
PATS Member Chris Peduzzi Lands Dream Job with the Philadelphia Eagles

Peduzzi, a Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers' Society (PATS) member, has recently been named as the Eagles' Head Athletic Trainer following the departure of long-time Head, Rick Burkholder. While each NFL team handles their business in slightly different ways, Chris was quick to point out, "The Eagles' ownership has been extremely supportive of us in every way imaginable."



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On February 23, 300+ men from all over the country will converge in Indianapolis for the NFL's scouting combine to impress prospective teams with their athletic prowess, brute strength, and cognitive ability. For some it is a chance to show the NFL's decision makers that they indeed have the qualities which are necessary to achieve and succeed at the highest level of football. For the Philadelphia Eagles' Chris Peduzzi, it will be his first chance as the Head Athletic Trainer to assist their medical team in grading these physical specimens.

Peduzzi, a Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers' Society (PATS) member, has recently been named as the Eagles' Head Athletic Trainer following the departure of long-time Head, Rick Burkholder. Rick, also a PATS member, has joined former Eagles' head coach Andy Reid and will be the KC Chiefs' Head Athletic Trainer. When asked about how things went down when Rick left, Peduzzi was, "surprised that all of a sudden the guy who ran the show for years had now moved on." In a league where each off-season it is common to hear the term "coaching carousel" hundreds of times on sports talk shows, referring to how some teams let their coaches go and other teams are anxious to claim them hoping to catch lightning in a bottle. This time Chris had unknowingly become part of that carousel. "I wasn't expecting it, usually you know when guys are getting ready to retire, but Rick's a young guy."

While each NFL team handles their business in slightly different ways, Chris was quick to point out, "The Eagles' ownership has been extremely supportive of us in every way imaginable. When we go to them and ask for a piece of equipment or a modality and explain how it is going to benefit the players, they have no problem making sure we get it. We are very lucky to have that kind of support." The Eagles' ownership is very proud of the support staff they have in place which is evident by the fact that Peduzzi was promoted from within. While some teams may allow a head coach to make decisions pertaining to their medical staff, Chris has proved himself to be a needed commodity and as such finds himself in charge in the athletic training room.

Unlike the guys he will be helping evaluate, Peduzzi is not a rookie to the NFL, rather he is entering his 15th year with the Eagles and 18th year overall. Growing up in western Pennsylvania, he was fortunate to land an internship with the Pittsburgh Steelers working under then assistant athletic trainer Rick Burkholder.

As social media grows by leaps and bounds we become more aware of the goings on of players after their seasons are over. It used to be thought that once the Super Bowl was over that teams went on hiatus for several months then



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regrouped for summer training camp and began the cycle all over. However, there are injuries which need to be addressed either surgically or through intensive rehabilitation. We also now know that personnel work around the clock to develop their team in to what they think will be a playoff contender. The combine weekend is the first step that the coaching staffs have towards retooling their roster. Chris will be in the room with the orthopedic physicians helping them grade each prospective player in preparation for the NFL draft. Following the combine, Chris will return to the Novacare Complex where he will continue to help his athletes rehabilitate and treat their injuries, and provide medical advice on free-agents who the team brings in for work-outs. Then they venture in to the world of Organized Team Activities (OTA's) which are when coaches are allowed to have contact with the players in preparation for the upcoming season. Then by mid-summer, all preparations are made for training camp and it is go time from there.

Chris credits having a great internship with the Steelers as his foundation for where he is professionally right now. "Probably 90% or more of the AT's in the league came through some sort of internship within the league. If you want to get in to the NFL as an Athletic Trainer, that is definitely where to start." When asked for advice for high school or college students who are thinking about going in to athletic training, his advice is to, "Be a sponge and be flexible."

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