

Kayden Zamore's 2023 Summer Internship Experience



I began my internship experience at Clay Today on Monday, June 5, 2023, and have had the pleasure to be included as a member of the team until now. I have worked directly with Don Coble, Managing Editor of Clay Today working directly out of the corporate office in Orange Park, FL Clay county. I found motivation in my daily interactions with other staff members who I was able to meet and build relationships with. It was extremely comforting to see a familiar face in Randy Lefko, Sports Editor, and photographer who I have had the pleasure of speaking with over the years as an athlete on the field for various stories at my school. Initially we established early on that my focus was mainly sports related, but I was open and willing to learn everything about the business of newspaper and editing stories. Overall, the employees and environment at Clay Today have been very friendly, supportive, and knowledgeable.

So far, my time with Clay Today has been more than a simple internship; it was an opportunity for me to prove to myself that I could pivot and enjoy sports even if I were not the person with the ball. I have also shown myself to be a dependable employee, a reliable coworker, and a motivated student of the work. By showing up on time, communicating effectively, and following the directions of my mentor/supervisor I have proven I am more than just an athlete and I am able to do more. This internship was also an opportunity to gain office experience with people I never met to broaden my scope beyond high school as I prepare to enter college. I would not have received the lessons, training, of experience through an average summer job.

One of the most valuable skills I developed was my versatility and flexibility. I've learned that the work in news and journalism is fast paced and slow all at the same time. One of my first lessons at Clay Today was news does not happen in the office. Over the duration of my internship so far, I have published three articles for Clay Today. My very first article was published my first week on the job about my injury and recovery. I have had the pleasure of interviewing my coach and some teammates and friends about this upcoming football season. It has been extremely rewarding to share my thoughts and ideas and see them come to life in print and then share the actual article with family, friends, and the public. I have received feedback about my articles, and I try to incorporate that feedback into my work whenever I write. I earned an increasing amount of responsibility in my third week of interning when I was asked to interview a teacher at my school regarding a grant that was received. I was also asked to take photos of a mini football camp for 8–12-year-old for an upcoming story about summer camp. I've accomplished more tasks and am always happy to receive new work. The support and direct feedback that I received from

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my mentor/supervisor was more than enough to make me feel comfortable with managing interviews and photography outside of the office walls. The empowerment that I have received on my internship was one of the most rewarding aspects of this experience. My mentor/supervisor has trusted me with projects and relied on me to get them done immediately and effectively. It feels like I am truly valued more as a coworker and not just a summer intern. In summary, I am humbled and thankful for Ms. Dee and The Annie Ruth Foundation for providing me with the ability to develop personally and professionally. This experience prepared me and because of the preparation I was able to have this internship opportunity which created an experience I will never forget.