Erin Dwinell

**Professional Interview**:

Catie Leblanc

Assistant Athletic Trainer- Longwood University

Major- Athletic Training

**Question 1**: What does a typical day and week look like for you?

**Answer:** A typical day starts at about 8:00AM. We are open 8AM-12PM for treatments; it is a lot of people coming in for rehab exercises and to take care of injuries that happened the previous day. There is also a lot of paper work and insurance filing. Then, in the afternoon from 1-3, is practice prep to set up for practice and getting everyone ready to go. A typical week will depend on the schedule of the team. When the team I’m responsible for has an off day on the weekend then I have a full off day; but if they have an off day during the week I still have to come in to work 9-3. Also, with game days we travel with the team so my schedule revolves around that as well.

**Q2**: What are the major responsibilities of your position?

**Answer:** My major responsibilities are Women’s Soccer and Men’s and Women’s Tennis for treatments, prevention, rehab, moral support, and mental health. But, I also have some administrative duties such as insurance paperwork, meetings, and making sure the athletic training room runs smoothly.

**Q3**: What is your educational background? And what were your most important undergraduate classes?

**Answer**: I have an undergrad degree in Athletic Training from Springfield College and a master’s degree in Kinesiology and Education. My master’s was based on lower extremity mechanics, basically how the body moves. My most important undergraduate classes were definitely Anatomy and Kinesiology. If you don’t do how everything moves and where everything is, you can’t do your job well.

**Q4:** Is there a need for more education or skill training even after getting a job? If so, what skills do you feel are necessary?

**Answer:** You definitely need to keep up with your education, you have to go out and see what the new research, protocols, and surgeries say to see how that effects the rehab process. There is a lot they don’t teach you in how to run an athletic training room and how to manage various things. So, there is a need to get used to and comfortable with the administrative side of athletic training.

**Q5**: What does the career path look like as an athletic trainer?

**Answer**: You usually start as an assistant or a graduate assistant if you’re getting a masters. The common misconception is that you work up from a high school to college, but you can start out in a college. It depends on what the persons ideal setting is. There are multiple career paths for ATs to take. There is the option of college or high school setting such as: assistant AT or head AT. High school ATs can also be teachers, typically anatomy, health, or even a sports named class. ATs are also in the clinic and hospital setting as physician extenders or working in a PT clinic.

**Q6:** What are the high points and low points of this job? What are the high points and low points of your career?

**Answer**: High points are when everyone is healthy and I can just watch the games and watch people succeed; That is the best part of the job. Another high point is when people get back to play from injuries like the first time they get to run. The low points are when my athletes experience season ending injuries, frustrations, and when things aren’t going how they should be. It’s hard to stay positive for them when I myself get frustrated because you don’t know what to do for them at that point.

**Q7**: What kind of people do well in this career area? Why did you select this area?

**Answer**: Social, high-energy, positive-energy people, that want to help others do well in this area. I selected this area because I like to help people. Also, I have torn my ACL so, going through rehab and how that all works interested me a lot however I didn’t like the population of physical therapists. So, I knew I wanted to work with people that wanted to get better and wanted to get back to what they were doing before injury. I like sports and it is a lot of fun working with this age group, it’s never boring.

**Q8**: Are there areas of educational specialization that should be considered either during or after an undergrad degree?

**Answer**: I think over the course of your career you see a lot of things and some people see more of one thing than another depending on what sport they are working with. For me, I’m comfortable with shoulder rehab right now. To me, what you see is what you tend to specialize in. For example, trainers that work with baseball players tend to become experts at shoulders, elbows, and wrists due to the high frequency of those types of injuries in that sport. Real- world experience is what will get you that specialization.

**Q9**: What changes have you noticed or do you expect in your field?

**Answer**: The Athletic Training program just changed to a five-year master’s program. Instead of just four years to get an undergrad, you must do five years to get your masters then take your exam after that point. I think some of the job positions are going to go away; this is going to make the dynamics of the AT room different. I hope this makes it more competitive so that there is a constant high demand for athletic trainers and the pay will get better.

**Q10**: What other career opportunities did you have? Why might you not have taken a particular path that was possible for you, given your educational background?

**Answer**: Physical Therapy was a career choice that I was looking at for a little bit, but I did not like the population involved with that path. Occupational Therapy is one that now I kind of wish I did just because of my interest with hands and wrists and that that job is more centered around them. However, I do obviously love my job and I am very happy with the career choice I made.

**Personal Response**

Before I interviewed Catie Leblanc, I assumed Athletic Training involved all hands on work and was focused primarily on the first response to injuries. My ideas have changed about this career because it does involve hands on work and newly created injuries, however it involves more. Athletic training also involves pre and post-injury activities such as prevention and rehab. I think I would fit into this position well because of my social skills and passion to help others. I am interested in the prevention and rehab aspects of exercise science, not really the aspect of the first response to injury. I believe I have the ability to do this job well, however I am in interested in a main aspect of this career. My impression of this career is that it requires a lot of social abilities, commitment, and passion. To do your job well, you must be able physically and emotionally support a team to your best of your ability through the highs and lows of their season. I think the career field has a high population but a low demand currently; therefore, I think it should be harder to become and athletic trainer.