

## Athletic Training: Why I love my job

In the U.S. alone, the sports industry brings in close to \$14 billion a year. Any time you walk by a television, chances are you will see a sporting event, program, or advertisement. It's hard to imagine why any young kid would not want to be involved in one of the most influential industries in the world. Odds are against becoming a professional athlete; only two percent of college athletes make it to the professional level outside of baseball. However, every kid will more than likely grow up being involved in some type of sport. It is here that many kids learn about the role of an athletic trainer. I know it is where I got my foot in the door almost eight years ago while playing high school athletics.

Athletic trainers "are health care professionals who collaborate with physicians to provide preventative services, emergency care, clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions." (NATA, 2016) Athletic trainers are not personal trainers, strength and conditioning coaches, or gym teachers. Many people often have this misconception when they first hear the title Athletic Trainer.



In celebration of March, or as I like to call it, "National Athletic Trainer month," I have compiled a list of reasons why I love my job. Please enjoy, and I hope that it provides enough insight to motivate you or someone you know to become a part of such a rewarding profession.

- 1) **New challenges every day.** Every day at work I can almost count on something new occurring. Even if it is another ankle sprain, the injured athlete may present in some new or interesting way that leaves me baffled. Each athlete/patient handles injury differently, which just goes to show the complexity and beauty of the human body.
- 2) **I constantly learn.** The evolution of medicine is constant. I may learn something from scientific based medicine or I may discover an anecdotal technique. Either way our profession continues to change and develop better medical professionals.
- 3) **Amazing relationships.** Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of the job is the relationships I develop with my athletes and patients. When an athlete gets injured,

returns to sport, has success, and at the end of their season tells you how much they appreciate you and they will miss you, it gets quite emotional.

- 4) **Appreciation.** When I leave my job after a day of work I know I am appreciated. I have had words of appreciation from my athletes, coaches, parents, Athletic Directors, you name it. It is often these small exchanges of praise that continue to inspire me in all I do as an Athletic Trainer.
- 5) **Making a difference.** My goal is to constantly change an athletes/patients' lives for the better. We are a part of a select group that has the opportunity to make a difference in an athlete's life. I have been fortunate enough to have never had to save an athlete's life, but I do know I have changed lives and possibly preserved their longevity.

*Jake Webster, MS, ATC*

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