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The purpose of this paper is to summarize my interview with Gary Reed, the director of the Gamber Mustangs youth football program. Gary had some background information regarding 3D Coaching because he had attended a few 3Dcoaching sessions offered by our local FCA staff. It was evident that Gary felt his program was already doing several of the things that 3D teaches, even though his program is not intentional about some of them.

I will attempt to analyze the Gamber football program in light of the three dimensions.

With regard to the first dimension, it was clear that Gamber runs an excellent football program. Gary emphasized that his players are taught how to “block and tackle, tackle and block”- prioritizing the fundamentals of the game. He told me that he runs very few plays; he wants his players to be able to do a few things with excellence instead of several things with mediocracy. His discretion with choosing coaches ensures that the players are receiving quality, fundamental, first dimension coaching.

For the second dimension, Gamber football has a certain way of doing things. Several of the characteristics of the program blur the line between the second the third dimensions. One of my favorite things that Gary said is that Gamber football is a community service program where football is the vehicle. The goal is not simply to teach and promote football. The goal is to create and build community, football just happens to be the way to do that. When one understands that the goal of the program is to be a service to the community, second and third dimension strategies naturally emerge. Team cohesion happens because each individual becomes part of the program, part of the community. Gary emphasizes that he measures success by the number of kids that come back the following year. He stresses with his coaches that practice needs to be fun- kids will not come back if they are not enjoying practice.

The third dimension was especially evident when I asked Gary the question, “What do you look for in a coach before you hire him/her?” He immediately responded, “Character”. He told me that he recruits coaches that he knows will be good for the program and good for the kids, regardless of their football knowledge. This sounds as if it hurts the first dimension, but there are veteran coaches on each staff that know the game. Gary tells the new coaches, “You just be you, and I will teach you how to coach football”. Hearing Gary explain this mindset made it clear how focused he was on developing the character of the kids in his program.

As mentioned above, the Gamber football program is a community. This mindset provides the athletes with several third dimension qualities. The players are given identity, encouraged to do acts of kindness, and given purpose by serving those hurting in their community.

In conclusion, Gary and his representation of Gamber football impressed me. It made me want my son to be part of their program. They do many things well, even though they are not necessarily intentional about them. Because of the lack on intentionality, it is likely that some second and third dimension topics go un-addressed. My recommendation to the program would be to look at all the qualities of the second and third dimension, and then identify specific ways to target those qualities. For example, Gary may have a goal of increasing numbers each year, and players may have goals for a certain Win/Loss record, but it could be powerful to have the athletes journal and share their goals with parents and teammates. Goal setting could tie into the third dimension by setting goals with regard to community service. It was encouraging to hear of a program that seems to be doing things the right way.