

# Bard Athletics Podcast

**00:00 Josh:** Welcome back everybody to the next edition of our podcast series. Today we will be learning more about Bard athletics and we are joined by our interim athletic director David Lindholm. Thanks, David, for joining us!

**00:13 David:** Yeah, my pleasure! Thanks for having me!

**00:15 Josh:** Yeah, great! So, I guess we will jump right into it. I am just wondering if you could give us a bit of the background about the athletic program at Bard: What athletic facility exists on campus? What sports are offered at the college? And what division and league is Bard part of?

**00:30 David:** Sure, so Bard is part of the Liberty League, which is a Division III conference within the NCAA. And it's essentially, since we are Division III, the idea is that it's an athletic department about participation, about academics, which is sort of the top priority of our teams and of our coaches. But we play a very competitive athletic conference within the Division III. So, the people who play varsity sports here take it very seriously and work really hard but know that their priorities lie in the academic and being citizens of the campus. So, it's a nice balance and that's why I think Division III works really well at Bard. We have 19 varsity sports, and you can check those out by going to [bardathletics.com](http://bardathletics.com), you can see all of the different sports that we participate in. We also have several club sports: those include ultimate frisbee, rugby, and a couple of others. And then there are a couple of other activities that are outside the realm of team sports and more in recreation, intramurals, classes like yoga, fitness courses and all those sorts of things that we use within our facility. So, we have a gym on campus that has a basketball court, a large indoor space that actually has two basketball courts within it. That's where our basketball team and volleyball team play in the winter throughout their seasons. We have a turf field, a swimming pool, a grass field, a turf baseball field as well. We have a number of athletic facilities that are used by the varsity teams and also by the student body more broadly for recreation, for club sports, and just for general fitness.

**02:06 Josh:** That sounds great, Dave! And just talking those kinds of three different levels of sports: varsity, club, and intramural, how would someone go about joining any one of those levels of sports teams?

**02:21 David:** Yeah. So, generally speaking, the varsity sports, for the most part, people have experience with that sports before they arrive at Bard. So, often, they have been in touch with the Bard college coach before they arrive at Bard. Maybe they have gone through a sort of recruiting process, which mostly just means that they are also talking about sports in addition to talking about everything else that Bard has to offer. Athletes don't go through any different admission process than the rest of the student body. But they might have an additional contact with the coach who would work with them in basketball, in soccer, or in one of the other sports that we offer. So, generally speaking, like I say, those students would have experience. Though we do have some sports, like cross-country, track & field, swimming which are welcome to people that want to make the commitment to our varsity teams. They don't have to have experience; they just have to be willing to spend a significant amount of time and really commit to that process of being a varsity athlete. So those are more participatory, even as a varsity sport. The club teams tend to be open to anybody who wants to join them, whether you have experience or not. Like I said, rugby or ultimate frisbee, those are sports where a lot of the people who do those sports here have not played them before they've gone to Bard. But join a group who plays a team sport and work together to team and improve those sports, I think, that can be a really positive and fun experience. And also, we have some incredibly competitive athletes in those sports too.

Probably, one of the highest achieving athlete at Bard currently is an ultimate frisbee player. So, it doesn't exclude the competitiveness and taking it very seriously, but it is also more participatory. And then recreational, intramural is open to anybody. And I think the goal is to bring in people who have not had athletics being a big part of their life before, looking for an outlet to get a sweat, to use their body and mind in a different way, and maybe to turn off their mind for a little bit, just run around and get some exercise. So, we try to keep those options open that you consider yourself very serious about athletics or you are new to it and just want to learn. We want to make sure there is room for everybody in this department.

**04:36 Josh:** Great, excellent! And I'm curious how often do your teams travel? Are there any overnight trips? Along those lines, also, how do students balance their workload, class schedules, and athletic commitments. I know you mentioned as a Division III school, academics comes first. I am just wondering what the balance looks like, especially if there is extensive traveling and overnight trips.

**05:03 David:** Sure! That balance is a tricky thing and I think it can take adjustments for students arriving at college. But I think that's true, whether somebody is a varsity athlete or not, there's an adjustment of learning period to what the requirements are. What's nice is that our coaches are attuned to that need, to make sure that students are juggling all the balls at once, to make sure that they are not letting anything drop. Coaches talk a lot about this balance. As a rule, we are also very understanding of if a student says, look, I have a huge test on Thursday, and I need some extra time to study for it. The coach is going to be sensitive to that. What we are trying to do is to learn about skills and tactics for scheduling and for balancing your various efforts. So, if those types of things, academics concerns, keep happening over and over again, we say, ok let's sit down and talk about scheduling and make sure we are balancing these things in a way that works for you as a student. Because there are some significant time commitments, especially for varsity sports there are occasional overnight trips. Sometimes depending on the sports, 2 or 3 or 4 for the season. Those teams, depending on the sports, play anywhere from 10 to 20 games/matches throughout the season. Some of the Liberty League schools that we play against consistently are in Rochester, New York, which is like 5 hours away, sort of up on the north country of New York, which is a hike. And so, we definitely need to stay overnight sometimes. But again, what is nice is having coached a lot of student athletes here you see a lot of people on the buses of those trips with their books and getting the work done. And what we found, and this is true for me when I was a student athlete in college, and we find it here too, is that busy-ness of having a very fixed schedule where you have practice every day and you have to be very thoughtful about how to organize your time, you actually end up being more organized and doing better academically in the semesters where you are very busy. So, for a lot of the student athletes and also students who play sports recreationally, it's something that provides structures, provides balance, and provides outlets and release. And it really enhances the academic experiences.

**07:16 Josh:** Great! That's great to hear! And along those lines as well, how do practice schedules fit into the overall academic schedule and what is that balance like?

**07:27 David:** Sure! This is one of the trickiest things for our coaches and also for student athletes, is finding a time when everybody can show up at the same time at the same place for practice. The practices are held usually in the late afternoon, most classes at Bard end around 4:30/4:45 in the afternoon. So, we will practice, depending on the team, the sport, either from 4:45 to 6:15/6:30 or after dinner. Our turf field has lights on it and our gym is obviously open throughout the day, so we are able to train into the evening, into the night sometimes. So, it just depends on the sport and the season. But in season for the athletics teams, they are practicing pretty much every day. Usually, the commitment is about 6 days a week between matches and practices. There's always a day off to make sure people have the chance to recover physically and mentally. For the club sports, they tend to be 3 or 4 times a week. Sometimes a

little bit more, especially if there is a big match or tournament coming up. Sometimes a little bit less, in winter if there is not field space available to jump out and play ultimate frisbee. The gym we have is often very busy in the winter, just because it's a space for everybody and anybody to get some exercise. It's definitely busy in the winter from morning to night, especially on the weekend.

**08:48 Josh:** Excellent! Since most of listeners are going to prospective students and parents, I'm curious would there be any opportunity for them to visit a practice, or a game, and to kind of interact with the team? What does it the general consist of if that's the case?

**09:03 David:** Yeah, absolutely there are those opportunities! I think the first point of contact is often the coach for our varsity sports. Again, you can go to [bardathletics.com](http://bardathletics.com), find the coach for whatever sport that it is you are interested in, and just send them an email and say: hey, I am interested in learning about the team, and the sport. Or you can say, I am coming to Bard on this day, can I check in, can I meet up with you or come up to a practice. Coaches are always excited to do that and have those conversations. If you are looking more into the club or recreational realm, again, you can just sort of look me up on the website: David Lindholm just find my email and send me a note and we can sit down and chat about those opportunities. In terms of what that consists of, it depends on the sports, the coach, and the time of the year. But often, it's really helpful and really easy for a coach to have a quick conversation or even a longer one, give you a tour about the athletic facility and, again, if you keep in touch beforehand, before you come to campus, maybe also say: hey there's a student on our team who is also studying the thing you want to study, why don't you have a conversation with them just to learn more about what the actual experience is like of being a student at Bard or being a student balancing the academics and athletics. So, those are definitely opportunities that we encourage, because we want everybody to have as much information as they can as they try to decide what the best fit is for college.

**10:25 Josh:** That's excellent! And I am also curious, outside just being part of the team, is there any way to work at the gym or work with the teams, and being part of the athletics in that sort of way?

**10:36 David:** Absolutely! There are a lot of jobs within the gym, and those are specific to varsity athletics. We definitely have people who don't compete in athletics, in varsity teams, are themselves manager of basketball team, or keep stats for the baseball team. You know, if you have an interest in sports but not as an athlete. There are definitely places you can get involved. There are also plenty of jobs within the gym, just in terms of monitoring at the front desk or monitoring within the fitness center, in the weight room, and making sure the equipment is clean and being used properly. Those are jobs that we have, and jobs in the laundry room. I think, like most departments on campus, we have plenty of employment opportunities and that's something that when you arrive at Bard, you can just walk in, talk to me or talk to the business manager in our office, and just say: hey, I am looking for work. What do you have? Front desk, that job I think is often well coveted because you are sitting at the desk, checking people in, and greeting people to come through but it's an opportunity to get your homework done while you are getting paid too. So, it's one of the coveted jobs on campus because it's an incredibly important for our operations but doesn't prevent you from getting homework done.

**11:47 Josh:** I can certainly attest to that. That was one of my on-campus jobs during my time as a student at Bard. Thanks so much, David! I really appreciate you taking the time to speak with us! And I am just curious, as we close, if you have any advice for students who are interested in joining a varsity team or just being part of the athletics in general?

**12:09 David:** Yeah, I think that the advice is just that definitely pursue that and try to talk to as many people as you can. What we talk about in the recruitment in athletics is just getting all the information as you can, learning about the place to see if you feel comfortable with the coach, with the team, and in that environment, and that's always something we are looking forward to talking to prospective student athletes, to people who want to participate in that here. And some of the people we've been closest to haven't played on our varsity teams, they've just been people who've loved being in the department, who've used the facility, who've come out to a lot of the games and supported some of the teams. That's what we are looking to build, is a community within athletics that is healthy and positive for everybody within the community, whether they play varsity sports, club sports, intramural, or nothing at all - just have a relationship with the people who do use the facility or are in the department. My advice is just to talk to a lot of people, learn about it, don't hesitate to reach out to anyone on our staff about a sport you are interested in, or a club sports, just get to know Bard and get to know us! We are excited to meet you!

**13:18 Josh:** Great, David! I think that's excellent advice. We'd like to thank everybody for listening. Certainly, if you have questions, don't hesitate to reach out to David, you can use the [athletics@bard.edu](mailto:athletics@bard.edu) email. If you have general questions about bard, feel free to reach out to [admission@bard.edu](mailto:admission@bard.edu), and we look forward to joining you with our next podcast! In the meantime, take care!