

Larry Munger, Ph.D.

What is the master of athletic training program?

0:06

So the master of athlete training program is an entry level master's program for to train individuals to become certified athletic trainers. And so we're nationally accredited by CAATE. So our students can sit for the BOC exam and become a certified athletic trainer nationally, and then they have to apply for licensure in whatever state they're working in.

How has the process of becoming an athletic trainer evolved over the last 30 years?

0:30

So our last 30 years athletic training has evolved, where we had, you had internship programs, and you had curriculum programs. Were an internship program, you had to have so many hours, so 1500 hours of experience and the same thing you have to do, you can still get a Texas state licensure and do basically an internship program where they're moving towards trying to do a little bit curriculum for Texas state licensure, but the BOC nationally certified program is you could do an internship program or do a curriculum program. And then it went to where you just had to go through accredited curriculum programs. We had different accrediting bodies. And so we've had a lot of growth through that also. And now we have CAATE, who's our accrediting body. And they have now moved to all entry level master's programs where Texas Tech University Health Science Center was one of the first five I believe we started in 2000 became an entry level master's program in 2000. And now that you have to have all entry level master's programs to become a certified athletic trainer.

How large is the TTUHSC athletic training program?

1:35

We try to hold a class about 20 to 30. And so we're one of the larger programs, we have over 400 graduates over our history and we have them internationally at all different levels.

How have the settings that athletic trainers work in grown beyond traditional sports settings?

1:49

For the growth of it, you see it's a lot of industrial settings. And so we have individuals, some of our alumni work in a military setting. And so professional sports. We've had some alumni recently take jobs with Amazon, they have they call them injury prevention specialist through Amazon, but industrial setting is really big. The military setting is really big. Down in San Antonio, the fire department employs an athletic trainer. And so a lot of tactical teams will employ athletic trainers, we've had athletic trainers go up and work with I mean different companies GM, up in Michigan, and different places like that. So industrial settings, you'll see him and like the doctors offices, so Lubbock sports medicine employees, athletic trainers, other

Larry Munger, Ph.D.

doctors offices in town employs some athletic trainers also so you'll see them versus a nurse that comes in to see when you go to for an orthopedic injury, you might see an athletic trainer come in to see you. But like Covenant employees athletic trainers, UMC employs some athletic trainers. And so all the medical systems in the area employee athletic trainers also. So you'll see the growth pretty much it continues to grow where we're at, but I call it we call them industrial athletes, tactical athletes, student athletes, professional athletes. And then you have a lot of the club sports where you don't see as many athletic trainers in the club sports settings. But you'll see at some of these club sports events, where they'll have tents and stuff set up with athletic trainers to try to take care of acute injuries.

What are some misconceptions that people have about athletic trainers?

3:15

I think one of the big misconceptions, that we're just, we hand out a lot of ice, we hand out water, we stand on the sidelines, we do some taping. And that's all we do. And that's kind of I think I saw an infographic that kind of said, the iceberg of athlete training. That's kind of what people see that we're doing. So we're the ones sitting on the sidelines, someone gets hurt, we might run out there. But really we're involved in all phases of athletes health care, and I say athletes healthcare, that can be industrial athletes and individuals that were really there for anything they need health wise. And so we can try to refer them out to see a doctor. So we need to know what referral services we have. So interprofessional education and understanding what other professions do is really important. And around teams, we have a big sports medicine team. So you have doctors, counselors, physical therapist, other athletic trainers, fitness coaches, you've talked to the coaches, you have all those individuals. But we're involved in the mental health, we're involved in emergency care, we're involved in evaluating the injury, right when it happens, trying to set up a program so that the rehabilitation, to get them back to play. So if they had to have surgery, we see them right after surgery, we start their rehabilitation, move into reconditioning, working closely with the strength conditioning staff to help with their strength conditioning, to get them back on the field safely and try to reduce their chances of getting hurt again, the taping stuff helps us try to prevent some injuries prophylactically but really, all the things that were involved with from the pre participation physicals. So when they first come in, we do a lot of the physicals are a big part of the physicals, with the doctors and then identifying where they might have impairments, movement impairments so we can help correct those movement impairments. So then it will reduce their chances for injuries.

What is an athletic trainers main focus?

5:04

A big part of our job is to help athletes be available to play. Like I always tell our kids, the best athletes aren't the most talented athletes on the team. The best athletes are the available athletes. Because you can be the most talented athlete, but if you can't play because of injury,

Larry Munger, Ph.D.

you're not helping out your team. And so we try to do things to make sure that they stay healthy. And at this time, at the end of the year, is when guys have all those nicks and bruises and they might have a little bit of pain here. but you're really working on trying to make them so they're available to participate in their sport, they're available to play for their team, and keep the load down on other players. But if we can elongate, and ensure that athletes have a longer playing career, they're going to be, they're going to be more successful and enhanced, they're going to come back and hopefully appreciate all the things that we've done for them throughout their careers.

How do athletic trainers differ from other types of trainers?

5:58

The big difference with athletic trainers and personal trainers is athletic trainers or health care professionals. And so first and foremost is we're healthcare professionals who are involved in the health care of athletes not that personal trainers and strength coaches aren't involved in the health but they're not really trained to diagnose or even evaluate injuries. And so they might have an athlete might say, I'm sore here, I'm sore there. But they're not trained to evaluate those injuries and identify okay, you had this injury you need to go see the doctor here were some of them will put them through, the good ones will put them through a movement assessment . "Say okay, that hurts. Let's send you to a medical professional." Which might be the athletic trainer.

Anything else to add?

6:34

Most time we're in the background, so we're not getting you don't become an athletic trainer to get the notoriety. I mean, it's been nice that these athletic trainers get noticed. Patrick Mahomes noticed his athletic trainer gave a shout out to them, Damar Hamlin shout out. Sometimes these athletic trainers go through times where we get a lot of shout outs. But for the most part, you're pretty much in the background, and that's fine with most of us we're unsung heroes, and the success of our team. If you ask me, we're, we're pertinent to every team for the success of the team because like I said, the best players are the available players and if your teams not available to play you're not going to win very much.