



OSAA Equity and Diversity Newsletter

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 4

JANUARY 4, 2021

OSAA Partners with Rise to Win

RISE hosted an interactive 90-minute workshop for Oregon School Activities Association athletics directors on November 18 focused on understanding identities. There will be two more workshops hosted by RISE over the next few months. The workshops are aimed at introducing participants to tools that can help them to be leaders in addressing matters of racism, prejudice, diversity and inclusion.

- Perspective Taking: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 2-3:30pm » [Registration form](#)
- Sports as a Vehicle for Change: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 2-3:30pm » [Registration form](#)



OSAA Equity Training Update

The OSAA Racial Equity Training has been gaining in popularity amongst districts across Oregon. As of January 4, 2021, 514 people have participated in the training. Some schools and school districts are committed to having their coaches participate in the training, which can be seen on the List of Training Online Course Completions link through <https://www.osaa.org/equity/training-resources>.

You can also find the links to other resources and the OSAA Foundation Equity Grant Application.

[Grant Application](#)

The OSAA Foundation Board has established an Equity and Diversity Fund that schools can apply for to support their efforts. From literature, to guest speakers, to additional training beyond what's provided by the OSAA – the OSAA Foundation is looking for innovative ideas from schools about the engagement of Equity and Diversity training with their students, their staff and their communities.



S.T.A.R. MISSION STATEMENT

To create a safe, welcoming and validating environment in Oregon schools by specifically disrupting racism and combating discrimination, so EVERY student can thrive as they are.

COACHES: SIX REASONS (AND MORE!) TO DISCUSS ANTI-RACISM WITH YOUR TEAM

PCA Voices By: Jack Bowen July 13, 2020 (Excerpt)

For the first two weeks of my own team's Summer Season, we devoted the first half hour of our team meetings and training sessions to the topic of racial injustice. I shared with them that it felt uncomfortable, I was in no way to be considered an expert, and that we would do this together. Granted, I did *a lot* of reading the week leading up to our team's Day One, not so much so I could prepare something, but so I could get an understanding of where I was personally, and what those who'd been thinking deeply about this topic for a long time had to say in their reflections.

Following that intro, I started with a question: "How are you all feeling about this?" I wanted this to feel like a discussion, not a lecture.

It was silent. And, as they know, I find value in silence. I teach Philosophy and the silence following a comment or question only provides time for students to actually think and digest, versus feeling the pressure to quickly react and blurt out. Because deeply philosophical, introspective issues like these take time to truly ponder.

What followed, for those four days, was a rich, honest conversation with players of varying ages and backgrounds, sharing together, all in an attempt to grow personally, and as a team.

Here are six benefits available to coaches as they consider discussing this topic with their athletes:

1. **Justice:** This is the obvious one. This issue is hugely important for our current culture, for the wellbeing not just of minority races, but for everyone. Justice is—or, at least, should be—an agreed-upon cornerstone of society on what our country is established. Clearly, deeper reflection and self-awareness surrounding this issue needs to be done. Coaches have the unique opportunity to provide their athletes with the gift of a safe haven for introspection and discussion on such a weighty and important issue.
2. **Athlete Self-Awareness:** The issue of racism, anti-racism, implicit bias, and all other related issues need to be addressed by adolescents as a part of their education and growth. And, yet, very few settings provide a venue for thoughtful, intellectually and emotionally honest, vulnerable conversation. Time spent on this instead of a few additional hours on their sport will yield considerably greater, more profound results.
3. **Team Culture:** These conversations set the culture for a team. Last year, our team focused on vulnerability: we read about, watched videos of, and discussed the topic, reflecting on it as a team, and came out of that with a considerably richer team culture. Likewise here: in discussing the difficult topic of racism in a serious manner, coaches create a culture in which anti-racism is a cornerstone, and inclusivity and vulnerability become the norm.
4. **Align with Mission and Values:** Every institution has a set of values and a mission statement, either implicit or, ideally, explicitly stated. The Statement at Menlo School, where I coach, includes the commitment to, "Empower students to... become ethical, responsible, and engaged members of ever-wider communities." Our club has a service component built into it which aims to achieve this exact goal. And now, we have a chance as a team to truly embrace this charge and foundational aspect of our school: in a way, to *not* do this would be to fail to live up to our own school's Mission Statement.
5. **A Foundation of Trust:** Good teams are based on trust. So, to even get a conversation of this importance off the ground, that foundation must be in place. And, as the conversation develops, the trust increases. In our conversation as a team, after the first two comments by Varsity members, the third comment came from an incoming freshman—the culture we had created made it such that a freshman felt equally welcomed and trusted to share his thoughts on the topic. I can tell you already, because of that, this team will be good: and it will be a great place to spend countless hours over the course of the upcoming season.
6. **Signaling:** Players recognize how precious training minutes are to coaches. So, it's one thing to send an email to your team or to say at the beginning of a practice suggesting you think this topic is important (and, if that's all you do, then that is considerably better than nothing). But when a coach takes some of those valued minutes and devotes them to some topic not related to her sport, the athletes receive the message loud and clear: this is very important.

Full article can be found through this [link](#).

As Students Return to Sports, Sportsmanship Must Be Emphasized

***By: Dr. Karissa Niehoff, December 10, 2020
(Excerpt)***

Every now and then, an event occurs that serves as a wake-up call and reminds us that we have some work left to accomplish. We are aware of two such events recently that were rather disturbing, and the issues behind those events need our full attention. Understandably, school leaders have been focused on simply getting high school athletics programs restarted – or rallying teams on Zoom calls in some parts of the country until restarts are possible. However, once those programs are up and running, the core messages of education-based activities must take center stage.

First, we believe most student participants who have been able to return to competition are grateful for the opportunity simply to be playing sports or participating in performing arts. We have heard of many instances of students going the extra mile to help others, or teams involved in community service projects. Even with reduced seasons and stringent mitigation measures in place, there have been expressions of thanks for the chance to return to the field, gym or stage.

Students, coaches and athletic directors have their hands full trying to meet COVID-19 requirements on a weekly basis, which has certainly made for a stressful environment in schools nationwide. However, those core values of education-based athletics and performing arts such as sportsmanship and respect must continue to be emphasized.

The first event occurred the day after Thanksgiving when race-related friction led to a brawl at the conclusion of a football playoff game between two Florida schools. Disciplinary action has been taken by the Florida High School Athletic Association, but the fact that another racially motivated incident occurred in high school sports is disappointing.

High school sports and activities exist to lift people up, not demean or tear people down. The goal is to treat everyone equally, treat each other with respect, regardless of the color of one's skin – the very fundamentals of high school sports and activities in our nation's schools where all genders, all races, all religions work together to accomplish a goal. Obviously, we still have work to do.

In another event last week in one of the more blatant displays of unsportsmanlike conduct in recent memory, a player from Edinburg (Texas) High School, running full steam from the sideline, bowled over the referee after the official had ejected the player for two consecutive unsportsmanlike behavior penalties.

While the player was escorted from the stadium by police and charged, and the Edinburg school district removed the team from the Texas University Interscholastic League (UIL) playoffs and denounced the player's actions, the video went viral. This was a bad and ugly scene.

This absolutely is not what education-based high school sports is about, but it shows what can happen when the intensity of the sport supersedes having fun and working together as a team. This happens when an individual is more concerned about himself than the team. There are several non-negotiables as a high school sports participant, and assaulting an official is at the top of that list.

Full Article can be found through this [link](#).



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