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Chris Butler named sports information director

Summary: Mark Fohl, athletic director, announces new appointment

(July 23, 2009)-Mark Fohl, director of Cougar athletics, announces that Chris Butler has been named sports information director (SID) at the University of Minnesota, Morris. He begins his appointment in August 2009. States Fohl: “Chris has the skills and the enthusiasm necessary to build an outstanding sports information department for Cougar athletics.”

Most recently, Butler taught writing courses for the Division of Humanities. His professional experience includes a variety of KYUK radio/TV positions in Bethel, Alaska.

“I started as a news reporter covering local events and soon became the sports anchor on the noon-time television news cast,” shares Butler. “When the station downsized, I became the radio manager. A staff of two, we managed everything from news to public affairs programming and entertainment. For example, I hosted call-in shows with national legislators from Alaska, like United States Congressman Don Young.”

A former three-sport high school athlete—football, basketball, and track, Butler describes himself as a “huge” athletics patron: “For me, being a sports fan is about time shared with community members, neighbors, family, etc.,” he says. “Division III sports, in particular, has that kind of atmosphere. You support the Cougar teams because you like sports, of course, but you also likely have a personal connection to the team in some way. The job of sports information is to help facilitate and enhance connections between supporters and athletes through media.”

Butler also believes that sports teach life skills. “The experience of being part of a team, of working with others in high-pressure situations, of sublimating your individual desires for the benefit of the group...these experiences can—and do—have lasting impact well beyond graduation.”

An avid Cougar fan, Butler is excited about the challenges and opportunities his new SID position affords. He states: “Now I have an excuse to watch as many Cougar athletic contests as possible. It’s my job!”

Butler earned a master of science in American studies from the University of Notre Dame. With wife Jennifer Rothchild, associate professor of sociology, he co-authored *Across Many Fields: A Season of Ohio High School Football* from which he was quoted in a December 2008 Wall Street Journal article. In his free time, Butler enjoys recreational sports, including basketball and running at least one marathon per year with friends and family.

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