

An Off-Season of Growth and Development

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Post-Season...

When an athlete or athletic team is successful during the regular season, post-season play usually follows. The post-season is a time to try to achieve the highest honor of being termed the best in that athletic category. As a coach and educator, I strive to become the best coach and teacher that I can. The post-season part of my career is the time where I am judged on my results. Due to my own personality, I will not be satisfied if I do not achieve what I feel I am capable. This goal is my championship – to reach my own professional expectations. Am I effective? What should I have done to see better results? What can I do differently next time? These questions are what will drive me to become the champion that I believe I am capable of becoming. In order to fulfill these goals, moving forward through the off-season is one of the most integral periods of my career.

Off-Season...

The off-season portion of a coach's or teacher's career is usually seen as a time for reflection and learning. As I see it, it is a time to develop in order to become more effective. Growth and learning are necessary for any effective professional and it especially no different for coaches and teachers. With the amount of new scientific ideas and learning theories that are developed frequently, I have to keep up with the learning curve to coach and teach in the most effective way.

As I enter the off-season, I plan to continue my education. Not only in the ways of coaching, but also as a teacher. Many coaching concepts relate to physical education and vice versa, so I am able to learn in multiple areas.

With the increasing popularity of strength training, I plan to continue learning about new and innovative techniques that will allow for the best training in what is a limited time frame for high school students and student-athletes. I am interested in becoming certified as a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS). Although this will not advance my teaching career, it will allow me to understand proper training techniques and principles to keep my students and student-athletes safe while training while effectively using the time available.

Specific coaching theories, practices, and techniques are also evolving rapidly. I need to continue to stay up to date on each of the new topics that are relevant to my career and the sports that I coach. Many mini-courses are available through sport governing bodies that will help me learn and understand new concepts to use as I develop new ideas and practices. Concussions are a major topic in youth sport today. Knowing and understanding concussion symptoms and protocols is just one example of what coaches need to understand to stay effective. As sport evolves, similar ideas will be brought to society's attention and I will need to stay up to date on how to effectively manage the situation. Sport needs to be safe for everyone involved and it begins with the coach staying current on proper techniques.

As an educator, I plan to continue learning. While taking part of my MAED program, I have realized how much I like to learn. Now that I am finished with this program, I will continue learning. Whether it be through formal classes, advanced degrees, or just informally, I will continue to grow and develop in order to help me advance my knowledge and ability level.

As I continue my career, my major development is not necessarily about what I can do for myself, but what I can do to help advance my students and student-athletes. My career is extremely important to

me, but that importance revolves around what I can do to help the youth that I encounter. I will continue to advance in order to give opportunities to those that are willing to take the next step once they leave sport and school. At the end of the end of the season, it really is all about the students and student-athletes.