

# ADmission

WINTER 2021

VIRGINIA INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC  
ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER







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# VIAAA Partnerships



## Platinum Partners

Dynamite Sports

## Gold Partners

BSN Sports

Herff Jones

Musco Lighting

Neff

Mledtech LLC

## Silver Partners

Daktronics

Xenith

Virginia Lottery

Pepsi Cola

Field Turf

Hudl

Dick's Sporting Goods

SEQL (STAC)

US Army

Schutt

Score Shots - Presto Sports

## Bronze Partners

Dodson Pest Control

Varsity Athletics

Time Technologies/Fairplay

CFS/Spirit Fundraising

Big Teams

RSchool Today

Final Forms

## Patron Partner

ESC

VACorp

Josten's

Sports Image/Nevco



# President's Message

**Joe Breinig, CMAA**  
*VIAAA President*  
*John Champe High School*

## **COACHES AND AD'S— DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PARENTS**

Every year, thousands of coaches and athletic directors all over the world dedicate their time to teaching other parent's children their sport. Most parents appreciate this good-natured act, but occasionally you'll find a couple of people that don't see it this way. Often the love they have for their child can blind them if they believe their child is being treated unfairly.

Dealing with difficult parents is something coaches and athletic directors need to accept will happen occasionally. No one goes through an entire career without ruffling at least a couple of parent's feathers.

Here are a few techniques that can prevent any issues occurring in the first place.

### **Have a pre-season meeting with all parents and players.**

Let them know you're approachable. A pre-season meeting will let you develop relationships with the parents, and it lets them know that they can come to you whenever they want to talk about any problems or concerns, they might have. I've learned a lot of the time parents are intimidated and would prefer the coach/AD makes the initial move to developing the coach/parent relationship. Being friendly, open and honest at the pre-season meeting is the first step towards this. Being an approachable coach is very important. It is important to end the meeting by letting all parents and players know that if they ever have anything to discuss, don't hesitate to reach out and make contact.

You see, most of the time when parents storm up to a coach demanding answers out of the blue, it's because the problem's been building up for a long time and finally got to a point where they couldn't handle it anymore. If the parents felt like they could talk to the coach about it prior, this outburst might not have happened.

### **Discuss distribution of playing time**

The second important topic to discuss is how you're going to distribute playing time among the players. This is a very important topic and is the number one issue for parents each season. Let the players and parents know that playing time will be based on talent and work ethic, so some players might not get much playing time in crucial games. Be sure to let the parents and players know that at times based on the game situation, you will make every effort to give the less talented players extended minutes so that they can develop their skills into better players... And make sure you do it!

### **6 Steps to use if you encounter problems with parents**

#### **1. Never talk to someone that's yelling at you**

First and foremost, never talk to someone if they're yelling at you. You're giving up your time to help their kids and deserve more respect than that. Hopefully, this doesn't happen too often ... but I've seen times where parents came down from the stands yelling at the coach and the coach has tried to defend his decisions on the spot. Which, as you can imagine, quickly



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escalades into a shouting match between the coach and parent.

Rather, if a parent approaches frustrated and yelling, in a clam voice let them know that you'd be happy to discuss whatever their concern is when they've calmed down.

## **2. Discuss the problem later**

If a parent gets frustrated with you during the game and walks over and demands you talk to them this instant (during the game), kindly let them know that you're happy to talk to them about it, but they will need to wait until after the game when you can both sit down and talk about it alone, without the other parents or the players watching. If you don't have time to talk to them after the game, schedule a meeting with them later. Scheduling a meeting for the next day or later is the preferred option. This gives both yourself and the parent time to sit down and think about the conversation prior to meeting, rather than blurting out whatever comes to mind when they're angry.

## **3. Get someone else to sit in on the meeting**

It is important to always get an assistant coach or someone to sit in on private meetings. This can be beneficial in many ways. Such as clarifying facts that may arise during the meeting; they are a witness incase anything happens, and they can help recall comments made in the meeting later if needed.

The parent needs to feel like they're being heard. If you're constantly interrupting and disputing their comments mid-conversation, the only thing you're going to achieve is making the parent much angrier than they already are. Hear them out and get their complete side of the story before you start adding your two cents in. The last thing you want to do is make the situation worse than it already is.

## **4. Body language**

You must show the parent that you're paying attention to what they have to say by using good body language. Don't sit back in your chair with your arms crossed. This shows a type of arrogance and stubbornness and will only infuriate the parent further. Sit forward and look them in the eyes. Nod when they're speaking to show that you understand.

## **5. Keep your composure. Even if they don't**

Even if they come in blasting you for reasons you don't understand, it's important to make sure you keep calm and talk rationally. You don't want to get into a shouting match and say something you'll regret in the future. If you find the way they're speaking to you is unacceptable, politely ask them not to talk to you that way, and if they continue to do so, you'll have to end the conversation. Then if they do continue to speak to you in an unacceptable way, simply tell them that you are not willing to talk to them when they're in this state and you'd be happy to reschedule when they've cooled off.

## **6. The correct way to respond**

Once you've let them have their say, it's your turn to respond. The correct way to respond is going to differ greatly every situation. Even if you don't fully agree with their argument, let the parent know that you can see where they're coming from. Acknowledge the points in their argument that you agree with.

Acknowledge their son/daughter's strengths before you tell that parent what they need to improve on. For example, you may have this conversation... "I understand where you're coming from. Look, Johnny's a very good shooter and we'd love to have him out on the floor more to make the most of that. The problem is that he isn't as strong as we need him to be defensively." ■



# NIAAA News

**Bob Stratton, CAA**  
*VIAAA Executive Director*  
*NIAAA Liaison*

I hope that each of you and your families are well and have started 2021 on a positive note even during these continued uncharted waters of Covid 19. I am truly honored to serve as your VIAAA Executive Director/NIAAA Liaison, and represent such a wonderful and outstanding organization. I want to take this opportunity to get you caught up on the many things that have occurred during the 2020–2021 year.

- VIAAA Officers met in July to plan for upcoming year
- Section 2 meeting Glade Springs West Va. - zoom
- Executive Director meeting South Dakota - zoom
- New Athletic Administrators workshop held at Charlottesville High School
- Summer Institute - zoom
- VHSL Executive Committee September - zoom
- VHSL Fall Membership meeting - zoom
- VHSL Foundation Committee meeting - zoom
- State Conference planning meetings
- VIAAA/VHSL monthly New Athletic Administrator meeting - zoom
- National Athletic Administrator Conference - zoom
- VIAAA Officers, Board of Directors, Past Presidents meetings - zoom

As we finish up the winter and turn our attention to the spring please take time to ask your regional

representatives about the new and ongoing things happening within our organization:

- Strategic plan
- Professional development
- Leadership training
- Technology
- Awards

Here are a few things to bring to your attention:

- Join your professional organizations VIAAA and NIAAA
- Please keep Chris Rollison, our VIAAA awards chairman up to date on your career awards
- May I encourage you to pursue your professional development by becoming a certified RAA, CAA, CMAA athletic administrator

In closing, please do not hesitate to let me know what the VIAAA can do for you. The professional relationships and vast knowledge that is the foundation of this organization is here for all of you to become a part of. Individually we are nothing, but together we are strong and powerful. Get involved and become active as we continue to grow and make a positive difference in our schools and communities. Thanks for your leadership, support, and friendship, always! ■



**Dr. Billy Haun**  
*VHSL Executive Director*

# VHSL Activities: The crucial role they play in education

As school divisions across the Commonwealth continue to reopen and plan to bring students back for in-person learning, student return to participation in extracurricular activities will be part of the discussion. Many school divisions across the country are having these same discussions with several considerations being part of the conversations.

As it should be, student physical health must be a top priority. A study from the University of Wisconsin-Madison suggests that the state's high school sports have not caused an increase in COVID-19 infections among athletes.

[https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/education/local\\_schools/uw-study-high-school-sports-have-not-spread-the-covid-19-coronavirus/article\\_3b04400a-7651-50dfa2ff-01a71bf4db65.html](https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/education/local_schools/uw-study-high-school-sports-have-not-spread-the-covid-19-coronavirus/article_3b04400a-7651-50dfa2ff-01a71bf4db65.html)

The CDC has provided guidelines for reducing the risk of spreading COVID while playing sports.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports-faq.html>

In addition, the VHSL *Guidelines for Return to Participation* were prepared with input from the VHSL and NFHS SMAC committees, the NCAA, the Virginia Department of Health, and several national sport governing bodies.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fBSqrR7oHavRy42l2XI8y0a-Vg7HwDF/view>

In addition to student-athlete physical health, several reports have been released sharing information about student emotional and mental health. How are students dealing with not being in schools and playing sports?

A CDC report released on January 18, 2021, reports that from April to October 2020 hospitals across the United

States saw a 31% increase in mental health emergency visits for children ages 12-17.

<https://www.wbur.org/npr/953581851/ive-tried-everything-pandemic-has-cut-options-for-kids-with-mental-illness>

A recent study from the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that a study of 3,243 high school athletes in Wisconsin, reported that 65% of the participants reported symptoms of anxiety. Historical studies show that the number of respondents reporting minimal or no depression dropped from 68% to 32%.

[https://www.wisports.net/news\\_article/show/1110971](https://www.wisports.net/news_article/show/1110971)

A third consideration to be considered by educators when reopening schools, is the learning students experience while participating in activities. While learning academic subjects such as English, math, science and social studies, participation in education-based activities is a key part of the process.

The Profile of a Virginia Graduate establishes a set of expectations – known as the 5 C's: critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship skills. While participating in activities, students learn teamwork, fair play, self-discipline, self-confidence and how to handle competitive situations. Like teachers who influence learning in the classroom, coaches influence learning through sports and activities.

As school divisions continue to make decisions about conducting in-person learning, a recognition that athletics and academic activities are a crucial part of the educational process is important. While keeping safety a priority, student activities should remain a part of the discussion in reopening Virginia's schools. ■





## Kemper's Korner

Dick Kemper, CMAA

### **VISAA Vision Statement:**

Develop a nationally recognized community of student-athletes with unparalleled competitive opportunities for participation and DEVELOPMENT IN strength of character

### **VISAA Mission Statement:**

Provide accredited member schools the resources and competitive environment in education-based programs that establish a foundation for excellence founded in integrity, sportsmanship and leadership

As we navigate the waters of Return to Play and winter championship events along with the VHSL where things and events seem to change hourly. Schools opting out of playing any winter sports. Many others having a reduced schedule based on regional or conference opponents to limited travel and exposure. But the good news is the student-athletes are back participating in education-based athletics with major emphases on their safety and well-being.

As we look forward to the Spring and a return to outside activities the VISAA is working with its sports committee chairs in developing Return to Play documents for those sports based on the CDC, State Department of Health and Governor mandates and Executive Orders.

Hopefully, with the continued vaccine distribution to teachers and coaches and a return to warm weather and outside environments we will be able to offer a fully spring schedule of regular season and state tournament events.

The One word I use for the new year is HOPE!!!

- Hope for the continued vaccination of all.
- HOPE to some sort of return to a normal way of life and education-based athletics.
- HOPE for the strength to move the VISAA Mission and Vision forward in these trying times.
- HOPE for a return to face to face meetings and fellowship with the many folks in Virginia and the nation that value education-based athletics and dedicate their lives to the service of others.
- Hope that the VISAA with its three subcommittees of finance, operation and programs can develop the new strategic plan for the next four to five years.
- Hope that within those four to five years the course is set with new leadership of our Association and its executive committee that enhance the growth of all schools in Virginia.
- HOPE to continue to build relationships with the VHSL, VIAAA, NIAAA, VCPE and NEDC that further coordinates public and private schools across this great state and nation.
- HOPE for building trust with all races of people for the advancement of our schools and communities.
- Hope that all will treat others the way that want to be treated.
- Hope of unity in our nation and schools that respects all people.

A lot of HOPE but something to continue to work toward to better our relationships, communications, trust and build a better platform for the advancement of all people and education-based athletics. ■



**Danny Tryon**

## **First Year AD in a Pandemic**

I started as a first year Athletic Director July 15, 2020. We were right in the middle of the Coronavirus pandemic. Schools had been closed, sports cancelled and a general feeling of uncertainty loomed over everything. One of the first things I did was sign up to attend the New AD Workshop which was thankfully held in person at Charlottesville High School. It was a great experience and something I would recommend to any new or aspiring Athletic Administrator. We spent a few days consuming a ton of information, talking with other ADs and even took two LTI courses. I thought my mind was full of thoughts and ideas before I attended and it was amplified even more when I left.

I was eager to hit the ground running and wanted to meet our coaches and kids but there just wasn't anyone around to meet. We were still shut down and were trying to get organized to begin off season workouts. I met with our entire coaching staff virtually like we have all become accustomed to but it left a lot to be desired. I met individually online with many of our coaches to speak more in depth about them and their program and to try to get to know people. I found myself spending most of my days cleaning out storage closets and working on our fields. I discovered that maintaining 4 bermuda fields in the summer is almost a full time job in itself. Fortunately we had a brand new turf field installed in our stadium in the spring which will be great in the years to come. I also walked or rode all of our athletic facilities and made note of any issues that could be fixed and worked with our maintenance department to get things taken care of before people came back.

I was excited once we were finally cleared to begin having off season practices. Our coaches were anxious to get back and I knew that the kids needed something to do. I felt confident that we could bring them back safely and follow all of the guidelines that we put together. It was great to have people back on campus but it was much more challenging than I thought it would be to actually get to know people under those circumstances. I went through the awkward introductions with many people where I wasn't sure if I should shake their hand, fist bump, or just keep my distance and wave. Every interaction I had with people I questioned whether I knew them or if I had already met them because everyone had the majority of their face covered. I introduced myself to a handful of people multiple times and had them tell me that we had already met. The challenge of recognizing people I had recently met based solely on their eyes had become next to impossible. Then came getting to know the kids. I was new and wanted to make good first impressions with our athletes but it seemed like my first interactions with most of our kids revolved around me telling them to put their mask on and spread out. Not exactly what I had envisioned when I thought about becoming an Athletic Director. For the most part our coaches and athletes bought in to following the guidelines because they understood we only had one chance to get it right and everything we did was under a microscope.

After months of off season workouts, we were able to start our winter sports season. Unfortunately the majority of teams on our schedules did not start at the same time as we did so, with the exception of wres-

ting, our winter sports teams didn't have any schools to compete with until the beginning of 2021. With all of the buildup leading to our first week of games I was dealt a challenge that I wasn't prepared for. I was quarantined due to Covid exposure and was not going to be at school for my first games as an Athletic Director. Fortunately, we had some great coaches step up to help set up the events and supervise our senior nights. We decided to have senior night at our first home game just to make sure we had a chance to honor the seniors and let their parents attend a game. I was stuck at home watching the games on live stream through the NFHS Network.

With a somewhat normal weekly schedule I have been able to get into a routine that has proven to be beneficial. On Fridays I verify all of our games, officials, and transportation for the next week. The first thing I do each morning is check all of our schedules for the day and check that our NFHS cameras are set up for any events that may be taking place. On game

days I set up in the morning which has worked out well since we haven't had kids in the school. I also schedule time in my day to work on long term projects and for basic maintenance of google sites and handbooks.

As I write this we are preparing for post season play with our winter sport teams and will be starting season two in the coming days. It has not been the perfect season but I really can tell how much our student athletes are getting out of being at practice every day and competing with their teammates. We have been very fortunate that none of our teams have been drastically impacted by quarantine yet. Our coaches have expressed to the kids how important it is to be responsible when they are away from school because anything they expose themselves to may have a negative impact on their team. This year has been a great learning experience so far and I hope that we can soon put the pandemic behind us and return to normal in the near future. ■





# Staying in the Game

## High School Sports in the COVID World

by Jimmy Swindler and Courtney Atkins

Serving as an Athletic Director or school administrator is challenging in the best of times. The challenge level has increased exponentially over the past few months as we navigated our way through the world of COVID safety protocols while simultaneously trying to find ways for our student athletes to compete with one another. Once unfamiliar terms like quarantine, contact tracing, vaccine schedules and masks have become part of our everyday sports vernacular while flexibility and patience have proven to be more valuable than ever. And through it all our student athletes, when given the opportunity, have met the challenges of COVID and its safety protocols and done what they do best; play the game.

Rappahannock County High School has taught students in person on an A/B hybrid schedule since late August, among the first public schools in Virginia to do so and one of the few to have uninterrupted in-person learning through the fall semester and into the spring. And RCHS has fielded sports teams since the first day extracurricular activities were allowed, putting six basketball teams, one wrestling squad and a Scholastic Bowl team into competition for the about to conclude winter sports season with another six teams scheduled to begin practice for the coming fall sports season. While there have been setbacks and disappointments, the experience as a whole has been both positive and successful, with lessons learned that may be worth emulating by others seeking to get their student athletes back in play.

RCHS is fortunate to have an Athletic Director who is also the school nurse. Courtney Atkins, longtime

RCHS Varsity Volleyball Head Coach (Group 1A State Champions in 2016), made a career switch in the fall of 2019, going from a full time surgical nurse and part time volleyball coach to a full time Athletic Director/School Nurse, keeping the volleyball coaching duties as well. Little did she or her principal know that her nursing background would prove to be an essential part of her success as an A.D. in the COVID world.

From the beginning of the pandemic, marked by the closure of schools in March of 2020, AD Atkins has been in constant contact with the Virginia Departments of Health and of Education, staying abreast of the constantly changing guidelines and communicating and implementing best practices for our school. Her COVID response team consisted of the athletic trainer, the administrative team, the custodial staff, and a few key employees with strong backgrounds in health services. She has had the complete backing and support of the central office, with Superintendent Dr. Shannon Grimsley consistently finding the needed funds to implement the safety protocols recommended by the VDH. With the rollout of the vaccine this year, AD Atkins has also been the point person for RCHS staff, keeping them informed about vaccine registrations and processes and helping to ensure that all who wanted the vaccine could get it.

Keeping abreast of the new regulations limiting ticket sales and requiring mask usage has also required frequent communication with our stakeholders and students. An unrelenting message of the need for compliance and a zero tolerance for non-compliance,

particularly in regards to mask requirements and crowd limits at events, has greatly helped to minimize COVID related issues. A unified message by the school community and consistent communication with the public have resulted in little to no pushback from students and fans regarding these new safety protocols and the safety protocols themselves have resulted in very few instances of illness among our students, student athletes, staff members, and fans. Obviously no one has been happy with the limits on attendance at games and just as obviously the impact on athletic department revenues has been significant. Broadcasting games via the internet has helped ease the pain of the fans who can't be in the stands, but the added costs combined with the limited revenue creates what is admittedly an unsustainable situation, one that we all must hope will end as the pandemic winds down.

So what are the takeaways from the experience at RCHS, an experience that has allowed our student athletes to learn during the day and compete with their peers at night? The first stage of this long strange trip is securing the needed resources, the funds necessary to cover the added costs of implementing the safety protocols required to safely resume school and athletic contests. RCHS is fortunate, as noted earlier, to have a proactive Superintendent and School Board that have diligently and successfully sought the additional funding needed. With the inability to have large paying crowds at events, all schools must rely on their top leadership to find the funds needed to reopen buildings and resume athletics.

Having the necessary resources is only the first stage of the journey, with intelligent use of those resources and effective communication of new practices a critical component of eventual success. Every school

system and athletic department must have at least one person to serve as the conduit between the VDH (and CDC) and the school's staff, students and community. A clearinghouse of information as it were, and one that can successfully manage the immense flow of data and information, translating it into implementable action steps that all can follow.

Just as unified teamwork is an essential component of success in athletics, so too is it crucial to the success of resuming school and athletics in the COVID environment. Everyone has to be on the same page, from the Superintendent at the top to the night custodian who now has to be an expert at disinfecting as well as cleaning. One break in the chain can lead to a dreaded "breakout" which can lead to multiple weeks of quarantine and interruptions in both the learning process and the game schedules. Ticket takers, athletic trainers, custodians and coaches all play vital roles, as vital as the A.D. or even the Superintendent. And of course the importance of what happens at home cannot be overstated, given that all the safety protocols in the world can be undermined by reckless exposure at home.

Summing up, reopening schools and resuming athletics in the pandemic is a complicated endeavor with many parts, with each part almost equally integral to the success of the effort. From having the necessary resources to using them wisely to implementing best practices to communicating those practices effectively, the road to success is hardly a straight one and each curve and dip can bring the trip to a quarantined halt. All of this requires an enormous amount of work and effort but the good news is that it is worth it, a sentiment I can attest to as I sit in the stands of our eleventh JV boys basketball game, cheering on both teams and filled with gratitude for all the efforts that made these games possible. ■



## Stay in Motion

**Laura Clay**  
*Dean of Athletics*  
*Chatham Hall*

Athletics have always been a part of my life. In fact, some of my earliest childhood memories include being active, in motion, running and riding bikes through my Virginia Beach neighborhood and begging my parents to allow me to stay out just a little longer so I could stay in motion. I seemed to crave the outdoors and exhausting myself with exploration, an adventurous imagination and ongoing movement. Those neighborhood days evolved into community league sports, year round, and led to travel teams and high school athletics and eventually college sports. Now, so many years later, I am actually not too surprised that my diverse career in education has always included some element of athletics—primarily coaching, but most recently, overseeing Athletics at Chatham Hall.

I have said many times to the athletes on my teams that there will be certain memories in your life you will never forget and certain lessons too. Those of us devoted to coaching and preparing our athletes for competition know that our role and our opportunity to positively impact the lives of young people go well beyond the Xs and Os. We know athletics can be transformational in the lives of our student athletes. Our commitment to coach technique, skill development and game strategies are in the shadow of our responsibility to teach and model teamwork, leadership skills, personal goal setting, integrity and humility. These lessons are most important right now. Although a year ago, we could not have predicted how the global pandemic would specifically impact our schools, communities, students and even our teams---we are now faced with the need to adapt, to pivot and to reimagine how we do, what we do.

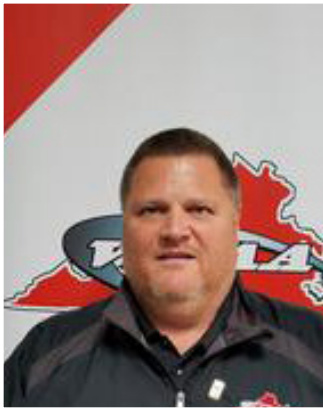
At Chatham Hall, an all-girls boarding school in rural Chatham, Virginia, we are focused on creating meaningful experiences for our sports and afternoon activities. Each afternoon program has their own unique approach to challenging and inspiring our students, fostering a sense of community and building relationships. We have an ongoing initiative focusing on a holistic approach to health and wellness and elevating the success of our programs by attracting and retaining students through those transformational experiences.

This year, as we have adapted to covid protocols, state guidelines and school recommendations, we have considered ways we can ensure that our students' health is well protected while still giving our them the opportunities for competition. So we leaned into a robust intramural approach with a focus on skill development, team building, character growth, endurance evaluation, personal challenge and JOY!!

As we continue to navigate the uncharted waters of 2021, the need for creative and supportive leadership is greater than ever. Our coaches need guidance and encouragement; our student athletes need reassurance and motivation; our programs need energy and opportunities to continue to build and our schools need balance and joy.

*Stay in motion.* It's what we have done and craved our entire lives; be reminded that the lessons of resilience, patience and endurance matter now more than ever. ■





Ed Dike

## Teaming Up To Get Results

So sitting in the Ballroom at the Koger Center last March and seeing the VHSL staff call up the AD's from the schools that were getting ready to play for basketball championships it was obvious that something was going down. Little did we know what was about to occur for the next few months. COVID-19 has caused everyone to change things and adapt in ways that we didn't know we would need to handle. The major thing that ended up hitting our school hard was having no people in attendance and having to figure out a live streaming alternative. The options were many and everyone was pushing their products hard and fast. I started investigating the options and came up with what I thought would meet our needs.

We decided to go with Sportscope which is a portable system that gives you options of having announcers and promos. The real question was who do I get to do this work. The short answer was the Sports Marketing class here at Warren County High School. After several meetings with the teacher, we decided to go forward with getting 2 units, purchased by the WWAA(Boosters Club) and that the students would do the announcing, camera work and all the things that go into a broadcast. Hence Wildcats Live was born.

The broadcast team is mainly 6 students and 1 adult. There is a color commentator, a play by play person, 2 camera people and 2 statisticians. There are 10 kids involved in the team with so they rotate from job

to job except for the actual announcing which has come down to only a couple of students but others that are interested are currently playing basketball so they will get their shot when the next season. Since our district has decided to limit traveling parties we are also in charge of game film which has been done by one of the camera crews so the school can have a copy of game film. This crew of students has also gotten sponsors for pre-game, post-game, quarters and halftime.

The response from the community has been very positive and one establishment has been having watch parties. The students are enjoying themselves and we even went out and bought them polos with their own designed Wildcats Live logo on the shirts which they wear to all games. Since we are hybrid, there have been students asking guidance about getting into the Sports Marketing class so they can work on the Wildcats Live team. Businesses in the area are contacting us about sponsorships for future broadcasts with football and volleyball coming up soon. With spring sports coming and the venues changing to softball, baseball, and soccer fields, we will have new challenges but these students seem more than willing to answer the call. Bottom line is that Athletic Department and the Sports Marketing class teaming up has been a great partnership for all concerned. And it seems like the students are learning and having fun. That's a great situation. ■



## Branding Your Athletic Program

### Jeff Berry

*Assistant Principal for Athletics and Activities  
Colonial Forge HS*

We all see iconic team logos that are easily recognizable in college and professional athletics. The interlocking NY of the Yankees, the menacing Leprechaun of Notre Dame and the star of the Dallas Cowboys are just a few examples. Each of these images have been ingrained in our brain and as soon as they become visible to our eyes we know exactly which team they represent. Your high school athletic program can achieve the same results by applying some simple practices that can separate and elevate your athletic stature.

### Design, Decide and Dedicate

Bring together a group of trusted and established school stakeholders to design a logo or logos that will be used exclusively on your uniforms, websites, stadium decor and apparel.

Decide which logos the athletic program will use exclusively. Limit the number of logos that will be used. You can always use slight variations of each logo to keep things fresh. Once the stakeholders have come to a consensus, distribute an “electronic folder” to all of your coaches, administrators, media and any other pertinent groups. Clearly communicate that these logos are the only ones that will be used when designing uniforms and spirit apparel.

Dedicate your athletic programs and social media to only using these logos on every t-shirt, web site, uniform, presentation etc. associated with your school. Being deliberate and repetitive with your approach has the same effect of a commercial jingle. It sticks in your head and is committed to memory whether you like it or not.

### One Uniform Brand and One Sporting Good Company

When it is possible and “bidding” is not needed it is important to compound on your effort of branding your athletic program by using the same uniform brand and sporting goods company. Using the same uniform brand for your entire athletic program and teams creates a sense of unity but also protects your branding of the athletic program. Using the same brand ensures that your colors will always be the same. For example, Forest Green is always the same shade when using the same athletic brand. Not all brands share the same shades of certain colors. This might not seem like a big deal but it is a detail that can not be overlooked when keeping your athletic branding effort intact.

Using the same Sporting Good Company for your entire athletic program is also a detail that can not be overlooked. When using the same sporting good company the representatives know exactly what logos can be used for uniforms and apparel. This alleviates the problem of a team ordering apparel or uniforms that do not have the preferred logos and compromising your effort of branding your athletic program. The sporting goods company that you are using almost exclusively will understand your likes and dislikes and anticipate what your schools “style” might be. This can save time when choosing uniforms and apparel as well as developing your branding.

These branding strategies are some ways your athletic program can be easily recognizable and all of your teams look united in their appearance. Like anything you want to successfully achieve it takes a true commitment from all of your school’s stakeholders. ■



# “Shout Out” to the Unsung Heroes in our Buildings

**Ira Degrood**  
*AD Osbourn High School*

As we have returned to activities this school year in unprecedented times, it is our Athletics/Activities that have led the way. We the DSA's, our coaches, and athletes are the most visible people in our communities as we have returned to athletics and activities. On the “front line” daily, following guidelines, protocols and providing the safest environment we possibly can in this “new normal”. Hats off to everyone that is out there working to give our students opportunities under these very trying times.

However, I am writing this article to recognize two groups of people that work extremely hard and go mostly unseen by the general public. I know we as DSA's appreciate and understand what these groups do for our students and schools on a daily basis. COVID has not only changed, but increased their responsibilities and time commitments to our programs. While I am in a great place, where I am supported by our administration, central office, and our school board and I am very thankful for that. Throughout the last year, the following people have gone above and beyond any expectations of their job descriptions. This article is to simply say thank you and acknowledge our “unsung heroes”.

First, our ATC's for helping and guiding us through the new normal using National, State, Regional, District, and school guidelines and protocols. I am fortunate to work with an amazing ATC, that without her help during these times, I am not sure I could have kept my head above water. Like many of you, we have had to put various programs/teams “on hold” for COVID related reasons. Contact tracing, phone calls, letters sent home, emails to families to communicate these issues is such a thankless job, not to mention extremely time consuming. Being on the “front line” on a daily basis with all of

our programs, makes me more appreciative than ever for our ATC's. They should never be taken for granted, and they are truly an unsung hero. I appreciate all of our ATC's and say “thank you”.

The second group I would like to thank are our custodial staffs. These people are the pulse of our schools. Always on the front line, but rarely seen or noticed. The time and work they put in during “normal times” is amazing and appreciated. Yet again, COVID has changed their job and time commitments to our schools. The additional protocols and guidelines that have been put in place, have increased their already full workload. The increased diligence to wipe down chairs, bleachers, tables, floors, door handles, restrooms and equipment prior to events, during events, and after events can never be overlooked. Adjusting their hours and daily schedules to accommodate our activities is greatly appreciated. The “usual” practice of stacking chairs, putting away tables, sweeping a floor are things of the past. Each chair, table, floor, etc. being disinfected multiple times on a daily basis is now the “usual” practice. I know, we as DSA's and coaches do our due diligence to help, but with our custodial staff's following these safety guidelines and protocols, they are helping to protect all stake holders. Our administration, coaches, and athletes “tip our hats” and thank you for helping us create these opportunities for our student body.

Please take time; which I know we all do, and thank our ATC's and custodians daily. It is as much due to their efforts, that our students have the opportunity to compete during these trying times. I feel very fortunate to work with a great custodial staff and an outstanding ATC. I am proud of the way we work together and communicate, and say THANK YOU for all that you do. ■





# Motivation

Joey Richeson

Motivation is not something that comes naturally, It has to be taught, coached, preached, practiced and enforced over and over again. Kids playing a high school sport are probably the hardest to motivate. They don't motivate themselves and don't always take the coaches "talks" as motivation.

Over the past several years, the dynamics of sports has changed greatly at the school where I am the Director of Student Activities. I have been at the school for 27 years. It has gone from what was called a "country club school" to a "ghetto school" to a "ESL school". The popularity of certain sports has changed along with the culture. We went from having a field hockey team to not having any interest in it at all. We went from Football state champions to barely having enough to field a team. We went from struggling on the soccer field, to making it to Regionals every year. Our student body as a whole is not motivated to do extra curricular activities and unless they think they can be state champions then don't see a reason why to put forth the time and effort.

I have a great group of coaches. It takes a special coach to coach at my school. He has to go over and beyond to reach the kids. He has to understand their home life and learn to work with them to keep them on the team. He has to get the parents to buy into the program so they will support, transport, and allow them to play and not work or help out at home.

The coaches have to be a motivator at all times now. If our kids don't see success, they are too quick to just say "I quit". It is easier to just quit then to keep working hard to better themselves. They don't want to be on a losing team. Their friends will tease them about how they have not won. I am dealing with this situation

right now for our football program. We have not won a game in the past two years. We have won states, have had losing seasons and have had winning seasons, but never a no win season. The kids don't want to come out to the program.

I have a new coach this year. In normal circumstances, I think our numbers would be good because he is a motivator, hard worker, and organized coach, but with the covid and being virtual, our kids have lost all interest in extracurricular activities and the ones that do come to conditioning, are looking around and thinking, "We can't have a team with these kids". So, we are trying some motivation tactics to get these kids out to practice. One, we have started offering a meal before conditioning to anyone who comes to conditioning and plans to play football. Second, we have a tee-shirt initiative for the "weeks hardest" workers that is handed out weekly and announced on our virtual school announcements. We are seeing a few more each day (still probably will not have jr), but the kids who are coming out are working hard and are seeing improvement.

A coach can not just be a cheerleader as a motivator. The student athlete has to trust and believe in the coach and the program to really take any motivation from the coach. Anyone can stand on the side line and cheer on the team or individual, but to really motivate the athlete the coach needs to know his "stuff". The athlete needs to believe what the coach is saying is the golden rule and that it will help push him to get better and to eventually reach his potential. I always laugh when I hear a coach say, "Nobody better than you" when a kid is up to the plate to bat. Yes, there is and the kid knows it. Why not give a better motivational saying or actually give instructions to make the kid do well.

A coach has to be real. Teenagers can see through a fake coach in a heartbeat. Once they have come to the conclusion the coach is just feeding them a bunch of bull, they shut down. No need to listen since none of it will help. Motivation can be positive, and it can be negative. The most important thing is that it has to be productive. There has to be a reason for the motivation. The athlete needs to know what the motivation is for and how it will help him. A teenage athlete can tune out a coach in a second unless he knows the purpose of the motivation.

Motivation during practice and during games are two different things. I believe that more motivation has to be given during practices than games. Student athletes go into the game wanting to win and that is motivation in itself, but sometimes days and days of practice can get long when there is a stretch of no games. The student athletes want the “spotlight” at the game and will try to push themselves to get the spotlight. There is no spotlight in practices. A coach has to develop motivation within the practice. I know when I coached tennis to young kids, candy always worked. It was amazing how much harder a young kid would concentrate for a piece of candy. It works for older kids too. I always had a bag of candy when I coached high school tennis. I would give a “baggie” of candy to the one I thought worked the hardest during practice. There would be these 6 foot 18 year olds waiting at the end of practice to see if they got the candy. They would use it among themselves during the practice to motivate themselves. “That candy is mine today!” and would push themselves to work harder.

A good coach can motivate through changing up the practice or changing up the game process. Doing the same thing over and over can get to be a routine that the kids know the outcome. A good coach throws a challenge in on the practices to have the kids look at plays or themselves differently. He makes it so the “superstars” are not always the ones who win or are the center of attention for the practice. How many times have we seen when a starter loses his position to a sub and the sub does well and that starter plays even better the next time he gets the chance. By putting someone else in who is not expected can motivate the starters and the subs to fight for the playing time.

Motivation shouldn't be the outcome, it should be the steps taken to reach full potential. A coach needs to set the expectations high so that the athlete has steps to take to get to the top. A good coach Raises the Bar to motivate the players. Visually this can be done. My volleyball coach has a bulletin board up where she would chart the players progress. She would put down how many spikes, aces, digs, and saves. The girls would look at it all the time and discuss how each was going to pass each other. There wasn't really any big prize if you got to the top. It was just the idea of visually seeing a chart and the progress that drove the athletes.

An athlete needs to want to be motivated. I have seen where coaches have talked til their blue in the face to an athlete to try to get the athlete motivated. The athletes that are the toughest to motivate are the ones that have not seen success. They haven't realized how the motivation can work and how it can benefit them in the long run.

Everyone who has played the game knows the “pep” talk before the game. Coaches approach the speech in different ways. The coach has to know his own personality so it sounds realistic and true. He has to know his kids so he will know what they hear and what they will just listen to. I have seen all types. I have had coaches who think yelling and bad mouthing the other team will motivate the team, and I have seen coaches who quietly talk about how his team is going to win based on his team and doesn't even mention the other team. The speech works if done from the right perspective and presented in the right manner.

Just as the team speech needs to be specific to that team, a coach must know how to specifically motivate an individual. A coach needs to know the personality of the athlete. The coach needs to know what has worked with this athlete and what has not. It is not “a one speech fits all” in the individual motivation. Good coaches get to know their athletes both on and off the field. The coach knows which buttons to push to motivate the athlete and which buttons that might be pushed that will shut the athlete down. Coaches should talk to the athletes. Athletes will open up and can assist

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in creating a motivation plan with the coach. Coaches need to make sure the athletes feel comfortable talking to the coach and letting the coach know if one way of motivation works for them or if it does not. Motivation needs to be a two way street. It has to be given in a correct way and it has to be taken in a correct manner.

Motivating an already successful athlete can be just as hard as motivating one who doesn't want to listen. Coaches have to remind themselves that even the best athlete needs some type of motivation. An athlete can always play just a little better or help his teammate out with his play. The coach has to find that "thing" that pushes the athlete. Goal setting works good for the achieved athletes because they can always get better. They may be the best on the team, so comparing them to other teammates will not work. Individual goals are what would drive them.

When I coached Boys' Tennis, we had a clear number 1 player. The other kids would never beat him to take his place. He was the best player among his teammates, but not necessarily the best in the district. We had to set up before each match what goals he wanted to accomplish during that match. We would discuss what he wanted to accomplish in the match (besides "winning") and how to work towards those goals during the match. It kept him focused and it gave him little things to work for. For example, his goal may be to have 10 aces in the match. Even though he may not be winning the game, he still had something to work for to reach the goal. Each ace motivated him to push for the next one. Eventually, the motivation goals made him a better player, and he did win district matches.

When soccer started to get more popular at my school the coaches found themselves in a situation where they had never been before. A lot of boys came out for

the team. That was great, but we soon learned that the commitment to the school team did not compare to their commitment to their "nationality" team league. They would miss practice to go play in those games. The coach had to come up with a way to motivate them to want to play for our school and to take pride in playing for our school. I had three different coaches (non coaching reasons for leaving) over a 7 year period. I was lucky enough to find 3 coaches with the same mind set and the same dedication to motivating the kids to feel pride when they wear the school jersey. The first year when we realized that the kids were showing up when they wanted to, my coach came to me and asked if it was okay to not have a jv team to show the guys that only the ones who were committed and coming everyday will be on the team even if we only had a small varsity squad. That action that year, changed everything. These kids didn't think they would be cut from a school team. They were definitely upset. When the season was over and the next year out of season conditioning started, we started to see the change. The kids realized that it could all be taken away if they didn't do their part. That was the motivation that kept them coming back to practice and eventually you started seeing the kids wear their jerseys in the hallways. They were proud to be on the team and the program has continued to grow and succeed. It is sad a coach might have to "take something away" to motivate, but this coach saw what would work and did it.

Athletes will always react differently to motivational techniques. Some athletes have the ability to motivate themselves and some need the coach or outside sources to help motivate them. Many athletes get motivation from their teammates and peers. Just trying to be the better player or get more playing time can motivate a player. Motivation is a crucial part of an athletes success, and he can use the motivation to reach his full potential. ■





**Kristy Hunter, CAA**  
*Glouster High School*

# Professional Development for Athletic Administrators

The Virginia Interscholastic Athletic Administration Association (VIAAA) highly supports the certification process offered by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administration Association (NIAAA). The VIAAA & NIAAA provide great opportunities to take a wide variety of professional development classes. These classes can be used to achieve several levels of certification or expand your knowledge on the field of athletic administration. The levels of certification include Registered Athletic Administrator (RAA), Registered Middle School Athletic Administrator (RMSAA), Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA) and Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA).

We encourage you to check out both the NIAAA & VIAAA websites for the lists of Leadership Training

Courses available. Some of the courses are offered as webinars with set dates and times while other are self-paced. Those being offered change throughout the year so be sure to keep checking back. The websites are:

<https://members.niaaa.org/page/Certification>

<https://viaaa.org/professional-dev-t/certification>

The VIAAA is an amazing resource for athletic administrators to acquire classes and grow as a professional. Please feel free to contact PD Chair Kristy Hunter – [khunter@gc.k12.va.us](mailto:khunter@gc.k12.va.us) – 724-255-0835 or Jeff Dietze – [jeffdietze1@verizon.net](mailto:jeffdietze1@verizon.net) – 703-915-8528



# LTI Update

**Kevin Adams, CAA**  
*Varina High School*

## PAST LTI EVENTS

### 2020 VIAAA Fall LTI Webinar:

With the VHSL October Meeting being virtual, the VIAAA offered our fall classes as a webinar. LTC 510, LTC 617, and LTC 608 were taught on three consecutive days at the end of the month. Many thanks to the instructors (Donna King, Dick Kemper, and Anne MacNeil) and all of the participants for a successful Fall Seminar.

### VA Beach November/December OutTeach:

Kudos to Chris Felton for facilitating a very successful late fall LTI opportunity for the attendees of the past two summer New ADs Workshops. Chris himself taught LTC 503 twice during the last week in November. LTC 504 and LTC 506 were offered on consecutive days in the middle of December with Joe Fowler as the instructor. Many thanks to the approximately 50 class attendees for their participation.

## UPCOMING LTI EVENTS

### LTI 2021 Spring Seminar:

While the dates of the Spring Seminar are still TBD, the course offerings are the following:

LTC 508	LTC 619
LTC 511	LTC 714
LTC 615	LTC 724

Check the VIAAA website and twitter page for updated information.

## 2021 Spring Webinar Schedule

These dates are subject to change. All courses are offered from 4 - 8 p.m. EST. Registration will be available in early 2021.

- LTC 501\* - Wednesday, March 17
- LTC 502\* - Tuesday, March 30
- LTC 504\* - Wednesday, April 7
- LTC 506\* - Monday, March 15
- LTC 508\* - Monday, March 29
- LTC 608 - Wednesday, April 14
- LTC 621 - Wednesday, March 10
- LTC 625 - Tuesday, March 9
- LTC 628 - Monday, March 8
- LTC 700 - Wednesday, March 31
- LTC 701 - Tuesday, April 6
- LTC 706 - Monday, April 5
- LTC 709 - Tuesday, April 13
- LTC 719 - Monday, April 12
- LTC 799 - Tuesday, March 16
- LTC 901 - Monday, March 22
- LTC 902 - Tuesday, March 23
- LTC 903 - Tuesday, March 30
- LTC 904 - Monday, March 29

\*Available as an online course

**48<sup>th</sup> Annual VIAAA Conference  
Leadership Training Institute  
June 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Omni Hotels and Resorts, Charlottesville**

Please enclose a check made payable to "VIAAA State Conference" and mail it with this registration form to:  
VIAAA State Conference / Attn: Steve Heon CAA / Western Albemarle / 5941 Rockfish Gap Tpk / Crozet VA 22932

Name (Last, First) \_\_\_\_\_ VIAAA # \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_  
District \_\_\_\_\_ Region \_\_\_\_\_ Certification: RAA CAA CMAA  
First VIAAA Conference? Y \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse or guest (if attending) \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Registration Category</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Enclosed</b>
<b>Fees if received on or before May 1,, 2021</b>		
____ VIAAA Member Registration Fee (1 banquet ticket only)	<b>\$25.00</b>	\$ _____
____ Non-Member Registration Fee ( 1 banquet ticket only)	<b>\$50.00</b>	\$ _____
<b>Fees if received after May 1, 2021</b>		
____ VIAAA Member Registration Fee (1 banquet ticket only)	<b>\$35.00</b>	\$ _____
____ Non-Member Registration Fee (1 banquet ticket only)	<b>\$50.00</b>	\$ _____
<b>Fees for retired athletic administrators</b>		
____ Retired VIAAA Member (Would include banquet ticket)	<b>\$25.00</b>	\$ _____
____ Retired Non-Member ( Would include banquet ticket)	<b>\$50.00</b>	\$ _____
<b>Leadership Training Courses (schedule located below) Taught Monday June 13<sup>th</sup> 8 am and 1 pm.</b>		
____ LTI 504 – Legal Issues I (Injury Liability & Risk Management) 8am	<b>\$100.00</b>	\$ _____
____ LTI 506 – Legal Issues II (Title IX & Sexual Harassment) 8 am	<b>\$100.00</b>	\$ _____
____ LTI 510 – Legal Issues IV (Social Media, Transgender Participation, Event Mgmt.) 8am	<b>\$100.00</b>	\$ _____
____ LTI 633 – Athletics and Students with Disabilities 1pm	<b>\$100.00</b>	\$ _____
____ LTI 640 – Urban Athletic Administration 1pm	<b>\$100.00</b>	\$ _____
____ LTI 706 – Athletic Administration; Coaching to be Leadership and Education 1pm	<b>\$100.00</b>	\$ _____
<b>Plan to play in VIAAA Golf Tournament, Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup></b> (this is a separate registration) Fee: \$80.00 per player / \$320.00 per team Yes _____ No _____		
Banquet – Sunday, June 13 <sup>th</sup> – 5:30 PM	YES _____	NO _____
Vegetarian Meal Requested YES _____ NO _____		
Additional Banquet Tickets – Quantity _____ (\$25.00 Each)		
<b>Total: \$ _____</b>		

**\*Registration is available online at VIAAA FinalForms AMP or by mailing the registration form and check payable to "VIAAA State Conference" to Steve Heon CAA as listed at the top right of this page.**  
**\*For Hotel Reservation Contact Omni Hotel, Charlotesville. All hotel reservation and payment are the responsibility of those attending.**  
**\*<https://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/charlottesville/meetings/viaaa-06092021>**