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Communications

March 19, 2020

Daniel Abrahao , '05, Turns His Passion for Fitness Into Successful Endeavor



Daniel Abrahao, right, coaches an athlete from Brazil who participated in the female adaptive athlete division at Wodapalooza held in Miami, Fla., in February. Wadapalooza is a qualifier for the National CrossFit Games.

When Daniel Abrahao graduated from Gardner-Webb University in 2005, he missed training and competing with the Men's Tennis Team. Abrahao was 18 when he left his home in Sao Carlos, Brazil, to attend GWU. "It was an overall amazing experience," he reflected. "I always felt very welcome at Gardner-Webb and everyone was so helpful. Coming from a different country, it was a bit of a cultural shock initially, but the environment was incredibly positive so that made it easy to adjust. All of the support and encouragement I received from my professors, the staff and especially, Coach Mike Griffith gave me the confidence I needed to get on the right path for my professional career."

He earned his bachelor's in sport management and moved to Greensboro, N.C. He continued lifting weights, biking and running, but missed being a competitor. One day he was watching television when a feature on the CrossFit Games caught his attention. "I went online to do some research," related Abrahao, the founder and director of WOD (Workout of the Day) League USA. "I came across CrossFit Greensboro and scheduled my first foundation class a few days later. After my first real class, I was instantly hooked and loved it. It was exactly what I was looking for, and it gave me an outlet to compete. A year later, in 2012, I went to Brazil and founded CrossFit São Carlos (now Shark Mode Brasil)."

As people in Brazil started to learn more about CrossFit, Abrahao began to organize competitions in the country. "Our first series of events was called 'Shark Weekend,' and it has become one of the largest functional fitness events in Brazil," he shared. "WOD (Workout of the Day) League came about in 2017, when we felt the need for a more practical and inclusive experience for the beginner and intermediate athlete. WOD League is now the largest functional fitness circuit in Brazil with over 40 editions a year in all parts of the country. In 2019, we had our first ever U.S. edition at CrossFit Oak Ridge (N.C.)."

Abrahao said information he learned from the faculty in the Godbold School of Business helps him run his international company. "Most importantly, they taught me to have a greater purpose in everything I set out to do, as opposed to just going through the motions of an everyday job," he affirmed. "I love seeing how our sport can make a difference and help people lead healthier and more productive lives. That motivates us every day to try to get better each time and create a unique experience for our participants."

[Learn more about GWU CrossFit.](#)

[Learn more about WOD League USA.](#)