

Stuart Williamson
Alpha Sigma Summer Enrichment Final Report

For the first eight weeks of my summer, I interned with Prokick Australia in Melbourne, Australia. Prokick is a for-profit company that works to train Australian athletes as American football players. Specifically, they train their athletes as punters. Prokick aims to get every one of their athletes a scholarship to play American football at a university in the United States, saving them hundreds of thousands of dollars in education fees. To be admitted into the program, each applicant has to have completed the Australian equivalent of high school and pass an athletic assessment. Depending each applicant's financial situation, the fee for joining the program for six months is around \$5,000 AUD (about \$3,500 USD). That fee is Prokick's only source of revenue. Since its birth in 2007, Prokick has helped send over 100 Australians to American universities. Some of the best programs in college football—including Louisiana State University, University of Florida, Texas A&M University—have had or, within the next year, will have a Prokick punter on their roster. Three Prokick graduates are on NFL rosters.

Before heading off to the bottom of the world, I had barely any idea of what I was getting into. My knowledge of what Prokick does was based off of a few YouTube videos, ESPN articles and a phone call with the owner of the company. I didn't know a soul in the land down under either. About the only thing I figured I would be familiar with, other than some slang, was the language. It was my first time leaving the United States on my own. And, although I was about to be hit with many unknowns, I could not wait for the experience to begin.

It did not take me as long to adjust to Melbourne as I thought it would. I started my internship on my second day there. Nathan Chapman and Johnny Smith, the co-founders of Prokick, were incredible hosts. They gave me nearly full transparency with how they run

things—from their training sessions to behind the scenes work. Everybody involved with Prokick welcomed me with open arms right away.

A normal day would usually start off with a 9AM-12PM training session. At those sessions, I would help answer trainees' questions, run drills, and give Nathan and Johnny some insight. After training, I would grab lunch with the trainees and coaches. Then, I would shadow Nathan and Johnny for usually around three more hours. I got the most value out of my internship during that shadowing. I would get to listen in on phone calls with college coaches, help with Prokick's finances, sit in on meetings with potential clients, as well as other things. Every other week Nathan and Johnny would lead classroom sessions where they would teach trainees about football rules, x's and o's, and sometimes general information about American culture. My role in these sessions expanded each session.

I also had plenty time to explore Melbourne and the surrounding areas on my own. I took fondly to trying new restaurants, visiting different museums, and attending professional sporting events. Locals like to call Melbourne the "sports capitol of the world," and I now understand why. Cricket is the national sport, although Australian rules football is arguably more popular. The Australian Open is held annually in Melbourne, as is the Australian Grand Prix. Melbourne has also hosted a summer Olympics. I did not know I was walking into all that, but I definitely did not complain.

I took plane trips to two different Australian states. First, I went up to Queensland to visit the Great Barrier Reef. It was spectacular. I did not expect it to match the hype, but it truly did. I am very fortunate to have been able to see it in person because, unfortunately, I do not think it has much time left. It was also nice to get away from the rainy and chilly winter weather down in Melbourne. The second trip I took was to Tasmania, where I think I found my favorite city in the

world, Hobart. I spent a weekend there and wish I had longer. I felt like I was on the bottom of the world. I was surrounded by nature, fascinating history, and fresh food. I took a few hikes and day tours to other parts of the island. Everything was mesmerizing and I promised myself that I would go back before too long.

I am so thankful for the Alpha Sigma Foundation and their decision to help fund my experience. I love talking and writing about my experience because it brings back memories that are extremely special to me. I will never forget my summer in Australia and owe much of it to the Alpha Sigma Foundation.

Training Session



AFL Match with Some Mates



Queensland



Hobart



Kanga

