

### Internship Report

My summer internship was unique from my peers, as I worked for four different organizations in Pensacola, FL: Blab TV, The Pensacola Blue Wahoos, WEAR TV station, and Pensacola's Independent newspaper, *InWeekly*. It was a great experience made possible through the generous stipend awarded to me from Sewanee. I would like to thank the Business and Economics fund group, specifically the Doherty endowment for funding me over the summer. I learned a lot from my experiences and it was made due to the generosity of the group. I cannot thank you all enough. I had a great time.

First, at Blab TV, I worked with a professional sports writer named D.C. Reeves. I spent a day with him in the summer of 2015, and at that time, he encouraged me to write as much as possible. I followed his advice and became a contributing writer for Scout.com during my Junior year at Sewanee. So in my initial meeting with D.C., I showed him articles I had written for Scout.com. He told me they were good pieces, but needed work. He taught me the Upside Down Pyramid of Importance, a formula much like the food pyramid, but in reverse. The largest chunks of the food pyramid are at the bottom, whereas for sports writing, the largest or most important chunks are at the top. D.C. instructed me to start my articles with the most important to second most important to third most important, and so on going down the Upside Down Pyramid of Success. That night I accompanied D.C. to Pensacola's minor league baseball team, The Blue Wahoo's game against the Birmingham Barons and watched the team's pitcher, Jackson Stephens pitch the game of his life. D.C. gave me an assignment to write an article about this game. The next day at the Blab studio I sat down with D.C. to go over the article. He told me it was much better and that I had followed the Upside Down Pyramid of Importance perfectly! After D.C. and I discussed my article he walked me over to the main camera man for Blab TV, Mark Smith, and told me I would work with him the next day to understand the sports writer's relationship to

the cameras while filming for TV. The following day I worked with Mark on a commercial. During this shoot, I learned about different camera angles and how cameras were positioned to shoot a better picture. I also was given the task of holding a reflector to reflect the sun's rays on the actor so the light around him would look better and his image would be more clear in the camera. I learned most commercials are not scripted. The amount of improvisation surprised me! During filming breaks the actors would suggest ways they could make the scene better or more funny rather than perfectly following the director's instructions. After two weeks at BLAB TV, I moved on to work with the Pensacola Blue Wahoos, the baseball team mentioned earlier.

The Blue Wahoos are a double A minor league baseball team for the Cincinnati Reds. The Wahoos are like a Junior Varsity team and if one of the players proves they are too good for the minor league they get moved up to the major league and play for the Cincinnati Reds. During my time with the Blue Wahoos, I worked again with D.C. Reeves in the press box assisting with player research and statistics. I also spent time on the ground observing player interviews and learned by listening to the questions the reporters asked the players. The types of questions were pretty straight forward, ranging from "What was working for you during the game today?" to "What is your mindset before each game?" Readers like this kind of information because it gives them access into the player's mind. D.C. taught me how to incorporate player quotes from an interview into a sports article. It's a lot like writing a research paper. I had to first introduce the quote, put it in, and then add my own commentary. Once I finished working with the Blue Wahoos, I moved to the Pensacola and Mobile TV station, WEAR.

At WEAR, I shadowed the regionally well-known sportscaster, Dan Shugart. It was interesting to be behind the scenes of a television broadcast, but I found observing was not as rewarding as the actual writing I was able to do with D.C. Reeves. My hours at the TV station varied depending on the broadcasts I observed, for instance, one day I worked from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. I found the sports video

editing to be the most interesting aspect of my time at WEAR. It was very cool to see how game highlights were isolated and made into sports clips. I also kept busy by running errands for the sports staff. After rotating through WEAR, I looked forward to my next position, as I knew I would be writing again.

*InWeekly*, a well-regarded Independent Paper in Pensacola, FL published and edited by Rick Outzen, took me on for two weeks. Each day, I would go into work and sit down with Mr. Outzen for about 30 minutes. During this time, he explained my assignments. My work involved interviewing sports figures and writing about them. For instance, I interviewed famous sports stars like NFL pro-bowler Fred Robbins who is now retired, and attended a press conference given by the professional golfer, Bubba Watson. My one on one conversation with Mr. Robbins about his camp for kids who hope to make it into the NFL, resulted in a story published in *InWeekly*. I enjoyed interviewing Mr. Robbins — we talked about his career in the NFL and about how he wants kids to realize that making it in football is incredibly difficult and that they most likely won't get there. Robbins teaches the kids to have a backup option, but he cares most about teaching them to act professionally in whatever job they do. Mr. Outzen made it clear that I must not write about Robbin's NFL football career, or the camp itself, but what Robbins hoped to accomplish during the camp — what the kids would take away from their experience. Under Rick Outzen I learned to ask in depth questions. I could have asked Mr. Robbins about the kind of drills they run at the camp and other stuff that isn't so important. Asking the in depth questions makes for a much better article that has more meaning and interests readers. Mr. Outzen also taught me about opening up my articles with more energy. One method he uses relies on quick words that jump out on the page in the opening sentence. I used his method for the articles I wrote for him, and from there on out, he complimented me on my introductions. I had such a great and productive time working at this independent newspaper that all of my articles were published either online or in print.

Originally, I was also to rotate as an intern for the athletic director of the new football team at the University of West Florida. Due to its newly formed status, the department was unorganized and therefore unable to have an intern. However, I have already pitched an article to Mr. Outzen for *InWeekly*, about the University of West Florida, Argonaut football team. This new Pensacola college football team belongs to the Gulf South Conference headquartered in Birmingham, AL, my hometown. Before I return to Sewanee for my senior year, I plan to interview the director of this conference and write an article about the Argonaut's membership in the Gulf South Conference. I think it will be an interesting piece for the people of Pensacola to read in *InWeekly*, as most are only familiar with the bigger and better known, SEC, also headquartered in Birmingham.

I had hoped my internship might lead to a job prospect once I graduate. Now, I do not think that will be the case, though I will continue to write for Mr. Outzen as he expressed an interest in a sports column. We agreed that I would write for his blog and if those sports articles are well viewed, he will consider a print column for the paper. Graduate school may well be on my horizon, as my internship mentor, Collier Merrill, and a former journalist advised me to attend graduate school for sports journalism. I know my Sewanee education will serve me well on whatever path I choose to pursue. I'm just thankful for that I was able to afford to explore my interest this summer through the support of the Business and Economics fund group, specifically the Doherty endowment. Before my desire to be a sportswriter was just a dream, now I know the steps I need to take to make it my reality.