WHERE TO LAND

A resource dedicated to student-athletes and their Life After Notre Dame.

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PURPOSE IN HELPING OTHERS FIND FULFILLMENT AFTER SPORTS

During Ed Lubowicki's (ND '16) career as a scholarship lacrosse player at Notre Dame, the Fighting Irish made four NCAA Tournament appearances, reached the Final Four twice, and played for a national championship. A two-time All-Atlantic Coast Conference Academic All-American and three-time Monogram winner, Ed's skills as an attacker contributed to Notre Dame's two ACC championship wins. He earned his degree in IT Management, joined Deloitte, and over nine years held cyber risk management and consultant roles with the Big Four firm. Ed led high-pressure technology and communication projects and saw firsthand how identity and performance are deeply intertwined. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in Organizational Dynamics, with a concentration in Leadership and Organizational Coaching, at the University of Pennsylvania. His studies spurred him to establish his coaching practice, **Lubowicki Performance Advisory** *(***ed@lubowickiperformanceadvisory.com***), based on the belief that one's skills, strengths, and experiences developed as an athlete can be the foundation for thriving in life after sports. Ed applied the scientific research he's learning at UPenn, as well as his own experience as a former athlete navigating the corporate world, to create his practice's three interrelated pillars: adaptation of the athlete's unique set of strengths to their work; connection to their body; connection to a new community. Ed says he has found his purpose and is excited to help others find theirs, including as a member of the LAND network coaching Notre Dame clients. Here's Ed's story:*

My dad, Ed, decided I was going to play lacrosse before I was even born. A player for Florida State, his focus on this plan became evident in the delivery room. There was a complication after I was born, and while I was in the NICU under oxygen, my Dad asked the nurse if this early challenge would make me faster.

My Dad's sense of humor and enthusiasm for sport carried through as he coached me in youth sports and after high school games, when the entire family cheered from the stands. His own dedication taught me how to stay motivated to be better and confident during my conversations with college recruiters.

Notre Dame was always in the back of my mind, but the realization of what a special place it was for me, personally, hit home when I visited the campus. The synchronicities were hard to ignore: Eddy Street near campus. The Moreau Seminary; that's the last name of my high school coach.

The air just felt lighter at Notre Dame, a diamond in the rough in Indiana that offered great academics, great people, and great lacrosse. The coaches, led by Kevin Corrigan, were awesome. And the locker room was a place where I could be friends with everyone. It offered a mix of seriousness and fun, full of sharp and motivated people. I felt a sense of belonging right away, the one that permeates any Notre Dame alum you meet.

FOCUSING, PERFECTING, MAKING THE PLAY

I like the combination of creativity and team orientation that lacrosse offers.

You obviously can't win on your own, but you can master certain aspects through practice, and that's what drew me most. Focusing on one component, perfecting it, and then putting it in my arsenal and seeing where that creativity could change things on the field was so interesting to me. (After my playing days, I would come to encourage others to take this approach themselves.)

In addition, I've always been more of a distributor playing the game; I liked seeing my teammates in the spotlight. You can do that in lacrosse, add a lot of value without being the superstar.

Right off the bat at ND, two other lefty attackmen in my freshman class offered competition. One of them would become a great friend and one of the best lacrosse players to ever live, Matt Kavanaugh. Playing with someone of Matt's caliber was incredible, and quite the transition from high school. So I had to create a different value-add on the team and in the locker room, by helping others be successful.

THE GRIND WAS WORTH IT

I didn't play much at first and didn't even travel my freshman year. This made for weird moments as I watched my teammates on TV after grinding in practice all week. I remember looking around at the others who didn't travel and thinking about how long and hard you work at a sport only to find yourself at the bottom of the totem pole.

This was a different experience for us, and it was tough. I knew going in that I probably wouldn't play early, especially when I saw Matt dominating. But you still have hope, and that's what makes athletes great: they find ways to get on the field.

My way was to play man-up my sophomore through senior years, continuing to add value and set an example for my teammates, even as Ryder Garnsey, another lefty attacker known for his creative play, joined as a freshman. In the end, our team camaraderie made the grind worthwhile, and we grew incredibly close. Surrounded by high-level guys, who were smart, experienced, and excellent at their sport, we strived for more on and off the field.

Along with the memorable lacrosse wins, losses, and plays, I look back on my time at Notre Dame as one marked by fun Saturday morning scrimmages before football games. Going from playing your sport to supporting everyone else in theirs during the tailgates was always special.

THE CORPORATE WORLD AND A NEW DIRECTION

I knew playing professionally was never in the cards. I had a deal with my dad that after graduation I could look to other things. Also, the lacrosse league was still up and coming in 2016. Today, the Premier Lacrosse League is gaining steam, with the past season's play and Championship game incredibly exciting to watch. And my friends' little brothers are now playing in the league, a really cool progression.

With my IT Management degree, I joined the cyber risk practice at Deloitte right away. The cybersecurity field was huge at the time and top of mind for executives and boards. They needed help adapting to the potential risks, and I was on a career path at a good company aligned with my values.

I became a manager within six years, but realized I no longer connected with cyber. Though I advanced and received good reviews, I was growing increasingly unhappy. I recognized that my struggles stemmed from losing sport. I no longer had a higher purpose or a place to put all the energy that I had once poured into lacrosse. I also could have better handled early challenges at work, had I known my strengths and was confident moving into the corporate space.

That's why after years at Deloitte and with their encouragement, I started my master's program at UPenn in 2024, with its concentration in Leadership and Organizational Coaching that's helping me gain evidence-based insights into a subject that resonates deeply with me: athlete transition and transformation.

I launched my practice, **Lubowicki Performance Advisory**, this year. I've designed it to help athletes navigate transition, leaders to seek clarity, or teams to grow stronger together by carrying their proven greatness forward.

My coaching approach with others is an offshoot of my own playing days, when I improved and felt fulfilled after focusing on one component, perfecting it, and then putting it in my arsenal to make positive change on the field. Helping my clients attain their goals is grounded in my joy at seeing others succeed at whatever game they're in.

WINNING FORMULA: STRENGTHS, BODY, COMMUNITY

To help define my practice and ensure it could provide real value for my clients, I combined my master's research study with hundreds of energizing conversations with Olympians, professional and college athletes, and youth sports practitioners. I realized I could make an impact as I learned how many of those I talked to struggled with the transition from sports. They might not have faced health or financial issues, for example, but they all experienced an identity shift unique to athletes.

I also spoke with organizations, including LAND, which is helping to break the ice for Notre Dame alumni as they reach out to each other to aid the transition from sports. LAND introduced me to one of my first clients.

This former athlete had just accepted his first job but was uncertain about where he fit in the corporate world. So we dissected what his incredible skills were on the field and repurposed them for making his first impression at work. For example, he connected how he would prepare himself for different circumstances that arose in a game – perfecting a play and calming himself before taking the field – to use in his new role.

As we made this judgment-free space to talk, articulating and leveraging his unique strengths to apply them beyond athletics, I felt a huge shift in his confidence to approach future challenges and his career.

In addition to exploring what made an athlete uniquely successful on the field and repurposing that for other avenues in life, my coaching program encourages them to reconnect to their physical self. They spent so much time perfecting their body and building strength to be successful only to land a job where that doesn't matter as much. But moving remains vital for a former athlete.

The third component of my program is helping clients find a connection with another community or group, to rely on, hold them accountable, and provide structure to their days. Again, as soon as the athlete graduates or leaves their sport, the 50 best friends they had in the locker room are gone. That community has to be rebuilt, whether it's through hobbies, corporate friends, a faith-based group, or Notre Dame alumni networks.

PURPOSE FOUND

I recently coached a college freshman who straight up asked me if he was ever going to love anything as much as playing his sport. I said, brother, I'm writing a whole thesis on how to help answer that question. I think it's a real feeling and one that people don't address as they are living their experience. For me, it took five years after I stopped playing to realize that I was craving, and trying to replace, my connection to my strengths, my body, and my community.

We can never recreate that feeling of the locker room in the corporate world, but we can learn to look back on that experience with fondness and realize how lucky we are to have lived it.

With graduate school and my business, I've found a deeper purpose, and I wake up every day excited to do this type of work as I approach my 10-year anniversary of graduating from Notre Dame. I don't know if 10 years is the best timeline; I feel people are finding their purpose sooner. But no matter. I'm full steam ahead!