

ers to get them ready for the game. The game itself is probably the least strenuous/stressful aspect of a Sunday.”

Entering his fourth season with the Colts, Baugh says he has learned many little tricks of the trade from the individuals with whom he has worked. But he has also learned a lot about the business side of the NFL and why some things are done the way they are.

Baugh says while he enjoys the excitement of game day, he finds the most rewarding aspect of his job to be helping an athlete recover from an injury and preparing him to return to play.

“The hardest and most frustrating part is dealing with an athlete who may not fully recover from an injury and watching him cope with the fact that he may never play competitively again,” he said.

A solid foundation at UGA

Baugh says the athletic training program at UGA, directed by Michael Ferrara, an associate professor of exercise science in the department of kinesiology, provided him with a solid foundation from an academic standpoint to build upon and pass the national certification exam.

“Secondly, the program provided me an opportunity to gain valuable experience under the direction of Ron Courson, Michael Dillon, Steve ‘Chicken Hawk’ Bryant and Michael Clanton, all of whom I must give a tremendous amount of credit for preparing me for a career.”

He also met his wife of two years, Kim, at UGA. “She toughed it out with me until I got into a stable situation,” he said. “Plus, it helps that she is a physical therapist and can relate to my job and work schedule.”

Baugh says he makes it back to Georgia twice a year to see friends and family and tries to get over to Athens at least on one of those visits.

And while Jennings is the only former Bulldog player currently on the Colts team, Baugh has seen a few others over the past three years including Adam Meadows, Brandon Miller, Josh Mallard and Paul Snelling.

With all of his success, what tips might Baugh have to share with young, aspiring athletic trainers?

“Choose your school/curriculum wisely. You want to put yourself in the best position to advance in this profession,” he said. “Study hard, work harder and remember to have fun with this because the hours will



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◀ *Baugh listens in on a conversation between Colts defensive end Dwight Freeney and defensive back Bob Sanders during a 2006 game in Indianapolis.*

become overwhelming if you don’t enjoy what you do.”

UGA’s undergraduate athletic training education program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). Graduate programs are offered in the department of kinesiology with areas of study in Biomechanics, Exercise Physiology, Exercise Psychology, Muscle Physiology, Measurement and Evaluation.

The program, established by Ferrara in 1999 and receiving initial accreditation in 2001, offers research opportunities in sport-related concussion, prevention of exertional heat illness and functional rehabilitation following total knee replacement.

So what does the future hold for young Bryant Baugh? Is working in pro sports, especially one as popular as the NFL, something of a pinnacle for athletic trainers?

“I don’t know that this is necessarily a pinnacle. Obviously, there are a lot of people who would like to work in a professional league, but at the same time, it is an individual preference,” he said. “However, I have been fortunate enough to work with some pretty terrific athletic trainers at the collegiate level, and that is very impor-

tant in terms of grooming upcoming athletic trainers to preserve the integrity of our profession.”

And if working with the athletes of a Super Bowl championship team isn’t a pinnacle, to just what does Baugh aspire?

“I would love the opportunity to become a head athletic trainer one day, but those positions are very limited, and there is not a lot of turnover,” he said. “I have not completely ruled out returning to college or even working in a clinical setting.”

OK, so one last question. While it takes hard work and discipline to become a pro athlete, many are also known to have fun-loving personalities. Does Baugh have any wild and funny stories from his NFL career so far?

“Oh, I have stories,” he said. “But I don’t know that it would be in my best interest to share them publicly.”