
Building Relationships Between Middle & High School Athletic Programs

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Today's Presenters



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Single Feeder School Program

Ways for your high school to build relationships with a single feeder middle school:

1. System wide inservice for all coaches to review philosophies and system rules and regulations
2. Coaches meet per sport prior to season
3. Coaches attend each others game when possible
4. Hold camps together
5. Have high school players come to middle school games
6. Have an overarching theme.
7. Branding of Logos and colors
8. Communication between coaches and players and parents
9. Sharing facilities
10. Big picture concept

Multi Feeder programs

Ways for your high school to build relationships with multiple feeder middle schools:

1. System wide inservice for all coaches to review philosophies and system rules and regulations
2. Coaches attend each others game when possible
3. Hold camps together
4. Have high school players come to middle school games
5. Have school recognition nights at High school games
6. Branding of Logos and colors
7. Communication between coaches and players and parents
8. Sharing facilities
9. Encourage rivalries but have the concept of one program.

The Transition Process

The most successful schools see the transition between the middle grades and high school as a process, not an event. These schools involve coaches, students and families in continuous planning to support students' academic and social success in high school and beyond. Students that have a successful transition are more likely to achieve in the 9th grade, to attend regularly and to not drop out of school and remain involved in sports. They are more likely to develop and sustain positive social relationships with peers and with adults. Four components of effective transition systems have been identified. They include providing students and families accurate and useful information, supporting students' social success in high school, preparing students for academic success in high school, and working collaboratively to monitor transition plans and adjust those plans based on data about student success.

Sharing Athletes

Coaches at both levels must learn to share athletes and encourage multi sport athletes. This starts at at the middle school level and must be communicated to parents and athletes. Coaches must work on offseason schedules and summer camps so students can attend lots of different things and don't get overloaded with multiple practices and workouts during the day. We need to remember to make time for kids to be kids and have some off time.

Multi Sport Athletes

Pros and Cons of Multi-Sport Athletes

- **Developing Different Skills** – Typically athletes who participate in multiple sports have the ability to develop skills that complement other sports. For example, if a football player runs track or plays basketball, he can further improve his footwork and hand-eye coordination. Although footwork and hand-eye coordination are not the same, understanding how to use those body parts makes it easier for athletes to improve in all sports.
- **Minimal Burnout** – It's no secret that nowadays athletes struggle with burnout. For most athletes being pushed to play year round can cause them to lose the passion they once had. And usually, this means they won't have the desire to play in college.
- **Choosing One Sport** – A major difficulty for elite athletes is deciding which sport they want to play in college. Unlike the great Bo Jackson, most athletes don't play multiple sports in college. So, it can be hard for someone who is a standout football and baseball player or softball and soccer stud to choose between sports.
- **The Risk of Injury in Other Sports** – Again, injuries are a common part of athletics. It's not often that a player will play their whole career without some injury. But a problem for multiple sport athletes is getting injured in a sport that they play in their offseason. That injury could cause problems for them in their main sport or worse; they could miss time in their primary sport.

Multi Sport Athletes Continued

Pros and Cons of Specializing in One Sport

- **Perfecting Skills-** Focusing energy on one sport and one set of skills is a great way to master a sport. For example, baseball players don't need to know how to tackle, and football players don't need swing a bat.
- **Confidence** – If an athlete specializes in one particular sport they have the ability to become confident in their abilities, which is a great thing. Confidence is key to being the best player on the field or court.
- **More Frequent Burnout** – Athletes who tend to spend all of their time on one sport frequently experience burnout from doing the same things over and over again. This problem is a major con of being a specialized athlete because they tend to quit or give up due to boredom or tiredness.
- **Overuse Injuries** – These types of injuries are prevalent for one sport athletes because of the constant repetitive motions. For a throwing sport like softball or baseball overuse can lead to serious problems like Tommy John's or shoulder problems.

Independent School Transition

Why Give Attention to this transition?

From the Inside → Out

- Goal - Smooth transition & that they transition
- Similar to Single Feeder Programs - Recruit your own kids!
- Shared Mission & Values
- Become a familiar face
- Smooth and easy transition
 - a. Coaches
 - b. Faculty & Staff
 - c. Program Knowledge
- Incorporate in Varsity Athletics early
- Mentor Opportunities
- “Class of 20XX Day”



Parent Information Meeting

- Introduce self and program if new or different staff than MS
- Inform
 - a. Eligibility Policies
 - b. Athletic Association & Leagues
 - c. Policies - Transportation, Communication, Social Media, Hazing, Drug/Alcohol, etc.
- Schedule
 - a. Tryouts
 - b. Games
 - c. Practices
- Parent Involvement - Expectations and Needs

Communicate (Developmentally Appropriate) Transition Differences

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| • Shorter, fewer practices & seasons | ➡ | Longer training & seasons |
| • Fun focus | ➡ | Intensity, strategy & concepts |
| • Social | ➡ | Performance Related |
| • Playing time philosophy | ➡ | Playing time changes |
| • Grade level teams | ➡ | Internal grade-level hierarchy |
| • Parent Handling of logistics | ➡ | Self-Responsibility Increases |
| • Smaller time commitment and more time for outside activities | ➡ | Program additions (weight training, study hall, etc.) |
| • Try it all, play it all! | ➡ | Sport Offerings Change |
| • Parent Communication | ➡ | Student Communication evolves |
| • Less Homework | ➡ | More Homework |
| • Restricted Seasons | ➡ | Off-Season programs |

Once they become a (*enter your mascot here*)...

- Reach out to Middle School Administration to “Meet the Students”
- Sign-up/Activity Fair or Event
- Program Orientation
- Summer playdays
- Weight Room Orientation
- Academic Needs
- Teaching independence - Remind, Email, etc.



SELL Your Program



- Middle School Nights
- Branding & Gear
- Buy-In
- Q&A Sessions
- Community Service
- Joint Efforts
- All-School Event Highlights
- Jerseys at School
- Mentorship

Win - Win

- Retention
- Buy - In
- School Spirit
- Culture
- Traditions
- Job Security for Coaches
- Predictability
- Consistency



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