

Reggie Stalzer
3-D Coaching Final

I had the pleasure of interviewing Brad Rose, the Activities Director at Valley High School in West Des Moines, Iowa. Mr. Rose has been the AD at Valley for nearly 13 years with six years previous experience at Fairfield High School in Fairfield, Iowa. At Valley, Mr. Rose is in charge of one of the top athletic programs in the state. Valley routinely competes for the Des Moines Register's All-Sports Championship.

When evaluating Valley athletics through the 3-D Coaching framework I believe there are a lot of strong connections to be made. When looking at the 1st Dimension VHS has a great foundation in building smart, strong, fast, and athletic competitors. Valley has hired good coaches and retained them for a long time. They are well respected in their professions and have excellent track records. Valley also has top notch facilities for competition, as well as a first rate weight facility that has the space and equipment to train their athletes. The only flaw that I have noticed is the football-first focus that permeates Valley Athletics. From the baseball perspective I feel like if a player is not a football player as well they do not feel as welcome in the weight room. I do believe that this is not the issue now that it was five years ago.

Within the 2nd Dimension, I see a lot of great things going on at Valley. My children played sports at Valley and I recognize several ways that Valley nourishes the body and mind of their student athletes. Within the softball program, student athletes often participate in team building exercises. Athletes were encouraged to partner with other grade level athletes to get to know each other better, encourage, and motivate each other. Whether it consisted of competitions within practice or player led meetings outside of practice, the softball teams were usually a close knit group. One of my sons played football for the Tigers. Every week they would have position group meals that players would take turns hosting. We had the opportunity to host skill players once and loved interacting with the players and getting to know them better. I imagine the experience of meeting each others' families helped them know and understand each other better. The football team would also eat a meal together on Thursday evenings before their games on Friday nights. Currently, as a baseball coach for Coach Cooley at Valley, I see first hand how in practice competitions, fun games, and a newly established "Leadership Committee" help further the cohesion of the team. The Leadership Committee is comprised of four players from each class, freshman to senior, to speak to issues from uniforms to disciplinary actions. The committee is a liaison between the coaches and players to establish trust and confidence that we are all on the same team.

When thinking of the 2nd and 3rd Dimensions one weekend stands out in my mind. This weekend is not school affiliated, and is totally voluntary to attend but I feel like it is a game changer for the football program. A team parent (has 3 boys that have been through the football program) is a local religious leader. He puts on a weekend at Camp Dodge where student athletes engage in team building exercises as well as prayer and fellowship. Dads are also encouraged to attend as well as sleep in the barracks with the players. Everyone eats meals together, engage in meaningful discussions, as well as listen to impactful speakers.

Overall, I believe that Valley High School does many of the things within the 3-D framework, but after having coaches receive this valuable training more strides will be made.