me this week and asked if I would like to take the lead on the breakdown of Tyson on Saturday after the SEC indoor championships. I was grateful that he asked me to do it and felt like my hard work and diligence over the past several weeks was noticed. As leader of the breakdown, I made sure all the student workers had an assignment as we had to take down the stanchions, tables, and chairs. Since this was the final meet of the season at Tyson, we also moved all mats and equipment from the infield and stored under the bleachers.

*Week of February 27*

This was another extremely busy week with multiple baseball games, our final men’s basketball game, and I started another inventory special project. Since the indoor track season is complete for the year, I worked on taking a complete inventory of the equipment at both Tyson and Fowler Centers. My previous experience in organizing and taking inventory at Barnhill was very helpful, as I was able to really hit the ground running with this project. Since the inventory had not been taken down and stored yet, it was much easier to count the inventory. This also proved very beneficial in the upcoming weeks. Since we had a clear count of the inventory, it was easier and more efficient to break down and store the equipment at both locations.

The week ended with the final home men’s basketball game at Bud Walton. I worked the game by setting up the stanchions for the student entrance to guide the crowd into the specific doors. As soon as the game was over, we had to start preparing Bud for the upcoming gymnastics meet. Since we didn’t anticipate any additional basketball games this season, we broke down all the bike racks, courtside chairs, and scorer’s table and put them into storage.
Similar to what we did for the first meet in Bud Walton, we laid down carpet to protect the arena floor so we could start moving gymnastics equipment first thing on Monday morning.

_Week of March 6_

This was a full week of preparing for the gymnastics meet. As with the first meet, this week was packed with moving equipment from Barnhill to Bud Walton. We rented U-Haul trucks again to transport the gymnastics equipment from Barnhill to Bud Walton. The remainder of Tuesday and all day on Wednesday were spent setting up the four apparatuses in their entirety. Since I had recently been more involved in the support side of event operations, I was provided with the complete timeline and script for the meet. This once again helped me see the intricate details that are required to ensure a large athletic event is successful. There are so many moving parts and so many people involved in the event, it is evident why it is necessary to have a document that outlines every aspect of the event. Figure 7 is the timeline document that was provided to all stakeholders involved in the meet.

_Figure 7_

_Arkansas vs. Minnesota Gymnastics Meet Run of Show_
Volleyball officially took over Barnhill this week to use for the remainder of the spring semester. We laid down the Taraflex playing surface for the volleyball games. This was the first time I had seen the playing surface installed, and it was great to better understand how this flooring is used for multi-sport facilities. It is crucial to have an efficient way to transform a facility floor when it is used for different sports. Images are even created on Taraflex floor, so it looks like an actual wood floor! This is one more little detail that I learned during this internship experience that will prove very useful as I grow into a broader administrative role.

Week of March 13

We got a bit of a surprise this week when the women’s basketball team was not selected for the NCAA postseason tournament, which ultimately led to the team getting a bid to the Women’s National Invitation Tournament (WNIT). This tournament is different than the NCAA in that it is a for-profit tournament. Therefore, teams place a bid to host games for each round, and the games are played on the site of the highest bidding team. This was a great learning experience because I better understand all the expenses that go into an athletic team participating in an event.

The University of Arkansas won the bid to host the first-round games this week. Since we had not anticipated having any additional basketball games in Bud Walton this year, we had put all the necessary game items in storage when we set up the gymnastics meet. Therefore, we spent the first two days of this week getting Bud Walton set up again for a basketball game. In addition, we had about 20 boxes of the 100 years of basketball commemorative Coca-Cola bottles left, so we transported those to the West entrance for fans to get when they walked in the doors. The women won this game, so then it was a waiting game to see who hosts the next game. We ultimately hosted the first three rounds at Bud Walton. The crowd for each game was very
small, even smaller than the regular season women’s games, so the income from the games was most likely less than the bid to host the games. Although the athletic department ultimately lost money by being a host site, I better understand why it was important to host the games. If we played at another site, the department would incur significant travel and meal costs for the team and support staff. By hosting these games, not only did the department come out ahead on expenses, but the local fans also had three additional opportunities to cheer on the team.

*Week of March 27*

This week started and ended with something that was surprising but exciting. On Monday, I attended my first monthly staff meeting. It was surreal to sit in a room with Hunter Yurachek, Sam Pittman, Eric Musselman, and Courtney Deifel. There was a lot to absorb during the meeting, but I quickly realized how important it is for a large department to hold regular all-staff meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity for the department to communicate and collaborate while ensuring everyone is on the same page. I am excited that I will get to attend these meetings in the future, as they will build my knowledge base as I work towards my ultimate career dream.

It was also an exciting week for the football program. In the midst of spring practices, the program hosted Pro Day for several of our former players. I helped set up Walker Pavilion so the players could perform for the 26 NFL scouts who were in attendance. My area of responsibility during setup was the bench press area. This involved placing the bench press and the 45-pound plates. We also included bleachers so players could watch the individuals who were benching, and we set up about 30 stanchions to block off the bench area from the rest of the field.

Since indoor track season is complete, I helped tear down the Tyson facility for the off-season. This included taking down and storing all the stanchions, chairs, and tables that were
used throughout the season. As mentioned earlier, I had already completed inventory of the track equipment, so this helped the tear down and storage go very quickly.

As I alluded, this week also ended with some exciting news. I had a meeting with Justin and Arek and learned that the person who held the “official” Event Operations internship position resigned due to personal reasons, so they asked me if I would be willing to take over the projects and responsibilities that he was doing. I was thrilled to accept this opportunity because I knew it would give me more visibility and interaction with members of the athletic department. The email sent to several key members of the athletic staff to officially introduce me as the primary intern is presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8

Introduction email

Note: This email was sent to the Event Management leadership staff to introduce my move into the primary intern role.

Week of April 3

I was quickly acclimated this week to my additional responsibilities. My biggest project was to update the facilities rental website page. I could not make the actual edits to the page, so I did a mock-up of my suggested design changes. In addition, the website only included the spaces
available for rent in Donald W. Reynolds Stadium. Therefore, I had to provide information on the additional rental spaces and rental costs. Once I fully understood the scope of this project, I started by going through each existing page to ensure the information was accurate and concise. I also tested the existing links to validate they all worked and went to the correct destination. Once I documented the changes needing to be made to the existing information and had Arek review my suggestions, I sent those to the web administrator in the Arkansas Creative Department.

Another exciting part of my added responsibilities was meeting with clients about renting facility space. This week I joined Justin and Arek in a couple of client meetings to discuss our rental spaces and policies. During my law and risk class last semester, I learned about the importance of contracts, waivers, and other crucial risk management elements that needed to be considered for facility management. I had several full-circle moments this week as I saw many of these concepts being used in our facility rental policies. It is very interesting to learn the liability insurance requirements for clients who rent an athletic event space. All events must have general liability insurance, worker’s compensation, comprehensive automobile liability, an umbrella policy, and property insurance to cover 100% replacement cost of any University property that is damaged. Even though this just brushes the surface of the risk management obligations, I am very grateful I had an opportunity to see it in action.

Since I am now more involved in the administrative side of event operations, I am also included in the weekly email that lists any upcoming special events. Arek sends this each week to numerous stakeholders to ensure that appropriate facilities, grounds, custodial, security, and catering staffing is covered for these events. This was yet another learning experience where I see the importance of keeping many departments informed so they can work together to support the special events that are hosted on campus. The email sent this week is illustrated in Figure 9.
Week of April 10

With the spring football game on Saturday, this week was filled with football preparations. After our Monday morning staff meeting, we did a walkthrough at Donald W. Reynolds to determine what equipment was needed throughout the stadium. We started transporting tables and chairs to each gate for security and support staff to use. The athletic department purchased new walk-through metal detectors, so much of the week was spent assembling them and getting them placed at each gate. I also helped with assembling the bike racks for crowd control. This was a different experience than setting the racks up for basketball games. With multiple entry points at Donald W. Reynolds, along with needing crowd control on Maple Street for Hog Town, we had to assemble many more bike racks!

Many football alumni and other dignitaries would be in town for the spring game, so we had to set up for the various functions that would occur over the weekend. The Foundation hosted a fish fry in the SEC Club on Friday night, so we had to prepare the room and move some of the furniture so Intents could set up their tables for the fish fry. The Foundation also hosted a
BBQ for former football lettermen during the spring game. This was held in the A Club, so we also ensured this room was ready for the event.

Since so many fans and alumni would be in town for Woo Pig Weekend, the athletic equipment department planned a surplus sale to get rid of extra shoes and apparel that were not used by athletes. There was so much stuff to sell that I had to go all over campus to find enough 6-foot tables needed for the sale. Since I was helping set up the sale, I got a sneak peek at the items. There were football jerseys, baseball jerseys, basketball game shorts, sweatshirts, polos, and tons of Nike shoes and slides. I got really excited about all the great stuff that was going to be sold at really low prices and could not wait to come to the sale. However, our department received a text from Arek on Saturday saying that Sunday’s sale was canceled. When we arrived at the office on Monday after the proposed sale date, Arek told us that the state of Arkansas had contacted the equipment department saying the profits from the sale had to be split evenly with them since the University of Arkansas is a public university. Since this happened at the last minute, the decision was made to cancel until all the appropriate groups had the opportunity to discuss the best path forward.

*Week of April 17*

We found out this week that the equipment sale was not going to be rescheduled. Instead of splitting the profits with the state, the athletic department decided to give away the surplus merchandise. The event operations department is creating an incentive program for student workers to reward workers who go above and beyond and those who work for the department for multiple years. This was a great opportunity to get nice merchandise to use in the program, so Arek asked me to pick out several items. I selected various shirts, jerseys, and pullovers. While getting the items for our incentive program, Arek also told me to pick out some items for myself.
I was excited to get some tennis shoes, a pullover, a couple of T-shirts, and a polo shirt. It was a pretty great start to the week!

We did lots of facilities prep and tear-down this week. First, we had to break down all of the equipment used during the spring game and put it back in storage. Since spring volleyball season just ended, we took up the Taraflex floor to begin preparing Barnhill for the upcoming graduation ceremonies. Track and Field also hosted the John McDonnell Invitational, so we took tables and chairs to McDonnell track to used for the event.

Wal-Mart is holding their shareholders meetings and associate events at Bud Walton in a couple of weeks. Leo Events is the production company Wal-Mart uses for this large meeting, and they will be in Bud Walton all next week to do pre-rigging for the event. To prepare for their arrival, we had to move everything out of the tunnels and push in the lower bleachers. This meant we had to transport all the gymnastics equipment back to Barnhill! With all the gymnastics mats and equipment in the storage room, it gets very crowded. I figured out a way to utilize all the vertical space for the mats, so Justin and I were able to stack the mats to the ceiling. This made a huge difference and really maximized our storage room capacity. Figure 10 shows a picture of the mats.
Although my internship will continue throughout the summer, this will be the last entry in my weekly journal. I am wrapping up my thesis so I can submit my final document and schedule my defense.

**Conclusion**

**Reflection**

Through this internship, I experienced many of the benefits typically gained during practical work experience. My personal objectives were demonstrated in many ways. First, this work experience certainly provided a better understanding of a collegiate athletic department. From department-wide meetings to weekly emails involving key stakeholders in upcoming events, I realized that all the functional areas within the athletic department must be in constant contact and coordination so the activities of the department can be achieved. All functional areas are held to the same standards and are clearly held accountable for their area of expertise. This
helped me appreciate the leadership that Hunter Yurachek has brought to Arkansas athletics and how important his staff-wide meetings are for interacting with others in the department.

Over the past twelve weeks, I had the opportunity to meet and interact with other members of the athletic department and many external clients. The confidence in my communication and interpersonal skills grew exponentially in just a short period of time. I quickly realized effective communication is probably the most important skill to have in any workplace. I was able to put these skills into practice when explaining my improvement ideas for several of the projects for which I was tasked. I had to be clear in explaining my ideas so others could help in the execution. I got very comfortable practicing “small talk” within our event operations group, and this led to my being able to practice it on a larger scale. Now I always make the effort to introduce myself when meeting someone new and actively engage in conversation with them.

Finally, my network of contacts has vastly expanded during this internship. I truly believe a successful career in athletics is not only about what you know but just as much about who you know. I am very thankful to Arek and Justin for providing me with exposure to others in the department. I have certainly worked hard to make the most of each occasion by asking questions and building relationships with those individuals. The connections I made during this internship could be a stepping-stone to a graduate assistant role or full-time opportunity.

**Impact on Future Career**

I am beyond grateful for the internship with event operations and am thankful that it is not over. I will continue to work with the department through the summer, and Justin has mentioned that the department will possibly get to share a graduate assistant with another area. Since I am starting graduate school this fall and am actively looking for a graduate assistant role,
the thought of continuing with event operations is exciting. I feel like I have just scratched the
surface during the past twelve weeks and could have much more exposure to the department
through a longer-term role.

My time as an intern has set a strong foundation for my future career. As I anticipated
when I chose to attend the University of Arkansas, the hands-on experience and networking
opportunities have proven to be valuable for my future. This internship allowed me to meet new
people, challenged me to grow, and improved my confidence. I was exposed to many different
areas of the athletic department and have a clear picture of how a successful department should
be structured. I thought I ultimately wanted to work in professional sports, but this internship and
my love for the Razorbacks caused me to re-evaluate my future. While I do not know where I
will end up down the road, the passion I developed for my internship work has provided clarity
in that I would like to start my professional career with the University of Arkansas. There is
something special happening right now in Arkansas athletics, and I want to be a part of it.
References


