

# **DEVELOPING YOUR PROGRAM'S DNA**

**ROB HERRINGER - ELKHORN SOCCER CLUB**



# ROB HERRINGER

- Born in Omaha, Nebraska
- Bellevue Soccer Club
- Omaha Gladiator Soccer Club (10 years)
- Bellevue East High School (c/o 1996)
- Benedictine College (BA and MEA- 2000 and 2004)

# PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Leavenworth High School (2000-2005)**
  - 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts Instructor
  - Head Boys' & Girls' Coach
  - Local club coach
- **Kansas Youth Soccer Director of Coaching (2005-2007)**
  - Director of Boys' Olympic Development Program
  - Boys' and Girls' State ODP Staff Coach
  - Region II Boys' ODP Staff
- **Benedictine College (2005-2015)**
  - Assistant Women's Coach and Head Men's Coach
  - Bus driver, travel agent, nutritionist, sport scientist, goalkeeper coach, psychologist...magician

# PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **NSCAA National Staff** (2002-present)
  - State Technical Coordinator
  - Regional Director
  - Level 1-Premier Diploma courses
- **Co-Owner- Coerver® Great Plains States**  
(2014-present)
  - [coervergps.com](http://coervergps.com)

# COACHING EDUCATION

- **Licenses/Diplomas**

- USSF “A” License
- NSCAA Master Coach Diploma
- USYSA National Youth License
- NSCAA Level 3 Goalkeeping Diploma
- Coerver® Youth Diploma

- **International Studies**

- English Professional/Youth Academies
  - Manchester United, Chelsea, Everton, Liverpool, Fulham, Crewe Alexandra, English FA
- Scottish Professional/Youth Academies
  - Glasgow Celtic, Glasgow Rangers, Scottish FA
- KNVB (The Netherlands)

# CURRENT ROLE

- Executive Director of the Elkhorn Soccer Club
- Second-largest club in the state with nearly 2,000 registered players
- Assist with:
  - Club philosophy and organization
  - Curriculum research and development
  - Coach education
  - Parent education
  - Player development and team training
  - Camps
  - Business management

# PRESENTATION GOALS

- Share ideas for coaching and leadership that have worked in a variety of situations
- Provide a basic outline/process for developing your own “DNA” for your program
- Get you thinking about your program and ways to improve
- Make it interactive and worth your time

# WHAT DOES “DNA” MEAN?

- Formal Definition: “The fundamental and distinctive characteristics or qualities of someone or something...”
- Athletic: How you define your program and its culture
  - Culture: the attitudes and behavior characteristics of a particular social group
  - Who we are, what we stand for and why we exist...our design
  - “The way we do things around here.”
  - It flows through every individual in the organization



# WHAT DOES “DNA” MEAN?

- Culture: the attitudes and behavior characteristics of a particular social group
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# STEP 1: PEOPLE FIRST

- People are our most important assets!
- People who compliment one another and work together to build something functional and special
  - Coaching and support staff
- Create a positive learning environment to help mentor and develop these important people
- Each individual, regardless of title, should be invited to contribute solutions to challenges
- Good people make good coaches, administrators...representatives of your program

# COACHES

- Character
- Thirst for knowledge
  - Always sharpening the saw
  - Willing to be mentored and learn from others
  - “The most important thing about education is appetite.” - *Churchill*
- Genuine care for others and want to help them reach their goals
  - True teachers of the game who understand child and player development

# COACHES

- Ability to communicate with everyone in the club
- Player/child development is their primary goal
- Organized, responsible, loyal

# ADMINISTRATORS

- Character
- Care for total player/child development
- Always have the best interests of the children in mind when making decisions
- \*Seek advice/guidance from others who know more
- Willingness to work with others- open-minded
- Strong communicators
- A “can do” attitude
- Have the courage to hold people accountable

# FAMILIES

- Must be involved in the process but have realistic expectations
- Consistently demonstrate the values of your program
- Parents should be your biggest advocates!
- Allow children to develop at their own pace
- Support club philosophy at home
- Support healthy lifestyles
  - Sleep, nutrition, curfews...
- How do you get the families involved in your program?

# PLAYERS

- **"That's a ... kid."**
- Character
- Attitude
- Work ethic
- Coach-ability
- "Warriors" - T.C.U.P.



# COMMUNITY LEADERS/EXPERTS

- Doctors
  - Physical Therapists
  - Personal Trainers
  - Legal experts
  - Marketing/Business
  - Accountants
- 
- How can you enlist the help of these professionals?



# GOOD TO GREAT

BY JIM COLLINS

“If we spend the vast majority of our time with people we love and respect- people we really enjoy being on the bus with and who will never disappoint us- then we will almost certainly have a great life, no matter where the bus goes.”

## STEP 2: DEVELOPING A SHARED VISION AND MISSION

### Vision Statements:

1. “The [NAME] will create and maintain a well-known, first-class, professional environment where student-athletes are consistently challenged to seek excellence in all aspects of their lives.”
2. “Developing a Culture of Excellence”

# THE MISSION

- “The Elkhorn Soccer Club is a leader in the community providing all players the opportunity to play competitive or developmental soccer; players will achieve a level of play commensurate with their ability, potential and interest.”
- “It is a mistake to look too far ahead. Only one link in the chain of destiny can be handled at a time.” -Churchill

# STEP #3: FURTHER DEFINING YOUR PROGRAM

- Club/Program Philosophy
  - This is what is important to us.
- Core Values
  - “Pillars” of your program
- “Culture Code”
  - Shared code of ethics
- Credo
  - A short statement that can be easily remembered and guides daily actions

# FURTHER DEFINING YOUR PROGRAM

- Standards and expectations
- Curriculum and education
  - This is how we teach.
  - This is our plan for total player/person development
- How will you define success?

# STEP 4: LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

- Establishing and developing leaders within the program
  - Players
  - Staff

# STEP 5: COMMUNICATION

- How do you get your message out to your people?
  - “Town hall” meetings
  - Website and social media
  - Informal or formal meetings/gatherings
  - Regular staff and player meetings
  - Leadership council

# STEP 6: TRADITION AND LEAVING A LEGACY

- The tradition
  - Produce amazing, well-rounded young people
  - Respect the past, create a brighter future
- The legacy
  - How do we want to be remembered?
  - Always leave it better than how we found it



# STEP 7: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- The community
  - What are we doing to make our community better?
  - How can we use our position and resources to help others?
  - How are we promoting the game of soccer?
  - Everyone involved should be positive role models and ambassadors of the game.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

- Must have the right people first!
- “Developing a Culture of Excellence” is an on-going process.
- It will take time and a tremendous amount of teamwork in order to create the environment we desire.
- Always seek ways to improve- never settle for anything less than the best- ***Nil Satis, Nisi Optimum***
- “Excellence” is extremely difficult to achieve, but strive for it on a daily basis.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

- Our ultimate goal should be to have a lasting impact on the players and families that participate in our programs.
- Hold firm to our beliefs and philosophy
- Establish and maintain high standards
- Have FUN! Enjoy our coaching and our work within the program.
- Never take ourselves too seriously

# RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Legacy- James Kerr
- Sacred Hoops- Phil Jackson
- The Miracle of St. Anthony- Aaron Wojnarowski
- Winning!- Clive Woodward
- Good to Great- Jim Collins
- Quiet Strength- Tony Dungy
- More Than Winning- Tom Osbourne
- Teambuilding- Rinus Michels
- Leading- Sir Alex Ferguson
- Soccer Tough- Dan Abrahams



# Case Study



# Phase I Goals

1. Establish philosophy, mission, core values and expectations
2. Curriculum development
3. Coaching education
4. Building relationships and communication
5. Parent education
6. Year-round programming

# ESTABLISHING A CLUB PHILOSOPHY

- **“DEVELOPING THE PERSON; DEVELOPING THE PLAYER”**
- **DEVELOPING THE PERSON:** We are determined to have a positive influence on the development of every child and inspire them to seek excellence in all aspects of their lives.
- **DEVELOPING THE PLAYER:** Our goal is to develop skilled, confident and creative players who have the ability, work ethic and intelligence to solve any problem the game presents.

# “CULTURE CODE”

- Through collaboration with coaching staff
- Example:
  - We will prioritize a culture of sharing ideas and best practices to elevate each other as people and coaches.
  - We will demonstrate courtesy and respect towards everyone involved in the game. We will develop a culture of excellence by holding ourselves to our own high standards.
  - We will be open, transparent and frequent communicators.
  - We will always represent the club in a positive and professional manner.



# CORE VALUES (IN PROGRESS)

- 30 different responses when starting the process
- Currently:
  - Integrity
  - Commitment
  - Respect
  - *Development*

# CLUB CREDO

- ***NIL SATIS, NISI OPTIMUM***  
(Nothing but the best will do)
- Forward, always forward...
- Philosophy, core values, credo, curriculum...all part of "THE ELKHORN WAY"

# COACHING EXPECTATIONS

## **Organization and Professionalism**

- Planning (lesson and game plans)
- Execution
- Behavior
- Communication
- Reflection and learning

# PLAYING PHILOSOPHY

- **“Style of No Style”**
  - Various tactics and systems of play
    - No “club-wide” system of play for 11v11
    - Not defined by one way of playing
  - Clever and courageous problem-solvers
  - Players and coaches can adapt to any situation
  - Age and developmentally appropriate
  - “Armies of one” who can fit into any style or shape

- “If God had wanted us to play football in the clouds, he’d have put grass up there.” -Brian Clough
- “Be yourselves. You need to dig into your own DNA. I hate tiki-taka. Tiki-taka means passing the ball for the sake of it, with no clear intention. And it’s pointless.”  
- Pep Guardiola



# CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT (PHASE I)

- "The Elkhorn Way"
- Coerver® Partner Club resources
- Implement ideas from U.K. youth academy visits

# COACHING EDUCATION

- Understanding child and player development
- Training session planning and execution
- Training expectations
- Self, peer and player evaluations
- Communication
- Coaching journals (“Journalized” app or other methods)
- Official coaching education courses- thirst for knowledge



# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- Creating and maintaining a family atmosphere
- Know and care about one another
- Facebook/Twitter/Tumblr





# COMMUNICATION

- Attend staff training sessions
- Attend coaching education opportunities
- Work with one another to design and execute excellent training opportunities for our players
- Share ideas in a variety of ways- talk about it- collaborate!



# PARENT EDUCATION

- Personal communication
  - Method- website, social media, etc.
  - Frequency
- Club-initiated opportunities and methods

# INITIAL GOALS

1. Establish basic philosophy, expectations, core values and build relationships
2. Observe and assess players and coaches through coaching education, team training and camp opportunities
3. Initiate beginning stages of curriculum development, especially at U6-U14
4. Establish leadership roles within the coaching staff
5. Possible additions to coaching staff
6. Plant the seeds for the future

- This is our opportunity to do things the right way and to the very best of our ability.
- We can set the example for how a club should do things for the overall benefit of the children involved in the program, regardless of what others choose to do and how they go about doing it.



# PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY



This bridge will only take you halfway there  
To those mysterious lands you long to see:  
Through gypsy camps and swirling Arab fairs  
And moonlit woods where unicorns run free.  
So come and walk awhile with me and share  
The twisting trails and wondrous worlds I've  
known.

But this bridge will only take you halfway  
there-

The last few steps you'll have to take alone.

*-Shel Silverstein*

“A society grows  
great when old  
men plant trees  
they will never  
see.”  
-Greek proverb





# QUESTIONS

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