

Go Longhorns!

Last week I reported on Abilene High School sports activities and several high school coaches shared their thoughts on the importance of these types of extra-curricular programs.

This week, as promised, I will again take a look at additional activities that complement the school's academic curriculum, enhance student's educational experiences and help them gain leadership and life skills. Following in the sports theme, I've asked several Abilene Middle School coaches to provide their perspective on the benefits of interscholastic sports activities for sixth through eighth graders.

AMS wrestling coach, George Havice, had this to say, "I've had the great opportunity to coach and teach middle school students for almost 30 years. I firmly believe participation in sports builds self-esteem and motivates students to excel academically."

Mark Willey, AMS football coach said, "Football is a great game and a good escape for many students. We try to place importance on hard work, discipline, and teamwork. We discuss how to act on the playing field and try to get the student athletes to understand the difference between on the field and off the field actions. Athletics is also a great way to learn about adversity. Just like in life, things do not always go as planned so student athletes must learn to overcome obstacles and react in a positive manner. They also learn that hard work and perseverance can bring success."

AMS 8th grade volleyball coach, Jade Koch, relates the relationship of athletics to academics, "Teamwork is a huge commonality between athletics and students in an academic setting. It involves individuals, each born with diverse gifts and strengths, working together to reach a goal (i.e. learning a new concept or winning a game). That goal is obtained faster when we collaborate, use each other's strengths, and persevere. In both settings, individuals each have a specific, unique responsibility and are required to work with different individuals, regardless of their relationship outside of the school or in a team setting. Both help prepare students for being adults and having to work with future coworkers. Athletes, as well as students, have to work through difficulties and learn to never give up in order to be successful."

Kim Korf, 7th grade volleyball coach states, "I believe that athletics reinforce the value of hard work, perseverance, working together, and striving to reach a common goal. Values that are important in the classroom, on the court, and in life."

And Micheal Willey, AMS Football coach, summed it up by adding, "Athletics plays a vital role in shaping young people. Student athletes learn the values like discipline, responsibility, self-confidence, sacrifice and accountability."

As a parent, former coach, and educator, athletics provide a means to learn about joy, excitement, success, and disappointment. These emotions exist in all of our lives and learning how to handle them is a journey. Athletics and other co-curricular activities in our schools is an important part of this road to adulthood.

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