About the Spartan

Many people know Junior Jack Allen (BA ’16) as a starting center on MSU’s football team, but off the field Jack joins his classmates as a student in The School of Hospitality Business. With a strong interest in the franchise restaurant segment of the industry, Jack aspires to own his own fast-casual franchise with a college town vibe someday. One of Jack’s ideas for future franchising includes East Lansing’s own Conrad’s, the place all Spartan’s have grown to love while living on campus. Jack likes the idea of franchising throughout all Big10 campuses, bringing the colleges together with the same classic meals. Jack’s favorite class was HB 345 – Quantity Food Production Systems, taught by Chef Allan Sherwin (BA ’64) and Chef Rick Brown. “The class was great, working with Chef Brown in the kitchen, gaining new experience, and working in the lab with classmates that I normally would not get the time to spend time with.”

The Internship

Being a student athlete at MSU posed a variety of obstacles for Jack. He balanced the responsibilities of a 400-hour internship with the intense demands of being a member of the football team. Jack spent Summer 2014 at East Lansing’s very own The Riviera Café, known affectionately to most students as The Riv. Jack worked as a doorman, bar back, and cook at the restaurant and bar providing him with a broad Level 1 internship. Jack compared his experience at The Riv to how the hospitality industry values the importance of teamwork. He explains, “Everyone working together for a common goal each night is similar to a football game, growing as a team throughout each shift.” Jack made sure to mention how helpful his co-workers were during the summer, making his time at The Riv that much more enjoyable.

Future Plans

Jack will complete his Level 2 internship at The Riv this summer; expanding his knowledge of the restaurant industry, and taking on additional, supervisory responsibilities. After his football career at MSU, Jack plans to enter the NFL draft. Aside from football, Jack aspires to move back to Chicago, IL to begin his career as a franchisor in the restaurant business. Whether he chooses a current fast-casual restaurant or a new one on the rise, Jack is researching for his future career in the industry. Being a student in The School requires a lot of commitment outside the classroom. It is clear that student-athletes like Jack, have the work ethic and drive to become an outstanding assets to the hospitality industry.