



The Athletic Director Survival Guide

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Dedication

I dedicate this Survival Guide to the following people without which this project would have never seen the light of day.

To ‘my person’ Sara Ann Bryant, your love and belief in me have often been the difference in my personal success and failure. Thank you for living out God’s love for me in such practical daily ways. In my marriage to you I definitely “out punted my coverage” in winning your heart.

To my dearest children Michael, Julie Ann, Megan and Katherine. I have felt your love for me as real as the Oregon rain. Thank you for your encouragement to “finish the race” by following through on this book and my dreams.

To the athletic directors, past, present and future in the state of Oregon, you are my inspiration and motivation. Thank you for loving, challenging and encouraging the students, coaches and community members around your athletic program. You are daily difference makers and my hero’s.

To Marshall Haskins of the Portland Interscholastic League. Thank you for believing in me and for being my first client. I shall never forget you!

To the many people who have had influence in my life (coaches, bosses, close friends, colleagues) your encouragement, challenge, friendship and care have influenced me. Thanks for your belief in me that has led to my best work.

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The AD Survival Guide; why survive when you can THRIVE?

Preface

While a high school athletic administrator in Oregon some years ago now, my daughter had a conversation with a parent of her select soccer team regarding my position as an interscholastic athletic administrator. His statement to her was that “I had the best job going because I got paid to watch games”. His perception was that interscholastic athletic administrators did nothing more important or valuable than watch games. It is this misperception of the role and job description of the interscholastic athletic administrator as well as my deep desire to assist and encourage people in this profession that led me originally to write the Athletic Director Survival Guide.

I am convinced that athletic directors have an impact on their communities far beyond their title, position or their communities' expectation. I am writing this book, in part, because I want you hard working and dedicated folks to have some tools to keep you connected, active and fresh in this important job so that you can have a maximum impact on those you serve on a daily basis. Athletic directors might be considered to be a bit like wallpaper in a home. The wallpaper is there for all to see but over time it is not something you focus on, you forget it is there at all. Athletic administrators are everywhere, morning, noon and night, often their time and effort is not fully appreciated by those being served. **As** I am concerned for the future of interscholastic athletic administration and those that practice this great profession, I want to do whatever I can to encourage, challenge and assist AD's to be their very best. **That** is my motivation to write this book.

I am concerned by three current trends in the interscholastic athletic administration field that also leads me to write on this subject:

1. **Turnover in this profession.** Last year in Oregon, out of 286 schools there were 45 new athletic administrators. This is not an anomaly but a yearly occurrence. Long hours, lack of support from administration, parental pressures, increased fundraising expectations and a trend toward more coaches coming from outside the education field than from within it.
2. **The encroachment of club sports on current high school sport offerings.** If I have heard it once I have heard it one hundred times, club sports are where kids go who win college scholarships, and high school sports don't matter anymore. I strongly reject this thinking, high school sport is not just about the top 5% of athletes who can afford club sport participation and whose

primary goal is winning a college scholarship. High school sport is about the other 95% as well: those who gain self-confidence, joy, fitness, skill development, become more athletic and who learn life skills from educated, trained and motivated coaches who are there to make a lifelong impact.

3. Finally, my third motivation for this book comes from my desire to impact the next generation of high school athletic administrators. We need to be prepared to look ahead at those who will inherit the high school sport leadership scene. Without a proactive approach to recognition, selection and training for these future sports leaders we will lose momentum and impact on those participating. Current high school athletic administrators are seeing the future of high school athletic administration as they walk the halls of their schools each day. We need adults like you ready to encourage, invest in and challenge the next generation of athletic director leadership.

The Athletic Director Survival Guide is written in an easy to understand, practical style with reflection questions at the end of each chapter for each AD to use for his or her every day professional growth. Few concrete, hands on training opportunities exist for interscholastic athletic administrators. Leadership Training Institute (LTI) are offered by the National Association of Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA). Often these classes are challenging to access and are usually focused on just one subject matter. While it is a privilege to spend four hours discussing specific content and these classes are excellent, it does not meet the day to day needs of athletic administrators referencing challenges that come up as regularly as the sun. The Athletic Director Survival Guide will become a daily reference guide for athletic directors from all over the USA who need assistance or encouragement with one of

the myriad issues with which athletic director's encounter on a daily basis. Examples are practical and questions will challenge each athletic administrator to reflect upon their current practice.

In addition to the use of the Athletic Directors Survival as a daily reference guide it will become the centerpiece of a summer AD Survival School concept that will become a reality in 2015 through the support and assistance of the NIAAA. A pilot program will run this summer in four two day sessions this summer in Oregon with the support of the Oregon Athletic Directors Association (OADA).

This material would be a practical look into the world of high school athletic administration for those taking classes for a degree in athletic management and or athletic administration. I am unaware of other related materials that would give potential athletic administrators such practical, timely and helpful challenge into this profession.

Chapter 1

I have the title athletic director, now what?

If you aim at nothing, you hit it every time. --Anonymous

You look at the job description and your original enthusiasm wanes as you see the reality of the 27 different expectations under the words, job description. You were thrilled to be overseeing a program of coaches, facilities, working with parents, student athletes and school staff. You feel overwhelmed, you are not sure where you are to begin and how to make your way in this amazing profession. Often, job descriptions don't cover the true focus or vision that a job requires. The lines under job description represent what you are supposed to do. That is for sure. If you do these tasks well no one will fault you for your work. You are living up to the expectations of the job description.

The job description however always fails to capture your heart and what led you to pursue a career in interscholastic athletic administration. We have as many motivating factors as we do people who do this job. For some, administration is their "thing", for others they want to give back to a profession that somehow impacted them, for some it is love of sport, for others it is leadership, some may even be motivated by the fact where you are now working was the school, district, league or state where you attended high school and participated in sport.

Whatever your motivating factor or the reason you find yourself in your current position it will continue to leave you unfulfilled if you don't catch the "bigger purpose" behind which you lead this sport organization.

When I became the Athletic Director at Aloha High School in Beaverton OR in July of 1999 I had come with seven years of intercollegiate athletic administration and coaching experience. I was coming from coaching JV2 boys basketball at a rival high school and I am sure shocked everyone who did not know me that I could move from JV2 boys basketball to the athletic

director position in one step. I thought I knew athletic administration from my previous work but I was unaware of the roller coaster ride that awaited me in the world of high school athletic administration. In college athletic administration at the higher levels, you are invested in a specific focused area, usually you don't travel out of that area. In the small college ranks you are more of a generalist as you are required to perform many different tasks with a smaller support staff. At the high school level you are the support staff, lock, stock and barrel. You are it.

Aloha Warrior athletics was in a pivotal place, a new school had opened the fall I took the AD job and the former AD left Aloha to open the new school. My predecessor was an excellent administrator, a better administrator than I would ever be. The school was not in need of excellence at that point in administration, they were in need of hope, a vision and a plan. We lost nearly 500 of our top socio-economic students to the new school and our coaches were discouraged and our facility was in need of an overhaul. I could see walking in the door that being a great administrator was not going to win the day. Other skills were needed. The job description for my position was greatly lacking at this point. I was fortunate that the needs of the athletic program at that time fit my own personal strengths and abilities.

Napoleon Bonaparte said, "A leader is a dealer in HOPE". What our community and coaches needed was HOPE. A vision, something to shoot for that would be worth investing in. In a word they wanted to know that I had a plan, a direction and a purpose for our athletic program. These are things that a job description finds difficult to capture, there are the details we must take care of each day as a part of our jobs to make things function but our larger sphere of influence and focus needs to be visionary. Where are you taking this athletic program and how will you get there?

Reflection Questions:

- 1. What do you like doing most that is on your current job description?*
- 2. What do you like least that is on your current job description?*
- 3. Do you have a current plan of action, vision or focus for where you are leading your athletic program and its participants?*
- 4. What comes to your mind when you hear the word vision?*

Chapter 2

No Surprises

Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right. –Henry Ford

The athletic director position is not one for someone who is skittish and is afraid of entering into the fray, you must have confidence in yourself and your ability to triumph when faced with challenging circumstances. While your position may not be the one with the most clout in your school or district, it is one that is very visible and is a position that has access to sensitive information and knowledge way above “your pay grade”. This is a truth that you must grasp almost immediately in your work as an interscholastic athletic administrator to be your most effective.

Communication between those above you in the school and district as well in those below you in the school and district is critically important. No one likes surprises, especially those above you in the chain of command. Hopefully you have established a successful working

relationship with your building principal or superintendent that most likely hired you. They will need to be clear about their expectations regarding communication so that you neither under communicate nor over communicate to them when challenges arise. An athletic bus that catches fire on the way to a contest, a bus accident with students on board, a high profile student athlete caught with drugs or a DUI, a coach caught in a compromising situation or with a major parent problem should all be issues that are not left for you alone to handle. There are precedents, legal realities and media challenges that must be met and your communication is critical to never catch those above you flatfooted when dealing with issues in the athletic program.

A recent article I read suggested that the top three problems that administrators must deal with on a consistent basis are:

- (1) A building remodel
- (2) Contract negotiations
- (3) Problems in the athletic program.

In each of these circumstances pressure is a result of these issues even if you don't have a significant challenge. That problems in any of these areas would be unknown to those above you makes it even more challenging for the issue to be resolved quickly and quietly. You want to become a person that can be trusted with information and shows the ability to take in challenging circumstances and make the best of them.

In most districts you are more than likely going to be allowed to be the AD all the time.

However, there are schools and districts where due to prior history or leadership style, the building principal or superintendent allows anyone to come to them about issues in the athletic program and bypass you. That is a dangerous precedent because that de-facto makes those in

the administration above you the “acting” athletic director. Sharing your honest and respectful reflection with those above you in the leadership chain when an issue arises and you are bypassed will allow those in leadership above you to realize that you are aware of this and that you would like it to stop. If this happens constantly then one of two things is going on, you are not being viewed as approachable and open to hearing from parents and community members or due to the way the place runs, you are being bypassed because the Principal and/or Superintendent are acting on a regular basis as the athletic director.

While the athletic director at Aloha High School, I became aware of an incident that had taken place the day before at a practice of our JV2 boys soccer team. They boys were playing a game of “muff” every day before practice where the ball is juggled with their feet and the one who misses the juggle a certain number of times must then grab his ankles and everyone gets to take a free kick at the player backside. All went well until one day when the player who liked to take free kicks at others but did not want to have people take kicks at him, lost the muff game. One of the players on his team scored a direct hit and the young man who was hit chased the kicker around the field until catching him and then choked him into unconsciousness. I heard about it the next day after receiving a call from the player’s parents who was choked. I told the parent “we are looking into this right now” as it was the first I heard of it. My young coach explained that he had his back turned as he was putting up a net on a goal at the far end of the field and missed the encounter. He was going to call me that afternoon to explain he said. This led to a system wide conversation I had with my entire coaching staff. No surprises! You can imagine what might have happened had the parent called the media, superintendent or the building principal vs. calling me. The problem would have grown immensely.

Realize that you have your fingers on the pulse of a very visible and passionate community resource as the athletic administrator. Communicate clearly as you begin your work at your school with those hiring you how things will work related to challenges in and around the athletic and activity program and how communication will be handled. Advocate for you becoming the first line of defense when problems are discovered and communication is needed.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. What is your understanding from your superiors as to how communication around challenging issues is to take place?*
- 2. What is your current experience with your senior leadership, are you the AD or are they?*
- 3. How have you communicated your expectation to your staff as to how communication should take place when challenging circumstances arise?*
- 4. From what you have observed thus far in your athletic administration career, what would you do differently when it comes to communication and notification around challenging circumstances?*

Chapter 3

Builder or Maintainer?

Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do. -- John Wooden

I attended a seminar for non-profit management once where the subject was builders vs. maintainers. Every non-profit has, and needs, both types of people to enjoy ultimate success. The ultimate challenge related to this topic is; which type are you and what is needed in your

current situation? These two diverse groups can irritate each other and cause people to look at one as good and the other as bad. This would be a mistake to become haughty about our own giftedness as we really do need the gift mix to make our operation the most successful.

I am a visionary, I like taking an idea that will make things better and going after it until it is accomplished, however, I am not detailed oriented. I need the maintainers around me to ask good questions, start checklists and help to keep me focused on the end goal. I used to think of myself as dynamic, action oriented, fun loving, shoot for the moon type of person and the maintainers as boring, accountant types who always are focused on how, when, why. So frustrating! I have come to see in my life however that the maintainers get as much joy and fulfillment out of their gifts as I do from mine. Their ability to see what needs to be done specifically is a huge help to me and in the long run will truly help me excel in my role. I now seek these folks out, ask for their help and advice and we build a team together where everyone does their best work and success is team thing. John Wooden said "it is amazing how much can be accomplished when no one cares who gets the credit".

How do you find help from the "other side"? First I would caution you, choose your help carefully. Make sure you have enough knowledge and experience with the person that you know them to be trustworthy and loyal. Observe and find time for conversation with people who bring a different perspective. Find out what makes them tick. Make sure you are compatible, ask good questions, and find out about their passion, time availability and interest in what you are up to. How do other people you know view this person? Getting another perspective or two is never a bad thing. Find ways to bring that person along with you as you do your work and help lead them toward your vision and the work you are passionate about seeing accomplished.

I would encourage you to take the Strengthquest inventory online

(<http://www.strengthsfinder.com/home.aspx>) and find a way for your coaching staff to do the same. You will come out of this time with a common knowledge and language to talk and work more successfully with one another. This was developed by the Gallup Poll folks and is highly accurate, inexpensive and is computer accessible. The inventory recognizes 36 signature themes in four specific quadrants. By seeing your gift mix and putting people in areas where their strengths are most used, you will be able to make sure your team is operating at your highest capacity. This would be a significant activity at a beginning year coaches retreat and something you will come back to time and again.

If you are to be at your most successful in your athletic administration career, then you will want to find a space where your strengths are used to the greatest possible degree. Often you can find a place where your strengths and the job are not a match. If you are a builder in a maintainer situation, for example, you will be frustrated before long because it is not a situation that will allow you to be your own best self.

I was very fortunate upon taking the position at Aloha High School that it was the type of position that would allow me to be me. My energy, vision, desire to accomplish, belief in the medium of athletics to impact students were allowed to roam free and I was able to do my best work. I found some help with the details from several sources and did my best to take care of the details that are a part of this position on a daily basis. As my work career has moved along I find myself seek opportunities that would allow me to use my strengths to the fullest measure, something I was unaware of early in my work career. Find that hand in glove fit for yourself and you will feel that you are not working as you use your many gifts to accomplish your goals and vision.

Reflection questions:

- 1. Which of these broad types are you? Builder or maintainer? How do you know?*
- 2. What are your top five strength themes from “Strengthfinders”? How will these help you lead your staff more effectively?*
- 3. What is something you can do today (right away) to connect with someone who is on the other end of the builder or maintainer continuum?*
- 4. Is your current position one in which you are maximizing your giftedness?*

Chapter 4

Fundraising Basics

The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity. –Emelia Earhart

You may think of fundraising as “other duties as assigned” on your job description, or you may be thrilled by the prospect of having a vision for a project and can’t wait to get going. Whatever you might feel about fundraising it has become a necessary part of the athletic director position at most schools around the USA. So rather than debating the responsibility, the question seems to be, “how can I be my most effective in this role as a fundraiser as a high school athletic administrator?”

Having had an extensive marketing, fundraising and major gift life experience in my previous work, I would encourage each of you to consider the following as you think through fundraising at your school.

- What are the school requirements for fundraising? By that I mean what approvals do you need?
 - Forms that have to be filled out, ○ District policies to be adhered to and shared with those involved ○ Sign-offs that will allow you to move towards your fundraising goal. If at all possible this might need to be an early summer activity for the coming school year so you can put together an overall plan for the year vs. bringing in one idea at time to those you would need approval from.
- What is the need? By this I don't mean the financial cost but the actual need for the project.
- Timeline for the need to be met?
- What is the financial cost involved? Is the number realistic or a guesstimate?
- Are permits needed from governing bodies (city, county, school district) if so how long will it take to obtain them?
- Will your booster club be involved in the project in a significant way?
- What materials (handouts) might need to be developed to use in raising the funds for this project? How will those need approval etc.?
- What is the best vehicle to raise the needed funds? (mailing, calling, special event)
- What will your role be in each overall project? You will need to be invested in the process so you can have answers for those above you.
- Is a potential donor the one pushing for a project at your school? Is this person a current parent of a student-athlete? Are you comfortable with the motivation to be involved in this project or is this project more about their child than the overall picture? By thinking these questions through for each project you will set yourself up for success: success in

the fundraising aspect and success within the district as you demonstrate your concern for following established guidelines and requirements.

My first year at Aloha HS I was told about a previous attempt by our baseball parents to build a concession stand near the baseball field. This was built with the knowledge of the coach and without approval from the school district or building principal. When the finished building was discovered it had to be torn down as it did not meet codes. Parents who had invested in this process were furious with the school district but literally the project had never been approved by any school district process. The baseball coach endured a very rough tough time following this incident relating to parents and school district personnel due to the fact that this building remodel had been pushed through without school district approval.

Fundraising is relational process of sharing a need and allowing others to take part in a vision or a goal. If success is to be realized in any significant fundraising effort it must be well organized and thought through with a specific realistic goal and the right vehicle to make the fundraising part successful.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. Do you have any idea how much money is raised each year through various efforts at your school? If not, find out. Understanding the overall picture could be helpful to your work.*
- 2. Are there current plans for fundraising for trips, buildings etc. that are underway at your school? Are the questions above answered for each project?*

3. *Do you have some business folks in your community or key trusted parents who can assist you in these important tasks?*
4. *Do you have a couple of projects in mind for your school currently? If so what are they?*

Chapter 5 Paperwork

It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen. --John Wooden

Excellence is a habit, we are what we repeatedly do. --Aristotle

I might be the last person that should be writing a chapter on paperwork, however it is a vital component of any interscholastic athletic administrators' success and vitality.

One day I was talking to the athletic directors in our league after a meeting about our favorite "brain fart" stories that we had personally encountered, here are my three favorite that came from our discussion:

- A Friday night high school football game, homecoming game to be exact, that was searching for officials as game time approached. Solid rivalry, two tough teams, packed stadium and no officials. When the AD went to check the official's information he saw that he had not ordered the officials for the game that night. He called the officials line, knowing that the head official was most likely officiating a game at that time and instead found him home and ill. The head official called some guys not working that night and rallied enough officials to get the game in. The official suggested to the home team that they do their homecoming stuff first so that by the time they arrived they would be ready to play. In the end everything worked out.

- Two teams in the same league were to face each other in, what each thought was an away track meet, you guessed it, and the buses passed each other going to their “away meet”. The track meet did not take place that day as a result.
- My first year as AD at Aloha High School I was in my office late one November night and I heard a knock on my door. I looked up and it was a JV2 boys’ basketball team there for their game with our team. I was sure that we did not have a game but after checking my schedule found that I was wrong we did have a game. I went to the gym to see who was practicing and it was our boys JV2 basketball team. I called the commissioner of officials who scrambled and found me a couple of officials, had the JV2 boys call their parents to let them know and pulled out the stands and off we went. Very lucky in deed.

I hope that these examples make you feel better as an athletic administrator, especially if you have suffered through various challenges in these areas yourself. But they point out the need in our lives to check and recheck our paperwork and details surrounding our contests over and over again. Whether it has to do with buses, officials, gym use, coaches and officials pay, game management workers, state playoff information that needs to be filed, or eligibility, related paperwork is all very important to how our programs run.

Ultimately it becomes important because it speaks of our competence to do our jobs. It does not matter how sparkling our personalities are or how nice we are if in the end we hurt our own credibility due to our inability to deal with details. If a parent cannot find their child because an activity bus did not get them home, or a coach forgot a student athlete, we will suffer for it.

Some suggestions to help you through the challenges with paperwork that we all encounter:

- Meet timelines expected by setting up a check list by season for paperwork that you must do each season, then meet the deadlines.

- Build time in your schedule to get this done, don't think that time will magically appear somewhere. Make sure it is time where you are not hassled by other important tasks.
- Hold your coaching staff to specific deadlines, usually several days ahead of actual due dates.
- Check and recheck schedules every day. Mistakes made while transferring paper calendars to electronic ones can be a nightmare for everyone.
- When mistakes are made, don't spend a bunch of time trying to get out from under the blame, make it right and move on. Find out how the mistake took place and how you can avoid it the next time.

Often it can feel that the only time paperwork is important is when something goes wrong. By being organized, committed to deadlines and using checklists we can avoid most major problems we will encounter. Check and recheck your paperwork each day.

Reflection Questions:

1. *What is your current plan for dealing with the paperwork you encounter each day?*
2. *What mistake have you made related to paperwork? How will you avoid this the next time?*
3. *How vital do you see paperwork to your job as an athletic administrator?*
4. *What are some "tricks of the trade" you might share with another AD to help them in the area of dealing successfully with paperwork?*

Chapter 6 What's best for kids? Connecting with Student-Athletes in the AD role

The two most important days in your life are the day you are born

and the day you find out why. –Mark Twain

I love high school students. I find them fascinating, fun, creative and at a great time of life to be impacted by caring adults in their lives. The fact that we get to work each day with these amazing young people is quite incredible. The challenge for each of us in our busy jobs is that we might find it easy to know some kids and have fun around them but never really connect with them in deep and rich ways that lead to their transformation and growth. You have a decision to make in your role as AD. Will you find a way to connect deeply and significantly with students or will you **not** do this? Is your athletic program student centered?

We find ourselves smack dab in the crosshairs of the Twain quote above when it comes to helping young people find out why they were made to do and be. This process usually does not happen from a remote spot on some mountain, instead we must be willing to get our feet and hands dirty by connecting with our student athletes in daily, relationship building fashion. The athletic enterprise allows us entrée to the lives of our student athletes so that we can step in and make a difference, a difference for a lifetime!

The question, what is best for kids? It seems to float in the air all the time around schools. It is often used as some kind of axe that is ground on a particular subject or point of view, often a debatable point with the ‘what is best for kids’ argument used as ammunition. When I use the “what is best for kids” line, I am referring to you as an AD being what is best for kids. You are best for kids because you are able to impact the student athlete experience in so many direct and indirect ways. Your hiring, mentoring, challenging and encouraging your staff has an impact across the broad spectrum of your athletic program. This may be the most obvious way

that you are best for kids but if you allow that to take the place of your actual investment in the lives of kids you are one who loses in addition to your entire program.

Knowing the name of a student athlete is only the beginning to impacting that person's life. You may hear stories about that student, watch them in the hallway, at practice or during an athletic contest but you really don't know that person directly. You must make the deliberate attempt to get to know that person to impact their lives.

I developed a Student Athlete Leadership Team (SALT) while the Vice-Principal and Athletic Director at Tigard High School. We met twice a month in the mornings before school and we had donuts and talked about how we might make the athletic program a better experience for each of them and their teammates. I wanted each sport to be represented by a younger (Freshman/Sophomore) and an older (Junior/Senior) so that we had a chance to see leadership in action and build leadership capacity in these student athletes. I felt that one of the best ways that I could support my coaching staff was to assist them in building leaders. It gave me the added bonus of connecting with student athletes on a regular basis and was the foot in the door for deeper conversations outside of SALT. As each of you know, after you have been at a school for a while you begin to get to know parents and grandparents, siblings, and aunts and uncles and your impact and connection grows. I believe developing a student athlete leadership program will help you to jump start impactful relationships at your school.

Two other quick thoughts on connecting with your student athlete population, one is show up at low attendance events. Water polo, cross country, tennis and golf are not usually supported with heavy fan support as a result your attendance at these events stands out and you make friends for life. I remember going to the state water polo championships, a two hour drive from Tigard High School, with my principal and she remarked often following that visit how many

parents mentioned her being at that game and how much they appreciated seeing her there. I also received strong parent and student athlete support and always did my best to check in with coaches and student athletes prior to or just after a game had taken place as I did on that visit.

Student athletes desire to have an “ownership” stake in the athletic program. I define ownership here as people supporting what they help to create. More than their participation on teams they want to see the overall program be successful and they want to be a part of it. You hold the “keys to the castle” when it comes to involvement and access. Your willingness to go deep with a few student athletes will make a lifelong impact on their lives and futures.

So how do you decide to impact? You can’t reach all your student athletes on a deep level but you can impact a few. The movie “The Guardian” featured Kevin Costner and Ashton Kutcher as a mentor/mentee relationship duo working through being Coast Guard rescue divers. When Kutcher’s character asks Costner’s character, “How do you choose who you save when you are in the water?” Costner replies that you “swim as long and as hard as you can and the sea takes the rest”. You must choose students to invest in, you cannot “save” them all. I would urge you to look for students that are FAT (faithful, available and teachable). Who do you see in your athletic program currently that matches these qualities? Begin to figure out how you might invest in their lives in such a way as to help them unlock their mission and purpose in life. You will never regret the investment of time, energy and emotion in the lives of your student athletes.

Reflection Questions

Do you currently have an operating Captains Club or Student Athlete Leadership Team? If so what is your purpose or mission for this group?

Do you know of some FAT athletes at your school that you could invest in?

What are some other ways that you have found success in impacting student athletes at your school?

How are you truly what is “best for kids”?

Chapter 7

Hiring the Best Possible Coaches

Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal. Henry Ford

There is an art and a science to hiring the best coaches for your athletic program. Most school districts and other non-profits spend close to 85% of budget on personnel. That makes this a very important task and most importantly these are the folks that YOU are hiring to build climate, hire their own assistants, teach life skills to student athletes and represent your school and community. Choose carefully!

Jim Collins in his book Good to Great, discusses the importance of hiring the best you can get by saying that you need the “right people on the bus, wrong people off the bus and the right people in the right spots”. Hiring your staff is a deadly serious business and needs your best work as these are the people who will impact student athletes on a daily basis.

The “science” of hiring well involves having a well thought out process and strict timeline that leads you to the very best candidates to choose from. That starts with your realistic job description appearing in the right places to attract top notch candidates. I always had a list of places I wanted my openings advertised and did all I could to expand on the “usual places” that coaching jobs

would be advertised. EdZapp (<http://www.edzapp.com/>) is an outstanding resource, so is your school district website, state coaches and AD association sites as well.

Once you have reached a date for your applications to be reviewed you want to get a solid group of folks to go through your resumes. I always liked picking other head coaches, supportive teachers and even some key parents to create ownership and broaden support for the athletic program especially if those parents have had some business and personnel experience. Do your best to cut your group down to 4-8 for initial in person or phone interviews. My goal after initial interviews was to get down to 3-5 finalists. If you have only two that is fine too. I don't much like having a process where you bring in only one finalist thus having no one to compare your other candidate to. Decide how long you want the interview to last and how many folks you want involved. Nice to have several different folks meet the coach involved and at every school I have worked, the building principal has always wanted to meet head coach finalists. It is always nice to include a couple of key people that are often forgotten but critical to the success of any head coach, your Principal's secretary and your head custodian. Make sure that you do a good job thinking through your questions for the interview and don't just use stock questions. Get at the information you are most interested in. Stick to your interview timeline and don't go long if you have other interviews behind the current one which can be frustrating for committee members as well as candidates. Have each person on the interview team ready to ask a question or two and ask everyone to take notes. Once you are done interviewing you will want to get together to talk about your final decision. I wanted the committee to make a recommendation to me so that I could recommend someone to the building Principal.

Your committee must decide what personal strengths, qualities and experience holds the most interest and is the highest priority for your department. The National Federation of State High

School Associations (NFHS) looks for four key qualities of a successful coach; (1) Relational expertise; (2) Tactical expertise; (3) Organizational expertise; (4) Technical expertise. You are in for trouble if the coach you are selecting is tactically and technically expert but not organizationally or relationally expert. Your coach will be impacting your student athletes for a lifetime so choose wisely and make sure that the coach you are selecting shares your priorities as it relates to impact in the lives of your student athletes.

While the AD at Aloha HS, we were in need of a head volleyball coach. Our previous coaching staff worked hard and had significant experience but our league was very tough in volleyball and due to our schools socio-economic mix we had few athletes that could afford to play club volleyball. I knew that I was in for a challenge to find a coach that was expert, highly motivated and was willing to build something. I advertised the job in the usual places but also sent emails to local community colleges and small colleges wondering if a part time coach or former player might be interested in taking over our volleyball program. I received an email from a coach about a former University of Portland assistant coach who had played Division 1 volleyball that might have interest. It sounded too good to be true. But the woman was perfect, her young family did not allow her the flexibility to coach, recruit and travel at the NCAA Division 1 level and so she was looking to establish herself through building a program. Our girls were the lucky recipients of a coach who met the four NFHS criteria above plus some. She ended up taking the team to a fourth place state finish a couple of years ago and it had been well over 20 years since our volleyball program had shown this type of competitiveness and accomplishment. I would most likely have not found this coach had I stuck to traditional avenues of coach recruitment.

That is why there is an art to hiring as well as a science. The art is a way to put your own stamp on your coaching staff team by doing what you can to attract top candidates to your school or district despite the individual program's lack of recent success. Don't ever give in to despair and just hire a "good person" to coach your kids. Make sure that you take every sport as seriously as every other sport in your mix. Football, basketball and baseball are still the sports that carry the most weight at most high schools today. They are not the only important sports to those student athletes, parents and community members who take part in sports other than the big three.

One of the ways that I have approached the art of hiring my coaching staffs is to keep a short list of candidates in your mind or on paper related to different sport at your school. That way if an opening does take place you already have in your mind some folks you might be interested in. I often would send our position announcements to some key AD friends that I had around who might know of some folks that might be interested in my position descriptions. You must be creative and proactive in finding the best available candidates for your openings.

Reflection Questions

What are you better at currently, the art or the science of hiring quality coaches at your school?

What are some unusual ways that you have gone about finding coaches for your openings?

How would your process stack up against some of the schools you compete against?

Chapter 8

Strategic Planning

I am looking for a lot of men who have an infinite capacity to not know what can't be done.

“Vision”, writes author Andy Stanley, “is a clear mental picture of what *could be*, fueled by the conviction that it *should be*.” Strategic growth in your program does not happen by accident, it must be planned for. In the midst of your everyday challenging job responsibilities it is very easy to sacrifice the long term for the tyranny of the urgent issues that come across your desk on a daily basis. But failing to plan is surely, planning to fail. I would urge you to set aside some significant time during the summer, over a Christmas vacation period or some other down time that gives you time to think and plan.

Even the words, Strategic Planning, can cause discomfort or confusion. What is strategic planning exactly? How does one go about enacting a strategic plan?

Strategic Planning is the process of determining an organizations long term (three to seven years) goals and objectives.

- Your strategic plan must be in compliance with your mission as a starting point;
- Your plan will formulate the proper plan of action (strategy), policies and programs which ensure that sound decisions will be made regarding both the internal resources and environmental factors that you expect will effect efforts to achieve the desired end results.
- It makes perfect sense for you as the AD leader to create and formulate short term goals and objectives but these short term plans should be part of an overall strategic plan that leads the organization somewhere.

A strong strategic planning effort will create an overall plan that forms boundaries which guides an organization to achieve long term goals and objectives. Without strategic planning, an

organization is like a ship without a rudder, engine, sails or compass. There is no direction, no course to follow, no protection and nothing to achieve. Without a strategic plan you are at the mercy of environmental forces, economy and whatever the hot topic becomes for that day, month or year.

The most important first step in developing your strategic plan is to be clear about your mission, vision and values. The most disturbing question I was ever asked as an athletic director came from a coach while I was at Aloha High School. At the end of a winter coaches meeting, we had just gone through a laundry list of some 25 items related to everything from making cuts, to team picture to bus times. The last agenda item said "questions?" The question from this coach was, "yes, why are we doing this?"

I asked, "why this meeting?" and started to answer the reason for the meeting when he broke through again and said, "No, why we doing this whole athletic thing at the high school level?"

He was asking, "What is our mission?"

I was deeply disturbed because I did not have an answer. The perfect answer would have been to talk about our mission and what it means exactly, but we did not have a mission to share. I thought everyone on our staff inherently knew that we were there to use athletics as a vehicle to impact the lives of our student athletes. But the point hit me like a mallet in the head as we did not have an agreed upon mission statement that tied all of our athletic work together. Do you have a mission statement that truthfully lays out your work and why you do it? Not a dusty statement on the wall somewhere but an actual living and breathing statement that captures the heart of your work? Your mission will lead you to do certain things and not do others. I started a process that took six months that led us to develop a mission statement and I wanted it so simple that coaches, student athletes and community members could repeat it. We came up

with the following: “The Aloha High School athletic department mission statement is to teach life skills to Aloha Warrior student athletes.”

It took us so long because we wanted to keep it simple and not add lines and lines to it, we wanted it boiled down to the essence of why we were doing what we were doing. Your mission will give you guidance and leadership if it is simple and clear. Defining your mission is the most important first step in the process of strategic planning. Following your mission creation, the other key components of the process include:

- Identify the long term objectives.
- Review the existing strategy to achieve these objectives.
- Evaluate current environmental factors (law, public attitudes, political factors and the state of the economy)
- Inventory the organization’s resources
- Identify strategic strengths and weaknesses of the organization.
- Compare current strategy against current information.
- Formulate new strategy if needed.
- Develop policies, procedures and programs to accompany new strategy □ Implement and control the strategy.

You cannot take on this task alone, you must gather several trusted people inside and outside your school to assist you with this important task. Don’t wait as this is too important to keep on a list somewhere to do when you find time. Let your strategic planning lead you and your work.

Reflection Questions:

- *Do you have an operating mission statement currently? Can you recite it from memory?*

- *Do you have a current strategic plan? If so is it current?*
- *If you don't have an operating plan, who would you need to involve to assist you in making it the most complete and thoughtful plan possible?*

Chapter 9

Turning around an Athletic Program

You can't fall if you don't climb. But there's no joy in living your whole life on the ground. -Unknown

When I accepted the athletic director position at Aloha High School in Beaverton OR I was aware that it was a building opportunity. We were down as a school, community and athletic program. Coaches were tired, many discouraged and frustrated. I knew that this was going to have to be more than just being a positive person and work hard, this was going to take a community wide effort.

The first thing I did to get the juices flowing was to attend the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association annual convention where a seminar was being offered on how to turn around an athletic program. I was sitting front row and taking notes like a madman. I got notes from the speakers and an audio copy of their presentations. This was a great start for me to think through what these two folks had done in their community.

Our community, like many, was pretty split up between youth sports in various organizational states with varying degrees of connection to our coaching staff. This was going to be critical component of our long term success. We had some parents of our current athletes connected to other community causes. I was aware that if we truly were going to turn around the athletic program to be as successful as I wanted it to be, that I had to help lead a community wide process

that would involve school administrators from all of our feeder schools, our school, key parents, youth sport leaders, head coaches and teachers. I proposed this to my Principal who endorsed the effort wholeheartedly. We discussed who might be involved and how it might look. We were fortunate to have two high profile NIKE employee parents who agreed to chair and co-chair our effort. This gave us instant credibility with our community and those involved. Both of these parents helped us to bridge the gap between youth and high school sports as both had feet in these two worlds.

We met over a six month time period and literally did not have anything that was not on the table for discussion and talked at length about everything from youth sports, to facilities improvement, to fundraising, to hiring and evaluation of coaches to youth sport access to our facility to marketing and branding our program. We divided up into four different sub committees once we had formulated an agreed upon mission statement and focus. These groups all met for over a year. We implemented several key things that over time turned around the athletic program at the high school;

- We remodeled the outdoor facilities (football, softball, baseball) that impacted our entire community as they saw a very visible commitment to the athletic and activity program at the high school. Our facilities finally matched the best that our league had to offer.
- We implemented a coach and AD evaluation program. This changed the culture a bit more because it raised the bar on expectations.
- We set specific goals related to our won/loss so that we did not shy away from the issue and made it clear we had goals and expectation to improve. It also impacted who we scheduled initially to get our teams on the right path especially non-league as our league was so very tough.
- We set up a fundraising plan and ended up with some absolute miracles that allowed us to remodel our weight room too, which had been a significant barrier to our success.

- Everything did not go perfectly as we lost some coaches who were not willing to raise their personal level of commitment and excellence to the changes going on around us. This allowed us to get some new blood in the ranks of our coaches and that too changed the culture.
- We painted our gym. Not a big thing maybe but just the change in how things looked and felt raised the level of our community pride and achievement.
- We started a Hall of Fame to connect the past success of our program with the current student athletes and community. This was a significant enterprise and was helpful to raise awareness of and support for our program.
- We started an auction that we shared with Band, Choir and Drama. We called the ABCD auction (athletics, band, choir, drama).
- After not being a true player in our league, the athletic program at Aloha has been revitalized. In the past four years the football team won the large school state title, boys track won the state title and volleyball ended up fourth. Wrestling and softball also continued their annual strong performances. Aloha was now a force to be reckoned with once again.

I was fortunate to be at Aloha at a time when the parent and community leadership had a strong desire to work together to give Aloha students the best possible chance to succeed. It was a time of great energy, excitement, accomplishment and community pride. I was proud to have been involved and am to this day with all that was accomplished.

This is not to say that your program can do things to turn things around that we did, however there are a few keys that I would suggest to any athletic director who is going to take this task on:

- Admit where you are to start. You cannot move forward unless you are truly willing to be honest and direct about your current state of affairs related to your athletic program.
- Involve your community to the greatest degree possible. Find leadership that has as few personal agendas as possible.

- Expect push back from your staff especially initially. Change is hard for most folks in education.
- Focus on tying your feeder or junior programs to the high school programs. Coaches need to find ways to connect, involve and embrace their youth counterparts.
- Get a solid plan down on paper with specific timelines and outcomes. Then work your plan.
- Work this out with your administration. No surprises.

Turning around your athletic program is worth all of the pain, torture and agony it produces. I remained hopeful and positive throughout because I thought it was best for our student athletes' long term.

Reflection Questions:

- *What is the state of your athletic program currently? What do you want to see changed?*
- *If you were king or queen for a day what would want to see changed if resources (time, money and staffing) were not an issue?*
- *Who are some people that come to mind immediately that you would want involved in this process with you?*

Chapter 10 Athletic Director Evaluation

I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed. -Michael Jordan

How should a multi-talented, hard-working person with an impossible job be evaluated? And with each school being a little different from the next, there is no one-size-fits-all evaluation tool for every athletic director in America.

However, if we strive to be great at what we do and want our athletic program to be the best it can be, we need to embrace a meaningful evaluation each and every year--whether our school requires one or not. We need to initiate and develop the process in a way that elevates our effectiveness. Harry Truman said it best: "Men [and women] make history and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better."

One result of the intense schedule, daily demands, and personal energy required of today's athletic administrators is that we can be resistant to evaluation. The reasons may vary but usually center on the following factors:

- This is a unique (and lonely) position. No one really understands what I do.
- The person evaluating me most likely has never done this job.
- I am expected to do an administrative job and work administrative hours while being paid as a teacher.
- There are so many expectations from different constituencies (parents, teachers, students, community, etc.) it is hard to determine the objectives of the position and know who to listen to.
- I am unable to perform this full-time job in the half-time or less given to me to do it.

Why should I be evaluated like I am a full-time administrator?

All of the above excuses for resisting an evaluation make sense. But they are still excuses. The "courageous, skillful" leadership Truman talked about begins with our willingness to be evaluated yearly in a meaningful way. Here are other reasons why it's so important:

- We evaluate our coaching staff every year. How do we continue this process with integrity if we are not evaluated ourselves?
- We demand that coaches give meaningful feedback to their student-athletes in practices and games. We need to respect and embrace this process by being open to our own evaluation. - Our unwillingness to be evaluated shouts to our community that we are above it all. As those who lead others, we ought to be the first to be evaluated *as an example* to all.
- How do we get better if we are not getting constructive feedback from others?
Shouldn't we hunger to continually improve in this amazing profession?

Following my first year as Athletic Director at Aloha High School I constructed an evaluation based on my job description and what I felt was important to being a great athletic director. I handed it out to my head coaches and other people connected to our athletic program whose input I valued. I gave them the freedom to sign their names or not and to give it back to me directly or through the principal.

After compiling the responses, I sat down with my principal to review the results. I used the meeting as a way to begin a constructive conversation about how effective I was (or was not) in the position over the past year and what I could do better.

I took the initiative to be evaluated for several reasons. First, I truly wanted to be the best athletic director possible for my coaching staff and our student-athletes. I felt that I could not accomplish this without receiving feedback from those I was serving on a daily basis.

Second, I wanted meaningful feedback from my direct supervisor. Since this person had never coached or served as an athletic administrator, I felt it would get us on the same page if I relayed to her what I saw as important to my progress, success, and overall responsibilities.

Lastly, at that time it was critical to build a sense of community in our athletic program. We had just weathered the opening of two new high schools in our area that took away more than 50 percent of the top students in our school and had a significant impact on our school's socioeconomic balance.

If I was ever going to be a part of unifying the community around Aloha High School and our athletic program, I needed to be open to hearing from all corners of our community. By asking coaches and community members for their feedback, there is a feeling that we're all in this together. I had learned from past experience that people support what they help to create. There is a buy-in that motivates people to work harder toward their overall goals.

I challenged myself with this question: "Am I a big enough person that I am willing to hear from many people about the job I am doing?" I was convinced that I needed to be evaluated to build trust with all constituents of our program and to be my very best.

The first year went well. My staff was surprised and also appreciated that I asked for their feedback, and I found their responses helpful. Also important, the survey allowed my supervisor to see my position in a broader sense. Her initial evaluation of me centered on rules and regulations, and the survey tool I had constructed showed her the bigger perspective of the position.

I continued to hand out the evaluation in subsequent years, always closely examining the feedback and sharing it with my principal. I used the responses to figure out how to improve in areas from scheduling to working with boosters.

Along with providing me a meaningful evaluation, one of the best things about this process was that it showed my head coaches their feedback was important to me, which opened up lines of

communication. It gave them permission to speak honestly about what they saw, and that resulted in many great conversations. It also helped to create trust and synergy in our department. I was being evaluated, they were being evaluated, and everyone understood it as a positive process. To bring this idea home, during their evaluations each year I would ask, "Is there anything you want to share with me that could help me do a better job serving you?" I continued to refine the review process through my years as an athletic director. The most important thing I learned is that you have to start by knowing your goals. What are the most important aspects of the job that I should get feedback on? The following are the five areas I deemed most critical:

1. *What is the quality of the experience our student-athletes are receiving? Does it match our mission, vision, and value statements?* If, in fact, athletics is about teaching life skills to student-athletes, are we accomplishing this at our school? Evaluating this can happen through a survey at the end of each season, senior exit interviews, informal conversations, or a combination of all these tools.
2. *How are our coaches performing?* Most school districts spend more than 80 percent of their budgets on personnel. Who we hire and how they impact our student-athletes is the single most important factor related to student-athlete success. As athletic director, am I hiring the best people possible and am I mentoring them well, providing them with yearly, meaningful evaluations?
3. *Is the department running efficiently and effectively?* Are all forms and paperwork filled out accurately and on time? Am I making the most of scheduling opportunities, especially with

non-league opponents? How am I doing with managing officials, pregame operations personnel, and team transportation?

4. *How are our facilities?* Am I diligent in making sure they are safe and of comparable quality to our league opponents?

5. *How are our department finances?* Are the department expenses coming in on or under budget?

Am I raising enough funds and working well with the booster club(s)?

From those five goal areas, I came up with a list of 35 job responsibilities I wanted to receive feedback on. I listed them on a two-page form, where respondents could rate me in each area on a scale of 1-5 (which corresponded with great, good, average, below average, or needs improvement) and also add comments. Underneath the list, there were four open-ended questions that required people to write responses.

Some of the feedback entailed small things, like needing better details on the bus schedule, which I then worked to implement. For the questions that focused on my supervision and style, I tried to look at all of the responses together and come up with personal goals for being a better leader.

Along with the formal evaluation process described above, feedback also happens each day in informal ways. As a coach or parent, I might describe these as teachable moments. As an athletic administrator, I might describe them as criticism.

Most athletic administrators hear almost constant feedback from all corners. Suggestions are lobbed our way at the grocery store, gas station, Movie Theater, or any event we oversee. It is easy to take offense to this and blow it off. Because most folks don't understand the wide range

of skills needed, the amount of time required, and the passion and energy expended to do this job well, it's hard to imagine they can help us.

But when we ignore this informal feedback, we miss out on some of the most honest, clear, and concise ideas we will ever receive. Unsolicited advice can be seen as unwarranted criticism or as a valuable resource we can use to improve.

One day I was working in my office and most likely grouching to myself about working administrative hours but receiving teacher pay or being unable to make big picture changes in our program because I spent 50 percent of my time doing paperwork. A head coach came by the office without an appointment and wanted to talk. I was busy. I kept working on the five things I was doing while trying to hold a "conversation" with this head coach. When I finally made eye contact, she glared at me and said, "You are a terrible listener."

She then had my undivided attention. I sat up--fired up and angry--listening to her share her needs. I already had my argument ready: "You don't know how hard I work. You don't know the long hours I put in." Fortunately, I did not make the situation worse by saying that and instead actually listened to her.

As she left and I processed what happened, I admitted to myself that I just received some feedback, informal as it was, that I did not like. Now what was I going to do with it?

I realized that I did not take her seriously, and I had not focused on her needs. After that experience, when a coach, student-athlete, teacher, or parent came by, I stopped what I was doing and gave them my full attention. To make time for focusing on people and their needs, I ended up asking a couple of parents to come help me with simple paperwork.

This change made me a better person, father, husband, and athletic administrator. The coach who spoke her mind helped me improve because I was willing to hear her criticism.

These teachable moments come daily. They come from people we have worked with for years and from people we don't know at all. If we are open to growing and to doing our best we must not see these comments as enemies but welcome them as friends. We must be able to grow thicker skin, see feedback as positive not negative, and want to improve each day.

My hope is that each of you will have the self-motivation to get better at your current position.

Your hunger to improve and be your very best will be the most significant factor in the overall success of your program.

Reflection Questions:

How do you feel about evaluation currently? Are you open to it? Do you see it as valuable for your improvement?

What type of feedback do you think would be most helpful to you in your daily work?

What are a couple of ways that you have received informal feedback from coaches, school district personnel, parents or assistant coaches recently?

Chapter 11

Program Evaluation

Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful. –Joshua J. Marine

Moving your athletic program ahead will be most effective if you have a base start with some data and feedback as to you begin your strategic plan or even developing a yearly plan. An outstanding resource for this work is the NIAAA LTI class 799 Standards of Excellence in Interscholastic Athletic Programs.

The class has nine focused chapters any of which would assist an interscholastic athletic administrator in evaluating part or all of your athletic program. The most helpful view of your entire program could be provided by a trusted friend(s) who would be willing to take some substantial time to give you a 360 degree view of your athletic program from an experienced outside viewpoint. Often we are so close to our program we cannot see our program clearly in its entirety. This would assist you in getting the clear view that you truly desire.

Measures that the LTI 799 class encourage you to review are the following:

1. Philosophy and policies as measures of educational compatibility.
2. Measures of educational compatibility.
3. Mentoring to enhance leadership among coaches and student athletes
4. Program safety and risk management
5. Program access and equity
6. Budget and supplemental fundraising
7. Personnel and Program assessment
8. Technology
9. Sports Medicine

I cannot imagine an interscholastic athletic administrator who would not benefit from such a comprehensive overview of the athletic program they lead. This information would be vital in terms of deciding on short and long term goals related to your strategic plan. Often our perceptions of a situation are not the total reality we are dealing with. This type of review would lessen anecdotal evidence that is opinion oriented and get your community focused on the facts with which you are currently dealing.

I was asked to participate in just such a project three years ago with a school district in the Portland OR area. I was able to meet with the superintendent and school board to start the

process and from there had connection to nearly every facet of the school district that related to the athletic program.

I met with the athletic director, the high school administrative team, head coaches, parents, the booster club, youth sports leadership, student athletes, custodial and maintenance people, individual school board members, teachers and other community oriented folks including a few in city government. It was enlightening to have the chance to have this type of access and inclusiveness within the school district. I was able to hear similar concerns and high points related to the districts attempts to pursue excellence in the athletic program of this school district. I was asked to present my findings and make recommendations for improvement for the program as a whole at a school board meeting.

Your process may not be as public as the process I led but no doubt there will be interest from many quarters of your school district or school boundary area in this process. The feedback will set you up for long term support and success for years to come.

The rub will come with this question, "Do you have the courage and desire to improve that would lead you down this path to begin with?" It is a great challenge as an athletic administrator to put yourself "out there" so to speak for others to enter into a process like this and when you are the one holding the reins, it can appear to be a very personal critique of you and your work. I was always willing to get better. I wanted to demonstrate this desire to be teachable to my coaching staff and administrative team. Do you have a hunger to get better?

Questions for Reflection

How would a 360 degree evaluation assist you in pushing the athletic program forward?

What barriers might you encounter in involving your staff in a process like this?

What would be your personal concerns about a subjective, thorough and complete program evaluation of your current program?

Chapter 12 Booster Clubs

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader. John Quincy Adams

Might be best to start a conversation about booster clubs with a short discussion on expectations. Agreeing on expectations is critical to having success in most relationships. Your expectation of your booster club, their expectations of you and how those get worked out will be very important to your long term enjoyment and success in your position.

I often used an analogy of my wife and I related to expectations. I have the expectation that I will be playing golf on the coming Saturday. I have made a tee time, talked to my golfing buddies, cleaned my shoes and clubs preparing, even thinking about the shots I will hit on the golf course since it is my favorite course. My wife, however, has a different set of expectations. She is expecting me to do yard work all day on the same Saturday that I am planning on playing golf. She has got it in her mind what she wants accomplished, what will be weeded, that the lawn will be mowed, that I will weed and feed the lawn, trim some bushes etc. The two expectations meet while I am heading the down the stairs on a Saturday morning and she feels that I am making enough noise for a "herd of elephants". She wonders what the deal is and sticks her head in the garage door as I am placing the clubs in the back of my car. The look on her face tells me all that I need to know. Not sharing my expectations of plans to golf just collided with her expectations of my yard work involvement in what can only be described as

disappointment. We missed each other in communication and expectations with the result being usually one of two emotions, anger or depression.

So it is with our booster club. We have people on our booster club that have expectations of us and we need to come quickly to some agreement on what those expectations will be if we want to have a healthy and successful working relationships. For many athletic directors the booster club can become a significant source of worry, angst and concern. Rather than seeing the booster club as a helpful group of people there to support us and the work of the athletic program, we instead view them as a group of folks whose "job" is to make our job as difficult and challenging as possible. Very important that we have a clear expectations setting meeting as early on as possible in our joint working relationship.

We can help this group indirectly by holding the booster club to their stated purpose, mission and bylaws. Continuing to hold the booster club to these original formation documents will assist all in living out our roles most successfully. It has been said that if during a high school athletic contest everyone fulfills their role we have a chance to have a most successful event. If players play, coaches' coach, fans support and officials officiate, then we have a great sporting event going on. But when coaches officiate, players officiate, fans officiate and officials coach then we have the potential of a very challenging situation. This is very true for our booster club as well. When everyone on the booster club accepts their roles we have the potential of a great thing going for the school and community. If not then like the example above we have significant challenges ahead. Nip those challenges in the bud by getting the expectations out on the table and agreed to as quickly as possible.

Leadership of the booster club is critical to the overall success of the endeavor. Your role is not to become the booster club chair. You must find a way to give leadership in your role and do so

without taking over the group. You would be well served to develop a strong and weekly working relationship with your booster club chairperson. Find a way to give leadership through the chair without becoming the chair yourself. Booster Club leadership must rotate following the agreed upon term of service, stick to your approved group by-laws. As the AD you can have a voice and influence in the next booster club chair since this group is critical to your overall success in moving your program ahead. By centering your time and energy on the booster club leadership, you can exert the influence you want with a somewhat minimal time commitment and yet maximize your influence. If your booster club has not established clear processed and agreed upon bylaws you will want to start there with your booster club chair. If you have them but are not following them then you might want to make this your primary focus with the booster club for the time being.

Your next objective might be how who is actually on the booster club. Often these groups can become a group of people who became friends around their children's sports at the high school and never left. Nice folks, faithful and kind but not real community leaders. If there is anything that is critical to leading non-profit groups like a booster club it is how to "hire and fire" volunteers. It might sound harsh to talk about "firing" volunteers but often a purging of the group is needed. That is what your bylaws are for. They should give clear instruction to the group as to how someone gets on the booster club and when they are supposed to cycle off. Recognizing long term board members and or presenting them with goodbye gifts at key athletic events might be a great way to see them off and have everyone associated with them feel good about their investment in the booster club and community.

Often it happens that members get on a booster club and never leave. It may be a community connection, their social outlet or they just truly love the high school. Whatever the motive, keep

booster club members moving along, even if they are successful long term board members you will not find the new blood, vision and energy needed to continue or renew the success of your schools booster club work without adding new members along the way. As you work with your booster club chair to select new members, make sure you are getting not just willing participants but people who actually have the skills needed to push the booster club ahead. Skills that you should be on the lookout for include; marketing skills and expertise, community connections, fundraising experience, leadership experience in other non-profits and most importantly a passion for student athletes and the work that you are undertaking through the booster club.

Your structure will be important for your ultimate success, one comprehensive booster club or several individual booster clubs? Some parents will want to split themselves out from the larger group because they don't want to commit to helping the whole over individual sports that their child may be involved in. I would urge you if possible to have one overarching booster club that represents all sports and whose membership is made up of representatives of each sport in some capacity so this group does not favor one sport over another in any way. You will have to decide (if not include as part of your bylaws) how money will be divided up among the various sports represented by the booster club. This is best done early in the process so as money is raised, this does not become a debated topic. If your booster club mission is clear then you will have an easier time of it.

You will need to understand your community a bit to get at what works to raise money for your booster club. It is a membership organization where you can join for a set fee? What events and outreaches will be organized to support the needs? Golf tournament? Auction? Pregame meals

to specific games? You'll want to work that out obviously for the year ahead. You will need to understand state and school district laws related to fundraising as you get your plans together.

One mistake I made early on in my tenure at Tigard High School was to not invest in the booster club as deeply as I could have. They seemed well organized, well-funded, with good plans and a strong leadership existed. I finally clued in late in my first year that I needed to focus my efforts on influence vs. direct leadership of this group of community connected and motivated adults. As I did so I made some good friends and partners in the work I was doing. As I shared my vision, they were willing to listen and assist in whatever way they could. The Tigard booster club raised their money a year ahead and had set amounts that each sport was to receive based on the number of participants and the expense of that particular sports equipment. My investment of time paid off in relationships, influence (especially toward booster club leadership selection), connections and ultimately in support of the work that the booster club was about in our community.

To recap I would urge you not to lead your booster club directly, instead influence behind the scenes. If you can strongly encourage a single booster entity over several different clubs, I would go that direction. Get connected early to those leading the efforts, help them set goals and keep them coming back to their agreed upon bylaws as they make decisions.

Reflection Questions:

What is your current booster club structure if any? What is your role within this structure?

Do you have people in your community that you would like to see helping to lead this group of folks? Write their names down.

How do you see you could make the most impact on your booster club over the next one to three years?

Chapter 13

Professional Growth as an AD

It's what you learn after you know it all that counts. --John Wooden

Professional growth is a choice. One that will make a difference in your work as an athletic administrator both now and into the future. It is an easy one to let go as you have so much on your plate that no one will blame you for letting this lapse. However, if you want to grow as a professional and be at the top of your AD game, hang out with others that are in the process of growing and learning and it will draw you in and make a difference in your life and work.

I was motivated from the beginning of my work in interscholastic athletic administration to try and do my best work and be the best that I was capable of becoming. I set a goal to earn my Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA) designation as quickly as possible and then to earn my Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA) which I did in the two years following my CAA work, exam and classes. I was motivated to continue on after earning my CAA as I was only the fifth Oregon AD to earn my CMAA. I loved the interaction with others that I met who taught the classes and shared their wisdom and experience.

I wanted to become the best prepared that I could be for my coaches, student athletes and community. While this is only one way of showing that I was focused on excellence in my work life, it was important to me personally to pursue these things. As I was committed to do these things, I remember having several conversations with an AD in our league whom I respected who kept saying he did not need letters behind his name to prove anything. I would agree with him however that was not my motivation for pursuing these certification, instead knowledge

and effectiveness were my motivations. I wanted to be the best interscholastic athletic administrator that I could possibly become.

Often as AD's we have limited opportunity for true professional growth. If you don't attend the NIAAA/NFHS national conference each year then you have only limited opportunity to take classes from the Leadership Training Institute which can take place at your state conference. Some LTI classes are now online and available for AD's in more remote location to attend and some are webinar based so interaction is possible.

I would challenge each of you if you are not pursuing LTI classes and certification then what is your plan to keep the job you are doing fresh and alive? What books are you reading? What conferences are you attending? What subject areas are you researching? You will need more assistance with that area of your professional growth.

Please take this area very seriously or you will find yourself moving ahead with a critically important job without the tools and knowledge base necessary to succeed on a daily basis.

Please make a commitment today to your professional growth you will never be sorry for doing so!

Reflection Questions:

What are you currently pursuing to assist you to grow in your job as an interscholastic athletic administrator?

What will you do in the next 30 days to put in place a plan for your professional growth?

What are some things that have assisted you in your professional growth in the past?

Chapter 14

Investing yourself outside the athletic department

When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left and could say, I used everything you gave me. –Erma Bombeck

I continue to be amazed when the school day ends that I notice teachers literally beating students to get out of the school building before the students can leave. It rubbed me the wrong way for so many reasons, probably reason number one was that I knew I was going to be at the school for a number of hours more due to a game or event. While this is not the majority of teachers by any means, it does cause me think how incongruous this picture is. We want to impact the lives of students yet when we finally have time to do so we are sprinting away from that opportunity. Obviously we live in a different world where we are invested, involved and connected to nearly everything that goes on in our school.

It may not be appropriate then to talk about investing ourselves in other areas of the school, however our positions are so visible within the school we miss out when we decide to not take part in other areas of school life. I would encourage us all to think of ways that we might impact other events that are going on, we may not need to be front and center as we are in the athletic arena but our desire to take part in school life outside of athletic arena speaks volumes to our community as to where our hearts really are. If we truly care about kids then it can't always be only about our programs and kids.

Some suggestions for you to consider if you are not already invested in some of these things:

- Assemblies. Often this can be handed to the student life function. You have a chance to connect and help events flow and be fun. Jump in.
- Graduation. Great opportunity to serve if you are not already on the podium etc.

- Those regular school performance events that people see you connected without you having to do much: Choir and Band concerts; Drama productions; Judge at a speech contest.
- Help your leadership students in several specific ways without tying yourself to some long term commitment.
- Attend Prom and other high profile events as a chaperone.

I was asked to participate in a Dancing with the Stars program while at Tigard HS to raise money for the Band. The band parents were able to connect us with some talented teachers in the dance area and we ended up practicing a bunch to get ready. Being a competitive person, I did not want to mess it up so I think I attended almost 30 practices in the winter season for an early spring night of dancing. It gave many folks in my school community a different view of who I was and also helped to raise money for the Band program. It was very challenging and was a cool thing for my family to watch as well. I was really glad I took part but was also happy when it was over. Our Principal and another Vice-Principal took part too which built camaraderie on our administrative team in addition to the fun we enjoyed together.

I think it is helpful to your leadership in the athletic program to stay invested across the curriculum and use your gifts for the overall good of the school where you serve. You cannot have your hand in everything but you can make wise choices that allow you to serve and observe in other places around the school. It will pay off in the end as others see your selfless devotion to the school and your students.

Reflection Questions:

1. *What do you find yourself currently involved in on a regular basis outside your job responsibilities?*

2. *What would you give up after reviewing these investments of your time and energy?*
3. *What might you add to your plate that is outside of your job responsibilities?*

Chapter 15

Youth/Feeder Programs

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now. Chinese Proverb

We can choose to spend our time and efforts in many directions with the hope that it will impact our athletic program toward maximum achievement. I know of few other initiatives that we take on however, that will have as lasting an impact as our investment in our youth or feeder programs. Giving the younger student athletes in our area a taste of our athletic program while they are growing is a wonderful way to capture their enthusiasm, dreams and future desires. Our challenge is how to create a path for them and find ways for them to have the most positive experience possible.

This positive experience that we want the youth in our schools boundary area to experience will come down primarily to three specific interactions; how they connect to our coaching staff; how they connect to our student athletes and how they connect to our facilities. You may have heard the expression that “more is caught than taught”. We will often not get a second opportunity to make a positive first impression. It is one thing to connect with our future high school athletes in camps, clinics and at our contests, but if the very interactions we expect to build connection and an enthusiasm to participate in our athletic program come across as negative or wanting we will see those students possibly enroll somewhere else or quite possibly not participate at all.

- **Connecting to our coaching staff:** Camps and clinics are a great way for younger students to connect with and know our coaching staff. It is imperative that our coaches realize that they need to do whatever they can to make the experience as fun as it is instructive. Having competitive drills and clear instruction will last a while but even

more will be the lingering memory of a young person who has just had so much fun and connection around sport that they cannot wait for high school. These times must be carefully watched to make sure that coaches are not being too intense and trying to give younger athletes a “high school experience”. It is critical to the success of any programmatic efforts with our youth programs that every coach on the staff has bought in as there is usually much cross over between sports when the athletes are younger and are playing a variety of sports.

It is important that our coaches work hand in hand with youth coaches to share knowledge and a commitment to teaching life skills through sport. There are many dedicated and gifted youth coaches that are hoping for a strong relationship with the high school coach as they work toward supporting the high school program. Our head coaches would be missing a significant opportunity to assist in preparing our youth athletes for the high school experience by not connecting strongly with youth program coaches.

- **Student athlete connection:** Many of our younger athletes will have existing connections with the student athletes at your school. It may be because they have older siblings at your school or it may be that they are big fans of these high school athletes and know who they are because the younger folks have watched them play. It is critical that your coaching staff shares the vision with your high school athletes that their behavior, language and overall attitude will impact these younger athletes. To put our high school athletes in positions of responsibility with our younger athletes is important for both our athletes and our feeder program athletes.

Our student athletes help us to close the “age gap” in two ways; by being closer in age to our youth athletes than our coaching staff thus creating a connection as well as the obvious fact that our high school athletes are still competing and in their prime and their expertise can be viewed in our communities. Our high school athletes need to be reminded how closely these younger athletes are watching them in what they say, how they carry themselves, dress and act. Some of our student athletes will be the future coaches in our area and state and to have this opportunity while in high school to explore this profession is a very good thing.

- Connection to our facilities: In most communities the high school facility is a critical piece of youth program success. While we have significant investment of our facilities by current high school teams we need to find ways for our youth programs to access our facilities as much as possible. Youth coaches have enough challenges working full time etc. that to have the facility access solves one of the issues that our youth program struggles with. Working out a schedule far enough in advance will make it work for all involved. In the NW, many high schools host youth basketball tournaments and often youth track meets, youth FB practices and games and a great deal of softball and baseball played at the high school facilities. Youth program students love playing on the “big field, court, pool” like those they look up to.

I would encourage you to make this a major focus of your discussion with your head coaches and as you meet with coaches as a group to continue to make this a point of constant conversation. To have a program wide commitment to your youth programs focused on the three topics above will assist you in maximizing your community connection and future success of your entire high school athletic program.

At Aloha High School we had consistent use of our facility by nearly every sport imaginable. Our school at that time had a significant free and reduced lunch population that limited the students in our area from participating in “club sports” like soccer, volleyball, AAU basketball and private instruction in golf and tennis. Our coaching staff and I were very aware that we were the youth program as a result. We had more contact and control as a result but we also “owned” the program as a result. We hosted a youth summit a couple of times attempting to get all of our youth programs represented with our head coaches in the room so that we could talk together about how we might work together toward creating a culture of positive support for all athletes in our community. The ownership that developed carried our program eventually to the most success the school had experienced in many, many years. Further it connected our youth and high school programs together like never before. Investing in your youth programs will be an investment that will continue to produce dividends long after the original work began.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. Of the three opportunities mentioned above (coach, student athlete and facility use) where do you need the most work currently?*
- 2. Have you or will you consider a “youth sport summit” in your community to maximize people, space and time?*
- 3. If you could do one thing immediately to positively impact your youth program focus, what would it be?*

Chapter 16

Marketing your athletic program

Everyone who's ever taken a shower has an idea. It's the person who gets out of the shower, dries off and does something about it who makes a difference. --Nolan Bushnell

Leadership is the capacity to turn vision into reality. --Warren G. Bennis

We cannot expect to move our program along toward excellence without well thought out and executed marketing strategy and plan. For some of you, you are the only game in town and as long as the gym doors are open or fields are available, you will have community oriented customers lining up to take part. For others you might be in larger communities and or more metropolitan cities and competing with college and professional sports for opportunities for support. Sports marketing at the high school level has jumped up in its complexities and need for success as revenues and budgets have shrunk and outside sources of revenue are needed to give your student athletes a chance to participate and succeed.

There are several keys to successful sports marketing in your community:

First, I would say is to get a handle on what you are marketing to your community. This is “the tell your story” part of the equation, you have an amazing opportunity to tell the story of the purpose and meaning of high school athletics. Hard to reach out to someone who is not or was connected to a high school sport experience. This is the basis for high school athletic marketing success, it is down home alive in nearly every community in the US type of experience. Important here that you are able to share the value of high school sport as your “pitch” line. Be ready to talk about stories of student athletes where the intersection of high school sport and experience have been life changing. That is what you are offering the partner to participate in. I am not aware of a

community that is not interested in their athletic program being successful and winning games, league and state championships. However if that is what you are basing your “sales pitch” toward you are missing the best sales point ever created and that is teaching life skills through sport that will make a lifelong difference.

Secondly, be so strongly committed to customer service that you will not offer an opportunity in your community that you cannot support and make sure is successful. Your best opportunity for a sale to most advertisers is that they will get yearlong access to your marketable community or all three athletic seasons. If you cannot offer them with certainty what you are selling them, then don't sell it. It will come back to bite you over the years and people will avoid jumping on board. Only sell what you can service. As an example, if you want to offer reserved parking, reserved seating and a food option for football or basketball season, you need to be sure that you have the help to make sure that parking and seating are available and will be kept for those signing up for this. If you under sell and over deliver you will have return customers.

Third, how will you decide to whom you will market your program? You have many natural opportunities by starting with yourself. Where do you spend money or support work in your community? What businesses do you frequent? Start with that list and build on it when you add the school community to it. When you think of the reach in your community through your faculty, coaching staff, student athletes and families you have an amazing loyal target market to ask others in your community to reach out to.

Here are several that you should consider connecting to:

○ **Gas**

station(s) ○ **Fast**

food ○ **Coke or**

Pepsi ○ **Movie**

theater ○ **Music,**

DVD, Movie store

○ **Grocery store** ○

Hardware store ○

Coffee shop ○

Clothing store(s)

○ **Pizza shop**

○ **Bookstore** ○ **Ice**

Cream

hang out ○

Car

dealer(s) ○

Bank(s) ○

Radio/TV

station ○

Superstore

○ **Workout**

facility ○

Sporting

goods

The question you will need to answer early on is this, do you want to sell exclusivity?

McDonalds or Burger King, Coke or Pepsi etc. You will be able to ask for more value from an exclusive sales pitch to specific companies unless you are convinced more overall sponsors are better for you than less sponsors and you would rather create a broader base of support.

Fourth, what do you need to do to develop this plan and who needs to sign off at your district office to have this go forward? What will be your “selling season”? You’ll need to have things ready to go for the next fall so focus on the spring and early summer season to have your plan ready to go out in your community. Will you have help? Booster club folks? Key sales oriented parents in your community? Marketing class from your business classes at the HS? Your

Student Athlete Leadership Team (SALT)? Who will do what? Make sure it is clear to all concerned. Have objectives, materials, prices clear so that you can have a quicker process with whomever is needed above your positions. Do this on the upfront so that you don't have to stop your momentum or advance once you get moving. That will hurt overall efforts for the

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remaining part of your selling season. Don't forget to achieve agreement and buy in from your coaching staff so you are not splitting revenues from traditional sport fundraising efforts.

Lastly, you need to decide what your event mix will be in your marketing efforts. Events are time consuming and investing in them can exhaust your community and those leading the volunteer efforts. I would suggest that you keep it to two or three maximum per year and that you do your best to make as much as possible from those events that you will not need more.

Events that typically can work well around a high school athletic program include:

- **Auctions**
- **100 hole of golf in a day**
- **Golf Tournaments**
- **Booster Club Awards**
- **Athons** ○ **Jogging** ○ **Bowling** ○ **Free throws**
- **Scholarship Banquets**
- **FB kick off scrimmage and meal**
- **Midnight Madness**

One year at Aloha High School several athletic boosters and I worked together to put together an event that we called Alohapalooza. It was a multifaceted event aimed at parents in our athletic program and to raise money for coaches to go to clinics so that they could improve

themselves thus making our program better. Our theme was Urban Cowboy, we had hay bales and country music playing but it was pretty much come as you are. We had a BBQ chicken dinner and all the fixings. We had raffles of various baskets with items in them and a skit night put on by our coaching staff followed by a coach sharing about their passions for kids and

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personal growth. We followed the skit night by a line dancing opportunity in the gym, dessert and then Texas Hold'em Poker dealt by high school students for chips and then prizes. Great night we raised about \$6,500 which was our goal and then an amazing thing happened, a gentleman showed up late that I never had met before, his stepson attended the high school and he asked for a tour of the facility. I knew that he was a successful businessman. Like us, he was amazed at the poor condition of our weight room and he jumped in following the event and got involved and through his business ended up remodeling and rebuilding our weight room to the tune of around \$250,000 when all was done. Again, my vision was for money for coaches' education and yet something much bigger happened. Events can take on a life of their own!

Most high school communities have traditional events that take part in a specific time period each year. Where would the events best fit into your marketing efforts each year?

Remember, get school approval before moving ahead, set your prices, see if you can package things together for sponsors that give them year-long reach, decide on your event mix and only go out to potential sponsors once a year. You are "selling" the most amazing opportunity of all time, a life changing people making experience through sport.

Reflection Questions:

- (1) *What is your current marketing strategy for your school?*
- (2) *What stories would you tell when you are out selling your program in the community?*
- (3) *Who would you ask for help on your marketing team to get his important task completed?*

Chapter 17

Capital Fundraising Basics

You can never cross the ocean until you have the courage to lose site of the shore

Christopher Columbus

The most common way people give up their power is by thinking that they don't have any.

Alice Walker

While serving as athletic director at Aloha High School in Beaverton OR it became clear that if I was going to help lead the athletic program back to any degree of success we needed to upgrade our outdoor facilities for two reasons, needed space for use and a competitive advantage in our own community. Some of the Aloha athletes were transferring to other high schools in our immediate area to schools that were athletically more competitive and whose facilities were better than ours. If we were going to keep our own athletes home we needed to revitalize our outdoor facilities and we had some space that was not useable and other space needed a significant upgrade. I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to join with some other committed dreamers that were not willing to let the status quo stand as it was.

Our initial approach to the district was rebuffed because of the concerns around equity related to all facilities having similar outdoor venues. With our free and reduced population being the largest of the five schools and having the least ability to raise the money needed, we were surprised by the rebuff. Then a miracle took place for one of the schools in our district, an alumni student gifted enough money to put in an all-

weather field surface at Beaverton High School. The result of that gift was that we were given the green light to explore ways to raise the money needed for ours. While approval did not come with money initially it was a huge encouragement to us all that we could at least be able to put our dream into real time mode.

Having just come from a job where I was the development director on a successful \$10 million dollar campaign in the NW, I was aware of many of the steps needed to accomplish our goal and push the project to a successful completion. Here is what I learned about raising capital funds for a project around high school athletics:

First, you must have real financial number for the project cost and you must have a clear plan of action. We had a literal “moat” that separated our baseball and JV soccer field from the football field and softball field and since this moat ran the entire width of our complex it was hampering nearly every area of our complex not to mention that it was a first class eye sore and one that no other high school in our district had to deal with. So our project took that into consideration as part of the plan, other specific goals of the plan included:

- Moat fill in and drainage
- All weather field for football, soccer, band, youth sports, PE, track
- Track resurface
- Expand the right field in baseball to over 275 feet (had been around 225 due to moat)
- Turn the softball field around and redo the entire field, dugouts etc.

- New press box for the stadium
- New lights for the main field
- New entry way and paths around the complex.

Being able to define our needs, get real financial estimates and timelines allowed us to get the necessary approval and permits through our district office.

Secondly, you must have a strong statement of purpose or “case” that explains the project in detail. Our committee worked diligently to rally around our theme of A Dream of Fields for the Aloha Community. This case document is critical to the overall success of fundraising material and gives all involved in leadership of the project the same “elevator speech”. Your case truly begins and ends with your mission as well as answering the important question, why do you exist and what is your organization about? We had worked hard to develop a clear mission statement that focused on serving the needs of student athletes; the mission of the Aloha High School athletic program is to teach life skills to Aloha Warrior student athletes. Our mission drove us, we were compelled to provide something for Aloha area students and this emotion around fairness, equity and accomplishment drove us to have success. Other key elements of a successful CASE include the exact need, what the program is to meet the need, the impact of the program, funding to meet that need development of a gift plan and information about those in leadership over the project.

Third, most capital fundraising programs rest on the ability of the group raising funds to find a lead donor that can make an initial gift of somewhere between 10-20% of the total program goal. Our overall goal for the first phase was around \$760,000. We were fortunate that as our

fundraising continued the school district stepped in with a 30% gift that was matched by our local park district, we also received a \$100,000 gift from our local recreational soccer club and another \$150,000 from the US Soccer Foundation that was tied to NIKE locally. We also had an alum who did our site prep and work at a significantly reduced rate. These folks all made the dream become a reality. You must realize three critical truths about potential large givers if you expect a gift of significance from them:

1. Donors must have passion for your particular project or mission.
2. They must have capacity to give the gift you want from them.
3. They must be people who are generous.

If donors don't have all three of these characteristics then it is doubtful you will be able to secure a gift of significance. Finally the person who asks for such a gift should be a person who the person being asked will have the most difficult time saying "no" to.

Fourth, never underestimate the power of leadership to exert influence on the overall process. You will need strong leadership outside yourself to make these dreams become a reality. We had that in a local parent who was a NIKE exec and who jumped into the fray to lead the charge. His investment in our community changed the athletic course of the high school. His ability to put internal pressure on several of our funding sources turned the tide for us from "that was close" to having ultimate success. You can have a strong CASE, donor prospects, strategies and a plan but without leadership you will never accomplish your goals.

Our project became successful and was the original "BIG STATEMENT" to our community that we were going to get better in our athletic program starting from the ground up with our

facilities. You can do the same in your community. Get district approval on the process, vet your numbers so they are real, find other key players who are committed in word and deed, develop your CASE, ask for gifts confidently led by your mission to serve students and find a couple of interested deep pocketed partners.

Reflection Questions:

- (1) What is your dream to accomplish at your school site currently that would take a capital investment to solve?*
- (2) Do you have some folks in your community that you know could help lead the process if you were bold enough to ask?*
- (3) What is the main thing holding you back from moving this dream ahead currently?*

Chapter 18

Communication Skills

Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can. Arthur Ashe

We all have different gifts in this profession. For some communication comes as naturally as breathing, to others it is their hardest work of the day. We are in a communications profession, which is a reality of the job we have chosen. You can disagree with me on this, you can say that it is not your reality, but those emails, voicemails and website sit in wait for you as you are reading this. We have to deal with our reality face to face, this is a communications profession,

you might not like it but those are the facts. The question is will you allow yourself to believe it and accept it?

Between twitter, Facebook, email, texting, phone calls and individual and group meetings our day is filled with communicating in different forms with different constituencies in a rapid ever changing environment. We can get caught off guard at any moment if we are not careful and have not taken time to think through our responses to the issues and people we face.

I would encourage you never to respond to an angry email exchange with anyone (parent, teacher, student, media, colleague, coach, official, spouse or significant other) when you have just received an angry, sarcastic, finger pointing, stomach turning communication. Let it ride for a bit. Nearly every one of us who have taken on this job have had the distinct “pleasure” of receiving an email or phone call late at night that we open or see early the next morning. It is a bad way to end a night or begin a day with this type of communication on our minds. Best to let it sit so that we don’t respond in kind and then create longer lasting issues than the original communication produces. We seem to get the opportunity nearly every day to be the bigger person, we must be HUGE by now as a result! Don’t bite on a communication meant to pull your chain.

Good friend Bruce Brown of Proactive Coaching refers to dealing with problems as “recovering at game speed”. When you and I have an encounter (in person, on the phone or through another electronic means) we need to recover at game speed. Let’s not let the communication get us off our game, discourage us and prevent us from having the day we were hoping for before whatever encounter took place. Remember we cannot ask our student athletes to make

the athletic experience about learning life skills if we don't respond to similar opportunities we face in our office life with a similar attitude and aptitude. Let's recover at game speed.

A constant criticism that I have heard about interscholastic athletic administrators is the timeliness of communication related responses. If you are facing a matter of significant proportion (failed drug test, cheating scandal, DUI of a student athlete) you must take into consideration what a terse email or text might feel like if you were the parent receiving the intended communication. Do your best to return your calls, emails requesting responses and any other timely related communication within a 24 hour period. That is truly common courtesy. This type of responsiveness will actually keep communication at more of a minimum than ignoring issues and hoping they go away. Most issues that request a response that are not responded to mean that this communication is now on the way up the chain of command, to your direct supervisor or the Principal or Superintendent or even the school board. Does not take a long time to write a short note that says, "thanks for the communication I appreciate it. I hear what you are saying and I will do my best to get back to you in the next 24 hours, please be patient". Then get back to them in the timeframe you have established.

Always spell check your documents that are sent out to anyone. Being in the field of education, we are expected to be clear, concise and error free in our communications. Have someone read your work before sending it to look for errors, places where clarity lacked and where you might tighten up what you are trying to say. I always try to get all the help that I can whenever I can. Writing says something about us, our ability to communicate, attention to detail and our thoroughness. Let's make sure we are attempting to be excellent in all that we do.

Be clear every time you get to meet with a parent group about the type of communications you and your staff expect and respond to best. Be honest and talk about late night emails, and talk about how anger once shared through an email message cannot be undone even though the next day the sender may feel the receiver of that message does not feel that way, the relationship now needs repair. Share with those in your community that you don't want officials or coaches walked to their cars or to the bus to discuss strategy or performance.

Strongly encourage your community who have concerns related to your athletic program to take them to the appropriate person directly and not hide behind email or others' comments in the stands at a game. If people want to give input and or have concerns make it clear how you will handle these issues related to the team and the students on that team.

You must be ready to handle emergencies. What is your plan if: the lights go out at a contest and don't come back on, the officials don't appear for a game, you have a fight break out at a game site, you have a significant injury take place, practice or game cancelled due to weather or other circumstances? You need to be ready for whatever may come your way. This past year while managing a 90 acre sports complex in Hillsboro OR we had a host football team not show up for a JV football game because their bus had caught fire on the freeway and they were not able to make the game time. It was BIG news on the Portland media scene and our visiting team was from 2 hours south of us. It was a mess, but clear communication won the day and though we did not get the game in we were able to share that no players were injured and that the game was cancelled.

Create clear tools that assist you and your coaching staff. You take yourself off the hook if you have a coach's handbook and a student-athlete/parent handbook. Most of the information that either will need at almost any time can be prepared and included in these resources that you can print each year or each season depending on your organizational ability and foresight. You will have less confusion and communication come your way if issues you know parents are concerned about are included in these material.

One of the best things I have done in my interscholastic athletic administration career was to commit to attending every parent night in every sport every season. By doing this I was able to be very clear about expectations related to parent behavior, coach communication and other issues I knew were important to parents. By standing up at these meetings and supporting my coaches, I ended up having less negative communication as the season started because we had a conversation and I gave them information as the season began. I would encourage you to do the same and save yourself headaches later on.

A final thought on electronic communication and policy. Create a clear social media policy for your athletic department coaching staff and student athletes so that everyone knows what is expected and equally important what is not expected between student athletes and coaches especially. Be very careful about having your teams text your coaches after certain hours of the day, you might want your coach to set up a website for the team specifically vs. having Facebook or a coaches cell phone become the most significant source for team communications. Pandora's Box is open, cell phones, texting, Facebook etc. are here to stay, there is no sense hoping it goes away. We must proactively monitor and plan to use this resource to the best of

our ability without crossing any lines with parents or student athletes. Think through your policy related to social media, you will be grateful when tough times come.

Your proactive planning, creativity and ability to communicate your expectations to community members, parents, coaches and student athletes will result in less overall problems each season and each year. Be mature and don't respond in kind when you receive communication that is less than warm. You can win the day in communication of your program needs to those who can help, you can learn and grow in this area of your work life.

Reflection Questions:

What is your most difficult mode of communication? What can you do to improve in this area?

What is your opinion concerning social media and your athletes and coaches? How will you help to manage this resource?

What are a one or two ways that you could do a better job communicating to parents specifically?

Chapter 19 Dealing with the Entrenched or Ineffective Coach

We gain strength, and courage and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face, we must do that which we think we cannot. --Eleanor Roosevelt

At an Oregon Athletic Directors Association annual meeting several years ago, our featured speaker challenged each of us to be the type of athletic administrator who "comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable." It made me immediately think about coaches who are no longer effective. Should we allow mediocre coaches to remain in our programs?

We've all seen these types of coaches. They may know their sport extremely well, are organized, and don't ruffle any feathers. But they aren't giving student-athletes a truly meaningful team sport experience. Maybe they haven't kept up with the times or don't know how to build relationships with today's kids. Maybe they don't implement life skills into coaching plans. Or maybe they don't do any of the extras that are so critical, like summer camps and reaching out to parents.

As athletic directors, we have the difficult task of figuring out how to work with such coaches. To ignore the problem and allow it to continue is a disservice to our student-athletes. To quickly fire (or not rehire) the coach may not be received well by the school community. The best approach, instead, is a multi-step process that entails defining expectations, holding the coach accountable, and then, if needed, making a coaching change in a fair and professional manner.

Do the coaches under our supervision understand what it really means to be "effective?" Do they know the measures we use in evaluating their performance? Our challenge as athletic administrators is to clearly define our expectations to all of our coaches.

Perhaps the most important expectation to define is the **weight given to winning versus student-athlete growth and development**. As educators, we know the "win" that lasts a lifetime is the impact that takes place when a coach teaches life lessons and is a trustworthy mentor to student-athletes. When students return to see coaches after graduating, their gratitude is for what they learned, not because of the championship they may have won.

But there is also the flip side. I worked at an Oregon high school that struggled overall to win. At the end of each season, parents would routinely come to me and demand coaching changes because we were not winning. Yet these same coaches were some of the best people I had ever worked with and had an amazing impact on the lives of their athletes. Regardless, winning is important for today's schools, and the effects of losing can't be ignored.

Beyond the big-picture criteria of balancing winning and learning experiences, there are many smaller areas to include in your evaluation criteria. If you don't already have assessment standards for coaches in place, be sure to create some, getting input from upper-level administrators, your most trusted coaches, and even athletes and parents.

Based on nearly 30 years of coaching and athletic administration experience at the high school and college level, I have developed a list of 10 distinct measures that I feel can be used to evaluate a coach's overall effectiveness. They are:

- Genuine concern for those they coach and teach
- Love of the game they coach
- Ability to motivate student-athletes to their best possible performance
- Teachability and openness to grow personally and professionally
- Growing knowledge of the game they coach
- Overall vision for their program, starting with youth programs
- Effective out-of-season planning for their student-athletes
- Accountability for the academic success of their student-athletes
- Clearly communicating the importance and expectation of winning
- Strong ability to form relationships with parents, staff, and community members.

One of the criteria I feel is most important is "openness to grow." Every coach must be interested in receiving feedback and motivated to continue to learn and improve. Coaches spend a great deal of time correcting athletes and should themselves be able to take suggestions for improvement from athletic administrators, school administrators, and parents. When they can't, it throws up a red flag and has become a significant barometer for me in identifying coaches who are no longer effective.

Along with developing concrete criteria, which should be specific to your school's mission and culture, it's critical to communicate these expectations and get coaches' buy-in to them. Talk with your coaches frequently about your list of expectations. Ask them for their questions and input and resolve any areas of disagreement or misunderstanding.

Once clear definitions for coaching effectiveness have been established, our job as athletic administrators becomes holding coaches accountable to these measuring sticks. The best way to do this is through one-on-one meetings with the coach, careful observation, and feedback from others.

I believe it best to meet with each head coach prior to the start of the season. Along with talking about logistics, the agenda should include a discussion on specific goals for the coach for the coming year. It's important to be honest and very clear about the benchmarks you would like the coach to achieve. At the end of the meeting, schedule a time to meet again mid-season and another time after the season is over to evaluate the goals and significant season accomplishments.

Throughout the season, observe the coach carefully--during both practices and games. Stay at practices for varying lengths of time and take notes on what you see. Talking with studentathletes and parents throughout the year is also critical to the success of any evaluation effort.

At the meeting halfway through the season, discuss the goals set during your first meeting and how things are progressing. Provide any specific feedback at this time. For example, if students are quitting teams at the lower levels, ask the coach why he or she feels this is happening. If a team is struggling to maintain a lead toward the end of games, discuss possible reasons for this problem. And don't forget to give the coach praise for what is going well.

Before the end-of-season meeting, get input from parents and student-athletes. Some athletic departments have developed formal surveys for feedback on coaches, which can be mailed to families. I would not use their feedback as the total picture of a program, but it can be very helpful to gain insights from those who are closest to the team and invested in its success.

After gathering feedback from others and reviewing your own notes, it is time to have the yearend evaluation meeting. Set the right tone by arranging a meeting location that gives both parties the privacy needed to express thoughts freely, and build in enough time to adequately talk through all of the issues.

Be clear about the positives that you see taking place in the program, and be equally clear about areas that need improvement. Before the meeting ends, make sure you and the coach are both on the same page about the steps needed to show sufficient progress in these areas. If you have concerns regarding the future employment of the coach, now is the time to express them openly. Don't downplay the seriousness of the needed changes and be as specific and as measurable as possible. For example, if there are problems with participation numbers at the lower levels, goals could be to have "X" number of students try out for the freshman team next year and "Y" number of players involved in the summer program. Follow up this meeting with specific items to follow through on so it is on paper and clear about expectations moving ahead.

In all three meetings, the athletic administrator should take copious notes and add them to the coach's personnel file. By putting everything down on paper, you have a record of the communication regarding your view of the coach's future in your program. You can then hold

the coach accountable for not meeting expectations. It also is a good idea to get in the habit of keeping notes on any other significant conversations you have with a coach and saving any meaningful e-mails.

For coaches who need major improvement in one area, work with them to come up with a game plan. For example, at the school I mentioned where teams had trouble winning, I asked coaches to make youth program connections, implement out-of-season workout plans, review the ability and success of coaching staff assistants, and then work hard to connect with middle school PE teachers, staff, and administration. We also set some win-loss goals for each sport at all levels (V, JV, FR) for the next year.

Coaches who do not respond to your suggestions for improvement must be followed up with immediately and handled carefully. First, you need a sense of whether deficient areas provide grounds for removal. Each school, school district, and community is unique in its willingness to tolerate certain behaviors by head coaches. You must know what the limits are as you seek to determine the future viability of a coach.

If you have not done so already, the next step is to convey your concerns and plans to your supervisor. Upper-level administrators can assist you in following proper procedure and avoiding potential legal complications.

With the support of your district administrator, more specific action should then be taken. I suggest starting with a letter of correction that outlines the behavior observed and the behavior expected. The letter should lay out the timeline for change and consequences for unchanged

behavior, which could include disciplinary action or being released from their coaching responsibilities.

This letter should be presented to the coach and explained in a face-to-face meeting. Consider having another administrator at this meeting as a witness and to help with any ensuing discussion. The letter should have a place for the coach, yourself, and, if necessary, an administrator to sign. A copy should be given to the coach and another added to his or her file.

If the coach does not improve and a change is needed, you will need to get your ducks in a row before letting the coach go. Think about this important question: What might happen when you announce the change? Will there be anger from current or former athletes and parents? Will there be protest from fellow coaches or teachers? Could there be school board interest and involvement? Media attention is another consideration.

Before you make any announcement, make sure you have a plan to deal with the response.

Your district's communication professional, or your principal or superintendent, may be able to assist you in this regard.

In addition, have a hiring plan in place, including a timeline. If the coach was a "legend," who will you get to replace him or her? How will you choose this person? Have a short list of potential candidates ready to pursue following the dismissal to jump start the search process.

So why go through such a clearly difficult and time-consuming process? Because it is only fair to your school and community to have the best possible people coaching and caring for your

student-athletes. Sometimes we keep a coach out of fear that we won't find someone better or we might harbor false hope that the coach will "see the light" and decide to change. But this is not being a strong leader.

In fact, not firing a coach can cause greater problems than if you don't make a change. If something serious were to happen with this coach and it ever came out that you had failed to act on concerns about this individual, your school district might be liable for not taking action in a timelier manner.

Being an athletic administrator who "afflicts the comfortable" is not easy. Try to remember to always look at the big picture and constantly ask, "What is best for the student-athletes in this program?" Your school will be at its best when you require all of your coaches to be on the same page and when everyone is truly focused on doing their best for student-athletes.

Reflection Questions:

Do you currently have an ineffective or entrenched coach you are concerned about?

What is your current head coaching evaluation program?

What is one thing you will do immediately to improve your coaching performance evaluation system?

Chapter 20

Overcoming Tragedy and Tough times

If you think you can do a thing or think you can't do a thing, you're right. --Henry Ford

While an assistant coach for the men's basketball team at Western Washington University we lost a player named Duke Wallenborn to a heart related incident late in our season. Duke was diagnosed with Wolfe-Parkinson White Syndrome and was awaiting a surgery to fix this condition following the season. Duke never got to the end of the season. We were devastated and so was our team, community and extended community. Duke was our captain and leading scorer, he was a beautiful person and player. There was no possible way to be prepared for the aftermath of Duke's death.

Just a couple of years earlier Hank Gathers of Loyola Marymount University had died of heart related cause on the court while playing the University of Portland during a West Coast Conference playoff game. We did receive calls from some folks in the LMU athletic department and their help was important to us as our department and school were shaken, we did not really know what to do except to begin making lists, having meetings to talk through procedure and be as respectful as possible to Duke's family and friends who were coming to Bellingham WA to connect with the loss.

We were unaware of the media presence that Duke's loss would create for us, the family and community. We were in constant touch with the college communication staff and in and out of meetings to talk about everything from soup to nuts related to losing a player that we wished we would never have had to prepare for. We learned immediately that we needed to be very careful what was said publically and who was saying it. There was a flurry of activity and questions related to who knew what and when they knew it etc. We were dealing with a devastating loss and a nearly overwhelming media inquiry that started in Bellingham and went as far as ESPN in Bristol Connecticut. We were unprepared for the media interest that followed.

We all knew that we needed to keep going, league playoffs were coming and we were a successful team with high hopes, our team was understandably listless and hurting. We had family members from Duke's family we wanted to help process the loss, we wanted to organize a public service of some kind that needed organizing and communicating to give our public in Bellingham WA a chance to mourn our loss together.. We did our best to make lists of things that we wanted to remember so we did not let our emotional state have us miss something important, like how would we recognize Duke's loss at our playoff game? It would have been easy to have missed some important details because we were all hurting and a bit lost. We all felt that we had been hit on the head with a mallet and were a bit dazed and confused. We kept trying to get our mind around the fact that Duke was gone. It was surreal.

I attended a seminar several years ago at the NIAAA National Conference that had two presenters talk about devastation from a hurricane that wiped out the entire school and community. Devastating loss is never something anyone of us want to imagine or prepare for.

Perhaps your school or district has developed plans related to these types of challenges you must face. If not, I would urge you to talk with those in your leadership about developing one. We were fortunate to have had some good help from professionals outside of our community that had been through similar incidents and their help and compassion was like a cup of cold water on a really hot day. Here are some things for you to consider about dealing with loss and tragedy as an athletic administrator as you develop your plan:

1. Give yourself a ton of grace. This is devastating stuff, don't expect everything to be perfect. The fact that you are doing your best as a human to work through your own emotion, loss and fatigue is going to be hard enough. You will be involved in leadership of this situation. Do your best, nothing more can be expected. As selfish as it may sound find time for yourself to exercise, walk etc. to get a break from this overwhelming emotion. You must take care of you.
2. Be on guard about all communication that goes out from you or anyone associated with this incident. You all need to be on the same page related to what is said to whomever by whomever. In working with your district administration you will need to determine early on who will be talking as the public face of this challenge you are facing. Make sure internally that your staff are on the same page about talking to anyone about this that is not an insider everyone else is on a need to know basis. You don't need fifteen spokespeople, the crush for information will be significant. The media will be insensitive and pushy almost certainly as some right to know language is shared. Protect your

community, students and families as they are your first priority. Realize that anything that is said to be “off the record” most likely will not be.

3. Develop a plan as to who will do what and how reporting will be done and on what timeline. As a person to be most central to the issue involved, you will need to operate on multiple fronts but make sure your role is clear. You are just one of many team members involved in this incident, don't try to hold up the world, that's Hercules job. Know your role and as a friend of mine says, “stay in your lane” don't run outside the boundaries of your lane to use a track and field analogy.
4. After you survive the initial shock and the aftermath you will need to circle back with others involved and have a longer conversation about loose ends, encouragement and work through how you all are feeling and thinking.

It has been said that tough times don't last but tough people do. You will be unprepared for most likely the direction of your emergency and the severity of it. Have a loose plan in your mind as to what you would do if a certain list of things happened in your community (fire, explosion, act of God event, shooting and death of a coach or athlete). Surround yourself with good and trusted people, get your district folks involved ASAP. Work from your strengths and don't try and be all things to all people, take care of yourself. Figure out how you will communicate clearly to all of your various publics, protect your students, coaches and families at all cost.

Reflection Questions:

What are your most likely tragedies that could occur in your area?

What is your greatest strength and role that you could fulfill in the midst of a tragedy?

Who would be on your "team" in the midst of a challenge of this type?

Chapter 21

Pay to Play Fees

Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.

John Wooden

An October, 2013 article in Atlantic Magazine titled “The Case Against High School Sports” lays out a clear one sided picture that blames most of the education underachievement in the US on the money spent on sports, money, the article claims that no other nation on earth spends. The National Federation of State High School Associations in their previous version of the Case for Activities and Athletics states the following regarding cost, “At a cost of only one to three percent (or less in many cases) of an overall school's budget, high school activity programs are one of the best bargains around. It is in these vital programs – sports, music, speech, theatre, debate – where young people learn lifelong lessons that complement the academic lessons taught in the classroom”.

No longer considered by many states as a part of a free and compulsory education, athletic programs and funding is in a world of hurt. Athletic funding seems to constantly become one of the first bargaining chips across the US when it comes to working through budget cuts.

Communities are a “victim of their own success” when it comes to the vast majority of US communities ability to raise the necessary funding for sports. In the 1970's when I participated in high school sport in Oregon a participation fee for those taking part in high school sport(s) and activities would have never been considered. Our school district saw the vitality of

programs that students gained confidence, exerted passion about and whose ultimate outcome was teaching life skills to gifted and interested teenagers. The need for these programs has never been greater and the funding for these programs never more at risk than it is today.

For far too many school districts the participation fee is only one way for a school district to fund athletic and activity involvement. Ticket prices have risen, summer camp costs have skyrocketed, business and corporate sponsorships have become a critical and necessary part of nearly every high school activity and athletic program. For many school districts without the increased support from outside the school district many programs would simply not exist for student growth and enjoyment. Participation fees are becoming a stop gap for funding high school sports and activities, one of several funding mechanisms without which the result might be the cancellation of most if not all sports at our schools.

Many of us athletic directors have fallen asleep at the wheel thinking that we would always be funded, never see cancellation of programs, increased fees, gate costs and other fundraising options necessary to see programs exist. We must not stay uninvolved as this is truly a fight for the future of high school athletics in our country. With the encroachment of club sport on the community scene over the past 25 years, high school athletic programs need to exist for those that desire a positive, encouraging, gift using opportunity to shine. Elitism has joined with budget cuts in many districts to price out a student with demonstrated financial need from participating.

In writing this chapter, I researched the eight largest districts in Oregon to see where their participation fees are currently. Participation fees started around \$50.00 per student per sport

25-30 years ago. The district where I grew up playing as many sports as I wanted for free, is now charging \$225 per student per sport with no individual or family cap to the fee and with little if any scholarship assistance. Seven of the other top districts ask for a fee of between \$150-225.00 per sport per season. Some districts offer an individual and family cap but in Oregon nearly every district requires an Associated Student Body (ASB) card as part of playing a sport which can add another \$25-\$60 dollar on top of the fee. This does not take into account the summer camp cost, equipment, fundraising, and increased gate fees at most venues. Coaching stipends are being cut, teams at lower levels and entire programs are being cut and for those that remain many are cutting back on transportation of students to and from events.

Some funding used to flow into high school athletic department coffers from the sale of soda. Now that the soda machines have been replaced with water, little money is coming to the high schools from these former formidable support mechanisms. Booster clubs are populated by parents of student athletes who are already invested in bailing out these important programs so how often can we go back to the well for more support? Being involved in a sport for the “season” can mean participation in some or all of the following; camps, clinics, pay to play, transportation, awards, uniforms, coaches’ salaries, booster club fundraising events so the investment is not just during the student athletes season of participation but yearlong in most cases.

The participation fee then, often characterized as a pay to play fee, creates expectation in the mind of the parents that are in fact now almost totally responsible for the daily financial footing of the organization as a whole. Playing time should be split evenly between all players because

we are paying the same amount the story goes. Pressure continues to build on coaches who must find time between their main job (whatever that is, as the out of building coach fraternity grows) and their job of coaching. Not only must the coach help with homework, feeding kids, arranging rides, finding equipment, training assistant coaches but also now assist in raising the money necessary to keep their sport from being cut all together.

Originally fundraising was allowed in many supportive communities to allow program enhancements to take place, be that new dugouts on the baseball or softball field, an additional coach, upgraded uniforms or a spring break trip. Those enhancements have been nullified with fundraising going to program subsistence for high school sports.

The final upshot of all of this is that the strong majority of athletic administrators are not managing a well-funded, well run program instead they are scrambling to see if they can figure out ways to even have a program to begin with. This will continue to add to the stress, work load and challenge of taking on this task of leading a high school athletic program in this day and age. Best that each of you know this going in so you are able to manage the many duties necessary to make the position work.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. What is your current situation related to your student athletes, what is their true cost of participation per person? (summer, clinics, camps, equipment, travel, pay to play)*
- 2. What can you do today to make a difference around the notion of communicating the value of these programs consistently to those in your community?*

3. *How can you share the experience with those that are supporting you so that your thanks is felt deep inside? Without these support folks you would be missing programs.*

Chapter 22

Teaching Life Skills through Your Athletic Program

The person who wants to lead the orchestra must turn their back on the crowd. --Max Lucado

Watch a master coach teach a skill. They understand what they want to communicate, they understand exactly where they want hands and feet, their enthusiasm is literally almost uncontainable, they are involved emotionally, and coaches have watched video after video and been to clinics on how to teach the skill. Let's say it is a tennis serve they are trying to teach at practice one day to a group of younger players. The coach will have extra balls there to practice with, he will talk about how to grip the racquet, and he will talk about knee bend, motion, transfer of weight from back foot to front foot, target, ball toss, impact and follow through. He will go over and over this again and again until it becomes ingrained in the tennis players mind and becomes literally part of the that persons game. The coach can then cross this off his practice plan and move onto the next item the team is working on.

Teaching life skills through sport needs to be done in a similar fashion. It starts at the top with the athletic director stating for all to hear that this is the most important thing our athletic program will do this year, it is the most lasting thing that will take place through this sport. It must be led by the AD from the moment a coach is hired to the last line from the last award ceremony of the year. Life skill are not taught by osmosis. It must be planned and prepared just like any other sport skill, it must be a priority and you must have people who understand it teach it. It should not be tacked on at the end of a practice, meeting or game.

Might work best if your entire department agreed on 5-10 key signature themes that you want the entire athletic program to take away from their experience. Come together with your coaching staff to determine what you will be teaching, reinforcing and encouraging your student athletes to demonstrate. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. This is the legacy of the entire athletic program, make sure you do everything within your power to teach life skills.

How can this happen each day in an athletic program?

- On every coaches practice plan a life skills lesson exists.
- In the athletic office a commitment to teaching and learning life skills is visible.
- Always talking about it as a staff with the coaching staff and with students.
- Never missing out on an opportunity to take advantage of a teachable moment.
- Championing and congratulating those student athletes that demonstrate your lessons.
- Involve your boosters, have information in the concession stand and throughout the leadership group.
- Use your coaches meetings to encourage “life skills stories” that they became aware of that week or day.
- Ask you leadership group of student athletes to assist the coaching staff in teaching these lessons to the younger athletes in their sport.
- Get your youth/feeder program connected to this. Train them and your youth coaches while you can. Benefits will pay off long term.

Being a high school state champion in 1975 in the large schools in the state of Oregon as a high school junior was a thrill. But more than that as that memory fades the clearer memories remain

of teamwork, sacrifice, commitment, love of the game, selflessness, dedication, work ethic and dealing with the deadly ego. My life was changed, not because I was part of a championship team but due to the fact that my coach required my best, he forced us to confront ourselves, our weaknesses and overcome them. He challenged us to be great teammates that wanted the best for the group over the individual. Once learned these skills will not be forgotten. They have done me well from high school onwards. I shall never forget the way my high school coach built lifelong capacity in my life. I want to do the same in the lives of others that I come in contact with through the medium of high school sport.

As a high school athletic director at Aloha High School I would ask constantly for stories from my coaching staff of life skills impact on our students. I often would receive notes, cards, phone calls and emails giving me some amazing updates on their work toward teaching and seeing life skills embedded in their student athletes.

Don't miss the good for the very best. Winning etc. is great for our egos, our students and our communities but what lasts is teaching life skills to student athletes through sport. If we fail here we truly have failed.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. What is a life skill you have learned through sport involvement personally?*
- 2. What is your plan to make sure your staff teaches life skills on purpose?*
- 3. What are your top 4-6 life skills you want emphasized in your athletic program?*

Chapter 23

Student Athlete Leadership Team (SALT)

Few things can help an individual more than to place responsibility on them, and to let them know that you trust them. --Booker T. Washington

This current generation wants to help own their experiences. They don't want to sit back and have others do everything for them. They want to give input and then make something happen. We prepare our student athletes when we allow them to be more than they thought they could be. Being a strong student athlete is a commitment as you know, don't get me wrong, but to challenge and prepare those same strong student athletes to become visible leaders is something else. "It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves, that will make them successful human beings" says columnist Ann Landers. This truly is the reason and purpose behind development of a Captains Club or SALT.

I was motivated to invest in the student athletes at my school when I moved to Tigard High School because as a Vice-Principal I was in a position where I was getting less and less positive time with the student athletes under my leadership except in rare cases as I was the person on our staff responsible for athletic discipline. My other motivation was that I wanted to provide leadership opportunities for our student athletes so they could grow in this role and so that my coaches saw it as an investment in their programs through their student athletes.

You can develop your student athlete leadership program in any number of ways. Here is how I went about developing my SALT at Tigard High School:

- We met twice a month, in the mornings, I brought Krispy Kreme donuts and orange juice as well agenda each time we met.
- We did not vote on leadership of the group initially but it emerged as it does most of the time if allowed in groups like this.
- I asked each coach to nominate two student athletes to this group, an upperclassman and an underclassman. That way we would have a growing experienced group and the chance to grow leadership each year from a group of underclassman.
- We marketed ourselves with shirts that the SALT team developed. They took great pride in wearing the shirts at each meeting and showing up to take part. For most they looked at this as a chance to build their resumes as well.
- We focused on several key items each meeting; (1) reporting on their student athlete experience; (2) figuring out how we could mobilize the student athletes at our school (about 900 total) to get out and support each other at games and events; (3) service in the school and community. I would often invite head coaches in to share a bit about a specific topic related to being a student athlete leader at
- I was able to build ongoing friendships with these student athletes and they became friends as well as co-workers in our athletic program.
- A resource that I would encourage each of you to review related to this cause comes from Jeff Janssen and is titled “The Team Captain’s Leadership Manual”. It is curriculum for a student athlete leadership experience. Go to jeff@jeffjanssen.com for more information or call 1-800-721-TEAM.

I would encourage an evaluation of this group each year with all involved. Is it meeting your original mission for the group? Are student athletes truly taking leadership in this enterprise in clear ways? What would you say are things you could do to improve the group's impact? What is one thing each student athlete would encourage you to think about to increase the effectiveness of the group?

Bar none I would say this one of the best experiences that I enjoyed as an interscholastic athletic administrator. I would encourage each of you to find a way to develop a similar resource in your school in the way that best fits your needs you will not be sorry for investing your time and energy in your student athletes in this way.

Reflection Questions:

- (1) Do you have a current SALT at your school? If so, how is it going? What would you change to increase the effectiveness of this group? If not, what is holding you back from pushing this opportunity ahead?*
- (2) What do you see as the advantages and challenges of such a program?*
- (3) What would you personally stand to gain as an interscholastic athletic administrator from a program like this?*

Chapter 24

Creating a positive climate through your Athletic Program

The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me. --Ayn Rand

It can appear to be so trite, however attitude it really everything. Often we might want to feel the victim to a ruling, officials call, supervisors written reprimand, bad luck, or important team loss. Our attitude truly determines what happens next. Will we allow ourselves to have a pity party and feel bad for ourselves to the point that we will allow our misfortune to color our daily work and those that we work with? Earl Nightingale once said “We become what we think about”. As visible as we are on our campuses and our programs are to those in our community, we must be aware that we can “win the day” every day by creating a positive, can do, optimistic, glass-half-full approach to life. Our athletic program can become an ever increasing positive force in our communities. How can we make that happen?

It starts with you as the AD. It must be real and authentic, it will flow downhill and around us to others. You cannot fake your love for life and the opportunity we have through sport to impact the lives of others. You must find a way to communicate your natural enthusiasm and positive approach to life to those that work for you. I am certainly not assuming that everything will be going great all the time, but as we are with students, teachers, parents and other community members who get to observe us, we will be able to share the positivity of life that will impact our student athletes ultimately. The Proactive Coaching concept of “Recovering at Game Speed” is a concept that we are trying to teach our student athletes on a daily basis as this insight will provide practical encouragement for the remainder of their lives. They must see that we are committed to doing in our life what we expect in their lives. They miss an important free throw in a game, no height in the pole vault, have a ball go through their legs in baseball or softball, strike out, get a spike blocked. Whatever the athletic related lesson that appears, we are

asking our student athletes to recover at game speed. We don't have time to sit around and moan about what might have been or the unfairness of an action or result we must keep going now, the game continues on.

So as we lead our athletic programs toward success and to ultimate real life lessons that will make a difference we must realize that we are being observed by all that we are connected to in our communities (parents, coaches, student athletes, teachers, business people). We are a light in a dark place and we will ultimately be responsible for the positive climate that is created around our program. Here are a few thoughts on how you can create and continue a positive climate around the athletic program at your school and in your community:

- Celebrate accomplishments by your entire program. All league athletes, All-State, All-American accomplishments. Signing letters of intent to colleges with a signing ceremony, League or state championships. Athletes of the week or the month or the year. Find inventive ways to celebrate the academic success of your student athletes. All of these opportunities create positive momentum in your program because your program will be viewed as student centered.
- Create a sense of ownership in the athletic program. The program is not "yours" it is "ours". A positive climate is created when ownership is established, ownership being defined as people supporting what they help to create. It truly does take a village to have the type of community support you desire. You must be willing to share the load with others so all can feel apart because their best efforts also went into the development of this successful program. Don't leave your student athletes out of this opportunity,

this is their athletic program too, make sure they are in the midst of helping you establish this climate. Author Maya Angelou said “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel”.

- Have fun together. Bowling on a weekend, notes to coaches in school mail boxes, recognition at public events and in the media. Quizzes at coaches meetings that produce the chance to laugh together. Special food at an unexpected time brought by the booster club. Be creative in how you can create fun for your staff to have a meal together etc. outside of the regular work day and around special occasions. This is a going the “extra mile” type of thing but one that is very important toward building an athletic department unity.
- Your coaches meetings, if held on a regular basis, are excellent opportunities to build a positive climate in your athletic program. Find ways to say thank you to your staff and let them know what good things are happening. This positive climate produced in your regular meetings carry over every time to the day, practice field and court and into the community. Having food together often enhance these meetings and create a positive togetherness.
- Keeping your agreed upon athletic department mission central to your climate work will be important to move the climate beyond a “positive feeling” about the athletic

program to a truly mission centered organization that sees, feels and celebrates the expected outcomes of your program.

- Every time you are in front of people from a coaches meeting to a booster club meeting to an administrative meeting to a school assembly, find ways to celebrate and bask in the positive climate being produced by your work.
- Find ways to continuously talk about the positive like skill development that you are aware of in your program. How is it happening? Speak it out and encourage your coaches with the positive work that they doing and the obvious results. Never let this go, see if you can find a way each day to talk about the work you are observing in the lives of your student athletes.

I would encourage you to find ways to create a positive climate in your athletic program not for the sake of a positive climate but because this will become a part of you, your work and that of your coaching staff over time. You will find yourself not having to think about it because you have literally helped to establish the expectation and reality of a positive department wide climate.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. How would you describe your current athletic department climate?*
- 2. What practical steps could you take currently to see the climate in your program change to become more positive?*
- 3. What will you do today/near future to see this positive climate become a reality?*

Coaches Meetings

Chapter 25

"We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing,

at whatever cost, must be obtained" --Marie Curie

I have had many opportunities to discuss the timing, length, purpose and frustrations of organizing and delivering meaningful coaches meetings with athletic administrators that I know. For many this has been one of their greatest frustrations as they want these meetings to be dynamic, challenging, meaningful and brimming with purpose. However if the truth be told many athletic administrators look upon these opportunities like they do taking a trip to the dentist.

After been through the cycle of coaches meetings my first few years as an AD I began to be weary of these meetings as well. I often felt tired, frustrated and sincerely at odds as to should I consider continuing these meetings and if so, for what exact purpose and outcome? I was the one soliciting input for the agenda but often these meeting would be nothing more than old business that I might have been able to cover by sending out an information filled email in their place.

My meetings began to change when several things took place to assist me in making these meetings worth the time and energy all involved were giving to take part. Maybe a few of these

thoughts can assist you in making your meetings the dynamic, team building, vision producing unifying force we all want them to become.

First thing I did was have an honest conversation with my coaching staff as to the purpose of these meetings and why I saw them as important and what their thoughts were on the current structure, timing and purpose of our coaches meetings. The feedback I received did two things, first it created ownership in my staff because this was something they were now invested in vs. this being another example of me trying to “serve” my staff and second, I got great feedback about what they felt were valuable and helpful agenda items for our meetings.

We ended up having our meetings monthly in the morning for one hour prior to school starting. I was at two schools that had a predominately on campus coaching staff at that time, even so it seemed like a better time for all than after school or on a weekend. We met from 6:30-7:30 am once per month on a similar date arrangement (2nd Tuesday as an example). I brought some breakfast type items (bagels, juice and fruit) to share each month.

After our initial conversations together I allowed them to help determine the agenda and to actively take part. This move from being me centered to coach centered helped to make our meetings more alive and productive. The nature of our coaching contracts allowed me to require their attendance however I knew that if this was the operative reason for their attendance I would not never have the dynamic, thought provoking and stimulating meetings that I desired. I was most interested in all head coaches taking part but wanted as many coaches in attendance as possible each month.

Having coaches help lead some specific discussions along the line of practice planning, summer programs, game preparation, film study, facility needs allowed coaches to hear directly from other coaches on a regular basis and developed more of a unified team approach to our athletic program. I tried to keep 'business items' to a minimum and thus make the opportunity to meet together about professional growth and relationship building. There was not much other time for the coaches to meet together as we were all very busy folks. This relationship building eventually spilled over to coaches observing each other's practices and sharing tips on how best to teach individual and group drills and in general support each other. On big game occasions in less attended sports coaches found ways to connect to support each other by bringing their teams to these important contests.

Because my coaches were given the opportunity to become invested, our coaches meetings became can't miss meetings vs. want to miss meetings. People felt valued individually, coaches valued each other and I remember as this took place our boy's tennis coach remarking that the football coach actually knew his name. These types of gains were the outcomes I was hoping for but I need the ownership of my staff to make it happen. I wanted to see these meetings create ownership, professional respect and friendship and produce a department wide pride and support for each other's work and for our athletic program overall.

Two other desired outcomes I wanted to see for our meetings was to use them as a forum to talk about gains we were noticing around student athlete life skill development. We had a time each agenda that took us back to our mission statement, Teach Life Skills to Aloha Warrior Student Athletes that was the focal point around their observations and efforts to teach our student

athletes life skills. The second outcome was a time for our coaching staff to celebrate on the field performances and tell each other well done. Both of these outcomes became significant to our coaching staff each month and created value and support for each other.

We did our best to stick to our agenda and not go over our allotted and agreed upon time frame for our meeting. This created trust and value as each coach could see that I was taking their time and our commitment seriously.

Another type of coaches meeting that took place prior to each season involved every coach from that season together prior to the season beginning. Usually this preseason coaches meeting would take anywhere from 90 minutes to two hours in length. We had an agenda that had nearly 30 items on it and was the overview for our coaches prior to tryout starting. We focused heavily on procedures, insurance, forms, cuts, schedules, bus transportation, injuries and a number for other important issues related to their season starting. These meetings usually took place between 4-6 pm or 3:30-5:30 type of time frame. Most of our coaches were educators somewhere and this best fit their time frames.

I tried my best each year to find a way prior to the fall season starting to gather everyone together for more of a BBQ involving all the coaches and their families so that we could continue to build relationships and camaraderie between all of our coaches as we began the year together.

Taking steps to organize, involve and create ownership among your coaching staff is never a waste of your time. Building rapport and deepening relationships with your coaching staff will

pay dividends for years to come. Be the initiator of this teambuilding opportunity is worth your best time, planning and follow through.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. Are you currently having regular coaches meetings with your staff? If not, why not? If so, how are they going?*
- 2. What do you see as the value of regular, organized and invested coaches meetings?*
- 3. What is one thing will do immediately to have a positive impact on your coaches meetings at your school?*

Chapter 26

Season Ending Award Ceremonies

Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome. Booker T. Washington

There are numerous ways to celebrate the seasons in your athletic program. I am a proponent of using these opportunities to create and celebrate community. I think we miss out when we have every sport do their own thing and create their own “special” celebration then the corporate community misses out on the chance to celebrate all sports and students.

At Tigard High School where our booster club organized the refreshments prior to the event, we would meet in our gymnasium and greet all parents and student athletes to begin the ceremony and then we would recognize our all league athletes, our academic all state teams and athletes, our league/state championships trophies and any coaching all league awards earned. Following the larger event in the gymnasium we would have the sports split up and meet in different rooms on campus so they could hand out individual awards and individual team recognition.

My athletic secretary and I would spend several days prior to the event gathering all necessary information and then producing the varsity award certificates and the participant certificates and then making sure we had enough actual letters for awards to first time varsity letter winners. We would also develop a program that had every participating student athlete listed.

We had an agenda in the front of the program and a list of our programs overall accomplishments for that particular season. It was often challenging to get this done to 100% of my satisfaction as we had overlapping seasons taking place around us that were utilizing some of the very athletes we were trying to honor and celebrate from the previous season.

Some thoughts on having your best results for a big night like this for your athletic program:

- See if your Principal or Superintendent can stop by to give a greeting.
- Stay on time!
- Use a checklist to allow yourself to have the most success possible with the myriad number of details. .
- Get help. Booster Club or other key parents can make this night much less stressful.
- Order needed materials, trophies, letters, and other awards early so you have them on time.
- Keep your remarks in the front of the group short but have enough to share and celebrate that the people attending can sense and touch your passion for the athletic program experience. Talk about how you came in touch with the passion of the athletes and coaches at your school this season. Don't forget lower levels in your remarks if they warrant it.
- Celebrate academic achievement at your awards night. (Oregon through our state association has Academic All State recognition)
- Have refreshments (cookies, coffee, punch) to give a bit of a celebration and fellowship feel to the evening.

- We always had some pizza and pop for the coaches to grab a slice of pizza and then get to their assigned rooms, picked up their awards and signed them and let us know of any errors so that we could try to fix them before people left the evening.
- You most likely will have mistakes with the amount of detail you have in front of you. Apologize and make it right as soon as you can.
- Get your dates on the community calendar as quickly as you can as the new academic year begins so everyone associated can get this on their calendars.
- Don't forget to honor and thank those that helped to put the ceremony together.

Acknowledge from the microphone and then follow up with a note of thanks. This is only one way to have a successful celebration of the accomplishments that your athletic program produces. You must think through what is best for your community. Don't ever lose sight of the positive nature of the community celebration that comes from your acknowledgement of your accomplishments.

Reflection Questions:

1. *What is your current program for recognition of your athletes following a season of competition?*
2. *Are you satisfied with your current program of recognition? If not what would you like to change?*
3. *What do you enjoy most about these opportunities to recognize the accomplishments of your coaches and student athletes? Is the enjoyment of the ceremony evident to those that work for and with you?*

Chapter 27

Creating a Hall of Fame

If you want to life yourself up, lift up someone else. --Booker T. Washington

Recognizing and celebrating the past accomplishments of the athletic teams, coaches and athletes at your school is worth the work needed to make it a reality. Creating a structure that lasts however will take some work, organization and vision to take an idea like this and make it a reality. We should begin our work with the end goal in mind, what do we imagine taking place as an end result? What ceremony do we anticipate hosting? What time of year? How will this honor be recognized after the ceremony is over in a permanent fashion at your school? By seeing this end result first, you will move toward this with confidence and motivation. While attending our first inauguration class of the Hall of Fame at Aloha High School I was struck at how amazing it was to be at this intersection of honor, emotion, celebration and community. I felt so proud of all that had been accomplished by the folks we were honoring and the gratefulness of our honorees and their friends and family truly made it worth all the effort that it took to create the structure, system and process. There are many ways to begin the process to develop a hall of fame for your school, the following bullet points will assist you in thinking through what needs to be accomplished to take this from idea to reality:

- The first step in the process would be to determine who in your school or school district would need to approve this concept before you begin the development of it. The last thing you need to do is get the “cart ahead of the horse” when it comes to the development of your hall of fame. What concerns might be raised? What wisdom might

you gain from those in your district that have experienced the development of such a vehicle for recognition at your school? Once approval has been received, you can begin to think through who might assist with this effort to make it a reality. If you are in a multi-school district you might have some existing guidelines regarding the development of such a recognition opportunity.

- Forming your committee to promote and organize your hall of fame is a critically important group for this group will have much to do to make this idea a reality. Choose carefully who you select. Do these individuals have sufficient experience and passion for this project that will give some sustained time and energy to this effort? I would encourage you to consider former administrators, athletic directors, teachers, booster club leadership and head coaches as you begin to form this committee. You will want to pick people who may know of the history of the school, have a long term commitment and sufficient remaining interest and passion for the school. You will want to be realistic about the initial effort needed to set up the structure to make this successful. How many meetings for how long will be required to establish this effort? How long is their commitment expected to last? What is your immediate timeline?
- Once you have established a working committee of 6-10 people you must clearly lay out the immediate tasks at hand and the accompanying timeline. See what you can do to develop a diverse group of people to work on this project together. Work backward in your timeline from the point at which you will want to have your first time of

recognition as a starting place. I would strongly encourage you to take the first year to establish your overall process, eligibility for induction, form of recognition (game or event), awards/plaques, notification of selection process, media contacts, research and forms needed for those who will be inducted. Take copious notes and make sure all are distributed for all involved. Keep your administration in the loop as to the progress and development of this group.

- Developing criteria for recognition and research into who might be eligible would be important as next steps. In our development of the Aloha High School athletic hall of fame we looked at All-American athletes and then All-State athletes as well as teams and individuals who had won state titles in their various sports. We developed criteria around teams, individual athletes, coaches/administrators and finally community contributors. We felt it best that each area was represented in the first years to establish the hall of fame that was growing and building. You will need to decide the specifics as to recognition criteria and how long a coach, team or athlete must be away from your school to be inducted, such as 3, 5 or 10 years.
- What are the specific qualifications that your nominees must meet to be considered for induction? Your committee must do some very strong work in this area to talk through all the various issues related to your nominees. What types of accomplishments, years of service, attitude and success following the high school experience would your committee like to consider in agreeing on those you will induct? Your research then into

all those eligible for this honor would be the next task that would need to be accomplished.

- At this point you might want to continue to grow your committee so that you have some help in sharing the work load for the coming ceremony to honor your alumni:
 - Event chairperson
for recognition event
 - Media ○ Awards
 - Notification ○
Selection
chairperson

Once the decision has been made as to who is eligible in your various categories you will want to determine how the decision will be made for selection. Keeping the process, clear, documented and public will assist all involved in making the best choices for induction and setting up the future selections for success.

- You will need to decide the vehicle you all agree would be best for recognition of your hall of fame honorees. Traditionally a fall football game or winter basketball game would be the venue for recognition of your hall of fame. Some however would prefer to have a stand-alone event either late in the spring or early fall that has a meal or banquet attached to the event with the recognition to follow. Your group will make a good decision on what best fits your school and way of doing business.
- Keep a detailed check list for your coming event and how you will determine the costs and who pays for the event. Usual recognition events that I have attended make

accommodations for the honoree and spouse but all others pay for their meal etc. You will need to decide how this will be funded and by whom.

Keep track of the entire process on paper, keep your administration in the loop, give great leadership and service to your committee and do your best to provide influence without being the point person for this effort. Your expertise, school access and influence will be enough.

Don't get yourself caught trying to do this as "other duties unassigned" but bring others in your community along with you to determine and create this unique recognition tool.

Reflection Questions:

How do you see this effort having relevance for your community with all that needs to be accomplished in your busy position?

Who would come to mind immediately as to volunteers who could assist you in leading this effort?

If you have a current hall of fame structure what needs to be done to "clean the dust off" and move this asset ahead?

Chapter 28

Power vs. Responsibility in the Athletic Director Position

*The most common way people give up their power is by thinking
that they don't have any. --Alice Walker*

Never allow a person to tell you no who doesn't have the power to say yes. Eleanor Roosevelt

Power is like being a lady... if you have to tell people you are, you aren't. --Margaret Thatcher

Great power involves great responsibility. --Franklin D. Roosevelt

One way to avoid constant disappointment is to have clear and vetted expectations of your position as an athletic administrator. You might assume that due to your title, Director of Athletics or Athletic Director, that you have freedom to make nearly any decision as it relates to the athletic program at your school. Unless that has been spelled out in your contract, be wary that you have this much freedom to act.

We don't have to take much time to reflect upon how much responsibility our position demands. We are responsible for nearly everything that has to do with our program on a daily basis:

- Organizing and ordering our officials needs
- Eligibility of our student athletes
- Hiring of our coaching staff
- Facilities and grounds issues
- Transportation of our teams and coaches to and from contests and practices

- Making sure our game management needs are organized and ready for our contests
- Representing our league, school and classification at meetings
- Booster Club representation from our school
- Taking care of internal school issues related to the athletic program

Yes, all of these responsibilities and many more are what we are required to organize, administrate and give leadership to. However, that does not mean that we have the power to make decisions on all related issues to our athletic program. We need to be fully aware of this fact as quickly as possible into our tenure as an athletic administrator. Often we have influence well beyond our pay grade but we don't have sole decision making power in our area of expertise.

Athletic administrators fall into many different categories across our country. We have AD's that are TOSA's (Teacher on Special Assignment) who don't teach much but are paid teacher scale to lead the athletic program. We have some that are teachers who teach and possibly coach in addition to their release for AD duty. We have some that are administrators (Vice-Principal) who have a state wide administrative license and are able to act in an administrative capacity as it relates to hiring and evaluating staff and in discipline matters related to our student athletes. For those not working in an administrative capacity you know only too well how you need administrative oversight (buy off or buy in) to get things done related to hiring, discipline and evaluation, at least this is true in Oregon.

We may have assumed in taking the position initially that we are free to do what we want as it relates to all aspects of our position as the school athletic administrator. However, the reality is that in many significant ways we must obtain a "sign off" be it an actual signature or verbal

support to take a particular action related to our athletic program. This might include one or all of the following:

- District wide facility use
- Hiring and evaluation of staff members
- Dismissal of staff members (even on coaching contracts)
- Facility related improvements and or plans
- Student athlete discipline
- League and state related classification and districting decisions and rules

The perception in the community by the vast majority of parents and other patrons might be that as the school's athletic administrator we are the one who have both the insight and the power to make decisions related to the program we administrate. Once the truth is known the challenge may become that our principal or superintendent becomes the de-facto athletic administrator as the folks who might have come to us instead go directly above us to those perceived to be in power over the athletic program at our school site. We must have frank discussions with those in leadership over us to determine our freedom to act on specific issues related to the athletic program so we are on the same page prior to answering a parent or another community member's question or concern.

The majority of people in our community see title, pay and position as the important information they need to get an answer or the answer they want. The issues of title, pay and position in the organization are viewed as power. Our power does not come from our title, though some may see it this way. Our power comes from our ability to become experts at our

profession, build honest, authentic relationships and to share our passion for sport and students at every opportunity. Our power flies under the radar, our capacity to work and build relational capital with students, coaches and parents gives us power. Potentially not the power we would like in certain situations but none the less it is a power that impacts and lasts.

We learn quickly that while we don't have final say on those things that impact our professional life each day we have the skills and relationships that in many ways give us power that our titles never could. Respect for a title often comes begrudgingly and often with great effort, however, our hands-on care for our coaches, students and community does build power that a title could never accomplish.

Our ability to influence is one of our key strengths in this position. Our commitment to excellence in knowledge and practice buys us respect and power with those above us in the organization. Our hands on work and relationships in our community buy us respect and power from those that we serve. We are "servant leaders", we operate with a title that does not imbue us with the power of making all decisions as we might like. However our ability to connect, share and act on vision, encourage those that work for and with us will be the tools that ultimately win the day for us in our leadership positions. In our role as true servant leaders, we will win victories in and outside of our school district that a league or state title will never help us achieve.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. In what practical ways do you influence others in your current position?***

2. *What is your greatest challenge related to your lack of “perceived power” in your current position?*

3. *How have you enjoyed recent success in your role as a servant leader/influential leader?*

Chapter 29

Impacting the student experience of your athletes

Definiteness of purpose is the starting point of all achievement. W. Clement Stone

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before

starting to improve the world. Anne Frank

I had a recent conversation with a good friend who is a high school principal here in Oregon. We talked about what school administrators want to see from the athletic programs they support within their school district. He made it clear to me that one significant issue district administrative personnel expect results in, is the academic success of their student athletes due to their participation in the athletic enterprise.

- As reported by the Los Angeles Times' Eric Sondheimer, (June, 2012) LAUSD has discovered [a striking correlation between students' participation in interscholastic athletics and their performance](#) in both attendance and in the classroom. According to the study, the 35,000 student athletes in LAUSD attended an average of 21 more days of school per year than their counterparts, while they also sported GPAs some 0.55 to 0.74 points higher than non-athletes.

Both of those statistics are pretty staggering when you consider that GPAs are typically calculated on a scale of 0.00-4.00 and students attend an average of 180 days per school year.

"[The study statistics] prove what has generally been assumed, that participation in high school athletics, on average, positively enhances the student's academic progress in comparison with the rest of the student body," LAUSD commissioner of athletics Barbara Fiege said in a memo to the district's schools, obtained by the Times. "I believe that a large part of this is due to the intervention and guidance provided daily by qualified coaches, who understand the relationship between academic and athletic success."

- A Minnesota State High School League survey of 300 Minnesota high schools showed the average GPA of a student-athlete was 2.84, compared with 2.68 for the average student, and that student-athletes missed an average of only 7.4 days of school each year, compared with 8.8 for the average student. (Trevor Born. High Standard for GPA, in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 14, 2007.)
- A study published in the August 2007 issue of *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* found that students who took part in more vigorous sports like soccer or football or skateboarding, did approximately 10% better in math, science, English and social studies classes.
- The academic success of approximately 550,000 to 725,000 high school studentathletes and non-athletes during the 2011-12 school year was analyzed across the nation. The study identified a significant correlation between athletic involvement and the academic success indicators of graduation rates, dropout rates, average daily attendance, and average letter grades. The study ranked graduation rates as the most positively impacted

area of academic success. Graduation rates were followed not surprisingly by dropout rates. Average daily attendance ranked third and although average letter grades contributed the smallest level of correlation, non-athletes earned a 2.72 GPA while studentathletes earned an overall 3.01 respectively. The results of every academic success category demonstrated student-athletes achieving greater than non-athletes.

Research is fairly unanimous in the assertion that high school athletes outperform non-athletes on most measures related to academic success (graduation, GPA, # missed school days etc.). However, the challenge for all of us as athletic administrators is how we will have systemic impact through our athletic program in an organized way so that all of our student athletes have that academic experience.

I am unaware of a school district that does not have clear academic standards for those taking part in the school athletic program. Usually such expectations include some of the following

- GPA expectations. Could be 2.0 or 2.5 and higher.
 - No F rule
 - Number of credits earned
 - In class every day or cannot practice or participate in contests
 - Grade checks during the season
 - Probation if not meeting current standards
 - Eligibility checks during the season required by the district or state association
 - The tracking of your student athlete GPA's and sharing of that information, sport by sport.

These minimum academic expectations are true for all students taking part in the athletic program. Some students taking part see this as the bar they have to jump over and that really constitutes pursuing eligibility vs. pursuing excellence in the classroom on a daily basis. While this issue seems like an easy one to hand off to individual head coaches to implement within their teams, what might an athletic director do to encourage a program wide goal or expectation for academic achievement?

Increasing the expectation for student athletes might be a challenging prospect. You might feel that it is up to the coach to create a program for their own sport and leave it at that. The challenge with this approach is that it does not take into account the overall athletic program. Certainly, accountability is much easier from the sport that student athletes find themselves currently engaged in and that is the best jumping off point. What if you were to gather your head coaches for a conversation about a department wide plan for student athlete academic achievement or offered this a topic for one of your regular coaches meetings?

Discuss how you might create “the Warrior (insert mascot name here) Way” academically that would challenge your student athletes to do more than the minimum. It will have a carryover impact to field of play as excellence is a habit. We often find it easier to demand athletic excellence over the most important skills needed to succeed beyond the high school athletic field and that is their academic success.

Perhaps your department would agree that your program would like something like this:

- In season sport by sport study hall 2x per week.
- Athletes will sit in the first three rows of every classroom they attend

- Zero tolerance for incomplete work or assignments
- In sport recognition for improvement academically just like we do for athletic accomplishment
- Juniors and Seniors must maintain a C average to participate in athletics
- No retribution for missing practice to receive academic assistance as long as it is not a habit. Help is not a substitute for not taking care of business.
- Mentors will be established from Varsity-Frosh to have someone to check in with
- Create an internal “Warrior Academic Champion” trophy/recognition for the sport that has the highest GPA program wide. I am sure you can figure out how to even up the numbers issue, maybe you can do this by season so you keep it alive all year.
- Keep your entire program’s GPA and compare it to the general student population each year.
- Create a summer program for all incoming 9th grade athletes to get acclimated. There a dozen or more ideas that I am sure your coaching staff can come up with that will make your student athletes’ students first in meaningful and successful ways.

Coaches seem to want to find ways to hold student athletes accountable for everything from class attendance to summer work out times. If you are able to create an environment where all athletes are on the same program and the expectations raises the level of academic performance then you are accomplishing the real purpose for athletic participation to begin with. You must find ways to consistently discuss, share and promote the academic success of your student athletes. Keeping your school district and key leaders in the loop will be another way of making a case for your programs funding and support. It is the number one reason that high school

sports exist and we must do whatever we can to encourage and promote the academic success of our student athletes at every opportunity.

Reflection questions:

- 1. What are you currently, doing program, wide to impact the academic success of your student athletes?*
- 2. What are one-two things that you could implement for the coming year that would have a positive impact on the academic success of your student athletes?*
- 3. How could you enlist your student athletes to assist in this effort?*

Chapter 30

Student Athlete Recognition

The battles that count aren't the ones for gold medals. The struggles within yourself—the invisible battles inside all of us—that's where it is at. --Jesse Owens

I cannot think of something more enjoyable than finding creative ways to honor, recognize and celebrate our student athletes. We might agree on some of the ways we traditionally have recognized our student athletes however as technology changes we need to be aware of different ways that we might be able to celebrate our student athletes.

First it is imperative that we are clear as to what our district or school parameters are regarding releasing student athlete names and photos. Despite our desire to honor and celebrate our student athletes we don't want to do this at the expense of our schools desires to protect our student athletes from unwanted or undesired publicity.

At Aloha High School we celebrated a male and female athlete of the month. Their selection was made via email by our coaching staff. Coaches had the chance to nominate varsity athletes and their "case" for selection. All nominations were gathered together and sent to our coaching staff who would all forward their votes to me. Then we would take a picture of the student athletes who were selected and their pictures were displayed prominently over our office door for all to see. They also received a certificate at an assembly as we had them for whatever month

they won. It was always fun to celebrate with them as they achieved this honor and their accomplishments on the field of play.

At the end of each school year, our league, supported by the local newspaper, selected an overall male and female athlete of the year. So each school was responsible for submitting a male and female and then the newspaper selected an overall winner from our five high schools while at the same time celebrating those from the other schools that were not chosen. The seniors at Aloha HS were then recognized at our annual senior assembly, receiving a plaque at the assembly as other awards were being distributed as well.

The local weekly newspaper also handed out athlete of the week status each time the paper was published. Usually a picture appeared for the male and female student athletes that were selected, short paragraphs were also in print for those nominated but not winning the weekly award. Sometimes these weekly awards were sponsored by a particular fast food restaurant and sometimes they were not. Those recognized were always varsity athletes.

Our league also worked together on a website that had each school's contact information, schedules, ticket information, eligibility information, forms and recognition for our all league athletes. Each sport was represented by an athletic director who was responsible for listing their sports all league athletes on the section that was appropriate for their sport. We followed this up at our seasonal awards event by calling out all league athletes for each sport and presenting them with their all-league certificate in front of their family, peers and other season athletes. All state athletes were chosen by The Oregonian newspaper and certificates representing their selection were usually delivered to the school for public recognition as well.

The Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA), the group responsible for running the high school athletic program in Oregon, recognized student athletes by their GPA in the Dairy Farmers of Oregon Academic All State awards. We would recognize teams for their GPA at our end of season awards ceremonies. Pins were distributed if you were a top 10 team and sweatshirts if you were a number one team in the state.

At both high schools I worked at in Oregon, we did our best to keep tabs on all student athletes who were in the midst of signing letters of intent for college participation. We would clean our commons area after lunch, invite friends of the student athlete to take part as well as other friends and family. Usually we would take pictures, have refreshments and allow the student, coach and family to take part in making any relevant comments that were interest in being made. These were always enjoyable times to celebrate the accomplishments of our student athletes.

As our teams would progress toward state playoffs we would host an all-school assembly to encourage the school community to come out and support the work of our student athletes. If a team ever won a state title the team would be recognized at an all-school assembly as they would present their trophy to the school at the assembly.

While these are the most obvious ways of celebrating student athlete accomplishment, there are several more that I am sure athletic directors have developed or have been school traditions.

One that I have enjoyed involved coaches having internal sport recognition during their week of competition. Our football coach at Aloha used to have several awards that were handed out to individuals at team meetings on the Monday following a Friday night game. These included

the Rock Award for the best hit the previous week and a large rock was actually there for the student to sign recognizing this honor, the other award that I remember was the step-up award that involved a step ladder for the athlete that had the best performance by effort in stepping up to help the team be its best. I know that coaches can give out stickers for helmets or lockers. Our track coaches at Aloha would give out suckers to team members who had a personal record (PR) following a meet. I know there are many ways for athletes to receive recognition and I am sure that you each have a few tried and true methods for recognizing your student athletes following their performances. I have observed the joy that any of this recognition produces in the lives of our student athletes and that alone makes it worth the effort to be creative in celebrating our student athletes' accomplishments.

One more recent way of recognizing our athletes has come from the social media platforms that are so available to many through improving smart phone technology. I have become aware recently of Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and Twitter being used by athletic directors, parents, students and community members as their teams participate. As messages are forwarded during a game it can become a powerful recognition tool for our student athletes, their families and community members. There are potential opportunities for challenges with emerging technology but it certainly is a more immediate form of recognition for our student athletes.

Reflection Questions:

1. *In what ways are you currently recognizing the accomplishments of your student athletes?*

2. *What would you like to add to the mix based on what you hear, see and observe from other schools?*
3. *Any ideas on how our student athletes below the varsity level might receive recognition for their efforts?*

Chapter 31

Pre-Season Organization

Nothing is impossible, the word itself says, "I'm possible!" --Audrey Hepburn

You cannot build a reputation on what you are going to do. --Henry Ford

"Prior planning prevents poor performance" the line goes. There can be no clearer example than preparing yourself and your athletic department for the approaching season. It might feel that, at times, all you are doing is constantly preparing for the next season. Your preparation however will assist you in minimizing major issues related to organizing and beginning your coming season.

The Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) that is responsible for organization and direction of high school sport in Oregon has a checklist for the fall, winter and spring seasons that mainly relate to the relationship of your individual school to the OSAA. It is helpful, however, as reminder to us for our own school organization as we prepare for an upcoming season especially the fall season as it typically kicks off a school year.

With so many items on our plate throughout the season, these checklists can assist us in creating a successful environment for our communities to participate in our programs. The

following are some things you might consider adding to your preseason checklist to allow you the chance to be your most successful for the approaching season.

Final schedules online

Up to date requirements for fees

and registration

Admin team conference

Current forms (parent permission etc.)

I would suggest a couple of things related to your upcoming season. First get your parent nights on the calendar as soon as possible to maximize the attendance at your events. You might be doing this already but see if you can set up a time to take fees and forms prior to the parent meetings, this is prior to try outs, and start with everyone in the gym or other large venue at your school where all parents and student athletes can be met and greeted together.

Have your booster club in attendance to sell gear and welcome new parents to your program.

Make it short but clear and create a great atmosphere that puts your program on its best footing.

You will the chance to have all parents together in one place to address them and then split up by sport for individual sport information. Have parents and your student athletes walk away

Facility issues

Scoreboards

Cleaning

Repairs

Lights

Storage

Field prep

Coaching pay forms submitted

Transportation forms filled out

Tryout dates finalized

All coaches meeting scheduled

Training needed for new coaches

Update school website

Phone messages clear and updated

Current coach contact information

Booster Club meeting dates

Playoff specifics

SA eligibility checks completed

Cust

Med

seas

You

Info

tour

Ope

Mee

Offi

Pare

SA n

Equi

Unif

Budg

Leag

OSA

Fall

with a sense of inclusion, excitement and a thorough understanding of what is expected in the athletic program at your school.

Your preparation as it relates to the organization of fees, participation forms, physicals and insurance are critical to the successful kick off to a new season. What will gum up the works is the issues that frustrate parents that you are not aware of or have missed out on being ready for. Your work on the front end of the process will assure not just a smooth organization prior to a season but will set up expectations for your and your community regarding your athletic program.

Reflection Questions:

1. *What is your current organizational structure for beginning a new athletic season?*
2. *In what ways could you take steps to make your pre-season organization more successful?*
3. *If you could stop something you currently are doing as well as start something to make your preseason organization more streamlined what would it be? Do you have the courage/support to take on some of these changes?*

Chapter 32

Working successfully with Parents of athletes

*The key to being a good manager is keeping the people who hate me away
from those who are still undecided. --Casey Stengel*

Success is never final, failure is never fatal. It's courage that counts. --John Wooden

The best team to coach is a team of orphans.

I used to maintain that the best team to coach was a team of orphans, because there were no parents to contend with. This was a shortsighted approach to a very important topic that we must manage daily as athletic administrators, that is working with parents. We have an amazing opportunity daily to help parents see the athletic experience in all of its complexity as the tool for teaching life skills and helping mature their children. What helped me change my attitude from seeing parents as competition or a struggle between good (me) and evil (them) was watching my own children compete at a high school in the league where I was an athletic administrator. I was then forced to go through the same struggle every parent goes through in wanting the best for my children in the athletic experience vs. wanting them to achieve goals that made me feel good for them and for me. *I learned early that I cannot and should not live vicariously through my children on the athletic field of competition.*

What I was forced to reckon with in my life was that these were my children competing and I was not as objective as I thought I was. I wanted in the worst way for them to achieve things and have the kind of athletic experience that was transformative and life changing, not very high expectations were they? Of course I am kidding. Most parents I had challenges with as an athletic administrator were parents who were either not as in touch or honest with their concerns or desires related to their child's athletic competition and success. Watching my children compete in high school did get me in touch with what most parents feel when they initially have concerns, anger, or frustration over issues related to their children and our athletic program. This was very helpful in my ability to relate, accept and connect with parents as a

high school athletic administrator. It helped me to know that under whatever anger or emotion was displayed to me from a parent, I knew they wanted their child's best and so did I, so starting out we had a great basis for a good relationship.

The age old challenge seems to be that one of two distinct things are shared by parents in approaching an athletic administrator with issues related to the athletic program. One, parents say they are coming directly to me (as the AD) because "other parents" say that this is better than going to the coach directly who will "take out" whatever parental frustration exists from the conversation on their son or daughter. The coach response often then is to stay as far away from parents as possible so that they don't have to worry about parents "currying favor" as it relates to their child and the program. Some coaches cannot believe a parent truly just wants to help their program succeed, they believe the motives to assist always ends up with help for the program in exchange for favor toward their child. This challenge puts us at logger heads without the chance to deal with these two divergent point of views directly before we have truly had an honest conversation, the battle lines are already drawn

My answer to this is to be as up front with the issues as possible in any possible way (personal conversation, parent meetings, printed materials, or website). It is critical that as the leaders of the athletic program we are clear as to our expectations for parents and their communication with coaches. Without this clarity we should not expect parents to know how or what to do when they are frustrated by issues related to our athletic program. Do parents follow our direction 100% of the time even when we are clear with them? Most likely not, but we should

expect a much higher percentage of problems than we already do without addressing our expectations.

I felt it critical to my success as an athletic director that I attend every parent meeting and take the opportunity to express in writing and verbally our parent expectations for behavior and for communication to our coaching staff. As a result I had several conversations with parents that started, "I know I am not supposed to talk to you first but...". It shows that I had communicated clearly what my expectations were and the message had gotten through clearly.

Here are the basics of the communication that I shared with parents:

I started by talking about every athletic contest having roles for each "participant" to play.

When the roles got confused or messed up we had issues. Spectators watch, players play, officials officiate and coaches coach. When we had parents coaching or officiating we had problems, when players coach and/or officiate we had problems, when we had officials coaching we had problems and when coaches officiated or became spectators we had problems. So we asked them to "stay in their lane" and play their role understanding that the team we were playing against had passionate parents too and they wanted their team to win and so let's cheer for our team not against the other team..

If challenges exist and a parent wanted to talk to our coach we asked the following things to take place:

Coaches should communicate to parents regarding philosophy, expectations, team rules, requirements and injury protocols. Parents should communicate directly to the coach first in a non-threatening manner. Never after a practice or game or on the way to the bus or car

following a game or practice. Concerns that we felt were things parents should talk to coaches about included:

- Treatment of your child mentally and physically
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior

Concerns that we agreed were out of bounds for parents to discuss with a coach included:

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Other student athletes

If a parent wanted to talk to me about an issue related to their child and the coach we laid out the following parameters as guidelines:

- Talk to the coach first...(24 hour rule from an incident or concern)
- Set up a time that is convenient for both the parent and the coach.
- Be specific about your concerns. Try not to let your emotions override your concerns.

Think about what you want from the meeting.

- If the meeting does not provide what you were looking for then call me, don't call me first!
- We will then sit down and discuss your concerns following your meeting with the coach. We wanted the child and the coach in attendance at this meeting. I don't know how many times we have all heard, "my child does not know I am here" as a premise to

a conversation. I would always follow that with a discussion of why they were there then? Playing time is won in practice and neither the parents nor I have been at practice to know the child's true practice ability. This information was in our parent/student athlete handbook, on our website and was shared verbally at our parent meetings. We did our very best as a staff to hold parents to these expectations.

In terms of sharing expectations of parent behavior in the stands, we took the material from Bruce Brown of Proactive Coaching and his booklet "The Role of Parents", it is simply the best material I have read on working with parents and the athletic experience.

Bruce shares the concept of "releasing your child to the athletic experience". At its core it is a challenge for parents to literally have a conversation with their child and admit that the athletic experience they are taking part in is athlete's not the parent's. The parent then officially "releases" the child to the experience and gives them the "keys to the car" as it relates to the athletic experience the child is taking part in.

The following are examples of a parent who has been unable to "release their child to the athletic experience":

- The parent shares credit when things go well...**we** pitched a great 3 hitter yesterday.
- Parent tries to resolve all problems that come up with the athletic experience vs. letting his/her child learn through this "sports lab"
- Parent yelling at officials at games or coaches...one adult yelling at another adult publicly in a place we are hoping teaches respect
- Parent makes excuses for child's lack of success (sick, big test, etc.)

- Child avoids the parent or seems embarrassed by the parent at games and events. The child avoids or seems embarrassed by his/her parent at games and events (more embarrassed than usual!)
- Game outcome impacts parents more than the child. On a Monday after a Friday loss the parent is more upset than the child!

What do we need most from parents in watching their kids compete?

- #1 thing parents need to do is model appropriate behavior. Kids need to see parents model this behavior in the stands.
- Kids need one instructional voice during competition, not the parent's voice but the coach's voice. This leads to team success over individual success.
- #1 toughest thing for athletes post game is getting into the car and hearing analysis, comments, coaching tips, criticism etc.
- Parent message needs to be: **I love watching you play**. Can only happen if you have released your kids to the game.
- Parents need to model poise and confidence during games and give kids time and space after games.

We need to continue to act on behalf of our student athletes and find creative ways to support our student athletes and not get "negative" about our parents.

So what do we do when, despite our best efforts, we can't seem to connect the dots for our parents during a challenging situation? We need to become experts related to note taking and communication up the chain of command. Have our notes ready to share with the VP, Principal

or Superintendent that will need and want to know more about the situation. We may have emails from other sources (officials, other parents, visiting coaches or administrators). We will have a record of phone calls and note from previous meetings on this topic. Get your coaches to write down notes from previous conversations as well on this topic. Stick to your guns on what was shared about process for coach and AD contact, stay to the facts, and keep to your league and school rules regarding the student in question. Do your best to not allow your emotions to become engaged during whatever communication you have with the parents involved. Often if a situation escalates you will be receiving communication from those above you in the leadership chain of command because parents will have headed that direction if they don't get the answers they seek from you and your coaching staff.

This "battle" that we might experience is one worth our best efforts because we want what is best for our student athletes. Let's continue to do our best work on the front end knowing that it will have a significant impact on those that we work with on a daily basis and in the long run will have a positive impact on our student athletes. Don't grow weary in doing good!

Reflection Questions:

- 1. How are you communicating your expectations currently to the parents in your athletic program?*
- 2. If you could do one thing that might increase your effectiveness with parents related to your athletic program what would it be?*
- 3. What advice would you give to parents who ask you how they might be a more effective sport parent?*

Chapter 33

Using your Summer Effectively

I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do. --Leonardo da Vinci

For most athletic administrators, the summer is not a contracted period of time for your work. That doesn't mean that you are out of the office between June 15-August 15 does it? Our head coaches are active in football camp, seven on seven football competitions, summer league basketball for boys and girls, fitness work, American Legion baseball, volleyball team camp, or cross country camp. Our coaches and student athletes are active and invested in the coming year, as a result so are we. We come in a couple of days a week, we manage our field preparation and watering, we have ongoing projects around our facilities, we might even have hiring to manage during the summer months and then there is the fall preparation for fall sport sign ups to organize and booster club folks to help plan with.

We could easily be busy every day and without pay to boot! No different than what our head coaches must do to maintain a quality sport season, the summer work is critical to their success in technical and tactical work,, fundraising and year-long planning. We have things to do and yet we are most likely exhausted and need to find some significant time to detach and withdraw to recover. To have uninterrupted time to get things done, plan and relax is critical to our long term mental and physical health.

I would encourage each of you to make a commitment to get time away for yourselves for an extended period of time. You might have a family vacation that can take you away for some disconnected time or to have periodic respite with some hobbies (golf, tennis, running, painting, drawing, photography, reading, biking) on a weekly basis. Your recovery time will not magically appear and you are not selfish for taking time to focus on your needs. Please make a commitment to prolong your influence in this great profession by planning some significant time out of the office, 2-4 weeks in total minimum. Usually I tried to get critical work wrapped up by the last day of June so I could take July off, guilt free.

Using your late spring to make a list of things you want to accomplish is a great way to be focused as you approach the “year-end” and new academic year beginning. Many Oregon districts have financial years that end the last day of June, with the next fiscal year starting July 1. We did all we could to push fall purchases for payment until July 1 so we had new monies to spend on new items.

The OSAA (Oregon Schools Activity Association) has had progressively more influence in the summer months even though the OSAA year ends after Memorial Day each year. We have now adopted a “moratorium week” meant to protect coaches, student athletes and family vacations. The last week of July/first week of August is usually set aside for the moratorium week where no high school facilities can be open for use in any form. Fall tryout dates are set as well by the OSAA as well as first competition dates. There have been restrictions put on certain sports as well as to how much contact can take

place in football in the summer and when that can take place. In many ways this has been a way to protect people who have a hard time protecting themselves in terms of time away from their coaching duties, these decisions even out the playing field by allowing everyone to take the same time off therefore taking the advantage argument away from coaches.

I enjoyed having the freedom to attend some summer events where I was not responsible for setting up or taking down the gym or facility. I would regularly attend varsity summer league contests to watch both the boys and girls basketball teams, take in a couple of 7 v. 7 football scrimmages, stop in on camps briefly and watch the summer baseball program play. These were fun for me because I was not responsible and yet it kept me in touch with my coaching staff and our student athletes. I was not responsible for staying for the entire game and that made it even more fun.

Some key work for the summer could revolve around the following topics. The key is to plan your time out wisely, take care of yourself and use some of the summer for vision

- casting and planning for the coming year:
- State association requirements
 - Facility needs
 - Basketball floor resurfaced
 - Watering fields
 - Deep cleaning facility
 - Facility Repairs
 - Summer competition viewing
 - Order and check in equipment
 - Budget finalizing and starting over
 - Shore up hiring for any open positions
 - Vision casting and planning
 - Booster Club check in

- Staff activity either midsummer or
preseason

While I have described what are some of the normal things you might think about during the summer months, I hope you have heard me loud and clear, that this is a chance for you to rest and rejuvenate and get ready for the next year. Please make sure this is your top summer priority.

Reflection Questions:

1. *What is your favorite thing about the summer?*
2. *What are you doing to rejuvenate and get prepared for the next academic year?*
3. *What are your top five summer priorities for the coming summer?*

Chapter 34

Building Community through the interscholastic Athletic Program

You take your life in your own hands, and what happens?

A terrible thing, no one to blame. --Erica Jong

The tyranny of the urgent calls out to us moment by moment and day by day. Hard to get the time or focus to think down the line and what “could be” vs. handling the chores in front of us and taking care of those challenges.

Yes we must take care of our daily duties that are so demanding of us: making sure our transportation for games and practices are arranged and on time; our officials have been

scheduled and rechecked; our schedules are accurate, especially in the crazy spring season; we are following through on meetings and evaluation of our coaching staff. We are helping influence our booster club by prioritizing meeting with the booster club leadership; we have arranged and rechecked those working for us in a game management capacity; we are staying on top of our budget as the year progresses.

Somewhat in the same vein however as teaching life skills to our student athletes, all of this work can become the mundane taking care of details without life or purpose behind it. What is our real goal by going through the perfunctory daily challenges associated with our jobs? Will all of this important work be for naught? I would urge you to consider that the real reason we are about this important work is to build community through our athletic program, not just win or lose games that we contest.

Our high schools represent a great sense of community history, if they have been around a while. We remember old coach so and so and those great years when our program could not be stopped. Our walls are adorned by those that came before us and through their effort, determination, hard work and sacrifice they became known to us and gave our school pride, accomplishment a history.

Our schools are places where people gather. People catch up with one another. They meet there and connect, they celebrate and become the elders who want to see the latest version of their high school community succeed and challenge themselves to be their very best. Generations of families take part in the Friday night football ritual that someday their son or daughter might be the emotional leaders taking over for mom, dad and the grandparents. It is a look over their

hedge at home to the neighbor's house, it is a chance to connect with one another at a fun and community focused athletic event. People gather at our school to build community.

Our schools are places where talent is on display. From the young frosh guard to the senior all conference or all-state player, student athletes are putting themselves and their talent on the line for teammates and their community. We see the maturation of our cheer and dance teams, our band improves each year, and our mascot seems a bit fiercer. Their desire is to be their best, and to move on to someday wear a varsity uniform for the high school team. We get to watch this transformation from skinny frosh to mature senior, we see their talent become an investment in themselves, their teammates and their community. We enjoy watching our kids be their best. Their talent is appreciated and encouraged when the community comes together to watch them

play.

Our schools are place where community pride is on display. The school colors are clear and unmistakable. We know who we are rooting for and we know our mascot like we know our own names. We want our students to play their heart out in giving their best effort, we want to win but more than that we want to have a sense of pride and dignity in the way our teams comport themselves, how they treat their opponent, the officials and the teammates. We want our pride to be realized through an excellence of effort from our athletes that displays the pride that our community has in our team and in one another. Our pride grows as we display behavior in keeping with our desire for excellence with sportsmanship the highest priority. Our fields, courts, pools and arenas give our community a place to belong and are the centerpieces of our towns and cities. Some might say that high school athletics are on the

decline and are no longer relevant, but try to tell that to the over 510 million estimated US citizens that attended a high school athletic event this past year in their community. Often the high school athletic program is the most visible representation of the school in your community. Paul “Bear” Bryant, former Alabama football coach once remarked “it is awfully hard to rally round a math class”.

Our high school athletic programs give us the opportunity to celebrate the history, success, talent, pride and community that our cities and towns need to connect. We are the gate keepers of this community stewardship. Might be hard to think about when you are mired in the midst of some mundane details that don’t seem to connect to community building, however your faithfulness to the details allow community to take place in ways that change lives.

As the gatekeepers we are often the ones that our communities depend on to “connect the dots” allowing them to take part. We get to decide in many ways who sits on the booster club board, who works games and events and who are hired to coach. We determine so much that we often do not reflect upon the amount of influence we truly have in deciding who is involved and who is not.

Communication can suffer at times in any community, bad feelings can develop and your community becomes hurt or injured. One way we can continue to provide strong and compassionate leadership is to apologize when and if it becomes necessary. Right relationships are built on authentic and real communication. Do your best to keep “short accounts” with others in your community. When things go awry do what you can to make the best of a situation. This is not to say you should apologize for anything that happens, however if you

mess up and need to make things right, do so, by taking leadership. In this way you will create a forgiving, real and compassionate community around yourself. Saying “I am sorry” goes a long way to solving problems and that goes for your coaching staff as well. The best we can do is to take responsibility for ourselves and our own stuff. You modeling this will help to keep the community you have helped build around the athletic program, the healthiest possible. As our world becomes more and more fractured, our athletic programs will continue to have an even bigger impact than they do now.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. How do you see the athletic program at your school assisting in building community in your area?***
- 2. What is one thing you might do currently to assist the program in building a stronger community right now?***
- 3. Is there anyone in your community you need to have a conversation with to make things “right”?***

Chapter 35

Creating Manuals for your everyday use

In order to succeed, your desire for success should be greater than your fear of failure.

Bill Cosby

The responsibilities of our AD job are accompanied by a myriad of details. Our ability to combine these, catch them and quantify them will lead to our ultimate success. Standard Operating Procedures or SOP's are critically important for us to have the tools, guidance and confidence to move ahead. These SOP's allow us the clear advantage of having agreed upon methods, systems and processes to help us do our jobs to the best of our ability.

Several manuals that I would encourage you to develop and keep current include the following:

- League Standard Operating Procedures
- Parent/Student Athlete Handbook
- Coaches Handbook
- Marketing and Promotions handbook
- Emergency and Evacuation Procedures Manual
- State Activity Association yearly manual

These materials will give you the techniques, information, guidelines and best practices that will help you avoid problems, violations and allow your athletic program to enjoy the most success possible. I cannot imagine how much harder this job would be without direction from these important documents. You save time, energy and effort by having the confidence of

direction previously agreed upon and established. There is process that must be followed so that your manuals have been signed off by all parties who have a vested interest in the information contained within. (See the appendix for tables of contents from these handbooks) League Standard Operating Procedures is the manual that gives you direction on all processes, rules and guidelines related to your league competitions. The process I am familiar with was that a list would be established at the beginning of the academic year and added to throughout the year for a spring reconciliation related to the whole document. Changes and updates would be provided by league coaches groups which meet preseason and postseason each year. These changes and clarifications were critical to help the athletic administrators in the league make the correct decisions related to rainout games, selection of all league athletes, playoffs, line ups and almost any other important issue relate to league competition. In the leagues I was involved in each sport had a “chair” and that chair was responsible for the updating of their particular sport(s). After input and voting on issues by the coaches this came to AD’s for approval and then became updates into the next years SOP manual.

The Parent and Student Athlete Handbook was developed for parent and student athlete meetings as a resource to both groups. The handbook lays out the expectations for student athletes as it relates to training rules, eligibility and sportsmanship expectations. I thought it was important to have the material for these two groups in the same document so that parents had access to expectations related to their children and our athletic program. At the same time I felt it important to lay out for parent what the clear rules of engagement were related to contact with our coaching staff related to their child’s participation. I also wanted a clear printed

message to parents around the topic of expected parent behavior at our games and events. This was an internal document and one that I updated each year. I also used this document when I met with each athletic program to go over the student athlete training rules.

The Coaches Handbook is an internal document that has everything to do with direction of our athletic program as it relates to our internal processes for our district athletic program. School board direction starts the manual out and details follow related to students, business processes, summer facility use, discipline, job descriptions and program policies and procedures. Almost every conceivable situation is covered from transfer students to transportation to summer camps. I made sure that each coach had one of these to start the fall as a resource. When used regularly by coaches it saved me time and energy answering questions that were already addressed.

The Marketing and Promotions handbook was a way for me to develop a plan and actual sales tool for the opportunities for businesses to join us in supporting our athletic program.

Individual options for local business involvement were listed with associated costs and then packaged for ease of decision making. Yearly events and their descriptions were also included along with some basic demographic information on our school and community so that a sponsor could see what the target market is. Once this is established, it will be a powerful tool year after year to achieve your marketing goals. With annual adjustments to inventory and descriptions this Marketing and Promotions Manual will give you great mileage throughout your career as an athletic administrator.

One area of growth that I believe most athletic directors need to look seriously at is their Emergency and Evacuation Procedures and Plan. Most likely you have faced a number of challenging situations at your facility where you jumped in and dealt with effectively but it was not due to a plan as much as your quick thinking and experience that saved the day. Often our facilities are significantly understaffed for any kind of major emergency and that is why I believe this manual is so critical to be developed and operational as quickly as possible. Be it a major on the field or court emergency, an accidental pepper spray incident, an active shooter incident, fire, drunk fans, a fight in your stands or even a lost child we need to be as prepared as possible for whatever might come our way as we manage our facilities. Once you have worked the plan through with your administration and other key district personnel, you are ready to begin training to meet your challenges with your key game management personnel. The last handbook I would like to address is your state association yearly handbook. Most, if not all state associations, have this material on line. I always like having a hard copy each year to be able spread open the pages and make sure I am catching it all vs. having to navigate around a page or pages. I would encourage you to have a hard copy on your bookshelf for easy reference and then replace it each year with the updated version.

Manuals and handbooks can assist you in giving you clear direction, gaining confidence from previously agreed upon procedures and the ability to make decisions as you have vetted your materials with others from your school or district as you complete your updates each year.

Don't neglect these important tools in your work each year. You will find this is time well invested as it will produce a great crop for you when the time is needed. You can develop your

own resources from scratch if you wish, however, borrowing from others to give you a start is something to think about or you can contact me for some templates if you want more direction.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. What is the current state of your manuals, handbooks and SOP's?*
- 2. What is one thing you could do immediately to assist you in becoming more focused on these important resources?*
- 3. Of the manuals listed in the chapter, which one needs the most work from you currently?*

Chapter 36

State Playoffs

Winning isn't everything, but wanting to win is. --Vince Lombardi

People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing. That's why we recommend it daily. --Zig Ziglar

While serving as the athletic director at Aloha High School in Beaverton OR for five years we went to a total of six state team playoffs. When I left and went to Tigard High School we went to playoffs in every sport every year that I was there. Socio economics had much to do with it. Tigard was a more established high school program and at Aloha we were in the midst of working through two new high schools openings over a five year period in our district and Aloha was hurt twice by the population shifts as the new schools opened. I was at a bit of a loss when we finally made it to a team playoff experience as to what exactly I was supposed to do. I was used to parents coming in and complaining about our coaching staff and lack of success after seasons ended instead of preparing our teams for the next season.

I learned much in subsequent years about how some coaches established traditions in the midst of “the third season” of state playoffs. Experienced athletic administrators encouraged coaches to keep practices similar but shorter, practice off site to get a different look perhaps in a larger facility, arranged tickets and travel and keeping our student body and community in touch with our options, timelines and brackets. What follows are a few thoughts about your preparation for this important time of community celebration and accomplishment.

I was told as a high school athlete that there are three seasons, preseason, regular league season and then post season. The high school basketball I played on was successful enough each year to expect to make a great third season run. It is a challenging thing for a team to set goals that they might not achieve or to get to the "third season" goal and find their goal was to make it to the playoffs but not to go further so they don't. We can often help our coaches think through how we might approach these unique and amazing times in the lives of our coaches and athletes. Despite the reality that only one team can win it all, I never liked to see a season end. I loved my coaches and the students taking part and know it would be a memory that would last a lifetime and one I wished that all of our student athletes and coaches could experience.

Coaches need to realize that students are tired despite the success that they have enjoyed together. Practices need to get shorter and more focused. You are preparing for one team at a time now and you need to be fresh for the stretch run. I have seen several coaches even move practices to another location, especially if the field or court size is going to change, so you had to adjust to a different environment like you will for the game. That is of course unless you are fortunate enough to host a playoff game at your home site. Make sure you talk to your coaches about these important preparatory thoughts for their upcoming playoff games...

Clear communication is important to your coaches, students, parents and community. Get the correct times up on your website as quickly as possible and make sure you have read through your state association's plan for playoffs that most likely exists on their website with the brackets. Information for AD's, coaches and fans is probably available on their site as well.

Everything from tickets, to game times, officials and the rest will be available to you on that site.

Read it thoroughly and have a conversation with your coach about what their concerns and needs will be. You will need to request substitute teachers for your coaching staff at some point and will want to get that in the pipeline.

Several times at Tigard High School I had parents or a parent support a roter bus for kids to go watch the game. If that is possible for you, make arrangements early so that the word gets out and you can do everything possible to pack that bus or buses. While playing the top ranked team in Oregon once, Aloha HS took a 4 hour road trip to South Medford, home of Kyle Singler the Duke and NBA star. We knew that our chances were slim but we had four busloads of students make the trip and despite the loss we had an amazing time as a school in celebration of our team's accomplishments. Make sure you have adult chaperones for your buses and make rules clear to those traveling to the game. Have parent permission forms signed by each student going on a school sponsored trip or don't let them get on the bus.

It won't take long but make sure you have communicated clearly to your visiting team school as to the bus parking, game cost, number of students expected, who will be representing your administration, etc. You will avoid problems by communicating clearly on the front end. If you want to have a warm up time after a long drive or walk through etc. make sure you have communicated this request as early as possible.

As with anything you do in the AD profession, having a checklist you can refer to will help you keep on track and not miss any important detail. I would encourage you to include the following as a start to your checklist on playoffs:

Sport, Place, Day, Time

Transportation

- Officials
- Game Management
- State Association requirements
- Booster Club
- Administration update
- Tickets for students
- Cheerleaders
- Band
- Halftime
- Website update
- Rooter bus and release forms
- Concessions ready
- Initial check in with head coach
- Custodian check in
- Facility set up/take down
- Ticket sellers/reconciliation

The third season is great honor and another opportunity to bring together your community and celebrate accomplishment in your community. Be at your best by being organized and on top of all of the details that are needed to run or participate in a state championship event. Your best work is expected when the eyes of the community are focused on you and your organizational and communication abilities.

Reflection Questions:

(1) What are your most significant concerns about hosting a state championship playoff event?

- (2) *What help do you need from other areas to make sure this event comes off without a hitch?*
- (3) *What place have you been in the past year that you felt did an outstanding job of hosting a playoff game or run to the state title game? How can you connect with them on this?*

Chapter 37

Athletic Director Health

The art of leadership is saying no, not saying yes. It is very easy to say yes. --Tony Blair

Last year in Oregon, of 286 total schools, 45 had a new athletic director hop on board. Change is not necessarily a bad thing, however, that much turnover, year after year will impact the quality of service received at each school, their individual leagues and eventually have an impact on the quality of the overall high school athletic program being delivered state wide. Why are athletic directors leaving in such significant numbers? Is the experience itself taking a toll on athletic directors to the degree that getting out of the profession seems the sane way to continue life? The athletic director position is very demanding, often stressful, filled with long hours and often lower pay than comparable jobs elsewhere in the school system. It is my observation that athletic directors need to take better care of themselves so they can last. This begins and ends with the AD taking themselves seriously enough to care for themselves. AD's are the ultimate "take care of others" in word and deed and often invested in others well beyond a healthy investment in their own lives and health.

Burnout has been defined as *"A state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion or extreme frustration caused by devotion to a cause, a way of life or a relationship that failed*

to produce the expected reward." says Herbert J. Freudenberger, PhD. As athletic administrators we have high emotional commitment to the work we do each day. With that emotion comes expectations, our expectations lead us to wish and want things to turn out the way we want, expect or plan. With our work ethic, commitment and amount of time spent on the job it might be easy to assume that we can out work a problem or challenge. When that does not take place this disappointment can lead us to wonder if the original effort was worth the cost. These feelings can lead to burnout. Factors leading to burnout can include some or all of the following:

- Unclear requirements or expectations
- Impossible requirements
- High Stress Times with no down time
- Big consequences for failure
- Lack of personal control over our work
- Lack of recognition for the long hours we are investing
- Poor communication from those who lead us □ Poor leadership from those that lead us.
- Insufficient compensation

Symptoms that burnout may be starting to take place in your life may be observed in the following ways:

- Physical Exhaustion (fatigue) ● Loss of Appetite
- Substance Abuse ● Overeating
- Insomnia ● Negative Attitude to

- Negative Attitude to Work Athletes/Students
- Feelings of Helplessness ● Poor Work Performance
- Absenteeism ● Negative Self-Concept
- Psychosomatic Illness ● Lack of Enthusiasm

If you are feeling and going through several of these symptoms currently, then I would urge you to find someone professionally to talk with. The ability to share your challenges and struggles with others is a key indicator of someone who is healthy and willing to work these challenges through to a successful conclusion.

Some specific ways you can combat the stress and challenge of your position involve taking seriously the following:

1. **Relaxation Exercises**-stretching, meditation, music. Finding a time each day to give yourself that freedom to be quiet and think through your day and week.
2. **Regular Physical Exercise**-personal fitness. The ability to run, walk, bike, lift weights will give you a physical release that will assist you in combating your daily stress.
3. **Create a Social Support System**-talk with other coaches or friends. We all need people in our lives that really know what is truly going on with us at our base level. If you don't have friends like that now, who might be a couple you could pursue? We are in a lonely, singled out place on our campuses.
4. **Set realistic goals** without overdue emphasis on winning-define your goals. Both short term and long term with the key being realistic about what you can truly accomplish.

5. **Positive Self-Talk**-Learn to listen to yourself, eliminate negative thoughts. Write down a couple of paragraphs about yourself, which are true when you are at your best. Great athletes use visualization as a powerful tool for success every day.
6. **Get Away**-family, time alone, vacation. Value yourself enough to plan and take a yearly vacation while monthly and weekly allowing time and energy for yourself and the outside activities that bring you joy.
7. **Professional Development**-attend a conference and coaching clinics. Again giving yourself the freedom and investment of getting away and in a positive learning environment.

Your job is critical to your family and community. Don't let your job define your life to the point where you are not living a healthy life. Make a commitment to get exercise and the rest necessary to have a healthy attitude and outlook on your life and work. Reach out and develop close relationships with a few others that can assist you in being your best.

Reflection Questions:

1. *Are you exhibiting any burnout signs currently from the list above? If so which ones?
What will you do to combat these impacts on your life and work?*
2. *What do you do to stay "healthy" in your life and work?*
3. *After reading this chapter what is one thing you can do to assist yourself become healthier in your life and work?*

Chapter 38

The Art of Having Difficult Conversations

No man ever listened himself out of a job. --Calvin Coolidge

Better to Remain Silent and Be Thought a Fool than to Speak and

Remove All Doubt. --Abraham Lincoln

The things I never say never get me into trouble. --Calvin Coolidge

A truth that is evident almost every day: we get to have challenging and difficult conversations on a consistent basis. It is a reality of our work. We cannot pretend that these are occasional or a blip on the screen of our work life “incidents”. These can take place almost any moment of any day. We need to be prepared for the conversations and not surprised by them.

Challenging conversations are always a perspective issue for each of us as well. What might feel or appear to be a challenging conversation for me may not be the same for you or another athletic administrator. These conversations can take place with your coaches, your athletic secretary, a parent, booster club member, student athlete or fellow staff member. These conversations can catch us off guard and if we are not prepared we can say something that we might wish we had not said, but now is too late to take back.

I was told that we have two ears and one mouth and that we should use those in that proportion. Listening and truly hearing another individual while they are sharing with us will take discipline and the ability to not react to provocative, challenging or inflammatory statements that come our way. We must try to detach ourselves from taking things personally long enough to make sure we are truly hearing what is being said. Our willingness to serve the other person by making sure we truly understand what they are saying will help to alleviate

misunderstanding the problem. Author and speaker Stephen Covey said of differing points of view “When you really listen to another person from their point of view, and reflect back to them that understanding, it's like giving them emotional oxygen.” It takes a great deal of discipline when we are “ambushed” by another and all of a sudden we find ourselves in the middle of what can feel like a firestorm. We must be patient, not take the comments personally and see if we can get to the issue as clearly as possible.

I have a friend who asks the question “What is the IS behind the issue”? Meaning that we must get to the real reason or emotion or fact behind the feelings we are sharing with each other. We will have the best possible outcome to the challenging conversation if we are able to step back and not take things personally.

Often when I get in competitive and challenging conversations I can make the mistake of losing my way because I want to ‘win’ the conversation. What that means for me is that I want to not take responsibility or ownership of situations instead I want to deflect all toward the other person. Usually these conversations don’t come out in a positive ending. When I open myself to the possibility that I might have had something to do with the situation and am willing to hear the other person and make sure to understand their point of view, a positive conclusion to the conversation is possible.

Another key in difficult conversations is to use “I” statements not “you” statements. Like, YOU said this or YOU did this before etc. Own your concerns and don’t blame or use accusatory language toward others you are having a challenging conversation with as it will inflame the

other person and turn the conversation more personal than it was previously. Do your best to own your own comments and be clear about what you want to have happen in the conversation. Think, "I really want us to come to a positive conclusion to this conversation today and not let this conversation linger on, do you see this as possible?"

Use reframing and other tools during the conversation to make sure you are truly hearing the other person, for instance, you could say, "What I hear you saying is _____ is that accurate?" Recap the conversation as it continues. If you can have paper and pen in hand that might be helpful in recording key points of the conversation and it will help you to be a little slower in your responses so you don't get goaded into saying things that you will regret later.

Be direct but be kind. You don't have to treat others as you are being treated, we all have a choice. If we are going to be honest, no one can make us feel a certain way, we choose to have our feelings and emotions. At some point in the conversation, if it gets really heated or out of control, you might say, "I want to have a successful conclusion to this conversation, let's take a break on this for the remainder of the day", few minutes, an hour or so.

Be even handed as the conversation draws to a close and you are able to put the words spoken by both of you in context. Find out if you are at a conclusion to the conversation and what the exact action steps will be following the conversation. Take some time following the conversation to reflect upon how it went and how you felt you did. Ask yourself, what would you do differently next time? Make sure you make some notes or whatever your follow through is on the conversation that took place. Your action will speak volumes to the person you just spoke with if you follow through quickly on what was agreed upon.

Reflection Questions:

(1) Reflect upon your most recent challenging or difficult conversation. How did you do?

What would you do differently if anything?

(2) Do you see a difficult conversation coming up soon with someone? What will you need to prepare to be ready for this?

(3) How can you share this information with your coaching staff so you can help them prepare for these conversations in their work life?

Chapter 39

Working with your State Associations

No man will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself or get all the credit for doing it.

Andrew Carnegie

You can talk about teamwork on a baseball team, but I'll tell you, it takes teamwork when you have 2,900 men stationed on the U.S.S. Alabama in the South Pacific. Bob Feller In Oregon

we are fortunate to have strong working relationships with all of our representative state associations.

- **OSAA**—Oregon Schools Activities Association. Regulates high school athletic and activities in the state of Oregon. Gives leadership to leagues, playoffs and other rules related to participation and competition. Is managed by several full time staff but primarily member schools are the ones who are giving leadership on a daily basis through representative principals and superintendents.
- **OADA**—Oregon Athletic Directors Association. Provides leadership representing athletic administrators to the OSAA process and a board of athletic directors organize and lead the group to serve athletic administrators. Headed by a part time Executive Director, the board truly runs the organization and helps provide leadership training opportunities and the annual state conference. Has a representative on the OSAA board.

- **OAOA**—Oregon Athletic Officials Association. A representative board made up of current officials from many sports who are there to serve member needs and high school competition throughout the state. Has a representative on the OSAA board.
- **OATA**—Oregon Athletic Trainers Association. Representing the needs and concerns of athletic trainers throughout the state of Oregon.
- **OACA**—Oregon Athletic Coaches Association. OACA board is made up of representative sport coaches from throughout the state of Oregon. Annual NIKE football clinic is one of many ways that the OACA supports Oregon coaches. Representative sits on the OSAA board representing Oregon High School coaches.

Each state may have a bit different structure but it will be similar to what is described above. You will need to decide on your own how connected you are willing to be to the state structures that help to run sport in your state. Leadership positions are often available to those interested in serving their fellow high school sport leadership folks. Input is received at the annual state AD conference on a number of issues that will impact high school sports for subsequent years. The AD votes on these subjects are only one vote of many as it relates to the approval or changes related to how sport is organized and led into the future.

I can say that one of the most personally rewarding times of my life is when I was on the OADA board representing high school athletic directors from all over the state. Working my way up the chain of command, I started as the Secretary/Treasurer, then the Vice President, then the President, then the Past President, then served as the Leadership Training Institute (LTI) chair for the state. I enjoyed learning about the history and positive work of the OADA board and

was grateful to make good long term friends with others who were committed to serve others in the state. It was very fun, I grew professionally and made friends from all over the US as a result. Eventually my investment in this group led to national volunteer leadership roles.

If you are interested in taking part there are a number of ways to stick your toe in the water before you jump in with both feet.

- Show up at meetings of your state activities association. We have delegate assembly meetings where those in attendance can discuss what is going on and what specific issues are gaining a hearing among schools.
 - Volunteer at your state conference to teach an LTI class, a workshop or lead a discussion.
 - Support other organizations during their annual meetings or special events.
 - Go to open state association meetings during regular scheduled board meetings.
- Volunteer led organizations doing great work are always looking for gifted and motivated people like you to jump in and get involved. Don't disappoint them by staying away, use your gifts by serving your fellow athletic directors and coaches in your state.

Reflection Questions:

- (1) Which state association group are you most familiar with?*
- (2) Which one are you least familiar with?*

(3) *What gift might you bring to one of the listed groups listed above? How do you see yourself being invested more deeply?*

Chapter 40

Student Athlete Discipline

When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it. --Henry Ford

Fall seven times and stand up eight—Japanese Proverb

To begin each fall, on the first Friday of school at Tigard High School an assembly is held in the football stadium. Every student and staff person attends. My third year at Tigard HS in Tigard OR, our starting quarterback was found to be chewing tobacco in the stands during the assembly and then lied about it. Our first game was that night. He was suspended per our student athlete rules for three weeks pending an assessment of his use and issues related to tobacco. It seems that he felt that he could get away with this because he was our starting QB. QB was very visible and important at our school so this was not an easy decision but it was the correct decision. It was a pressure filled situation and not easy. We had to pull our back up QB out of class to get him up to speed on the situation and not let it be a disappointing situation for our team. This player let his whole team down by his behavior.

Recently I had a discussion with a good friend who is coaching high school softball in the Portland OR area. He became aware of a situation over spring break where a student athlete on a softball team (not his) was allowed to play over spring break despite being academically

ineligible. The parents called the AD to complain because a daughter was not playing because this ineligible athlete was allowed to play. The AD in discussion with the coach after the incident let him know that this was a firing offense for knowingly playing an ineligible player in a contest. They would need to report to the state association what took place and possibly face a fine if the ineligibility was part of the state mandated eligibility issue.

Other examples of potential student athlete discipline that you might have to address include; athletes gathering for a Friday night party at some student's house and not only violating their school training rules but they post pictures of the party and a number of student athletes on Facebook. Once these pictures make their way to the school and the administration, what are you going to do with what you know? Perhaps you are reading your local paper on a Saturday morning and notice in the police report a DUI arrest of one of your student athletes is mentioned. Now what?

Student athlete discipline is an issue most athletic administrators will deal with several times each year. The following are some thoughts on working through student athlete discipline related to your athletic program.

- Immediately get your administration in the loop so that you are all on the same page. Let your principal or vice-principal know exactly what has happened as you understand it.
- Find out more, from your coach, the student(s) involved and any other personnel that might know more about the incident.

- Write down the information that you receive so you have it all in one place. Once you have more information it is a bit like peeling back an onion, you keep going down layer by layer until you get to the core issues and who was involved.
 - Realize that as this takes place there will be several layers to the ongoing research and interviews from your sources.
 - You are not responsible (at least in Oregon) to immediately notify the parents about your interviewing their child.
 - You can be sure that despite your best efforts to keep this quiet and get the best information possible you will have students sharing this information by text, email and potentially twitter and Facebook.
 - You may begin to receive calls or emails from parents of the students involved related to your current “investigation” of the incident. They may share their angst, anger, frustration and might even do their best to stall, evade or actually change their student’s or other student’s stories.
 - Keep your administration in the loop as you talk with others. Don’t share anything with anyone that does not need to know this information.
 - You do need to do your best to protect the information that is shared with you.
- After you collect all the information that can be verified one way or another then if you are not an administrator you most likely will need to sit down with the administrator you report to so you can walk your leadership through what you

know, how you know it and what you see as the athletic policy that relates to the incident involved and what you plan to do with this discipline wise.

Then you must sit down with the student, coach and potentially the parents involved and share what you know and what you plan to do with the information you have become aware of.

Despite your best efforts in working with this age group, often students will not think past their noses when things happen. What seemed like a good idea the night before no longer seems like a great decision in the light of day. Rather than being the vindictive, angry and judgmental person, you might have a right to be, you must share your disappointment and the subsequent damage and decision on what happens when training rules are broken.

I worked hard each year to make sure that five things took place each year related to participation in our program relating to our training rooms:

1. Parents would be notified about our training rule expectations somewhere on the release form they signed related to their child's participation in the athletic program
2. Student athletes would have a group discussion with their team and coach about the training rules. I had designed a parent/student athlete book that had all of our training rules, written in one place.
3. I would meet with each sport to make sure they were clear on our expectations related to:
 - a. Tobacco/Drugs/alcohol use
 - b. Class attendance days of practices and games
 - c. Grade expectations

- d. What it means to us to be a good citizen and representative of our school and program.
4. I would attend each parent meeting of each sport to make sure that I was able to address parents related to expected parent behavior and our training rules.
5. Training rules and citizenship expectation are posted on our website.

We might think that all of this preparation related to sharing clearly our expectations for behavior and what it means to be a good teammate would lead to a zero tolerance for poor behavior, but human nature overcomes training often and in this case it certainly is true. The sad thing is that the 3-5% of student athletes who don't follow established rules can impact their teammates and even the teams' season in significant ways.

As you work the situation through with your administration you will want to discuss briefly the potential fall out of the decisions you will be making related to the student(s) involved and the team that is impacted. Having a brief discussion related to how information will be shared and what potential community feedback you might receive will be important as you want to do all you can to move beyond the problem once it has been recognized, understood and thoroughly vetted.

Reflection Questions:

1. *Of the five examples shared regarding notification in preseason of school training rules and expected behavior, which ones are you currently undertaking?*
2. *Of the incidents you have already dealt with at your school, how can you do a more thorough job to get to the truth and subsequent decision?*

3. *Do your schools training rules need updating? How do you see them being of benefit to your school, community and student athletes?*

Chapter 41

Meeting the Challenge of Club Sports

Build your own dreams, or someone else will hire you to build theirs. --Farrah Gray

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

Martin Luther King Jr.

We are not just propagating a sports program at our schools. We are about using the vessel of sport to teach life skills and hold our student athletes to be students first and athletes second.

We have a philosophical difference between educational athletics and club sports.

Having had a son and daughter participate in both club sports and educational based athletics, I have some observations related to the differences between the two different sport forms. One of the main advantages most often mentioned by “experts” about club sport over educational based athletics is that club sports are the way to go to get scholarship offers and the only real way. These “experts” are often club sports people themselves who are focused more on the financial realities of sport than on the people development part of the equation. Educational based athletics is focused on teaching the life skills that sport lends itself to and starts that by requiring student athletes to be athletes first. I would never disagree that if you want to earn a scholarship that club sports will get you more of that exposure. However, the dependency that many parents have on the club model equaling a college scholarship creates expectations on

their children and the coaches involved that can never be realized. Not everyone's child on every club team will be playing on a college scholarship due to their club sport involvement.

The financial investment to take part in a high level of club sport (soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball, swimming, tennis, golf and softball) can easily run into the \$4,000-\$12,000 range yearly.

The NFHS (National Federation of State High Schools) coaches training states that for a coach to have maximum impact they must be able to demonstrate excellence in four areas:

- Tactical expertise
- Technical expertise
- Relational expertise
- Organizational expertise

The majority of the club coaches I have observed rely heavily on their tactical and technical expertise over the other two areas. Organization is handled by a team parent, details about travel, uniforms, equipment etc. Relational expertise is allowed to slip as we all know the only important thing is winning, so tactical and technical win the day. People are not developed in this scenario, only the athlete part of the person is. Sport is not a vehicle to teach life skills but is a marketing opportunity for a college scholarships. Despite the fact that all folks are paying the same amount to play a club sport, playing time is only about the top several kids on each team. What happens to those parents then who think their child will win a scholarship to college on this team that they are not playing on? They usually become disgruntled and leave for a "better opportunity" somewhere else.

In educational based athletics then it is critical that we don't fall into the same mentality as the club sport mentality and focus our efforts overly on the winning of games at the expense of team and individual growth. High school sports will never win the battle against club sports when it comes to winning scholarships, remember that is not a purpose for educational based athletics.

In the past several years two articles have come out in national publications advocating for the elimination of high school sports. One reason cited is they are costly, prevent the entire school from having more educational based opportunities, and clubs can fill the gap because sport has been boiled down to an exchange for college scholarship opportunities. The most recent article called "the Case against High School Sports and Activities" in the October 2013 Atlantic magazine was challenged by the head of the NFHS on several points.

- Attendance at high school events continues to rise; 510 million people watched a high school sport last year despite the articles assertion that attendance is down.
- Participation continues to rise each year and has for past 22 years. This past year over 1.6 million participants nationwide. This despite the assertion that US high school sport participation is down and irrelevant and that we need to pursue a European model of club sport.
- The achievement of student athletics academically continues to outpace that of the general student population at high schools around the US and this is an issue few club teams are concerned about other than occasional grade checks.

Club sports have little interest outside the small circle of participants and their families.

Winning a “club state title” gains scant attention locally, regionally or nationally except for those that are participants. High school sports help to build community, self-confidence, life skills and are not socio economically based sport experiences. Yes I would agree club sports are the place to earn a scholarship, but high school sport is truly about the 97% of students for whom athletic participation is not about winning a state title. Sometimes there are bigger wins to fight for than that of scholarship athletics.

An area that we need to continue to be mindful of and ready to address involves how we will incorporate club sport focused students into our programs. Many parents on the one hand will reject high school athletics and then turn around and desire their child to take part in a sport because they want to see their child win a state title in something, again all about the win. So what do we do with athletes who are missing team workouts to participate in a club sport and then want to play on the school team as well? How can we require our “regular team members” to participate daily in practice and other team oriented activities but then be joined by a “mercenary” attitude athlete when games approach? Is not a team more than the individuals that make it up? These are challenging issues in each one of our communities as often the athletes in question are our athletes in other sports.

We must be prepared to realize the philosophical differences that exist between the two and when given opportunity and the forum to do so, share why we are committed to students winning friends and lifelong skills over winning a college athletic scholarship. We are the guardians of an impactful program and we must always do our best to answer our critics with

more than philosophy in return. We need to continue to prove our facts with the evidence of impactful lifelong athletic impact on our academic goals and lifelong learning. Let us all be ready for a challenge that is not going away.

Reflection Questions:

1. *What are you most significant current club sport issues?*
2. *What is your schools philosophy on playing club and school sports at the same time?*
3. *How can you have an impact in your area related to the differing philosophical differences between club and educational based athletics?*

Chapter 42 Making your coaching staff your TEAM

The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person who is doing it. --Chinese Proverb

Without a doubt one of my favorite things I enjoy about the interscholastic athletic administrator role is the ability to build my coaches into a team. Building your coaches into an operating team is not easy and does not happen overnight but we can put our own coaching hats on for a moment and strategize as to how we might build a team around our own athletic program.

Teams are not built easily and certainly not without a great deal of effort. Teams go through cycles to be their best. There are four ways that a group of individuals become an actual team.

They include:

- **Forming** is the actual way you go about creating an atmosphere where everyone knows that they are a part of something special and unique and their gifts and talent are needed to make it a reality. People all buy into the mission and the power of a team begins to show sign of life.
- **Norming** is where we appreciate each person's unique contribution and where roles are recognized and assigned. One on your staff may be the detail person, another a compassionate caring encourager, another a visionary, another the fun loving sort that keeps the team loose. All need to be recognized and encouraged.
- **Storming** is natural when you get highly motivated, verbal, competitive people together. Some of the old guard may resent the fact that their "place" has changed. When this happens, don't worry, life as you know it is not over, people are vying for your attention and their place in the universe on your team.
- **Performing** this is where you get people together and moving in the same direction. Your mission becomes paramount and you have people lined up where they should be. You have accomplished what author Jim Collins in his book Good to Great describes when he says "the right people on the bus, wrong people off the bus and the right people in the right spots". You will need to battle your desire to build your athletic department team and their own desire to build their teams and programs. But you can help model what your expectations are and show them how to build team along the way.

My goal with all of my coaches was to see them become what Bruce Brown of Proactive Coaching refers to as coaches who are *Coaching for Significance*. These type of coaches are intentional coaches, character based people who share love for an activity. As your coaches love their sport and their team members, the impact is *life lessons*. The overarching goal is to make kids better adults. You can take that same approach with your staff. This type of coach lives in the application mode. They want to win and try to do so but want to impact lives more than anything. As the athletic department leader you are all about building coaches who committed to the athletic program mission and who will live it out in the lives of their athletes by becoming a coach committed to significance.

There are three reasons that coaches build trust with their athletes and teams and they apply to you as the “coach of the coaches”:

1. Professional preparation-(knowledge, teaching ability, style)
2. Personal caring
3. Purposeful Character

Your professional preparation is the first critical element of your ability to build your coaching staff into a successful, motivated and gifted unit. Your ability to teach, give practical and helpful knowledge and your style will impact your ability to build credibility and trust with your staff. Bruce Brown of Proactive Coaching shares in his booklet, [The Impact of Trust](#) the traits that demonstrate being professionally prepared:

1. **You have a “coaching style”.** Your leadership style better be understood by you or it will be difficult to share it with others. Often our biggest challenge is to “overcome our coaching” and find our unique coaching voice and style.
2. **Trusted coaches never stop learning.** Are you hungry to get better and is that obvious to all who work for you? These traits are ones that you will pass on to your staff if you in fact are living them out yourself. Be hungry to get better. John Wooden said “it is what you learn after you know it all that counts”.
3. **Trusted coaches plan.** Be sure you are all over all the details your coach needs to be successful. Take care of business; this builds trust with your staff.
4. **Trusted coaches can teach.** Be it about your district requirements, coaching techniques, or parent relationships, you need to be able to teach your coaches effectively.
5. **Trusted coaches motivate.** You can learn this skill if you are not a natural motivator. You don’t need to be Vince Lombardi to be an effective motivator. You want to assist your staff in being their very best every day. One speaker said you must be able to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable”.
6. **Trusted coaches clarify expectations.** Don’t assume that what your understanding is, is the same as your staff. Your lack of clarity will lead to confusion and coaches doing their own thing vs. what you want them to be doing. Be clear, crystal clear, in your expectations.

7. **Trusted coaches are secure people.** You should carry your leadership title etc. lightly. You must be able to demonstrate the ability to laugh at yourself and display your selfconfidence when push back or disagreement take place. One person put it this way “First rate people are confident enough to hire first rate people”. Are you such a person?
8. **Trusted coaches are great workers.** Are you a great worker? Do you show up every day prepared, organized, motivated, and ready for action? This approach will win you fans on your coaching staff.
9. **Trusted coaches have a style that encourages fearless competition.** Mentally tough, fearless and determined. Are you living this out before your coaching staff?

Your ability to share personal care is critical to building a staff of coaches that share the same with their athletes and assistant coaches in their programs. Knowledge is critical and without it you won't be your most effective, however knowledge without care falls short of the true reason for the knowledge in the first place. The business world reports that only 42% of employees believe that management cares about them at all. Does your coaching staff share that percentage?

There are six primary ways that coaches demonstrate personal caring in building their teams:

1. Positive talk
2. Loyalty
3. Show genuine interest. Listen when spoken to.
4. Give credit to your coaching staff. Be an encourager.
5. Be accountable (admit mistakes)

6. Confront out of love. Be consistent. Deal with them openly, honestly and fairly

The third and final reason, that coaches build trust with their teams is through purposeful, intentional and consistent character. You must be a person of honor if you want to lead your coaching staff down the same path. Your skills and knowledge may be great and you can show personal concern for others but it will be sorely lacking in the end if you don't follow it up with your own character being above reproach. It is difficult, if not impossible, to hold your coaching staff to high ideals if yours are not the same. Your personal integrity and willingness to live a real and authentic life in front of your coaches is not a *tell* thing, instead it is a most important *do* thing.

Making your staff **your team** takes work and a commitment to live out what you want your coaches to live out to all of your student athletes. Share the load with your staff, start with your agreed upon mission statement and decide together how you can best live this out in community with all of your various gifts, talents and abilities. It is an investment of time and effort that will pay off time after time.

Reflection questions:

- 1. Of the three areas reasons described above; what is your strongest area and the area that needs most work with your staff?*
- 2. Of the four team building stages, where do you see your coaching staff currently (forming, norming, storming, performing)*
- 3. What are a couple of things from this chapter that you can do to increase the unity and effectiveness of your coaching staff team?*

Chapter 43

Out of Building Coaches

If the wind will not serve, take to the oars. --Latin Proverb

By some estimate we are nearing around 50% of our current coaching staffs coming from outside the realm of education. It seemed challenging enough when we had educator coaches coming to our school from another school outside our building. Our newest challenge is presented to us in that most of these off campus coaches have had no formal training in educational philosophy, coaching pedagogy or even school and state wide coaching expectations.

Your first thinking needs to be *what training do my in building coaches have that this new head coach needs that most likely he will not be in touch with.*? This will include training like:

- First aid and CPR, AED
- Sexual harassment
- Child abuse reporting
- Use of buildings and keys
- Transportation
- Process of hiring assistants
- State required coaches education training
- Practice planning and game schedules

Even if this coach were a former assistant and is now moving into a head coaching position at your school they will need you to assist them in organizing and thinking through all the pieces of the puzzle needed to make a high school athletic program really sing.

One of the challenges for an out of building coach might be to see themselves a piece of the larger community athletically. They are not just coaching one team, as is often the case with community connected coaches, you are asking them to run a program with multiple levels,

assistant coaches all of which fit into the larger picture of your athletic program. How are they able to grasp this? It is critically important to their success and vitality in the high school athletic community that they are able to understand and embrace this reality.

Taking some deliberate time to walk your new head coach through the overall training rules and expectations of educational attainment in the athletic program will be very important.

Grade checks, grade requirements and class attendance required for eligibility purposes will need to be explained and then updated as you get information.

You will need to determine the best way for you to connect with this new community coach.

Email, text, phone or otherwise inform how often you plan to see this coach during the season.

It's important to share upfront so that neither of you have unmet expectations in this area. It

would be best to talk about how your coach will connect with students outside of practice and

games and make sure that you are clear about your expectations related to their use of social

media with the student athletes in his/her care Lastly, you will want to be clear about the

evaluation cycle that you use as the AD. When will it happen and how will it happen? You

will want to address as early as possible after selection of your out of building coach the

balance of winning and losing and their philosophy vs. yours. How will the importance of

winning be addressed by the coach? How does the balance of winning/losing vs. life skills look

in their coaching life? How will they go about making sure that life skills will be taught in an

organized, effective way and what specific life skills will they emphasize? This is a very

important discussion if you see the main purpose of athletics being the personal growth of the

participants.

Communication, safety and logistics can be challenging with out of building coaches so your ability to communicate clearly regarding student safety, travel and clear communication will help to get the coach off on the right foot and keep your relationship on solid ground. While you don't want to assume a community coach will not have the same level of diligence toward athletes, a school district usually has a different level of expectation from a community sport program. Walking your new coach through your district's expectations about student record information, confidentiality, use of school vehicles and facilities. You would prefer to deal with things on the front end vs. the back end of issues related to students and school district policies. Often times the time commitment by off campus coaches is not fully understood, especially as a head coach. Make sure that the full year of time expectation is clear both during the season and out of season. You will also need to assist your coach in doing the proper paperwork to get paid in your system. Best to make sure you take care of that in your initial meeting after hiring. You will also want to keep tabs on who the new coach might be hiring as the assistant coaches for the program and the subsequent needs those coaches will have if out of building as well. Finding out of building coaches can be something that might happen through your former coach, through prior contacts with community members, prior personal experience with a coach, from a suggestion of a student athlete or from your area youth programs. Do a superb job of vetting coaches from the community so that you are truly aware of what the coach brings to the school and sport from both on and off the field of play.

Reflection Questions:

1. *What is your biggest concern about hiring off campus coaches?*

2. *What has been your experience with off campus coaches thus far in your AD career?*
3. *What are two distinct positives that off campus coaches bring to your staff?*

Chapter 44

Multiple Sport Athletes

You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try. --Beverly Sills Is

our desire to see athletes play multiple sports simply a “throw back” to a bygone era of short shorts and shorter haircuts? Where athletes said *ma'am* and *sir* and in the end everyone watched the black and white TV screen and all was well? Is it realistic in this day and time of focused energy to expect teenage athletes to devote themselves to several sports at once? Does not the multiple sport athlete hurt our high schools because it means our teams will never reach their true potential with specialization discouraged?

How do we make a “case” for both sides of the equation and then try our best to assist our staff and community in finding their way as it relates to the discussion around multiple sport athletes in a school?

Each situation is a bit different. In some cases schools are so small that if students did not take part in multiple sports, offering certain sport teams would not be possible, while bigger schools who compete against other large schools cannot have their best athletes opt out of multiple sports as it hurts their chances of competing as well.

Club sport pressure in the larger communities has helped to impact focus on one sport over all others. The expectation with this investment of time, money and coaching focus for the young person to gain as much publicity and skill improvement as possible leading to a college scholarship. The unfortunate truth of this investment is that it is not a guarantee of reward toward the anticipated college scholarship desired. I read a recent article that laid out the case

for overuse injuries from younger athletes who are overtraining and with the focus on one sport leading to overuse injuries that put their desired goal of a college scholarship in jeopardy at young ages. The high school vs. club mentality is alive in well throughout Oregon (volleyball, soccer, swimming, basketball, tennis, golf). Parents want their cake and to eat it too. Many want their children to have the opportunity to win a state championship in their particular sport and at the same time have the opportunity to play with other likeminded athletes on a set apart club team. The impact that this has had on the lives of the high school teams has been significant. How many practices does the “club” athlete have to make to be “eligible” to compete on the HS team? This “bargaining” with the “better athletes” among us causes disunity and a lack of trust from athlete to coach as the school athletes in question are living up to agreed upon commitments to take part on a team that are not being met by the “better athlete” members who are playing both. Interesting that the same parent who might be in your office one day to tell you that *HS sports don't matter, only club sports matter* due to more college coaches watching club sports, will be back in your office the next day to talk about how he/she wants their child to experience a state championship and so be allowed to play without meeting practice and other team expectations. The emphasis on self could not be clearer in the midst of these discussions.

We cannot teach team and unity, sacrifice and commitment while negotiating individual “contracts” with each student on each team.

Can athletes become stale by playing one sport all year? I played about 35 high school basketball summer league games each summer of high school and then around 25 games each high school season with some fall and spring open gyms as well thrown in along the way. Middle school basketball players in the Portland area can play 35-60 games per season (fall, winter, spring, summer) thereby playing 140-240 games per year with no real break. What this equation believes then is that game play is the most important aspect of an athlete's development. Anyone who has coached long knows that you refine and hone your skills through well-organized team and individual drills that lead to expertise. Game play does not hone skills due to the lack of focused repetition. The least we can do is to share this information with parents who can help make informed decisions vs. making decisions that other parents are making because that is the current best group thinking. The question at least needs to be raised, what does the child truly want? Do they have a true vote in the process?

Playing multiple sports allows for a variety of experiences by our young athletes. Many coaches supportive of multiple sport athletes would share that they are concerned about their athletes becoming *competition ready* vs. *skills ready*. Sports like football and track are less about specific skills in most positions and are influenced more by developing true athletic skills that will be useful in most any sport. By being in different pressure situations and showing a breadth of decision making and using different muscle groups in different sports, a student athlete grows in their ability to make important decisions in different contexts. By sacrificing the individual needs for the group needs the athlete learns much about commitment, trust, sacrifice and

teamwork. To those athletes pursuing specializing in a sport they would admit it is the easier and less challenging approach to playing multiple sports on a school team. .

Some schools are offering incentives for students to play multiple sports by offering a “third sport free” option as many parents are concerned about the overall cost of sport participation which goes well beyond a one sport participation fee when you add summer team camp expenses, shoes and other related gear purchases, overnights and organized team functions to already existing fees. This is a fact that many school districts find themselves caught between wanting to encourage as many students to participate as possible without having to put out too much money to run the athletic program.

I know of several schools that are trying to find creative ways to honor their three sport athletes each year and over the life of a high school career by having special recognition ceremonies and special awards created for those that create distinction for themselves by taking part in multiple sports at the end of each year.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. Are you a proponent of multiple sport involvement? If so why? If not why not?*
- 2. Do you agree with allowing “club” sport athletes to take part during the same season on a high school team? If so how should these challenges be worked out?*
- 3. Is it time to loosen up our fascination with multiple sport athletes at the high school level as an antiquated notion?*

Chapter 45

Budgeting

If you always do what you have always done, you always get what you always got.

There has been a budget crunch in athletics all over the US. It has been particularly severe here in Oregon. Athletics used to be a protected segment of the annual budget discussion, but no more. Participation fees began in Oregon around 20 years ago and have only increased since then. Budgets in districts are being built around participation fees, gate receipts and in some cases fundraising as well. When I competed in high school athletics as a student back in the 1970's, the athletic and activities budget was viewed as a vital part of a "free and compulsory" education. That philosophy has changed greatly and with it the landscape of high school athletics across our country. Participation fees seem to range from \$125-\$250 per sport per season per athlete which are supported in most cases by an individual and family cap. Scholarships are sometimes available as are the use of payment plan for fees if needed in some cases.

The National Federation of State High School Associations states "At a cost of only one to three percent (or less in many cases) of an overall school's budget, high school activity programs are one of the best bargains around. It is in these vital programs – sports, music, speech, drama, debate – where young people learn lifelong lessons as important as those taught in the classroom. Unfortunately, there appears to be a creeping indifference toward support for high

school activity programs by the general public...This neglect undermines the educational mission of our schools and the potential prosperity of our communities.

As we begin to discuss the budget with our school district we need to be aware first of the cost of the athletic program when juxtaposed to the overall general fund budget. With average schools around the country getting 1-3% of the budget we need to know what our current allocation is in our district and begin to find ways to make the case for the 1-3% number for your district. The publication listed above, The Case for Athletics and Activities lays out the benefits associated with participation in these vital co-curricular programs. I say co-curricular because we are teaching skills and abilities that are not being taught in our regular education classrooms and to be called extracurricular belies the importance that these programs bring to the places we are serving every day. This language issue may appear to be simply semantics but it is in reality much more than that. We are teaching life skills as much as a teacher in math or social studies is teaching their important lessons. We must be able to share this message and share it in practical ways that have evidence behind our statements. As discussions continue around our country about what is centerpiece to an education to those attending, we need to be ready to enter the discussion with our proven outcomes of clear impact on the lives of those that participate.

So we have made our case of the 1-3% of general fund budget needs. We need two things to go along with this, realistic numbers related to needs and a clear way of keeping track of every penny. Since these are tax dollars that are being spent in support of the program, we had better have an efficient system that allows us to show on a PowerPoint presentation how we spent the

money allocated to us and that we did not go over our allotted budgets. Overspending our budgets by claiming we have more need than allowed is a bad way to go to ask for more direct support. If we keep track of our expenses in a clear, direct and efficient way then we can ask for more support if we know exactly where those dollar are headed.

I asked several Oregon athletic directors for their ideas about taking care of and maximizing their current budgets, here is what they told me:

- Know what you are allotted and what you really are responsible for! My first year, I was told that there was no budget for playoffs! So, I had to skim from accounts that had not been spent all the way down each season to build a budget. A couple of years later, we were told mid-year that paying for game management was no longer coming out of general fund and would come out of athletics. KNOW what you are responsible for.
- Adjust each year for increases in fixed costs, like transportation and referees, we try to add 3-5% each year to try to stay ahead of actual increases.
- Play an active role in your booster club, they can help with extra projects.
- TRACK your budget carefully. This was the subject of my CMAA project. I could not, and still don't, understand our district's accounting program, so I built an interactive spreadsheet so that I knew exactly what the status of each sport's budget was at any time with a quick glance. Just like your own checking account, it is a lot easier to stick to the budget if you always know exactly how much there is left.

- A small idea I have found is getting money to carry over from one year to the next. With most of my budgets, if I don't use them, that money is lost on July 1 of the following year. "Use it or lose it" idea. I do have a few budgets that carry over year after year such as our booster club or "travel budget" for baseball/softball teams. That money is not lost but carries over to the next year. With that in mind, as we get to the end of the year and I have bills to pay, I use an appropriate budget that will zero out at the end of the year and I make sure all that money is spent. If I have any leftover money at the end of the year, I want to make sure it is in accounts that carry over.
- Years ago an AD much smarter than I explained that his District allowed the high school to keep the funds they made when they hosted tournaments (i.e. both the entry fees and the gate receipts). At that time – my district was the same way – so I was able to host one or two tournaments each season and then have a bit of a 'cushion' to help me with either special projects of the Athletic Department (i.e. new coaches shirts or new wall pads for the gym etc.)
- Another idea that has worked is to 'negotiate' with the Principal the amount of money that the Athletic Department receives for selling Associated Student Body (ASB) Cards. At Willamette – we ask our athletes to pay a one-time ASB Fee and tack this onto their first sport. A portion of this \$35 fee then goes to the Athletic Department just like any non-athlete who wants to purchase an ASB Sticker. This entitles either free or \$1 admission into all of our league events (Free at home events) – and

encourages kids to attend your events; as well as provide another revenue source for your athletic department.

- The easiest way to make the budget last is to tell the coaches money is very tight next year and to let them know they probably need to raise most of their needs. NOW you have lots of extra money to spend on things they weren't expecting... and they are HAPPY!
 - I create the DRAFT budget THEN based upon what the total \$\$\$ amount needed (includes descent amount of contingency) is vs the amount I have.....
I divide \$\$\$ I have by \$\$\$ I need. That is how much I give them. ○ Example: If the numbers above are \$36,000 / \$60,000 this is 60% . If baseball needs 2,400 then I fund 60% of \$2,400 = \$1,440 the amount I will pay. They will need to pay the other \$960. note: I have varied this also with a different number on uniforms.
Fixed 75% on these. For the most part a three year cycle. Home ... Away ... and None
- I believe one of the best fundraisers I have done involved padded chairs for the gym. Parents and businesses each paid \$500 to get their business or athlete's name on the chair and it would stay there for the next 10-15 years. The chairs were only around \$125. We are able to get 40 new chairs for our gym as well as 15,000 for the school.
- First thing I would do is define the difference between General Fund dollars and ASB dollars Every state I have been in is the same. Unspent General Fund dollars go back

to the General Fund at the end of the fiscal year and ASB dollars remain in the school account.

- Next thing I would suggest is to look at your income sources. For me it is General Fund, Participation Fees, Gate Receipts, ASB Cards, and fundraised dollars that come to the Athletic Department not to a specific sport. From this projection you can begin to build a budget.
- I then look at expenditures. I categorize these in a few areas: Transportation, Officials, Game expenditures, Equipment, and Supplies. I estimate on the previous year.
- I explain to my coaches that my first obligation is transportation and officials. The next obligation is to game workers, and the last obligation is to equipment and supplies.
- My budget formula is probably different than most but this is what I do. At the end of each year I take the number of athletes in our program and divide that number into the amount of money I receive in participation fees. I then project 80% of this figure as the amount I budget for a specific sport. That is their budget. I use all general fund money for transportation and officials. Of course that does not cover the need so I have to pay the remainder.
- For gate receipts I deposit them in the sport account that raised the revenue. I take 20% of this figure and put it in my Athletic account along with the remainder of the participation fees. I also put the entire ASB card allotment I get in this account.

I use this account to pay the remainder of the costs in transportation and officials.

The money remaining is what I use to buy general athletic department equipment needs such as fencing around a field, rims for a basketball court, volleyball standards, jumping mat pads, clock repair etc. I also use this money if a sport has a unique need.

- For any remaining needs by a team it must come from fundraised dollars. We do not pay coaches from any accounts I manage.
- Use opportunities like the NIKE program to save money where you can. Make sure your entire staff is on board before you agree do so, you don't have issues afterward. Knowing where you stand in your district related to your 1-3% number is a great start, as you advocate for your program be clear about the real impacts of the program on your student athletes life skills development and academic achievement. Take great care of the money you are allocated so you can account for each dime you were given. Think creatively about your budget and how you might extend it by becoming more entrepreneurial.

Reflection Questions:

1. *What amount is your current athletic budget as it relates to the overall general fund total?*
2. *How can you "make the case" for athletic support in your district as it relates to life skills training and academic achievement?*

3. *What creative idea do you have from the list above or your own list that will assist extending your athletic budget for this next year?*

Chapter 46

Building Attendance at Games and Events

Limitations live only in our minds. But if we use our imaginations,

our possibilities become limitless. --Jamie Paolinetti

There is criticism leveled at the enterprise of high school sports because it has been said that attendance is down. Yet according to the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) attendance at high school events last year topped 510 million. My observation at the high schools in Oregon is that attendance wavers between the seasons and who the opponent might be. Games used to be the place to be seen and connect with peers and friends. What has changed the game is the increase in distractions for students. Part of this change can be thrown at the feet of the cell phone. Availability to friends does not have to take place at a game or event it can happen instantaneously through small computer devices we carry with us each day.

So we must meet the challenge if we are to impact back this busy, media savvy, immediate gratification generation that exists in our high schools. I would be very frustrated to see our high school games become like NBA or NFL games where there is hardly a moment to actual sit and think because our senses are constantly being assaulted. High school athletics has a certain

charm, and unsophistication that is attractive, popcorn, the band, hot dogs and bringing your padded seats for the hard bleachers. Friends and family together in an “epic’ struggle between two high schools each trying to play their best to defeat the other, with great high school pageantry to boot, the band, the cheerleaders, the dance team and all for the community to enjoy.

The new electronic medium of Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and other social medium have created following of an odd nature. No longer does a high school student need to be at a game to be involved with the game. , Pictures, video and other posted messaging can take place by one friend who can keep a number of students involved who can pass this information on to even more friends. A junior quarterback can run for a touchdown and before he has the chance to return to the bench, pictures/video are posted to Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter. Friends in turn pass those postings on to others and the “new media” is born. So our choice is to get connected to this new way of communication if we want to reach out to this generation. We need to continue to strategize how to connect with students through this medium. As an AD you are at most contests and your willingness to embrace this new communication tool or connect with someone who will be trusted to post for the school will allow your community to take part in nearly all of the games you are playing in real time.

The next area then that I would propose you invest in, is a group of students to assist and lead your marketing and in game sponsorships, contests and general fun. Having their friends see them taking part will draw other friends to the games and giving students (trained students) freedom to have fun through creative contests will encourage many to take part. The ideas are

nearly limitless but must be done in good taste obviously. This will give these students some practical experience and their passion for the opportunity will lead them to assist in promoting games and events that will astound you. If you can, connect with a sports marketing class in your school to assist, or if not, see about starting one. This resource I have observed at several Oregon high schools has been invaluable for the athletic programs at these schools. Some of the schools I am aware of even have students out in the community assisting with sponsorship and other marketing calls with businesses.

Ideas related to specific promotions of games are many and varied. I am aware of several schools in the Metro League in West Portland that have developed Jam the Gym Nights that reflect their mascots names Cram the Cage (Wildcats), Jam the Dam (Beavers), Jam the Gym (Warriors) the creativity assists the athletic director and his students in making their individual game the best around. I helped start the craze when I was the athletic director at Aloha High School because I wanted our athletes and students to see and feel and touch a jammed gym experience. With help from the Sports Marketing class we put together a proposal that we took out into the community. The final version had a pizza place title sponsor, a \$10,000 half time hoop shoot, the Portland Trailblazer-Blazer Dancers and some great promotions between quarters. We had a band competition too and the chosen "garage band" was allowed to play during the game several times and then a short 5-6 song mini-concert following the game in the gym. Sponsors loved the variety and the size of the crowd and it was something we looked forward to putting on and people enjoyed coming to each year.

Some other ideas that might work for you as you think through promotion and capacity

building of your events/crowds include the following:

- Kids club with a connection to school mascot
- Contests for prizes from concession stand
- Halftime hoop shoot for liters of soda
- Pizza give away for a made lay in, FT and 3 point shot
- Dribble relays
- Hall of Fame Nights
- Teacher/Family appreciation night
- Have elementary schools come for discount (preseason)
- Bring in local mascots (baseball, hockey etc.)
- Portland Trailblazer Stunt team
- Beat the AD FT competition with prizes
- Knock out competition during halftime
- Tricycle races during quarter break
- 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, dress night
- Special
- Youth teams playing at halftime
- fan seating section (lazy boys)
- Class competitions
- Faculty competition
- Competition between Athletics, Band, Choir and Band
- Ball give away (plastic with logo business sponsored)
- Schedule poster night
- Tee shirt night (white out, Green machine night)
- Funky hat night
- Costume night, contest at half
- 8th grade visit night (for next year frosh class)
- Free Root Beer float night
- Booster Club gear sale night

This are just a few of the ideas that you might consider. Your ability to be creative and forward thinking will enhance the promotion and attendance of your games. Having the courage and willingness to involve students will only further your success. Consider how you can involve today's social media opportunities in promoting your games and events to your community. Build some traditions that your community looks forward to each year. You will love the results of your extra effort.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. What are you doing now that works well in promoting your games events?*
- 2. What is your current connection to students in your promotions in your community?*
- 3. How are you using the current social media opportunities to promote your games and events?*

Chapter 47

Time Management

Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.

Benjamin Franklin

Time is at once the most valuable and the most perishable of all our possessions.

John Randolph

Around 100 years ago, Charles Schwab, president of Bethlehem Steel, wanted to increase his own efficiency and that of the management team at the steel company. Ivy Lee, a well-known efficiency expert of the time, approached Mr. Schwab and made a proposition Charles Schwab could not refuse:

Ivy Lee: "I can increase your people's efficiency – and your sales – if you will allow me to spend fifteen minutes with each of your executives."

Charles Schwab: "How much will it cost me?"

Ivy Lee: "Nothing, unless it works. After three months, you can send me a check for whatever you feel it's worth to you."

Charles Schwab: "It's a deal."

The following day, Ivy Lee met with Charles Schwab's management executives, spending only ten minutes with each in order to share the following:

Ivy Lee: "I want you to promise me that for the next ninety days, before leaving your office at the end of the day, you will make a list of the six most important things you have to do the next day and number them in their order of importance."

Astonished Executives: "That's it?"

Ivy Lee: "That's it. Scratch off each item after finishing it, and go on to the next one on your list. If something doesn't get done, put it on the following day's list."

Each Bethlehem executive consented to follow Lee's instructions. Three months later, Schwab studied the results and was so pleased that he sent Lee a check for \$25,000.

If Schwab, one of the smartest businessmen of his day, was willing to pay so much money for this advice, don't you think you could benefit from it too?

Taking advantage of this time management technique is as simple as it gets...just 4 steps:

1. Each night, make a list of the top 6 things you want to accomplish the following day 2.

Prioritize the list

3. Start working on task number one, and keep working on it until you complete it. Do not move onto the next task until you complete this one.

4. If any tasks are left at the end of the day, move them to the top of the next day's list. For example, if you finish tasks 1-4 today, tasks 5 and 6 become tasks 1 and 2 on tomorrow's list.

Have you ever wished for a thirty-hour day?

Surely this extra time would relieve the tremendous pressure under which we live. Our lives leave a trail of unfinished tasks. Unanswered letters, unvisited friends, unwritten articles, and unread books haunt quiet moments when we stop to evaluate. We desperately need relief. But would a thirty-hour day really solve the problem? Wouldn't we soon be just as frustrated as we are now with our twenty-four allotment? A mother's work is never finished, and neither is that of any student, teacher, minister, or anyone else we know. Nor will the passage of time help us catch up. Children grow in number and age to require more of our time. Greater experience in profession and church brings more exacting assignments. So we find ourselves working more and enjoying it less. When we stop to evaluate, we realize that our dilemma goes deeper than shortage of time; it is basically the problem of priorities. Hard work does not hurt us. We all know what it is to go full speed for long hours, totally involved in an important task. The resulting weariness is matched by a sense of achievement and joy. Not hard work, but doubt and misgiving produce anxiety as we review a month or year and become oppressed by the pile of unfinished tasks. We see uneasily that we may have failed to do many of the most important tasks before us as we have allowed the winds of other people's demands to drive us onto a reef of frustration. We confess, "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done."

Our greatest danger is that we are letting the urgent things crowd out the important.

A professor of philosophy stood before his class with some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly he picked up a large empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks about two inches in diameter. He then asked the students if the jar was full.

They agreed that it was full.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly and watched as the pebbles rolled into the open areas between the rocks. The professor then asked the students again if the jar was full.

They chuckled and agreed that it was indeed full this time.

The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. The sand filled the remaining open areas of the jar. "Now," said the professor, "I want you to recognize that this jar signifies your life. The rocks are the truly important things, such as family, health and relationships. If all else was lost and only the rocks remained, your life would still be meaningful. The pebbles are the other things that matter in your life, such as work or school. The sand signifies the remaining "small stuff" and material possessions.

If you put sand into the jar first, there is no room for the rocks or the pebbles. The same can be applied to your lives. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are truly important.

Pay attention to the things in life that are critical to your happiness and well-being. Take time to get medical check-ups, play with your children, go for a run, or write your grandmother a letter. There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, or fix the disposal. Take care of

the rocks first – things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just pebbles and sand.

Finding time in the day for fitness or participating in other athletic endeavors should be considered a “rock” for us all each day if possible. Physiologically, working out releases endorphins in the body. These endorphins are natural pain-relievers produced by the body. This is what gives us the natural high experienced after a workout. This natural high has the potential to positively influence our daily interactions by making us feel better about ourselves. Make fitness a rock solid priority in your life and reap the benefits.

Taking control of your time starts with you acknowledging that you are in control of your schedule, no one else is. By starting here you are making a commitment to take care of your own time management issues vs. allowing time to take care of you and living in a world of constant frustration and out of control living.

Only you can decide what your time, work and personal priorities are. By being aggressive and protective of your time management, you will give yourself the best possible chance to succeed in meeting the related daily challenges. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail. While this statement is true on an athletic field, it is also true on the daily front lines of athletic administration.

The most challenging part of our jobs may well be the way in which we handle our constant interruptions that are a part of a normal AD day. Our priority list discussed above and our commitment to being disciplined to live this way will assist us in being the best we can be in the midst of our busy days and lives. Do you have the discipline and will to make your days, hours and minutes count?

Reflection Questions:

- 1. Do you have a current time management system? Outlook? Day-Timer, etc.?*
- 2. Currently are you managing the demands of your work by working off daily list of priorities?*
- 3. After reading this what is something you will do immediately to change the way you manage your time and priorities in your daily life?*

Chapter 48

The Professional Growth of your Coaching Staff

Success is never final, failure is never fatal. It's courage that counts. --John Wooden

Seeking out professional growth opportunities for your coaching staff has changed significantly over the years. In the past, large clinics with well-known college or professional coaches speaking was the norm. Due to the influence of the World Wide Web and online resources, coaches no longer have to travel significant distances to pick up knowledge as it appears that it can be accessed through the click of a mouse and use of a computer.

In Oregon I have witnessed a trend toward school visits by a high school coaching staff as the latest form of “clinicing” with a staff of coaches be it track, football, baseball or basketball. A high school staff will go to a college and then watch practice and talk with the coaches about specific strategies, coaching techniques or points of emphasis that this particular college program employees to be successful. It can save time, have the benefit of creating some synergy and relationship over time and the specific nature of the questions allows more interaction than sitting at a clinic as a passive observer. Watching practice has the added benefit of watching these respected coaches teach the game as well as having the ability to discuss strategy with those same individual coaches.

Requirements from individual state coaching or athletic leadership organizations are requiring coach training in many states and with that training often comes certification in different areas:

- ASEP or NFHS coaches education that most likely will be required
- Sport specific coaches education is available
- First Aid, AED and CPR training can be required to be up to date
- Concussion management training
- In football specifically tackling training and or video resources
- Heat exhaustion training and requirements
- State Association rules quiz to keep up with changes
- Sexual harassment training

While many of these lists and others are required, they can be an outstanding way of getting your coaches, especially your off campus coaches, prepared for their work in the school environment. Legal issues dictate that you keep an accurate list of each training your coaches attend so that you are clear on their certifications and if asked can produce proof of your coaches training and certifications.

Your coaches meetings can be another opportunity to do more than enjoy a donut and a cup of coffee together before school starts. Do some brainstorming with your coaches prior to the end of the academic year so that you can create a list of topics that your coaching staff is interested in hearing more about. Assign these topics to veteran coaches who have the knowledge, passion and presentation skills to make one of these topics a 10-15 minute presentation at your monthly meetings. It will take pressure off of you to have to be the “genius” each month and will also give your coaching staff a chance to buy in to the training of your staff. As we did this at Aloha High School I found my coaches were much more engaged and connected to one another and to

their peers by sharing from their heart and current experience with one another. Some topics you might consider could include:

- Communicating with your athletes
- Practice planning
- Year long view of your sport
- Using your summer to improve your athletes skill and athleticism
- Weight room use and skills
- Fundraising
- Multiple sport athletes
- Recognition of your student athletes
- Ideas for building team unity
- Sports Psychology

Your coaching staff will come up with ideas that in most cases will top these but the ones mentioned will help to prime the pump of creativity that exists in your coaching staff.

An idea that I have observed used by at least one AD working in Oregon, was to agree upon a book that the coaching staff would read together and then they would meet once per month to discuss the authors concepts and point of view. These discussions were fruitful as the coaches developed the ability to hear from different points of view on different topics. It also served as a resource past the reading experience for these coaches. There are some great resources out there for coaches and I would encourage you to start with two books by Brian Kilmeade about the values of athletics that have been experienced by the participants in the program.

Our track staff at Aloha High School hosted a track clinic several years at the school as a way to make money for their program while providing an opportunity for the track coaches from our area to be able to access high quality instruction without spending an arm and a leg in travel, food and lodging. Lunch and some snacks were usually provided and the day had a great “feel” to it as the track staff at our school was able to “double” the impact of a local clinic.

One of the best events that I was pleased to be a part of was called Alohapalooza. It was my way of trying to raise some necessary funding to help send coaches to clinics and become more expert in their coaching strategies and techniques. Our event was focused on several key points:

- Skit night with comedy sketches put on by our coaching staff.
- Dinner with BBQ chicken and all the trimmings
- Desserts provided by an Aloha family that made cheesecakes as a business □ We had a theme, Urban Cowboy was our final theme.
- Country music, hay bales etc. helped to spruce up the cafeteria at our school.
- Line dancing in the gym
- Baskets for auction/raffle
- Texas hold-em poker dealt by high school kids to our adults.

I had a gentleman show up a little late and ask if I would mind him paying for the dinner. He then wrote a generous check to pay our dinner expense. He went on a tour of our facility and personally witnessed potentially the worst weight room of any school in a state our size. Over the course of the next several months this gentleman donated nearly \$200,000 to push out a weight bearing wall, bring in all new weights, new lights, sound system, etc. He helped to

change the fortunes of our athletic program when all I was trying to do was raise \$5,000 for coaches to go to clinics! It taught me a lesson in thinking bigger and the overall event was a great way to publicize our coaching staff and their desire to get better as coaches. The event did much to humanize our coaches to our parents and other community members.

Finally, utilize the NFHS coaches education “four qualities” we should look for in an expert coach as a guide:

- Relational expertise
- Organizational expertise
- Tactical expertise
- Technical expertise

How can we build capacity in these four identified areas so that our coaches grow in their ability to impact the students that attend our schools? It would be worth giving the four qualities some significant thought as you consider how to improve your coaching staff’s ability in each of these areas each year. If you do this you will continue to build capacity and expertise in your coaching staff and their impact each year will increase.

Being creative, making the most of your state requirements and taking advantage of colleges and other learning opportunities close to your school can help you manage both budget concerns related to coaches gaining more expertise.

Reflection Questions:

1. *Currently what is your most useful tool to assist your coaches in becoming more expert?*

2. *What one thing in this chapter that would assist you in helping your staff?*
3. *Do you have a yearly plan for your coaching staff that would encompass many of the elements discussed above?*

Chapter 49

Social Media---Pandora's Box is OPEN

Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it—Charles Swindoll

Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck .Dali Lama

A recent article I read mentioned that around a dozen girls 15-17 years of age were being informally interviewed about their use of social media. The article was titled *Teens are Leaving Facebook for Facebook*. Of the girls interviewed only one of the many had an active Facebook account as all the rest of the girls interviewed had turned their loyalty to Instagram, which unbeknownst to the girls was also owned by Facebook. Just a few years ago the rage among this population was email and My Space. Both of these forms of communication have been “replaced” by texting and Twitter for many as well as by Instagram, Pinterest and other forms of social media. Teens are always looking for ways to distance themselves from their parents’ generation and how they use new communication methodologies is one clear way to do that. I hardly think of myself in my mid 50’s as old but that does not mean my teenage counterparts feel that way. Their communication process is quick, short and to the point. With these current changes becoming our reality, how do we keep up and make sense of all that we are encountering on a daily basis due to the challenges of social media and our athletic program? I observe high school students walking down the hall next to each other texting each other as they walk. Pictures are transmitted at alarming rates as the adage of a “picture is like a 1000 words” has come home to roost. We have signs throughout our building that caution or ban use

of these pocket computers. Hoping that our students will abandon use of these tools throughout class and their school day is unrealistic at best. These computers can be used for good just like they are used for less than appealing reasons. We have a responsibility to give our student athletes leadership in their use and hold them accountable to previously agreed upon rules of these important tools. The cell phone can be used as effectively for research as it can be to cheat on a test or paper. It can be used to encourage a teammate as easily as it can to harass others and poke a finger in the eye of the next opponent in a game or match. We need to lead our student athletes toward a positive use of this valuable and powerful tool in their hands each day.

Case law in the area of social media and use by student athlete, though new, is growing and is a significant challenge we need to be prepared to manage in our work each day, examples include:

- Texas HS says Myspace, Facebook “ban” was coaches mistake Sept 2008, Student Press Law Center
- Tangled Web Courts conflict in efforts to define schools’ power over online speech Fall, 2008 Student Press Law Center
- To Catch rule-breakers, schools look at online photos showing athletes using alcohol, drugs Boston Globe, December 22, 2008
- The Trouble with Myspace...it’s popular, personal and maybe perilous for teens Rutland Herald, Argus February 12, 2006
- Colleges, Athletes Learn Downside to Websites, LA Times August 8, 2006

- Can myspace.com come back to haunt athletes? The Gainesville Sun, June 2, 2006
- Kent Banning Web Profiles, The Columbus Dispatch, June 2006
- Nebraska wrestlers dismissed after posing nude Associated Press, 2008
- The Prying Game, Sports Illustrated, Selena Roberts, September, 2008

We cannot end the use or impact of the these devices and programs on our athletic program but we can take proactive steps to assure our student athletes, school and community are represented in the most positive manner possible. I was concerned enough while the AD at Tigard HS that I put out the memo below to my coaching staff each year.

Memo

To: THS Coaches/Advisors

From: Kevin Bryant, Associate Principal for Athletics and Activities

Subject: Communication with students in extracurricular activities

Date: Tuesday, May 06, 2014

I wanted to give you a word of caution regarding communicating with students outside of the school day using different forms of technology (cell, text, email, Myspace, Facebook)

Please be very careful in your communication with students. The time of day that you communicate, the type of communication, the tone and personal nature of communications can be taken as inappropriate by students and their families.

If you have a Myspace or Facebook page be careful what is displayed on it if you use it for purposes of club or team communication. Social networking sites have become increasingly misused by advisors, coaches and students. Please be careful how you use these sites for communication with students that you are working with.

Ideas that some teams are currently using at Tigard HS include communicating through captains or leadership students on a team; connecting to team sites that have less personal communication potential and more direct communication regarding the activity. Please see me if you want more information to want to discuss this further.

Obviously the above communication needs to be updated to include the most recent types of technology. Being a responsible user of the technology means that students need to grow up and use their discretion in the use of the powerful medium that they hold in their hands each day. I would encourage each of you to develop a policy that relates to your student athletes' use of technology while on a school team at your school. It is also critical that your coaches don't use technology to put students in difficult and challenging positions. It is one thing to text students during the day about a game or practice time change but it is quite another to connect with students at night or on weekends with that communication having little to do with their team affiliation. It is important that we make our use expectations very clear to our coaching staff and that they are aware of the problems and potential liability associated with ignoring our agreed upon guidelines which could lead up and to termination of their coaching contract for failure to comply. Obviously, with any policy that you write up, it must be approved by your school and district leadership.

A policy written for student athletes might begin by reminding students of the expectations of citizenship as already shared through your student athlete handbook. You might start with this paragraph before getting into specifics or you may refer the use of technology to this already developed policy:

Membership in an athletic/activities program is an honor that should be carefully guarded. The privilege of competing in athletics/activities also carries added responsibility for each participant. This privilege may be forfeited for conduct that is detrimental to the team, school, or program in general. As a member of a school program, behavior on campus, in the community, and at other schools, reflects not only on the student but on the program and school as well. Criminal acts, violence, intimidation or discrimination, whether at school or in the community, will not be tolerated and may be cause for immediate suspension from the program.

It will all boil down to what is acceptable use of technology for your staff and student athletes in your school and community. How far will your school and district allow you to go in determining for your student athlete what use should look like?

We must remember that there is a positive side to the use of such technology tools as well. Twitter and Instagram have become popular in game media generators for fans, students and parents of many high schools across the US. I have heard from several athletic directors recently about the positive feedback they are receiving from the use of Twitter during various athletic contests as they report briefly on team scores and individual accomplishment during real time. These results are shared quickly around a community and can help others not able to travel to either home or away games to stay connected to results.

Reflection Questions:

1. *What does acceptable use of technology mean to you and your school? What does it not mean?*
2. *Are all of your coaches held to this standard too, certified teachers or not??*

3. *What problems do they present for us and athletic administrators?*

Chapter 50

The Politics of leadership in Interscholastic Athletic Administration

In order to become the master, the politician poses as the servant. ~Charles de Gaulle Those

who are too smart to engage in politics are punished by being governed

by those who are dumber. ~Plato

We have, I fear, confused power with greatness. ~Stewart Udall

Understanding our expectations related to our ability to enact change in our schools or take leadership in situations is critical to our overall success as interscholastic athletic administrators.

We may think that by title or position we will get to make decisions that ultimately get made above us, around us or in spite of us.

When I first started as an athletic administrator in the state of Oregon, I thought that input related to doing my job would be listened to and accepted at face value. Because I was in the position of athletic director, I assumed that “all” input and decisions would be left to my discretion, input and experience. I was way wrong. I realized very quickly that state wide decisions related to my schools classification and or any other significant rule changes were going to be a result of building consensus among principals and superintendents. The structure in our state athletic association originally allowed decisions made by representatives of our classification to be people in those positions. The Oregon Athletic Director Association representative has just one vote on the OSAA governing board. We had to get political if we

were to gain support for our point of view as athletic administrators. Often we found that those leading were not as informed or invested in matters related to interscholastic athletics as we were and that they were swayed by other leaders in their same professional category (principal or superintendent). So seeing change take place started with the leagues agreeing to a course of action, then all leagues voting together and following that up with pursuit of those in leadership over the state association to share our point of view, rational and expected results. Some may think the process so frustratingly ridiculous and not worth pursuing, however to not take this course of action would mean almost certain failure for our point of view to be shared, heard and for change to take place.

Our school district's decision making process may not be much different in terms of the politics of change, input and strategic thinking around the issue of interscholastic athletic administration. Our titles and positions in our district don't guarantee that we will always get what we want no matter how persuasive the argument or vital the information shared. We need to be patient enough to understand who the decision makers are so we can influence those in the decision making seat to assist us in doing the best possible thing for our programs, students and coaches. This work is often so below the surface that our influence may not be recognized or appreciated by our staff and student athletes. I learned that recognition for whatever part I played in getting what I needed was not my objective. Getting what I needed for my staff and program was the objective and worth the behind the scenes energy, work and planning. Sitting through endless meetings and waiting for decisions and discussions we might not even be involved in can be maddening, but it is the price we pay for achieving our goals and dreams.

John Wooden said “It is amazing how much can be accomplished when no one cares who gets the credit.”

While AD at Aloha High School, I raised the issue of fairness regarding how district funds were distributed and how leagues were assigned related to socio-economic status. Our school was at a distinct disadvantage regarding student’s ability to pay for athletics (we had a significant participation fee), little access to club participation, scholarships for fees and all the extras that come with a high school athletic experience (summer camps, shoes, fundraising, sweats, travel) as examples. We were competing in a very tough league with teams, even in our own district, which did not share our challenging socio-economic situation. Our free and reduced lunch population was 4-5 times what other schools in our district were experiencing. As usually happens, schools without these issues had little sympathy or understanding for our situation. As a result I felt that in most sports we played it “rec vs. classic” competition. We had kids who played recreationally through the park system etc. where the rest of our league had student athletes who had experienced a “classic” sport experience of private coaching, better competition and private club facilities etc. We had to figure out ways to do more in our community to build and support the athletic programs because we lacked this advantage. From a state association point of view then I wanted the reality of our situation (and other schools) to be taken into consideration when assigning leagues so that these schools were competing on an equal footing against like-minded competition. Now nearly 10 years later our state association, the OSAA, has finally begun to factor in socio-economic status as they develop leagues and classifications. One challenge that I was unable to overcome was our own school district’s

insistence to keep all the schools in our district in the same league despite the obvious disparities that existed. Our district leadership felt that keeping all schools together in the same league was more important than the ability for our school to compete on equal footing. Building relationships from within the organizations we are a part of is critical to our long term success and support. We need to take a long term view of the issues we are passionate about being changed and continue to build alliances and connections that will help our points of view be heard and appreciated even though it may take much longer to get things accomplished than we had originally thought possible. The politics of high school sport are such that we will need support for our point of view at some point so we must be careful about burning bridges with those that we find ourselves in leadership with.

“Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will” said Mahatma Gandhi. We must show through our work ethic, vision, joy and indomitable will that we are ready and able to do the hard work of politics necessary to serve the communities that we are a part of in serving students and the community. We must be fully aware that we are in the midst of a political system and that we must learn “the rules” of this system if we want to be successful in it.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. How have you become aware of the political nature of your position?***
- 2. What tools do you need to develop to be effective in this environment?***
- 3. What do successful people you observe do to thrive in the political environment of high school sport?***

Chapter 51

Mistakes to Avoid Making

“Success does not consist in never making mistakes but in never making the same one a second time”. --George Bernard Shaw

It would not be difficult for any honest interscholastic athletic administrator to fill up a page or two about the mistakes we have made and would like to avoid in the future. What follows are my reflections on mistakes that I have made that I would strongly encourage you to avoid making in your work as an athletic administrator.

Avoid seeing your most important job as paperwork and details. The important daily details of running an athletic program are critical, however, we must not get caught up in the daily tasks to the point that we miss impacting the lives of those we work with. That is our true calling in this position. While I was athletic director at Tigard HS outside Portland OR. I would often head to a practice of one of our teams just to get my balance. It might have been a particularly tough day and seeing student athletes and coaches doing their thing seemed to right all wrongs in my world and helped remind me that this is why I do my job. While at Tigard I also looked forward to my twice monthly meetings with our Student Athlete Leadership Team (SALT). Here I got to know athletes on a one to one basis and connect with them about their lives outside of sport.

Avoid focusing on your athletic programs outcomes (wins) over life lessons that your student athletes are learning. Life skills will leave an indelible mark on those experiencing life in your athletic program if they learn them on purpose vs. by accident. Coaches in our programs need to make life skill lessons a part of everyday practice plans. We spend hours on strategy and athletic skill building, which we should, but to miss out on this imprinting is to miss out on our highest calling which is lifelong impact. We took up to six months at Aloha High School in Beaverton to develop our mission statement, “Teach life skills to Aloha Warrior student athletes”. It became our mantra and we encouraged each other by sharing great life lesson stories with each other on a nearly daily basis.

Avoid making the mistake of not valuing the “ownership” of your booster club and those that serve it. My first year at Tigard HS I did not focus much on our booster club because we had so many other challenges and I honestly felt “that they did not need me”. It was to my detriment. I did not gain value from these important relationships, perspectives and assistance with community issues. I eventually saw this was time well spent and critical to the success of the adults serving our athletic program as well as our program itself. I have always defined ownership as “people supporting what they have helped to create”. These adults had proven their ownership of our program through their time, energy and financial support.

Avoid the mistake of letting your pride get in the way of apologizing for mistakes made or from asking for help when it is needed. While at Aloha High School I was in my office one day working when one of my head coaches came in and I was not paying proper attention as I was doing the typical AD “three things at once”. She easily got my attention however, when

said to me directly “you are not a very good listener”. At that point, I was embarrassed and angry, stung a bit, but she had my full attention. It was a great lesson for me. When people come by my office, I give them 100% of my attention so I can meet their needs. This head coach was also a full time teacher in our building and I know how busy she was with a myriad of things herself. As a result of our interaction our relationship deepened as she saw that I was willing to take criticism and listen to her concerns. Your willingness to humble yourself before others will build a significant cache with your staff.

Avoid the mistake of doing this work alone with everything depending on you. Yes, your title says that you are the Director of the program and that you are in charge. However, sharing the load with others on your staff will allow you to keep your sanity and remain most successful. I had several parents (moms) come assist me at Aloha HS when I started. Their willingness to answer phones, help me organize and deal with paperwork was a life saver. Pick your helpers carefully but pick some. The job is lonely enough so build a team around your position

Avoid the mistake of trying to “save everyone”. Invest your life in a few so you can maximize your time and efforts; deputize your coaching staff to do the same. In the movie *The Guardian*, Kevin Costner’s character is responsible for training newly recruited Coast Guard rescue divers. His mentee, played by Ashton Kutcher, asks him “how do you decide who you will save”? Costner answers “I swim as long and as hard as I can and the sea takes the rest”. I have had numerous conversations with coaches and athletic administrators relating to this topic, all of us want to make a lasting impact but we must be wise as we invest in the lives of those we are

involved. Choose wisely look for those folks who are FAT (faithful, available and teachable).

Avoid the mistake of keeping staff that are not effective because you are afraid “you cannot do better”. Jim Collins in his book, GOOD TO GREAT, discusses that successful companies “get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus and the right people in the right spots to maximize effectiveness”. The most significant expense any school or district manages is that of its personnel. 85% of a school districts budget is the cost of its people. We need to be clear about our expectations of our staff and when they don’t consistently meet them we need to make changes that will impact our student athletes in the best possible way. There is not a sport around that does not need our most qualified and motivated coach to lead it. Don’t buy into the “it’s just tennis, or just water polo” mentality. Get your best person every time.

Avoid the mistake of not making you and your coaching staff’s yearly evaluation a priority. I gave an evaluation tool to my staff each year and asked for practical and direct feedback about our work together. I cannot in good conscious evaluate my staff without giving them the same opportunity. Each coach deserves an evaluation each year. Athletic Director evaluates the head coaches, and head coaches should evaluate their entire assistant coach staff each year. **Avoid the mistake of not paying close attention to details.** Checking and rechecking your schedules, transportation plans, officials and game management schedules on a daily basis is critical to your success and running an effective program. I was startled by a visiting team my first year at Aloha HS from a Portland area school for a JV2 boys basketball game that I was sure was not being played in our gym that night. Upon checking, I was wrong, but I was very lucky that our JV2 boys’ team happened to be practicing in the gym at that time and we had time to connect

with the officials, call parents and get the gym ready. I was lucky beyond words. In talking with other AD's I became aware that I was not the first person to make such an error. I became aware of two other league teams that had not checked schedules for a track meet. The closest they got to pulling it off was both schools passing each other in buses headed to each other's home site! Details are really important.

It is my most sincere hope and desire that by becoming aware of the issues this section raises, you will be to avoid their snares. Give yourself grace in midst of your mistakes. There has never been, nor will there ever be, the PERFECT AD, ever. Pick one or two of the aforementioned mistakes to avoid and you will be better for it as will your staff and ultimately your student athletes.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. What mistake(s) have you made similar to those in this chapter?*
- 2. How can reviewing these mistakes help you to avoid them a second time?*
- 3. What is the "best" mistake you have ever made as an AD?*

Chapter 52 The Future of Interscholastic Athletic Administration

Everything you have ever wanted is on the other side of fear. --George Addair Most

interscholastic athletic administrators have lived for so long in a deficit “economy” with budget and programmatic cuts that we can hardly find a way to get out of this type of thinking. As we prepare ourselves for what is ahead, are we going to take a deficit mentality to the future of our leadership over interscholastic sport, or can we find a way to be optimistic and positive as we continue to see the impact personally and professionally of educational based school athletics on those participating? Truly the choice is up to each one of us.

If we can bet on anything with certainty in the world of interscholastic sport, it would be that there are challenges and new opportunities to express patience, understanding and encouragement to our coaching staffs and student athletes. To “wish away” this reality is a mistake. This is our environment we find ourselves in. We are invested in the lives of others, it is a significant investment of our time and personal energy, parents are a reality, we must deal with stubborn coaches, growing student athletes and the constant challenge of the unknown. If we don’t “like” our environment then a career change might be in order. This is our job environment and we need to be positive and upbeat to meet the daily challenges we face.

So what is ahead for us in the future of interscholastic athletic leadership? If we had a crystal ball that could predict the future or show us the way we might find it easier. I would encourage each of us to take a few minutes of reflection and look around and notice the challenges we see

today in the world of interscholastic athletic administration. Do we see any of these challenges going away? What challenges seem to be emerging?

Challenges that I see that we need to be aware of and preparing ourselves for the hard work ahead include:

- The viability and purpose of educational based high school sports in general
- Club sports
- Specialization
- State Association key issues
- Legal issues
- Technology
- United Sports
- Parents
- Funding challenges
- Fundraising

We will all need to continue to be vigilant to defend, encourage and speak out about the **value of the educational athletic experience** for ourselves, coaches and student athletes. That we are one of the few countries that continue this model has been a lightning rod for criticism especially for those that are outside of our system (non-participants). An article came out in October 2013 of Atlantic Monthly that was titled "*The Case Against High School Athletics and Activities*". This article proposes that we could use the money currently committed to high school sports to reenergize the academic program in schools across our country today. Another

voice was heard in 2012 when former college basketball coach Len Stevens was quoted in a USA Today article slamming high school sports because club sports do a more effective job creating scholarship opportunities for students and that schools need money for academic programs.

As we all know, the athletic programs that we support on a daily basis are educationally sound, co-curricular in nature and benefit the student and the community in numerous ways. Despite the significant economic challenges that many districts face, athletic programs in the majority of districts represent 1-3% cost of the general budget but benefits nearly half the students or more in each high school. For this minimal cost the school is buying higher graduation rates, higher grade point averages for participants, fewer attendance and behavioral problems and the chance to assist students in using physical, mental and emotional skills in the midst of a program that they are passionate about and gifted enough to take part in. High school athletic programs have never been about students finding college scholarships for every participating student. These college opportunities are usually reserved for the top 1-3% of students taking part each year. I would say that high school athletics is all about the 98% that don't plan on playing a sport in college.

We must be prepared to answer our critics not with words but with results. We must be sold out to creating an environment in our athletic programs that produce academically sound student athletes who are learning life skills by their daily participation in our programs. We cannot rely on philosophy in these two areas we must have proven results to share. Our unwillingness to continue to go the offensive for our programs will assist those wishing our

demise to have a clear advantage. We must speak out loudly and often for our overall program values.

The issue of our programs “competing” with **club sports** will be an ongoing one. We will continue to be challenged by parents who, on one hand, criticize our programs and on the other often want their child to take part in educationally based school programs for the relational benefits and school connections. Many club parents also want their children to achieve success within their state or league championship events. This often takes place in individual based sport programs (swimming, tennis, golf, track/field) where parents have private coaches for their children which puts our team cultures at risk of great challenge. How many practices and matches must their child commit to, to be a part of a school team? How does this athlete’s disruptive attendance to practices affect the overall team dynamic? Many districts have rules related to competing on a club and school team at the same time or competing in multiple school sports during the same season. Best for us to be aware of the issues and work with our coaches to not exclude students but at the same time not allowing one student to hold a team hostage.

Specialization will continue to be a challenge for us either by interest of sport parents or students or because our coaches continue to push students to take part in only one sport.

Specialization is not good for kids. Kids at this age need multiple experience and the “all eggs in one basket” approach to sport can result in early burn out, overuse injuries, unmet expectations and a significant limiting opportunity for students that are in the midst of making decisions that could impact them for a lifetime. Varied coaches and sports are good for students who are still

growing, maturing and gaining strength. Most schools cannot function without students playing multiple sports. Long term success for students can take place when placed in various challenging competitive situations in different sports as it grows their ability to make decisions in different context and use their athletic ability to succeed in different venues that build on each other.

Our **state associations** will continue to become more complex in the future. In Oregon, the OSAA has seen a significant rise year after in year in monies spent in defending policies and procedures in the courts. Constant legal battles are brewing related to classification of schools into leagues, transfer related rules, safety and rulings from appeals and other related topics. Recently the focus on student athlete safety and health has become a national issue as it relates to concussions and heart related health. We will be drawn into these various issues which in turn will impact our individual schools.

I would strongly encourage any newer interscholastic athletic administrator to take the LTI classes related to **Legal Issues**. Being aware of our responsibilities legally to the safety of our students, facilities, equipment and potential risk is vital to living a less stressed existence in our positions and allowing us the leadership capacity we have gained to be in a preparatory vs. a reactionary state in our athletic leadership. It is impossible for us to keep our programs on the right road if we are ignorant to the demands, expectations and responsibility that we hold related to our legal obligations. I don't see this area becoming less important in the future of interscholastic athletic administration.

Hard to imagine, as I write this on my laptop, that **technology** could improve and grow. The future will most likely smack us in the head with some new technology that will challenge us in our role as athletic administration leaders. For now we have enough challenge with regard to Facebook, texting, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr and Pinterest. How will we manage the current and coming technology while admitting that we cannot control others and their use but that we want to teach through our team sport culture how to use this tool with respect and admiration and safety? Technology will not be going away; we are on the ground in a strategic place to make a difference in the lives of our athletic community related to technology. Don't shrink back from this important challenge in your community, lead on!

A national movement is growing in the area of **Unified Sports**. Dedicated to promoting social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences, Unified Sports joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. In Unified Sports, teams are made up of people of similar age and ability, which makes practices more fun and games more challenging and exciting for all. Having sport in common is just one more way that preconceptions and false ideas are swept away. We have a unique opportunity to lead in an area that will open up our communities to an entirely new framework of learning about sport and society.

The reality of living in Oregon is rain. Not every day and not all year but rain is part of living in the northwest. We have green life around us all year as a result no matter what time of year. I find it odd when I hear people complain about the rain, like it is a surprise or something. The

same is true for those of us invested in the profession of interscholastic athletic administration and **parents**. Parents are a reality of leading a high school athletic program, this fact will continue to challenge us to make us grow as individuals and professionals. We need to work through why we take things personally when approached and how we might best serve the parents in our community. We need to continue to find ways of connecting, helping and challenging parents to, in the words of Bruce Brown of Proactive Coaching, “release their child to the experience”. We get the opportunity to stand with parents and coaches to design and implement programs that challenge and meet the needs of their children. What an amazing privilege.

We have become forced “victims” of our own success when it comes to **fundraising** and we had to negotiate the slippery slope of **funding challenges** over the past ten years with our economy as it is. Once the door opened to our fundraising and our school leadership realized the passion behind the enterprise, they have “allowed” us to use our marketing and fundraising abilities to keep programs afloat. We must acknowledge the impact that this funding and fundraising pressure has put on our backs. It is a major cause of stress and sleepless nights for not only us but, coaches, parent and communities. Some communities have cut back on lower level (Fr, JV2/Soph, JV) teams in an effort to save money or have gone with volunteer coaches in certain lower level sports. Some programs have gone unfunded in total. It is hard to look into our crystal ball and determine the future. I would suggest we continue to battle for that 1-3% general fund amount for school athletic programs (from the NFHS). We need to make the case as discussed at the beginning of this section to make plain the value and long term impact of

high school sport on the participants for a lifetime. In the short term I don't see our needs to fundraise going away so we must be prepared as we move ahead to these realities.

Reflection questions:

- 1. As you look into your "crystal ball" toward the future what concerns you most regarding the challenges related to interscholastic athletic leadership?*
- 2. Where do you feel confident in the midst of the challenges to make a difference related to these issues?*
- 3. What are you most excited about related to the future of education based athletics?*

Chapter 53 How to use this book most effectively

I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions. -- Stephen Covey

Thank you so very much for investing in this resource. While writing it, my greatest desire was to create material that would be ultimately practical, challenging and helpful. I think of the young AD's that I talked to at the OADA state conference a few weeks back and if any message was conveyed to me by these young athletic leaders, it was, "help me I am drowning!" I guess I look upon this book in some ways as a life raft or life preserver that I could throw your way to give you some practical encouragement and insight so that you can meet the everyday challenges you face.

If I were to give you some advice on how to use this book to its ultimate benefit, I would mention the following ways for you to maximize the experience:

- Use the note pages that follow as you read something you want to implement or come back to or think of more directly.
- Share this experience with your fellow AD's in your league by taking a chapter to discuss at your monthly AD meetings.

- Use the book to attend an Athletic Director Survival School training and hang out with other AD's going through similar things.
- Take June or July to read this through and let it assist you in getting prepared for the coming fall.
- Grab a couple AD friends and work through the entire book or agreed upon chapters together.
- Go away on a weekend "retreat" by yourself and read through the book using it to encourage and challenge you in areas that you need to grow and improve as an interscholastic athletic administrator.
- Work with me to host or arrange your own AD Survival School training for your league or part of your state.
- Use it as a resource to connect with and develop a one on one mentoring relationship with another AD in your area or state.

However you choose to use this resource, my hope is that material within these pages encourages and challenges you to be your very best. It is my greatest desire to see you be as effective as you can be so that student athletes and coaches benefit from your expertise and concern as much as humanly possible.

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Acknowledgements

I want to thank the following for their support, encouragement and expertise while writing this book, a “bucket list” long term project for me for sure:

To the Old Man’s Therapy Group; Ken, Rob, Dave and Todd for your friendship and encouragement. To Ken specifically thank you for your challenge and thoughtfulness around the purpose of this book.

To my editor, friend and sophomore English teacher Mr. Dave Robbins. Dave you truly are “the best damn coach in the state” and in this case the “best damn editor” too.

To Steve Duin of the Oregonian. Thank you for taking time to listen and hear me out and give me encouragement toward this project. You are an impact player in the lives of many and mine for sure!

Sara my lovely wife. Thank you for the freedom to pursue this project for which I have so much passion.

To my friends in the Oregon Athletic Directors Association. Mark, Bill, Mike, Terry, Kris, Tim and others that have encouraged me to pursue this project with energy, vision and faith.

To Pat for your expertise in the printing of this manuscript into a real book. Sure is fun to work with you on this.

To Bruce and Mike and the NIAAA for your leadership and hard work on behalf of the hardest working folks in our country, HS athletic administrators. Thanks for encouraging this project.

To Bruce and Dana Brown of Proactive Coaching. Thanks for modeling to me faith, encouragement and faithfulness to your giftedness. The faithful use of your gifts have given me courage to pursue mine.

To those on my advisory group. Greg, Jim, Jim, Todd, Todd, Ken, Rob, Mark, Barry, Sara, Kurt, Maggie thank you for your time and wisdom toward my new venture. You are better friends than I deserve.

To my early morning tennis friends at SAC, Kurt, Mike, Big Kiwi, Matt, Erik, Scott, Bao. Your friendship and our tennis means a great deal to me. Wish I could drop an ace on each one of you each day!

To those I have coached with at the high school level in the NW. Mike, Jim, Terry, Pat, Brian, Matt and Mark. Thanks for modeling to me excellence and care for students.

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Kevin was part of a state championship boys' basketball team in 1975 in Portland OR with Sunset High School. He has never forgotten the impact that participation in high school sport has had on his life.

He spent nearly 30 years as a part of high school and college coaching and athletic administration working at five different NW high schools and four different NW colleges. He holds the CMAA, Certified Master Athletic Administrator designation. He was named Oregon's Athletic Director of the Year in 2005 and is a past president of the Oregon Athletic Directors Association.

He was honored in 2006 with the NIAAA State Award of Merit, 2007 the Distinguished Service Award and in 2009 with NHFS Citation for his work locally, regionally and nationally in interscholastic athletic administration.

He is proudest of his role as father and husband. Married to Sara for 32 years and children Michael, Julie, Megan and Katherine.

Kevin crossed off a 'bucket list' item last summer as he and Sara sat Centre Court at Wimbledon during the first week of play. Kevin loves to play tennis and pickleball and is an ESPN addict!

For more information please contact me

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Would appreciate any feedback on this material. Thank you!