

Topeka Officials Association

Football “Newsletter”

Week 9

A Season of Frustration, A Season of Great Growth: I am willing to bet that most coaches and administrators are like most “normal” people. They dislike losing - they dislike authority figures (read, officials) - they dislike losing (did I mention that before?) - they like winning - they really dislike losing - they really, really, dislike officials...you get the idea. Way too often we (they) forget that school activities are to be co-curricular in nature - that is to say that the lessons learned on the football field are co-curricular in nature - self discipline, for example. What they learn in activities can be transferred to other parts of their lives.

What is learned when a coach spews venomous language at one of his players - another coach - or officials? What is to be learned when officials are “black-balled” because of their “win-loss” record with a team? Who keeps track of that statistic?

The point of all of this is: Life isn't always fair and the only thing officials have to rely upon is that they officiate as fairly as possible. Take whatever opportunity you can to get better. But, always remember that the one thing that matters most is that activities are great for kids to learn the lessons of life! As normal people, we don't “lose 'em all,” and we certainly don't “win 'em all!” Schools need to retain coaches who teach those lessons - administrators need to look at the kids coaches produce as well as “wins and losses!” Officials, remember, the most important people in the stadium are the kids! Or, as General Electric ads used to say - with a slight variation: “Kids are our most important product!” Or, “productive, fair-minded kids are our most important products!” The sooner kids, coaches, parents, and administrators learn this valuable lesson, the more we can honestly say that activities are truly “co-curricular.”

The importance of the above statement is that there is no reason that can be defended for having sports in schools unless kids learn valuable life lessons from their participation. Kids can learn things from playing games at recess - co-curricular activities teach values such as cooperation - team work - and self discipline. Those are the reasons for having co-curricular activities in our schools - learning lessons beyond wins and losses!

The “Great Growth” Part of the Story: We built an entirely new crew this season. Our R had never even owned a white hat before; L came in to town as a new member of the KU Recreation staff; I really don't know if our B had worked much football at this level before, or not; our H was our “rock” in the past and continued in that role with the blessings of his wife. And, there were certainly a goodly number in our ranks who thought I (U) was well past my prime.

For whatever reasons, this crew developed a trust that I had not experienced before. Members showed concerns for others - members showed concern for doing things right (mechanics) and getting plays right (rules). We all helped each other! I drew strength and knowledge from my four partners - all of them, except one, new to us or working at a new position.

I am affirming that the old adage is absolutely not true: You can teach an old dog new tricks!

Congratulations to those working playoff games. May you have been chosen for the right reasons and may you remind yourselves that you are teaching kids - hopefully the right things, for the right reasons! FS