Interview with retired Northwestern College Athletic Director, Barry Brandt. December 2020.

Barry had been the athletic director at Northwestern College, a small NAIA college in Orange City, Iowa for around 20 years before retiring several years ago. Barry was an active leader in the GPAC Conference as well as the NAIA.

One of Barry’s strengths was his consistent pursuit of helping student-athletes grow into solid Christian citizens.

The number one strength of the NWC athletic department would certainly center around quality people. They search diligently for the right person/coach who is a good fit for NW’s mission statement. Additionally, they pursue athletes who fit the mission statement but if they are not a perfect fit (many are not), it is ok, because they work very hard to help young people grow to be prepared for life.

Another strength that Barry kept talking about was that all coaches have an open door policy in regards to their offices and their time. Coaches strongly encourage athletes to hang around the coaches office area in the building that is attached to the main gym. During those visits they talk about anything and everything that the athletes want to talk about. Also many conversations about the academic side of school. During that time, the coaches continually try to point the athletes in the right direction. This is done without lecturing but primarily by getting the athletes to reflect.

The main weakness that I see is that there is no set program for all coaches to follow, not only individually but also no set program for all sports/activities to be a part of. I believe there is a ton of collaboration between coaching staffs so in a round about way, they probably do many of the same things that an organized program would do.

One other weakness might be that some of the less visible sports have coaches who coach at NW but they have a different job or career away from campus. Since these coaches have very limited time to be on campus, they are not always included in some of that important collaboration.

Based on the information that I gained in the interview, I believe that NWC does a tremendous job of developing character, so I do not want to be critical at all. However, as mentioned above, perhaps it would be good to have a unified program that all activities follow. It should be noted that I interviewed a retired AD and do not know if there currently is a program that they follow. The NAIA offers Character Driven Coaching online so I am sure that many of the coaches use or have used that program.