

A Different LENS

STORY AND PHOTO BY ***ELIZABETH CHAMBERS***

Chancey Hauck, Mindy Wells and Cassidy Friend combine agriculture, photography and athletics to build careers that redefine expectations

The crowd rises as the ball clears the fence, and just beyond the dugout, a camera clicks as the moment unfolds. These athletic feats are captured by Kansas State University student photographers, but some may be surprised to learn that three of them are pursuing degrees in agricultural and natural resources communications. Mindy Wells, Chancey Hauck and Cassidy Friend are the students covering the sports action for three different organizations.

TAKE THE SHOT

Wells, an intern for K-State Athletics, captures game-day moments and uses photography to learn from others.

"Each one of these photo shoots is an opportunity to advance your future self," Wells says. She adds that learning from people and seeing different creative lenses is why she enjoys photography.

As an intern at Martinez Media & Marketing Group, Hauck got started in sports photography by agreeing to take photos at a baseball game, even though it wasn't part of her usual responsibilities.

As a full-time student, Friend found a creative outlet to develop her interest in photography through her work at the Kansas State Collegian.

"Taking photos of games, that's where my passion comes in. I absolutely love going. It's not hard for me. It doesn't necessarily feel like a job," Friend says.

None of the three had formal sports photography experience before stepping into their roles.

ADJUST THE FOCUS

The students agree that their agricultural values inform their work ethic in their respective jobs.

Hauck says that working with livestock prepared her for the demands of athletics photography, such as long hours, changing weather and late-night editing.

"Being able to withstand challenges that photography brings, whether it's expenses, weather conditions or personal battles, you have to know it's worth it every time," Hauck says.

Friend also draws connections between agriculture and athletics, particularly the values of teamwork and shared goals.

"In the ag industry and sports, you are trying to accomplish these goals not just for yourself but also for your team and community," Friend says.

For Wells, the connection between agriculture and sports lies in the level of commitment she sees in both.

"Everyone in agriculture is spirited, and they love what they do," Wells says. "That aligns with the sports industry because people don't just do it, they do it because they are passionate about it."

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>
> *– Mindy Wells, K-State intern*

WIDEN THE FRAME

Through their roles, the students are gaining experience applying their degree in an athletic setting.

"It's unique because it shows that even though you are an ag major, you're not limited to just ag things," Wells says. She adds that working in athletics has changed her approach to her career and helped her build a more versatile skill set.

Hauck says her growth comes from placing herself in unfamiliar situations and continuing to learn from others.

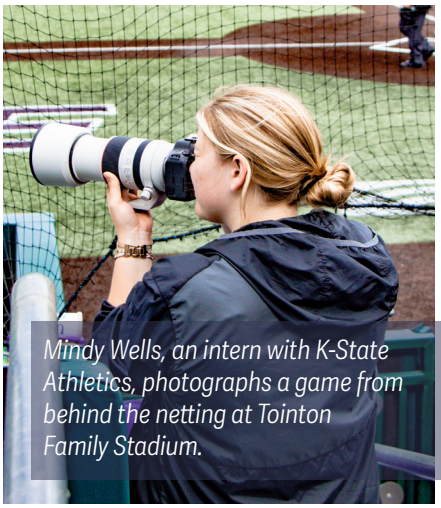
"It's essential to get better every day. Never stop trying, never stop asking questions from mentors and peers," Hauck says.

For Friend, her experience in sports photography influences her academic plans and encourages her to explore more opportunities in the field of sports photography.

"Find something you are truly passionate about, and take every opportunity given to you," Friend says.

Wells encourages other students to reach beyond what is expected of them and never limit the possibilities of their agricultural degree, even when opportunities fall outside traditional paths.

"Agriculture and communications are two different words, and they will never restrict you," Wells says. "Step out of your comfort zone and never limit yourself to one thing." KS



Mindy Wells, an intern with K-State Athletics, photographs a game from behind the netting at Tointon Family Stadium.



Chancey Hauck, a photographer with Martinez Media & Marketing Group, takes action shots at a Kansas State baseball game.



Cassidy Friend, a photographer for the Kansas State Collegian, photographs infielder Dee Kennedy signing autographs before a game at Tointon Family Stadium.