The work from which this copy was made included the following copyright notice:

Copyright 2016 by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association.

Oklahoma State University Interlibrary Loan
Journal Title: Interscholastic athletic administration
Volume: 43 Issue: 2
Month/Year: 2016
Pages: 14-16
Article Title: ADDRESSING CHALLENGES OF THE TEACHER/COACH ROLE.
Article Author: Hill, Grant
Borrower: RAPID:CLO
Patron:

ILL Number: -11378239
Lending String:
A majority of high school coaches also teach full time. While some appear to thrive in the dual roles of teaching and coaching, this “double duty” often results in overload, both in terms of time expenditure and emotional and attention demands (Ryan, 2008). Teaching and coaching are diverse and complex roles that have been shown to be time consuming, stressful and subject to burnout (Richards and Templin, 2012). Because of the expectations of each job, as well as the time required to perform each role effectively, the pressure of dual responsibilities can lead to overall lower job satisfaction, greater investment in one role over the other, and an increased desire to leave one or both roles (Konukman, 2010). Past research has also revealed gender differences with females reporting higher levels of “burnout” than males in regards to the teacher/coach role conflict (Richards & Templin, 2012; Sage, 1987).

Teachers, who also coach, tend to interact more frequently with members outside the school (i.e., officials, parents, fans, coaches) and within the school (i.e., other coaches, athletic director, transportation director, players) than teachers who do not coach (Ryan, 2008). During a sport season, the time expenditure for both roles may be close to working two separate full-time jobs (Locke & Massengale, 1978). Teacher/Coaches (TCs) who also have families may feel they are without sufficient time or emotional resources to perform both roles effectively. The TC role conflict has been shown to be influenced by several organizational structures such as size of school, students' socioeconomic status and expectations of school community regarding both athletic success and academic excellence (Drake & Hebert, 2002). TCs in higher socioeconomic schools may be more prone to feel pressure to excel in both roles because of heavier school community investment from parents. The TC role conflict can also be impacted by individual factors such as level of family responsibilities, personal career aspirations, teaching area, number of sports coached and years of experience (Richards & Templin, 2012).
Specific problems ADs may face in regards to the teacher/coach role conflict

**Problem #1:** TCs prefer one role over the other and, consequently, prioritizes one over the other in terms of time and effort.

Prioritizing one role over the other will result in a less than exemplary performance in the lesser preferred role. If the preferred role is coaching, a disproportionate amount of time may be spent in that role and the TC’s teaching performance may be negatively impacted. This is unfortunate because the students in those classes are depending on their teachers to help them meet state standards in specific subject areas. In addition, TCs who fail to “take care of business” in the classroom are setting a poor example to their athletes because academic achievement should supersede athletic accomplishments.

**Problem #2:** TCs may experience stress overload because of the combined responsibilities of teaching and coaching.

On game days, TCs may be required to teach and coach from early morning to late in the evening with little or no break. In addition, TCs may experience significant pressure from parents regarding their son or daughter’s academic or athletic performance. Pressure from parents, in either regard, can be exhausting and may require the TC to respond to complaints that have been made by parents to school administrators. The combined pressures of both jobs can make the sum of life stresses rise to a level where professional “burnout” is a serious concern.

Eventually the stress level could negatively impact the TC’s physical health and possibly lead to a psychological or emotional meltdown. In addition, since many high school sports require training and participation in summer leagues, high school coaching has become increasingly a year-around endeavor.

**Problem #3:** TCs receive perceived higher community expectations and greater rewards associated with one role.

A TC may feel their work is continually being publicly evaluated based on the performance of their athletic team, whereas there is little reward to for teaching excellence. Consequently, a TC may spend more time and focus more intensely on preparing his or her team to be successful than on helping students in their classes excel academically. This issue can be more pronounced in high profile sports such as football and basketball than other sports, such as cross country, that attract fewer spectators. This pressure is even more intensified if those programs have had a high level of success in the past (Richards & Templin, 2012). In contrast, a TC teaching Advanced Placement classes may face pressure in regards to how her/his students do on the AP exam and, consequently, prioritize the performance of those students to the extent that time is taken away from coaching responsibilities.

What Can Athletic Directors Do to Help Teacher/Coaches to Be Effective in Both Roles?

To help TCs effectively deal with the time demands, stress, expectations, and multiple responsibilities associated with both teaching and coaching roles, athletic directors should consider several strategies.

1. Athletic directors should hire coaches who have a strong commitment to both teaching and coaching.

   Over emphasis on one role to the detriment of the other role may lead to more conflict between the two roles.

2. Athletic directors should regularly meet with each TC to address specific issues that might negatively affect either role. Specifically, they should check on TC’s stress/fatigue level in each role, impact of their work on their family, and challenges they face in regards to time management. If an athletic director senses there is a serious possibility of role conflict or burnout, he/she may decide to limit the number of sports that individual coaches or try to enlist another coach to provide mentoring.

   Athletic directors should always be aware that some individuals can effectively teach a full schedule and coach multiple sports while others are unable to do so effectively (Ryan, 2008).

3. Athletic directors should seek to insure TCs have enough assistant coaches who can help with some of the more tedious and time consuming aspects of coaching such as facility management, record keeping, and communication of basic information to parents/guardians. Assistant coaches can also help manage training facilities, including off-season workouts times.

4. Athletic directors should not limit themselves to just helping teacher/coaches with their athletic teams. They should also help them secure a teaching schedule that allows them to do perform at a high level in both roles over the long term. Athletic directors should also encourage coaches to take advantage of any available teaching aids such as student assistants and parent volunteers. These helpers can lighten their load in their classes in regards to such time-consuming tasks such as filing forms, correcting objective assignments, and providing individual help to students.

5. Athletic directors should not assume, just because a teacher/coach has successfully performed in the dual role successfully for several years, the combined responsibilities will become any easier. If anything, coaching may become more stressful given that many successful coaches develop expanding programs, including summer camps, feeder systems, and booster clubs.

   Given this “expanding universe” veteran teacher/coaches, particularly at larger high schools, may find their coaching commitment is a year-around venture; consequently, athletic directors will need to provide additional encouragement, support, and suggestions to insure burnout doesn’t occur.

6. Athletic directors should try to increase compensation for coaching. Many coaches are only provided an in-season
stipend or, at best, a one class per day release, but are expected to manage and promote their program throughout the year. Increased compensation for coaching should provide more stability to athletic programs because of improved candidate pools for open positions and less attrition.

Finally, with increasing numbers of “walk-on” high school coaches, the role of the athletic director has taken on an added dimension. Whereas teacher/coaches are employed within the school community, “walk-on” coaches may experience possible conflicts between coaching and their work, which normally takes place outside of the school community. This provides additional challenges for an athletic director because each “walk-on” coach will be unique; consequently, the athletic director will need to take time to listen and understand the complexity of each situation. Helping “walk-on” coaches successfully manage both their outside work responsibilities and coaching roles requires constant communication and back-up plans to ensure that adequate supervision and consistent high quality coaching is provided to student athletes. A resourceful, insightful, and energetic athletic director is required to insure this occurs. IAA

References


ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Grant Hill Ph.D., is currently the associate chair for Graduate Studies in the Department of Kinesiology at California State University-Long Beach. He can be reached at Grant.Hill@csulb.edu.