

The Society of Sports Therapists

First Class Sam!!

Sam Le Marquand, a member of The Society of Sports Therapists has just graduated with a first class honours degree in Sports Therapy from University College Chichester. She will be heading for Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) to represent the Society on a two-month internship.

The trip, which has been sponsored, by both The Society of Sports Therapists and Virginia Commonwealth University was open to Members of the Society graduating with a First Class Honours Degree in Sports Therapy in 2004. Students were invited to write a short proposal as to why they should be considered and were then short-listed to attend an interview in London. The Interview panel included Professor George Borden, Professor of Sports Medicine at VCU and Professor Graham Smith, chairman of The Society of Sports Therapists.

We caught up with her in London just after she had heard the news that she would not be spending her summer at home on the island of Guernsey but would, in fact be heading for Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, USA.

Why did you decide to put your name forward for the trip?

When I first saw the position advertised, I thought it was an amazing opportunity, one that I couldn't afford to miss. So once I had successfully gained my First Class Honours Degree, I applied and just hoped it would be me.

How do you feel now that you know you will be going?

Very Happy. Extremely Fortunate and Immensely Excited. Plus a little nervous

How do you think the trip will help you?

It will broaden my horizons. It will afford me the opportunity to see a totally different way of life, both culturally and academically. The exposure to athletes and the challenges they have to face and overcome will be invaluable experience. Also working with athletic trainers will undoubtedly improve my skills, and may offer a more varied approach to treatment and rehabilitation.

What are you looking forward to most about the trip?

Working with the athletes and athletic trainers. Learning about the way they work and speaking to them about Sports Therapy and my experiences. It will be interesting being exposed to the facilities and the environment. I am really looking forward to meeting new people and seeing new places. I am also hoping that I will be able to observe surgical procedures and perhaps get involved in research.

You worked for several years before joining Chichester - what did you do?

I worked in finance for various banks and for the last 4 years I have been a temp at Investec Bank (Channel Islands) Limited, who without their support of continually employing me, I would not have been able to fund my 4 years of study.

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Did you go straight onto the degree programme at Chichester?

No, I did a Sports Therapy course at Chichester College and from this I was then accepted for the Degree programme at University College Chichester.

How did you find the adjustment from commercial life on Guernsey?

I felt really at home as everyone was so friendly and welcoming. The staff have been tremendously helpful and very supportive.

You chose a difficult subject for your dissertation, how did that come about?

I decided that I wanted to find out more about Sports Therapy and how it had developed.

It is not an obvious one to research and staff and friends were concerned about my choice. However, I was pretty determined and stuck with it. I've learnt a lot in the process about Sports Therapy and The Society of Sports Therapists and its hopes and aspirations. I also had to research the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA), so hopefully that will help as well when I am in the States.

You helped out at the Island Games in 2003 as part of your work experience, tell us a little about that?

The Island Games are an Olympic-style biannual event between islands all around the world. Twenty-three Member Islands were involved in the 2003 Island Games, competing in sixteen sporting events, attracting approximately 2000 athletes.

In 2003 the Games were held in Guernsey. I contacted the doctor and the physiotherapist in charge of the host medical team for the Island Games. Dr Jonathan Pearce and Jay Peet respectively. I asked to work as part of the medical team as part of my work experience requirements for a third year module at university. They agreed that I could help, as they said they also had another Sports Therapist coming over from the UK and I could work alongside him. It turned out that he was a massage therapist so, although I learnt some good techniques from him, I was personally disappointed that the physiotherapists only considered me to be a purely massage therapist. I attempted to educate them regarding the content of the course and they seemed very receptive.

The Medical team provided 2 dedicated physiotherapy units, 1 at the athletics track and 1 within a leisure complex. I spent most of my time at the leisure complex, dealing with athletes from volleyball, table tennis, swimming, football and cycling. I saw athletes from a range of Islands, many from Guernsey but also many from Bermuda, as they were very keen to receive as much treatment as possible. I even took some bookings!! They had an Athletic Trainer travelling with their volleyball team; I was fortunate to work with her and she was extremely helpful. I also treated athletes from other Islands including Isle of Wight, Ynys Mon, Saaremaa, Gibraltar and Shetland.

You are obviously a sports fan. Do you play sport yourself?

My main sports whilst on Guernsey were Hockey and Ladies Football I played for Puffins Hockey Club for 15 years and I captained the team for 4 years prior to leaving the Island. I was voted Player of the Year in 2000 and I also represented the Guernsey Ladies 1st XI at this time. I then represented the Channel Islands at County Level, in the Western Counties Tournament.

I played Ladies football for various teams, again reaching an Island standard whereby I received my Guernsey Cap on 2 occasions. I played for Guernsey at a tournament in Manchester. I also played for local softball and volleyball teams and was happy to give any sport a go.

Once I moved to Chichester I joined the local hockey club where I played for the 2nd XI for 2 seasons. I was then unable to continue as I was doing work experience with a local football team on a Saturday.

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I then joined the University Volleyball team and I played for them 2 years. During the first year we won the league and got to the BUSA National Championship Finals held at Loughborough University, where we lost in the semi-finals.

Do you have time for any other hobbies?

I am still trying to learn how to play the saxophone - 8 years later - it's a work in process. I love music and the theatre. I also like to perform, I was a member of the Drama Society at University and appeared in two plays - which gave me a real buzz!

Best of Luck Sam!

It looks like Sam will be pretty busy during her time in the States, if not working she will no doubt be busy playing sport. However, we are hoping that she will be able to give us a little insight into how things are going while she is out there. Sam leaves for the States mid August and we all wish her well.

University College Chichester - www.ucc.ac.uk
Virginia Commonwealth University: www.vcu.edu/
<http://vcurams.vcu.edu/facilities/pjsportsmedicine.html>
<http://vcurams.vcu.edu/services/pjathtraining.html>
International Island Games Association - www.islandgames.net



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