

Couples:

Arian Nasab (Pediatrics)	Samantha Polly (Dermatology)
Erica Eggers (OB/GYN)	Aaron Dahmen (Urology)
Pat Hegde (Emergency Medicine)	Brittany Wiseman (General Surgery)
Brandon Fairless (Pediatrics)	Pallavi Nair (OB/GYN)
Grace Owen (Psychiatry)	Wes Owen (Family Medicine)
Kiran Singh (Pediatrics)	Varun Singla (Ortho, non-UTHSC)

- **Overview**

- AN: The Couples Match adds a layer of complexity to what is already a seemingly complicated process. Instead of matching one person matching into one program, both applicants must individually match at that program for there to be a successful match.
- EE: Aaron and I were in a different position as we couldn't officially couples match through the NRMP. Urology is an early match so he found out where he matched in January, then I submitted my list in February and matched in March. It's doable to end up together but you don't have as much assurance.

- **ERAS/Selecting Programs to Apply To**

- AN: In general, a wider net has to be cast in terms of the number of programs applied to. For example, instead of applying to a select 20 programs or so for pediatrics, we ended up applying to all pediatrics programs with a nearby dermatology program.
- EE: Urology applicants tend to apply to a lot of programs regardless, but I ended up applying to many more than I would have alone. We essentially went through each state, decided if we would live in that state, and compiled a list of cities with both obgyn and urology programs. I generally had more programs than he did, so I narrowed my choices down based on my own preferences.
- BF: We each ended up applying to 60-70 programs, scattered across the country. We focused on major cities that had multiple programs, to increase our chances of interviewing in the same cities even if it was at different programs. It can seem expensive at the time, but in the long run it's a small investment for matching in the same place.
- SP: Dermatology is an advanced residency, meaning that a preliminary year is required also. This made things very complicated. If you are applying to a residency that is similar (Dermatology, Radiology, Rad-Onc, etc.) expect some extra complexity and stress.

- **Interview Scheduling**

- AN: Dermatology interview season was a lot later (Dec - Feb) than Pediatrics was (Oct-Jan), so scheduling my interview requests before Sam received any presented it's own challenges. My strategy was to schedule most interviews as

late as possible (sometimes double booking some days) with the intention of cancelling ones that Sam did not receive, and to schedule nearby interviews (Memphis, UAB, Miss) relatively earlier. That way, if Sam did not get the corresponding interview, I would not have invested too much time or money in that program.

- AN: Because pediatrics is a lot less competitive than dermatology, I was offered more interviews than was realistically possible to make. Again, I scheduled far programs much later in the season, in hopes that Sam would hear from those programs by then.
- AN: Depending on your specialty, programs are willing to help couples match applicants. In some cases, Sam would be offered an interview at a program I had yet to hear from, and vice versa. Sending an email to the program explaining your situation and desire for an interview invitation paid off a surprising amount, giving us more choice in our ranking process.
- BF: We went in with the plan of scheduling all of ours close together so we could save on travel and hotels, but in reality it didn't work out that way. Interview offers came in at different times, and spots filled up quickly, so we focused on scheduling an interview whenever it worked with our individual schedules. Occasionally, we were able to shuffle them around afterwards and travel together, but in the moment, just getting an interview spot was more important to us.
- BF: We kept a Google spreadsheet with every program we applied to, the location of the program, application status, interview date (if scheduled), residency coordinators for each program, and thoughts on the program post interview. It helped us keep our own schedules organized, and was an easy way to glance at the other's schedule and try to plan interviews accordingly.

- **On the Interview**

- AN: Programs will know that you are participating in the couples match and, in my experience, will ask about your partner. Some interviewers will also be past participants of the couples match, and will be glad to find kindred spirits to share experiences.
- AN: If your partner has not yet received an interview at the institution you were interviewing at, I always asked for one on their behalf. The program was already investing an interview spot for you, and many times they would ask the corresponding program if your partner could be offered an interview as well.
- BF: In the case that one person had received an interview and the other hadn't, we would usually each send an email to our residency coordinator .
  - Person with interview: Dear [Residency Coordinator], My name is [ ] and I am very excited for the opportunity to interview at [program] on [interview date]. I am participating in the couples match with [partner's name]. He/She is interested in [corresponding residency program], but has not yet been invited for an interview. If possible, we would like to coordinate our visits and interviews. Anything you can do to help with this process would be appreciated. We are both excited to spend time in

[Program City] and to learn more about the respective [school name] programs. The [partner's program] residency coordinator is [ ]. His/her email is [ ] and phone number is [ ]. Thank you very much, I am looking forward to my visit.

- Person without interview: Good morning [Residency Coordinator], My name is [ ] and I wanted to take the opportunity to tell you I am still very interested in [ Program Name ]. I am participating in the couple's match with [Partner's name] and he/she is interviewing with [Partner's Program] on [interview date]. If possible, we would like to coordinate our interviews and visits. If the possibility arises for an interview spot, I would love to come interview in [City] around [Partner's interview date] or whenever an interview is available. Thank you for your time.

- **Post-Interview**

- AN: If you were the first partner to go on the interview, it's a good idea to write the program after your partner finished his/her interview with how much you both enjoyed the program/town/etc.

- **Ranking**

- BF: We each made a list and ranked programs as if we were matching individually. After that, we took all of the cities we had in common and compared where the programs ranked on our respective lists. We didn't have an exact science, but each spoke up about programs/locations that we had strong feelings about (either positive or negative). From there we were able to make a common list of which cities we liked best, and referred to our individual lists for which program we'd each rank higher within a certain city. For us, we decided that matching in the same place was our top priority, so we made every possible combination of us matching in the same area before either of us ranked a program in a city that the other didn't interview in.
- BF: When making match combinations of programs in different cities, we looked at Google Maps to see what the drive between the two places would potentially be, as well as on Kayak to check for direct flights and cost. We prioritized city combinations that allowed for easy travel back and forth. It ended up being unnecessary, but wasn't all that time-consuming and gave us some peace of mind after we had submitted our list.
- BF: When it came to the "Do Not Match" portion of the list, we assessed who was a more competitive applicant and put all possible combinations of that person not matching first. The theory behind that is a more competitive applicant would have an easier time in the SOAP, but that's more just something we read on a random message board...not sure if there is any statistical validity to that claim.

Feel free to contact anyone with further questions; we'd be glad to help! Good luck!