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Core Values of Sports Teams: What are They and How are They Conveyed?

Eric Raisbeck
Winona State University

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Core Values of Sports Teams: What are They and How are They Conveyed?

Eric Raisbeck

Winona State University

Leadership Education Department: Sport Management

In Partial Fulfillment of the Masters of Science Degree - Master's Capstone

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Sports fans can all recognize teams who are well-known for their longstanding consistency. For example, the San Antonio Spurs of the National Basketball Association (NBA) have won four World Championships out of five appearances in the last twelve seasons. Since the beginning of the 2001 season, the New England Patriots have appeared in the Super Bowl – the championship game of the National Football League (NFL) – six times, winning four titles. Over that 15 year span, the Patriots have a record of 204-67 including the post-season. Organizations such as the Patriots and Spurs are models of consistency. A possible rationalization for this is a strong foundational set team values. As such, many teams could benefit from the understanding and implementation of these same core values by-which these teams operate.

According to the Common Cause Foundation, “In both action and thought, people are affected by a wide range of influences” (Common Cause, p. 1). This suggests the importance of identifying which values we believe can motivate and influence us. Common Cause also explains that, “Values represent our guiding principles: our broadest motivations, influencing the attitudes we hold and how we act” (Common Cause, p. 1). A collection of foundational values – core values – allow members of organizations to interact harmoniously. These values encourage the formation of individuals, and make it easier to reach team goals that would be impossible to achieve individually. An example of a core value is *Effort*. It’s been said that hard work will beat talent, if talent doesn’t work hard enough. Meaning that hard work – or effort – can be a major influence in a person’s ability to achieve success.

Core values are the fundamental beliefs of a person or organization. They are guiding principles that dictate and influence behavior – as well as – action. They are the unchanging and

unwavering guide. The roadmap to success for a collective group. “Core values are traits or qualities that you consider not just worthwhile, they represent an individual's or organization's highest priorities, deeply held beliefs, and core, fundamental driving forces” (Healthfield,2016). Core values can help differentiate right from wrong and help determine if you are on the path to fulfill your goals. But what are those values? How are these values instilled within each member of the team? The purpose of this study is to identify the core values that coaches would like there team to reflect and how these are communicated to their players.

Why This Study is Relevant

Across the world, millions of people are involved in organized team sports from pee-wee to professional athletics. With a purposeful set of core values, teams are easily guided. Part of a coach's job as the designated leader of the team is to elevate individuals beyond their prior performance and push them towards greater achievement. For a team to find the motivation for excellence – as well as remain foundationally grounded – requires the implementation of core values. “Over time all other things may change...but its values should not. Values are the things upon which you should never compromise” (Edwards, 2005).

Purpose

The mission of this study is to understand what core values current coaches believe to be important within their programs. It is also intended to discover how these coaches convey each value to the members of their team. By identifying core values and outlining strategies for communication and implementation, future coaches and leaders can formulate their team's identity. This study provides beneficial information on designing and implementing core values for coaches who aspire to take on the leadership role of head coach. Coaches should contemplate which core values they believe in and how to convey those values to their team.

Research Questions

1. What are the core values that coaches communicate to their players?
2. What methods of communication are used to convey these core values?

Research Methodology

The collection method for this study was semi-structured interviews that were conducted in person and over the telephone. In this study, coaches were asked a series of questions about the core values that they communicate to their teams. A pool of 6 to 8 coaches agreed to the share information about the foundational values of their programs. These coaches also shared information about how they communicate these values to the players on their teams. The goal is to understand which core values coaches believe in for their programs and how these values are instilled in the individual players.

Definitions

Core Values: a principle that guides an organization's internal conduct as well as its relationship with the external world. Core values are usually summarized in the mission statement or in a statement of core values.

Respect: a feeling or understanding that someone or something is important, serious, etc., and should be treated in an appropriate way.

Integrity: the quality of being honest and fair.

Accountability: the quality or state of being accountable; an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions.

Perseverance: the quality that allows someone to continue trying to do something even though it is difficult.

Trust: belief that someone or something is reliable, good, honest, effective, etc.

Service: the occupation or function of serving; contribution to the welfare of others.

Culture: a way of thinking, behaving, or working that exists in a place or organization.

Commitment: a promise to be loyal to someone or something.

Responsibility: something that you should do because it is morally right.

Loyalty: the quality or state of being loyal.

Character: the way someone thinks, feels, and behaves; someone's personality.

These definitions are directly from Merriam-Webster's dictionary and
businessdictionary.com.

Limitations and Delimitations

As a college coach, I believe in the power of core values which is why I chose this particular topic for study. I know that most athletic teams are guided by a set of foundational core values. Having aspirations of being a head coach in the future, I was seeking information that I could apply to my own eventual circumstances. My assumptions were based on the personal relationship I have with the coaches that were interviewed. It was my assumption that each coach I interviewed would have a collection of values that they believed to be important. Also, I believe coaches use specific strategies when communicating these values to their teams as to instill them into each individual player.

A limitation in this study was not being able to conduct all in-person interviews. Thus, telephone interviews were necessary. Also, a limiting factor was the time table to meet with coaches for those in-person interviews. Half of the in-person interviews were conducted during a summer camp for high school students. There was limited time to meet with each head coach during only two days of which the camp was hosted. However those conditions were beyond the control of the researcher and will not restrict conclusions of this study and applications to further research. There was an inability to assign coaches to experimental and control groups because they were all informally interviewed with the same questions.

The first delimitation for this study was the specificity for which the interview subjects were chosen. All subjects interviewed were collegiate head coaches of NCAA athletics teams and conclusions are not to be extended beyond this population. The second major delimitation was the interview questions themselves. All interview subjects were asked the same eight questions. The last delimitation is the scope of which the questions were chosen. The questions were specifically designed to address each coach's creation and implementation of their team's core values.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Through the literature review, core values will be defined. Understanding the definition of core values leads to the importance of developing them within an organization. Also within the literature review, some strategies for communicating and implanting core values will be outlined. As Lencioni (2002, *Make Your Values...*) states, “Values can set a company apart from the competition by clarifying its identity and serving as a rallying point for employees.” It will be critical to understand what core values embody in order to comprehend their importance in athletics. Furthermore, the strategies of communication become a necessity to the head coach in order to secure buy-in from the athletes.

Defining Core Values

It is important to note that a core value guides the conduct of the organization. In athletics, an organization can be an entire athletic department or a single team within. The core values are chosen by the leader of the team – in this case, the head coach – or sometimes an official of the athletic department that oversees all teams. One can look at core values from a few different perspectives – the perspective of individuals, organizations, and culture.

Individuals.

A core value will dictate expectations of individual player behavior and provide a foundation on which the team is built. For example, integrity is often chosen by organizations and individuals as a core value. “When a leader’s beliefs and values are positively connected to what is true and good, integrity is readily evident” (Lumpkin & Doty, 2014, p. 2). Player expectations are established by a coach’s beliefs of what is true and good – developing program integrity.

The United States Army follows a specific set of core values they call “The Army Values.” These values play a huge role in the lives of a soldier. Similar to Heathfield’s definition of core values, Army Values are the driving force for a soldier’s life. They guide them to “*be all you can be*” for the sake of protecting the USA. According to the Army’s official website, “Many people know what the words Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage mean...Soldiers learn these values in detail during Basic Combat Training (BCT), from then on they live them every day in everything they do — whether they’re on the job or off” (Army.mil/values, 2016, The Army Values).

A soldier is a member of a military team, much like an athlete is a member of a sports team. A soldier adheres to specific core values in order to be the best at their job, because the job has no room for error. Providing core values for their athletes – a head coach can administer similar structure to encourage the best from athletes and work to improve each day. Each individual athlete has a specific job to do in practice, at team meetings, and when competing. Core values serve the coach in encouraging athletes to perform at their best in all situations, so that as a collective, the team can also perform at its best.

Organizations.

College athletic programs have mission statements that note the core values that guide them. For example at Villanova University the mission statement reads:

The Athletics Department seeks to be a community of scholar athletes, coaches and staff whose primary focus is to achieve academic excellence while also striving to produce teams and individuals who are committed to athletic competition and outstanding performance. Such efforts are made within the context of our core values: Excellence,

Integrity, Sportsmanship, Community, Opportunity and Service. (villanova.com, 2016, *Vision*)

Villanova goes on to outline these core values with examples of how the institution models them. “The nature, role, and function of core values are considered a fundamental component in the development of an entity’s foundational belief structure” (Hutchinson & Bennett, 2012, p. 4) In this case each coach at Villanova has been given the foundational structure by the organization by which to align the team’s core values.

Susan Heathfield, a Human Resources expert, says that “Core values are traits or qualities that you consider not just worthwhile, they represent an individual's or organization's highest priorities, deeply held beliefs, and core, fundamental driving forces” (Heathfield, 2016, p. 1). Here we find that core values represent great significance and the driving force for both the organization and the individual. A coach will provide the team with ideals that will direct the program. They must place priority on the core values to ensure each players belief in them. Heathfield further explains, “Core values are also called guiding principles because they form a solid core of who you are, what you believe, and who you want to be going forward” (p. 1).

Culture.

Some examples of core values include dependability, intensity, respect, accountability, perseverance, discipline, innovation, responsiveness, ambition, self-control, equality, boldness, modesty, patience, commitment, timeliness, composure, teamwork, etc. The list goes on and on. Heathfield (2016, p. 2) says that, “Values form the foundation for everything that happens in your workplace. The core values of the employees in your workplace, along with their experiences, upbringing, and so on, meld together to form your corporate culture.” This being true – it is paramount for a head coach or the leader of an athletics program to implement core

values that will build the program's culture. The culture will set the direction of the team and define the daily actions of its members. "The core values of the founder of an organization permeate the workplace. His or her core values are powerful shapers of the organization's culture" (Heathfield, 2016, p. 2).

Lencioni, in the Harvard Business Review, states core values to be "the deeply ingrained principles that guide all of a company's actions; they serve as its cultural cornerstones" (Lencioni, 2002). Core values set an organization apart, clarify its identity, serve as cultural cornerstones, and guide behaviors of its members. As fundamental and strategically sound beliefs, core values permeate and are integrated throughout an organization's culture and should guide every employee-related process and action, suggests Lencioni. In relation to an athletics team, "...[C]ore values are considered to be a key component in defining the brand of an organization or university" (Hutchinson & Bennett, 2012, p. 4). It's imperative for an athletics department to strategically identify core values that clarify its brand and guide all of its teams. Equally important, each head coach shall establish a set of core values to serve as cultural cornerstones for their team.

Strategies for Communicating Core Values

The first task for a head coach is to select the core values that will be important for the development of their program. With that in mind – only choosing some words and writing them down will not be enough to objectify them. Equally as important is communicating these core values to program members in a way that will elicit belief and buy-in. It's pivotal to translate the core values into player and team behaviors. I believe a common mistake is simply identifying your core values and not actively promoting them to organization members.

Employees at Thomas Nelson, an international publishing company, realized "...that identifying the values wasn't enough" (Hyatt, 2010, p. 1). They understood that they needed to go further and connect these values with their employees. "We had to translate our core values into behaviors... Unless values become behaviors, you only have a set of platitudes. Unfortunately, these platitudes will ultimately create cynicism when smart people realize that your behavior doesn't line up with your words" (p. 1). At Thomas Nelson they rely on six methods to communicate core values: live your values, teach your values, reward your values, hire new people based on your values, review people based on your values, and let people go based on your values.

To live your values you must lead by example.

Leading by example is the most powerful communication tools any leader possesses.

While values must be taught, they are more often *caught* as people observe our lives.

Like it or not, our behavior is always communicating our values. Therefore, we must be very intentional about how we model those values. We have to 'walk the talk.' (Hyatt, 2010, We live our...)

"If the leadership of your enterprise doesn't live the core values, you can't expect that your employees will" (Jeffrey, 2014, Make Sure Leadership...). The head coach is the face of the program and everybody will look to the head coach it good times and bad. A core value based head coach will lead its team through those time by modeling values based behavior.

Using the six purposed communication methods that Thomas Nelson model, an organization or team should first expand core values beyond words. Before someone can live the core values, they must possess meaning and purpose. Members of a team must see deeper than a word – they must be taught each value. "If you don't constantly educate your team and reinforce

the importance of your values, they will become mere slogans and will not influence company culture... Make your values an on-going part of your corporate dialogues.” (Jeffery, 2014, Educate your organization...). A great strategy to reinforce your values is to make them visual and visible. Handing out a copy of the core values or hanging posters of core values around the office are ways to accomplish this. “We try to make it very clear about what we value and what we expect in terms of values-based behavior” (Hyatt, 2010, We teach our...). Examining and reinforcing the core values is also critical for education. “From the first interview to the last day of work, employees should be constantly reminded that core values form the basis for every decision the company makes” (Lencioni, 2002, Weave core values...).

Next, reviewing the core values with employees or athletes is essential. A company or athletics department must also review each individual’s commitment to the core values.

A section of our annual review process is dedicated to our core values and how we did living them out...our goal is not to be scientific; it is to foster an on-going conversation about our values, so we can reinforce what is important. (Hyatt, 2010, We review people...)

To manage this, organizations can incorporate core values into the performance management process. Each core value should come with a set of behaviors that are measurable and specific that forms part of an employee’s performance review. “With a fully integrated performance-management process, managers can proactively monitor, evaluate and reward individual performance and behavior that’s in line with an organization’s core values” (Ruhmann, 2007).

Third, members of an organization will start to understand and adhere to the core values when their behavior is recognized for modeling them. Much like the Thomas Nelson’s method, it is necessary for a leader to reinforce the behaviors of people who are demonstrating the core

values by rewarding them. “We try to notice when people are living out the core values and affirm them in real time...we give each one public recognition, a trophy, and a cash prize.” (Hyatt, 2010, We reward our...) Coaches do this by putting players into situations to model specific behaviors and then positively rewarding them for doing so. “After a company has embedded its values into its systems, it should promote those values at every turn. It’s been said that employees will not believe a message until they’ve heard it repeated by executives seven times” (Lencioni, 2002, Weave core values...). “By modeling and rewarding behaviors that demonstrate each value, employees are constantly reminded of what their company stands for and how to better work by those principles” (Lavoie, 2015, 4 Ways To...).

Also, it is wise to make personnel choices based on core values. Head coaches can hire their assistants and recruit their players based on the core values of the program. “The task is to find people who are already predisposed to sharing your core values. You must attract and then retain these people and let those who aren’t predisposed to sharing your core values go elsewhere” (Collins, 2000, Identifying core values...). “Your core values need to be integrated into every employee-related process—hiring methods, performance management systems, criteria for promotions and rewards, and even dismissal policies” (Lencioni, 2002, Weave core values...). For coaches and administrators alike, recruiting people who have core values that align with theirs is paramount. “We want to hire people who share our values. If the values don’t resonate with the prospective employee, we know they are not going to be a good fit with our culture” (Hyatt, 2010, We hire new...). Conversely, a company or athletics department must work to maintain employees whose core values align. “If someone consistently behaves contrary to our values—even if they are a high achiever—we have to show them the door. Otherwise, it reflects on our credibility and commitment to our values” (Hyatt, 2010, We let people go...). A

head coach must make the same tough decisions about their own personnel. If a player cannot model the programs core values, they must no longer be a part of the program.

Organizations and athletics programs should publicize and market their core values for all to see. What follows is a quote from a corporate perspective:

Keep the company's moral code at the forefront of everyone's mind by making it prominent within the workplace. In addition to featuring it on the company website and in the employee handbook (neither of which employees look at on a daily basis), post it where employees often gather (conference rooms, snack rooms, etc.). (Lavoie, 2015, Put values front...)

“Many companies publicize their values on T-shirts and coffee mugs...” (Lencioni, 2002, Weave core values...). Most athletic departments at universities post their core values on the school's website. Some coaches also do the same, but many head coaches use social media to promote their own program core values. Dr. Robert J. Petrusch, an associate professor at Iona College believes some best practices to communicate and share your organization's values are as follows (Petrusch, 2012, 5 Tips For...):

1. Make them visible in words, symbols and pictures. Reinforce them in town hall meetings and other forums as well as in one-to-one meetings with supervisors and senior executives.
 2. Showcase them in public relations initiatives, advertising and other marketing communications tools.
 3. Feature them in your orientation and training programs for new and existing employees.
 4. Create and distribute case studies illustrating how your values are making a difference in the lives and businesses of your stakeholders.
-

5. Let traditional media and new media know that the organization is living and enforcing its values and sharing them with others.

Coaches need to weave the program's core values into every interaction with the players, school, community, and the media. They should talk about them at practice and include them in orientation manuals. They should post them in the locker room and on their Twitter feed. They are the driving force behind the program.

Summary

Coaches, administrators, and executives alike use core values as the backbone of their team or organization. A random selection of sophisticated words is not going to solidify a foundation for a team. One must identify and define core values that reflect a leader's beliefs. That leader must model behaviors that reflect each value. Decisions involving direction and growth of a team must be based upon these values. Each core value must be taught, reviewed, and reflected upon in order to develop purpose. Through this resolve, organization members will model desired values based behaviors for the betterment of themselves and the team. Collective growth will result in positive outcomes and prosperity.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study is to discover core values that are important to coaches at the collegiate level and how these values are communicated by the coach to their players. As individuals, it can be influential to establish personal core values. In addition it is equally important for groups of individuals to be guided by core values. Gandhi said, “Your beliefs become your thoughts, your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your values, your values become your destiny” (goodreads.com, 2016, p.1). Coaches can follow the map that Gandhi created by identifying their beliefs – turning those beliefs into thoughts, actions, and habits – then turning those habits into their core values.

Data Collection

The data collection method used in this study was semi-structured interviews. These informal interviews were conducted both in person and over the telephone. The responses to the interviews were kept anonymous by assigning a descriptor to each transcript (Coach A through Coach G). Each coach was asked eight questions in order to identify their core values and how they communicate those core values. The interviews lasted ten to twelve minutes in length and were conducted informally. The interview format was chosen to identify core values specific to that coach and to open discussion on their strategies of communicating the core values.

Research Question 1 - What are the core values that coaches communicate to their players?

The four interview questions pertaining to core values:

- a. What are the core values that you communicate to your program?
 - b. Tell me how you chose these core values? Why?
 - c. What role do core values play in your coaching philosophy?
-

- d. Did the athletic director ask about your core values and how you would convey them during your interview for this position?

These four questions were chosen to get a thorough description of what core values are important to coaches at the collegiate level and how those coaches come to develop those core values. These four questions were designed to find out how closely related to a coaching philosophy that these coaches believe in. Lastly, this line of questioning was intended to find out how important these core values are in the interview process or how important they are to the administrations that hire coaches.

Research Question 2: What methods of communication are used to convey these core values?

The four interview questions pertaining to communication approaches to convey core values:

- a. What strategies do you use to communicate your core values to the program?
- b. How often do you refer to the core values? How do you model them?
- c. Are there specific team activities that reinforce these core values?
- d. How do you hold your players accountable to these values? How do you measure the success of these values?

These four questions were designed to understand how coaches communicate their core values to the members of their teams. The questions aimed to discover if regularity of reinforcement is important in instilling core values within a team. These questions also aimed to discover if there are specific activities used to reinforce the core values that a coach has implemented. Lastly, these questions were designed to figure out how a coach can hold players accountable to learning the values instilled and how the coach measures that learning process.

Sample

Purposive and convenience sampling was used to select participants in this study. The target participants for these interviews were head coaches at the collegiate level. Subjects were

selected because they held the title of head coach and are responsible for program building. Participants involved were coaches for both men's and women's sports. Data were collected through in person interviews conducted during youth camps in the summer of 2016. Telephone interviews were also used to collect data from coaches that could not be reached at the camps. The sample size for this study was 6 collegiate coaches. The interview responses will remain anonymous and conducted at the approval of the Winona State University IRB.

Protocol

Before the study could begin, approval of the Winona State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was needed to conduct this study. A formal application was submitted to the IRB with an outline of the proposed protocol and the interview questions. Specific coaches were chosen for interviews based on the author's prior relationships within the coaching profession and the convenience of meeting in person with a group of coaches at a summer camp. At the summer camp, private in-person interviews were conducted for approximately 10-12 minutes. To complete the study, additional coaches were interviewed via a telephone call.

A consent form was prepared in accordance to the IRB process. This consent form explained the purpose and structure of the interview. It also outlined that no identifying information would be collected and that the interviews were voluntary. Coaches were asked to read the consent statement; a signature was not required. In advance of the summer camp, coaches selected for an in-person interview were contacted via email and telephone to get consent for their participation. These coaches were chosen by referencing the camp website for the list of guest coaches. If they could not be reached in advance, a printed copy of the Consent Form and interview questions (see Appendix G) was given to each coach to read before the

interview could begin. Their participation in the interview constituted their consent. For all phone interviews, the consent statement forms were emailed prior to the interview.

Each interview was recorded and the responses to each question were transcribed into text using Word, respondents were given labels A through F. Full transcripts of the interviews can be found in Appendices A-G. Any notes from general conversation outside of the structured interview questions were also written and recorded. All notes and recordings were kept confidential as per the consent form. The notes were stored in a single notebook, which was destroyed upon completion of the research paper. All recordings were erased at the conclusion of the study. Within the research paper, coaches were coded as Coach A, Coach B, Coach C, etc. to keep their identities anonymous. The key for identifying each coach was also destroyed upon completion of the research paper.

Data Analysis

The methodology used to analyze the data was grounded theory. The theory about core values was conceptualized from a specific line of questioning. The rationale of establishing core values within a team is grounded by the disclosure of values by the coaches interviewed. The theme of the interview was to identify each coach's values and the communication strategies they use to convey them to their teams. The first question of the interview is what are the core values that you communicate to your program? It is expected that the data collected from this question will be summarized in a table. The following seven questions were analyzed for common responses and compared for possible themes. For example, answers to question 1a about core values will be outlined in a table, which should clearly identify a common theme.

Summary

Six collegiate level head coaches participated in semi-structured interviews about the core values they implement within their sport's programs. These interviews were approved by the Winona State University IRB and used purposive and convenience sampling. The responses are presented anonymously as to protect the identity and integrity of the coaches involved. Responses to the eight questions were analyzed for common themes. Chapter four will outline the information collected from these interviews.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

This study was designed to discover what core values are in the realm of athletic programs. Through semi-structured interviews with head coaches at the collegiate level, specific core values were identified. Six coaches were chosen for interviews, varying from men's and women's programs and from Division I athletics to Junior College athletics. Secondly, the interviews were designed to discover the methods of communication by which these core values are conveyed. Each research question is restated below with the results of the interview questions that pertain to each of them.

Research Question 1 - What are the core values that coaches communicate to their players?

Core Values – Interview Question 1: What are the core values that you communicate to your program?

The answers are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Core Values Identified By Coach

Coach	Values				
A	Be on Time	No Drugs	Respect Others	Good Decisions	Compete
B	Integrity	Accountability	Responsibility	Perseverance	Hard Work
C	Trust	Accountability	Perseverance	Service	
D	Dependability	Accountability	Hard Work	Trust	
E	Family	Togetherness	Toughness		
F	Toughness	Finish	Commitment	Accountability	

Two big themes jumped out about these coaches' lists of core values. The first being that five out of six identify accountability, or a component of accountability, as one of their core values. Coach A listed "be on time" as a core value which I believe is elemental to being accountable. This suggests to me that a players being accountable for their actions is important.

Second, five of the six coaches believe that toughness is a critical core value. Coach B and D used the words “hard work” to express the concept of toughness.

Core Values – Interview Question 2: Tell me how you chose these core values?

Why?

Many coaches share philosophies and ideas with each other, which is why it is not uncommon for coaches to develop their core values based on being around other coaches. Coach B admitted that his core values came from other coaches. I found it very interesting that four of the six coaches stated that they gathered their core values from other places outside of their own creative minds. Coach D mentioned that their core values came from “several places” and included that his father and family played a big role. Coach A, B, C, and D all created their own set of core values based on past information and previous experiences around other people or coaches. Coaches E and F created their core values after being hired to a new job and meeting their team.

There are two big themes here that I believe are worth noting. First, the four coaches who created their core values over time before becoming a head coach – created these values based on their own personal beliefs. “Core values...represent an individual's or organization's highest priorities, deeply held beliefs, and core, fundamental driving forces” (Heathfield, 2016, p. 1). Even if the information or idea was inspired by another person, these coaches found a personal connection to the finalized group of core values. Secondly, four of the six coaches devised their core values before being hired as a head coach. Coach E and F developed their core values after identifying a problem and attempting to address it, after already being on the job.

Core Values – Interview Question 3: What role do core values play in your coaching philosophy?

All six coaches stated that someone’s core values must directly correlate to their coaching philosophy. Coach E stated that core values and philosophy should “mirror” each other. All six coaches believe that their core values are the foundation or pillars to their coaching philosophy. Coach B talked

about basing everything around your core values, because they “will define who and what you and your program wants to be.”

It was interesting to me that three coaches – A, C and E – mentioned that it is important to have your values be the core of your coaching philosophy because you need to fall back on them during tough times. Hard times are certain to happen, and when they do you need to “go back to them to handle difficult situations” says Coach C. This reminded me of the Lencioni article – *Make Your Values Mean Something* – that it is important that you make decisions based on your core values. When tough times arrive, fall back on your core values to make corrective decisions. A final interesting thought – only two coaches C and E – spoke about continual self-reflection on their philosophy to question if their core values still hold the same meaning.

Core Values – Interview Question 4: Did the athletic director ask about your core values and how you would convey them during your interview for this position?

The answers to this question surprised me. Only one coach – Coach C – said that they were asked about his core values during the interview. This is interesting to me, because I would’ve guessed that athletic directors or school administrators would want to have knowledge of a coach’s core values and beliefs. Deciding on a new face of a program is a vigorous process and I would – if I was an athletic director – want to know what kind of values a coach would bring with him. Coach D and E stated that they were not talked about at any part of the interview.

On the flip side – Coach A, B, and F all talked about how they brought the topic of core values up during the interview. Coach B went as far as saying he, “pushed for them during the interview.” This interested me that these coaches were eager to speak about their core values and beliefs, so they brought them up or displayed them for the interview committee. Coach B, E and F all used a pre-made interview tool to showcase themselves during the interview; they handed out a manual or portfolio at the beginning of the interview.

Research Question 1 - Summary of Responses

After looking at all four core value questions together, I concluded some interesting ideas. First, it can be helpful – when creating your own core values – to reflect upon past experiences and to use what you have learned from other coaches. It is OK to borrow ideas as long as those ideas match your own personal beliefs. I find it interesting that some common themes amongst coach's core values are accountability and hard work. It is my belief that many – if not all coaches – would support these two core values as highly important for players to embody.

Second, it is important to establish your set of core values before you become a head coach. The core values should mean something to you and reflect your own personal values. They can travel with you from job to job. They are the bedrock of your program and should be formed before they are to be implemented. This will also come into play during an interview for a head coaching position – even if you may not be asked about them during the interview. You should be prepared to impress upon them. I found it interesting that even if not asked, most of the coaches were prepared to present their core values and talk about them.

Lastly, your core values are the foundation of everything you believe in as a coach. They are the bedrock of your coaching philosophy. You will base everything in your program around the core values. You will make decisions based on your core values and you will fall back on them in tough times. Because of the idea that your core values are everything, taking time to create appropriate and self-reflected core values before an interview, is of great significance.

Research Question 2: What methods of communication are used to convey these core values?

Communication – Interview Question 1: What strategies do you use to communicate your core values to the program?

All six coaches talked about discussing the core values with their teams. They all believe in talking to their teams about the meaning of the core values and practicing this technique often. Coach E said they “talk(s) about them all the time.” Coach F said that they discuss the values on a weekly basis

with the team. I particularly liked a strategy that Coach B used called “Word of the Day.” This tool was described as a message delivered to the team emphasizing the core value and its definition. Coaches A and C both talked about having a “constant” and “consistent” message from them and their staff members to the team. This reminds me of the Thomas Nelson model discussed by Hyatt (2010) about making your core values an on-going part of your dialogue. Hyatt also wrote about reviewing core values with employees to reinforce their importance. Coach D spoke on this by saying they are “preaching a core value within every message delivered to the team.”

It was also interesting to me that four coaches talked about some sort of visible representation of the core values. Coach A and D used the word “signage” for posted representation of their core values. Coach E uses posters and pages in the team binder – whereas – Coach F displays their core values in the player handbook. This reminded me of the Petrausch (2012) article which suggested to “make them (core values) visible in words, symbols and pictures.” Coach C talked about modeling the core values, which ties directly to the Hyatt article discussed in Chapter 2 and lead into my next question. Lastly, I found a statement Coach C said very interesting. Coach C talked about branding by saying, “what is your brand?” There was no more mention of branding from Coach C – but I see this as a possible area for a follow up conversation.

Communication – Interview Question 2: How often do you refer to the core values?

How do you model them?

All six coaches spoke about needing to refer to the core values regularly. I found it interesting that some of the coaches varied on the timeliness of referring to their core values. Coach A believes you need to refer to them “more than daily, constantly.” Coach C and D believe you need to refer to your values every day, with Coach C elaborating to “every interaction with the team and in every team meeting.” This is contrary to what Coach F believes saying they believe in talking about core values weekly, not daily; “You want to talk about them frequently, but you don’t want to overkill them” Coach E was most similar to Coach F by saying his staff refer to them every chance they can, but admitted they

needed to do a better job of it. Coach E wasn't as direct about referring to their core values daily such as Coaches A, C, and D.

Coach A and Coach F both talked about the importance of living what you preach when it comes to modeling core values. Five of the six spoke at length about modeling the core values. Coaches B, C, D and F all talked about how it was important to find real life situations to use as examples to which the members of their teams could relate. For example, Coach B believes "that you must model them with references to life situations." I thought it was interesting that Coach C agreed with this idea but admitted that it can be challenging finding these situations in which to model the core values. Coach E flat out said that they need to do a better job of modeling their core values for the players to get better.

Another thing I found interesting came from Coach A. Again, Coach A told me that "you must live what you preach." Coach A went more in depth expressing that they try to gauge this in interviews of candidates for assistant coach when they were building their coaching staff. This reminds me of a Lencioni quote that I outlined in chapter 2. "Your core values need to be integrated into every employee-related process—hiring methods, performance management systems, criteria for promotions and rewards, and even dismissal policies" (Lencioni, 2002, Weave core values...).

Communication – Interview Question 3: Are there specific team activities that reinforce these core values?

There was a wide variety of answers to this question. Each coach used some specific, yet simple activities of reinforcing the core values to their team. Only Coach A did not provide a specific activity, instead saying that it is more important to speak of the values daily than to do activities to reinforce them. Coach A believes that "core values are things you got to live." Even though Coach C gave some specific examples of activities, one paralleled Coach A's idea – saying that you should get the players to "verbalize the core values every opportunity you can."

Many of the coaches had great ideas for team activities. Coach F spoke about bringing in guest speakers who preach real world application of the core values. Coach F also said that they do non-sport

related activities, such as community service projects requiring manual labor, to build mental toughness within their team. Coach B uses an outsourced leadership program called “Character Matters.” Coach B outlined this program with some details about how the program educates the players on how character actually does matter through paper and pencil activities. Coach D said they utilize a lot of team building partner activities. This was similar to Coach E who partners upperclassman with underclassman and has them learn about each other three questions at a time.

Communication – Interview Question 4: How do you hold your players accountable to these values? How do you measure the success of these values?

This was a two part question to wrap up the interview. When addressing accountability to the core values, three of the six coaches referenced something to do with discipline. Coach A stated that their system is “black and white” and that if you make a mistake you “pay a debt and we move on.” Coach A went on to say that if a player is a repeat offender then the position group would pay the debt for them. Coach B talked about players performing duties that they would “not normally like to do.” Coach A called this group “Friday Night Lights Crew,” because they would have the players show up on Friday nights late when they would like to be out doing their own thing. Coach D said that they have even stopped practice to address a negative influence and has actually started practice over.

In terms of measuring success of the core values, three coaches believed in quantitative assessment and three coaches spoke of qualitative assessment. Coaches A, D and F all referenced quantitative examples of measuring the success of their core values. Coach A said that, “the values are measurable based on documentation.” Coach A elaborated by using examples such as documented grades and “documentation in terms of mistakes made.” Coach D also spoke of monitoring student grades and similarly, Coach F talked about graduation rates. Attendance and discipline issues are two more areas that can be measured according to Coach D. lastly, I found it interesting that Coach F was the only coach that mentioned wins and losses as a way to measure success of core values.

Coaches B, C and E all spoke of qualitative ways to measure success of the core values. All three presented similar questions relating to how players represent themselves. Coach B talked about reflecting on player behavior, saying that you need to “step back and take a look at how the kids handle themselves.” Coach C believes that a coach should ask themselves a few questions. One of these questions – “are the players modeling the values?” – I found similar to what Coach B believed. Another example of a question in Coach C’s opinion is, “have the players taken control of the program in a spiritual sense?” Coach D monitors two things: “What level are they playing at in practice and games? And how do they carry themselves off the playing field in terms of academics and discipline issues?” It was interesting to me that there was a split of qualitative and quantitative responses and that within those categories there were similar examples.

Research Question 2 - Summary of Responses After reviewing all the answers to the four communication questions I couldn’t help but think of what I learned in Chapter 2 about living the core values, teaching the core values, and reinforcing/rewarding the core values. In order to live your core values – you must model your core values on a daily basis. You must lead by example. It is also important to connect your players with real life examples of the core values. Show them what they represent and how a real life application relates. At the end, I think it is important to reflect on the effectiveness of your core values as well.

There are many ways to teach your core values, but this may be the most imperative part of infusing them into your players’ minds and hearts. The most obvious example is to make them visible. Post them everywhere. A poster on the wall or a page in the player’s manual. They need to be seen and read. You must consistently and constantly be speaking about them and teaching the meaning. Every day and within every interaction, you must be preaching the core values.

Finally, it is important to reinforce and reward behaviors that reflect the core values. Once the players start modeling the core values themselves and preaching on them, it is time to reinforce the core values by rewarding that message. A coach must put them in scenarios that allow for them to practice the core

values. From team building activities to community service projects, it is important to present opportunities to model the core values.

Coaches should then reflect on the effectiveness of their core values. This can be done by assessing if the core values are being learned and embodied. Coaches can evaluate this by both quantitative and qualitative assessment. For example, a coach could do some personal reflection and ask themselves questions about the state of the program and if the core values are having the desired effect. Or a coach could simply monitor and evaluate wins and losses or team GPA to assess the effectiveness of the core values within the program.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

Summary of What Was Learned Doing this Study

After reviewing all of the interviews in Chapter 4, I realized I had learned a lot about core values and how to communicate them. A few major concepts stood above the rest. First, when deciding on your core values it is important to make them personal to you. They need to match your own personal beliefs or it will be hard for you to teach them and model them. Second, modeling the core values is incredibly important. Lastly, I learned about the importance of reinforcing your values.

My wife and I are about to have our first child. Ironically, during the time I was doing research on core values, we had discussions about what family values we would like to instill in our child. Through my research, I learned that when choosing core values for your program, it is important that those core values match your personal beliefs. I think that it is great that once I decide on what my personal family values will be, those values will be reflected in my coaching core values.

Modeling core values becomes easier when those values match your personal beliefs and values. Much like a parent modeling positive behaviors for their children, a coach must model the core values for their team. You must live what you preach. Not only is it important for the head coach to model the core values to the players, but it is also important for the players to model the core values. When the players begin to showcase behaviors that reflect the core values, a coach can start to believe that the core values are having the desired effect on the program.

In order for the players to truly learn the meaning of the core values they must start to model behaviors that reflect the core values. This is done through extensive reinforcement. A history student can be told to read a text book to learn about the industrial revolution, but a great teacher will find ways to make the material come to life in order to make the material relevant to that student. Constantly and consistently promoting the core values is only the beginning. Going further, a coach can provide opportunities for the players to correctly model the core values and then rewarding them for doing so. Teach, reinforce and reward is a simple progression for teachers and coaches alike.

Doing research is not my favorite thing to do in the world, but doing research on core values surprised me. I did not think that I was going to find as much information as I did on core values that would apply to my paper. Even though there was a limited amount of information that came directly from coaches about their core values, I was able to gather that information through doing interviews. What I did find was information about how businesses instill core values into their employees. This information paralleled the world of coaching more than I imagined and I learned how to make core values work for a head coach. I learned about a progression and a model for successful implementation and communication of core values.

Suggestions for Improvement

One area that I would improve if I had to do it all over again would be the interview process. It would have been great to get more ideas and opinions on core values. It would also have been great to hear a few more examples of how coaches communicate their core values, and more importantly, how they measure the success of their core values. On the flip side, less variety could have been found through the interviews, showing that there is a right and wrong way to properly instill core values within your program.

Another thing that I would have done differently is interviewed some athletic directors. I think that athletic directors have an outside and unique perspective to a coach's core values. Athletic directors might be involved in developing athletic department core values and might want to see those reflected in the coach's core values. Also, one of my questions for the coaches was if they were asked about their core values by the athletic director during the interview. It would have been great to question the athletic directors to find out why they may or may not find this to be important during the interview. I could have found that some athletic directors look for specific core values when interviewing coaches.

Areas for Future Study

Now completed with my research and review, there are a few topics and ideas that someone could use to branch out and do additional research. One such idea is that of "branding" that came up in one of my interviews. Coach C talked about their brand and the importance of promoting the brand. Their core values become the bedrock for the brand and the coach must promote that brand by communicating those core values. Another area for adjunct research would be the idea that a company or a team should always fall back on the core values and base program decisions on them. An employer should hire, fire, promote, punish, and reward employees based on the core values. A coach should do the same within their program with the players and assistant coaches. I think this concept could be expanded on as a single research topic.

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Appendix A

Interview Responses for Coach A

Core Values - Question 1: What are the core values that you communicate to your program?

1. Be on time, 2. No drugs, 3. Respect Others, 4. Good decisions, 5. Compete

Core Values - Question 2: Tell me how you chose these core values? Why?

Coach A said that their core values changed over the years, but is a believer in the players being a productive member of the team. They do that by following the Five Pillars of the program, which is the name used to describe the core values. “These five things will eliminate 99.9% of the problems and distractions.”

Core Values - Question 3: What role do core values play in your coaching philosophy?

Coach A stated that core values are everything in your philosophy saying that, “you better be willing to stand by your core values.” They believe that their better be consequences for living up and not living up to the core values. Coach A believes that core values are the foundation or the “bones” of all of your decision making as a coach.

Core Values - Question 4: Did the athletic director ask about your core values and how you would convey them during your interview for this position?

Coach A said that they did not articulate their core values in the interview for their current job because they were developed after they got the job. Coach A stated that they touched on some core values during the interview, but wasn’t asked to articulate them. They believe that the values are “simplified after articulation.”

Communication – Question 1: What strategies do you use to communicate your core values to the program?

Coach A has done many things to communicate their core values including bringing in experts that can speak of the benefits and the pitfalls to each of the teams values. They also believe in providing “constant messages from me and the assistant coaches.” Their program is big on signage that represents the core values.

Communication – Question 2: How often do you refer to the core values? How do you model them?

Coach A said they refer to the core values “more than daily, constantly.” They said that you must live what you preach and had to gauge this in interviews of assistant coaches when building the staff.

Communication – Question 3: Are there specific team activities that reinforce these core values?

Coach A believes that it is more important to speak of the values daily than to do activities to reinforce them. Saying, “core values are things you got to live.”

Communication – Question 4: How do you hold your players accountable to these values? How do you measure the success of these values?

Coach A holds each player accountable with discipline. Coach A says that “our system is black and white. You pay a debt when you make a mistake and we move on.” Coach A requires the assistant coaches to know their players and to know what strategies of discipline will work with each player. If a player has repeat offenses the position group will “pay the debt for him.” Coach A will skip this step when major mistakes are made by players. Coach A believes that it is important to “document everything in terms of mistakes made.” “The values are measurable based on documentation. Academics will improve and problems will be reduced.”

Appendix B

Interview Responses for Coach B

Core Values - Question 1: What are the core values that you communicate to your program?

Coach B stated their core values are 1. Integrity, 2. Accountability, 3. Responsibility, 4. Perseverance, 5. Hard work

Core Values - Question 2: Tell me how you chose these core values? Why?

Coach B said that the core values were gathered from other coaches that they worked with over the years. Believed Integrity to be very important to building character within the players. Also mentioned that they would like to redefine their core values by removing either Accountability or Responsibility and adding service, stating that accountability and responsibility are similar and a little redundant.

Core Values - Question 3: What role do core values play in your coaching philosophy?

Coach B stated that a coach must have a set of values to base everything around because they “will define who and what you and your program wants to be.”

Core Values - Question 4: Did the athletic director ask about your core values and how you would convey them during your interview for this position?

Coach B said that he was not asked about them, but pushed for them during the interview. Coach B said that he was prepared to answer any questions that would come up by having the core values listed in a manual used as an interview tool.

Communication – Question 1: What strategies do you use to communicate your core values to the program?

Coach B holds team meetings to discuss the core values and talk about their meaning. Has used a tactic called “Word of the Day” to represent each core value during a specific team function. Such functions include practice, lifting or running sessions.

Communication – Question 2: How often do you refer to the core values? How do you model them?

Coach B believes that you must model them with references to life situations.

Communication – Question 3: Are there specific team activities that reinforce these core values?

Coach B used a leadership program developed by Wade Salem called Character Matters. The program is designed to build character within the players and utilizes paper activities to educate the players on how character matters. Coach B also hangs papers in the players lockers with inspirational messages relating to the core values.

Communication – Question 4: How do you hold your players accountable to these values? How do you measure the success of these values?

Coach B said that when kids get in trouble they are required to show up on Fridays to perform a duty that they would not normally like to do. They call this group the “Friday Night Lights

Crew.” One way Coach B measures the success of their values is to “step back and take a look at how the kids handle themselves.” Coach B believes that when issues come up you must fall back on your core values.

Appendix C

Interview Responses for Coach C

Core Values - Question 1: What are the core values that you communicate to your program?

Coach C stated that their core values are 1. Trust, 2. Accountability, 3. Perseverance, 4. Service

Core Values - Question 2: Tell me how you chose these core values? Why?

Coach C said that they did not want too many core values and believed that having four core values would not overload the student athletes. Believed Trust to be the most important core value which is why it is number one on their list, stating that “players don’t have trust anymore.” They also like the progression from Trust to service going through accountability and perseverance. Coach C said that they were aware that many other programs were preaching the same thing.

Core Values - Question 3: What role do core values play in your coaching philosophy?

Coach C stated that core values are foundational to your philosophy. Believes that a coach should think about their core values a lot and self-reflect on your philosophy often. Through self-reflection, Coach C believes you can find out if you pushed your core values far enough. Also that, “you should go back to them to handle difficult situations the best way that you can.”

Core Values - Question 4: Did the athletic director ask about your core values and how you would convey them during your interview for this position?

Coach C said that “it was everything in the interview.” They believe that administrations should want to know about your plan for developing people. In their interview there was zero talk about football saying that “the only they cared about was my values and policies.”

Communication – Question 1: What strategies do you use to communicate your core values to the program?

Coach C believes in a “constant and consistent approach.” Coach C was big on branding and stated that it is important to ask yourself, “what is your brand?” Coach C said that the core values need to become second nature to the players and that you want the leaders of the team to “model them or utilize them with the rest of the team.” Coach C said that your players must become the values saying “they are your values.”

Communication – Question 2: How often do you refer to the core values? How do you model them?

Coach C believes you must refer to them daily. Says that “you must refer to them in every interaction with the team and in every team meeting.” Coach C believes that modeling them is the challenge because you have to find situations in which you can model them. For example you have to seek out community service opportunities to exemplify the value of service.

Communication – Question 3: Are there specific team activities that reinforce these core values?

Coach C wants their players to “verbalize the core values every opportunity you can.” Coach C also identifies certain practices with a “word of the day” that relates to a specific core value. Coach C has the team do service projects together to get the team to understand the meaning of service. Coach C admitted that their program could do more and “needs to do more.”

Communication – Question 4: How do you hold your players accountable to these values? How do you measure the success of these values?

Coach C said that it is important to be direct with your players, because “they need to be bought in first before they can be held accountable.” Coach C measures success of the core values by asking a few questions. “Are the player’s modeling the values? Are they the ‘bus drivers’ of the values? Have the players taken control of the program in a spiritual sense?”

Appendix D

Interview Responses for Coach D

Core Values - Question 1: What are the core values that you communicate to your program?

Coach D stated that their core values are 1. Dependability, 2. Accountability, 3. Hard-Work, 4. Trust

Core Values - Question 2: Tell me how you chose these core values? Why?

Coach D said that their core values came from several places including their father and family values. As a former walk-on athlete Coach D believed that instilled hard work within them and wanted to pass that core value along. They believe trust to be easily related to and exemplified for the student athletes.

Core Values - Question 3: What role do core values play in your coaching philosophy?

Coach D stated that their core values are the cornerstones or the pillars of their coaching philosophy. They said that their “philosophy is held together by core values and is all about teaching kids.”

Core Values - Question 4: Did the athletic director ask about your core values and how you would convey them during your interview for this position?

Coach D said that they were not asked about their core values during the interview.

Communication – Question 1: What strategies do you use to communicate your core values to the program?

Coach D uses strategies such as leading by example and being transparent with the player. Coach D posts signage that display the programs core values. Coach D also believes in preaching a core value within every message delivered to the team and will always do team breakdowns with a core value.

Communication – Question 2: How often do you refer to the core values? How do you model them?

Coach D said that they refer to the core values every day saying that “you always got to be looking for them in daily life to find examples in which you can refer to with the kids.”

Communication – Question 3: Are there specific team activities that reinforce these core values?

Coach D utilizes a lot of partner team building activities designed to get the players “to work together and create dependability with each other.”

Communication – Question 4: How do you hold your players accountable to these values? How do you measure the success of these values?

Coach D believes you can measure dependability and accountability by monitoring grades, attendance and discipline issues. A common saying for Coach D is “be where you need to be, when you need to be there.” There is a penalty on Coach D’s team for not adhering to that saying.

Coach D has even stopped practice to address negative influences. The rules of Coach D's team were based around the core values that were set.

Appendix E

Interview Responses for Coach E

Core Values - Question 1: What are the core values that you communicate to your program?

Coach E stated that their core values are 1. Family, 2. Togetherness, 3. Toughness

Core Values - Question 2: Tell me how you chose these core values? Why?

Coach E said that their core values did not come to the job within them, but rather were created with the new job. Stating, “The program was in disarray and had zero idea how to operate as a Division 2 program.” Each of their three values grew out of the problems the program faced. Since the program was in disarray, they believed in instilling a family atmosphere. Because the program had little fight in them, togetherness was a value that arose from that need. Lastly, Toughness became a core value out of not living up to the D2 standard.

Core Values - Question 3: What role do core values play in your coaching philosophy?

Coach E stated that their core values should “not only pertain to the kids but the coach as well.” Coach E believes that each coach needs to fall back on their core values in hard times which is why it is important to mirror your core values with your coaching philosophy. Coach E also shared that they needed to continually self-reflect and “needs to be more steady as a coach.”

Core Values - Question 4: Did the athletic director ask about your core values and how you would convey them during your interview for this position?

Coach E said that they were not asked about them but had a manual prepared with core values they believed to be important in their previous job. However these core values “were not discussed.”

Communication – Question 1: What strategies do you use to communicate your core values to the program?

Coach E uses theme posters, pages in team binders, and talks about them all the time with the team. Coach E believes that “the coach must relate values to examples from games, practice and life.”

Communication – Question 2: How often do you refer to the core values? How do you model them?

Coach E refers to them every time that they can. Coach E was honest about needing to model them more for the players to get better. “The coach needs to continue to improve modeling the values and continue to hold themselves to a standard.”

Communication – Question 3: Are there specific team activities that reinforce these core values?

Coach E pairs upperclassmen with freshman and has them learn about each other three questions at a time. “That is how they develop a relationship with one another and can start the process of being able to trust each other.” Coach E also believes this is important so that the upperclassmen can convey to the newcomers what was good and bad the year prior year so that they can start to figure out what they can do better.

Communication – Question 4: How do you hold your players accountable to these values? How do you measure the success of these values?

Coach E believes you can hold your players accountable by monitoring two things. “What level are they playing at in practice and games? And how do they carry themselves off the playing field in terms of academics and discipline issues? Coach E says that in terms of measuring the success of your values, “the first month of practice will tell you everything you need to know. Are the players competing well every day and are the upperclassman leading by example for the youngsters?”

Appendix F

Interview Responses for Coach F

Core Values - Question 1: What are the core values that you communicate to your program?

Coach F stated that their core values are 1. Toughness, 2. Finish, 3. Commitment, 4. Accountability

Core Values - Question 2: Tell me how you chose these core values? Why?

Coach F said that they also surveyed the landscape of the team make-up before deciding on their core values. Believed that they needed to find “what was important to impress upon the kids.” They wanted to find what was lacking within the team and they did this by collaborating as a staff.

Core Values - Question 3: What role do core values play in your coaching philosophy?

Coach F stated that core values “must go hand in hand” with the coaching philosophy. Coach F believes that the core values as well as the coaching philosophy must be transparent with the team and that it is “important for a coaches personal values to carry over.”

Core Values - Question 4: Did the athletic director ask about your core values and how you would convey them during your interview for this position?

Coach F said that they were not asked about them but “had a pre-made portfolio with values displayed inside.”

Communication – Question 1: What strategies do you use to communicate your core values to the program?

Coach F displays their core values in the player handbook and discusses the values on a weekly basis. Coach F utilizes a weekly theme that reflects the core values. In each meeting that week the core values will be referenced with examples from practice and games.

Communication – Question 2: How often do you refer to the core values? How do you model them?

Coach F believes in talking about the core values weekly, not daily. “You want to talk about them frequently, but not overkill them.” Coach F believes it is important to tie the core values to a reference and to model the core values in order to live what you preach. Also, Coach F said to “make sure the captains model them as well.”

Communication – Question 3: Are there specific team activities that reinforce these core values?

Coach F brings in guest speakers who can reference the values. Coach F also has the team do activities that are not sport related to develop mental toughness within the team.

Communication – Question 4: How do you hold your players accountable to these values? How do you measure the success of these values?

Coach F says that in order to hold your players accountable to the values you need to “communicate what the values mean, model appropriate behaviors on a daily basis, track grades

and attendance, and hold individual players meetings with the kids bi-annually.” Measuring success of the values comes down to tracking wins and losses, graduation rates and growth as leaders from freshman to senior year for coach F.

Appendix G

Interview Questions with Consent Form

This research study is designed to understand core values of head coaches in athletics and how they are communicated to the program. Participation will require an interview of approximately 10-12 minutes. There are no appreciable risks or benefits from participating in this study. No identifying information will be collected. Participation is *voluntary* and you may stop participating at any time. If you agree to participate, responding to the questions below constitutes your consent. If you have any questions, contact Eric Raisbeck, student researcher at (608) 228-8181, Dr. George Morrow – Professor of Educational Leadership at Winona State University – at 507.285.7131 or the Human Protections Administrator Brett Ayers at 507-457-5519. This project has been reviewed by the WSU Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects.

Interview Questions:

1. Core values
 - a. What are the core values you communicate to your program?
 - b. Tell me how you chose these core values? Why?
 - c. What role do core values play in your coaching philosophy?
 - d. Did the athletic director ask about your core values and how you would convey them during your interview for this position?
 2. Strategies used to communicate the core values
 - a. What strategies do you use to communicate your core values to the program?
 - b. How often do you refer to the core values? How do you model them?
 - c. Are there specific team activities that reinforce these core values?
 - d. How do you hold your players accountable to these values? How do you measure the success of these values?
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