

Lannie Hales' job is cool because she gets paid to attend sporting events. As the athletic trainer for East Carolina University's Cross Country/Track and Field team, she attends events in the fall, winter and spring to keep her athletes healthy throughout their seasons. Athletic trainers are highly qualified, multi-skilled health care professionals who collaborate with physicians to provide preventative services, emergency care, clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions. Athletic trainers are licensed as health care professionals in about 48 of the 50 states in the USA.

Not surprisingly, Hales got her higher education start at Southside Virginia Community College. Since her mom (Christie Hales) has worked full time for the college since before Lannie's birth, it was just a natural pathway to follow.

Her first classes at SVCC began as a ninth grader at Brunswick High School through the Dual Enrollment Program. As a junior, she was accepted into the Governor's School of Southside Virginia and attended morning classes at the Christanna Campus in Alberta for two years.

In May of 2012, Hales received her Associate's degree from SVCC a month before her high school graduation.

For the next move in her career path, she registered at James Madison University, a school she chose because she could major in Athletic Training. With plenty of credits to transfer, she began at JMU as a sophomore and started taking the pre-requisite classes necessary for acceptance into the prestigious program.

Hales was overjoyed to learn she had been chosen for the program that only accepts 18 students each year. For the next two years, Hales studied the necessary classes, observed athletic trainers in the field for over 1000 hours and assisted in the health care and rehabilitation of athletes at Eastern Mennonite University and JMU.

One of the greatest opportunities was working with JMU Softball in 2014, highlighted by being in the dugout during the Colonial Athletic Association Championship game and travelling with the team to the University of Kentucky at Lexington for the NCAA regionals.

While a senior at JMU, Hales researched and applied to programs offering Graduate Assistantships in athletic training. She landed a full scholarship to North Carolina State University where she practiced clinically as an athletic trainer and went to school for the next two years. As a member of the Wolfpack's Sports Medicine team, she was assigned to the Cross Country/Track and Field team consisting of about 80 athletes. This was an excellent chance to hone her skills, gain valuable knowledge in the field and continue her lifelong passion and involvement with sports and healthcare.

She graduated from NC State with a Masters in Adult and Community College Education (with a specialization in Health Professions Education) in May of 2017 and searched for a full-time job as the next step in her journey. In July, she happily accepted a position as assistant athletic trainer at East Carolina University.

Hales said, "I am very fortunate to have had the career opportunities I've had so far as a young professional in athletic training. When I look back on the reasons why I have been so fortunate, my education always comes to mind first. Being an athletic trainer is the perfect job for me; I get to combine my love for sports with my passion for quality health care for others. Getting my degree at SVCC really served as the kickstart for my athletic training career and I couldn't be more grateful."

