

Student-Athlete Mentors (SAM) Program at the University of Virginia

What is the SAM Program?

- The Student-Athlete Mentor program is the primary substance abuse education program in the athletics department.
- A SAM serves as a peer to peer resource to other students on his or her team to help prevent substance abuse.
- SAMs receive valuable training in alcohol and other drug abuse prevention throughout the year and learn to use educational and professional resources to support their efforts.

Having SAMs on your team can help:

- Create a safe, healthy atmosphere for teammates
- Provide leadership
- Promote healthy choices concerning substance abuse
- Teach coping strategies and problem solving
- Improve interpersonal relationships
- Help teammates find resources for problems
- Provide extra support for first-year teammates
- Facilitate communication between coaches and athletes
- Provide community service opportunities for team and teammates

Who can be a SAM?

Each team has its own method for selecting SAMs. SAMs can be: volunteers, nominated and elected by their peers, or appointed by a coach. Each team has at least two members. SAMs work with their teammates, providing insight and support to help prevent substance abuse. SAMs also work with other SAMs, forming a peer network of prevention specialists.

SAMs have the opportunity to:

- Be leaders
- Make a difference in the lives of friends, teammates and peers
- Build skills
- Interact with other student-athletes and administrators
- Work independently to create model prevention programs

SAM Events

- Game Night: event of various sports skills games competition between subgroup teams formed of all sports team members. Usually conducted in the Cage.
- Care Packages: a fundraising project to assist with Shoot Out for Cancer. SAMs invite parents of current student-athletes to buy care packages of useful and fun items for student-athletes to receive during the winter exam period.
- Shoot Out for Cancer: The carnival-style event, sponsored by the SAM program, supports the UVA Cancer Center. This spring event allows children and families of the Charlottesville community to meet and play carnival games with UVA athletes



For more information about the SAM program, contact:

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