

FOOTBALL ATHLETE

I initially wanted to go abroad to challenge myself and spend a significant amount of time in an unfamiliar country. Several of my friends and teammates had participated in the Davidson in Cambridge summer program in prior years. As an English major, I wanted a program centered around literature, and this one fit the bill. Also, a chance to study at one of Cambridge's colleges sounded pretty good, too. The six-week summer program was ideal for me because I wouldn't want to spend an entire semester abroad and miss crucial parts of the football offseason.

The most academically rewarding part of the experience was getting to interact with the Cambridge tutors. We attended lectures from [local experts] nearly every day, but I found the assigned reading and the discussions from tutorial sessions to be more enjoyable. It's a little like sitting down with a Davidson professor in a group of seven or eight and becoming more a part of a conversation than simply listening to a lecture and asking a few questions. They don't dominate the discussion, but they have an incredible base of knowledge with which they can respond to the direction of student's ideas. They were extremely helpful in choosing paper topics and offering research advice. When grading papers, they gave a tremendous amount of feedback as well as offer additional reading material they thought you might be interested in.

The most personally rewarding experience was being able to travel with friends throughout England and Scotland. I got to know some Davidson classmates much better than I might have in the course of a regular semester. I also enjoyed traveling by myself. On one solo trip, I ended up lost in a small town in the North Yorkshire moors when I had intended to be 100 miles away in the opposite direction. I wandered into a pub, and once some of the locals had a bit of a laugh at the lost American, they explained how to get to my intended destination. I had arrived around 9:00 pm, and after a long conversation and finding out that none of the four rooms available in the town were vacant, an older couple offered to let me spend the night at their house. The next morning, we went for a walk in the hills, had a very nice breakfast, and then they drove me back to the train station and saw me off.

I would absolutely recommend considering studying abroad for student athletes. I originally didn't plan to because of football, but I think it is just too good of an opportunity to pass up. I think it's worth it in the long run, and I certainly don't regret it. Summer was a good time for me as a football player, but it wasn't ideal as I literally [arrived] back in the States the day after fall camp started. I knew ahead of time that there would be a fully-equipped gym near the college, and there would be greens to run on. That is something you definitely should research ahead of time, but I also enjoyed some freedom in breaking up the routine and doing some different workouts like running longer distances, bodyweight exercises, and finding ways to push myself in a new environment. If you can find the right time and the right program, it won't hurt your athletic performance, and it's an incredible opportunity.