

#MonthlyMotivation: Chrissie Hoolahan (class of 2010)



With a focus on the digital age this week at Putney High School, we are excited to share alumna Chrissie's story. Chrissie works in a niche area that was only made possible by the advances of technology. With the statistic that 80% of jobs that current school students will go on to do are not yet invented, it is time to future proof your skills for the digital era and to be open to new career paths!

As a keen tennis player throughout her time at Putney High School, Chrissie followed her passion across the Atlantic after being offered a tennis scholarship to study Communication and Business at the University of Colorado, America.

Throughout the summer holidays, Chrissie managed to land herself a role working for technology giant [IBM at Wimbledon](#), where she worked on the match statistics and TV graphics aired live via the BBC.

Not wanting to pursue a tennis career herself, Chrissie began exploring different career options. Managing to combine her sporting passion with her digital literacy, Chrissie secured a short internship in the USA working with the specialist racket sport equipment supplier, [Babolat](#). In 2016, with solid experience under her belt, Chrissie made a final move back to the UK and was offered a role as a Tennis Operator at [Hawk-Eye](#). Chrissie reflects: "My experience in tennis as well as IBM at Wimbledon really helped me with my next career move."

Part of the technology giant, Sony, Hawk-Eye is a leading innovator in sports technology. Since its first use as a broadcasting tool to analyse decisions in cricket, it has become an integral part of over [20 sports](#), and every year covers 7,200 games or events across 450+ stadiums in over 65 countries!

So what does a typical day as a Tennis Operator at Hawk-Eye look like? "It honestly varies tournament to tournament. We travel about 230 days of the year and spend approximately 10 days at a tournament unless it is a Grand Slam, then it is more like three weeks."

Aside from the travel there is a lot of preparation to do before the tournament Chrissie shares. "The first three days are spent setting up four computer systems, running the cables from 10 separate cameras into a booth, and making sure everything is networked so we can output to television easily. Calibrating camera equipment and setting up software takes about two days and we test everything to make sure there will be 100% accuracy."

Chrissie explains, "Once the tennis starts, and the matches begin, we track all the balls and log the statistics of the point when it's over, this takes quite a lot of concentration. Another person will be sending out the footage to air and to the big screen on court and the third person is managing the cameras, making sure the settings are still correct."

Although the days are hectic and the hours are long, Chrissie has been able to travel to 10 different countries in the last year. Chrissie admits "I do find the travel tough sometimes. Being away from home for weeks at a time can be tiring and a lack of routine is tough. However, I was lucky enough to have had travel experience with tennis at university. On the road a lot, playing matches in various states, I learned independence and that has really helped me to adjust to the job."

How did Putney help Chrissie in her career? "I was always encouraged to participate in team sports. Being part of a team made me more aware of how to deal with people whilst getting a good result. For me this is vital as I spend time with so many different people. Putney also offered me a vast range of subject choices. I had to do a Maths aptitude test for my Hawk-Eye interview and had I not done the level of Maths at Putney that I had, I probably wouldn't have been successful with the job."

So how can you combine your passion with the digital age? Chrissie's advice is to gain as much experience as possible. "Companies such as Hawk-Eye employ a wide range of people and having an interest in sports really helps. As the roles at Hawk-Eye are fairly technical, they also look for people who have studied engineering, sports technology, maths and physics and of course, they seek outgoing, determined and innovative candidates."