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**Ohio University Campus Recreation staff connecting with the Athens community**

The Athens community benefits from Ohio University's Campus Recreation staff expertise. Several full time staff members work with the various youth groups and local schools. Using their expertise in recreation provides the community experienced professionals in various sports related areas.

Brad Whittaker and Nicholas Brigati are the Intramural and Club Sports Director and Assistant Director, respectively. Brad has worked for Campus Recreation and officiated local sport games since he was a student at Ohio University. Whittaker currently officiates middle school, high school and college basketball at branch campuses. He also officiates youth league, middle school and junior varsity football in the Athens, Alexander, Vinton County, Federal Hocking, Trimble, Nelsonville York, Warren and Belpre school districts. Whittaker's officiating experience began at Ohio University where he worked with intramural sports for three years as an undergraduate. As a graduate student at the University of North Texas he transitioned into high school sports. Whittaker returned to Ohio University in 2004 for a full time position with Campus Recreation. He continues to attend basketball officiating camps every year to learn more rules and mechanics.

Assistant Intramural and Club Sports Director Nicholas Brigati has also been a part of Campus Recreation as an undergraduate at Ohio University and returned to a full time position within the last year. Brigati's official training is similar to Whittaker's. He officiated games as a student at Ohio and has been attending summer camps to improve his skills and knowledge of the games since the summer of 2004. His most recent camp was a one-day event in Akron, Ohio led by a division one official, Bill Ek.

Brigati officiates high school and college football, high school and college basketball, and high school baseball. He has officiated high school games in Alexander, Athens, Corning Miller, Federal Hocking, Meigs, Trimble, Nelsonville-York and Vinton County. He works the North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAA Division III) and the Mid-States League (NAIA) for college games. Neither of the two conferences have teams closer than Columbus. In college basketball, he works in the Ohio Regional Campus Conference. That league is made up of the branch campuses of the larger 4-year institutions.

Brigati's experience at Ohio University has paid off. "I have had nothing but positive experiences as an official, and I owe much of my success to my time with Ohio University Intramural Sports as an undergrad. Working games on campus for four years accelerated my development as an official because I saw many more games than if I'd only officiated middle and high school games."

Intramural and Club Sports is not the only area of Campus Recreation with staff members participating in Athens area events. Steve Sammons, Associate Director of Campus Recreation, graduated in 1988 and has worked for the City of Athens and Ohio University ever since.

Sammons works with the developmental hockey leagues at Bird Arena and coaches the Athens Mite team, which is comprised of children between the ages of 5 and 8-years-old.

Bird Arena Director, Marcus Marazon, has been playing hockey since he was 4-years-old, played for Ohio's club hockey team and has worked with Campus Recreation since he was an undergraduate. He started in 1995 as a skating guard at Bird and has since moved onto management positions. Following his undergraduate tenure, he took on the interim position of Assistant Director and has been in his current position since 2002. Based on his experience with Campus Recreation, he agrees that the student development that comes from working with OU is great.

“The development opportunities working a place like this are remarkable. Everything I have learned for the position has come through the outstanding mentorship of Steve Sammons or Craig McCarthy, learned through dealing with situations hands on as they came up, or through the ability to network and attend ice related conferences and training courses through an organization called STAR, Serving The American Rink,. I am one of only about 250 STAR Certified Ice Technicians in the entire United States,” Marazon said.

The experience Ohio University gives to its students year after year is clear. Campus Recreation thrives on students learning the trades by doing. Whittaker, Brigati, Sammons and Marazon are proof that students can do what they love while on campus and later gain a career out of it.

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*For more information on please contact Campus Recreation at 593-9908.*