

# The assist shot, perfected

## *Diamond Sports preps big league wannabes*

BY ALEXANDER SOULE

casoule@westfairinc.com

One way to get a toe in the locker-room door of the sports business is via a bachelor's or master's degree.

Post patterns and three-pointers make the headlines, but they are only part of a multibillion-dollar sports industry that used to stream Saturday and Sunday afternoons, but now streams 24/7.

Some 25 people filed into a UConn Stamford hall earlier this month in hopes of achieving that same goal in a more compact time frame, as Diamond Sports Business Education Group launched two weeks of seminars in Fairfield County, helping those who aspire to the big leagues – or the minors – in sports management.

The company was founded by Walt Recher and David Torromeo, who also run a sports-management academic program offered by Manhattanville College in nearby Purchase, N.Y.

Through Diamond Sports, Recher and Torromeo hope to provide pointers to those already ensconced in careers who have always harbored a secret wish to work in the sports business, be it with juggernauts like the NFL or NCAA; or with upstart leagues like the independent

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Atlantic League of Professional Baseball, whose clubs include the Bridgeport Bluefish and which can serve as a springboard up the ranks.

Last week, Diamond Sports continued its seminar series at the University of Bridgeport and at the Arena at Harbor Yard, where it scheduled a "perfect pitch" seminar on how sports-business candidates can best prepare themselves for getting noticed by leagues, teams and programs.

Sports Business Journal estimates the U.S. market for professional services targeting the athletic industry at \$15 billion, including facility management, financial, legal and marketing services, and athlete representation.

That is a small sliver of the \$213 billion U.S. market for sports-related spending across all fields of endeavor, including spectator spending, broadcast advertising, product licensing and sales, and gambling.

For some, getting to the industry start-

ing line means starting out with a low-pay or no-pay internship or event organizer position – and hoping for a bit of luck to accompany the hard work they put in.

That is how Todd Marlin, the general manager of the Bridgeport Bluefish, got his start, obtaining an internship with the Nashua Pride minor league team in New Hampshire in 1998 and working his way up to general manager within five years. Two years after becoming GM, he was named executive of the year for the Atlantic League.

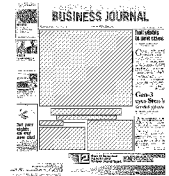
One does not need a college degree in sports management to land one of those internships, note Recher and Torromeo, and they say the internship process is crucial for those aspiring to work for a sports program, team or league – and they can be had if one hits the street and builds up a network.

Still, collegiate programs have become increasingly popular in recent years at Manhattanville, UConn and the University of New Haven. UConn runs its programs under the department of kinesiology – derived from kinesis, the Greek word for movement. UConn offers master's and doctoral degree in the subject, with dissertation students doing research with UConn's Laboratory for Sports Management.

Current graduate students include Justin Evanovich, who was on the roster of UConn's 2004 NCAA champion men's basketball team; and Rhema Fuller, a co-captain in 2006 of UConn's football team who played defensive tackle.

UConn course subjects cover the intersection of sports and management, marketing, law, and societal issues, along with a course specifically covering the management of sports facilities and events. The school also offers bachelors programs on the social science of sport, and on coaching and administration of sports programs. Ten percent of the credit for those programs involves internships.

For its part, the University of New Haven includes a human resources component as part of its master's program in sports management and the school also touts an internship program that has landed



students at sites like Bristol-based ESPN and Stamford-based World Wrestling Entertainment Inc.

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BILL FALLON



From left, Ann Ruocco, intern, Sport Business Management; Walter J. Recher, managing partner; David Torromeo, managing partner; and Doug Davis, intern.



From left, Walter J. Recher, Ann Ruocco, Doug Davis and David Torromeo.