Bethany Christian Schools
BULLETIN

Athletics: Finding Balance

Success, Sportsmanship, Faith, and Community; Developing Wholesome Attitudes and Character



Inside this Issue

Alumni News 6-7
Campus News 6
- Spring Arts Day
- MCC Essay Contest
- State Geography Contest
- Scholastic Art Award
- Sportsmanship Award
- Spiritual Life Week

From the Principal 8

Athletics Feature

Boys' Basketball Wins Sectional

see page pp. 2-6

Bright Time
Summer Camps 2009

Camp Invention, athletic, art, and theater camps for grades 1-8. For more information, see www.bethanycs.net/BrightTime.

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Athletics

Cover: Junior Jesse Ramer (second from right), provides statewide leadership on the state's 18-member Student Advisory Committee. With him are Bethany's winter sportsmanship award recipients: Mark DeLeeuw (boys' basketball), Ana Mendes (cheerleading), and Seth Krabill (bowling). Sarah Lederman (girls' basketball) is not pictured.

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Athletics is a significant part of American high schools and their communities—this is highly evident during March when Hoosier Hysteria reaches its peak. As in other schools, Bethany students and fans are excited when their teams are successful, especially when winning sectional championships as the Bruins boys' basketball team did this year (see p. 6). However, athletics at Bethany goes beyond the satisfaction of winning; it reflects our Christian and educational values and provides a balanced, holistic approach (see From the Principal, p. 8).

Community

Perhaps the one word that best characterizes Bethany athletics is community—something that senior Jenae Rupp quickly began to appreciate after transferring to Bethany in fall 2007. "At Bethany, team means more than just varsity or JV; it is the whole program, so I get to know younger students and not just those in my grade. The openness among teammates is amazing and creates a close bond." Her basketball coach, Krysten Parson, says, "One of the joys in coaching is watching kids come from different schools and learn to become friends, a team, a community."

Doing things together is an integral aspect of Bethany that pervades athletics as well. "We want students to be part of a team, to learn how to work together, to celebrate success together, and to mourn losses together," says girls' tennis coach Sarah Yoder. Indeed many students have this opportunity as over 90% of middle school students and 80% of high school students participate in interscholastic athletics. Boys' tennis coach Matt Miller says, "Community can be one of the most important things in life. Athletics can help students understand what community can be and grow in faith as we process sport, faith, and life issues together."

The community and close relationships that develop on Bethany teams can last a lifetime (see alumni focus p. 7) and extend beyond the sport itself. As longtime boys' basketball coach Jim Buller notes, "Our lives intersect in so many ways—hallways, music concerts, church, baptisms—that our relationships are more global than just sport." (See Community and Faith below.)

Holistic Education

In fact a significant Bethany distinctive is that coaches do not fight for specialization of their athletes but encourage students not only to play other sports, but to broaden their involvements to include activities outside of sports. "High school years are



Jenae Rupp and girls' basketball coach KP (Krysten Parson).

Community and Faith

Jenae Rupp ('09), volleyball and basketball: "My coaches are more like friends, helping us deal with personal situations, and providing encouraging feedback from our journaling."

Her parents, **Russ and Rita Rupp**: "We have appreciated the staff's attitude in coaching and giving spiritual direction. They have spent numerous hours talking about life issues and surrounded Jenae with love and care."

Brent Reinhardt, girls' basketball asst.: "I would love for my daughter to play for KP. She pushes, is aggressive, but her players know she loves them and has a personal relationship with each one."

Athletics

Leadership

Jesse Ramer ('10), soccer and basketball, serves as a team captain and is a member of the Indiana High School Athletic Association's 18-member Student Advisory Committee. "It is a privilege to serve in a larger role and to also bring back new ideas to Bethany. I enjoy seeing a job well done unfold successfully—to see hard work achieve results. Serving as a leader has made me a better person."

Jim Buller: "Jesse is ready to assume responsibility with no excuses. He is determined and willing to try new things; he sets a high standard for himself and others to follow. "



Jim Buller and Jesse Ramer find a moment to laugh as they prepare for boys basketball regionals.

great for developing gifts, an opportunity for students to try many things," says Buller. Boys' soccer coach Hank Willems adds, "Diversification benefits students—makes them better players and better people."

Athletic director Bryan Kehr emphasizes balance as a core value of the athletic program. "We expect athletes to be dedicated to practice and participation in athletics, but to also succeed academically and participate in other activities at school and church. Our primary goal is not to produce division-one athletes but to develop people of wholesome attitudes and character that continue beyond competitive athletics."

Sarah Yoder, one of several coaches who were also former Bethany athletes, agrees. "The opportunities to participate in sports, along with other extracurricular activities, was by far the most positive part of my Bethany experience. Teachers and coaches encouraged me to play on their teams, be in their theater productions, sing in their choirs, play in their orchestra, work on their yearbook. I never would have had all these chances to explore my gifts in a variety of activities at a larger school. And my athletic experience prepared me to compete successfully in college."

Coaches also cultivate leadership skills in their athletes. In some cases, such as boys and girls' basketball, team leaders effectively serve as assistant coaches. Buller empowers his captains to help manage players and team chemistry and be aware of and deal with problems that arise. Parson has her captains help design practices with a goal of taking complete charge of running one practice. Coaches provide verbal affirmation and meet periodically with their captains to discuss effective leadership skills and issues needing attention. (See Leadership above.)

Faith, Sportsmanship, Ethics

Willems says, "When I coached in public schools, growing in faith was privately important, but at Bethany we can talk about it openly." And we not only can, but we do. Many coaches discuss faith issues and set aside devotional time with their teams—providing opportunity for players to lead devotionals as well.

"At Bethany we have opportunity to talk about faith development and then go out and make faith an integral part of competing," says Buller. "Can we be the same person on Saturday night as Sunday morning? And when our actions don't match what we say, we have a culture at Bethany that allows us to talk about the congruity of our faith and actions in team devotionals or in chapel" (as was done earlier this year).

Faith in Action

For boys' tennis coach Matt Miller faith is such an important part of the program that he develops a different faith theme for the team each year: focusing on what God is doing in players' lives, being a blessing to others, and praying together as a team. One way that has happened is for players and coaches to identify specific acts of God's blessings in their lives (not a correlation to winning) and then donate $5 to a charity. Over the past two years the team has donated more than $1,000. (For more on faith and tennis see prayer wall link at http://bctennis.blogspot.com.)

Athletics

Faith in Action

2006: When Matt Miller was coaching middle school boys' basketball, he was committed to playing every player in each half. With a few minutes left in a close game he realized he had missed playing in that half a player who was not particularly skilled. So he immediately put him in for the rest of the game. Afterwards the opposing coach questioned Matt about this and was amazed that he would risk the outcome of the game in such a situation.

2007: Email from another school's coach: "When your girls ran off the court this afternoon your fans clapped as they left the gym, but then as our team exited the gym your fans applauded for my team as well. Your fans have a lot of class, and I think that was the first time anyone's fans ever applauded my girls. Please let your parents know that their support was greatly appreciated."



Opportunity Off the Court

Tony Miller ('10) is an avid sports fan who has found his niche off the court, serving as an announcer, timer, scorekeeper, and scoreboard operator in several sports since middle school. He has helped put historical stats on the school's website and authors a comprehensive sports blog: see http://bleedingbruinblue.blogspot.com.

Tony: "I first got involved because I was asked, but with the blog I saw a need. These have all fit well with my career interest in sports journalism."

His parents, **Lyle and Bonnie Miller**: "Being able to participate in sports, despite having a moderate physical limitation, has been a significant part of Tony's experience. As parents who have lived with his passion for athletics, it is gratifying to see how opportunities like these have begun equipping him to pursue his long-term goals. We've also appreciated having teachers like Bryan Kehr who look to help all students reach their potential, on and off the court."

"Following Christ's teachings doesn't mean we can't be competitive, though the Bible does address how we might compete in a right way," says Willems. Baseball coach Brent Reinhardt adds, "We do our best to win, but to do so without putting the other team down."

Phys ed teacher Krysten Parson, who also coaches girls' basketball and softball, says, "We are always held to a higher standard, whether we like it or not. We are representing our school, team, fans, and families. How we as coaches treat our players affects how they will act. Our staff models our expectations."

In that vein, coaches teach that opponents are not the enemy. Matt Miller, whose team won the 2008 tennis sectional, says "Too often people villify opponents, almost dehumanize them in order to compete. In sectionals, we prayed for our opponents by name—recognizing that we are competing, but that they are people too and worthy of our respect."

When Russ and Rita Rupp's daughter Jenae transferred to Bethany, they noticed that Bethany fans were supportive in a different way than they were used to—at times clapping for the opposing team! Inspired in part by seeing Bethany fans treating opponents with respect, the Rupps initiated an effort this year to provide fan support for players from a boarding school, who being away from family and friends do not often have people cheering for them. Rita says, "Finding a balance between the mindset of winning and being a peaceful Mennonite has been difficult at times. Bethany sports have been an adjustment from sports in a public school, but it has taught us some great things."

Opportunities

As noted earlier, almost all Bethany students take the opportunity to be part of a team, which is a valuable part of their life education. With a strong emphasis on participation, Bethany seeks to provide opportunities for anyone desiring to participate in sports, regardless of skill level. Consequently, students who wouldn't normally play athletics at other schools do so at Bethany. (See Opportunity stories above and at right.)

Athletics

In recent years the boys' soccer team has had more players than needed for two squads (varsity/JV). Rather than cutting players, the school committed to funding a third team. Willems says, "I appreciate working in a school that is willing to accommodate anyone who has interest—not just the best. In my previous coaching assignments, schools limited the number of people who could participate—at Bethany we increase the opportunities, while competing at a high level."

One of Kehr's goals as athletic director is to provide activities for a wide variety of students—especially at the middle school level—to help them find their niche in a low pressure environment where they feel physically and emotionally safe, have fun while learning the basic skills of a sport, strive to do their best, and practice good sportsmanship and healthy competitiveness. So in addition to intramurals and existing interscholastic options, this year he led the school in adding club sports: bowling and track for high school students and baseball, golf, tennis, and track for middle school students. Additionally he has started developmental leagues for Bethany and community youth in younger grades for basketball (grades 4-6) and volleyball (grades 5-8).

Excellence and Success

Providing opportunities for students with a wide range of skills does not necessarily diminish athletic excellence. Kehr says, "There is a misperception, even among some in our Mennonite congregations, that Christian schools are inferior athletically."

Since 1997 Bethany has won 3 regional and 14 sectional titles among eight different sports, including boys' tennis and boys' basketball this year. The girls' tennis program has never had a losing season since its inception in 1991 and won sectionals in a non-class sport in 2006.

With over two-thirds of students participating this fall, varsity sports collectively posted an impressive 73-36-3 record! In addition to the two sectional titles this year, boys' soccer was conference champions, volleyball won an invitational championship, girls' cross country advanced to regionals (Ali Hochstetler first, sixteenth in state), and both boys and girls basketball won holiday tournaments.

"There is a misperception, even among some in our Mennonite congregations, that Christian schools are inferior athletically." —Bryan Kehr

Opportunity Leads to Success

Jonny Shenk ('09): "Tennis was a great way for me to learn to know people. I had never played tennis before coming to Bethany and probably would have been cut in other schools. But coach Matt Miller values each of us for who we are and helps us all to feel a part of the team. This year I focused not on my individual rank, but on helping the team wherever I was put."



Jonny Shenk and Matt Miller

Through hard work and a coach who cared about all athletes, Jonny developed from an inexperienced player three years ago to playing No. 3 singles this year and becoming an important part of the tennis team's success that culminated in a sectional championship.

Faith in Action

Some memorable moments of beauty from the past:

1996: Bethany lost in the boys' soccer sectional championship game on the eighth sudden death penalty kick—to a team it had outplayed and earlier defeated 3-0. "We were a close team and at some point someone began singing "606" (Praise God) and the whole team joined in. It is a moment I will never forget." —Dan Bodiker, coach/athletic director (1964-2007)

2007: During a fall girls' cross country meet, the girls' soccer team stopped practice to form a tunnel for their schoolmates to run through as they crossed the finish line. When the first opposing school's runner also approached, someone shouted, "Hands up!" The girls cheered this opponent, and each succeeding runner, regardless of the school name emblazoned on her jersey.

Campus News



In Bethany's first year of fielding a bowling club, senior Taylor Eby advanced to regionals where he placed fifth.

News at bethanycs.net

Spring Arts Day: Green was the theme for this annual celebration of the arts. "It's not just a choice to make the world a cleaner place; it is a spiritual decision as well," wrote ninth-grader Emma Caskey in her first-place essay. See /SAD_2009.

MCC Essay Contest: For the third consecutive year, a Bethany student wins international contest: Johnny Kauffman ('09). See /MCC_Essays_2008.

State Geography Contest: For the third consecutive year, a Bethany student wins state geography contest: Sadie Gustafson-Zook ('13) See /GENI_poster_2009.

Scholastic Art Award: Emma Gerig ('10) wins top two awards in regional photography contest. See /Scholast_Art_2009.

Sportsmanship Award: Bethany earns state sportsmanship award. See /sportsmanship_award_2007-08.

Spiritual Life Week: Shane Claiborne urged students to be radical followers, not just believers, of Christ. See /SLW_HS_2009.

2009 Boys' Basketball Sectional Champions



2009 Boys Basketball Sectional Champions: (front) Abbey Reith, Sydney Kehr, Daniela Buenrostro, Karli Graybill; (second row) Shane Miller, Aggi Dumford, Yumi Otsuka, Ana Mendes, Jen Sharkey, Kate Steury, Jen Snyder; (third row) coach Jim Buller, Matt Vander Werf, Tim Gautsche, Ben Bontreger, Jordan Weaver, Jesse Ramer, Mikey Kelly, James Helmuth, asst. coach Chad Stoltzfus; (back) asst. coach Trevor Daugherty, David DeLeeuw, Andy Slagel, Mark DeLeeuw, Hamilton Thorne, Jared Christophel, Seth Kauffman, Derek Plaster, asst. coach Barry Johnson, Luke Slagel, asst. coach Dan Bodiker. The team lost to defending 1A state champion Triton in the Triton regional 58-47.

Births

Karl ('83) and Karola **Steiner**, Munich, Germany, son Simon Elias, Apr. 2, 2008.

Scott ('88) and Sheila **Bodiker**, Berlin, Ohio, son Luke Thomas, Feb. 17.

Emily ('93) and Chris **Burkhalter-Blosser**, Philadelphia, Pa., son Elijah Loren, Dec. 16.

Dawn (Myers '94) and Ryan **Warkentin**, Winnipeg, Man., son Easton Carter, Oct. 8. They have a daughter Cassie (age 3) and attend Bethel Mennonite Church. Dawn works as an adoption counselor.

Mandy Yoder ('95) and Jon Schrock, Goshen, daughter Anna Yoder Schrock, Jan. 31. Mandy was installed as pastor of congregational care at Belmont Mennonite Church on Sept. 7.

Curtis ('96) and Amy **Burkholder**, Indianapolis, Ind., son Braden Lee, Jan. 22. Curtis works for Wild Birds Unlimited.

Jim ('96) and Kelly **Neff**, Goshen, son Connor James, Dec. 31, died Jan. 7.

Justin (Shank '96) and Brooke **Rothshank**, Pittsburgh Pa., son Layton Beatty, Nov. 7.

Chris ('99) and Marena **Nachtigall**, Kalona, Iowa, adopted son Cohen Christopher Steven, Aug. 13. Chris is athletic director at Iowa Mennonite School.

Rachel (Stump '99) and Chris **Krull**, Goshen, son Cameron James, May 9, 2008. They attend Community Church of Waterford.

Janice (F'08-) and Brian **Eigsti Miller**, Goshen, son Preston, Feb. 17.

Deaths

Richard Chupp ('60), Goshen, Dec. 16, 2008.

May Calendar

3 Drop-in Open House for prospective students/families, noon-3 p.m.
15 HS Spring Concert, 7:30 p.m.
21 MS Spring Concert, 7 p.m.
28 Grade 8 Recognition, 7 p.m.
31 Commencement, 3 p.m.

Willow Street Mysteries

7 p.m May 8-9, 2009

adults $4 • students $2
Reservations begin Apr. 20
Call 574 534-2567

Marriages

Phil Swartzendruber ('93) and Marie Ammerman, Portland, Oreg., Aug. 16, 2008.

Megan Ramer ('94) and Jon Stutzman, Chicago, Ill., Apr. 26, 2008. Megan pastors Community Mennonite.

Nathanael Arbuckle ('97) and Christina Bergstrom, Warrensburg, Mo., Feb. 14.

Conrad Burkholder ('99) and Carrie Mercer, Battle Creek, Mich., Sept. 13.

Daniel Horst ('01) and Jessica Brubaker, Goshen, Jan. 10.

Notes

Christopher D.H. Stauffer ('88), Canton, Kan., has been admitted as a member of Knudsen, Monroe, & Company, LLC, a public accounting firm in Newton, where he has worked as a certified public accountant for nearly ten years.

Kyle Reinford ('02), Brooklyn, N.Y., is a member of the *Les Misérables* ensemble performing in Houston, Tex., March 24-April 5.

Len Harms (S'06-) was Teach and Tour Sojourners first resource participant in Uganda, where he taught, met with teachers, and toured schools for three weeks in early January.

Alumni News

Gary Chupp ('87)

Two of Gary Chupp's most memorable moments in sport come from his days at Bethany, but in strikingly different ways:



1) the joy that led to a team pile-up after he scored the winning run in a seven-run last inning rally against Goshen for Bethany's first-ever baseball sectional title (photo above), and 2) disappointment after missing his attempt at 63 consecutive free throws, one short of the state record 64 held by Steve Alford.

Since graduating from Bethany, Gary has continued to be involved in athletics. After playing four years of basketball at Eastern Mennonite University (third leading career scorer), he served as an assistant basketball coach for two years each at Bethel (Kan.), Bluffton, and Geneva colleges. Then he returned to Bethel College as a head coach for nine years, where his teams won two conference championships and a first-ever appearance in the NAIA national tournament. Since fall 2007 he has served as head men's basketball coach at Goshen College.

While working at a basketball camp during college, Gary realized he enjoyed working with kids on the court and began to seriously consider coaching as a profession. But he also credits Bob Steury ('73) and Jim Buller ('71, F'79-) as significant mentors for him during high school and beyond.

"Playing for Jim Buller is one of the reasons I chose the coaching profession. He created a family atmosphere that guys wanted to be a part of. When you leave his program, you have a friend, and in my case a colleague, for life. Recently we had a tough loss and I saw Jim in the crowd. I called him late that night and we talked for about an hour. Having that kind of resource is invaluable to me as a coach."

photo courtesy of Goshen College



Gary Chupp ('87) coaching at a Goshen College men's basketball game (above) and celebrating Bethany's baseball sectional championship as a player in 1987 (at left).

Gary loves teaching basketball, but finds his greatest enjoyment in coaching is building relationships with his players. "I enjoy the cyclical process of getting to know a recruit, watching him transition from an immature freshman into a confident mature upperclassman, and then upon graduation, the relationship changing from player and coach to friend and peer. Some of my best friends are guys who played for me."

Basketball also led him to meet Melissa Stucky, a sister of one his former players at Bethel. Gary and Melissa married in 2002 and have three children: Madilyn (5), Tyson (2), and Corrine (1). They attend Waterford Mennonite Church.

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Notice to parents:

Please notify the *BCS Bulletin* of the new address of your son or daughter.

From the Principal

Allan Dueck



One of Bethany's core values is gifts development: "We nurture the spiritual, academic, artistic, physical, and social gifts of all students and unleash these gifts to further God's work in the world." As a church school, Bethany typically focuses on and talks about developing students' spiritual and academic gifts. However, as Paul's admonition makes clear, our physical bodies are the "temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16) and we are to treat them as such. Our bodies too come under the lordship of Christ.

This issue of the Bulletin highlights positive dimensions of athletics at Bethany. Among other things, participation in athletics cultivates community, contributes to a holistic education, provides a microcosm for practicing faith, and offers opportunities for excellence.

To be sure, we live in a society in which professional sport often assumes disproportionate emphasis, many believe in winning at all costs, and performance-enhancing substances are condoned as long as athletes don't get caught. Such values of pro sports stand in opposition to Christ's call.

Our challenge as Christians is to claim Christ as lord of our bodies and athletic participation just as we claim him as lord of our intellects, aesthetic gifts, and social relationships. Paul's words mandate taking care of our physical bodies through proper nutrition, consuming food in moderation, and exercising regularly. Indeed, in phys ed and health classes students learn the basics of fitness, nutrition, and healthy lifestyle choices.

More than three-quarters of Bethany's students play on at least one interscholastic team. This extraordinary participation rate reflects Bethany's commitment to holistic education, as many athletes also sing in a choir or play in the jazz band, excel academically, and serve in leadership roles such as planning chapels, fish fry, or student activities. As members of a team, students learn to discipline themselves during training, they discover the values of cooperation and fair play, they learn to respect their opponents, they learn to win and lose gracefully, and they push themselves to excel. They learn to encourage, challenge, and support each other, and many develop leadership skills.

At Bethany we seek to place athletics, along with all our other pursuits, under the lordship of Christ. Doing so teaches students a positive, balanced attitude towards fitness and sport and equips them for cooperative teamwork and integrity in adult life.