

KC Smurthwaite - Immersed in Sports

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When KC Smurthwaite started his freshman year at College of Eastern Utah in 2008, his involvement in sports was making the baseball team and writing sports for the college newspaper, The Eagle. Fast forward 10 years and Smurthwaite's life is immersed in sports after being named director of development for Aggies Unlimited, the fundraising unit for the Utah State Athletics in July. "I've

benefited greatly from being surrounded by great people throughout my life," Smurthwaite said.

"I wouldn't be where I am today without my Price family. They gave me the tools and opportunities to build a resume while working on a degree: Scott Madsen, Dave Paur, Alex Herzog and Susan Polster. I know I am missing so many more that impacted me positively while I was a student. They all changed my life."

Prior to his promotion, Smurthwaite's resume included graduating with an associate degree from Utah State University Eastern, bachelor's degree from Southern Utah University and master's degree from USU.

By the time he was a sophomore in college, he was an assistant baseball coach, editor of The Eagle newspaper and outstanding communication student. He also earned the title of Mr. USU Eastern. Transferring to SUU, it took him one year to graduate with a degree in communication studies and left with a plaque naming him outstanding communication student. He worked in association with the athletic department as the sports director for KSUU, the home for Thunderbird athletics.

Smurthwaite said, "I often ask myself, 'would I have done this any other way?' and it is always a no." He enrolled at USU in Logan fall 2014 to pursue a master's degree and help coach the Aggie softball team, working with the outfielders and assisting with recruiting. "The path I took was definitely less traveled, but well worth it."

During the 2016 season, Assistant Coach Smurthwaite helped Utah State to its best season in 20 years, posting a 26-25 overall record while going 12-12 in Mountain West action. In his three seasons with the softball team, he helped the outfield to improve statistics across the board, while coaching four outfielders to all-Mountain West honors. The Aggies also set program records in runs scored, doubles, home runs, total bases, RBIs, stolen bases and slugging percentage.

Smurthwaite was promoted to the athletic administrative staff as a major gifts officer where he managed a regional portfolio that helped the Aggies Unlimited team generate a record-breaking \$6 million during the 2016-17 academic year. The following year, he increased major gifts by 120 percent from the previous fiscal years and assisted in the creation of the Blue A Society, Utah State Athletics' first-ever major giving society.

He helped coordinate the cultivation and solicitation of the Merlin Olsen Fund, which set new highs in giving during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Sport-specific giving doubled

with help of an outreach program that communicates with all former student-athletes. With the addition of the newly renovated Maverik Stadium, Smurthwaite assisted in growing premium seats giving from \$430,000 to \$1.4 million.

In his role as director of development he will oversee the day-to-day operations of the athletics' development office, including annual giving, stewardship and special events, while also serving on the external leadership team. He will also manage a portfolio of major gift prospects.

"As a team, we must build relationships with our alumni, community and friends of the university," Smurthwaite said. "Ultimately, we need to make philanthropic asks, whether it be for an entry-level \$50 donation or a major gift. There is a place for everybody – participation is powerful. We want to get everybody on board and headed in the right direction. We will consistently challenge the way we do things in order to be successful."

For his work in the last fiscal year, Smurthwaite was recognized as a "Prime Officer," by Reeher. Through analytics, Reeher identifies and recognizes the top 15 percent of fund-raisers in the nation.

Recently, he was selected to be the representative for the Mountain West Conference for the National Association of Athletics Development Directors (NAADD).

"I have always had a love for the sports industry," Smurthwaite said. "I have aggressive plans for my career and Utah State has consistently supported them. From Logan to Price, there are great people at this university."

~ Susan Polster