

# A-State athletes and tattoos



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVEN PASCOE

Lasse Thilo Albert Funck is a sophomore studio art major from Dortmund, Germany and a middle-distance runner at Arkansas State University.

Running is not his only passion he also loves art. For Funck, the tattoos are not connected to any meaning, he said "I just liked the way they looked on my skin."

Each tattoo was anywhere from \$50 to \$400 depending on color and detail. Funck gets his tattoos on the fly.

Because he is on the track team and travels he receives tattoos from multiple states. He has made it his goal to get a tattoo from every new state he goes to for a race. Funck currently has five tattoos and received his first one at 19 years old.

Funck also has earrings and likes to change his hairstyle often. He rotates between the buzz cut and the mullet. The buzz cut is preferred because it shows off his most unique and favorite tattoo, an eagle on the side of his head.

Funck received the American eagle tattoo holding the American flag in its talons in Memphis last year. When asked if this tattoo hurt, Funck said "No this feels too American to hurt."

Funck credits his success on the track and in the classroom to his supportive parents. He said he's thankful that his parents and grandparents approve of his style and appreciate the ways he expresses it.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVEN PASCOE AND A-STATE ATHLETICS

Ethan Mychajlonka got his first tattoo the night he turned 18. He got a quote that said "no rocks". To him, this meant to keep negative thoughts out or they'll weigh you down.

Mychajlonka is a graduate student studying physical therapy, from Gilbert, Arizona. Mychajlonka is a long-distance runner for the Red Wolves in track and field and cross country.

Mychajlonka has 26 tattoos. His second tattoo was "aim high" and does not have any meaning. He said he got it because he wanted a rib tattoo and that it looked cool.

Mychajlonka said he dedicates his right leg to important things in his life.

On his leg is a lightning bolt and "enjoy the run" dedicated to his running coaches throughout life. He got a tree to remember his first 10k and has flowers on his right shin for his family. His fiancée's eyes are on his chest.

These tattoos ranged from \$40-\$250.

He said he is not worried about future employers and covers most with his pants and "hasn't had any issues finding work."

Although he has tattoos dedicated to his family, his dad is still not a fan. Mychajlonka covers them up around him, and his grandparents; whereas, his mom does not mind them.

Mychajlonka does not have any regrets about getting tattoos. "They're fun to look back on and see where I was at that time in my life," he said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRAYDEN MORSE

Arkansas State rugby player, Aidan Ridgway, uses his set of aces tattoo as a reminder of his two brothers and sister.

Ridgway is a senior business economics major from Johannesburg, South Africa. Ridgway said his siblings have variations of the same tattoo.

"We each took a different suit. It's four aces lined up as if you were holding them up in your hands," Ridgway said.

His tattoo cost around \$60-\$70 and he has no regrets about getting it, because of the reminder of his siblings and the old memories they had growing up. He got the tattoo last year at the age of 22.

Ridgway has played for the rugby team all four years of college and is the scrumhalf for the rugby team.

The scrumhalf operates as a link between the forwards and the backs. They are also responsible for making decisions while throwing key passes and kicking accurately.

"It's a family thing. All of us siblings are in different places of the world. Just to have that with me the whole time is sentimental," Ridgway said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRAYDEN MORSE

Arkansas State University rugby player, Matthew Hickey has a tattoo that represents his connection to his ancestral tribe.

The tattoo is a sword with a heart on the left and the brain on the right located on the bottom of the calf of his left leg.

"The heart refers to core values and family stuff. The brain is individual stuff like having to think for yourself and no one can think for you. The sword is the main part and the attention catcher. It refers back to the tribe that we came from, which is the Umguza tribe in Zimbabwe," Hickey said.

Hickey goes on to explain more about the importance of the sword on his tattoo.

"I think it's pretty cool because they (Umguza tribe) always used swords and cow skins as shields," Hickey said.

His tattoo cost around \$60-\$70 and he was 21 years old when he got the tattoo.

He is a junior exercise science major from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and plays a wing position for the rugby team. He has been on the team for three years.

Hickey wants to be an athletic trainer and knows the circumstances of getting a tattoo for his future employment.

"Before I got this one, I was thinking about what I would wear for my job and would it be covered up? If it's not covered up, would it be a problem? I feel like in athletic training it won't be a problem," Hickey said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURYN PENDLETON AND A-STATE ATHLETICS

Since she was seventeen, Kiayra Ellis has been getting meaningful ink.

Ellis is a guard/forward for the Arkansas State University's Womens Basketball team. Ellis has been with the team since the Fall 2021 and has improved her game over three years. She is a junior financial management major from Shreveport, Louisiana.

Ellis is one of many players on the team with tattoos. Ellis has a full-arm sleeve on her left arm and a shin sleeve on her left leg.

Coming to A-State, Ellis only had a piece of her arm sleeve completed, but over her time in Jonesboro, she has completed her full arm.

Ellis has eleven tattoos ranging from \$95 to \$450. All of Ellis' tattoos have meaning. The majority of Ellis tattoos were done in Shreveport but she's gotten one done in Jonesboro.

Ellis isn't worried about the judgment of others when it comes to her tattoos because they all have significant meaning to her and can be covered with clothing.

Her one regret is that she, "wishes that some of the tattoos were a little cleaner."

Briefs by Brayden Morse | Special to The Herald; Steven Pascoe | Special to The Herald; Lauryn Pendleton | Special to The Herald.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURYN PENDLETON AND A-STATE ATHLETICS

Anna Griffin transferred to Arkansas State University last season from the University of Virginia as a guard/forward for the Arkansas State Women's Basketball team.

Griffin is a junior finance major from Aurora, Illinois. In her first year with the Red Wolves, Griffin was a starter and was highly recruited out of high school. She made an immediate impact on the team and led the team in rebounds last season.

Griffin has an assortment of tattoos. Coming into Arkansas State, she only had a few tattoos, but since she's been with the Red Wolves she's completed the rest of her arm along with six additional ear piercings on both ears.

She has a full arm sleeve and three additional tattoos. The "Keep Going" tattoo on her left arm is a motivational piece for Griffin. All tattoos cost her around \$420 a piece.

Since getting her first tattoo at the age of 16, Griffin has gotten tattoos in Chicago, Memphis and Virginia.

She said doesn't worry about the judgment of her peers or her parents and doesn't regret any of her tattoos.

Griffin doesn't see her tattoos being a distraction in the workplace because she said that "the world has evolved in the areas of self-expression."