



Washington State University

Native Youth Sports Summit 2014

Home
 Contact Us
 Tribal Liaison Office
 Native Student Center
 Native Grad Student Center
 Outreach & Recruitment
 Plateau Center
 Leadership Program
 Newsletter
 Events Calendar
 Resources

Playing College Sports Requires Hard Work, Commitment

by Faith Price

Participants in this year's Native Youth Sports Summit at WSU had the opportunity to hear from a panel of five athletes on the variety of ways to continue in sports at the collegiate level.

Panelists included: Sequoia Dance, Shoshone-Bannock, a member of WSU's club volleyball team; Rio Fernandes, Lower Elwha Klallam, a senior on WSU's club rugby team; Shay Workman, Cowlitz, a former college wrestler; Jacob Yarbrough-Jones, Nez Perce, a freshman WSU baseball team hopeful; and Derek Johnson, Saginaw Chippewa, the Academic Coordinator for WSU football and a former college football player.



(l-r) Panelists Jacob Yarbrough-Jones, Rio Fernandes, Shay Workman, Derek Johnson, and Sequoia Dance share their experiences in college athletics.

Fernandes, a communications major who will be graduating in May, has played on the WSU rugby team all four years of college. The rugby team is considered a "club" sport and does not offer scholarships. The team has an organized season and competes against other colleges in games and tournaments.

"It's a lot of commitment. We travel a lot. Your grades have to stay up," said Fernandes, explaining that a certain GPA is not required to be on the team but is required of all WSU students. "It's a lot of fun and a lot of work."

In varsity sports, where students are receiving scholarships, such as football and basketball, your GPA dictates if you'll be able to play or not, shared Johnson.

"You have to have a 2.0 to play," he told the crowd.

Your high school GPA is important if you want to play varsity sports in college. In junior year, when "the recruiting process gets heavy," explained Johnson, "If you don't have the grades or they start going down, a lot of coaches will drop you because we have academic standards."

Not only do potential recruits need to get good grades, they also need to actively promote themselves, said Workman.

"Talk to the coaches. They're not going to come look for you. They're busy," advised Workman.

One way to get your name out there is to attend camps, said Johnson. He advised high school athletes to attend camps freshmen through junior year to get the attention of coaches.

Even if you are not recruited for a varsity scholarship, you can still "walk-on" to a college team.

Jacob "Jay-J" Yarbrough-Jones is attempting

to do just that. A pitcher in high school, he is practicing every day on his own to try out for the WSU baseball team in August.

"Right now, I'm throwing 87mph," said Yarbrough-Jones, noting he is still trying to improve.

Dance, on the other hand, had scholarship offers to play volleyball at a couple different junior colleges when she graduated from high school. She turned them down however to accept an academic scholarship to WSU rather than play sports, because she "wanted free time," she told the crowd.

However, in her second year at WSU, she found herself missing sports and tried out and made the WSU club volleyball team. The day of the Sports Summit, her team was hosting a tournament on campus, and she popped in to participate in the panel between games.

All panel participants agreed that student athletes live very busy lives.

"If you can manage your time wisely, and know when you need to study, then you can have some free time," Johnson reminded the audience.



Sports Summit participants joined WSU students (and Butch!) to watch the WSU Women's basketball team thrash Idaho State University after the panel presentation.

[Native American Programs](#), PO Box 641046, Washington State University, Pullman WA 99164-1046, 509-335-8618, [Contact Us](#)

© 2019 Washington State University | Accessibility | Policies | Copyright