

Soccer alum helps spread innovative PE program in Germany

BY BARRETT HATHCOCK

For one Birmingham-Southern athlete, a passion for playing a single sport has turned into a passion for teaching multiple sports to children across his native country.

German alumnus Thorsten Damm attended BSC from 1998 until 2000, majoring in international business and playing soccer for coach Preston Goldfarb. After graduating, Damm returned to Germany and played professionally for 1. Fussball-Club Kaiserslautern alongside famous German striker Miroslav Klose.

After he returned to Germany, Damm also studied business and education at the University of Mannheim and physical education at the University of Heidelberg through a cooperation agreement between the two institutions.

While completing his studies, Damm was introduced to the "Ballschule Heidelberg" (Heidelberg Ball School), an internationally recognized PE program created by Dr. Klaus Roth. As he finished up his exams, Damm was asked by Roth and Dr. Daniel Memmert, another of Damm's professors, to join their work at the University of Heidelberg's Institute of Sport and Sport Science.

"The original [Ball School] idea was not to teach each game independently, but to find the similarities between sports games like soccer, basketball, and so on," says Damm.

Based on tactical and technical similarities between the sports, the institute developed games that

contained common elements from these different sports, so that students could learn the general abilities and skills in new, non-specific games.

"That way, all children can engage in physical activity," says Damm, who himself serves as a "playing coach" for a senior professional team in Germany. "Usually, when you play soccer, the ones who don't like soccer (or the ones who are not good at it) are left out. The next week, though, others kids might dislike the next sport offered."

The philosophy of the Heidelberg Ball School is to reinvigorate a sense of physical activity for kids everywhere, particularly the kind of free play embodied in an active culture of street games. The program also is designed to give kids a general sense of different types of games and different types of skills before having to actually specialize in a specific sport, potentially reducing the risk of burnout or too early of a specialization.

"The participating children naturally don't care about the theory that is behind the program," Damm says. "That is perfectly okay because they are supposed to have a lot of fun and enjoy what they are doing. [The program] might also be a good way of fighting against the lack of exercise, obesity, and so on. The most important thing still is to get and keep kids moving!"

The institute offers the program to elementary schools as an extracurricular activity in addition to its regular PE classes. It also instructs club teams to offer this program to their kids. Among teams that are participating in the program are famous teams and former German championship winners like SV Werder Bremen (soccer), THW Kiel (team handball), Mannheim



Damm at the Heidelberg Ball School.



Damm in competition.

Eagles (ice hockey), and USC Heidelberg (basketball). The nonprofit sports institute also relies on the sponsorship of companies such as BASE, Capri Sonne (German Capri Sun), and the software company SAP.

"I think the time at BSC prepared me in a really good way for what I'm doing right now," says Damm, who's a project manager for the institute. "When you start a project, there is no routine or a ready-made way that you can just go along. It's more like: Here are our goals—you go ahead and do it and get it done. At BSC, you had all the possibilities and all the help to get something done. What you established was up to you, though."

The institute currently supports international projects in Austria, Brazil, Nigeria, Japan, China, and Chile—but none yet in America.

"Just like in Germany, we want to offer this as an after-school activity to keep kids active and safe at the same time, help working families, and develop skills and talents," he says. "Since students achieve best when they're physically fit, we might even improve academic performance through our PE program."

For more information on the Heidelberg Ball School, feel free to contact Thorsten Damm at thorsten.damm@ballschule.de.

Come home this fall for

HOME COMING 2007

Birmingham-Southern's next Homecoming will be held Saturday, Oct. 6.

Come celebrate the rebirth of football on the Hilltop, as the Panthers take on Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference foe DePauw University Tigers at 1:30 p.m. at Regions Park in Hoover.

Please Note

Our next Alumni Reunion Weekend will be fall 2008.

Beginning in fall 2008, Alumni Reunion will coincide with the annual Homecoming football game. Not only will you join your classmates and friends for Alumni Reunion, but you also will enjoy BSC football, Homecoming festivities, tailgating, and more!

Watch your mailbox and future issues of 'Southern' for more information.

To get the latest news and info, be sure to update your contact information at www.bsc.edu/alumni/form-address.htm.

Alumni Reunion Weekend 2007 “The Best of Times”

The more things change, the more they stay the same. As BSC graduates spread out across the world, they each share a common home in Birmingham-Southern, where the campus might have a few new buildings, but the BSC bond still is strong. It’s the place where you found your calling, the place where you made lifelong friends—the place where you had some of the best times of your life.

This past spring, more than 650 alumni came back to visit during Alumni Reunion Weekend April 27-28. They celebrated at class parties, receptions, lectures, a family festival, dinner on the quad, and more.



Lighting the skies—Alumni Reunion Weekend 2007 culminates with a grand fireworks extravaganza set to music.



Registering for reunion—Josh Vasa '03 and Carrie Kramer Vasa '03 report to the reunion registration desk for their nametags and materials and to greet friends and fellow alumni.

Hilltop performance—Almost 150 alumni enjoy a performance by the Hilltop Singers during the Saturday Alumni Awards Luncheon.



Alumni achievers—BSC President Dr. David Pollick (left) congratulates Outstanding Young Alumni Award recipients (from left) Grover Robinson IV '92 and Congressman Robert Aderholt '87, and Distinguished Alumni Award recipients Elvin Hilyer '60, Jean Prescott Pierce '52, and Bob Clem '67.



Budding van Goghs—A father and his children view the artwork created by children of alumni at the art camp during the Alumni Reunion Family Festival.



Just jump—Two little girls have a blast jumping in the inflatable Cinderella's Castle.



Job well done—President Dr. David Pollick congratulates then-BSC senior, now assistant director of alumni affairs, Mallie Searcy on a successful Senior Gift Campaign.



A bittersweet sound—Dean of Chapel Dr. Stewart Jackson plays with the "Dill Pickers" during the Service Learning reunion honoring his retirement from the college.



Presidential honors—2006-07 National Alumni Association President Julie Lockwood '92 speaks to alumni during the dinner on the academic quad.



Fish and hushpuppies—More than 350 alumni, faculty, staff, and students are treated to a tasty fish fry on the grounds Saturday night.



All smiles—Current BSC students join alumni at the dinner on the academic quad.

Alumni travel to Italy with BSC professor

Spring Break 2007 was special for 12 Birmingham-Southern alumni who traveled to Italy with BSC Professor of Classics Dr. Sam Pezzillo. The group first traveled to the island of Capri and visited the famous "Blue Grotto." They also visited the ruins of the Villa Jovis, a favorite villa of Emperor Tiberius. Visiting sites affected by the eruption on Mount Vesuvius, the group explored the ruins at Herculaneum before making their way down the spectacular cliff-hugging, serpentine roads of the Amalfi Coast en route to Pompeii. The remainder of the trip included visits to the Vatican Museum, St. Peter's Cathedral, and more classical sites in Rome, with an optional excursion to Florence.



Experiencing Pompeii—Jo Anne '93 and Walter Garrett '67 were among the BSC alumni who visited Pompeii. Here, they are shown in front of an ancient oven.



Friends and family—One group of alumni traveling together included friends and family. (From left) Brian Cash '97, Maryann Loman, Kelly Williamson, Foster Williamson '97, Howard Williamson '71, and Harrison Walker '97 await the boat to Capri.



Lemons in Capri—Italy is known for its lemon and orange groves. On the island of Capri, (from left) Regina Cates '95, Barbara Simon, Melissa Shackelford '01, and Harriet Rejonis pose in front of a large lemon tree.

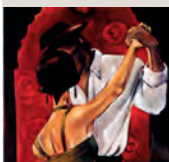
Tag! BSC is it—Have you seen those Birmingham-Southern license tags? For just \$50, you can show your BSC pride by both displaying a BSC license tag and supporting the college. And \$48.75 of that cost comes back to the college in support of the Annual Fund. BSC collegiate license plates may be purchased at any time, regardless of your tag renewal month. Due to confidentiality laws, the Department of Transportation does not release the names of tag owners. To receive gift credit, contact Maggie McDonald in the Office of Annual Giving at 205/226-7737 or mmcdonal@bsc.edu.



BSC to offer variety of travel opportunities for alumni

Throughout the next year, Birmingham-Southern will offer many travel opportunities tailored specifically for alumni. Led by BSC professors and staff, these trips are packed with both adventure and education and include some of the most beautiful locations in the world.

Spots for the trips must be made in advance, so don't hesitate. For additional information, contact Lisa Harrison, director of alumni affairs, at 205/226-4912 or lharriso@bsc.edu.



Argentinean Adventure: Buenos Aires

March 20-30, 2008

Dr. Barbara Domcekova, associate professor of Spanish

Dr. Janie Spencer, professor of Spanish

Cost: \$2,850

Spanish professors Barbara Domcekova and Janie Spencer will pack as many of this great South American city's attractions as possible into this whirlwind visit. Travelers will experience an in-depth city tour and also will be able to explore on their own. Visitors will learn about the city's history and culture through its many museums, art galleries, and elegant cafés, as well as trips to Buenos Aires' multifaceted neighborhoods, from the exclusive Recoleta to colorful La Boca to hip Palermo Soho.

Other activities will include tango lessons, fabulous shopping for antiques or leather goods, and sampling Argentina's exquisite cuisine and spectacular wines.

A non-refundable deposit of \$150 is due by Oct. 15.



Springtime in Paris!

March 21-March 30, 2008 (BSC spring break)

Kim Thomas, director of the Foreign Language Lab and Academic Resource Center, and member of the Alliance Française of Birmingham

Cost: \$1,889 per person for Alliance members; \$1,939 for non-members

Birmingham-Southern alumni are invited to join Alliance Française of Birmingham for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Paris. During the weeklong trip, you'll enjoy Paris a la carte!

For those new to Paris, you will be free to hit the major sites: Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, and Centre Pompidou, which houses the National Museum of Modern Art. Veteran visitors may wish to explore such sites as Saint Denis, the tombs of the kings of France and the origin of Gothic style, and the Marais district, with its medieval and renaissance townhomes.

A non-refundable deposit of \$299 is due by Nov. 15. Final payment is due by Jan. 31, 2008.



Exploring France—Provence and Paris

May 14-24, 2008

Dr. Sam Pezzillo, professor of classics

Cost: \$3,985

This study tour of France will be conducted by Professor of Classics Dr. Sam Pezzillo, who will guide alumni through the Roman antiquities of Provence and serve as the overall tour host. He will be assisted by Karen Greene '85, veteran group traveler and organizer. The trip includes two nights in Aix, four in Avignon, and three in Paris, and will feature numerous sites of historical interest as well as ample time for individual exploration. Highlights include a visit to the Fragonard Perfume Factory, a tour of Avignon including the Papal Palace, a visit to Chateneuf de Papes with an excursion to the wine cellar, and trips to Vaison La Romaine and Orange to see the Antique Theatre.

A deposit of \$400 is required to reserve a space. Final payment of \$3,585 is due March 14, 2008.



Exploring the Galapagos Islands

May 29-June 10, 2008

Dr. Megan Gibbons, assistant professor of biology

Cost: \$5,395 per person

Assistant Professor of Biology Dr. Megan Gibbons will lead this 13-day discovery expedition that will take alumni travelers from Birmingham to Ecuador for three days and then to the Galapagos Islands for another seven days. Passengers will tour the islands via a 20-passenger private yacht.

Most days will include two moderate hiking excursions and at least one opportunity to snorkel or lounge on a beautiful beach with Galapagos sea lions. Participants also will see Galapagos penguins, frigate birds, flightless cormorants, marine iguanas, and other amazing animals found nowhere else in the world.

A deposit of \$1,000 is required.



Service Learning in San Francisco

One week in late June 2008; specific dates to be determined

Kristin Harper, director of service learning

Cost: \$1,250

The service project will be located at Glide Memorial United Methodist Church, located in the Tenderloin District of San Francisco. The project will be a miniature version of the college's previous service learning program at the church. Participants will help serve meals at Glide, whose program serves over 1 million meals a year—three meals a day, seven days a week. Or, to put it in perspective, that's 800 lunches in two hours.

Housing will be provided at the Fort Mason Youth Hostel, which includes dormitory-style rooms with hall baths and a continental breakfast each morning. The location features beautiful views of San Francisco Bay. Transportation will be available via San Francisco's historic streetcars, as well as by the city's Municipal Railway (Muni) buses and cable cars.



River Run and River Dance! Dublin and the West of Ireland

July 1-16, 2008

Dr. Sandra Sprayberry, professor of English

Cost: \$4,500

Led by Professor of English Dr. Sandra Sprayberry and Irish tour guides the Enrights, this alumni trip highlights Ireland's rich cultural heritage and spectacular landscapes. Martin and Joyce Enright, an Irish music expert and archaeologist, respectively, offer personal touches not often found in standard group tours.

This tour will allow visitors to explore the many activities available in Dublin while also experiencing the spectacular Gaeltacht region of Western Ireland, seemingly untouched by time or British culture. Our itinerary includes Dublin and the counties of Meath, Roscommon, Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, and Galway. Activities will include guided museum tours; poetry, storytelling, and theatre experiences; tours of political, historical, and archaeological significance; ceili (musical pub sessions); and nature walks.

A \$300 deposit is due by Oct. 1.



Coral Reef Ecology in Roatan, Honduras

July 19-26, 2008

Dr. Andy Gannon, associate professor of biology

Cost: \$2,500

Participants will spend a week with Associate Professor of Biology Dr. Andy Gannon visiting coral reefs and dolphins at the Institute for Marine Sciences on the island of Roatan, off the coast of Honduras in the Caribbean Sea. The trip will be a condensed version of one of the most popular of all BSC Interim trips—the month-long Coral Reef Ecology Interim project.

Alumni will dive and snorkel on one of the most beautiful reefs in the world, and they will get to participate in lectures and lab exercises to understand what they are seeing down below, as well as in ongoing reef biodiversity and water quality monitoring projects.

SCUBA certification is encouraged but not required, and everyone must be able to swim.

A deposit of \$150 is due Oct. 1.



Down Under: Australia and New Zealand

Last two weeks in July 2008; specific dates to be determined

Dr. Byron Chew, Monaghan Professor of Management

Cost: Approximately \$7,500

This trip to Australia is designed to familiarize participants with the unique history, culture, ecology, and economic environment of the land down under. The experience will include an examination of the region's history and its cultural diversity, the magic of the Great Barrier Reef, the wildlife of Australia, and the excitement of the Australian and New Zealand economic and business environments.

Of particular interest will be the external pressures that are shaping the economic future of Australia and New Zealand. Travelers will visit Sydney and the reef, in addition to a trip to the center of the continent.

Recent alumna named assistant director of alumni affairs



Searcy

Mallie Searcy, a Tuscaloosa native and 2007 Birmingham-Southern cum laude psychology graduate, has been named assistant director of alumni affairs at the college. She replaces Amanda Warren '04, who is the new donor relations manager at BSC.

Searcy's past experience includes internships in the offices of Institutional Advancement and Student Affairs at both Birmingham-Southern and the University of Alabama. At both colleges, she researched annual giving, the cultivation of giving among students at peer and aspirant institutions, and the giving patterns of alumni; served as Senior Gift Campaign chair; and planned and organized student programs.

As a student at BSC, Searcy was active as president of the Panhellenic Council, service-learning coordinator for First Light Women's Shelter, and BSC liaison to the American Red Cross. She also was a member of numerous honoraries.

In her new position at the college, Searcy says she's looking forward to helping organize the upcoming joint homecoming and reunion in fall 2008, as well as coordinating alumni football events this fall.

Seven ways to get involved with your Alumni Association

If you've ever wondered how you might get more connected to your alma mater, think about serving as an Alumni Association volunteer. It's a great way to reconnect with friends and classmates, network, and give back to the place that gave you so much.

Here are seven ways that you can become involved:

Become a chapter leader—With more than 40 designated alumni chapter areas in the United States, the college needs leaders to help establish and implement active chapters. For more information, contact Mallie Searcy at 205/226-4908 or msearcy@bsc.edu.

Start an affinity group—BSC alumni share many similar interests and professions. Consider starting a group of like-minded alumni in your area. For assistance, contact Searcy.

Recommend and recruit prospective students—We're looking for prospective students who fit the BSC profile. We need volunteers who will recommend prospective students, attend college fairs, call applicants, and present Alumni Book Awards. To volunteer, contact Tyler Davis at 800-523-5793, ext. 4681, or tdavis@bsc.edu.

Serve on a reunion committee—Alumni Reunion Weekend celebrates all alumni, whether they are celebrating special class reunions or not. We need alumni to serve on class committees as well as on the Reunion Weekend planning committee. To volunteer, contact Lisa Harrison at 205/226-4912 or lharriso@bsc.edu.

Assist with fundraising for the Annual Fund—The Annual Fund is looking for volunteers who will sign fundraising letters and make phone calls soliciting their classmates for annual unrestricted gifts to the college. For more information, contact Maggie McDonald at 205/226-7737 or mmcdonal@bsc.edu.

Get involved in service and outreach—A new goal of the Alumni Association is to provide more outreach and service involving alumni across the world. If you are interested in serving, contact Harrison.

Serve as a member of the Alumni Board—The Alumni Association is looking for leaders who want to help manage various areas of responsibility. If you like to lead and want to assist the college in this way, contact Harrison. No matter how you serve, we need you. Volunteer today.

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