STAIRSTEP participants ran a booth at the annual Major’s Symposium representing the Computer Science department on the evening of April 24th in the Montagne Center. The participants were Billy Newman and Matthew Williamson from the Computer Science branch of STAIRSTEP. During this event, they gave athletes who may have never been exposed to the computer science field information about it so that they would be better equipped to choose a major that is right for them.

While there were approximately 100 athletes attending the major’s symposium, the overwhelming majority of them had already decided that they were going to major in Kinesiology because it caters very well to people who are already athletes. Because of this, we had relatively few visitors to our booth -- roughly seven in total.

For the seven who did show an interested, Billy and Matt shared their experiences with Computer Science with them and talked about their research as well as sharing information about other STEM disciplines when questions about them arose. The STAIRSTEP team encouraged those who stopped to pursue a STEM degree, however there was not much genuine interest. Those who did show an interest in Computer Science or STAIRSTEP were given the information necessary to contact our department and Dr. Doerschuk.

Both participants thought that the event was beneficial, Matt said that “it was good to expose athletes to Computer Science. A few of them seemed really interested” and Billy said that “It helps athletes to know what careers are available.” The only hitch in the event seemed to be that STAIRSTEP had a less polished looking table, Billy said that we need to “be better prepared for events.” Matt noticed that some departments have boxes pre-prepared full of outreach materials that they take to each event and suggested we consider doing something like that ourselves.

Event Coordinator: Matthew Williamson (CS)