

BCAM MONTHLY REPORT – NOVEMBER 2009

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR....

--by Tom Hursey

Hopefully you are ready to start your practices in the coming weeks. Most of you are anxiously awaiting the new season. I always felt the toughest job as a basketball coach was having to cut kids. The first few cuts were not too difficult since it was obvious that these players did not have the ability or attitude that was needed to play for me. But the closer I came to my final cuts, the tougher the decisions. My rule was if a junior and a senior were equal in ability and attitude, I went with the underclassman. If I was thinking of keeping a senior that probably wouldn't get much playing time, I would ask him if he would still have a good attitude in February. If yes, then I could use this in February if his attitude became a problem. Each of you will need to have "a plan" for making your decision about who to keep and who to cut. Make sure you give this some thought and that your players trying out know what your decisions are based on. No doubt you will need to explain WHY to a parent or two. Good luck!

REMINDERS:

- The **School Special** for \$80 has proven very popular. But some schools and coaches are sending in \$80 but not signing up all their coaches. In fact, sometimes we get one of the two varsity coaches signed up but not the other. **YOU MUST BE SIGNED UP TO BE A BCAM MEMBER.** To add members to your existing School Membership go to BCAM website and click on JOIN BCAM. Select "School Membership". Then select "Existing School Membership". Fill out the information for each coach you need to register.
- The **Clinic** was another great weekend for BCAM members. A great line-up of speakers. Great Hall of Fame Banquet. A variety of vendors. BUT I was not happy with the turn-out. We will be asking members to let us know what we need to change to get more members to attend. Look for an email requesting your response.
- We have all lost friends and relatives to cancer. BCAM will be stepping up its efforts to raise money to fight this terrible disease. You will be receiving some information on a Coaches vs Cancer fund raising project in January – **it will be very easy to administer and only take part of one practice.** Please make sure you get all your teams in your system to participate. If you have your own special fundraiser, please continue to use that.
- Along with our winter efforts for Coaches vs Cancer, we are planning our 2nd Annual BCAM Golf Scramble. It will be held on Monday, August 9, 2010 at the beautiful Walnut Hills Country Club in East Lansing. By moving the outing to the center of the state we hoping to increase participation. Rodney Palmer (Boys Varsity – Williamston HS) has a great committee overseeing this event. Mark your calendars and line up your team.
- **Seeding** of the District Tournament was considered recently. Dave Ginsberg (Boys Varsity - TC St. Francis HS) did an outstanding job of coming up with a proposal. That proposal was sent to boys and girls varsity coaches who were BCAM members. 66.5% voted in favor of the seeding proposal. 33.5% voted against. The BCAM Board of Directors believes that any major rule change must be favored by around 75% of coaches or the MHSAA will not consider it. There is a good chance that seeding will be looked at again in the future.
- Our **website** is awesome. The new changes give us much more flexibility. Communication with members is now much improved. I would like each member to take a few minutes to check it out (www.bcam.org). Find out how it can help you as a coach. The LINKS page has many areas that you can access that will help you.
- I am including in this month's report a couple of articles that deal with **parents** and their involvement in high school sports. Please look them over and anticipate problems. Remember

that it isn't the X's and O's that get coaches removed from their position but more often than not it is the parents that are the cause.

- I sat in on Don Meyer's talk at the clinic. He had numerous pass outs. The one that caught my eye was a small card entitled STOP & THINK. It is a card that he gives out to his players to put on the dash board of their car. Coach Meyer wants his players to think before they do something stupid. The four questions on the card are:
 1. Is this a risk I can afford to take?
 2. How will this affect my future?
 3. How will this affect my family?
 4. How will this affect my teammates and coaches?*Maybe this is something you can use with your players....*

REACHING HIGHER SHOWCASE – 2010

Preparation for the 2nd Reaching Higher Showcase Event is in full swing. The girls showcase will take place on Sunday, April 18th @ South Lyon High School. The boys event will take place on July 31st at a site to be announced soon. Coaches may nominate top underclass players beginning in December. The nomination deadline is January 29, 2010. A detailed letter will be sent out by the MHSAA in early December detailing the nomination process. Nominating coaches are encouraged to contact the Reaching Higher Regional Representative from their area. Reaching Higher Selection Committee Members may be found at <http://www.mhsaa.com/Sports/BoysBasketball/ReachingHigher.aspx> or at www.bcam.org.

120 players and 40 alternates will be selected on Sunday, February 7th, @ the MHSAA Office by the Reaching Higher Selection Committee.

Additional information may be found at <http://www.mhsaa.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=TjUQTnefUNQ%3d&tabid=120>. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Coach Moffit [Grayling HS] or Coach Conley [Heritage HS] at reachinghighershowcase@gmail.com.

RESULTS OF SEEDING SURVEY

The vote is in on the Seeding Proposal that was developed by Dave Ginsberg (TC St. Francis). 400 varsity coaches responded. 266 voted in favor of seeding (66.5%). 134 voted against seeding (33.5%). Past history indicates that BCAM needs at least 70-75% support before further action can be undertaken. The fact that 2/3 of those responding were in favor of seeding makes me believe that future efforts might push our results closer to the necessary percentage. Stay tuned. If you really want to get involved, contact Dave at hoopster33@hotmail.com

Advice for adults: Don't overwhelm your kids

By Mick McCabe (Detroit Free Press)

Before the high school sports season gets going in a big way this weekend, it's time for me to have a sit-down with you parents. Now why would I feel compelled to write something directed at parents? Because somebody needs to say something to parents before it's too late. Nothing about high school athletics has changed as much in my 39 years at the Free Press as parents.

Kids are no different. Parents are.

People I consider sane, rational and knowledgeable about sports become raving lunatics when it comes to their kids playing high school athletics. People who say they can be objective about their kids and their athletic ability are lying. It isn't their fault. It's perfectly natural to be a little nutty when it comes to your kids.

The problem arises when a parent's actions affect other people. And the person most likely to be

affected is your kid, and it might not be in a positive way. So let's begin with a bit of free advice for parents: Lighten up! Seriously, lighten up!

There are two things every parent must know and accept or this could be a long year for everyone involved. First, your kid is not as good as you think. Second, your kid's coach isn't as stupid as you think. I know both issues are tough to accept, and the first one may be a completely unacceptable premise for parents.

You can pretty much forget it if you think that your kid is going to end up with a college athletic scholarship. I know a scholarship to college would make your life so much easier if you didn't have to write those big, fat tuition checks. But few high school athletes actually end up with college scholarships, and you will be in for a bitter letdown when no college coach comes with a letter of intent in hand for your kid's autograph. Already I have had parents leave voice messages for me about their kids and their awe-inspiring talents and how I should adjust my schedule to be sure to see them. One parent said his son is a "Ray Lewis-type linebacker. He's like nothing you've ever seen."

Trust me, I've seen it.

I've seen Tyrone Wheatley. I've seen Jake Long. I've seen Gary Danielson. I've seen Mill (The Thrill) Coleman. I've seen Jerome Bettis. I've seen Ronald Johnson. I've seen Pepper Johnson. I've seen just about everyone of consequence in this state over the last 39 years, so don't think that your kid is so special that we're going to start writing his autobiography in November. And don't worry. If your kid is good we will find out about him or her from the coach. You don't need to be your kid's press secretary. Trust me, it doesn't help in the least.

Now about your kid's coach. He or she really isn't an idiot, and, no, the coach doesn't hate your kid and that isn't why your kid isn't playing. I have never met a coach who didn't play a player he or she thought could help the team win unless there was a disciplinary issue involved. The bottom line is winning, and that is what the coach cares about most. Personal feelings really don't enter into it, so you are going to have to lose that as an excuse for why your kid isn't playing more.

Over the last few years I've seen more and more coaches leave the profession because they hate dealing with the parents. And when they say *hate*, they really mean it. Somewhere along the way coaches went from people to be revered to the point now that they are thought of as low-paid employees of the parents.

And the job of the coach, parents believe, is to make sure their kid plays virtually every minute of every game, is the leading scorer, makes all-league and all-state and receives a college scholarship. Anything less and the coach is a complete failure, and some parents will be willing to devote the rest of their lives to getting the coach fired.

The crucial aspect parents don't get is that high school athletics is about your kid and not you. And really, none of your friends will think less of you if your kid doesn't make all-state.

Now go out and try to enjoy the school year and try not to ruin it for your kid. Your kid only goes through high school once. You already had your shot. Don't ruin your kid's.

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THE CHALLENGE OF COACHING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Reprinted from the September 2009 issue of The Minnesota Prep Coach Magazine

During the course of this spring and summer there have been an alarming number of coaches who are facing non-renewal of their coaching contracts. Coaching has and will always be a profession that opens itself for second guessing and micro-management. Almost all coaches know this fact when they enter the profession. The level of concern has been raised by the increasing number of coaches losing their jobs. I think it is time for the coaches who work in this profession to ask why? What has changed? How can we correct what is happening?

From the outside it seems that high school sports have been derailed from their purpose. The purpose of high school athletics has been to offer a positive experience to the young men and women in our schools. High school athletics along with the fine arts were intended to provide opportunities for students to grow and mature by experiencing positive opportunities. These positive opportunities help our young men and women on their journey to becoming productive, educated leaders of our future. Athletes who are fortunate to go on to the next level are an exception and not the rule and the opportunities intended for those that choose to participate should not be jeopardized in an effort to produce an elite athlete.

In 2002 the Board of Directors of the Minnesota State High School League sent out a press release to the member schools and citizens of Minnesota. In that release the concern was made about the changing direction of high school sports. A quote from the article that stood out was: "The values embedded in educational athletic and

fine arts programs are threatened by some philosophies that say ‘take the best and leave the rest’.” This mentality seems to have grown since 2002. Coaches are often blamed when some of their athletes do not receive scholarships or collegiate opportunities. The statistics have not changed from that year, only the unreasonable expectations. Only two out of 100 high school athletes will ever play in college, and only one out of 12,000 high school athletes that do go on to play college athletics have only a partial scholarship or in the case of division three athletes, no scholarship at all.

The unfortunate truth is that these messages are falling on deaf ears. There are many who still believe that participation in high school athletics will lead to scholarships. We know that will happen to only a few of the very gifted. The message that parents are choosing to hear is that there are scholarships out there and if their son or daughter is pushed hard enough and provided with enough opportunities they will be one of the chosen few. For many of the parents who believe this, it has become increasingly difficult to adhere to the fundamental role of parents in athletics. Their role is to cheer and support their sons and daughters. There is one instructional voice and it belongs to the coach. As the role of parents seems to become distorted, the more difficult it has become for coaches. There are numerous factors that have contributed to the changing roles that parents are taking. The change does require coaches to be more aware of communication with parents, boosters and school officials. Coaches still play a critical role in the development of our young people and the responsibility of that role should not be taken lightly. We have a great product called high school sports. It is far better for communities than any AAU teams, traveling teams or all star teams. High school athletics is a value we have to continue to feature in our communities as a way of providing opportunities for our future leaders to grow. If it leads to future opportunities it is a bonus. Coaches must send out a clear message to all associated with high school sports that we have something special and it should never be jeopardized by misinformed and misguided folks who do not quite understand the fundamental truth that there is not “I” in TEAM and we are here for the benefit of all our student athletes.

"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."

-- Maya Angelou, Poet

RESTORING AND KEEPING THE LOVE IN YOUR MARRIAGE

By Dr. Gary & Barb Rosberg, The Great Marriage Experience, from the NABC Timeout Magazine.

- **PUT YOUR SPOUSE FIRST ON YOUR LIST.**
Make it a priority to spend time together. After a long day (even when on the road), connect with your spouse. Communicate with your spouse during the day.
- **COMMUNICATE HONESTLY WITH YOUR SPOUSE.**
Share your trials and temptations with your spouse. Work struggles are things your spouse would want to know about. Husbands can offer valuable problem-solving ideas and wives appreciate emotional insights. By trusting your spouse and being honest with him or her, you can deepen your intimacy and strengthen your marriage.
- **SPEND TIME WITH YOUR SPOUSE.**
Think back to when you were dating and do similar things. Get to know your spouse again. Find out what he or she is interested in now. Do things together. Date!
- **THINK POSITIVE THOUGHTS ABOUT MARRIAGE AND YOUR SPOUSE.**
Control your thoughts. Determine that you will rekindle your love for your spouse. Remember all the positive, appealing qualities you admired in your spouse when you first married. Compliment your spouse, and enjoy the warm response you'll receive.
- **RESTORE ROMANCE AND INTIMACY WITH YOUR SPOUSE.**
Do the things you remember your spouse loved to do when you first dated or were newlyweds. Take your spouse to a favorite restaurant. Watch movies your spouse prefers. Communicate intimacy through sharing your thoughts and emotions. Share your memories of favorite family times. Laugh together. Men spell intimacy S-E-X, and women spell intimacy T-A-L-K. To improve your marriage, speak your spouse's language!

Coaching Players from Good to Great

Eddie O'Connor, PhD

Players will not reach their potential if they settle for being just good enough to win. In practice and games, players have to diligently work on their skills, take chances and overcome adversity. The team culture you create must encourage learning and growth. Here are six steps to coach your player from good to great:

Define success as:

- giving maximum effort
- personal improvement
- execution of strategies
-

Keep winning in perspective

- Athletes can't control the outcome of the game. So teach them to focus on the *process* as defined by consistently giving full effort and "doing their job" (i.e., executing their assignment each play).

Know why your players play the game

- Athletes play basketball for many reasons. A survey of athletes 10 to 18 years-old report the top three reasons kids play sports are: 1) to have fun, 2) improve skills, and 3) to stay in shape. Winning ranked #10!
- Provide opportunities for success with these multiple goals (for example, allow socializing during stretching or plan team outings if the team values relationships as a priority)

Always be realistically positive

- I know you've heard "be positive" before. But when done correctly, it is one of the most powerful ways to build motivation, confidence, and engagement in basketball.
 - Catch players doing things right
 - Be specific with what you compliment, so the player knows exactly to do again the next time
 - Be sincere and reinforce behaviors immediately
 - *Everybody* cheers good plays. Make the extra effort to reinforce personal improvement and effort.
- Do not say "good job" after a sloppy practice. This is not being realistic or specific.
 - Instead, pick one or two things they genuinely did well (e.g., hustle, decision-making ... even if they just showed up on time!). Reinforce that and then provide instruction.

Create a positive, task-focused, practice climate where athletes:

- Practice to get better (not prove they're better than others)
- Compete against themselves to improve (not against each other for playing time)
- Help each other to reach their potential (not worry about mistakes, failure, or letting teammates down)

- Coaches emphasize:
 - Learning new skills (vs. competition with teammates)
 - Giving high effort (vs. demonstration of high ability)
 - Bettering one's self (vs. assuming that players are limited by talent)

Encourage honest mistakes

- This does not include mistakes due to a lack of effort or concentration
- Honest mistakes are made when an athlete “pushes the envelope” and tries new things in an attempt to grow. You want athletes to accept these mistakes in their quest for excellence and learn from them.
- After a mistake, feed athletes a “positive sandwich” (Smith & Smoll, 1995):
 - Compliment something they did well
 - Provide future oriented instruction, only if needed (many know what they did wrong)
 - End with encouragement

Follow these steps and your athletes will improve their performance while enjoying the season even more.

** If you would like to receive Dr. Eddie's free Mental Toughness e-newsletter and get tips like these monthly, send an e-mail to DrEddie@PerformanceExcellenceCenter.com today. **