From Classroom to the Stadium

Presented to 2023 COSMA Conference Attendees
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Today’s Trot Around the Bases

- Batter’s Box: Background
- First Base: Learning Lab
- Second Base: COVID-19 Effect
- Third Base: Business of Baseball Class
- Home Plate: Student Accomplishments
- Back to the Dugout: Discussion / Q&A Session
Background - Speaker

- Full-time instructional faculty
- Part-time PhD student
- 13 years of experience teaching Sport Management
- 4 years of experience serving as a career coach to Sport Management students
- 9 years of experience serving in leadership capacity for Southern Ohio Copperheads
- 20 years of experience working full-time or part-time in the sport and entertainment industry
Background – Dewey's (1938) Experiential Learning Theory

• Knowledge is socially constructed and based on experiences
• Knowledge should be organized in real-life experiences that provide a context for the information
• The teacher's role is to organize this content and facilitate actual experiences

(Grady, 2003)
Learning Lab: Southern Ohio Copperheads

• Community-owned, student-operated 501(c)(3) organization
• Summer collegiate wooden-bat baseball team
• Member of Great Lakes Summer Collegiate League
• Established in 2002
• Strives to be the most affordable, family-friendly means of summer outdoor entertainment in southeast Ohio
• Historically leads to high job placement for graduates
COVID-19 Effect

- Students lost out on internship and other hands-on, high impact learning experiences (Forbes, 2020)
- Copperheads forced to cancel 2020 and 2021 season
- Financial distress common among local businesses
Business of Baseball Class

• 16-week undergraduate Sport Management class (3 credits)
• Offered each spring semester
• Capped at 40 students
• Comprised of Sport Management majors and minors
• Course Description:
  • *This course provides students with the opportunity to explore the managerial aspects of operating a baseball team, facility, and event. It combines classroom instruction with hands-on experiential learning to give students an overview of how to operate a summer collegiate baseball team. The course focuses on 501(c)(3) non-profit operations as a member of the Great Lakes Summer Collegiate League.*
Business of Baseball Class (cont.)

• Learning Outcomes:
  • Identify departments in organization and how they work together
  • Understand non-profit tax identification and its role in community
  • Develop promotional night to attract fans
  • Assist in marketing or social media effort
  • Generate pre-season ticket sales
  • Develop sponsorship proposal
  • Construct community outreach event
  • Develop a plan to mitigate facility and event risks
  • Analyze top-line financials of organization
  • Interact with alumni who worked with the organization in the past through guest speaking appearances throughout the semester
Students Accomplishments: Sponsorships

• Official Concessionaire
• Customized beer named after mascot
• Kids under the age of 14 get in for free
• Post-game meal donations
• Free gym membership for players
Student Accomplishments: Game Promotion

- Church Night
- Turn it Gold with Passion Night
- Teacher Appreciation Night
- Beach Night
- Bark in the Park Night
Student Accomplishments: Overall

• Generated highest amount of revenue in Southern Ohio Copperheads history
• Donated over $11K to local organizations in need
• Received local and regional publicity for its "learning lab"
• Hosted more than 20 community events
• Received 2022 Athens Area Chamber of Commerce Community Support Award
Discussion / Q&A Session
References
