

Community Conversation – Junior high athletics

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Why do we do athletics?

- Sense of community and belonging, at a vulnerable age bracket.
- Not everyone's talent lies in the athletic realm. Some talents are in other areas.
- Motivates kids regarding school in general.
- Instilling real-world character and experiences.
- Teamwork with others to accomplish goals.
- Teaches how to overcome adversity.
- Leadership potential – have to lead teams in critical situations.
- Taking ownership of what you're doing – grades, eligibility, schedule, etc.
- Work ethic, including in the classroom.
- Learn perseverance.
- Self-discipline.
- Exposure to different sports they haven't tried.
- New friends through sports.
- An alternative to negative things they could be doing.
- Great way to instill time management.
- Instill athletic fundamentals.
- Friends that are different – forced to meet people outside your comfort zone.
- Fun.
- Preparation for high school sports.

What are the hot topics parents talk about in the stands and on the sidelines?

- The invisible wall (lack of communication) between parents and coaches.
- Parents that used to be coaches hit the wall harder.
- Parents who have spent thousands of dollars hit the wall harder.

As a coach, I had two different experiences. Early in my career communication issues with parents wore me out. Later I realized it happens at every level. I learned to over-communicate early.

It takes a while to develop a thick skin.

At Lakota during the lean years we weren't hiring a lot of teachers. So we didn't have as many young developing coaches. We're doing a good job building that back.

Finding a balance between having kids talk to the coach versus parents doing it.

Parents fear if they talk to the coach it might make things worse....taking it out on the kids.

Some coaches are also the student's teacher. Makes things more complicated.

Coaches need to receive information from kids and parents...it's not a one-way relationship.

As a coach, you have a responsibility to deal with parents – if you don't want to do that, maybe you shouldn't coach.

Coaches should talk to other coaches about how they do things. Develop and learn from a community of practice.

There's no coaching bible on how to survive the first few years.

Learning to deal with occasional hateful emails.

Need parent-to-parent mentoring.

Sometimes parents don't accept communication.

Be pro-active and over-communicate about playing time and expected results. Do it early.

What is the obligation to develop players? Good coaches set expectations.

Be blunt and honest about expectations.

Junior high is a transition to competition. It's no longer just participation and development.

Read the OSHAA standards: more kids involved, more sports.

There can be a big difference between a seventh-grade individual and an eight-grade one.

It's hard to predict future development. I may be sitting a kid that's going to win a state title for us someday.

The more kids you have, the more issues you have with parents and playing time.

In junior high the kids are groomed to have to perform in order to play. Seventh grade is the transition year to do that.

Making sure everyone is fully participating in practice. They have the opportunity to improve in practice.

I coach at the youth level. I like to win using all my players. It's easy to win using just the best players.

It's a triangle between winning at all costs, playing everybody, and practice.

Playing time is on a continuum between different levels. The only time winning is the only goal is at the professional level.

East-West rivalry is a big issue. Now we're telling kids they have to hate the other side.

Other hot topics:

Fees!

Transportation – not consistent among sports

Feedback about coaching from parents

What elements should be in the district athletic philosophy?

Expectations of parents

Code of conduct for parents

Expectations of athletes – grades, behavior in and out of school

Commonality between schools – training regimen, boys/girls resources, facilities, professional development

Is it all about winning or all about developing players?

Involvement of high school coaches at lower levels. There is a big disparity right now.

Lakota philosophy vs. GMC philosophy. Where is it the same? Where is it different?

When and how do we add a sport?

The difference between sports and activities.

Direction about situations like a boy who wants to play on the girls volleyball team, because there is no boys team. How to handle that.

The impact sports has on school culture.

Athletics are the greatest source of community in our community.

Athletics are and need to be inclusive to all, not just high socio-economic groups.

Budget. Fund-raising. Who's paying for what.

Educating parents on how to get kids enrolled in sports (physicals, forms, etc.)

Safety of sports (rehab times, concussions, etc.)

Time commitment. Ability to do multiple sports.

Criteria for deciding who makes the team.

One-word from each person to sum up the conversation (some words offered more than once):

team

coaches

ideas

standards

character

communication

opportunities

preparation

openness

feedback

commitment

work

school spirit

teamwork

expectations

strategies

a start

positive

kids

Why Athletics?

Sense of belonging at vulnerable age

Not everyone has academic talent → provide expansive opps

In still real-world **Character** → motivates kids re: school, general

Exposure to sports they haven't tried

Meet new friends → different
keep out of trouble

Time management

Sports fundamental

Fun

Transition to H.S. level

- experiences → esp. team, work w/ others to goal
- overcome adversity, student
 - leadership potential/discovery
 - responsibility/ownership
 - work ethic - balance work
 - perseverance
 - discipline

Real world

Expectations of parents
→ code of conduct

expectations of Athletes
- grades - in school
- behavior - a team
- out of...

- Commonality** betw schools
- training regime
 - Boy & girl's participation
 - resources - facilities
 - Pro level.
 - the winning vs. not issue
 - H.S. coach involvement
 - " player "

(Elements)

Budget/Fundraising

Educate parents on how to get kids in sports
- physical
- forms

- Safety**
- come back from injury
 - injury protocol
 - risk awareness
 - coach training

Time commitment
- ability to do more than one sport

Criteria on who makes team

Compare to EMC philosophy

When & how we add a sport vs. "activity"

- Boys playing volleyball
How the whole school / students feel part of athletic culture/pride
→ impact on school culture

Role of community bldg w/in & due to sports

How to make it available to all

- access issue
- inclusive
- assistance

