



# Student Newsletter

## Welcome!

### CPSDA Members:

Welcome to the first issue of the new year! As we move forward, 2017 will bring us many exciting opportunities within CPSDA.

The 2017 Sports Nutrition Boot Camp is right around the corner on January 28th, followed by the Advanced Practice Workshop on February 24th. These workshops provide hands-on instruction from leading professionals in the field. The CPSDA Annual Conference will also be here before you know it—book your calendars for May 17–19. Refer to page 7 for more details.

This edition of the CPSDA student newsletter includes unique perspectives from both student and professional sports dietitians. From insight into professionals working in Olympic and high school settings, to helpful advice from the Gatorade Sports Nutrition Immersion Program (SNIP) fellows, there is something for everyone.

We look forward to seeing you at the upcoming events!

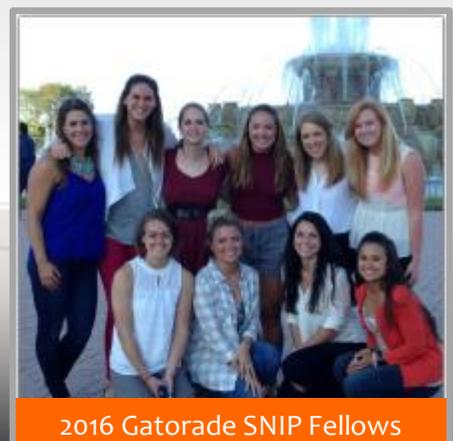
Morgan Clift and Ella Stephan, Student Committee Co-Chairs

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2016 Gatorade SNIP Fellows

# Sports Dietitians in the High School Setting

CPSDA Member Meredith Howell, MS, RD, highlights her experiences running an established high school sports nutrition program in Nashville, TN.



## **How did you get involved in high school sports nutrition?**

While completing my master's degree at UT Knoxville, I completed my DI to become a Registered Dietitian. During my time there, I worked under the former Sports RD for UT athletics, Allison Maurer. I actually owe everything to her regarding my interest in sports nutrition; she guided me to this job. This job was a dream job for me, and it really married all of my interests in nutrition. I believe Ensworth High School is committed to developing each student wholly and is willing to be a model school for how this can be done to develop truly healthy students.

## **What is your involvement in the program? What are your responsibilities? How many teams/athletes do you work with? How much time per week/month do you spend with them?**

Our program is set up to operate on four pillars: Fitness/Sports Nutrition, Menu Development, Nutrition for Special Populations, and Nutrition Education. On each of these pillars, you find a dynamic process in our school where we plug into already existing programs to expose our students to nutrition. For example, nutrition class is offered by the science department; we have a partnership with our cafeteria staff where we meet monthly to plan menus along with administration; and we have an on-site “fueling station” where our athletes visit around practices and can pick up their pre-game meal. My other responsibilities include teaching a junior/senior elective class—Introductory Nutrition—as well as four fitness classes. I manage our café (which doubles as our fueling station), where I am available to meet with students for one-on-one nutrition counseling. Additionally, I work with our dining hall to plan 1–5 year goals on changing our nutrition environment. Myself and the interns that work with me are responsible for any nutrition needs for our athletic teams. We have approximately 250 athletes, and the number we work with changes based on which season they compete. The amount of time spent with them is dynamic depending on how many athletes are seeking one-on-one counseling and how many coaches solicit nutrition education. We typically find at least 1–2 teams to do weekly educations with during each season as well as our presence at any of their pre/post game meals.

## **What type of response/feedback have you received?**

We've received a positive response from students, parents, and administration.

## **What are the biggest challenges you face in the high school setting?**

You know there is so much nutrition information out there, and it is readily available at their fingertips. I actually just had this discussion with one of the other fitness coaches about making nutrition simple for our students and determining a few key messages that we want them to know when they leave Ensworth. As a student, you have several key influencers in your life—parents, coaches, mentors, PEERS—and you tend to follow the advice of those you trust. Therefore, establishing relationships is essential to being successful at this level. Also, hello! Does anyone remember themselves at 14–18 years old? Eating healthy was not in the forefront of your mind—probably the exact opposite—so navigating the ever-changing tide of this age group keeps me on my toes. You have to be creative and flexible, and you have to realize that right now you may be planting seeds that take a while to harvest.

## **What do you see for the future of high school sports nutrition?**

I see growth! I do think it is important to find ways to market the sports dietitian as an asset to already existing programs, at least at the beginning. Our program has experienced a lot of growth over the past 4 years, and we started small—with me being just part of the fitness department and working one-on-one with athletes. The value will sell itself once you are in place.

If you have questions or are interested in learning more about the Ensworth Nutrition program, please contact Meredith Howell at [howellm@ensworth.com](mailto:howellm@ensworth.com)

# Sports Dietitians in the High School Setting

*CPSDA member Allison Maurer, MS, RD, CSSD, CSCS, provides a look at her experiences as she breaks into the high school sports nutrition setting.*

## **How did you get involved in high school sports nutrition?**

Since leaving my position at the University of Tennessee, my family and I have stayed in Knoxville. I had some former UT football players who were coaching at a private high school in town. I also have a good friend who is a strength coach at a high school, and the school where I teach is k-12—so those were my ways to get in.

## **What is your involvement in the program? What are your responsibilities? How many teams/athletes do you work with? How much time per week/month do you spend with them?**

For one school, I was attending one practice per week, and then did their game-time nutrition and hydration on Friday nights. For another school, I do nutrition bulletin boards and have a couple kids who I do individual appointments with.



At the school where I work, I do weekly nutrition sessions with the boys and girls basketball teams and provide recovery snacks for them once a week. I actually had an intern working with me, and she did all the planning and execution of those sessions, so that was a tremendous help. During the football season and between the two schools, I worked about 5–6 hours a week. Now, with basketball season and the one school, I do about 2 hours a week with them.

## **What type of response/feedback have you received?**

I received some feedback and mostly from parents. They were appreciative that someone was supporting their team and was able to carry out the halftime fueling and hydration issues that some of their kids had. One of the schools asked me to put in a proposal to teach a sports nutrition elective class for next school year, so that was positive. I submitted that to their academic dean, and hopefully it gets approved.

## **What are the biggest challenges you face in the high school setting?**

The biggest challenge is money, hands down. The information is desired, but the financial effort is still not there. It is a slow-moving vehicle, but it's perhaps better that way so the right plans can be put in place.

## **What do you see for the future of high school sports nutrition?**

The future of high school sports nutrition is most likely going to begin in the private school sector and even more so as an actual educator. Offering classes where all students can benefit by learning about nutrition is a way to get the message out and get the compensation necessary. From there, I think it can blossom into more. Not sure what that looks like exactly or what that timeline is, but I am excited to be a part of it.

# Working with Olympic Athletes

*Alicia Kendig, MS, RD, CSSD, Senior Sports Dietitian at the United States Olympic Committee, offers insight into the responsibilities of an Olympic Dietitian.*

## **What sports teams do you oversee?**

Currently, swimming and track and field.

## **How many athletes do you work with?**

About 200 athletes, 60–80 for the swim teams and 100–120 track and field athletes who are traveling. Every year there is an international team named, and those athletes become a priority for a month or two. In the years leading up to World Championships or the Olympics, I have a prioritized list from the two sports telling me who to invest my time in.



## **What is the most common misconception that Olympic athletes have about sports nutrition?**

That they can eat whatever they want, whenever they want, and it doesn't affect their performance. Eventually, they reach the age where they have to face the reality that they are not recovering as well and that nutrition can help. I would argue that nutrition is affecting their recovery time now, their energy levels now, and the strength of their immune systems now.

## **How often do you travel?**

I work with decentralized sports, and there isn't really a residency facility or program for either team. So athletes train all over the country in small post-grad groups or at universities. This means I'm traveling a lot to visit them in their home environments. I typically travel 2 out of 4 weeks every month, if not more. Sometimes I leave for 2 months at a time—for example, for the Olympics. Most of my travel in the summer is international for competitions.

## **What does a typical day look like for you?**

A typical day, when I am traveling with a team, starts off by waking up and getting coffee going for the endurance athletes early in morning, like 5 a.m. or 6. I have a rice cooker that I will get oatmeal going in too. I make a bunch of smoothies first thing in the morning, as well as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Anything that doesn't require a fridge. I pack a bunch of bags of snack and recovery foods for medical providers to take to the track or pool with them, because I can't be at all places where the athletes are at one time. This allows me time to go to the grocery store to stock up on food. I can't get too much, as the refrigerators are not very big in foreign countries, which means I have to go to the store often. Then I meet with athletes and talk to them about dehydration or cramping—whatever was going on that day of competition. Sometimes, I get a nap in. I then prepare for the evening. I package everything individually to prevent the spread of germs and to promote food safety. I rely a lot on medical staff because there might be 10–15 of them and only 1 of me. They are very helpful and motivated to include nutrition in their support of the athletes. I get back late, sometimes close to midnight, and make sure all of the athletes have what they need and I'm packed up and organized for the next day.

## **What is your favorite part of your job?**

I have athletes who proactively reach out to me about nutrition. I've seen them evolve and grow their knowledge base and reliance on performance-based nutrition. Seeing athletes get interested in it is really cool and exciting for me. They themselves are wanting to learn more, and then they see results in their training. It's really a rewarding evolution to see.

# CPSDA Gatorade SNIP Fellows Reflect on Their Experiences

*CPSDA Gatorade SNIP Fellows Kim Feeney, Meredith Price, Danielle Mach, Alyson Heller, Lauren Marucci, Liz Wluka, Julia Bell, and Sophie Pomrehn reflect on their experiences and offer advice.*

The Gatorade Sports Nutrition Immersion Program (SNIP) matches full-time sports dietitians with CPSDA students and associate members interested in getting more practical hands-on experience working with athletes and sports programs.

Gatorade and CPSDA provide 10 paid internships. Each immersion program spans from a minimum of four to a maximum of eight months. Listen to what the SNIP fellows have to say about their experiences!



2016 Gatorade SNIP Fellows at the Chicago kickoff event

## **When did you decide you wanted to get involved with sports nutrition, and where are you now?**

**Sophie Pomrehn:** My junior year of college I joined the CPSDA to understand more about the sports nutrition field, and that sparked my interest. I am currently completing my SNIP at Stanford University.

**Julia Bell:** I have always had a passion for sports and knew I wanted to major in nutrition my senior year of high school. When I got to college, I pursued an opportunity to get experience with The University of Tennessee Athletic Department. The experience of working with the athletes at the fueling station and observing a sports dietitian's daily routine led me to pursue a career in sports dietetics. I completed my master's at The University of Tennessee and recently became a Registered Dietitian. Currently, I am completing my SNIP fellowship at the University of Maryland.

**Liz Wluka:** During my dietetic internship at Pepperdine University, I had a week opened in my schedule, and my director said that UCLA could take me on for an elective sports nutrition rotation. I was interested in sports nutrition, but I had no idea it was a career to be a collegiate sports dietitian. I was fortunate that my preceptor was an incredible mentor and told me all about CPSDA and all of the career opportunities. I am now currently completing the sports nutrition immersion program at UNC–Chapel Hill and have the opportunity to work with football and swimming and diving.

## **Did you have the RD certification when seeking experience? If not, did you find it difficult to gain experience?**

**Meredith Price:** I was completing my master's when I began getting sports nutrition experience, and yes, I had the RD credential. However, many of my classmates did not, and they still were able to gain experience.

**Lauren Marucci:** I did not have my RD certification when looking for experience, but I don't think that prevented me from getting the experience I sought. I believe volunteering at places that have an established sports dietitian or sports nutrition program makes it easier to get experience without the RD.

**Liz Wluka:** Because I was in my dietetic internship, I didn't have my RD credential while interning at UCLA. I personally didn't find it too difficult only because my 1-week rotation was set up for me. I guess the difficult part was to make sure I got the experience I wanted and needed by finding a way to stay on for extra time after the 1-week rotation, while still completing my dietetic internship.

# CPSDA Gatorade SNIP Fellows Continued...

CPSDA Gatorade SNIP Fellows Kim Feeney, Meredith Price, Danielle Mach, Alyson Heller, Lauren Marucci, Liz Wluka, Julia Bell, and Sophie Pomrehn reflect on their experiences and offer advice.

## Have you been to a CPSDA conference? If so, what was that experience like?

**Kim Feeney:** I attended the 2016 conference and really enjoyed it. It was a great place to learn, network, and pick brains. I would highly recommend students try to go to at least one.

**Danielle Mach:** Yes! I highly recommend anyone who is interested in sports nutrition to go gain some knowledge as well as network with an awesome group of sports dietitians at the CPSDA Annual Conference!

**Lauren Marucci:** Yes, I've been to a CPSDA conference. The conferences are great opportunities to network with other dietitians, as well as with vendors and similarly situated students. The conferences also help you stay up-to-date on the latest ideas concerning sports nutrition.

## If you could offer any advice to students aspiring to be sports dietitians, what would you say?

**Kim Feeney:** Be flexible. Be persistent. Speak with your actions.

**Sophie Pomrehn:** Take advantage of every opportunity and be willing to work hard at a supportive role. Knowing that people can trust and count on you will go far.

**Julia Bell:** Start with seeking out opportunities within your community or institution. Be proactive during these experiences in learning the details of how to be a successful sports dietitian. Keep a journal or make notes of what you learn. It is always good to have a reference to fall back on, especially early on. There will be some adversities, but do not be afraid to reach out for help. Most importantly, remember to follow your passion for helping athletes achieve their goals.

**Alyson Heller:** If you have a passion for sports nutrition, don't give up on following your dream. It may take a few years to get the position you desire, but your hard work and patience will pay off. It is important to gain experience where you can (shadow sports dietitians, volunteer at colleges or fitness facilities, consult with individual athletes, apply to sports nutrition internships at colleges) and continue to build your sports nutrition network.

**Meredith Price:** Find a mentor in the field! I learned so much from my mentor, Rob Skinner (USOC Senior Sports Dietitian, MS, RD, CSSD). Your mentor will guide you through the ins and outs of sports nutrition. You will be a mentor for someone one day, too. Don't show up anywhere without a pen and paper to take notes. Be confident but willing to learn. Ask questions. Reach out. Work hard. Proofread. Learn. Keep your network strong. Be confident, but not cocky. You don't know it all (and that's OK!). Have fun! There are plenty of teams or clinics that would love to have a sports nutrition talk. You never know where you can get your foot in the door. Rob always tells me it's the right person, at the right place, and the right time. You don't need to do anything completely on your own. It's good to have someone who has your back and can help you when you have questions. Best of luck!

Do you have more questions for the SNIP Fellows? If so, they would be happy to answer!

<a href="mailto:juliabell724@gmail.com">juliabell724@gmail.com</a>	<a href="mailto:spomrehn@stanford.edu">spomrehn@stanford.edu</a>	<a href="mailto:ewluka@email.unc.edu">ewluka@email.unc.edu</a>
<a href="mailto:Imm5581@gmail.com">Imm5581@gmail.com</a>	<a href="mailto:alysonroseheller@gmail.com">alysonroseheller@gmail.com</a>	<a href="mailto:dmach16@att.net">dmach16@att.net</a>
<a href="mailto:mprice22@uw.edu">mprice22@uw.edu</a>	<a href="mailto:kimberly.a.feeney@gmail.com">kimberly.a.feeney@gmail.com</a>	<a href="mailto:sarahs@gators.ufl.edu">sarahs@gators.ufl.edu</a>

## Upcoming Events

### The Advanced Practice Workshop

**What:** 12–15 up-and-coming sports dietitians are nominated by CPSDA veteran members to attend this intensive multi-day workshop. During the workshop, new sports RDs sharpen the skills necessary to earn and excel within full-time positions.

**When:** February 24th, 2017

**Where:** Scottsdale, Arizona

### Annual Conference



You don't want to miss this event! The annual conference brings together sports dietitians from all areas—collegiate, professional, tactical, and private practice—to share the latest sports nutrition research. This is a great time for students to make connections with sports dietitians and other dietetic students with a similar passion.

Further event details will be provided in the coming months. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with questions, concerns, or topics you are interested in learning about in the student newsletter. Happy fueling!

**CPSDA Student Co-Chairs:**

**Morgan Clift:** [morgan.j.clift@gmail.com](mailto:morgan.j.clift@gmail.com)

**Ella Stephan:** [Ella32937@gmail.com](mailto:Ella32937@gmail.com)