A STUDY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL HEAD COACHES’ AND NON-ADMINISTRATIVE ATHLETIC DIRECTORS’ PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF NON-ADMINISTRATIVE ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

By

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ABSTRACT

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The Role of the Non-Administrative High School Athletic Director 
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The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a difference 
between high school head coaches’ and non-administrative athletic directors’ 
perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors. 

The subjects for this study were all employed by one of the 38 rural public 
school districts in Western Wisconsin. Each subject either held the position of 
head coach or non-administrative athletic director. All 38 athletic directors and 
200 of the 500 head coaches in Western Wisconsin were randomly selected to 
participate in this study. All subjects were provided with a written overview of 
the study, which described what their involvement would entail. Their 
participation was entirely voluntary and all subjects remain anonymous. 

The instrumentation for this study consisted of a questionnaire with ten 
items. Subjects were asked to rate each answer on a scale from one to five (Likert 
Scale). The questionnaire was developed specifically for this study to survey
head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors in areas that they commonly work collaboratively in.

Data was collected during the spring semester of the 1999-2000 school year and analyzed to test the null hypothesis: There will be no difference in the perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors between head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors. A statistical analysis was conducted on the mean scores for each item on the questionnaire between the two groups. The data was compiled using a t-test for independent samples. To determine significance, the probability level was set at the .05 level for each item.

Four of the ten items analyzed supported the null hypothesis: There will be no difference in the perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors between head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors. The items were as follows:

1. Selecting of assistant and lower level coaches
2. Selection of score keeper, statisticians, and other workers
3. Preparation of programs for home contests
4. Sending of roster information to opponents for away contests

Six of the ten items analyzed did not support the null hypothesis, but the alternative hypothesis: There will be a difference in the perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors between head coaches’ and non-administrative athletic directors’.

1. Selecting of officials for all non-conference varsity contests
2. Selecting of officials for all non-varsity contests
3. Acting as first line in the chain of command for parental complaints
4. Scheduling of all non-conference varsity opponents
5. Scheduling of all non-varsity opponents/contests
6. The direction of specific athletic programs (K-12)

The results speak to the perception problem that exists on many issues between non-administrative athletic directors and head coaches. This study benefits head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors by helping each to better understand their role in running the athletic programs at their respective schools.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Athletics (Greek athlos, “contest”) is defined as games or contests, played individually or in teams, involving physical strength, skill, and endurance (Funk & Wagnalls, 1994). In the United States the term is used synonymously with sports. Contests involving physical prowess date from prehistoric times. Early athletics placed a heavy emphasis on simulated combat reflective of the times. As time passed, more non-combative sports were developed. The organization of athletic contests dates back 700-plus years to ancient Greece.

After the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century AD, organized sports declined in popularity until the 11th century, when the joust became a favorite pastime of the English nobility. But it was not until the 19th century that schools and colleges in the United States began building their athletic programs. By the early 1890’s, boys of school age were being exposed to organized sports. But with the rekindling of the Olympic torch in Athens, Greece in 1896 when the Olympics were re-instituted came an explosion of organized sports in America. It was also in 1896 that the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association or WIAA became the country’s first organization charged with directing and controlling sports programs in the public schools of Wisconsin (Otte, 1997). Since that time the organization of high school athletics has been the focus of many such organizations across the country.
At the local level high school athletics are organized by conferences, school boards, and administrators. The introduction of women’s athletics brought about by the passing of Title IX added to the organizational burden of these organizations and also increased the stature of the athletic director. The athletic director is the position most closely associated with managing the school’s athletic program on a day to day basis and is actually an extension of administrative control, even though many athletic directors are not actually licensed administrators. Administrative control varies greatly from school to school. It is regrettable but true that various levels of administrative control did not develop in the secondary schools in the United States in a logical, predesigned fashion (Hixon, 1967, p. 1). Hixon stated… “It was rather a haphazard affair with the schools usually adopting the practices developed by the colleges and universities” (1967, p. 2). This reactive approach to athletic organization at the administrative level has led to debate about the role and function of the athletic director in our high schools.

Fuoss and Troppmann (1977, p. 24) also commented on the perception problem: How the athletic director views his position in terms of duties and responsibilities and how subordinates, associates, superiors, and the public view his position is likely to be vastly different. A concept of the athletic administration may picture the director sitting in a swivel chair, feet on a desk, issuing orders in an authoritative manner. On the other extreme is the concept where the athletic director is expected to do everything. The latter includes lining the athletic fields, picking up towels
in the locker rooms, selling tickets, and handling all such chores and tasks that must be done as part of an interscholastic athletic program.

As an athletic director, the researcher has experienced first hand the problems created by differing perceptions in the role and function of the athletic director. This is most evident in the relationship with the group that most AD’s work closest with, the head coaches of the respective sports. Prior to becoming an athletic director, the researcher had experience as both a head football and head baseball coach. As a coach, the researcher had ideas of what the athletic directors’ responsibilities were. It has been interesting to hear what other head coaches felt the role and responsibilities of the athletic director were. Now, as an athletic director (the researcher is still the head football coach), the researcher has a different notion of what the function of the AD is. Now the researcher has to deal with all of these different notions of what the function of an AD is. Even at a small rural school this means dealing with 13 different head coaches, which means 13 different philosophies with regard to the AD’s role.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this descriptive study is to determine whether there is a difference between high school head coaches’ and non-administrative athletic directors’ perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors. Data will be collected through the use of a questionnaire sent to rural Western Wisconsin school districts during the 1999-2000 school year.
Hypothesis

There will be no significant difference in the perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors between head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors.

Alternative Hypothesis

There will be a significant difference in the perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors between head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors.

Definition of Terms

For clarity of understanding, the following terms used need to be defined.

Non-administrative- positions without official administrative license or authority. A non-administrative athletic director position is usually part-time such as ¼. The remaining ¾ of the non-administrative athletic director’s position is usually filled with teaching assignments which places them in the same bargaining union as head coaches who also teach.

Rural- 9-12 high schools with a population of less than 500 students.

Assumptions

Experience may be a factor in the role perception of new coaches and AD’s versus veteran coaches and AD’s.

Limitations

This study only looks at non-administrative AD’s. In addition, the difference between AD’s and head coaches’ perception will be the focus, not the public perception.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the two forms of athletic director management hierarchy, one with an administrative athletic director and one with a non-administrative athletic director. It will also take a look at the traditional roles and responsibilities of high school head coaches and athletic directors.

Athletic Management Hierarchy

The purpose of this section is to become familiarized with the chain of command in the two forms of athletic management hierarchy for high schools. In situations where schools operate with a non-administrative athletic director head coaches and AD’s are located on the same level (Emery, 1978). Both usually answer to the high school principal. The principal in turn answers to the district administrator, who in turn answers to the local school board. This form is very common in small rural school districts where funding for a full-time administrative athletic director is simply not available and where the number of athletic offerings is limited. In this form the athletic director and the head coaches are often times represented by the same bargaining union. This prevents the athletic director from being directly involved with the evaluation of coaches due to union bylaws. Often times athletic directors in these positions are practicing coaches themselves.
The second form of athletic management hierarchy is where the head coach answers directly to an administrative athletic director, who in turn answers to the principal and so on. Administrative athletic directors are often times trained in athletic administration including the areas of program development, personnel management, business management, and finance, development and utilization of facilities, and a good public relations manner (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1977, p. 63). Administrative athletic directors are common to larger schools where funding is not as big of a factor as it is in small rural schools. Administrative athletic directors assume full responsibility for the overall athletic program and all authority which goes along with it including the evaluation of coaches.

**Roles and Responsibilities of High School Head Coaches**

To many it seems that the role of all head coaches is simple, to win. While this may be the single most important performance standard at the professional level, it is far from healthy at the high school level. And while victories tend to be the central concern of many people who are external to the sport program it is generally accepted that the role and function of a head high school coach goes far beyond wins and losses. Let’s start by looking at the definition of coach. Fuoss and Troppmann define coach as…”a person who instructs or trains performers in the fundamentals and various techniques of a sport” (1981, p. 9). This is coaching in its purest form. If we could create a sterile environment for a coach to work one on one with an athlete, this is what we would see. Reality, however, requires that coaches become much more than
the above definition, especially head coaches. Coaches can probably be best defined by the roles that they are often required to assume. Roles such as disciplinarian, counselor, salesperson, diplomat, psychologist, leader, teacher, and strategist, among others. According to Malina (1996) the role of a head coach is to “maximize the benefits of participation of athletes while minimizing the detrimental effects by effectively teaching the physical skills, rules, and strategies of the game in an orderly and enjoyable environment, appropriately challenge the cardiovascular and muscular systems of athletes through active participation, and teach and model desirable personal, social, and psychological skills” (1996, p. 2).

Unfortunately neither definition provides coaches with a blueprint for success. One is far too narrow the other too broad. This problem exists in part because coaching is neither a science nor an art. It is a hybrid. Coaching is scientific in that a body of knowledge exists that relates to coaching practices. The application of this body of knowledge, however, is through teaching, leading, directing, and coordinating human beings and their activities, which is an art (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1981).

Coaching is highly individualized and what works for one coach in a particular situation may not work for another. There is no one best way to coach. This is why it is so difficult to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of every coach. Each coach must develop a natural style and follow practices that are consistent with one’s own personality and philosophy.

For specific direction coaches must turn to a job description if one exists or to the administration for clear expectations as to what they will be held
accountable for. Job descriptions for high head coaches are rare, for a couple reasons. First, it is impossible to write a job description which would cover every possible scenario which could come up for head coaches. But the primary reason, which was mentioned above, is simply that there is no best way to coach. This does not mean that school boards and administrators give head coaches free reign to coach and run their programs however they please. Contrary to public opinion, seldom does a head coach have the complete autonomy and authority to conduct and administer the sport for which they are responsible and accountable, as they perceive things should be done (Fuoss & Troppmann, 1981, p. 27). Most head coaches are given a list of expectations that they are accountable for and that they will be evaluated upon. This may either take the form of a coaching handbook which outlines the procedures coaches are to follow in certain specific instances or in form of an evaluation form to be complete at the conclusion of each season. Below is a list of areas which many head coaches are commonly held accountable to.

A. Administration

1. Care of equipment
2. Organization of staff
3. Organization of practice
4. Communication with coaches
5. Adherence to district and school philosophy and policy
6. Public Relations
7. Supervision

B. Skill

1. Knowledge of fundamentals
2. Presentation of fundamentals
3. Conditioning
4. Game preparation
5. Prevention and care of injuries including follow up with parents

C. Relationships

1. Enthusiasm
   a. For working with students
   b. For working with staff
   c. For working with academic staff
2. Discipline
   a. Firm but fair
   b. Consistent
3. Communications with players
   a. Individual
   b. As a team

D. Performance

1. Appearance of team on field or floor
2. Execution of team on field or floor
3. Attitude of team on field or floor
4. Conduct of coach during game
E. Training and Experience

1. Knowledge of sport/activity

2. Education for injury treatment or prevention (First Aid Certification)

3. Coaching experience

4. Professional growth

(Mamchak & Mamchak, 1989, p. 96-97)

While these evaluation forms are fairly straight forward and help coaches in terms of understanding accountability they still don’t provide head coaches with clear understanding of all of their roles and responsibilities. Some areas that are not mentioned, but still fall, at least partially, under the head coaches domain include involvement in the budgeting process, scheduling, the selection of assistant coaches, selecting officials, and their role as leader of their specific sports program at all levels K-12. It’s these administrative areas where coaches work with their athletic director or administrator to accomplish goals. The problem is that the head coaches’ involvement in these areas often times is not clearly defined. It is also apparent that many new coaching candidates lack the specific training needed to be effective in these areas. In a high school survey of randomly selected football coaches, ninety percent stated that they were not adequately prepared to handle administrative duties associated with coaching (Horine, 1985). One factor which contributes to this high number is the fact that many states do not require high school head coaches to have any formal coaching certification. This problem is compounded in small schools where there is often a
shortage of qualified coaching candidates in the first place. In fact it is often necessary for small schools to actively recruit coaching candidates in order to staff all coaching positions.

**Roles and Responsibilities of High School Athletic Directors**

As stated above, there is no one best way to coach. This holds true for managing an athletic department as well. AD’s must each develop their own style that fits their individual personality and philosophy, just like head coaches. School districts do, however, often develop a list of duties for the athletic director. Following is an example of the duties of the athletic director for the Owen-Withee (Wisconsin) school district:

**Duties**

A. The Athletic Director will oversee, supervise, direct, and actively promote all boys’ and girls’ athletic programs.

B. The Athletic Director shall be directly responsible to the high school principal.

C. The Athletic Director will organize the interscholastic athletic program for grades seven through twelve.

D. The Athletic Director will coordinate schedule development for all sports.

E. The Athletic Director (in cooperation with the coaches) will schedule the elementary athletic practices and games.
F. The Athletic Director will evaluate the interscholastic athletic program in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association and the Cloverbelt Conference and see that all programs comply with all applicable WIAA and conference rules and regulations.

G. The Athletic Director will determine the need for appropriate personnel to staff the interscholastic programs, assist in recruitment of personnel, and conduct meetings of the coaching staff. The Athletic Director will also be responsible for ensuring that only responsible, capable volunteers are utilized in the athletic programs.

H. The Athletic Director will coordinate the use of the athletic facilities to assure efficient use by the various teams.

I. The Athletic Director will determine facility and equipment needs for all sports, establish procedures for the proper care and maintenance of all facilities equipment, direct the inventory of equipment, and supervise the coaches in their duties relative to the care, maintenance, and inventory of their facilities and equipment. The Athletic Director will also ensure that all participants have appropriate uniforms and equipment.

J. The Athletic Director will prepare the annual budget for the athletic program, and direct the preparation of requisitions for athletic supplies and equipment.
K. The Athletic Director will engage officials approved by the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association for all games and meets.

L. The Athletic Director will direct the verification of eligibility for all students who participate in interscholastic athletics.

M. The Athletic Director will be the official spokesperson for the athletic program and will represent the school district at conference, regional, state, and other meetings as directed by the administration.

N. The Athletic Director will remain current by attending meetings relating to secondary school interscholastic athletic programs.

O. The Athletic Director will maintain all records regarding season performance and coordinate the awarding of all athletic programs honors.

P. The Athletic Director will communicate with administration and other staff matters of importance and mutual concern.

Q. The Athletic Director will develop and communicate procedures for handling of student injuries in a practice, game, or meet.

R. The Athletic Director will check the condition of playing areas; postpone meets (games) when necessary; notify coaches,
officials, opponents; cancel transportation; and assume responsibility for details in rescheduling the event.

S. The Athletic Director will be responsible for the preparation of game programs.

T. The Athletic Director will provide the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association with the proper forms needed for school preparation in all athletic events.

U. The Athletic Director will arrange for the proper management of all Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association and conference tournaments (playoffs) hosted by the school district.

V. The Athletic Director will coordinate publicity for all athletic events.

W. The Athletic Director will be responsible for the implementation of, revision of, and compliance to the school’s athletic code and the school’s coaches’ handbook.

X. The Athletic Director will coordinate the establishment and implementation of new athletic programs.

Y. The Athletic Director will assist the administration in the formal evaluation of coaches.

Z. The Athletic Director will see that all athletic programs are organized and run in a manner consistent with the goals and philosophy of the school board.
AA. The Athletic Director will coordinate any/all school based fundraising endeavors related to the athletic programs.

BB. The Athletic Director will serve as advisor to the letter club.

CC. The Athletic Director will order first aid supplies for the District.

DD. The Athletic Director will serve as liaison between school and The Booster Club.

EE. The Athletic Director will see that officials are paid the day of the event they officiate.

FF. Any other duties as may be assigned by the District Administrator.

While job descriptions such as this for athletic directors provide them with fairly clear understanding of their duties, they do not provide them with a clear understanding of the involvement of the head coaches in many of the above mentioned processes. Often times statements like “coordinate with” or “in cooperation with” are all the AD has to go on. The actual level of involvement of each party is not clearly defined. It’s the perceived level of involvement by each party in these cooperative ventures that is often in question.
CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will describe the research hypothesis, the subjects under study and how they were selected for inclusion in this study. In addition, the instruments being used to collect information will be discussed as to their content, validity, and reliability. Data collection and analysis procedures will then be presented. This chapter will conclude with of the methodological limitations.

Description of Subjects

The subjects for this study are all currently employed by one of the 38 rural school districts in Western Wisconsin. All subjects work for schools aligned with one if the following athletic conferences: Dunn-St. Croix, Cloverbelt, Dairyland, and Middle Border. Each subject either holds the position of head coach or non-administrative athletic director. There are approximately 38 athletic directors and 500 head coaches in Western Wisconsin. Head coaches from both male and female sports are subject to this study.

Sample Selection

Two hundred head coaches were randomly selected from the population and asked to participate in this study. All non-administrative athletic directors were asked to participate in this study. They were given a written overview of this study which described what their involvement would entail.
Instrumentation

The instrumentation for this study consisted of a questionnaire with ten items. Subjects were asked to rate each answer on a scale from one to five (Likert Scale). The survey was developed specifically for this study and can be found in Appendix A. Items for the questionnaire were developed through the study of job descriptions and evaluations forms of head coaches and athletic directors. Items selected were ones in which it was often expected that coaches and athletic directors would work cooperatively on.

Data Collection

Surveys were sent out during the first week in March, 2000. Subjects were given until March 31, 2000 to complete and return the surveys.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the surveys will be used to test the following null and alternative hypothesis:

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in the perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors between head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors.

Alternative Hypothesis: There will be a significant difference in the perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors between head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors.

Responses received from non-administrative athletic directors will be compared to those received from head coaches. A predetermined level of .05 was selected to ensure 95% confidence level in accepting or rejecting the null
hypothesis. Treated as interval data, an independent t-Test was run to determine if the data contained statistical significance when comparing means.

Limitations

Surveys are often viewed as a hassle and are often filled out haphazardly. The response rate from head coaches was fairly low. There may also be a significant difference in the way experienced personnel fill out the survey compared to young/inexperienced personnel. Participants may also be concerned in remaining anonymous. A final limitation is that only coaches and non-administrative athletic directors from Western Wisconsin were included in this study.
CHAPTER 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this descriptive study was to determine whether there is a difference between high school head coaches’ and non-administrative athletic directors’ perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors. The following null hypothesis was tested: There will be no difference in the perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors between head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors.

The subjects were 32 athletic directors and 66 head coaches in Western Wisconsin from one of the following rural athletic conferences: Dunn-St. Croix, Cloverbelt, Dairyland, and Middle Border. These subjects each completed a questionnaire containing 10 items where they rated each item on a scale from 1 to 5 in terms of role and responsibility of a non-administrative athletic director.

1 = no responsibility on the part of the athletic director
2 = little responsibility on the part of the athletic director
3 = moderate responsibility on the part of the athletic director
4 = considerable responsibility on the part of the athletic director
5 = exclusive responsibility on the part of the athletic director

Data Analysis

Since the purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of non-administrative athletic directors to head coaches, a statistical analysis was
conducted on the mean scores for each item on the questionnaire between these
two groups. The following data was compiled using a t-test for independent
samples. To determine significance, the probability level was set at the .05 level
for each item.

Item Number 1

The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was
accepted for item number 1: Selecting of officials for all non-conference varsity
officials. The mean score for the athletic directors (n=32) was 4.94 while it was
4.62 for head coaches (n=66). The probability level was 99.9 % that these results
did not occur by chance. Head coaches scores indicate that they feel that the
selection of non-conference varsity officials should not be made exclusively by
athletic directors, while most athletic directors scores indicated this to be their
exclusive responsibility.

Item Number 2

The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was
accepted for item number 2: Selecting officials for all non-varsity contests. The
mean score for the athletic directors (n=32) was 5.0 while it was 4.68 for head
coaches (n=66). The probability level was 99.9 % that these results did not occur
by chance. Head coaches also indicated that someone other than the AD’s should
have some input in the selection of non-varsity officials, such as at the JV level,
sophomore, and freshman levels. Athletic directors’ scores indicate that they
clearly perceive this to be their exclusive responsibility.
**Item Number 3**

The null hypothesis was not rejected for item number 3: Selecting of assistant and lower level coaches. The mean score for the athletic directors (n=32) was 3.44 while it was 3.05 for head coaches (n=66). The probability level was only 93 % that these results did not occur by chance and therefore was rejected. There seems to be general agreement between athletic directors and head coaches when it comes to selecting assistant and lower level coaches. Both groups scores fell in the moderate level of responsibility on the part of the athletic director.

**Item Number 4**

The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted for item number 4: Act as the first line in the chain of command for parental complaints. The mean score for the athletic directors (n=32) was 4.0 while the mean score was 3.06 for head coaches (n=65). The probability level was 99.9 % that these results did not occur by chance. Athletic directors’ scores indicated that they bear considerable responsibility when it comes to acting as the first line in the chain of command for parental complaints. Head coaches scores, on the other hand, indicated that athletic directors should only have considerable influence in this area.

**Item Number 5**

The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted for item number 5: Scheduling of all non-conference varsity opponents. The mean score for the athletic directors (n=32) was 4.94 while the mean score
was 4.02 for head coaches (n=66). The probability level was 99.9 % that these results did not occur by chance. Athletic directors’ scores indicated that it is almost exclusively their responsibility to schedule non-conference varsity opponents. Head coaches scores indicated that while athletic directors bear considerable responsibility when it comes to scheduling non-conference varsity opponents, they should not have exclusive responsibility in this area.

Item Number 6

The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted for item number 6: Scheduling of all non-varsity opponents/contests. The mean score for the athletic directors (n=32) was 4.88 while the mean score was 4.0 for head coaches (n=66). The probability level was 99.9 % that these results did not occur by chance. Once again athletic directors’ scores indicate that they should have considerable, bordering on exclusive responsibility in this area. Head coaches’ scores reflect their perception that AD’s should have less influence when it comes to scheduling non-varsity opponents/contests.

Item Number 7

The null hypothesis was not rejected for item number 7: Selection of score keepers, statisticians, and other workers. The mean score for the athletic directors (n=32) was 4.47 while the mean score was 4.21 for head coaches (n=66). The probability level that these results did not occur by chance was only 75.3 % and therefore was rejected. Here there seems to be no statistical difference in the perceptions of athletic directors versus head coaches. Both groups scores
indicated that athletic directors should have considerable responsibility when it comes to selecting score keeper, statisticians, and other workers.

**Item Number 8**

The null hypothesis was not rejected for item number 8: Prepare programs for home contests. The mean score for the athletic directors (n=32) was 3.34 while it was 2.78 for head coaches (n=65). The probability level was only 94.3% that these results did not occur by chance and therefore was rejected. Again, we have no statistical evidence to indicate that athletic directors and head coaches disagree on the matter of preparing programs for home contests. Both groups scores indicate that athletic directors bear little to moderate responsibility in this area.

**Item Number 9**

The null hypothesis was not rejected for item number 9: Send roster information to opponents for away contests. The mean score for the athletic directors (n=32) was 3.56 while it was 3.0 for head coaches (n=66). The probability level was only 94.1% that these results did not occur by chance and therefore were rejected. Scores indicate that there is not a statistically significant perception difference in the area of sending roster information to opponents for away contests. Both groups indicated that this is moderately the responsibility of the athletic director.

**Item Number 10**

The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted for item number 10: Direction of specific athletic programs (K-12). The mean
score for the athletic directors (n=32) was 3.84 while it was 3.21 for head coaches (n=66). The probability level was 99% that these scores did not occur by chance. Athletic directors scores indicated that they perceive themselves to have more responsibility of the direction of specific athletic programs than the head coaches’ feel A.D.’s do.

Summary

The data indicates that there is a significant difference in the perceived role and function of non-administrative athletic directors between head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors. Six of the ten items analyzed reflected this perception problem between head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors. For non-administrative athletic directors and head coaches to disagree on sixty percent of the items on the questionnaire is alarming and telling as to the perception problem that exists.
Chapter 5

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter will include a discussion of the results of the study and conclusions. The chapter will conclude with some recommendations for further research.

Discussion

According to the research finding, there was no difference in the perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors between head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors in the areas of:

1. Selecting of assistant and lower level coaches
2. Selection of score keeper, statisticians, and other workers
3. Preparation of programs for home contests
4. Sending of roster information to opponents for away contests

However, there was a difference in the perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors between head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors in the areas of:

1. Selecting of officials for all non-conference varsity contests
2. Selecting of officials for all non-varsity contests
3. Acting as the first line in the chain of command for parental complaints
4. Scheduling of all non-conference varsity opponents
5. Scheduling of all non-varsity opponents/contests
6. The direction of specific athletic programs (K-12)
Conclusions

Although the sample size was small, the results speak to the perception problem that exists on many issues between non-administrative athletic directors and head coaches. Clearly, job descriptions and evaluation standards alone do not adequately address the complex issues that exist in administering athletic programs in today’s high schools. This is an issue that is not unique to athletics. It exists anytime you ask people to work together to complete tasks that do not result in a standard, recognizable end product. While the public may measure the overall success of an athletic program by wins and losses exclusively, those in the business know that it is much more complex than that. Issues like sportsmanship, academic and behavior standards, skill development, off-season work, organization, public relations, and team development are just a few of the areas that successful athletic programs measure themselves in.

Success does not start and end with head coaches and athletic directors. It starts with the personality of the entire community in which the school exists. I don’t limit this to just the parents of athletes, but to all community members. How much value they place on athletics is reflected in how much money they are willing to spend on facilities, how much support they offer to head coaches, and on whom they elect to the school board. The school board members, in turn, set the policies and ultimately the foundation for a successful athletic program. The school board is also the organization charged with selecting and hiring the district administrator and principals.
All administrators in the district must be strong advocates of athletics. If students, staff, board members and community members are sent the same message by all administrators, from the elementary principal(s) to the district administrator, that athletics are important, then you start to create the atmosphere that is vital to success. If any one of the administrators is sending a mixed message, it is a recipe for disaster as far as the athletic program is concerned. I cannot overstate the importance of this, because this is the group, with the most authority, involved in making the day-to-day decisions in the schools. They are responsible for setting high expectations and for ensuring that all involved have the support necessary to succeed. They are also the ones that screen, hire, and evaluate head coaches and non-administrative athletic directors. As I mentioned earlier, it is often necessary to recruit head coaches at small schools. Administrators can make a tremendous impact in this area by hiring teachers that are passionate about coaching as well. Administrators are responsible for budgeting for athletics and appropriating the funds necessary to provide the physical tools necessary for success as well. It sends a strong message to all involved when athletes and coaches are provided with the equipment needed to be the best in the business.

Obviously you need good athletes, but this is an area that those of us in public schools know is beyond our control to a certain extent. We are not like universities, where it is permissible to actively recruit athletes beyond the boundaries of the school district (although I have no doubt that it does occur in some instances and the new open-enrollment policy implemented in Wisconsin
has muddied the water somewhat in this area). However, it still is necessary to effectively recruit athletes from within the school. While this may seem to be the responsibility of the coaching staff, I would argue that they are only part of the equation. It all goes back to atmosphere. Does the community value athletics? Does faculty and staff actively support athletics? Do all coaches, including lower level coaches, have high expectations, yet make athletics fun for kids? Are athletes recognized for excellence? All of these factors and more help to determine the level of participation in high school athletic programs.

A healthy athletic program is like a puzzle; all the right pieces must be put in place in order for it to be complete. Once the puzzle is complete, it must be held firmly together. The real tragedy in any athletic program is to have all of the pieces in place only to have it fall apart. Perhaps no ingredient is more important than that of effective communication. Communication is, in effect, the glue that holds the puzzle together. Communication is the key to clearly understanding the roles and responsibilities of all involved. There has to be open, honest, two-way communication among all parties; community, parents, school board, administration, athletic director, head coaches, assistant coaches, lower level coaches, staff, and students. Good communication promotes growth and constant improvement by helping each group to understand what is expected from them, and what they can expect from others. Each group works together to help the others, holds the others accountable for their actions or in-actions, and is held accountable by the others themselves. Good communication promotes the team effort necessary to produce a quality athletic program.
Poor communication, on the other hand, will result in confusion with regard to roles and responsibilities and will polarize the groups. We are left with individual groups sitting in their departments focusing on their specific interests only. You might still find one or two successful programs within the athletic department, but you will never find a healthy, complete school-wide athletic program under these conditions.

Effective communication can come in many forms. The key is to find an individual form that each party is comfortable with. For the athletic director it may be simply visiting with each head coach as often as possible. For one administrator it may be e-mail, for another it may be a written memo. For coaches it may be a phone call home to parents, or a note to players. The form is not what’s important; it’s simply the fact that it has to exist. In fact, it is a big mistake to mandate a standard form of communication, because you can be assured that not everyone will be comfortable it, and therefore won’t use it. Let each group decide what form(s) to use and they will use it more often.

Recommendations for further research

A couple of suggestions are offered for further research on the perception of the role and function of non-administrative athletic directors’ between head coaches’ and non-administrative athletic directors’.

The first suggestion is to enlist a larger sample. This study was limited to Western Wisconsin. A state, region, or national study would produce more meaningful results.
A final suggestion would be to modify the questionnaire used to allow subjects to indicate exactly who bears the responsibility of certain tasks not rated as the exclusive responsibility of the athletic director. The questionnaire used simply allowed subjects to rate the non-administrative athletic directors perceived role in selected areas, it did not specify who was to fulfill the task if it was not to be completed by the athletic director.
Reference List


http://Owen-Withee.k12.wi.us