

AKWASI - Team captain



Running the fastest time of the day during the 'time try outs'. That was my sporting highlight last month since my stay at the Utah Valley University (UVU). After that day, much has happened. My fastest time of the day was instantly overshadowed when I was selected as team captain. The moment when that took place is still very fresh in my mind.

I went to go watch a home game of the UVU Wolverines basketball team with a few of my fellow students. Eventually they beat Northern Arizona by 68 – 62! I left the arena after the game, drifting along with the mass of people to the outside. Surprisingly I saw my head coach Scot Houle also standing outside, enjoying a hotdog. While being surrounded by his children he calls me over to them. Short and concise he says: "On Monday 17 November we have a staff meeting with all the coaches. I really want you to be there as one of the team captains." Completely flabbergasted I stare at my coach with an open mouth. A team captain is the leader of a group of about a hundred athletes. Mostly the privilege of being appointed the team captain is reserved for older students with more authority and experience. After being at the UVU for only 3-and-a-half months I am only a 'freshman'. In high school films those are the people constantly being pestered and having to do all the unpleasant odd jobs all the time. I had realised very soon that being elected to team captain as freshman, is a highly unlikely occurrence.

As coach Houle taps me on my shoulder, I instantly get a flashback. I was thinking back to 2002, when I became a member of the athletics association, Continental Sports. I was only sixteen years old back then. My trainer Sammy Monsels apparently saw something in me and made me team captain after a short while. In some way my destiny always seems to lead me in that direction. Finally when I could get a word out of my mouth, I said to coach Houle: "Coach, are you being real here? There are so many big leaders in our team. I cannot accept this." His answer followed shortly. "The people here like you. And in the last three months you have shown that you can work hard. That is something that we appreciate, and we want you to be team captain even while being a freshman". That means that I am being valued for who I am and for my hard work. Well, that is what you do it for! For the team I will give everything and that is also something for which I will put my heart and soul into.

There is also been a lot happening in my studies. In August I started with Business Management Studies, but in the meanwhile I have switched to Communications. The focus is more on Public Relations in this study. Before I came to America, I worked as a PR-associate at the ROC of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. This is the same teaching institution of which the Johan Cruyff College is also part of. That working environment suited me perfectly back then. In Business Management Studies there is a lot of mathematics involved, and I have to admit that this is not exactly my strongest point. In Communications I can bypass this matter rather smoothly. I am only obligated to choose a major in two years time, but it is good to make the right steps regarding a study as soon as possible.

Sometimes I think that I would like to start my own business in events coordination when I am back in the Netherlands. The subject Communications will serve as a good platform for this area. If you look at my study results I am not doing bad at all. Last month I stood in the 6th position in my class for our grades, and this month I am standing at number 1. Top of my league!

Something that is not going as well is my injury. At the end of last month our UVU-sports physician, Dr. McLane, made an MRI-scan of my groin. The scan showed that I do not have to go under the knife, but that I have to contend with a 'stress reaction', having overworked of my leg and my hip. Further examinations have showed that my right leg is half a centimetre longer than my left leg. That causes much pain during my training. I received an injection against that and my shoes have been modified. A huge disappointment is that I have to stand next to the sideline for five weeks long, and that I am temporarily not allowed to take part in the pre-event trainings. The only thing that I can do at this moment is to coach and encourage my fellow team members as team captain from the side. In the middle of the month of November I got confused with my daily planning because I could not train. With the study I am in the top of my league, but regarding my sport I am currently at a low point. Things will only get better...

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