

## **Nick Mascioli '14**

### **Please provide your biographical information.**

I have a bachelor's degree in Exercise Science. I was raised in the great city of West Chester, PA, and the reason I chose West Chester as my college was 1) I was going to play baseball 2) it was close to home 3) and I originally wanted to be a history teacher and West Chester has a great education program.

### **What made you go into this degree?**

I chose an Exercise Science degree for a couple of reasons. It was a pretty easy transition since I have always loved sports and I loved to exercise and train, but the main reason was because of injuries that I had as athlete. I had a knee injury in college and there was really no explanation given to me by my doctors on why it happened. I looked back and thought about my training programs in the past and thought that maybe this could have been prevented if I had educated professionals educating me on how to train and take care of my body. So I chose to be a strength coach because I wanted to make sure that athletes in the future wouldn't have to experience what I went through.

### **What is your official title and what are your responsibilities in your current position?**

I am a Minor League Strength and Conditioning Coach in the Pittsburgh Pirates Organization. Responsibilities include designing programs for baseball players in our organization, educating them on how to train the right way and take care of themselves and make them self-sufficient, and help them manage stress and nutrition. I also do soft tissue work from time to time since I have my massage therapy license. In a nut shell, I try to make these guys as game ready as possible, maximize their performance level to the best of their abilities. Finally, I help to develop them as young men, and help them grow as a man.

### **What is a typical day like at work?**

Days change based off of where I am in the season. But for a normal day in season, our days start around 12:00pm. Players that have to lift or train that day will come in a little bit before the clubhouse opens. We will also perform any type of daily readiness protocols to help give us a pulse on how guys are recovering. I'll have some time to work individually with guys with some extra warmup or resets that they might want to do. We then take the team through an active warmup before they start their workday. We help the pitchers with their daily conditioning protocols during batting practice and then go into the weight room to help them with their lift. When batting practice is over, I have about an hour window to either relax, do paper work, or help some players out that might need some extra game preparation work. About 20 minutes before the game starts, I'll warm the starters up again. During the games, I document total 90s (times they cover a base length), and times from home to first. After the game, I will help players cool down if they need to do any recovery work.

### **What have been the biggest challenges at work?**

Some of the biggest challenges definitely stem from having a lot of players that are Latin American, and don't speak English well. I had to learn how to communicate in different ways, and especially learn how to cue and coach exercises with more visual and tactile cues. Another challenge that the

minor league life brings is limited access to good training facilities on the road and the space you have on the field. I learned that I needed to be able to make adjustments on the fly and modify exercises that would fit the environment.

**What do you enjoy most about your current position?**

I love building relationships with the athletes I work with. A lot of times we can see these players so differently because of their status, but in reality, they are just like everyone else with great personalities and good hearts. It's cool that I get to work with these guys earlier in their careers and see them move up to the next level.

**What skills, talents, and other traits are useful and necessary to do your job?**

Really the biggest skill that I feel is the most important to do my job is the ability to relate to the athletes you work with, build genuine relationships with them, and truly care for them. If you can't build trust with the athletes you work with, you will never get the buy in you need to make them a better player. You can have all the knowledge in the world but it doesn't matter unless you understand where these guys come from, how they operate, and what is going to work for each individual player. That all comes from building relationships.

**Do you have a favorite or funny story about work?**

Long story short, the first day I started working for the Pirates, I got the nickname "Snacks". Although I do like snacking and have been known to eat a lot of food, I tend to chalk it up to being at the wrong place at the wrong time. Needless to say no one calls me by Nick, I'm only known by Snacks in the organization. I guess you can say I have made quite a name for myself.

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I love to read and educate myself, spend time with my family and friends when I have the opportunity, and I actually love to sing.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

That's always a tough question. I'll answer that question by saying that when five years down the road arrives, I can look back and ask myself "Am I a better strength coach now than I was 5 years ago, and have I bettered myself in trying to become the best professional I can be?" If the answer is yes, then I'm on the right track.

**What advice would you give to a current student who aspires to follow in your footsteps and pursue a similar career path?**

Biggest advice I would give a young student with similar aspirations is this: Be humble and have a White Belt Mentality. That is a saying that I learned a couple years ago about a story of an ancient karate master who said that when he died and was to be buried, that he wanted to be buried with his white belt on, the lowest and most novice belt. He wanted to be known as a person that never was satisfied with where he was, and always wanted to be humble, keep learning, and become a better person. That's the mentality I have been trying to live by and I would encourage a young West Chester student to do the same thing. Be humble, ask questions, surround yourself with professionals

who are good at what they do and learn from them. Don't be afraid to move out of your comfort zone. Travel and go where you need to go to better yourself as a professional. Intern as much as you can, INVEST in yourself.

**How has your WCU education contributed to your success?**

West Chester has given a solid foundation and education. It gave me the building blocks to go from college and feel ready to go into my profession and succeed.

**What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishments (both personally and professionally)?**

I feel like I'm still so young that I really haven't accomplished anything. But I would say being on the 2012 Baseball National Championship team was the biggest accomplishment so far. Not just winning the World Series, but being a part of that team and building relationships that will last a lifetime.

**What's your favorite memory from when you were a student at WCU?**

My favorite memories are the ones I had with my teammates. Building relationships that I still cherish so much, and considering them as family. Life is all about the relationships you make, and the people that impact you and the people that you impact. I'm so happy I went to West Chester University.