



# Taylor Hargrove & Athletes in Action Sharing the Journey



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## Interview with Taylor Rogers

by Taylor Hargrove



Meet Taylor Rogers a towering right-handed pitcher from Tulane University standing at 6' 5" weighing 202 lbs. Taylor sent me a very encouraging email in early February, which caused me to want to check on him and see how he was doing. Here is a glimpse of that email an excerpts from a recent conversation.

*"Man, I don't know what has gotten into me...I think it was just one giant build up from this summer, and this fall...but over the Christmas Break...really the last half of the break my spirit just burst into flames. And God has rewarded me spiritually beyond what I ever could have imagined. It's funny, Mike Myers (AIA teammate) is in New Orleans right now (during Mardi Gras no less...haha that will be interesting) and we went to lunch today...anyhow, we talked about it...I feel like Mineral Wells (our AIA Texas team) was possibly the single greatest thing I could have done for myself spiritually last summer. At the time, however, I don't feel like I really appreciated it, and I really took everything for granted. I was somewhat of a spiritual "punk", I say spiritual, punk too, but I feel like much of this summer, the field, that I really didn't take to heart what many things from this summer, but honestly*



*I am sure I had my moments as a physical I was so concerned with what I was doing on was going on in my walk with God. I took so kind of put them on the shelf at first."*

### **Tell us about your life outside of talents and hobbies you like to do?**

I play guitar, and I am a big acoustic fan. Any started playing in church my freshman or is when I got more serious about it. I anything outdoors. **Why outdoors?** that really grabs me. When I want to be New Orleans, I like to go out to Levy by the Mississippi River) and get away from on Sunday morning and I can't make it to my time with God.

### **baseball. What are your gifts and**

Jack Johnson or Dave Matthews I love! I sophomore year in high school and that also like to golf, hunt, fish—pretty much There is something about being outside alone that is where I want to be. Being in the river (a big patch of grass overlooking man-made things. When we have games church I take my bible out there and have

### **What is it like playing for one of the top college baseball programs in the country? What are the bonuses and some of the drawbacks?**

Everything is provided for you. You are treated like a pro—gloves, cleats, everything you could want are a \*snap\* away. The fan support is awesome with about 3,000 people a game! There is a level of prestige that comes from playing at Tulane University. The drawback is the pressure that comes from the bonuses—the expectations that come with being at a top Division I school; it is really easy to put too much pressure on yourself.

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**What were some obstacles you had to overcome to get to Tulane?**

Well, it was a blessing in disguise. My sophomore year in high school I was very involved in football as a pretty good tight end. One game, I broke my collarbone diving for a pass, but it was a sick catch! That injury forced me to miss the season and that is when I decided I was going to play only baseball. God took football from me, and it turned it out for good but was very difficult going through that process of not playing football at the time.

On the flip side, the recruiting process to go to Tulane was a big thrill for me because I didn't get really serious about baseball until after my junior year of high school because I had been playing football. The recruiting process lasted a month and a half. It was a big thrill, especially because of the academic and baseball traditions Tulane has. It was also a source of affirmation that I was good enough to play the game.

**What have been some of the hardships in your life?**

One hardship was my mom being diagnosed with breast cancer my senior year of high school and going through that struggle. Praise God she is in remission right now!

Another blessing in disguise was moving around a lot growing up, which shaped my character. My dad's job got transferred quite a bit early on in his career. We lived in Dallas, Oklahoma, and Austin. Moving so much created a wide network of friends for me. It has also forced me to be a more outgoing and easygoing person because I had to acclimate quickly to new people.

**How are you being used by God to make a difference at Tulane?**

On campus there are some very well publicized sex events like Kamasutra Week. They teach you exciting ways to have sex in different positions. It is *bizarre*. They promote sex like it is an exercise. The collective heart at Tulane is very hard and very vulnerable to that stuff, being in New Orleans. I stay really busy, so it doesn't affect me that much other than flyers in the hallways. **(Check out <http://xxxchurch.com/insidex3/press.php> and see one way they address these things on college campuses)**

It does make it tough to witness when students have us speaking and living the love of Christ in one ear and in the other they are hearing about the various ways to have sex. It's hard to witness when we are saying Jesus loves you but the collective student body and administration have a different set of morals and ideals.

I am involved with a Bible study every Thursday night. It has been really good to be connected with other believers on campus. They are doing some really good things, and I am excited to be part of that. In addition, there is a small group of believers on the team, and we get together before the games for a short discipleship.

Every Monday night there is a student-led worship service. It's cool although I have a lab so I don't get to go. We sidewalk chalk the campus with verses and directions to get there. There are different activities to promote what we are about. As Christians at Tulane it is hard to have a voice.

**To young athletes seeking to play sports at the college level what advice would you give? What advice would you give to their parents and coaches?**

To young athletes I would say commit yourself to it every single day. The ones who really want it aren't taking a day off. In college everyone was the best player on their (high school) team.

To parents I would say provide your child the opportunity to play in the right environment. Step back and let them pursue their own career. Provide the opportunity but don't force them. Don't create an environment that the kids feel if they don't perform they are a failure. Never let him get too high or too low after a game. Parents are a huge support.



Taylor & his mom, Vicki

And for coaches I would say the ones I respect the most are the ones who relate to the players. Be supportive but also be honest. Don't beat around the bush and tell them what they want to hear but at the same time be aware of how they are going to respond to it.

***Why should a college athlete want to play with AIA instead of any other team? What sets them apart?***

To be perfectly honest, I think it is the teammates. I learned so much this summer that I didn't even realize by simply being surrounded by a bunch of good guys. I am still in touch with a lot of the guys who I met last summer. The majority of players with AIA come from similar backgrounds and perspectives of Christ, so it is real easy to relate. You have something in common with everyone on the team.

***Tell us about your experience with AIA this summer and how that has helped you as a person and an athlete and in your walk with God.***

My experience left me with a lot of lasting impressions about Christ. The lessons you can relate with sports and everyday life are long lasting. They have had a huge impact on me spiritually this year. I have struggled with confidence and mental toughness within the game of baseball this year. I was putting too much pressure on myself and creating pressure that wasn't there and that caused me to have a rockier pre-season than what I hoped. And it caused the coaches to lose confidence in me as well. It was clearly visible that I didn't trust myself on the field. By sitting on the bench I was forced to address those issues.

A lot of what I learned has helped me to have a new perspective on the game. God has taught me a whole lot about patience and discipline as opposed to pouting and worrying about myself. Now I can look to the future, which is something that I hadn't been good at before. It has helped me to see the bigger picture and made me a better ball player.

***You can follow Taylor Rogers and Tulane baseball at:***

***<http://tulanegreenwave.cstv.com/sports/m-basebl/tul-m-basebl-body.html>***

**Dialing Up the King**

***(Our prayer needs)***

- That Taylor Rogers at Tulane, Andy Womack at Wichita State, and Zach Leighton at Vanguard would worship God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. If the enemy has attacked them in any way for sharing their heart with you that the Lord would restore to them double blessing this second half of the baseball season
- For college campuses across the U.S., especially during Spring Break so that the gods of sexual immorality, alcoholism, and other soul-darkening things would not to capture their hearts
- For Tulane and those in New Orleans to experience the pleasure and love of Jesus so intensely that He romances them to Him—the only true fulfiller of desires
- For integrity and godly character to be needed and desired by a tainted and damaged professional athletic world
- That God's will be done at the Olympics this year in Beijing, China. There will be Athletes in Action staff there ministering to athletes from all over the world
- For my heart to be pure, my actions obedient, and my financial support to finish up and prayer warriors to be birthing and soaking this ministry in prayer

**Hooking Me Up**

***(If you would like to donate or contact me)***

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