

**Virginia Tech Lacrosse**  
**Director of Operations Meg Bartley**

**HokieSports: What initially drew you to Virginia Tech?**

**Meg Bartley:** On my visit in high school, I had this sense of spirit and community with all of the people here and I came to find out that's the Hokie Spirit of being a part of this community. I think in the first few moments of being on campus I knew this was the place that I wanted to be. The following months after I decided that I was coming here, everyone I told had someone in their life that they knew had come to Virginia Tech and loved it and I think that also exemplified that Hokie Spirit and the sense of community that being here brings.

**HS: What are some of your best memories both on and off the field?**

**MB:** I think some of my best memories on the field were in my later years because I had a few years with some of the same girls and we really built such a strong connection especially in my class. I think those bonds really translated on the field and having those bonds with them off the field helped me achieve all of my goals on the field. That connection with them really brought so much fun and joy in general, whether it was games or practice, we really just loved being out there. Somedays we would ask for extra reps in [the sevens practice drill] just because we wanted to try new things like behind the back or new plays so I think those memories of playing lacrosse whether at games or practice were awesome.

Some of the fun memories we had off the field were just doing random things. I know one thing we did during spring break were music videos with our class. Each class would do a different one so picking those music videos, what we going to do, dressing up in our costumes, videotaping them and showing them to the whole team was a lot of fun. Obviously being a part of the athletic community, going to different sporting events - football all of those fun times, basketball going to huge games those were always awesome times but – the memories that we made both on and off the field, the connections we were able to create off the field then translated on the field and we truly enjoyed being with each other.

**HS: Do you have a game or a specific goal that stands out as the best moment in college?**

**MB:** I would probably say the Michigan goal which we won in the last second – at the Big House so that was pretty cool. That same game I think I also broke the all-time draw record so it was a pretty big day for me. We had gone to overtime against them. The last goal, Megan Will my best friend she had scored the goal to tie it. It was my turn to do the next play, the end of game play. We were in the second part of overtime and Michigan forced a turnover and it was with, 20 seconds left because we were winding down the clock – so they forced a turnover while we were in our offensive set and we started to redefend and I can still see it in my head. I think Meghan Macera got the turnover she passed it up to I want to say Jessi Thon who then passed it to Cawley (Bromley). I was still close to the crease because I'm a crease attacker so I was

cutting up and they passed it to me and I swear I took 80 fakes and then I shot low and it went in. Luckily, I did one less fake because it was in the last second of the game. That was probably the most awesome game experience and goal.

**HS: When did you know that you wanted to go into coaching?**

**MB:** I started coaching I would say after my freshman year of college. It's kind of the norm for a lot of college students and college lacrosse players to work different camps, different university camps so I had a few older teammates who were into coaching for clubs and I started doing that. I signed up for a bunch of different college camps to work. I think that kind of pushed my interest in coaching. I always enjoyed working with younger kids, babysitting when I was in high school and then being able to work these camps and have these little girls who were either learning lacrosse or trying to perfect their skills. [They] really look up to you and thought you were the coolest thing ever, and it was such an awesome experience and it really showed me this purpose of being able to teach people the sport you love but also teach them other in ways and just connect with them and enjoy something you grew up enjoying which was lacrosse. I just think that experience kind of pushed me into coaching.

I would say coaching after playing college lacrosse has really changed who I am as a person because as much as we are teaching the girls how to be better lacrosse players and better people out in the world and better leaders on campus, they are constantly teaching us to be better people ourselves and they drive us to want to be better for them. I feel almost older than I am because of how much all of the girls that I've worked with over the years have truly changed my life in one way or another. I have so many stories to tell and experiences that I've had that have made me want to become a better person - more kind, empathetic, more understanding and just a person who cares about the people they are surrounded with and it's because of the girls that I've been able to work with.

**HS: How did you meet John Sung and how did the opportunity to come back to Virginia Tech develop?**

**MB:** John Sung, when he was at Winthrop he recruited a lot of girls from my high school to go there so we know a lot of the same people and will talk about them from time to time, girls that I had played with in high school. He had a relationship with my high school coach who I'm also really close with so I kind of knew of him – but then when I played professionally in the lacrosse league over the summer about two summers ago he was chosen as my coach so I was able to work with him during that summer and he coached my team. It was really awesome because he was obviously at Virginia Tech at the time, I didn't play for him so it was nice to play for him that summer and see what he was doing and how he coached for my alma mater Virginia Tech. That was when we really got to get to know each other and then from coaching throughout the years you see a lot of coaches on the sidelines, we're all recruiting at the same games so I was able to talk to him after the professional experience ended so I got to know him through there.

As for coming back here, it was honestly out of the blue. The old director of ops found an opportunity in an area that she really wanted to pursue and it was at a little bit of an unorthodox time in December that she was able to pursue that career so John Sung called me late December. I remember I had a missed call from him I thought it might be a butt dial or he's reaching out about some alumni stuff and so I listened to his voicemail, I called him back and the rest is history.

He told me he had this opening, we talked for a few days about it, what the director of ops does and where the team was going and what this year looked like. The more I talked to him the more excited I got. I've always wanted to come back here to work at some point in my life and although it came out of the blue, it just seemed like the right opportunity at the right time so I got really lucky with that.

**HS: What are some of your responsibilities?**

**MB:** There's the listed stuff that I have to do and there's the things that you don't even know that you would need to do that I've learned over my short time here, so it takes a lot of color coding. I am constantly having to think on a macro scale and a micro scale. Some things that I work with: I help with fundraising for our program, alumni connection so that's one thing that I'm really excited about because I am an alum. So many of the girls I have their numbers or have seen in the past few weeks or months so that's something I've been working on lately is connecting the alumni base with the current team and how we can morph those and be resources for each other. I do travel and logistics, the food orders, I help set up and operate practice and games. I help with the academics, I'm really involved in the academic portion with the girls – making sure they're on track talking to our academic advisor and making sure everything is good, the girls are on track and getting good grades. Checking with girls who maybe are struggling with a class so we can come up with a plan so that they can do better and so they can finish the semester strong. I work with the social media team to try to get to 10,000 followers on Instagram so creating content. We have a group of student managers who I manage and utilize all of their assets that they can bring to the program.

**HS: With all of that going on, when do you find time to take a break?**

**MB:** I don't – no, I joke that I either work or I sleep and then I work then I sleep. The girls and the team - fortunately at Virginia Tech we have so many resources and people that we can utilize with skillsets that I may not be great at yet so I think those resources really help me find time to sleep and those things we talk about.

**HS: What are some of the joys of being around this team and some of the great memories that were made this season?**

**MB:** The girls have such great energy and I think its kind of that Hokie Spirit that I mentioned before. People who come here truly love being here they know what they're getting into there is a sense of community and pride. Working with the girls who are Hokies just like me is such a unique experience that it truly motivates me to want to be better and bring better for them and want to bring them my best every day.

So those joys alone of knowing you're working hard for girls who are what I was not too long ago, it just really is so unique and special. Even when I'm tired and sleep deprived after a long season, I really don't take those moments for granted with them and I try to always remind myself to stop and pause and joke around with them because of how lucky I am to be in this position and be back. [Current players] will ask about a certain player and I'm like 'Oh my gosh that's my best friend, I was just talking to her' and they're like 'Really you know her?' so to be somewhat of a bridge between the old and the new, that alone brings joy to me every day in working with them.

**HS: How would you characterize the 2020 season both on the field and from your perspective as the director of operations?**

**MB:** From an operational standpoint for the season of 2020 that the coaching staff and the program had really started to fine tune what they were doing for the needs of the team and giving them the optimal resources that they needed. We were adding things that the team needed, for example we got these awesome recovery bands because we knew that recovery was very important for the girls this season to take their games to the next level. Coach Sung invested in these bands called WHOOP bands and I think that alone showed how much we are catering towards the girls and their needs to make that separation between elite and ultimate championship team so having those minute details fine-tuned really stood out to me from the operational standpoint of how we are trying to make this program the best program that it can be.

As a new coach you come in and there's a lot of things to change, getting the team to buy in the team culture and now we're in Coach Sung's fourth year so really focusing on those minute details that the girls are expressing needs for and adjusting those, that really can set a team apart and create that championship culture.