



The Department of Sport Management

SMSA Visits NBA Oklahoma City Thunder



Members of the Sport Management Student Association traveled to Oklahoma City Jan. 16 to visit the city's new NBA franchise, the Thunder. The visit included a Q & A session with six Thunder staff members and tickets to a game against the Detroit Pistons. SMSA students also got to see Oklahoma City's Bricktown Ballpark, as they had dinner at Coach's Restaurant located in the stadium.

WSU alumni Rusty Wiley, an account executive with the Thunder, and Rebecca Day, a guest relations associate, were among the Thunder staff members to meet with the SMSA members. The Q & A session addressed topics ranging from professional preparation to career paths to prospective internships. The game that night saw the Thunder pick up its most impressive win of the season.

Special thanks go to SMSA president Candace Friedrich for planning the trip and to Dr. Mark Vermillion and graduate assistant Jordan Bass for driving the vans.



Sport Management Alumni Association Membership Drive to Kick Off

The Sport Management Alumni Association's 2009 membership drive will begin early in the spring semester.

request information by contacting Mary Myers at mary.myers@wichita.edu or 316-978-5445.

Membership packages range from \$25 to \$500, and the organization's revenue is primarily devoted to fellowship support for students. SMAA will send letters of invitation to all program alumni for whom we have current records. Alumni who do not receive letters can request information by contacting Mary Myers at mary.myers@wichita.edu or 316-978-5445.

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You Get What You Pay For?

My son Justin is an avid sports fan. He is particularly fond of hockey. As an eleven-year-old he knows more about the players, their stats, and team records than his sport management-teaching old man. Over the semester break I had the opportunity to take him to a couple of hockey games, and although we had a good time at both games, he left each event with a degree of confusion and disappointment.

Case in point, one of the games we attended took place at a newer, state-of-the-art arena. Justin's experience at this venue was generally positive. He liked the flashy scoreboards, the cushioned seats, the pyrotechnics, and the fact that he could see the players without other people obstructing his view. During the breaks the event staff, like at many sport events, would throw or shoot t-shirts into the crowd. Each time they did this (roughly three or four times throughout the game) Justin missed out on getting one of the t-shirts. When the game was over he asked me when he was going to get his free t-shirt. I had to explain that the t-shirt giveaway was only a promotion, and only a small number of those in attendance actually got a freebie. Undaunted, he wanted to stop by the gift shop and purchase a shirt with the twenty dollars he saved for this occasion. Upon arriving, he was disappointed to find out that the t-shirts they had for sale were way out of his price range. He eventually settled on purchasing a souvenir hockey puck, but he left the arena confused as to why a t-shirt at a department store costs less than twenty bucks, but at the arena they cost significantly more, and why some people got free shirts while most others didn't.

Dr. Andy Gillentine, director of the sport administration program at the University of Miami, addressed this type of situation in his keynote address at our department's recognition night last November. Promotions where only a certain (usually small) percentage of the crowd receives something extra, and charging high prices for merchandise and concessions is common with sport organizations, but not necessarily right. When organizations do this, they are leaving a large portion of potential

customers feeling slighted, or taken advantage of.

As Dr. Gillentine noted, with today's economy, sport managers need to start doing what they can to make sure every person feels as though they got more than their money's worth after attending an event. While it might not be possible to give a t-shirt to 20,000 spectators, sport organizations can make changes so that their customers leave their event feeling they were treated hospitably and fairly. Pleasant greetings by the ticket staff, clean facilities, easy access to concessions and restrooms, and fair prices for concessions and merchandise are just a few things that will make fans want to come back.

My son will still want to see hockey games. It's up to the sport managers to determine if he will want to see them in person, or on TV.

-- Jeff Noble

Dr. Miller on Leave During Spring Semester

Dr. Lori Miller will be on leave during the spring 2009 semester. Both of the classes for which she is listed as the instructor—SMGT 462 Legal Aspects II and SMGT 835 Legal Issues I—will be taught as scheduled with David Moses as the instructor. Bachelor's-level students with last names starting with A-F should see Dr. Jeff Noble if they plan to enroll in the SMGT 210 Practicum and Dr. Mark Vermillion if they plan to enroll in SMGT 547A Internship. Graduate students with last names starting A-F should see Dr. Clay Stoldt for advising and if they plan to enroll in SMGT 847 Internship.

A Success: Sport Management Recognition Night, Speaker

The Department of Sport Management's first annual recognition night was held on November 5, 2008 in the Heskett Center lobby. The event was well attended and included over 50 students (both graduate and undergraduate), faculty, staff, and area practitioners. The opening remarks were given by the College of Education's Dean Sharon Iorio and Department Chair, Dr. Clay Stoldt. Highlights of the event include Dr. Noble presenting **Russell Wilkins** with the undergraduate sport management major of the year award. Russell

now serves as the assistant director of ticket operations at Wichita State University. Dr. Vermillion

presented **Candace Friedrich** with the graduate sport management major of the year award. Candace is currently the graduate assistant in the marketing department of Wichita State University athletics. Both students are highly involved in the sport management department and are well deserved awardees.



Dr. Stoldt presented **James Nicas**, University of Houston Athletic Department, with the sport management alumnus of the year award, and Dr. Miller presented **Kari Samora**, of Disney Sports, Inc., sport management practitioner of the year. James, in addition to his duties with the Cougar athletics, finds time to be actively involved in the alumni association (SMAA) and helps to represent and promote the department as much as possible. Kari is an

important contact for many of our students looking for internships and employment and has been an active part in our department for many years. Both James and Kari are great examples of the characteristics promoted by the sport management department.



The keynote speaker for the evening's event was Andy Gillentine, PhD from the University of Miami (Florida). His speech, entitled *Re-Positioning the Sport Product in an Era of Economic Uncertainty: The Lagniappe Factor*, captivated the audience by imparting some of the ideas that he has encountered in his thirty plus years of professional involvement in sports ranging from a high school coach to dean's positions within higher education to his current faculty position with the University of Miami (Florida). During his speech, Dr. Gillentine spoke regarding how sport organizations, in uncertain economic climates, can position themselves as important experiences for individuals. According to Dr. Gillentine, the lagniappe factor- providing your customers with something extra- is a crucial way for sport organizations to not only distinguish themselves in a crowded entertainment marketplace, but also retain fan bases by providing customer incentives and making individuals feel welcome. Long term commitments from sport organizations to customers, Gillentine states, will help develop strong, honest relationships between fans and franchises.

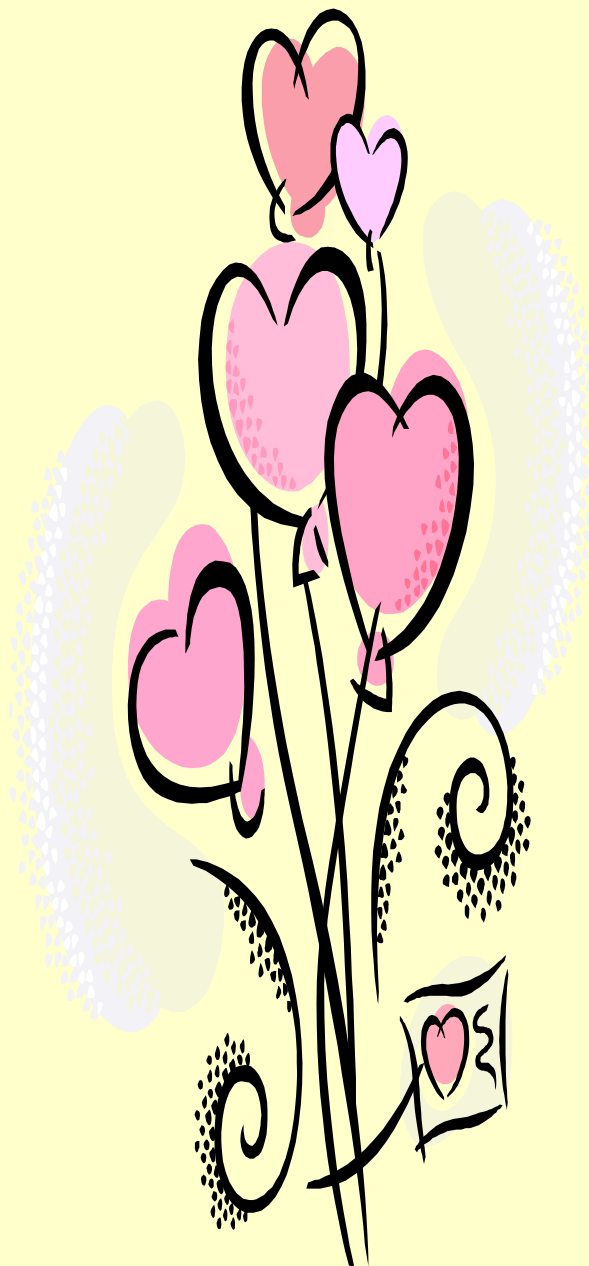
Two Receive Sport Management Fellowships

Congratulations to **Laura Biery** and **Ryosho Matsumoto**, recipients of Sport Management graduate fellowships this spring. Selection criteria included academic record, contribution to program diversity, extracurricular activity, professional experience and community service. Award selections were made by the Sport Management Program Committee.

Sport Management Alumni Association Awards Fellowships

Congratulations to four students who are being awarded fellowships by the Sport Management Alumni Association this spring. Graduate students **Laura Biery**, **Candace Friedrich** and **Micah Friedrich** and undergraduate **Scott Riesterer** were selected for the honor by SMAA's Executive Committee.

Selection criteria included academic record, extracurricular activity, professional experience and community service. The committee noted that the pool of applicants was excellent and commended all the students who applied.



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Alumni Update

Nicole Campbell G 2008 is now working the National Center for Drug Free Sport in Kansas City. ... **Allyson Clark (formerly Hills) G 2007** has taken a job with Wichita Festivals. ... **Abigail Cress UG 2005** has accepted a full-time position with Marketing Werks in Chicago. ... Congratulations to **Jackie Hass (formerly McChristian) G 2003** on the birth of Stoney Jackson Hass Nov. 19.

Thanks to all our alumni for staying in touch. All sport management alumni are encouraged to submit updates to the Department of Sport Management by calling 316-978-5445 or by sending an e-mail to mary.myers@wichita.edu.

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Chris Presson — Marketing Sport & Physical Activity

Frank Rokosz — Structuring & Scheduling Sport Tournaments

Steve Shaad — Sport Tournament & Event Management, Selling in the Sport Industry