Leaders of the PAC: Making Better Leaders of Our Collegiate Basketball Players

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Introduction

Why We Need to Lead Our Leaders:

We need to help mold and develop leadership among our incoming freshman entering college. We continue to ask these young men to be leaders but have not invested the time, energy, and resources in helping make these young men leaders. The PAC12 has made great strides in making themselves a premier conference and revenue generator in college athletics, some of the responsibility should fall upon them to help develop the leadership qualities we sometimes assume these young men should already have. How can we expect these young men to be leaders when some of them have not had anyone leading them? Some of our players may come from single-parent households and have not had a positive role model in their life. They have not been properly taught how to act as men and no longer children. Educating these players will help protect the investment placed upon these athletes and the amount of pressure that a college athlete faces. They are often provided with many advantages normal students are not and have to balance that moving forward. We often are blinded by all the glamorous aspects we see on the television of these athletes. But we forget of all the pressures that a college athlete faces. They are often provided with many advantages normal students are not and have to balance that moving forward. "Some of the wrong decisions you hear about with a lot of athletes are due to the fact that they are often provided with a lot of advantages that normal students are not and have to balance that moving forward."

The Stress and Pressure of Being a College Athlete

College athletes earn fewer degrees than do students in general, they take longer to do so, their grades are lower, and their curricula is less demanding (Adelman 1990). Coming from high school and being thrown into the high profile level of a PAC12 school can be a very intimidating and daunting task for these players. Student athletes report greater difficulty than other students in taking leadership roles, learning from their mistakes, discussing their personal problems, and articulating their thoughts (Dudley, Johnson, and Johnson 1997).

Social Life

The 4 point balance of a Student Athlete

The Landscape

Oregon Ducks Basketball Student Athlete Survey (Multiple Choice)

1. What is the hardest part of being a student athlete in the PAC12
   A. Academics (6) B. Time Management (3) C. Game Performance (3) D. Pressure to Succeed (3)
2. What was the hardest transition to make from HS to College
   A. Personal Responsibilities (9) B. Academics (2) C. Time Management (5) D. Other (1)
3. What is one thing expected of you at this level you weren’t prepared for?
   A. Leadership (9) B. Athleticism (1) C. Expectations (3) D. Other (2)
4. What is one thing you had better training on before coming to University of Oregon and PAC12 conference
   A. Media Training (9) B. Social Media (8) C. Time Management (1)

Example Schedule of Topics To Be Covered

1. Being in the public spotlight
2. Social Media training
3. Media interview
4. Dealing with booster/alumni
5. The right and wrong decisions to make
6. Speaking engagements in the community
7. Financial training
8. Daily chores training (laundry, food, etc.)
9. Sport and School balance
10. Travel tips and tools (how to pack, what to pack, rules)
11. Networking with alumni and boosters
12. Etiquette training (dinner, clothing, cultural)
13. Speech and dialogue training
14. Dealing with adversity
15. How to handle the pressures of being a student athlete
16. Guest Speaker – Those that came before you
17. Guest Speaker – Professional athlete
18. Guest Speaker – Athletic Director
19. Guest Speaker – Leadership
20. Guest Speaker – Leading Others

Why Athletes May Be Our Best Leaders

Athletes: Natural Born Leaders

· Athletes are determined
   Progressing in sports mean negotiating an increasingly exclusive series of hurdles that can’t be cleared without discipline, focus, determination, patience, practice, and more practice. It takes sweat equity to bring whatever a leader possesses to fruition.
· Athletes appreciate fellowship:
   Athletes understand the tangible advantages of executing a plan. Their very goal achievement is contingent upon following well and truly. Leadership is rooted in having learned the lessons of following.
· They preach and practice teamwork:
   Integration is necessary to gather a coherent whole, but everybody gets the chance to shine. Everybody on the team has to do the job in order to achieve success.
· They are cognitively complex:
   They grasp the dynamic flow of many inter-related variables, simultaneously played. All the intricacies of learning an offense and team culture show the kind of thinking it takes to keep up on the playing field.
· Working under pressure:
   There are enormous stakes at hand to one’s future. The investment placed upon these athletes and the amount of people watching will show the true colors of a person’s leadership ability. They must outperform anxieties and continue to stay calm, cool, and collected.

Sports surface, support, and, potentially, impart that most important of leadership qualities: Character. Athletes have character in abundance. College athletes are the next generation of leadership and it’s time we turned to them and and provide the leadership training we yearn for and they deserve.

Budget For 2013 PAC12 Freshman Basketball Conference

Total (est.) = $85,500*

*sponsorship opportunities will supplement costs

Contact Information and Acknowledgements

For further information, please contact Steven Thomas, stwrent@uoregon.edu

References

· Athletes being Natural Born Leaders: http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-04-10/athletes-natural-born-leaders
· Developing Leadership Capacity in College Students: http://ncdp.udf.edu/includes/pdfs/MLRReport_FINAL.pdf
· http://thejournal.org/article/athletes-expectations-success-athletics-compared-academic-competition
· Wharton and NLF Launch Program for Teen Athletes http://mobile.businessweek.com/schools/blogs/mba_admissions/archives/20120220/wharton_and_nlf_launch_program_for_teen_athletes.html

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*This document contains a table with the Oregon Ducks Basketball Student Athlete Survey results. The table includes multiple choice questions and responses. The survey results are used to discuss the challenges and expectations faced by student athletes in the PAC12 conference. The document also features a budget for the 2013 PAC12 Freshman Basketball Conference, detailing expected expenses and sponsorship opportunities. Additionally, it references several articles and resources discussing the qualities of athletes as leaders, their experiences in college sports, and the importance of leadership training. The document concludes with contact information for further inquiries and acknowledgments for the speakers and conference participants.