



- * COACHING WITH EMPATHY - PCA
- * 5 QUESTIONS TO ASK EACH DAY
- * FALL STATE CHAMPIONS
- * BENCH BAD BEHAVIOR - Toolkit
- * FALL ACADEMIC CHAMPIONS
- * IHSAA RULE OF THE MONTH - Rule 1 & 9
- * LEADERSHIP BOOK OF THE MONTH - Tuesdays With Morrie
- * STATE SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS
- * UNDERSTANDING THE THREE SPORT "DROP OUT ZONES"
- * DAIRY WEST - Replenish Program Application
- * PART III OF WHAT IS SUCCESS - A Guide to Sports Parenting



November
2022 ISSUE



IHSAA EXPRESS

Supporting Education Through Activities



Coaching with Empathy

In-person and Zoom Workshops



What is Coaching with Empathy?

Creating a positive, developmental youth sports environment for your young athletes starts with the coach. The **highly interactive** Coaching with Empathy workshop provides coaches with the tools to build meaningful, understanding relationships with and amongst their team - and unlock the many benefits that sports can provide.



This **research-based** two-hour* workshop demonstrates how to seamlessly integrate empathy into everyday coaching by creating strong connections, listening to athletes, and understanding how kids' experiences impact how they show up to your practices. Coaches will actively participate in the workshop, including small group discussions and will practice applying the tools to real team settings. Coaches will take away tangible tools and tips to create an empathetic environment with their team so all kids feel safe, seen, heard, and valued.

In this workshop coaches will learn about:

- The impact of stress on young people
- The role of empathetic coaches
- How each coach's own experience impacts their relationships with athletes
- The "PACT" - our framework for applying empathy
- How to apply the "PACT" action steps



When players are around coaches who consistently carry themselves with a Quiet Confidence, who are Compassionate, who handle adversity with Mental Toughness and who treat them, the other coaches, the players parents and the umpires with Respect, by the end of a season, you will see a group of young men who will have acquired these same qualities.

Baseball Dudes

Schedule your Coaching with Empathy Workshop Today

Strengthen your positive youth sports experience by scheduling a Coaching with Empathy workshop in-person or virtually via zoom for your coaches today through your Program Manager.

*Zoom workshop is 90 minutes



ADMINISTRATION CORNER

DATES TO REMEMBER

11/2	AD Zoom - Sportsmanship During Basketball Season
11/4-5	State Swim Meet
11/7	State Football Pictures & Rosters Due
11/11	Veterans Day
11/11	1st Practice Boys Basketball
11/14	1st Practice Wrestling
11/14-15	State Student Council Conference
11/18-19	Milk Bowl
11/24	Thanksgiving!
11/29	Wrestling Weight Assessment Window Closes
12/1	Fall Sports Concussion Survey is Due
12/2-3	State Drama

NOVEMBER CHECKLIST

- ___ Make time for family
- ___ Check basketball/wrestling scoreboard & PA system
- ___ Prepare winter practice schedules for gyms
- ___ Arrange/finalize winter bus schedules
- ___ Review winter event cancellation procedures
- ___ Finalize spring schedules
- ___ Verify winter coaches requirements are met
- ___ Review winter gate procedures with staff
- ___ Confirm basketball and wrestling DragonFly schedule
- ___ Distribute sportsmanship information to coaches/players/parents



You can't change how people treat you or what they say about you. All you can do is change how you react to it.

GANDHI

IHSAA Rule of the Month

RULE 1 - ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

1-1-1 The principal of each member school is recognized as the school representative and, as such, is accountable to the Association for the conduct of the activities program of that school.

1-1-4 The principal must provide adequate team and crowd control at all contests in which his/her school participates and assure that participants and fans conduct themselves in a proper and sportsmanlike manner. Failure of the principal to provide adequate control or failure of the school's participants and/or fans to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be deemed sufficient reason for disciplinary action by the Board of Directors.

RULE 9 - GAME MANAGEMENT

9-1 Students, parents and fans are not allowed on the playing surface during game time or after the game until the opposing team and officials have left the playing area. Administration, or their designees, from each school is responsible for keeping their fans off the playing surface and in their designated seating areas. Rushing the court or field after games or interfering or attempts to interfere with any contest is not allowed.

9-2 Host school administrators are responsible for getting officials to, and from, the officials dressing areas before, during and after contests. Host school administrators are also responsible for letting the visiting teams and fans know where their seating sections will be.

9-3 Any conduct or violation of this rule may subject actors to any and all remedial measures available to the local District Board of Control and the IHSAA.

It's the Tools!

The Athletic Director's Toolbox

The Top 20 "Tools for Success" from the Educational AD Podcast
Dr. Jacob von Scherrer, CMAA

and

The Athletic Director's Toolbox - 2nd Edition

More Top Twenty Tools from The Educational AD Podcast
Jacob von Scherrer, CMAA

The Athletic Director's Toolbox -The Top 20 Tools for Success!

These 2 books contain the Toolbox Tips from over 300 interviews with Athletic Directors across the USA and the world on the popular Educational AD Podcast

Purchasing Your copy allows me to provide books to Rookie ADs and their State Associations

Jake von Scherrer, CMAA

The Educational AD Podcast

Available now at Amazon.com
Get a copy for yourself and get one for your Favorite ADs and Coaches



LIVE PA ANNOUNCEMENT

#2

Listen up, fans!

High school sports would not be possible without high school officials, so please be respectful to the hardworking officials serving today's athletic event.

And if you think you have what it takes to make the big calls, sign up today at High School Officials dot com (HighSchoolOfficials.com).



WE EXPECT MORE.

Adult fans behaving badly has become normalized at high school athletic events. Ready to tell fans in your state this must stop?

This FREE toolkit features resources you and your member-schools can use to proactively address bad behavior at high school athletic events. It includes a parent-player contract, printable flyers, program ads and more!



Download the complete Toolkit here

NOVEMBER COACHES EDUCATION PAGE

Understanding the Three Sport Drop Out Zones

written by Wayne Goldsmith

Every sport – in every nation – talks about the phenomenon of the sport “drop out rate”, i.e. the rate at which kids drop out from playing competitive sport during their teenage years. Everyone’s got a theory to explain sport drop out.

“They were pushed too hard to early”.

“Life caught up with them and they wanted to try other things”.

“They became focused on their school grades and couldn’t continue training and playing competitive sport”.

But there is a way to decrease the sport drop out rate and it starts with understanding the three Sport Drop Zones.

Sport Drop Zone 1: Entry to High School/Secondary School(11 years of age)

At Sport Drop Zone 1, children are changing rapidly: developmentally, biologically, physically, emotionally and even geographically as they make the transition from being “little-kids” to “big-kids”.

In primary school they usually have one teacher, a small group of friends and a fun, family, friendships orientated learning environment. High school means many new teachers, new ideas, new friends and new ways of doing things. Their minds, their experiences and their engagement with the world is changing rapidly.

There are also significant developmental changes which underpin much of what the athlete thinks and does. In sporting terms, Sport Drop Zone 1 is often the place where teachers and coaches encourage young athletes to play one sport or another and to start to specialise.

Sport Drop Zone 2: Entry to “Serious” High School(15/16 years of age)

Around their mid-teens, usually prompted by their parents and their school teachers, children start to consider their future a little more seriously. The “big” question, i.e. “*what do you want to do for the rest of your life*” starts to become more important and a lot more serious and children are routinely told “it’s time” to start studying hard, to think about their future and to consider their possible career direction.

In many nations, where academic success is prized and valued far more highly than sporting success, kids in their mid-teens simply walk away from all competitive sport to concentrate on their school studies.

Athletes in this Sport Drop Zone are also experiencing several significant and important developmental, social and physical changes all of which have the potential to impact on their capacity, desire and ability to train for and play competitive sport.

Sport Drop Zone 3: Entry to University (or the Workforce)(18/19 years of age)

In Sport Drop Zone 3, the Entry to University (or the Workforce), athletes are facing considerable life changes. For those athletes continuing their studies, there are pressures to gain entry into the “right” University, to be accepted into the “right” courses and the pressures of more practical challenges like finding affordable and appropriate accommodation. There’s the need to earn some sort of income to support themselves as they study. There’s a desire for independence and freedom, including in many cases the need to purchase a motor vehicle.

For many athletes, it’s not about University – it’s about finding a job: about gaining and retaining employment. At each of these three Drop Zones, the developmental, social and other needs of athletes change considerably and as a result, what they are looking for in their sports experience – their sport “relationship” also changes. Every sport experiences the “drop-zones”. The question is why?

Why is Knowing and Understanding Sport’s Drop Zones Important?

We know that the number of children who are committed to playing and competing in competitive sport all over the world is dropping rapidly. We also know that sporting organisations, sporting clubs and governments across the globe are all rushing to find effective solutions to address this situation by introducing a wide range of new ideas such as “modified” versions of sport, shorter and more dynamic “games” based on different sports, “E” versions of sport and more flexible “community-based” sporting options.

Ultimately however, people will do what they love doing. They will make time to do the things that they feel are of value, are rewarding, are meaningful and are providing them with an experience they enjoy.

The main reason children drop out of sport is that they stopped loving what they do. Plain and simple. They fell out of love with their sport and they found something else to focus their time, energy and “love” on. If any relationship falls apart – a marriage – a business partnership – a friendship – or an athlete-sport relationship – the first question has to be...“why”?

Why Children Fall Out of Love with Their Sport: Explaining Sport Drop Out.

There are many reasons why children fall out of love with their sport including:

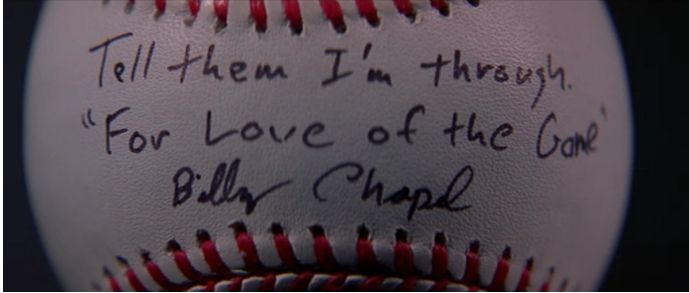
- 1) It stopped being fun. This is without doubt the number one reason athletes drop out at each of the sport drop zones.
- 2) The athlete developed and progressed – but their coach didn’t. Coaches need to learn, to grow and to develop at a rate as fast – or even faster than the athletes they are coaching.
- 3) Their coach didn’t adapt, change and innovate in line with the athlete’s changing needs. It is unreasonable to expect that an athlete will continue to accept the same coaching methods and coaching techniques at 18 years of age as they did when they were 8.
- 4) Their friends – their peer group – all moved on to something or somewhere else. Coaches, Sporting Clubs and sports generally should place far more emphasis on creating, building and maintaining environments where peer groups can grow and flourish as athletes change and mature.
- 5) Another “relationship” became more appealing. Athletes who are not enjoying their sport “relationship” or if their sport “relationship” doesn’t meet their needs, will seek another relationship.
- 6) The sport’s competitive structure didn’t change or adapt as the athlete’s needs changed. Far too many sports offer the same competitive structure, the same meets, the same tournaments etc. for athletes in their late teens as they do for athletes in their early teens.



WWPIS
WORKING WITH
PARENTS
IN SPORT

This is a platform for parents and coaches to enjoy an **interactive learning experience** with us. Featuring content from our live workshops, along with exclusive access to blogs and podcasts as well as some additional bonus material, there is something for everyone.

Visit the Learning Platform now!



Real Life Story:

A parent wrote to me recently and asked for advice. Their daughter was turning 15 and entering "serious" high school, i.e. Sport Drop Zone 2. She was a good student and had aspirations of studying law at University one day. She was also a very well performed basketball player who had represented her state at national championships level.

The athlete decided to take on some additional studies to help in her long-term plan to be accepted into a good University law program which meant she would be late for her basketball training sessions.

She went to her coach and discussed the situation, offering to stay back and do extra training to make up for the lost time or to follow a training program she could do in her own time to make sure she was continuing to prepare to the level he expected.

Her coach said, "If you can't be here on time, you're obviously not serious about basketball and there's no place for you on this team".

Completely shattered and disillusioned at the coach's lack of flexibility and understanding, the young athlete dropped out from basketball all together.

How to STOP the DROP - stopping the Sport Drop Out Phenomenon - Three Tips!

- A) School teachers don't teach advanced calculus to 11 year olds. And they don't teach simple arithmetic to 17 year olds. Tailor your coaching and athlete development activities to be appropriate for the age and "stage" of the kids you're working with.
- B) Adapt your training and competition structures to the changing needs of the kids in your programs. If your training and / or competitive structures do not change as the athletes in your sport grow, change, mature and develop, expect to see a significant drop out rate.
- C) Take time to understand the rationale behind the Sport Drop Out phenomenon and more importantly take time to understand the unique developmental changes each athlete is experiencing at each of the Sport Drop Zones.

Summary:

All sports experience the Sport Drop Out problem. The challenge is - what are YOU and YOUR sport going to do about it? Sports who take time to understand the reasons behind their sport's drop out pattern can develop ways of making sport more engaging, exciting, relevant and enjoyable for athletes at each of the drop zones and in doing so decrease the likelihood of the athletes severing their connection with the sport.

Ultimately, people will stay connected with and engaged with experiences and relationships which they enjoy and that meet their needs. Knowing that - and accepting that athletes change in relatively predictable ways - coaches, clubs and sporting organisations can design and develop better ways of delivering sports experiences to everyone in their sport.



Sketchnote by @haypsych Hayley Lewis

2022 IHSAA FALL STATE CHAMPIONS


STATE CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONS

GIRLS		BOYS	
BOISE BRAVE		5A	 ROCKY MOUNTAIN GRIZZLIES
PRESTON INDIANS		4A	 BISHOP KELLY KNIGHTS
SUGAR-SALEM DIGGERS		3A	 KIMBERLY BULLDOGS
SODA SPRINGS CARDINALS		2A	 WEST SIDE PIRATES
RAFT RIVER TROJANS		1A	 VICTORY CHARTER VIPERS

STATE VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONS

5A	MADISON BOBCATS	
4A	SKYVIEW HAWKS	
3A	KIMBERLY BULLDOGS	
2A	MELBA MUSTANGS	
1ADI	TROY TROJANS	
1A DII	HORSESHOE BEND MUSTANGS	

STATE FALL GOLF CHAMPIONS

5A	ROCKY MOUNTAIN GRIZZLIES	
4A	TWIN FALLS BRUINS	

STATE FALL GOLF CHAMPIONS

5A	EAGLE MUSTANGS	
4A	BISHOP KELLY KNIGHTS	

STATE SOCCER CHAMPIONS

5A	BOISE BRAVE	
4A	BISHOP KELLY KNIGHTS	
3A	SUN VALLEY COMMUNITY CUTTHROATS	

STATE SOCCER CHAMPIONS

5A	TIMBERLINE WOLVES	
4A	CALDWELL COUGARS	
3A	SUGAR-SALEM DIGGERS	

2022 IHSAA FALL STATE CHAMPIONS

2022 IHSAA FALL STATE CHAMPIONS

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK EACH DAY



ACHIEVING OUR POTENTIAL AND BEING THE BEST WE CAN BE IS NOT EASY. BUT IT'S STILL THE ASSIGNMENT FOR EACH OF US.

Around 435 BC, Greek sculptor Phidias was commissioned to make a statue that would stand on the roof of the Parthenon in Athens.

Phidias was the greatest sculptor of his time and painstakingly labored to produce his final work. The colossal statue of the Athena Parthenos was completed and dedicated years later.

The original work, made of gold and ivory, stood some 38 feet (12 meters) high. The goddess stood erect, wearing a tunic, aegis, and helmet and holding Nike (goddess of victory) in her extended right hand and a spear in her left.

But when Phidias presented his bill for the work, the city accountant refused to pay.

"These statues stand on the roof of the temple, the highest hill in Athens," the accountant said. "Nobody can see anything but their fronts. Yet, you charged us for sculpturing them in the round, that is, doing their backsides that nobody can see."

"You are wrong," Phidias replied. "The gods can see them."

More than 2,000 years later, the statues still stand, but the problem of saving money and cutting quality still exists. The urge to take the easy path is ever-present in our lives, but the quality that Phidias valued even then will always prevail. Producing our best work will always stand the test of time.



Along our journey, we will encounter the same situation Phidias did. Do we do our best or only what is necessary? Do we satisfy the task or do we satisfy the Gods who can see them?

These aren't spiritual questions that we attach to our daily work production. They're for self-reflection question, a character assessment of our willingness to extend ourselves and not take the easy and familiar path of so many others.

**Before each day begins,
we'd be wise to ask ourselves five questions in particular:**

- 1) Do we simply want to get the work done or do we hold ourselves to higher standards?
- 2) Do we value time over quality?
- 3) Is checking off our to-do list the goal each day?
- 4) Do we want our work product to be part of our legacy?
- 5) When we look back at our work, five, 10 years later, will we be satisfied?

We all have a ton of work to accomplish in a short amount of time. As the great former UCLA basketball coach John Wooden once said: "If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have the time to do it over?"

Phidias only wanted to be the best, even though he wasn't compensated and sent to prison for attempting to defraud the government by charging too much. But his life and work had a higher meaning.

Does yours?



Fall 2022 State Academic Champions

GIRLS GOLF

5A	Timberline	3.942
4A	Ridgevue	3.905

BOYS GOLF

5A	Eagle	3.858
4A	Idaho Falls	3.876

GIRLS SOCCER

5A	Highland	3.843
4A	Idaho Falls	3.783
3A/2A/1A	Sun Valley	3.800

BOYS SOCCER

5A	Highland	3.717
4A	Bishop Kelly	3.614
3A/2A/1A	Sun Valley	3.570

GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

5A	Madison	3.952
4A	Twin Falls	3.980
3A	Parma	3.965
2A	West Side	3.994
1A	Logos	3.903

BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

5A	Coeur d'Alene	3.893
4A	Bishop Kelly	3.902
3A	Fruitland	3.902
2A	West Side	3.870
1A	Raft River	3.970

VOLLEYBALL

5A	Madison	3.957
4A	Ridgevue	3.875
3A	Homedale	3.881
2A	Declo	3.870
1A DI	Prairie	3.944
1A DII	Kendrick	3.990

FOOTBALL

5A	Thunder Ridge	3.480
4A	Bishop Kelly	3.495
3A	Marsh Valley	3.368
2A	Bear Lake	3.689
1A DI	Logos	3.633
1A DII	Kendrick	3.600

GIRLS SWIM

5A	Madison	3.805
4A	Twin Falls	3.924

BOYS SWIM

5A	Lake City	3.790
4A	Bishop Kelly	3.843

FALL 2022 STATE SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS

The IHSAA State Sportsmanship Awards are presented to the school in each classification that exhibits the best sportsmanship throughout the State Tournament. Schools are judged on Team, Coach, Administration, Student Section, Cheerleaders, Band, Adult Fans, and Inappropriate Behavior.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THESE SCHOOLS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

GIRLS SOCCER

5A **Thunder Ridge Titans**



4A **Shelley Russets**



3A **Timberlake Tigers**



BOYS SOCCER

5A **Lake City Timberwolves**



4A **Canyon Ridge Riverhawks**



3A **Wendell Trojans**



VOLLEYBALL

5A **Boise Brave**



4A **Century Diamondbacks**



3A **Kimberly Bulldogs**



2A **Ririe Bulldogs**



1A DI **Murtaugh Red Devils**



1A DII **Horseshoe Bend
Mustangs**



5 Ways Coaches

can teach life skills
through sport



Communicate Your Philosophy

The level of commitment you expect, what you plan to teach your athletes, and how you plan to run your season are important things to be clear on!



Build Meaningful Relationships

Get to know your athletes as people and use their strengths to address their weaknesses! Team building activities can be a great way of building meaningful relationships.



Use Development Strategies

Educate your athletes on what life skills are and why they are important. Empower them to have some say in their own development.



Discuss Life Skills Outside of Sport

Make the connection for your athletes about how they can use the life skills you teach in sport out in the "real world."



Practice Using Life Skills

For example, let your athletes lead some activities to practice leadership, or allow them to voice their opinions during team meetings to practice effective communication.

November

Leadership in Coaching
Book of the Month

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

tuesdays with Morrie

25TH
ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

an old man, a young man,
and life's greatest lesson

Mitch Albom

With a New Afterword by the Author

The Most Valuable Lessons from "Tuesdays With Morrie"

FORGIVE NOT ONLY OTHERS BUT ALSO YOURSELF

Most of us find it hard to forgive others, but what we don't know is that it's even harder to forgive ourselves. We tend to hold grudges in life, and somehow, it is the reason why we can't entirely be happy.

"We need to forgive ourselves. For all the things we didn't do. All the things we should have done. You can't get stuck on the regrets of what should have happened."

LIVE YOUR LIFE AS IF IT IS YOUR LAST DAY

Most of the time, we take our chances for granted – the opportunity to spend time with our family, to help other people, and the chance to do what we love.

"Every day, have a little bird on your shoulder that asks, 'Is today the day? Am I ready? Am I doing all I need to do? Am I the person I want to be?'"

STOP CHASING THE WRONG THINGS

Most people are blinded by money and fame, so they often chase the wrong things. They tend to disregard their family and friends because they thought that it's the material things that could keep them satisfied.

"So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep, even when they're busy doing things they think are important. This is because they're chasing the wrong things. The way you get meaning in your life is to devote yourself to loving others. Devote yourself to your community around you and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning."

DO THINGS WHOLE-HEARTEDLY WITHOUT EXPECTING SOMETHING IN RETURN


The reason why some people feel incomplete and unhappy is that they think only for themselves. Morrie taught us that selflessness and genuinely helping others brings us satisfaction and happiness.

"Do the kinds of things that come from the heart. When you do, you won't be dissatisfied. You won't be envious, and you won't be longing for somebody else's things. On the contrary, you'll be overwhelmed with what comes back."

BE COMPASSIONATE AND HELP OTHERS

Some people believe that we are all different from each other; that's why we don't treat everyone the way we should. We might be unique, but we need to accept people who are different from ourselves. For Morrie, we are always stronger together than if we are divided.

"Whites and blacks, Catholics and Protestants, men and women. If we saw each other as more alike, we might be very eager to join in one big human family in this world. And to care about that family the way we care about our own."



When you're in the spotlight you have to be fully focused on the game.

Don't let nicotine control your thoughts. Are you a teen who wants to quit vaping, smoking, or chewing? Find free and confidential help by texting "Start My Quit" to 36072 to get started.



?????

WHAT IS SUCCESS

?????

This is the third edition of a 3-part article, first published in the Idaho Education Journal and this series of articles, comes from a collaboration between Nathan White and Jason Warr. Both of us are lifetime educators and coaches in the West Ada School District, where Jason has worked for 26 years and where I have worked for 24 years.

We are both heading towards the end of our careers after holding multiple jobs at multiple schools and buildings in the district. We are both parents of former and current student-athletes in multiple athletic programs. We are both passionate about high school athletics and the lessons gained from playing high school sports.

Nathan White

Nathan White has spent the last 24 years in education and coaching. He worked for one year in the Phoenix (Oregon) School District, two years in the Mountain Home School District, and 21 years in the West Ada School District. He has coached football, baseball, and track at Phoenix High School, Mountain Home High School, Heritage Middle School, Rocky Mountain High School, and Eagle High School.

Nathan has been a classroom English teacher for 24 years and is married to a high school chemistry teacher, Lynette. They have four kids: Brock, Tennyson, Shelby, and Sydney. All four of his children have played sports and been educated in the West Ada School District—and one is even teaching in the West Ada School District.



Jason Warr

Jason Warr has spent the last 26 years in education and coaching. He worked for the Hagerman School District for four years and the West Ada School District for 22 years. He has coached football, girls' basketball, boys' basketball, and track at Hagerman High School, Eagle High School, Meridian High School, and Rocky Mountain High School.

Jason has been a classroom History teacher, a Vice Principal, and is currently the West Ada District Athletic Director. He is married to Mary and has four kids: Payton, Carly, Kobe, and Madison. All four of his children have played sports and been educated in the West Ada School District.

STATEMENT:

In creating a three-part series about high school athletics, coaches, and parents. Our goal is twofold: one, to help everyone remember the value of high school athletics, and two, to remind people that life and sports are viewed through many lenses and that these lenses show many definitions of athletic success.

Since we have spent most of our adult lives in high school athletics, we have seen the ugly side of high school athletics. This ugly side, more often than not, comes from different definitions of success.

Success is defined as a favorable or desired outcome. Just in that definition, there is a lot of ambiguity about what success looks like. Once you add in athletics, parents, players, coaches, and competition, that definition gets even more ambiguous.

One of the problems in high school athletics is how success is defined. When one looks at coaches, parents, and players in a high school sport, each of those definitions of success can look different. Which lens do we view athletic success?

Is success winning? How many games do you have to win? Is it winning a district championship? Is it winning a state championship? Is it being the starting point guard on a basketball team? Would you rather lose and play all the time? Would you rather your child not play as much but the team to win more?

These are hard questions that have different answers in theory and in practice.

One way to objectively look at success is to look at some stories from around the West Ada School District that attempt to define the different lenses that can be used to see athletic success.



3rd Edition - A GUIDE TO SPORTS PARENTING

Almost every sports parent comes from a place of love for their child. We all want to help our kids, give them the most opportunities, and give them what we didn't have but wish we had. My definition of the American Dream echoes this idea; the American Dream is wanting better for our children than we have or had in our lives. This includes their high school sports career, too.

I do not have all the answers, but I like to deal in honesty. I know we can't solve all our problems in three easy essays, but let's be honest about what we can do to help our parents, our players, and our coaches in high school athletics.

As a parent, how can I best support my child in high school athletics?

#1

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

I have a sticky note on my school computer. It reads “Ignore the Noise-Focus on what you can control.”

I first heard this quote stating that Nick Saban, the head football coach at Alabama, has it in his office. I have never been to his office so I have no idea if that is true or not.

However, this quote has been a mainstay in my life. Teaching, coaching, or my family life—focusing on what I can control is a big part of how I try to achieve my definitions of success. That sticky note is at least 15 years old. I have to tape it to new computer screens because all the sticky is long gone.

I believe parents focusing on what they can control helps them understand the bigger picture. As much as parents would like to, they do not make the decisions for high school sports teams. Coaches control playing time, schemes, strategy, who plays where, logistics, and the day-to-day coaching of the team.

Parents do not get to vote on team issues. However, by focusing on what is in their control, parents can help set a tone for their student-athlete. Parents also need to understand that high school athletics are high-level competition. Playing time is not guaranteed.

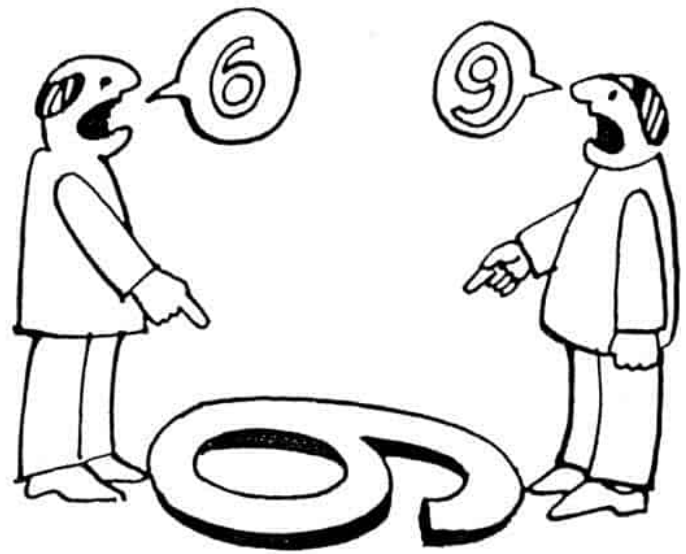
Each player on a team is a piece of the puzzle. The puzzle will be incomplete without all the pieces and each piece is important. Players and parents might not like their piece as much as another but they can make their role, or their piece, very important. By players embracing their roles, and by parents helping their player embrace their role, players can control what they have in their control.

In finding this role, parents should encourage their player to talk to the coach and identify areas for improvement. If you want more minutes on the basketball floor, what skills do you need to improve on? This conversation can help focus athletes on where to spend their time and can help the parent know the coach is interested in helping their child improve. However, when and how much that improvement happens is an evaluation made by the coach, which is out of the parent’s hands.

This process of improvement is a marathon, not a sprint. The parent and the coach may not agree on the timeline, but the coach’s vote is the only one that matters. Remember, Michael Jordan was cut from his 9th-grade basketball team. Where would he be had his parents encouraged him to move schools? Instead, he worked diligently on his skills and made himself into the player he was.

The changes between an athlete as a freshman and a senior can be incredible. My son grew seven inches and gained 30 pounds during his sophomore year. He was a much different athlete as a senior than as a freshman. Had he given up and not worked hard as a young player because he physically wasn’t there yet, he would have never been the varsity athlete he developed into.

High school sports are a four-year marathon of building a program, not a one-week or one-game or one-season sprint.



#2

BE REALISTIC AND UNDERSTAND OTHER PERSPECTIVES

I believe that all parents come from a place of love for their kids. We want the best for them. We want them to have success in sports and school. As parents, we have been watching (and paying) for our kids’ athletic success for years.

However, just because I believe my kid is the best athlete does not mean that the coach may see it the same way. There are many lenses and many reasons for this, but the bottom line, even if the coach is “wrong,” it is still the coach’s decision, not the parents’. Just because I have paid for private lessons and all the travel club fees does not guarantee my child is the best athlete.

Many times, coaches see a player’s strengths and ability to contribute differently than the parents. While he might be the second-best linebacker on the team, that player is also the very best offensive lineman and we are better if he plays Tackle for us. He may have been a linebacker his whole life, but now he is being moved.

Parents, support this for your kid. It’s a badge of honor when coaches are looking for ways to redesign a player’s piece of the puzzle. Your child is so good that he or she could be several puzzle pieces. The coach’s job is to fit the piece correctly to give the whole the best chance of success.

If the parent can buy in with the plan at the dinner table, chances are so will the player. However, if the parent doesn’t, is that really going to help your child? It’s probably not going to change the coach’s mind. It’s probably not going to result in more playing time for your child. It’s probably not going to help your child learn the lesson of striving and overcoming. It’s probably not going to help the program win more games.

In fact, by undercutting the coach and program, the athlete’s chances of success are far slimmer—the success of playing time, winning games, and the grit that comes with the process.

A lot of parents push high school athletics for the unicorn of the college scholarship. Parents need to be realistic about how hard it is for athletes to earn a college scholarship.

According to NCAA.org, the likelihood of earning a college athletic scholarship is between 3% (men’s wrestling) and 26% (women’s ice hockey) of all high school athletes. To check your child’s specific sport, click on the link above for the exact numbers from the NCAA. Most of the sports listed are below 5%.

That means for every 100 kids on the football field over the summer, less than five of them will play football in college. The other 95 kids are working to be the best high school player they can be.

Parents, be realistic. Not every child will go to college and play, no matter how bad we want them to. Far more of them will have to pay to go to college and use their brains for their degree, not their athleticism.

#3

REMEMBER THE KEY TO ANY RELATIONSHIP IS COMMUNICATION

There are very few times in life when over-communication is a detriment. If there are issues on a sports team, a lot of times it is a simple misunderstanding. To address this, a parent's first step should be to talk to their player. Is what the parent is seeing really an issue for the player, or is it just the parent? A lot of times, the player does not feel the same way about an issue as the parent does. And is the parent or the player the one on the team?

After talking to your player and confirming the issue, the next step is to talk to the coach about the issue. Please write or call the coach requesting a meeting. Don't try and grab them after a practice or game. Remember, coaches have emotions and families, too.

In a lot of cases, this meeting with the coach, parent, and player will fix most issues. That doesn't mean the coach will change her mind and make your daughter the starting shortstop. However, you may come away with clarity as to why your daughter is NOT the starting shortstop and what she can do to reach her goals.

Sometimes, parents will approach coaches and say "Don't tell my kid I'm talking to you." This makes it difficult for all involved to deal in an honest, open line of communication. Remember, communication is the key to a relationship. We can't build a relationship by hiding things from one another. If there is still an issue after meeting with the coach, set up a meeting with the building athletic director. After that, if there is still a need, is a meeting with the building principal.

Too often, parents skip to emailing the superintendent and district athletic director. This is inefficient. Start by talking to the people in your building before jumping to the top of the ladder.



#4

REMEMBER THE POINT OF HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

Why do athletes lift all those weights and run all those sprints? Because it makes them stronger. Adversity makes our athletes mentally stronger. Life is not easy; sports help prepare us for this. When our children are challenged, it makes them grow. Too often, we as parents want to grade the road for our children. We want to remove the adversity.

Parents, we need to react to adversity in a positive way to show our athletes how to overcome it. Athletes need adversity like they need to lift weights. They also need their parents to be role models in how to deal with adversity.

Amy, one of my favorite student-athletes ever to come from the West Ada School District, was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer at 19 years old. As a college athlete, she went from having it all to almost losing it all overnight.

Amy clarifies how important sports were to her struggle.

"Because of sports, I knew I could work through the pain of the surgeries, the fatigue, tears, and struggles through chemo, and life thereafter. But now that I am sitting here typing this I consider being an athlete the biggest blessing in disguise. It gave me the tools to fight for my life, create friends, create my community, and learn who I am. Sports have played an extremely important role in my life. I learned how to battle, I learned how to be a part of a team. I learned how to take my losses, rub some dirt on it, and stand back up stronger."

Amy, now a 35-year-old professional, credits being a high school athlete for saving her life. Cancer was just more adversity for her to overcome, like a slump that lowered her batting average or a broken nose on the soccer pitch. She attacked cancer treatment like she knew how to attack opponents on the field.

In addition to maybe saving an athlete's life, high school sports also help athletes earn money. I have listened to many CEOs of large companies explain why they want to hire high school varsity athletes. Athletes understand work ethic, how to put someone else's goals ahead of their own, how to work as a team, how to be a leader of a team, and how to compete with external forces and focus on strategies that lead to success.

The point of high school athletics is bigger than wins and scholarships. When parents see struggle and adversity, remember what the point of all this is. What are we really trying to teach and learn?

#5

YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOUR PLAYER'S NAME MIGHT BE CALLED

If your player is second string, they are one play away from being a starter. If they are third string, they are two plays away. It's never going to be perfect but we might miss out on the perfect moment if we aren't ready. If your player has spent the last three weeks kicking grass because they aren't playing, upset at the coaches, not focusing on his or her craft, then he or she might not be ready when the lights are brightest. In 2001, in the 4th quarter of a 13-10 loss, Drew Bledsoe was knocked out of an NFL game with a concussion, a collapsed lung, and internal bleeding. Bledsoe almost died from the violent hit. His backup, with two minutes left in the game? A nobody named Tom Brady. Tom Brady went 11-3 the rest of the year and won his first Super Bowl. He did not miss when his moment was presented. And he hasn't left the field for the last 21 years. Second string is one play away. In addition to being ready, many times coaches see a player make an impact in a way that wasn't anticipated. A sophomore can run down on special teams and makes a big tackle in space which changes his future from wide receiver to defensive back. A backup infielder comes through with a big hit in a big spot, which prompts a move to the outfield since there was just an injury. Even though your player might not be making contributions to the team in the way you had planned or hoped for, focus on the fact they are making contributions and the lessons that come from that.



IN THE END

Ultimately, we want our West Ada players, parents, and coaches to have great experiences. In writing these three essays about high school athletics, Jason and I, among many other trusted colleagues, have been forced to think and talk about why we do the things we do. At the heart of it, we love high school athletics and high school athletes. I have enjoyed reflecting on different coaching stories and how I handled certain situations. I haven't always been right. I haven't always been wrong. But with time, I have learned to look at lots of different perspectives and to try to see where others are coming from. Our goal is to try and have parents look at their athletes and their athletics from multiple perspectives. My encouragement is for parents to communicate with their coaches, support their student-athletes, and try to focus on the awesome lessons that come from high school athletics. Not everyone will end up with a college scholarship or in the NFL, but every high school athlete can be a part of something greater than him or herself and learn these awesome lessons.

THANK YOU
TO
NATHAN & JASON



Replenish Program Application

Chocolate Milk to Fuel Your Athletes

To coach your athletes to achieve their personal greatness means teaching them about the importance of fueling properly. Drinking chocolate milk after physical activity is a great way to replenish energy and help muscles recover.

Your high school athletic program can apply for 1 pallet of chocolate milk, per high school, to help fuel your athletes!

Dairy West is excited to offer this program to high school athletic programs across Idaho and Utah for the 2022-2023 school year!

Application Process

This year's application for shelf-stable whole chocolate milk is a competitive process.

Dairy West is looking for passionate high school athletic programs to partner with us to:

- Teach the importance of fueling for performance
- Promote dairy foods as trusted fuel for athletes

School athletic departments can apply by filling out the short application and telling us how they intend to partner on this program! Applications will be reviewed by a committee and awards will be announced in early July. Milk will be distributed to schools starting in the fall of the 2022-2023 school year.

Please note the following changes to the Replenish with Chocolate Milk Program:

- We will be offering one-time, one pallet deliveries
At least one team from your school must complete a Game Winning Fueling Strategies Virtual Team Talk *prior* to your milk delivery



APPLY HERE!

For questions, contact Calla Chapin at cchapin@dairywest.com

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