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- S1 00:21 Welcome to the Sports Medicine Podcast brought to you by the Sydney and J.L Huffines Institute of Sports Medicine and Human Performance in the department of Health and Kinesiology at Texas A&M University. At the Huffines institute we're always working to facilitate, apply, and bring you the most up to date coverage of the wide world that is sports medicine and human performance all in a language you can understand and share with your friends. And now here's our host, the director of the Huffines Institute Dr. Tim Lightfoot.
- S2 00:50 Hello and welcome to the weekly edition of the Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance podcast, I'm your normal host, somewhat normal some people would say, Tim Lightfoot and I want to thank you all for joining in. And this is a special occasion for us as you can hear from the background noise, this is our 200th podcast. So this is going to be a little different. We've had several requests and people have asked us why we started now back now six years ago almost to the day, as a matter of fact. We wanted to give you a little insight on some things that happened, why we put this together. I estimate that for each one of the podcast that we put up, it takes us about two and a half to three hours to do total, and that includes editing, and that includes the interview, that includes transcribing, et cetera, et cetera. And so 200 of these represents about 6 to 700 hours of actual labor. And while we certainly appreciate that all of you take the time to listen, I am certainly have been appreciative from day one of the people that we have here at the Huffines Institute that help us put these things together, oftentimes unsung. You hear their names on the back-end of the podcasts if you are listening, but certainly our produces over the years, Justin Dobson, Sheril Marek, Ayland Letsinger, our most current producer Kenneth McIntyre. They have been fabulous, and they've been on almost all of our podcasts. We have some other other folks that sit in when we can't get someone else coverage, like Carlos Guevara who's responsible for our Huffines Human Performance Minutes on TexAgs. Alexis Applequist who's responsible for our text articles, Daniel Sanders who is our general all around heavy hitter here in the institute. And so these are the people that we just couldn't do without. And as a part of this thing, I'm going to turn the mic over today to one of our podcast producers, our current one, Kenneth McIntyre. And before we get started though, because he's going to start asking me some questions, we are going to ask him a couple of questions to see what he thinks. And so from a producer's standpoint, Kenneth, when you first started with this, what did you think? What has surprised you the most about the podcast that we do?
- S3 03:11 I'd say the most surprising thing, the fact that we interview so many people from so many different disciplines. Obviously this is the Health & Kinesiology Department here at A&M. But that in itself is broad, includes series like sports management, kinesiology itself, but also this past week we had professor from the college of architecture. We've had sports management experts, we've had all sorts of professionals of different areas doing different types of research or work in industry. And for a student like myself, I'm a senior, it's really interesting to hear the different takes and perspectives these people have on human performance in the abstract at large and also in sports medicine and particulars in the field itself.
- S2 03:55 You helped bring an interest viewpoint, because the audience probably doesn't know that you're actually an engineering major.
- S3 04:01 I am.
- S2 04:01 So you're not even in health and kinesiology or any of the health related fields. So tell them a little bit about your story, about how you got involved with the Huffines Institute, because it's actually a pretty remarkable story.
- S3 04:11 Well, I came as a freshman to Texas A&M, was pretty unsure of what I wanted to do. I was a biomedical sciences major, pre-med, looking towards medical school, and wanted to get involved in research. I knew sports was a passion of mine and I sort of put the two of those together, meaning sports medicine, and ended up seeing the Huffines Institute name on the side of a building here on campus and just sort of shot in the dark, thought, "Maybe that's an opportunity where I can get involved." And me and my blind, wide-eyed 18-year-old state of mind, I figured, "I'll just send an email to the guy who runs it. He'll probably get back to me." In hindsight, I knew very little about it. And had I thought about it more and maybe known more about it, I might not have done that, but I did and Dr. Lightfoot, you were so gracious as to talk to me and see what I was interested in and what I could bring and ended up working out. So despite my major change at the end of my freshman year, I've stayed on at the institute because the working environment's great. I'm meeting interesting people, getting exposure to all

Transcribe Me!

sorts of things. So thanks for having me on, and it's been wonderful.

S2 05:22 And this is the beginning of your fourth year with us.

S3 05:23 It is. Fourth year.

S2 05:25 Which is really cool. And we've got several folks like that, that you may hear from during the rest of this podcast that are in the same position as Kenneth is. And what is really cool is they bring all sorts of insights. So as you got involved with producing this podcast, because you didn't do this from day one - we try to move people around so they can do some different things - what has surprised you the most about the podcast? When we make it and edit it and put it up and that whole production thing?

S3 05:53 I guess the simplicity of it, in a way. We do obviously put a significant amount of time into editing it and preparing for who's going to be here and reaching out to them, but at the same time it's a genuine interview. We're asking them questions about what they're doing, they're telling us about what they're doing. There's about three to five minutes of preparation work with them in studio and then we talk to him. We have just a human conversation. And I guess, for me, it's put real personality into the media as a whole. It bridged the gap between the end product that you hear and the people themselves, and it's been cool to be a part of.

S2 06:33 It's always interesting how our speakers come to us not really knowing what's going to happen. We have a primer that we send to them that we lay things down and say, "This is going to be a conversation. Pretend you're talking to your uncle or your mother or whatever," and it's amazing how we have people that come in with reams of materials like they're going to need to refer to it or they're really nervous because professors, they like to be prepared. Most people like to be prepared and we say, "Don't prepare. Just come in and sit down and we'll have a conversation," and that's really unnerving sometimes for them, right?

S3 07:06 Yeah. And as I came here today I came in with no preparation, didn't know what to expect. I don't think I've messed up too bad so far.

S2 07:14 [chuckles] Not too bad. Well, and we always tell them that if you mess up, we can go back and take that out. We've got wonderful producers who know how to use editing software to make us all sound really good. And so let's take a minute and let's share a little clip of some of our-- because we do record everything, and

share a little clip of some preliminary stuff that we tell speakers before they ever go on the air.

S3 07:35 Now, they'll be giving me hand signals as we go through this process to keep us on track as far as time goes. So ignore them. Whatever you see them doing.

S4 07:45 It's not meant for me.

S3 07:46 [chuckles] Well that's okay, it's still interesting to watch every once in awhile. What we do Claude is at the end of the podcast two things - we'll ask you if you have a take-home message. Whatever it is - the conclusion that you want to tell everybody, the one thing that you want them to remember. So you can start thinking about that. And then we will have what we call our Podcast Question of the Week. And it is a question that these two come up with during the podcast that we ask, and the first person who emails us the answer, gets a podcast t-shirt.

S4 08:22 So this is directed at the students?

S3 08:29 We say an educated lay level audience. Actually we have students are a big part of the audience, but we've got people from all over the world that download this and listen to it. So we've got a little bit of everything. And so they may wind up messing with your mic a little bit as we go to adjust it up or down so they get the volumes right. Okay. So how do we look over there, Sheril? We good?

S2 08:57 So that was an example of some of the stuff that happens and some of the conversations we had before the podcast even airs or even after the podcast airs or is done or just eliminating-- it really shows how graceful and kind so many of our interviewers - the people that we interview - are, that they're willing to sit and have conversations because they're all passionate about what they're doing, and I think that's what we wanted to do was try to bring that passion across to the listeners. We mentioned awhile ago some of the other folks here. Let's pull in a couple of other folks and see what their thoughts are. And so next up we'll bring in-- how about Ayland?

S5 09:34 And so there's so many scientists out there doing big things and every single podcast Dr. Lightfoot would give me a name

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and go look this person up and realize, "Oh my gosh, this person has done so much." And then finally getting to meet them, they're just-- every single person is down to earth. They're very willing to talk. And so it just gave me a lot of motivation. At first I wanted to be a physical therapist, but going through these podcasts and hearing so many different professors talk I switched my whole plan up and now I'm in grad school. So obviously it had a pretty big impact on me.

- S6 10:05 My name is Alexis Applequist. I'm a junior biomedical science major. I've been involved in the Huffines Institute, this is my second year now, and I work in the office and I work with the text articles and the HHPMs.
- S3 10:20 So how did you begin your involvement in the Institute? How did you find out about it?
- S6 10:25 I was involved in an organization with Ayland my freshman year and he talked to us a little bit about what he does for the institute and so if-- if anybody is interested in sports medicine type of stuff then it's definitely something they should look into getting involved with. So I just scheduled a meeting with Dr. Lightfoot and got on board.
- S3 10:46 So everybody now, joining me on the podcast, is the legend Dr. John Thornton. He actually works here in the institute with us. He's the head of the Texas A&M Coaching Academy, which is up and running. I'm going to ask Dr. Thornton a couple of questions. First of all, thank you for joining me here, Dr. Thornton.
- S7 11:03 Well, thank you for having me. We don't have to go into why I am a legend, it could be bad things, why I'm a legend. You just don't know about that.
- S3 11:09 Well, either way, you are what you are.
- S7 11:11 Okay.
- S2 11:13 Just to start us off, Dr. Thornton, what's it like for you seeing these podcasts produced every week, hearing them. And from the athletics perspective, administratively, what do you think of them? What value do they bring?
- S7 11:26 To me, first of all, it's been impressive to watch the process, through the three or four years that I've been around and to see the work that goes into it and also to see the type of people that are interviewed and programs that are profiled, because they are absolutely informational and inspiring. And I know how much work goes into it, but at the same time, the product itself, speaks for itself. It's very good and I think it's extremely timely. I've enjoyed it and being associated with it.
- S3 11:57 Being Texas A&M's former interim athletic director, how do you think this podcast contributes to the mission of Department of Health and Kinesiology and to the university as a whole?
- S7 12:07 Well, my focus, and I think the Huffines Institute is similar in the fact that we want to make difference and we want to make a difference in real-time. There's not much hesitation. The programming, the topics, the structure's all set up to share and to make an impact on society as a whole but individuals in general. And whether it be something related to exercise science, whether it be related to something performance, or whether it to related to athletics, being able to show an insight or glimpse of something that people don't totally understand or have a good feeling for is a big deal, and it's been fun to see that occur.
- S3 12:54 Now we're going to play a recorded conversation I had with Sheril Marek. She's a former Huffines podcast producer who's now a physical therapy student in the University of Texas medical branch in Galveston.
- S8 13:05 So, the way I got involved with the Huffines Institute was my goal for undergrad was to have all the tools to be able to successfully get into a physical therapy program. So I knew that you couldn't just have good grades because everyone that's applying has good grades, so I needed something that would help me stand out. And so going into the Kines department, I looked at all the research labs. And the Huffines Institute really stood out for me because they were doing not only the basic science research but also the clinical, the stuff with the NASCAR, and then the community outreach with the podcast and the text articles and that sort of thing. So that's kind of what really led me to the Huffines Institute was the triple, doing all three things, versus just doing basic research or just doing this. So on my resume, it kind of was to help me get the leg up on maybe some other people who didn't do as much. Right now, I'm in physical therapy school. I'm getting my doctorate in physical therapy and the University of Texas medical branch in Galveston, and besides the experience, Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Thornton also wrote me recommendation letters. The reason that Dr. Lightfoot is such a good mentor is that he opens up the paths for you to challenge yourself, grow, do really any opportunity and any responsibility that you want to take on, and that really helps you become competitive in the application process to PT school and it really helps-- I mean, I use stuff that I learned from the Huffines Institute in class. All those experiences, doing stress testing and all that has really helped me already saying, "Oh, I've already seen this stuff." So it's really helped.
- S3 15:09 Next I'm going to speak with Carlos Guevara who heads up the Efforts for the Huffines Human Performance Minutes that air

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weekly on TexAgs Sports Radio. I'm going to ask Carlos how he got involved in the institute and how it's going to impact him moving forward.

- S9 15:23 Freshman year, one of actually my directors in my organization, he's actually involved in the institute, Ayland came up and said this inside in the organization he was in and what he contributed to the Huffines Institute. So it kind of just sparked an interest with me. I actually want to pursue a career in coaching. So it was kind of very broad and vague to me, but I went up and talked to Dr. Lightfoot and just was really interested at what was going on here and I was just saying, "Anyway I could get involved?" So I volunteered for a semester. It was kind of jumping around, helping out with podcast and Huffines Discussion. This really led me to my role doing HHPMs, helping out with the media part of this, and just contributing anyway I can. So--
- S3 16:11 And you mention that you do the HHPM, so talk me through that process. What does that look like? How do you come up with the topics?
- S9 16:18 HHPM stands for Huffines Human Performance Minute, and we actually are connected with TexAgs and that's broadcasted a one minute spot through Texags which is a really cool opportunity that we have here at Huffines. And kind of what we do, have you ever heard of a Ted Talk?
- S3 16:35 Yeah, yeah.
- S9 16:35 Yeah, so simplify a Ted Talk into one minute, kind of give a short, simplified Ted Talk on a very exciting topic in the sports, maybe medicine, or sports practitioner world, and kind of simplify it to the public. So let's say you're looking and you see an ACL injury. Not many people might-- people think an ACL injury is just, "I hurt my knee and I'm out for a long time". Well I kind of go down, kind of run you through the basics of what really is happening in the knee, what's tearing, what ligaments are happening, and able to simplify that and then kind of term it down into like a football standpoint or a basketball standpoint and really make it appealing to the public.
- S3 17:21 With the podcast, as you've been here for a while now and you've experienced going through this process, what have you seen that's been particularly interesting to you? Why have you enjoyed it?
- S9 17:31 What's really interested me is just the fact that was one of those people that would see those injuries and just not really think of it much or have an injury myself back in high school playing sports and not really think of it much, I would just think "It's an injury." But looking at really the effect it can have on someone's body if not treated right, as well as just what really is happening inside your body is really interesting. And for me, wanting to be a coach one day, I see it in the way of, me having this knowledge can be retained and put back forward into a career in coaching because I will be able to see a player and be like, "Okay, he has a PCL tear or a high ankle sprain." It's kind of similar to me, I'm just not lost. It's just one of those things I can see it as really benefitting in the future.
- S3 18:23 Having heard from a number of producers, we'll now switch back to Dr. Lightfoot. What was sort of the driving force behind the creation of this? And with that in mind the Huffines Institute itself? I'm not sure if a lot of people who listen on the weekly basis are really familiar with that.
- S2 18:38 Yes. The institute is really a unique entity in the country. Actually, the idea was formulated by a guy named Jack Wilmore, back in 1999, and really incubated and developed a little bit by Dr. Steve Crouse, who was the first real director. I say real director, first named director of the institute. And the idea was to provide a bridge between academics and athletics. Because in so many places, where academics and athletics used to be in the same department and they all worked with each other. Nowadays, in the modern University, there are walls up between those folks. Athletics does their things and academics go do their thing, but there are things that we can learn from each other. And so the institute was meant to actually reach across those walls with athletics, as well as other parts of the university that are interested in human performances and sports medicine. And so it was really a great opportunity for me. I was very blessed to be given this job. And I had been thinking about, how do we make science accessible to the public, for several years before I came to A&M. And it was very exposable in the late 1800s to early 1900s. Scientists would give talks, and there would be thousands of people that would show up, because they were very interested. And we've kind of lost that sense of wonder a little bit. And so I wanted to do something where it was accessible, and made science accessible to individuals, and understandable. And yet we could get that passion across. And so that was kind of the idea for the pod cast.
- S2 20:04 When we started this it was in late 2010. Podcasting itself had only been around about five years at that point. It really derived from the original I pods, this was before everybody had phones. And so I had heard several podcasts out there that were kind of the inspiration for what we do here, and we continue as you know. We continue to all listen to different podcasts to try to use those for inspirations to do different things with what we're doing. I mean, people that are listening now, if you haven't been listening very long you should dive back into our archives. We actually have put up a couple of science fiction stories that were podcast elsewhere, that actually directly deal with athletics. One of which is, I believe the name of it was Fuel, and it actually dealt directly with what was going through the mind of an individual running a cross country race. And

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which was really a cool approach to this, it was an inner city cross country kid. So those are the things that I see the podcast has given us the option to do. Fun stuff. Very interesting.

- S2 21:04 In your opinion, having done 1999 or so of these interviews in the past, who was the guest you thought brought the most unique take to this realm, in terms of just an unusual perspective from a sports medicine aspect?
- S2 21:20 We look for individuals that have opinions and are not afraid of stepping out of the box. Too often scientists are afraid of stepping out of the box. And there are examples of that in some of the people that we've interviewed that they're great and then you put them behind a microphone and you say, "What do you think of this?" And they go, "Well, the literature says this should only be this way blah blah blah," and immediately my head hits the table because it's so boring. What were interested in is people who are really willing to say, "Well, this is what the literature says but I think this is what it really means." And we've had a bunch of those folks like that. We've had especially some in really cool in sports medicine and the athletic training side where people have been willing to step out and say, "I'm the expert, this is what I've seen, and this is the way it works." We've had some great authors own-- I will do a big shout out for David Epstein who if you haven't heard of him he's an author, got a best-selling book called The Sports Gene. And he's been a big supporter of ours. Used to write for Sports Illustrated and has been on-- gosh, I think we've had him on the podcast five times. Those are the kind of folks that we're looking for, people that are excited and enthusiastic and willing to share their opinion. We're not looking for people who are afraid of putting their opinion out there.
- S3 22:36 In any realm, I think that's an important thing for sure. So, sort of changing gears a little bit, Dr. Lightfoot, something that I enjoy asking people, you've seen it yourself, how did you get to where you are? And this is something we hear every week. You ask--
- S2 22:51 Et tu brute.
- S3 22:51 --a lot of our guests. Where did you start? Why are you a professor? What do you like to study? What interests do you have? The whole story.
- S2 23:01 I'm a little bit reticent about this, because this is again about our 200th podcast, so we're really excited about doing 200. And yes, we do ask all of our other guests about these things, so I guess it's only appropriate that I broach this. I was always interested in athletics. I wanted to be a basketball player when I was growing up. And given the fact that I don't jump very high, I was somewhat slower. I wound up playing soccer in college and really loved that and thought I was going to be either a soccer or a basketball coach when I got out. I did my student teaching and realized that I didn't want to do that. That was not a good thing. And so I had a great professor who said, "You know, you really could go on and be a professor." And I was a country boy, I came from a farm, lived on a farm growing up and it was like I have no clue about any of this and he helped me understand this stuff. And it was like university system's a great place to be. And so exercise physiology was really hitting big at that time. I was very interested in how to become a better athlete myself, and so the physiology side was very, very interesting to me. And so just one thing led to another. I happen to know some really good people, that first professor helped me get into the university of Tennessee where I did my PhD work. I met some folks at Tennessee that helped me get hooked up with NASA. I was very interested in aerospace physiology, and so I did sometime at NASA in Florida. For those of you that are old enough to remember the Challenger blowing up, I was down there right before that happened. I was part of the team that did some of the pre-flight physicals with those astronauts. We did a lot of my dissertation work there. From there I was fortunate to have some folks that pointed me towards Johns-Hopkins and I did a post-doc research fellowship there. And it's, like so many academics, after that then I got a faculty job and had moved to different universities.
- S2 24:52 So it's been one of these things about, what I've realized over the years, keeping as many doors open as you can. Keep all your doors open for the opportunities because you never know when someone's gonna come up and go, "Hey, that's interesting. How about you go over here and do this?" It's like, "Great." I'm often reflect on improvisational comedians who I'm really interested in how well they-- how they work so well. One of the rules of thumb that I've heard from them is that they never say no on stage. If you'll watch improv comedians, when someone throws something at them they never say no - "No, I'm not going to do that." - but they take it and they run with it. I kind of think if we were all like that in life a little bit better. As long as it's ethical and moral and all that other stuff, it's amazing what people can do. I think I've told you, and I've told several others, as a professor, the biggest thing that kills me is when I see students that waste their potential. I've seen several over the course of my career, and it just kills me because there's so many people that could do such great things. If they just said, "Yes." and went.
- S3 25:53 Looking back at 199 podcast, this is number 200. What stands out to you as the hardest thing about week-in and week-out producing these podcasts? From your perspective?
- S2 26:04 There are many technical difficulties. I'll start off with the positive. My, I think, favorite podcast was our 100th podcast, because what our audience-- if you haven't heard that one, you should go back and listen to it. It's a little bit longer. The 200th is going to be a little bit longer as well. It's kind of our prerogative, we don't celebrate these to very. The 100th podcast was a live podcast. We did that in front of an audience of about 300 people. We had a musician that-- all the music that people

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hear on the beginning, he did all that music. We had a live narrator. The guests were live. We had the oldest living Aggie at the time who was-- I think he was like 101. Now he's like 103, 104. We had R.C. Slocum, one of the legendary coaches around here. That was a great deal of fun. If there's one podcast that really stands out, it's that one. It was technical challenge big time because we had a world of mics and we streamed it live and the whole nine yards. But doing this podcast we've always had interesting challenges. From a technical standpoint, the challenge we battle all the time is ambient noise in the studio, in this room. And so we'll give you a little demonstration, everyone a little demonstration. This is what it should sound like without ambient noise. Notice that there is nothing there, it's quiet. This is what it sounds like in our studio all the time. You notice there is like this low grade hum the whole time. And on top of that, we're outside of a bathroom, the ladies bathroom as a matter of fact. And so if we are recording during class change time we have hundreds of people going in and out of the bathroom and the door slamming. So it is interesting people don't think about it, but that is one of our big challenges, is the sound that's always there. So it's always fun. There's other things, of course, we deal with but that's the fun stuff, that we have fun playing with.

- S3 28:07 Those of you that listen to the podcast every week know that it's time for us to give our guest, that's Dr. Lightfoot, the chance to give us a take home message. Dr. Lightfoot, if there's one thing you'd like people to remember from this podcast this week, what would it be?
- S2 28:21 If you're going to remember anything from the podcast remember that the Huffines Institute website is huffinesinstitute.org and that you can go there and subscribe to our podcast. You can also go to your either iTunes or Google Play and download the app because we want to make this stuff accessible. Spread the word, tell your friends. Yes it's free, some people say, "It's free, it's not worth anything." That's not true. It's free because we want to make it accessible to people. So, take advantage of the resources that you have, and this is one of the resources that you have.
- S3 28:51 It's a great take-home message.
- S2 28:52 Thank you. Now, do I get to do the Podcast Question of the Week?
- S3 28:55 If you'd care to.
- S2 28:57 I would love to do the Podcast Question of the Week, because normally this is the one the guests try to answer, that you so articulately, artistically cut out.
- S3 29:06 Oh, wow.
- S2 29:06 Yeah, so a good Podcast Question of the Week. If you go back and listen to Podcast Number 156, what's the take-home message from that week?
- S3 29:18 A challenge, then. With a hook. Always a challenge, with a hook.
- S2 29:22 With a hook. Thanks Kenneth.
- S3 29:24 Thank you, Dr. Lightfoot.
- S2 29:25 You've done a great job.
- S3 29:27 Likewise. Thank you.
- S2 29:29 Now we'll just continue to pat each other on the back [laughter].
- S3 29:32 Good job.
- S2 29:32 Good job.
- S3 29:33 Yes, good job.
- S1 29:36 The Sports Medicine Podcast is produced by Ayland Letsinger, and licensed by the Huffines Institute at Texas A&M, under a Creative Commons 3.0 license. You can share it as much as you want and you can talk or blog about it all you want, just don't change it or charge money for it. This podcast is made possible by support from the Omar-Smith family, and the Sydney and J.L Huffines family. Our music was performed, composed and graciously provided by Dave Zeltner Productions,

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