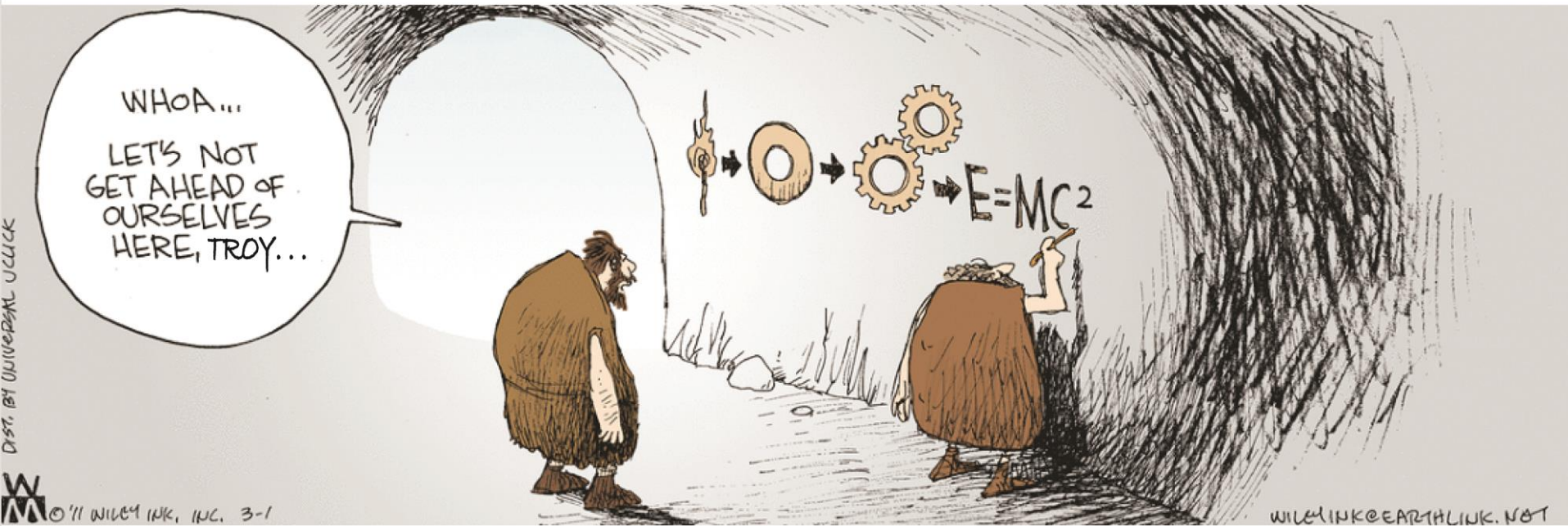


2023 Nebraska Coaches Association Multi-Sports Clinic



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**“If You’re Not Having Fun, What’s
the Point of Playing?”**

Lessons Learned from
Student-Athletes

Listening to Students



Presentation Agenda

1. Athletes' best and worst experiences in HS Sports
2. Applying these lessons to administering HS sports
3. Take-home messages for coaches and ADs
4. Concluding thoughts

Athletes' Best Experiences in High School Sports

- ❖ I loved my coach
- ❖ I loved my teammates
- ❖ I loved playing
- ❖ I loved winning

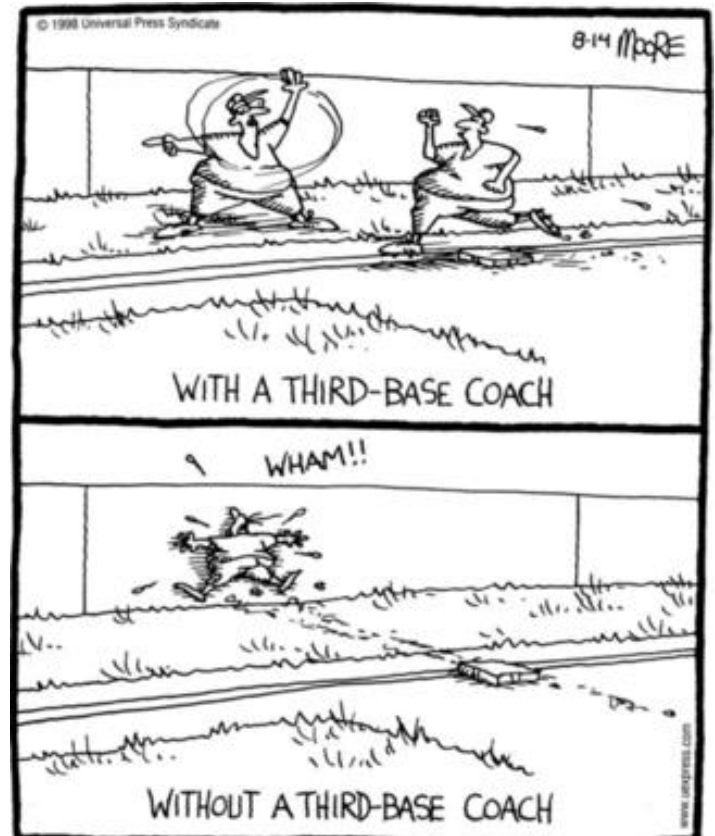
Athletes' Worst Experiences in High School Sports

- ❖ Problems with coaching
- ❖ Problems with team
- ❖ Problems with playing
- ❖ Problems with losing

I loved my coach

“He taught me so much that I probably wouldn’t have learned from anyone else about the game.”

- ❖ A great coach
- ❖ We had a great relationship



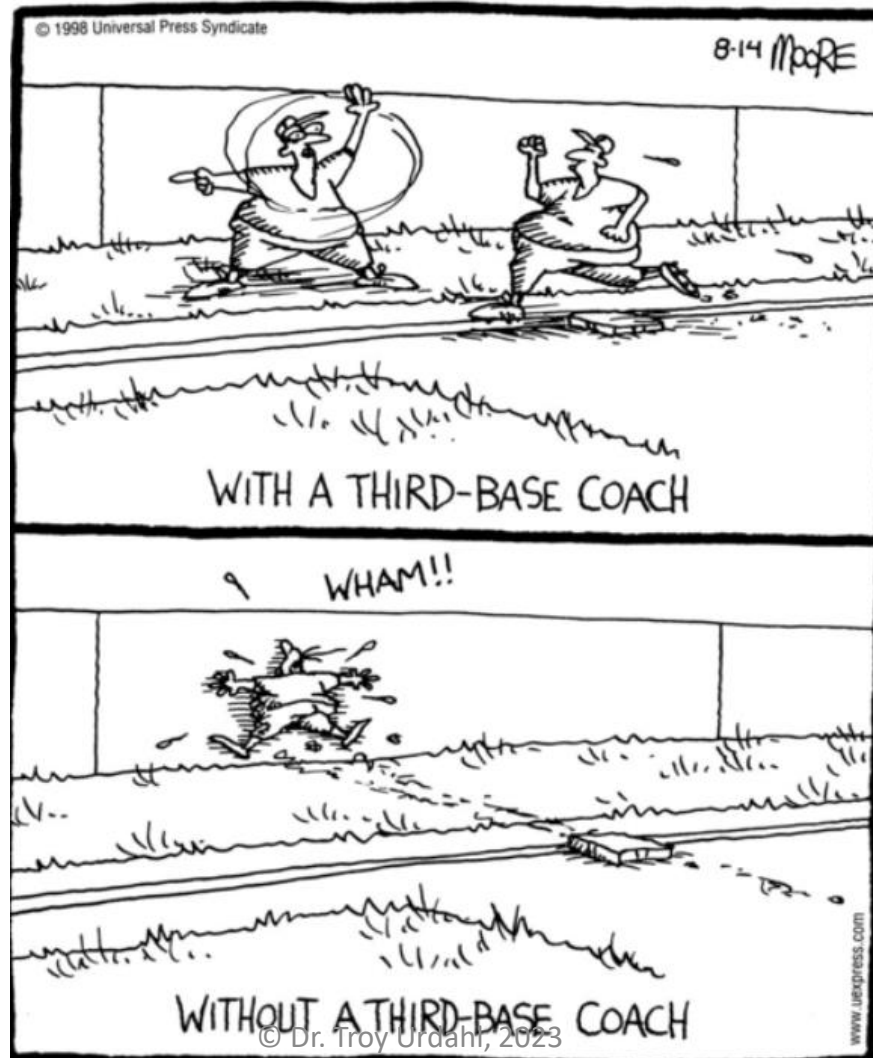
Problems with coaching

"If she treats me like this again I'm not going to make it through another season."

- ❖ Bad coaching
- ❖ Poor communication
- ❖ Poor relationships with athletes



Train & Retain Transformational Coaches



Professional development focused on learning *and* relationship development



“Action Expresses Priorities”

Schedule C Competitive and Performance Payscale

	Points Earned			
Category	1	2	3	4
Paid Staff	1-2	3	4	5+
Roster size	1-20	21-35	36-50	51+
# of Levels	X	1	co-ed / co-op	3+
# of Weeks	11	12-13	14-15	16+
# of Contests	9-11	12-14	15-17	18+
Longevity	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	20+ years
	1	1	1	0.5 / 1
Responsibility	Uniforms and Equipment	Event Staffing	Facility set-up / tear-down	Safety
Visibility & Communication (1 point per)	Parent group and fundraising	Feeder Program	Summer Waiver	Summer Waiver competitions
Professional Learning (up to 3 pts)	Partial Meets	Fully Meets	Goals meetings	Van driver training (0.5)
Training and Service Requirements (up to 4 pts)	District only	District and MSHSL or other required	Staff Member	Service project (0.5)
	0.5	1	1.5	2
Postseason competition - # of Weeks	1	2	3	4

What is your "WHY" or transformational coaching purpose?

What are three goals for you to support your purpose this year?

I loved my teammates

“When we’re out playing football we’re all like a family, like a group of brothers.”

- ❖ Spending time together
- ❖ The relationships

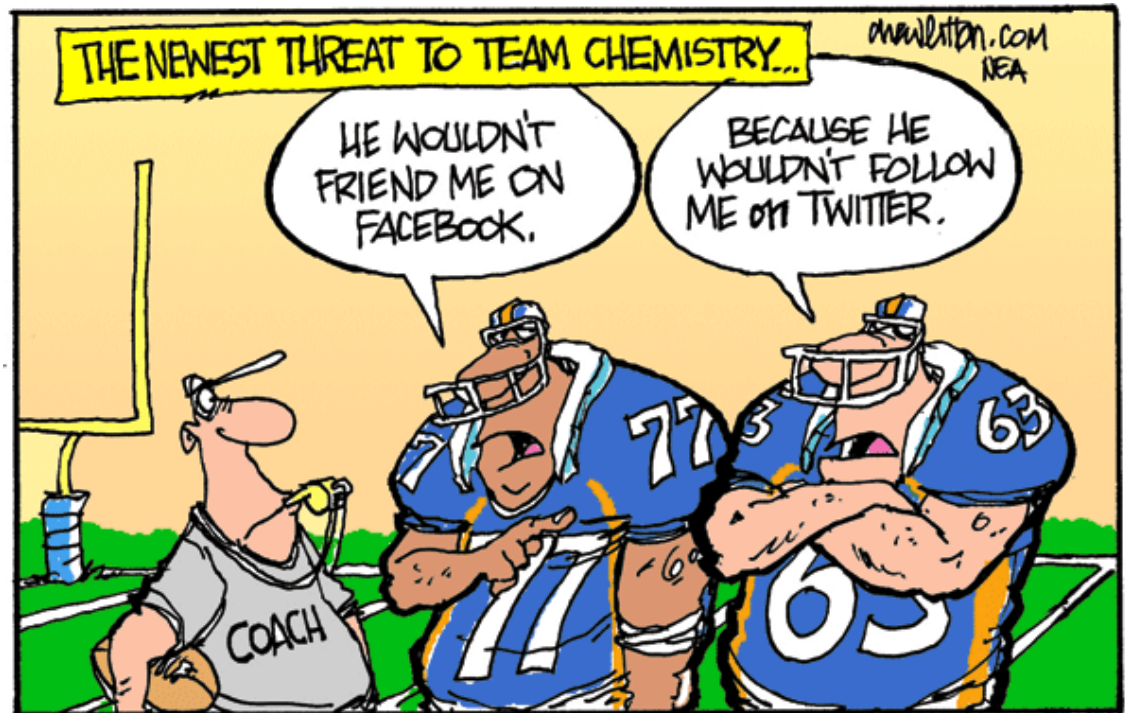


“Hey, don’t get me wrong. Hank is a great bowling partner, but I always get the feeling he’s one beer away from just hauling off and devouring me.”

Problems with team

“We wouldn’t even say “Hi” to each other off the court even like you had to be with them for two hours every day and it was just terrible. No one got along.”

- ❖ Team drama
- ❖ Relationships with teammates
- ❖ Teammates’ commitment to the team



Team Bonding & Time Together



"I'm sorry, but Fred isn't available. He's spending a few days in the penalty box for not being a good team player. May I help you?"

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Intentional Time Spent Together



I loved playing

“I just had the biggest grin on my face ever and I just couldn’t help but smile because the mood was just perfect.”

- ❖ The excitement
- ❖ Performing well
- ❖ It felt great
- ❖ Having fun
- ❖ Improving



Problems with playing

“I just felt helpless, like I couldn’t do anything to help out my team. And, I don’t know, it was just horrible.”

- ❖ Not getting to play
- ❖ Playing wasn’t fun
- ❖ Difficult changes



We are Teaching and Learning!



"You took a hard blow to the head. I'll tell coach you're OK to go back in the game if you can answer these three simple questions correctly."

We are Teaching and Learning!



"You took a hard blow to the head. I'll tell coach you're OK to go back in the game if you can answer these three simple questions correctly."

Weekly Lessons

The Pony in the Dung Heap¹

"Both optimists and pessimists contribute to society. The optimist invents the aeroplane, the pessimist the parachute." – George Bernard Shaw



President Reagan loved to tell a story about two young twin boys. The boys were alike in every way but one. One was a hope-filled optimist who only ever saw the bright side of life. The other was a dark pessimist, who only ever saw the down side in every situation.

On the twins' birthday, the parents gave the pessimist a room filled with brand-new toys. But when the parents went to see him in his room, the boy was crying. "What's the matter?" his parents asked. "Don't you want to play with the toys?" The boy told his parents he was afraid if he played with any of the new toys they might break.

Unlike his brother, the other twin who saw the world in an optimistic light received nothing but an enormous pile of manure for his birthday. When his parents went to check on him and his gift, they found him digging with delight; scoop after scoop of manure shoveled with his bare hands went flying into the air. "What are you doing?" the parents asked, "With all this manure," the little boy replied with excitement, "there must be a pony in here somewhere!"

"In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility." - First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt

[Ask] Do you believe being an optimist or pessimist can lead to greater happiness and success? How so?

Is being optimistic or pessimistic a choice we can make and is this something we can change in ourselves?

Who would you rather surround yourself with – optimists or pessimists?

Does optimism assist or inhibit individual and / or team performance? Why or why not –and how?

What actions, thoughts, or steps can you take to live a life with a more positive outlook and less of a cynic and downer?

¹ A product of the SAVHS Athletics Department, contact Troy Urdahl at prov@insideinitiative.org

I loved winning

“We just kept rolling and just kept winning and winning and winning and ... no one could stop us and we just felt like we were like the top.”

- ❖ Reactions to winning
- ❖ The way we won



**“... Super Bowl? NBA? World Series?
Stanley Cup? World Cup? ... You have no
championship ring of any kind??”**

Problems with losing

“You wish you just had a few more minutes to just go back out there and in some sense sometimes you regret not going all-out on the floor when you had the time.”

- ❖ The way they lost
- ❖ Reactions to losing



“Listen up! Diplomacy has failed and sanctions have had no effect ... We have no choice but to play the game.”

“If I lion could talk, we could not understand him.”



*Instead of stalking its
prey, the lion unsuccessfully tried talking.*

Student Exit Interviews



Student-Athlete Exit Interview

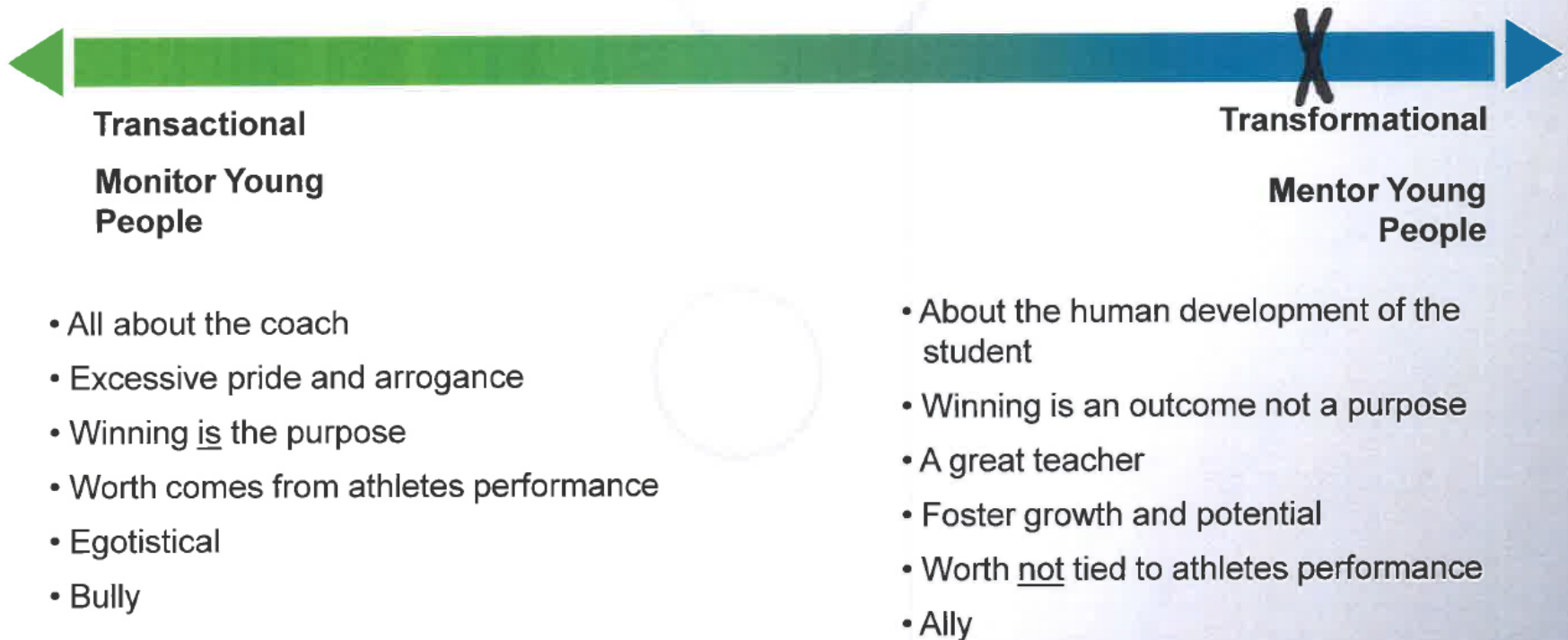
Did you have fun?

Did you get better at something you enjoy doing?

Do you feel your participation made you a better person, not just a better athlete / performer?

Coaching Continuum

Place your coach on this continuum?



Take Home Messages

Four lessons to improve coaching and athletes' experiences

Take Home Messages

1. Practice intentional communication



Take Home Messages

2. Capture learning opportunities



**"Let's not call it a 'career-ending' injury.
Let's call it a 'character-building' injury."**

Take Home Messages

3. *Promote positive team relationships*



Take Home Messages

4. *Promote fun*



Chase the Influence



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Concluding Thoughts

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