
Challenges of a Middle School Athletic Administrator

— National Athletic Directors
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Today's Presenters



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OPENING THOUGHTS ON MIDDLE SCHOOL A



Getting Playing Time



Getting Pictures Taken



Winning



Trying Your Best



Earning Medals or Trophies



Getting Along with your Teammates



Playing in Tournaments



When Coach Treats Player with Respect



Playing Well/Together as a Team

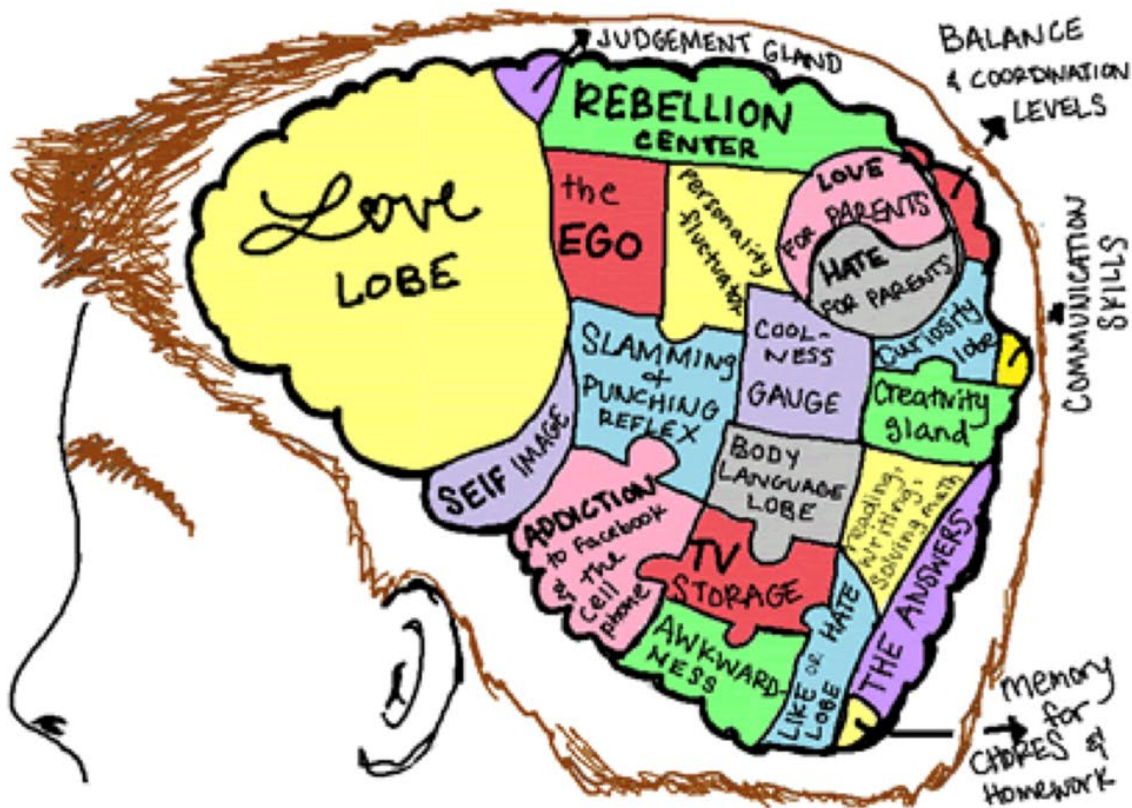


Exercising and Being Active

Rank in order from most important to least important.

SHOULDER PARTNER DISCUSSION: What are the differences between a middle school's order of importance and an adult's order of importance?

THE AVERAGE TEENAGE BRAIN



Does this look accurate?

MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS

For many middle school students, the competitive sport experience brings with it the first exposure to the concepts of :

selection

ranking

playing time

team role

the privilege of participation

What is Education-Based Athletics?

1. Is a privilege.
2. Enriches the educational experience.
3. Encourages academic achievement.
4. Promotes respect, integrity and sportsmanship.
5. Prepares for the future in a global community.
6. Develops leadership and life skills.
7. Fosters inclusion of diverse populations.
8. Promotes healthy lifestyles and safe competition.
9. Encourages positive school/community culture.
10. Should be fun.

What are the Goals of Educated Athletics?

Learn Teamwork

Learn to be Successful

Learn to be a Good Sport

Learn to enjoy Athletics

Learn desirable Health Habits

Learn to set Goals

Middle Schools MUST FIND

- Employ educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so.
- Have courageous and collaborative leadership.
- Create a shared vision that guides decisions.
- Implement an inviting, supportive, and safe environment.
- Hold high expectations for every member of the learning community.
- Students and teachers engage in active learning.
- An adult advocates for every student.
- Schools initiate family and community partnerships.

TIPS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS

- Encourage & support regardless of degree of success, the level of skill, or playing time.
- Model respect for the coach and the importance of contributing to the team.
- Attend and participate in preseason parent meetings.
- Ensure balance, encouraging participation in multiple sports and activities.
- Recognize the developmental stages, ensure enjoyment, skill development and team play.
- Leave coaching to coaches. (24 HOUR RULE)

TIPS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS

- Avoid pressure on your child about playing time and performance.
- Be realistic. Only a few select earn a college scholarship, compete in the Olympics, or sign a professional contract.
- Avoid specialization. Yearlong play in one sport leads to potential burnout.
- Acknowledge that young people strive for excellence , compete to win, but cherish participation and friendships.
- Be there when your child looks to the sidelines.

From daddy ball to organized school sports

Communication is the key.

1. Explain athletic rules on tryouts and practices
2. Make sure parent meetings are well attended and timely.
3. Talk about playing time before the season starts.
4. Explain the chain of command.
5. Go over insurance, travel, practice expectations and fees and costs.
6. Provide communication avenues ie. Band, Social Media, Text, emails ect.
7. Developmental issues of athletes.
8. Realistic expectations.

Middle School Athletes come in all shapes and s

This a crazy time in middle school athletes lives as they are growing at different rates and skill levels. You must be sure to teach at different levels to protect kids and to help them stay in love with their sports. Don't neglect the little ones because they may grow exponentially over the next few years while others may not grow much more.

The difference in Middle School Athletes

A 6th grader and an
8th grade teammate



The difference in Middle School Athletes

7th Grade teammates.

The smaller one is
older.



The difference in Middle School Athletes

8th Grade wrestlers .

72 pounds and 225 pounds



Coaches Expectations

Things to help Middle School Coaches excel:

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 a great relationship with your feeder school
6. Have an overarching theme.
7. Branding of Logos and colors
8. Communication between coaches and players and parents
9. Big picture concept

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 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. Also middle school athletes are growing and developing at different levels. Do not encourage a one sport mentality.

Multi Sport Athletes

Pros and Con 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.

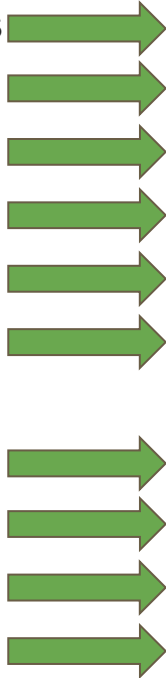
Goals for students transitioning from elementary s

- Try to help them have a smooth transition
- Become a familiar face
- Communicate early about who they need to meet and what they need to know:
 - a. Coaches
 - b. Faculty & Staff
 - c. Program Knowledge
 - d. Try-out times
- Provide Mentor Opportunities with older students
- Provide camp information
- Provide opportunities for them to purchase school gear.

Communicate Transition Differences for each

Elementary Level

- Shorter, fewer practices & seasons
- Fun focus
- Playing time philosophy
- Age level teams
- Parent Handling of logistics
- Smaller time commitment and more time for outside activities
- Try it all, play it all!
- Parent Communication
- Less Homework
- Restricted Seasons



Middle School

- Longer training & seasons
- Intensity, strategy & concepts
- Playing time earned
- grade-level teams - JV and Varsity
- Self Advocating Increases
- Extra time - weight training, study hall, camps, off season training
- Make Choices on Sport Offerings
- Student Communication evolves
- More Homework
- Off-Season programs

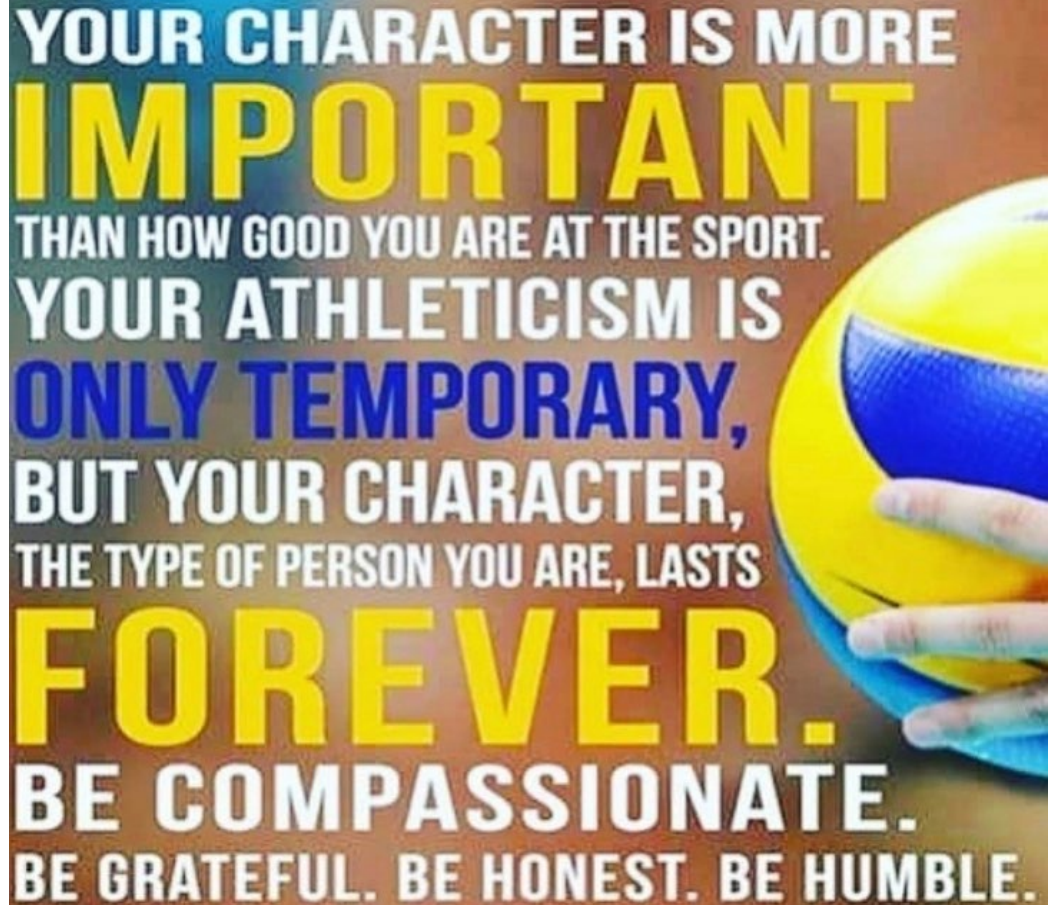
Sell Your Program and Your Brand

- Be Sure you have a School Brand that is consistent in colors and logos
- Elementary School Nights at Games
- Branding & Gear Stores
- Create Buy-In
- Q&A Sessions for parents and players
- Free Skill Camps at their Elementary Schools
- Provide Social Media info
- Mentorship Program - Little brothers and sisters program



Reminder!

- Buy - In for parents and students
- Sell your School
- Show School Spirit
- Emphasise Culture
- Honor Traditions
- Promote your Coaches

A motivational poster with a background image of a yellow and blue volleyball being held by a hand. The text is in bold, white and yellow capital letters. The main message is: "YOUR CHARACTER IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HOW GOOD YOU ARE AT THE SPORT. YOUR ATHLETICISM IS ONLY TEMPORARY, BUT YOUR CHARACTER, THE TYPE OF PERSON YOU ARE, LASTS FOREVER. BE COMPASSIONATE. BE GRATEFUL. BE HONEST. BE HUMBLE." The word "IMPORTANT" is in yellow, "ONLY TEMPORARY," is in blue, "FOREVER." is in yellow, and "BE COMPASSIONATE." is in white. The rest of the text is in white.

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5 C's of Success:

Commitment - Don't shortchange your program, coaches or yourself

Communication - Say what you mean; mean what you say

Caring - Treat others with respect

Competitiveness - Compete in everything

Consistency - Find what works & keep doing it. Hold yourself and your coaches accountable

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