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## *His Olympic hope is all that it's cracked up to be.*

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***Rick Berthiaume is taking another step toward an Olympic dream.***

***The Rockledge-based chiropractor is at the United States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., where he'll spend two weeks at the U.S. Olympic Committee's Sports Medicine Clinic.***

***He is taking the first step in a four-tier selection process to join the team at the Olympic Games. He began the journey two years ago by applying to the USOC.***

***"It's a really great experience," Berthiaume said, just three days into his job as a volunteer. "I've already worked with a few gold medalists from the last Olympics and probably a dozen people who are slated to be possible medalists in the future."***

***While he works with a number of athletes in his private practice, the issues he faces in Colorado Springs might be a bit more focused.***

***"These are all more sports-specific injuries," Berthiaume said. "The women's and men's wrestling teams I'm working with are pretty consistently interested in chiropractic help, and that's refreshing to see."***

***He also has worked with athletes from other sports, including women's volleyball, cycling, rifle and triathlon.***

**Berthiaume had to apply for a license to practice in Colorado and was briefed on his duties at the Olympic Training Center prior to undergoing orientation upon arrival.**

**Much of his interest in the job comes from his own background. He was a four-year soccer letterman at Rockledge High and became one of the first scholarship players at Brevard Community College. He went on to get degrees for nutrition and chiropractic at Life University in Marietta, Ga.**

**"I also grew up playing summer league baseball," Berthiaume said. "This is just another way to be involved with the community."**

**He will leave the center on July 10. What happens after that will be determined by his work during his two weeks there.**

**The USOC evaluates medical professionals doctors based on their abilities, rapport with athletes and record of following policy guidelines. The second step on the road to the top is a national or international appointment, for example, working a sport's national championship. The third is an appointment to work with athletes at an international event, which could include the Pan American Games or World University Games.**

**Finally, the USOC will select medical personnel for the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. Those chosen receive an eight-week appointment.**

**For Berthiaume, that would be the fulfillment of a personal dream.**

**"I was inspired to be an Olympic athlete, but injuries and other things prevented it. I aspired to be involved with Team USA Soccer," he said. "This is kind of my last chance to be a part of the Olympic team, and it's kind of neat to be associated with athletes of this caliber."**

**The trip to Colorado Springs is not the first plunge into working with advanced athletes for Berthiaume. He has been affiliated with the Orlando Rage of the Southern States Football League and has an interest in working with the NFL.**

**That experience helped him qualify for the USOC opportunity, as did his commitment.**

**"You also have to be a team chiropractor or head team physician for three or more years," Berthiaume said. "I've spent seven years with the same organization."**

**Nearly two years ago, he interviewed with the NFL Players Association to qualify to be a non-union chiropractor in the league, and he has contacted the Jacksonville Jaguars.**