

Case Study Summary – Ben Whitney

I interviewed Todd McAtee for my case study. McAtee is the athletic director at Shawnee Mission West High School in Overland Park, Kansas, and has been in that role for five years.

McAtee is a firm believer in servant leadership, and he sees his most important responsibility as helping the coaches at West in any way he can. He also takes his own growth as an athletic director seriously. He is a member of both the KIAAA and NIAAA, attends both organizations' annual conferences each year if time and money permits, and he received his CAA (Certified Athletic Administrator) designation via the NIAAA.

Evaluation of coaches in the first dimension starts during the interview phase. McAtee usually brings in an individual to sit in on each interview who has prior experience coaching the candidate's sport. These individuals' opinions on the candidate are highly regarded, and they help verify whether the candidate actually knows the sport at a high level. Once a candidate is hired on, McAtee encourages and supports coaches to find professional development opportunities to further their first dimension strategies.

At West, coaches are required to undergo CPR training every two years, complete concussion awareness training every year, and all fall sport coaches must complete heat illness training yearly. In terms of second and third dimension strategies, no official training exists; however, McAtee often finds resources to share with coaches such as books, articles, and professional development opportunities. For student-athletes, McAtee and two other head coaches at West teach an Athletic Leadership class that use books from the Jannsen series on athletic leadership.

In terms of my suggestions for the athletic department at West to better meet the needs of all in all three dimensions, I first think specific trainings could be helpful to coaches. For example, McAtee noted that he helps coaches find professional development opportunities to further their first dimension skillset, but I think implementing a specific course or training for every coach when they first join the coaching staff at West would be beneficial, as everyone would start from the same place regardless of their previous experiences. Though McAtee didn't express interest in the 3D Institute's course, implementing the course at a school-wide or even a district-wide level could help coaches both better understand all three dimensions and get all coaches on the same page in terms of strategies and methods to effectively lead their teams. One comment I found interesting was McAtee explaining how the department has no mission statement. I believe crafting a new mission statement, with input from both athletes and coaches, would help foster second dimension factors like team cohesion and goal setting and third dimension factors like identity and values. Though McAtee mentioned this would be difficult due to district and school vision statements already in place, I believe it would be worth the additional effort in the long run.