

Interviewer: Andrew Pals

Interviewee: Al Lammers (Athletic Director at Norwalk High School)

As I look at the athletic department as a whole in the first dimension, Mr. Lammers does a really good job of providing us what we need in order to do our job well. Mr. Lammers frequently will encourage the coaches to get the equipment needed in order to coach our athletes to be successful. Mr. Lammers also talked about providing opportunities to attend our local associations coaching clinics. The activities department will pay for the membership dues for the association as well as sending the entire coaching staff to the coaching clinic. I have always found these to be very valuable. A suggestion I would have for the activities department is to encourage coaches to seek out other clinics that are regional or even on the national stage supplementing their travel, hotel fees or clinic registration within reason. Another suggestion would be to provide a professional day or days in order to go watch a college practice and build relationships with college coaches. Anytime coaches are able to foster relationships with other coaches, especially college coaches, I find it to be valuable for the coach as well as the athletes.

In the second dimension, Mr. Lammers admitted he needs to find more ways to support the athletes in the psychology of the game. Mr. Lammers understands this starts by providing training and resources for the coaches in the athletic department. I believe the Norwalk athletic department has done a good job as I look at the second dimension. Norwalk is the only athletic department in my 20 years and three different coaching jobs that has provided any training in regards to coaching. Mr. Lammers has encouraged the head coaches to take the 3D training and at this point has had two groups of 4-6 head coaches go through the training. This is a great first step to providing professional development for the entire athletic department. The next step in the process would be to have the assistant coaches go through the 3D training.

Finally, the third dimension Mr. Lammers has encouraged all programs to develop a leadership initiative for their program. This has been a point of emphasis the past several years and is included in both our pre-season and postseason meetings. I believe the leadership initiative ties in well with the third dimension. Mr. Lammers also provides a book each year for all head coaches that he feels fits the culture and stretches our learning. One area of growth for the department might be to encourage programs to do community service projects to give back to the community. Another area that would be helpful is to get more training on how to talk to athletes about their self-worth and their identity. Many times, athletes define themselves based on winning and losing and athletics are so much more than winning and losing.