

So Much More than an Ankle Wrap

Katie Mann '03



An injury is not something a student athlete normally attributes to the beginning of a lifelong passion and career. An unfortunate mishap, a hurt ankle in middle school, landed **KATIE MANN '03** in Coach Michelle Piette's training room several years ago. "It was the first time I saw training happen," Mann remembers. "I had my foot in an ice bucket, and I was looking around thinking, 'I like this. I could do this.'"

Fast forward to the present day and you will find Mann has been an athletic trainer at Charlotte Country Day School for the past seven years. She attributes her first moments in Coach Piette's training room as the start of her journey toward a career in athletic training.

Mann's freshman year, she continued with soccer and joined the cheerleading team as well; however, she was still curious about the other side of the field. "I was able to get into the athletic training room and observe and learn

from coach," said Mann. Coach Piette nudged her towards taking a different direction for the next year to work with the football team as an athletic trainer.

"She basically said to me, 'I can't tell you to stop cheering, but you should stop cheering and work with me.'"

By sophomore year, Mann was in the sports medicine class and thriving. She combined her love of sports and her interest in nursing, which turned out to be a lasting fit.

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man year of high school and haven't changed how I've done it since. I always give Coach Piette credit."

Upon graduating from Ravenscroft, Mann attended Wingate University's athletics training program. In addition to her experience at Ravenscroft, she worked with Wingate's football and men's soccer teams and interned with the Charlotte Checkers, a minor league hockey team. She began covering practices and home games for the Checkers and was the first athletic training

student from the program to travel with the team to some away games. This was her first experience with more gruesome injuries. She worked with the team physicians stitching lacerations and even taking sutures out.

"My favorite injury was a shoulder dislocation that occurred from a fight during a game," Mann remembers. The athlete required surgery, and she was able to be part of his rehabilitation process. When it happened, "he skated off the ice and said 'I'm pretty sure my shoulder is out of socket, but I definitely won that fight, eh?'"

"I was already ahead of the bend (at Wingate)," said Mann, "I had already learned how to tape an ankle. I felt prepared and enjoyed it ... since it was a small school setting."

Mann is now an athletic trainer at Charlotte Country Day School, a college preparatory private school in Charlotte, N.C. Having been in contact with other schools' trainers through games at Ravenscroft, she met Stephanie Miller from Charlotte Country Day and continued that connection through her time at Wingate University.

"Stephanie called me, knowing what I could do while at Ravenscroft, and said I had a job a Country Day coming out

of college," said Mann. "We had lunch one day and she told me I would start in August (2007). I couldn't say no; I like the high school setting."

Mann is currently finishing up her seventh year at Charlotte Country Day.

"I enjoy very much working here. Things are constantly evolving, and that's why I love athletics and sports medicine ... you never know what's going to happen," she said. "Country Day has been a really great place, and I've become involved in a lot around campus and even outside of athletics."

Although her "typical day" is exactly the opposite of the phrase, Mann's facets include following up with parents and doctors about any athlete injuries that are new or ongoing. She works with some of these athletes in rehab during lunch periods or study hall. They gear up for practices and games, which involves taping and setting up the fields with equipment. She says they are prepared for anything that could happen in a day.

"Then we clean up, hopefully not sending anyone to get x-rays, and head home to start the process all over again the next day," Mann said.

In the future, she would love to get "front office" experience staying within the role of athletics. She is already

involved in many aspects of Country Day athletics including alumni events, senior recognition, and generating hype for events. Graduate school is a possibility for a future sports administration or management route.

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"Somewhere down the line, when I decide to get 'off the fields,' I would love to stay involved in athletics, but from an administrative role instead of a medical role," she said.

"I enjoy helping others, and when you see a kid get back on the field, it's very gratifying that we can do that. It's great." *R*



KATIE MANN '03 accompanied the Charlotte Country Day varsity boys' soccer team to London for preseason games against local teams and a tour of the city.