

New Women's Lacrosse Coach Taylor Bastien Ready to Set a Fresh Standard for the UNH Team

With guidance from new lacrosse coach Taylor Bastien, the 2024 University of New Hampshire Division I team has adopted a fresh vision for the upcoming season, prioritizing culture and connection.

Zoe Michael, Staff Writer

With seven years of coaching experience under her belt, Bastien is ready for the next step in her career at the University of New Hampshire. She is excited to be part of a Division I institution and to build on the program's rich history, which includes the Wildcats' last national championship in 1985.

Bastien was born and raised in Rhode Island. She earned a spot on her high school varsity lacrosse team as a freshman, marking the beginning of her journey. After excelling in high school, she attended Bentley University in Massachusetts, where she played lacrosse and majored in business. Shortly after graduating, she gained her first coaching experience as an assistant coach at the University of Bridgeport while also working part-time at ESPN in the office department. After just one year, she was offered the head coaching position at Simmons University, a Division III program in Boston. She coached there for two and a half years before returning to Bentley—this time as the head coach.

Bastien's background in business and lacrosse gives her a unique edge in her tactical approach. Lacrosse requires strategy, collaboration, and analysis—elements Bastien thrives on.

"I'm an analytical coach," she said. "I love watching films, analyzing statistics, and seeing where we might have a leg up on the competition, then incorporating that into our practice plan." She believes lacrosse requires a game plan, and a game plan requires hard work.

One of her methods to ensure consistent motivation is by focusing on a different theme each week, "The first week's theme was setting the standard. Once we hit that standard, it gave us a vision of how we want to show up each day and push beyond it. The goal is to get the most out of each player, that's how I see it" Bastien said.

The lacrosse team has been training since late August, dedicating 20 hours a week to practice. Bastien balances their training with weight lifting, field plays, fitness, and, most importantly, team bonding. For her, what happens off the field is just as important as what happens on it.



“When you get to know someone and build that connection with your team, you’re more motivated to work harder for yourself and your team. Ultimately, we’re going into battle against every opponent we face, and you want to be connected with the people you’re going into battle with,” Bastien said.

Her goals are not solely focused on winning; she prioritizes building strong foundations of trust and support. “We’re focused on building connections with our players. This type of focus is achievable and trackable” she said.

Bastien has implemented several ways to create an involved team culture, such as a “big-cat, little-cat” mentorship program, in which an experienced upper-class student pairs with a younger student to help familiarize and welcome them within the team, their team lunches, and even time during practice for players to answer prompted questions. She and her team have established four core values that are expected from every member: respect, attitude, character, and commitment.

She reiterates these values daily to emphasize their importance, explaining, “Having these values in mind influences the way they carry themselves, not just on the field but also in their classes and throughout the institution.”

Bastien understands the outside factors that contribute to being a great athlete. “Everything bleeds into one another. If they’re struggling academically, that might impact lacrosse, and if they’re struggling in lacrosse, it can also impact their focus in the classroom,” she said.

This holistic mindset shapes Bastien’s coaching approach. Lacrosse is a team sport, but each individual needs to feel a sense of belonging to perform at their best. Her commitment to the well-being of her athletes is evident in her one-on-one meetings with players. She uses this time to discuss their academic, personal, and athletic lives.

“I try to treat each player holistically. I give them feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. I want to give the players tools to navigate each situation, whether academic or lacrosse-related, maximizing everyone’s strengths and implementing them into the group system,” Bastien said.

She reminds herself that “Coaching is fun, and this is something you don’t want to lose sight of; being able to have fun with the players at practice, while also getting the most out of it.” Bastien understands the responsibilities of the head coach as well as the ultimate goal: to have fun.