

Summer Internship Paper

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## ABSTRACT

The following paper is aimed at giving a detailed overview of my Summer Internship with Tacoma South Sound Sports in Tacoma, Washington. TSSS is a non-profit organization that assists in the development of amateur athletes and athletic teams in Pierce County, WA. TSSS mission is to promote Pierce County as a destination for tourism by working with clubs and organizations in order to bring local, regional, national and international amateur sporting events to the area. Tacoma Sports is made up of an 11-member Executive Council consisting of business and civic leaders that oversee the operations of the Sports Commission through their 18 plus services.

Over the course of my ten weeks at Tacoma Sports, I aided in the development of the inaugural Rainer LAX Cup which consisted of marketing components, finding vendors, and event day management. I also partook in office team building exercises, enhanced my computer skills and attended and worked numerous sporting events. The pages that follow detail the work and assignments that I completed within my 200 hours at Tacoma South Sound Sports.

## RAINIER LAX CUP

With the significant increase of youth participation in the sport of lacrosse, Tacoma Sports wanted to provide the South Sound community with an opportunity to travel locally and partake in first-ever girl's U15 Regional Lacrosse Tournament & U19 VIP Challenge. Lacrosse is flourishing in the Northwest, but unlike the East Coast where lacrosse is extremely popular, there are not as many opportunities for teams to participate in tournament style of play off season. The RLC consists of the top U15 girl's lacrosse teams from Washington and Oregon that compete in a bracket style of competition for two days. The U19 component consists of high school aged players from the Northwest that play in a round-robin style of play for one day. The U19 players register individually and get split into equal teams constructed by the top VIP coaches. The VIP coaches were hired through the RLCs premiere sponsor WOMENSLAX.COM and are prestigious coaches and college players from across the U.S.

### Process of Developing an Event

Similar to a group project for school, the process of developing an event at a professional level starts off the same way, having a team meeting. Tacoma Sports already had the LAX Cup on the books, but before anyone could delve into their work to help make this event come to life, the staff needed to know what duties they were in charge of along with the logistics such as budget, marketing and general overview of the event. My supervisor Emily was given the lead on this project, or what Tim, President of TSSS liked to call, the Chief Indian. The next three months Emily delegated out assignments to the staff involved in the RLC. She did frequent follow ups to ensure that everyone was doing their jobs thoroughly. Being Emily's liaison I got to work closely with her and gained a better understanding of the organizational

process and what it took to be the director of an event. Emily kept things very structured on a master calendar and formatted projects that needed to be completed before someone else could start another task. It was crucial she had maintained contact with everyone involved in developing the event, not just TSSS staff.

Even though I was working in a professional environment, some people did not always do their part of the job. This was made apparent on the day of the Rainier LAX Cup when Emily had asked a team member where the EMT was. The man in charge of making sure there was a certified EMT on site did not follow through with his task. This could have been really problematic if someone had been seriously injured in the tournament. Luckily, no one was other than a few minor cuts and bruises. Imagine if someone needed treatment, this could have caused some concern not only for the parents of the injured player, but Tacoma Sports. It is required by U.S Lacrosse to have a certified EMT or medical personnel on staff for all organized lacrosse games and tournaments. If a U.S LAX associate had come to this tournament and saw we were missing an EMT, TSSS would have to pay a large fine or cancel the tournament. This situation was an eye opener for me when I eventually become a young professional. Though I will be working on projects at a larger scale, my co-workers will not always be reliable.

### Marketing

Event coordinating is like a giant puzzle, it takes a bunch of pieces to make a final masterpiece. Some of those pieces or “projects “overlap with others and this is especially true when it comes to marketing. In the pre-event meeting I was assigned to find teams and players to participate in the Rainier LAX Cup. However, I could not officially start contacting people

until the marketing director designed the official flyers and advertising pieces. My job was a huge component of the tournament. If I was unable to get at least six U15 teams and sixty U19 players signed up, Tacoma Sports would lose money on the event, not to mention we needed players to participate in the tournament in order to make it happen. Luckily, the marketing director was aware of the importance of having these materials in a timely fashion so I could start getting people registered.

Up until the day of the event I was working on getting participants for the LAX Cup. The Washington Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association had a very accurate database of team contacts in the Northwest area which made it easier to find teams. With the help of Mail Chimp, a free email marketing service, I email blasted all the U15 & U19 coaches in the state of Washington and Oregon. One would think out of the 83 teams I emailed, I would have had at least six teams register within the first month, but I did not. It took a lot more than just a flashy email to spark the interest of these coaches. I ended up calling all of the team contacts directly in hopes of getting some verbal commitments. At first it was nerve wrecking, I felt like a true saleswoman trying to pitch the idea of this tournament to these people. Most of the time I left voice messages, but when I got someone directly on the phone they turned me down and had stated their players would be out of town or it was too much money. Finally, it was not until a local lacrosse jamboree where I had received several verbal confirmations from coaches who would sign their teams up. Though I had consistently been calling and emailing these contacts, the best form of marketing for this event was direct marketing. At this jamboree I had approached coaches in between games and handed them flyers about the Rainier LAX Cup. It was astonishing to see how many of them had no idea what I was talking about, even though I

had contacted these people once before about the RLC on the phone. It just proves that engaging in conversation in person and forming that connection with someone is a more proactive way to get ones product or service out there effectively. Granted, it was very time consuming and can be costly due to travel, it hands down was the most efficient way to register the six teams that I needed for the U15 tournament.

### Vendors

Another task I was in charge of for the Rainier LAX Cup, was finding vendors to sell soft and hard merchandise on the event day. Already being familiar with the sport of lacrosse from playing in college, I was aware of the different types of merchandise that would be appropriate to sell at this event. Very similar to finding teams, I had called up local and major lacrosse retailers pitching the RLC in hopes they would come and sell their goods. Unlike the teams however, when working with a vendor everything boiled down to money and number of participants. The vendors who were interested wanted to make sure it would be worth their while to come to the RLC. They did not want to spend money on gas hauling their equipment and paying staff to sit there and sell their products if there was not going to be a large amount of people to buy.

Ideally it would have been nice to have a major retailer like Nike or STX (LAX retailer) out there selling merchandise, but given the small projection of participants and the fact this was a first year event, there was no way we were going to be able to get a big fish out there. Being the overachiever that I am had thought I was capable of landing a major company to come to the LAX Cup. So I took a gamble and emailed Sports Her Way, a very popular online sports retailer for female athletics. However, what ended up happening was I received a very harsh

email in return from Sue Heether, the President of Sports Her Way. Emily was not overly happy with the email I had been sent, she had assumed I said something inappropriate that might have upset Heether, but scanning through my emails Emily had come to the conclusion this woman was just being professional. I responded back being equally professional and apologetic for in a proficient way she said, wasting her time. In a more light hearted response, she said in the future she would certainly consider doing business with us, once we were able to reach larger participation numbers. I had gone from jeopardizing Tacoma Sports the opportunity of developing a partnership with a millionaire to rekindling one, who would have thought. Overall I had learned from this that it is ok to be confident, but I cannot waste the time of a business professional unless I have something that is of more or equal value to their interests.

Finding vendors was not nearly as challenging as finding teams. The only thing that was difficult was getting them to sign a contract. Once I had received a verbal commitment from a vendor, I emailed them the contract that had a detailed conformity of what we had agreed upon as far as in-kind offers and vendor percentage splits. Retailers, especially those that offer vendors, are booked quite frequently, out of office, or forget to check their emails from time to time. Though they could have very well signed the paper work on the event day, we wanted to ensure they stuck to our agreement and did not back out at the last minute like our food vendor had done. It caused a lot of stress trying to find a new food source a week before the event was being held. Contracts are pivotal especially when dealing with outside parties because it holds them responsible for any mishaps that may occur on their end.

Technology

With the hundreds of emails I sent and the different people I was contacting, it got confusing trying not to mix up all the information I was working with. Thankfully, Tacoma Sports uses different computer aids to help organize the people and companies we work with. One system I used to organize the U19 players, who had registered online, was Google Docs. Google Docs is a suite of products that allowed me to create different kinds of online documents, work on them in real time with other people, and store them along with other files. I used the spreadsheet option which automatically synced those who had registered to an organized document. It essentially eliminated the middle process of having to type those who had registered online into an Excel sheet myself. This might be one of the handiest software tools ever for those working in event coordinating, it saves time and gets rid of the hassle of dealing with multiple registration emails. Another system I used frequently was Zoho, a free document management service. I had a love hate relationship when working with Zoho. TSSS used it to help organize all of their business cards that they collect. On my “downtime” everyone in the office would give me their stacks of business cards and I would have the privilege of entering all the information into the database. Though tedious busy work, Zoho is like a giant online address book that makes for an easier way to look up a contact when needed.

Having advance technology in the work place defiantly helps to maintain a productive and efficient working environment. It improves communication, human capital and mobility. The computer at my desk was nice, however Microsoft Word which I had used frequently, was still the 2002 version which made it difficult to transfer documents to other formats. With the newer version I would have been able to save time on trying to transfer and email important

information. When I was not working on the Rainer LAX Cup or entering business cards into Zoho, I researched and looked up the contact information of every sports club team in the Tacoma area. With this information I then entered it into an Excel sheet where it was shared on the TSSS hard drive so everyone could extract information from it at any point. Without the help of the internet and Excel, it would make researching clubs in the area a lot more challenging. Being a future graduate when seeking employment, it is important that I remain up to date on all forms of business technology. It is advancing at rapid speeds and employers will rarely hire anyone who does not know how to use a computer accurately.

#### Day of Event Operations

The final week before game day was buzzing. Though most of the work had been completed, it was time to put all our efforts into action. As a team we met up one final time to go over last minute details and the run sheet (See pg.15-16 for Run Sheet). We went over the times for set up and take down, emergency action plan, and item placement including tables, chairs, tents, vendors, water, porta-johns ect. There were so many small components that went into this one day it was crucial to make sure everyone knew their roles through and through. I had been directed to oversee all the vendors and help them where to set up. This was just a small fraction of the other work that had to be done on event day. We had someone in charge of our volunteers making sure they knew what they were doing, a master timer, referees, equipment managers, someone to transport VIP coaches, set up and tear down staff, player check in, and much more. It is difficult to put into words what exactly took place when, where and how. There were so many things that went on simultaneously and so much prep work for the RLC, it would take a whole fifteen pages to explain the process of event day

management. To sum it up though, it is important to be overly organized and have a check list. The more organized and the more detailed oriented the run sheet is, the less chance of having a disaster occur.

The Rainier LAX Cup went off without a hitch, minus the lack of an EMT on site that I had discussed in the previous section. Though the event was over, there was still some follow up work that needed to be completed before the LAX Cup could be laid to rest. I sent out emails to all the players and coaches involved in the RLC thanking them for their participation. Emily wanted to maintain a friendly relationship with all the participants in hopes of having them return to next year's event. Tacoma Sports also had a final meeting to go over the pros and cons of the event and what could have been done differently. The only thing that was suggested by the staff as a whole was to eliminate the U15 component of the tournament. It is not that the U15 portion went over badly, it was more so the fact it was very difficult finding teams to compete in the off season. Like a lot of coaches had told me over the phone, their players were already on summer break so it was challenging trying to compile a full playing roster before the tournament. I had agreed with the rest of the staff in the fact it is not only easier to offer a round robin style of play for the girls, but registration can be done all electronically and eliminates the hassle of onsite paper work, not to mention it is more of a money maker. Whether these suggestions will be implemented into next year's RLC or not, it is still important to have a wrap up meeting to continually improve the planning process for all events.

## TEAM BUILDING

When working on any event at Tacoma Sports, I had to work closely with everyone in the office. During these times a lot of communication takes place amongst the staff members. Though there is constant communication, it is still important to build staff cohesiveness through team building activities that are non work related. Twice a month the Tacoma Sports staff takes a break from work and unleashes their inner competitive nature in friendly games of ping pong and foosball. Tim Waer, President of Tacoma South Sound Sports, told me that it is important to take time away from your desk not only for the mental break, but to interact with your co workers in a friendly and positive way. This helps to build stronger relationships outside of the office which in turn results in a better connection amongst the staff and creates a positive environment to work in. I could not agree with this statement more. Even though they were just simple games of ping pong, it allowed me to chat with the others in the office about their likes and interests rather than just work related jabber.

At Tacoma Sports a birthday never goes unrecognized. Tim attempted to be sneaky once by email blasting the office with a mandatory meeting later in that evening. We all sat in the board room waiting for him to arrive and as he did he was holding a giant cake for Dean, the birthday guy. The look on Dean's face was priceless even though we all knew that the meeting was bogus. TSSS also occasionally likes to do staff retreats. A retreat is more of an out of office team building activity. Though I did not get to experience one, I heard in the past the staff went paintballing, bowling and to a hockey game. This type of environment makes going to work more enjoyable and I can honestly say when I woke up to go to Tacoma Sports in the

morning, I looked forward to it. If I am ever a future manager of a business I will defiantly implement fun team building activities into the work days.

#### BENEFITS OF THE JOB

Working in sports certainly had its perks. Being a member of a sports commission enabled me to experience some of the most memorable sporting events of my life. Working with other sports franchises grants Tacoma Sports access to premiere events such as the Olympic Diving Trials. Even though I was just the intern, Tim invited me to attend the trials in Federal Way, WA. Little did I know this also included VIP access to the lounge at the event, which included free food and bottle service. TSSS also gets season tickets to the Rainier AAA Baseball team which I could attend whenever I wanted, as long as no one else had claimed the tickets before me. These tickets also granted access to the VIP lounge which included free beer and wine, along with all the peanuts I could possibly eat. Hands down the most memorable sporting event I attend was Olympic Day at River Valley BMX. I had never been to a BMX competition before and never knew what it really entailed. To say the least, I have a better appreciation for BMX athletes and really enjoyed watching the races.

#### CONCLUSION

After the 200 hours I have completed at Tacoma South Sound Sports, I feel more confident in knowing the ins and outs of how a sports commission operates. I have learned that having a sports commission in a city helps to generate new revenue for that community by bringing in an influx of cash flow to that region. Similar to how the Olympics work, by bringing in outside visitors or tourists to one city, that extra money being spent on transportation, food and hotels helps to boost the economy in that surrounding area. Sports commissions also help

to market and support local clubs in the area, which in turn promotes living a healthy and active lifestyle in the community. The knowledge I have gained through working on the Rainier LAX Cup has helped me to become more professional in organizing my work, along with being able to plan an event from start to finish. I have honed my communication skills not only on the phone, but making sure I send emails in a professional and business fashion. Overall I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Tacoma Sports. The only complaint that I have, were the long work days, after the LAX Cup had been completed there was not a whole lot for me to do. I can see where people suffer from burn out if their job continually involves staring at a computer screen all day. Luckily working in sports I was able to get out of the office frequently, whether it was hanging up flyers or working at an event. My final day at TSSS, Tim held a surprise going away meeting for me with cake; I am only the second intern he has ever done that for. It was sad saying goodbye to all my co-workers, but after this internship I feel ready and capable to pursue a career in sports

## RUN SHEET

**RAINIER LAX CUP**

Fort Steilacoom Park July 14/15

(8714 87th Ave SW, Lakewood, WA 98499)

**LOCAL ORGANIZING  
COMMITTEE**

Emily Miller	Tournament Director	(480) 250-1784	emilym@tacomaspports.org
Kelley Miller	Vendor Coordinator	(480) 326-4910	intern@tacomaspports.org
Craig Wickstrom	Sound System, Awards, jerseys	(253) 973-1163	craig.wickstrom@comcast.net
Glenn Smith	Field Management (goals, paint)	(253) 732-5962	asmith9682@aol.com
Kerry Hardersen	Hospitality	(253) 797-2575	kerryjoh@hotmail.com
Jen Frapwell	Officials Coordinator	206-678-2148	frapwell@gmail.com
Beth Lancaster	U19 VIP Challenge Coordinator		danandbethl@comcast.net
Elyse Glahn	Volunteer Coordinator	(253) 797-8204	intern@tacomaspports.org
Shelli Williams	VIP Transportation	(253) 973-0221	shelliw@tacomaspports.org
Tim Waer	Water Boy	(253) 222-6218	timw@tacomaspports.org
Tim Morgan	Master Timer	(503) 953-5315	timm@tacomaspports.org

**VOLUNTEERS**

Joanne	Clarke Dillman	253-304-1715	jclarked@gmail.com
Susan	Wright	253-202-5500	swrighttapps@comcast.net
Vanessa	Sawyer	253-219-3712	Dandvsawyer@aol.com
Kathi	Lucchesi	253-905-7574	k_lucchesi@yahoo.com
Cathy	Schrock		schrocks@comcast.net
Angela	Sisney	253-961-5507	Angela@harbornet.com
Michael	Lund	253-861-1114	mellund2@gmail.com
Mike, Mikki & Amanda	Gordon	253-534-9553	mgordon@tscnet.com
Jennifer	Rodriguez	253-820-3374	rrodri1124@aol.com
Craig and Uyen	Christiansen	253-224-4157	Christiansenguc@yahoo.com

**FRIDAY July 13th**

8am	Line fields/ layout vendor @ Ft Steilacoom Park	Glenn, Emily, Craig
12pm - 8pm	VIP Pickup @ Seatac / Day @ Pike Place	Kelley
10:30am	Costco Run	Kerry/Emily
Afternoon	Pick-up Pinnies/ Jerseys	Craig
Afternoon	Load up equipment (tens, water coolers, etc)	TSSS Staff
Afternoon	Load up raffle prizes	Emily
8:45pm	VIP Pickup @ Seatac/ drop off at La Quinta	Kelley
6pm (Erin) & 1am (Alex)	Seatac pickups	Emily

**SATURDAY July 14th**

7:00am	Alffys arrive/ Parking signs setup	Emily & Kelley
7:45am	Vendors Check-in	Kelley
7:45 - 8:30am	Vendor set-up (raffle, sound system, etc)	Kelley
8:00am	Volunteers arrive	Elyse Glahn
8:00 - 8:30	Field set-up (water, tables, chairs, training)	Elyse Glahn

8:15am	VIP pick-up	Shelli Williams
8:30am	U19 athlete check-in	Emily & Kelley & Volunteer
8:30am - noon	U15/U13 check-in	Emily & Kelley & Volunteer
8:45am	VIP team Meeting	Emily Miller
9:00am - 11:00am	U19 VIP Challenge Practice	VIP Coaches

SATURDAY GAMES	Field 1	Field 2	womenslax.com field
9am	U19 VIP GOALIE Practice	U19 VIP Practice	U19 VIP Practice
10am	Warmup Field (open)	U19 VIP Practice	U19 VIP Practice
11am	U13G TYLA Stars V Harbor Fire	U15G Tacoma Tigers V Harbor Fire	U19G Bowen V Halstead
12pm	U13G TYLA V Tacoma Tigers	U15G Puget Sound V Oregon Rush	U19G Lobel V Benner
1pm	U13G Oregon Rush V Harbor Fire	U15G Tapps Lightening V Tacoma Tigers	Warmup Field (open)
2pm	Warmup Field (open)	U15G Puget Sound V Harbor Fire	U15G Bowen V Benner
3pm	U13G TYLA Stars V Oregon Rush	U15G Tapps Lightening V Oregon Rush	U19G Lobel V Halstead
4pm	U13G Tacoma Tigers V Harbor Fire	U15G Tacoma Tigers V Puget Sound	U19G Bowen V Lobel
5pm	U13G Tacoma Tigers V Oregon Rush	U15G Harbor Fire V Oregon Rush	U19G Halstead V Benner

6pm	Awards Ceremony by speaker system	Craig
6:30pm	Vendor Tear Down	TSSS, volunteers, Led by Kelley
7pm	VIP pick-up for Dinner at Chambers Grille	Craig
7:30 - 9pm	VIP Dinner at Chambers Grille	
9pm	VIP returned to hotel	Emily or Kelley

**SUNDAY July 15th**

7:15am	Alffys arrive/ Parking signs setup	Emily & Kelley
8:00am	Volunteer check-in (set up fields)	Elyse
8:15am	Vendor/ team checkin	Emily & Kelley
9am	VIP Pickup	Shelli ??
9am - 2pm	Games	
9:00 - 10:00am	Intro to Lacrosse Clinic Check-in	Elyse
10 - 12pm	Intro to Lacrosse Clinic	VIPs

SUNDAY GAMES	FIELD 1	FIELD 2	Womenslax.com Field
8am	Warmup Field (open)	Warmup Field (open)	
9am	Warmup Field (open)	U15G Harbor Fire V Tapps Lightening	

10am	Warmup Field (open)	U15G Tacoma Tigers V Oregon Rush	Intro to Lacrosse Clinic
11am	Warmup Field (open)	U15G Puget Sound V Tapps Lightening	Intro to Lacrosse Clinic
12pm	Warmup Field (open)	U15G seed 4 vs seed 3 (3rd/4th place)	
1pm		U15G seed 2 V Seed 1 (2nd/ 1st place)	

2pm	U15 AWARD CEREMONY	Craig & VIPs
2:30pm	Tear Down vendors	All
3pm	VIPs leave for Airport/ Redmond	Kelley
4pm	SeaTac dropoff	Kelley
5pm	Redmond Dropoff	Kelley

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### VIP CHALLENGE SCHEDULE

#### THE EVENT on Saturday:

The VIP Challenge was designed to be a FUN day for any and all U19 players in the NW. All the girls will come together between 9am – 10:30am for a practice session and then be split into their respective teams for the afternoon.

#### PRACTICE (9am – 10:30):

9:00 – 9:20am – Warm up/ shuttle lines

#### GOALIE SCHEDULE

9:00 – 9:45am – Goalie training Led by Coach Bosch & Coach Benner (after this goalies and Bosch/Benner will fill in where needed) (Field 1)

#### FIELD PLAYER SCHEDULE

Round 1 9:25 – 9:45 (No Goalies will be provided)

Round 2 9:50 – 10:10

Round 3 10:15 – 10:35

The girls will be split into 3 groups and rotate through each station: Each station will last 20 minutes. Coaches who lead each station will be required to run through 1 or 2 of their favorite drills. Your group size will range between 20-25 players at one time. Keep in mind during Round 1, you will not have goalies present.

- Station 1) Led by Coach Bowen (womenslax.com Field)
- Station 2) Led by Coach Lobel (Field 2)
- Station 3) Led by the UPS Coaching Staff (Field 1) (1/2 field 1 station)

10:30am Teams will be split up into color teams

GAMES START AT 11:00am and end at 6:00pm

All games start on the hour ----- Two 25 min running halves with a 5 minute half time

6:00pm "Spirit of Lacrosse" Awards & Q&A ----- location?

- Spirit of lacrosse --- sportsmanship, leadership, rising star, your choice.

WHAT DO I DO BETWEEN GAMES?

- Name Game/ Get to know you
- Eat snacks & lunch
- Rest/Sleep
- Hang out
- Go to the lake
- Go to the playground
- Shop
- Teach my players cool tricks