

TEXAS

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S ASSOCIATION



Texas High School Athletic Directors Association

2022-2023 Board of Directors/Chairs/THSADA Staff



Officers

President – Debbie Fuchs - Retired (Board Committee)
 President-elect – Philip O’Neal - Mansfield ISD (Finance Committee)
 Past President – David Kuykendall - Retired (Finance Committee)-Chair

Region Directors

Region 1 – Max Kattwinkel - Lubbock Cooper ISD (Strategic Planning)
 Region 2 – Jerod Womack - Stephenville ISD (Strategic Planning)
 Region 3 – Leslie Slovak- Richardson ISD (Strategic Planning)
 Region 4 – JJ Calderon - Socorro ISD (Strategic Planning)
 Region 5 – Andre Walker -Houston ISD (Strategic Planning)
 Region 6 – Lynn Pool - Austin ISD (Strategic Planning)
 Region 7 – Rey Ramirez - Rio Grande City ISD (Strategic Planning)
 Region 8 – Melanie Hinson -Southwest ISD (Strategic Planning)-Chair

Ex Officio-Independent

Ex Officio-Executive Director - Rusty Dowling (Finance Committee)
 Ex-Officio-Assistant Executive Director - Bob DeJonge (Strategic Planning)

THSADA Committee Chairs

Membership: Tom Lee - Sharyland ISD (Resolutions)
 Awards: Russ Reeves - Rockwall ISD (Resolutions)
 Policy (UIL): Ray Zepeda - Cy Fair ISD (Resolutions)-Chair
 Publications: Andrea Fluhman - Amarillo ISD (Resolutions)
 Athletic (UIL): Stan Leech - Boerne ISD (Resolutions)
 Officials (SOC): Mike Bass - Alvin ISD (Resolutions)
 TAAC: Johanna Denson - THSADA (Resolutions)
 NIAAA: Brenda Marshall - Corpus Christi ISD (Resolutions)

THSADA Staff

Director of Finance – Diane McKay (Finance Committee)
 Director of Exhibits – Bill Daws
 Director of Strategic Partnerships – Dave Stephenson
 Director of Convention Services – Lisa Stephenson
 Director of Administrative Services – Ellissa Unger
 Director of Professional Development – Johanna Denson
 Director of Information Technology and Operations – Stuart Raty
 Event Speaker Coordinator – Keith Kilgore
 Assistant Exhibits Coordinator – Joe Barnett
 Technology Coordinator – Jeff Lillibridge

The new 2022-2023 THSADA Board of Directors took their positions at the State Conference under the direction of THSADA President Debbie Fuchs (former Director of Athletics-Clear Creek ISD). The THSADA Board is representative of all areas of the State of Texas and looks forward to the first regular Board meeting of the year on December 7-8 at the THSADA office in League City. President Debbie Fuchs was also able to preside over the 3rd annual Fall Forum that was held this past October in San Antonio.



Executive Director's Report — Rusty Dowling



As I write this letter it seems we are not that far removed from dealing with COVID and in some cases that is still true. We are fast approaching the end of our Fall sport seasons with the playoff and championships specific to all of them. Some have already occurred such as with our newest sport-Water Polo-along with Team Tennis and Cross-Country. Both Volleyball and Football are on the horizon and then the first semester will have again flown by!

The first semester has been an incredibly challenging time for Texas Athletic Administrators. This was certainly reflected in one of our topics at this past Fall Forum which was Student-Spectator-Parent Behavior at Athletic contests. Every athletic administrator that I have talked to seemed to have dealt with this in one way or another at either a junior high or a high school competition in all the different sports. One of the other things I find interesting was in attending this past Legislative Council meetings was the announcement of the number of times that the State Executive Committee met to consider numerous UIL violations that have occurred. These situations can serve as a reminder that we can all lean on each other for advice, counsel or just a reaffirmation of what we are doing is correct thru networking opportunities such as Region Meetings, THSADA events or just phone calls. It is also very telling that throughout my time as Executive Director, which is approaching 11 years, last year was incredible for the number of athletic administrators that retired or even changed professions. I had never seen anything like that before, but then again, we are in a different time.

Coming out of a highly successful State Conference the THSADA opened up membership registration and we are currently reaching record numbers as we are approaching 1,300 members and look to be around 1,900 by the first of December which is where we usually top off. As a reminder you must be a current THSADA member to register for our

next event which is the Spring Sponsor Showcase February 28-March 1, 2023.

There will also be several new THSADA Committee Chairs who are non-voting members of the Board of Directors but are responsible for their specific area of responsibility and keeping the Board informed of the progress their respective committee makes.

All members that have reached TAAC certification has been posted on the website. If you have any questions regarding your certification, you can contact Johanna Denson.

The October Legislative Council meetings were held in Georgetown on October 16th and 17th with one of the shorter agendas we have seen but nevertheless some significant items were discussed. For a complete rundown on what was passed, you can go to: <https://www.uiltexas.org/files/policy/October-2022-Legislative-Council-Packet.pdf>

What are the key legislative dates and deadlines for the upcoming 88th Regular Session? Most official deadlines will be set when the House and Senate adopt rules after session begins, but until then, take a look at the date and deadline provisions listed below that are already available in the [Texas Constitution and Statutes](#), the [House and Senate Rules](#), and the perpetual calendar in the [Texas Legislative Council Drafting Manual](#).

Monday, November 14, 2022: Bill prefiling begins. [[House Rule 8, Section 7](#) and [Senate Rule 7.04](#)]

Tuesday, January 10, 2023: 88th Legislature convenes at noon. [[Texas Constitution, Article III, Section 5](#); [Texas Government Code, Section 301.001](#)]

Friday, March 10, 2023: -60day bill filing deadline. [[Texas Constitution, Article III, Section 5](#)]

Monday, May 29, 2023: Adjournment sine die. [[Texas Constitution, Article III, Section 24](#)]

Sunday, June 18, 2023: Post-session -20day deadline for Governor to sign or veto. [[Texas Constitution, Article IV, Section 14](#)]

Effective Dates: Time of Taking Effect of Laws. [[Texas Constitution, Article III, Section 39](#)]

As always, I appreciate our members supporting the THSADA with your attendance, input, and collaboration on those issues conducive to athletic administration. Your collective input makes this a very strong athletic administrators Association. Thank you again. Look forward to seeing you at our next event-Spring Sponsor Showcase.



Assistant Executive Director's Update – Bob DeJonge

This year just seems to be flying by! We only have 72 days until we bring in the new year. Even though time passes quickly, we do have so much to celebrate! As we look at our ever-growing membership. I really can see our number grow to around 2,000 members in the next year or so. That's quite a jump from 238 about 10 years ago. I think we can attribute this growth to a few key factors. Our regional leadership continues to engage their membership at the highest level. Not only are we offering valuable Region Meetings, but our Directors and Committee mem-



bers remain in constant contact with their region members on matters related to athletic administration. In addition, the dramatic growth of our Aspiring Athletic Administrator group has brought in new members and also facilitated the preparation of the next generation of

Athletic Administrators. Lastly as we continue to expand and improve our professional development program through our TAAC program we can now offer significant growth opportunities for our members and all three of our main events. **State Conference, Fall Forum, and Spring**

Sponsor Showcase.

Let's do a quick review of this year's programming:

Spring Sponsor Showcase

The 2023 Conference will be at the Kalahari and will be June 11-14. We hope to see you there, please watch for updates in upcoming THSADA E- News publications

Fall Forum 2022

This year's event was October 11 – 12 and was held at the Estancia del Norte Hotel in San Antonio on day one. Day 2 programming featured sessions at North East ISD's outstanding Blossom Athletic Center. We had 186 Attendees and 30 individuals representing some outstanding Sponsors including HomeTown Ticketing, Musco Sports Lighting, Daktronics, Gipper, Paragon Sports Constructors, Brock USA, SportsYou, Protect Ed, Snap Raise, RFS Sports , and Whatabutger. Day one began at the Estancia with an opening general session featuring a presentation on Developing State Championship Athletic Programs followed by an reception in the Hotel Courtyard featuring the introduction of our event sponsors. Day 2 at the Blossom Center featured sessions on Parent and Fan Behavior, Educating Parents of Middle School Athletes, UIL Legislative Council Preview, Transitioning from Coaching to Athletic Administration, and Athletic Event Management. Our Executive Director Rusty Dowling concluded the outstanding event with a brief closing, thanking attendees and sponsors and reminding the membership about upcoming THSADA events and Region meetings.

DeJonge Continued on next page

State Conference at the Kalahari Resort June 11-14.

Our 51st annual State Conference this past June was our largest attended event ever. We had well over 600 attendees and around 400 individuals representing sponsors and exhibitors at our Tradeshow. The Kalahari continues to prove to be the perfect venue for THSADA professional development, fun, fellowship, growth of our organization and a unique family entertainment experience! This year we offered over 30 professional development opportunities which included several TAAC Classes, 5 Aspiring Athletic Administrator Classes and several unique program offerings ranging from motivation, mental and physical health, THSADA Committee meetings and of course the highlight of the 4-day event our Hall of Honor Celebration. This past year's inductees included, **Don Murphy** retired Grand Prairie, **Chris Feris** from Conroe ISD, **Debbie Decker** from Katy ISD and **Rodney Sa-veat** of Beaumont ISD. We also recognized our **8 Regional Athletic Administrators of the Year**

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Region 1 – Joe Sexton | Region 5 – Ray Zepeda |
| Region 2 - Del Van Cox | Region 6 – Todd Raymond |
| Region 3 - Jennifer Frazier | Region 7 – Robert Davies |
| Region4 – Carlos Puertas | Region 8 – Stan Leech |

Joe Bill Fox DSA– Harold Leverett of Balfour Awards

NFHS Citation – Rusty Dowling

NIAAA Bruce Whitehead DSA – Brenda Marshall

Kelly Reeves State Award of Merit – Debbie Decker

Frank Kovaleski Professional Development Award – Sandra Mader

NIAAA Hall of Fame (Texas) – Bob DeJonge



Spring Sponsor Showcase 2023:

This year our 2023 Spring Sponsor Showcase will return to a familiar venue. On February 28 and March 1, we will convene at the Waco convention Center for this annual event. There is a dual purpose to this event in that we want to continue to provide our membership with outstanding professional Development opportunities and take an opportunity to give a special thank you to our 50 THSADA Sponsors. Highlights of the event will feature opening general session and reception for attendees and sponsors on day 1 followed by Day 2 at the Blossom Center where we will offer several outstanding TAAC and AAAA sessions throughout the day. We'll take an extended lunch break and encourage all attendees to join our sponsors at the THSADA Mini Trade Show. This will be a great opportunity for our members to interact with our key sponsors. Last year we had 242 attendees and received a great deal of positive feedback from all involved. This year we hope to grow attendance numbers to as high as 300. Please mark you calendars for this key THSADA event. Registration will begin around December 1.

Thank you for your continued support of our organization – You are part of the largest State Athletic Administration in the Country!!

President's Message – Debbie Fuchs

Happy Fall to all of you!! – As we are heading into the end of 2022, I am so excited and encouraged that our THSADA Association is continuing to GROW, to EDUCATE, and to INSPIRE future professionals into becoming our next Athletic Directors, as well as giving our existing Athletic Directors professional learning that will continue to help them enhance their sports programs. What a bright time it is to be a part of the THSADA, and I am truly honored to serve as your President!! We just had our strongest and well attended Fall Forum in beautiful San Antonio. I want to thank North East ISD and Executive Athletic Director Kelly Parker along with his staff for hosting us at the Blossom Athletic Center. I would also like to thank our Fall Forum sponsors for helping make this great event possible. All of our sessions involved panelists and those men and women did a terrific job of answering our questions to benefit and give valuable information in various topics to benefit their school districts. Thanks to everyone who helped make the Fall Forum possible including THSADA Executive Director Rusty Dowling, Assistant Executive Director Bob DeJonge and the incredible staff of Bill, Stuart, Elissa, Diane, Keith, Johanna, Dave and all others. Thanks also to our THSADA officers who are so engaging and encouraging for our association to the BE THE BEST! (which it is!!) President Elect – Philip O'Neal - Mansfield ISD – Past



President – David Kuykendall – Frisco ISD – RETIRED. Thanks also to our regional directors and committee chairs and members. THSADA thanks all of you who have helped and our helping this organization work toward its goal to promote, facilitate and recognize athletic administrators. As we continue to complete the Fall semester, I want to again thank you and express my sincere gratitude to you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your President. Please know that I am always available to you if you have questions or concerns. Here's wishing you and your sport programs the best of luck for the coming year!! Have a super super rest of your school year.



UIL Legislative Council Summary – Grace McDowell

The October 16-17, 2022 Legislative Council Meeting report may be found [HERE](#) and videos may be found [HERE](#).

Approved Proposals:

The number of golf coaches from a school that will be allowed to coach during tournaments will be increased from 1 to 2 coaches beginning in August of 2023.

A pilot program was approved for the 23-24 school year that would require 5A and 6A teams to play a 3-game series during playoff rounds leading up to the UIL State Tournament. A single game may only be played if both coaches mutually agree.

As a part of a pilot program for the 23-24 school year, 1A schools will be allowed to use sixth graders to field as many as two (2) teams. Another part of this pilot program would also allow sixth graders to participate in individual sports in 1A if they participated in any team sport under the guidelines of Section 1478(c)(3)(A).

Beginning in the 23-24 school year, two of the six allowable track and field meets for 7-8th graders may start no earlier than 2:00p.m. This change will allow schools who finish the school day later in the day to begin 2 meets before end of the school day, which will allow meets to finish earlier in the evening and possibly get students home sooner on a school night.

Conference 2A schools will be

provided with the opportunity to opt to participate in 4A Soccer beginning in the 2023-24 school year. Currently only 3A schools have this as an option.

Lastly, charter schools within multi-school districts may be assigned up to the same conference as the high school in the district with the lowest enrollment. If the charter school is within the boundaries of a school district with schools in more than two conferences, and the school's enrollment qualifies it for at least the conference of the smallest school in the district, the charter school may be placed no more than one conference higher than the conference for which the school's enrollment qualifies.

The Standing Committee on Athletics also approved the extension of the pilot program to allow both girls' and boys' basketball coaches the ability to coach their athletes during the June TABC showcase events. The 2023 showcase is scheduled for June 15-17 for the girls and June 23-25 for the boys.

Other important topics discussed:

Dr. Susan Elza, the UIL Athletic Director, shared that there will be a revised PAPP that will roll out in January. The changes include the addition of a request for the date and county where a divorce was filed for divorced parents, and the requirement for all schools the athlete has attended in the

last 12 months to complete section III Previous School Certification of the PAPP.

The proposal involving the altering of the 5A football realignment structure did not receive the support from superintendents or athletic directors needed to be pushed forward.

There was a lack of support by superintendents for any changes to be made at this time regarding varsity eligibility of foreign exchange students. No further action will be taken on this proposal.

No action was taken on a proposal to allow retired coaches to be head coaches of team sports. With the shortage of coaches, some council members voiced that it may be helpful in filling positions. The biggest concerns shared was that it would deny young coaches the opportunity for advancement when we are losing coaches from the profession at an alarming rate. It was also shared that head coaching positions are not difficult to fill, but high school assistant and middle school coaching positions are difficult to fill. Currently, retired coaches may serve as a high school assistant or middle school coach.

Texas Girls Coaches Association requested that coaches be allowed to coach their own athletes during the TGCA All-Star games which are comprised of athletes who finished their junior year and are entering their senior year in high school. The UIL Staff will study the proposal.



Regional Temperatures: What's Cold, What's Coming In, and What's Hot: – Michael Mackeben

1. *A challenge in your region that ADs are facing*
2. *Something new in the region*
3. *Something that is going well in the region*

Region 1

1. Inflation of travel prices for fuel and food
2. Canyon ISD West Plains Class 4A Fall 2022 and Lubbock Cooper's Legacy High Fall 2023
3. Continued team success with extensive re-districting in the region

Region 2

1. Getting equipment and uniform orders in on time for winter and spring seasons from athletic suppliers due to most brands being backed up, back ordered, or slow shipping.
2. Multiple School/Athletic bonds in the region being voted on in November
3. Positive response from officials on the TASO Abuse of Officials Policy as well as officials reporting a concerted effort from coaches to get schedules in on time and making limited changes

Region 3

1. It is difficult to narrow it down to one challenge. Challenges that we are seeing in Region 3 include the effects of spectator behavior on the shortage of officials, the increased levels of security measures that are being required in response to current events, and the increased stress on coaches due to the pressure to cover for staff shortages in various areas, including bus drivers, custodians, and coaching positions that were not filled
2. Board elections have become increasingly important given the current political climate. Several districts are preparing for their next bond elections
3. There has been an increased focus on intentional leadership development for both coaches and students. Various districts in the region have established developmental programs for coaches to prepare them for head coaching and/or athletic administrative roles. Several districts have also created student leadership councils at the district level to represent the student voice directly to the Athletic Director

Region 4

1. Basketball & soccer official shortages changing days and times of games/bus driver shortages – forcing early drops
2. Possibility of no football playoffs in El Paso – all 3A, 4A, and 5A traveling out, 6A depends if opponent signed inter-local agreement for 1-2 host, 3-4 visitor
3. Significant athletic construction/upgrades

Region 5

1. Official shortages, supply chain issues
2. More districts moving to clear bag and/or metal detectors as sports competitions
3. Successful water polo season for all the region participants

Region 6

1. Shortage of officials, shortage of ISD officers or police presence at games, what does proper sportsmanship among fans, coaches, athletes, and officials look like and how to enforce/communicate, budget cuts w/CTX cost of living
2. Spectator crowds are back and bigger than ever. Athletic events seem to be a catalyst to bring people back from COVID and engage again with their communities. We now have more growth with Samsung and Tesla
3. The respect of one another's Athletic Administration and their districts to work together with other Athletic Administration in Region 6 for the better of High School Sports in the State of Texas. Participation is on the rise after experiencing COVID

Region 7

1. Shortage of certified coaches (teacher/professionals)
2. Adding sports officiating class at HS level (elective)
3. Four Inaugural Water Polo Teams from RGV in the Sweet 16

Region 8

1. Shortage of teachers/coaches
2. Water Polo
3. The programs and assistance available for new coaches to keep them in the profession



Honoring our Military, Veterans, and First Responders

Judson ISD Athletics hosting Inaugural Operation Dog Tags

– Dr. Nicole Taguinod, Judson ISD

Judson ISD Athletics is organizing the Inaugural Operation Dog Tags football game, a new district wide tradition that will recognize military veterans from the community. A combination of teachers, staff, parents, community members, and trustees from the Judson ISD Board were recognized during the Wagner vs. San Marcos football game on Thursday, September 8, 2022.

“This is a simple token of our appreciation to veterans who have served our country,” said Triva Corrales, Executive Director of Athletics. “What these men and women have sacrificed for us is invaluable. We want to ensure that our Judson ISD community knows the District is a staunch supporter of all our military families.”

A meet and greet dinner on Tuesday, September 6, 2022 at the Wagner Cafeteria will kick off the week. Football players will meet veterans, have a uniform reveal with a dedicated red, white, and blue jersey with the veteran’s name on it, and have dinner with the hero. Eventually, the name plate will be presented to the veterans.

“Not only do we want to build great athletes, but we also want to build great leaders,” said Corrales.

“Our athletes are playing for some-



thing bigger than themselves.”

The first 500 people who enter D. W. Rutledge Stadium received a commemorative dog tag.

Before the event, the Golden Knights parachuted onto the field to present the colors. Veterans who participated in Operation Dog Tags, and all veterans in attendance, will be honored for their service.

Throughout the game, attendees were able to donate to Homes for Heroes, the largest nationwide network of affiliate real estate, mortgage, and local business specialists who are committed to providing easy ways for veterans to save on a home.

Establishing a new tradition, each high school in Judson ISD will host Operation Dog Tags each year. Judson High School will host the event in 2023, followed by Veterans Memorial High School in 2024.

Northside ISD Athletes show their appreciation to Military, Veterans, and First Responders.

– Sonia Almanza, Northside ISD

Every year Northside ISD in San Antonio honors Military, Veterans, and First Responders by holding Americas Heroes Week. Football players wear an American Flag decal on their helmets and greet heroes in the end zone with an American Flag. Some players write special notes on the flag expressing their gratitude towards them being heroes in the community. Northside also partners with the Cavender Cares, a program that honors a veteran at halftime with a new vehicle. Other fall sports such as Tennis, Volleyball, and Water Polo also recognized their community heroes during their games.



Shortage of Stripes – Scott Campbell - Stephenville ISD

There has been a growing trend of the last several years of shortages of football game officials in the state of Texas. There are many people to shoulder the blame for this and there are many groups looking to curb this trend. So how did we get to this point?

One reason for the stress put on official chapters is that more sub varsity and junior high level games spread out over more nights during the week. In most school districts it is not uncommon to have a football game four nights out of the week. On some Tuesday and Thursday nights there might be up to three or four games at one site. In an effort to get the kids home earlier in the night most game administrators are looking to start those games as early as 4 or 5 pm in the late afternoon. This really puts game officials in a bind who are having to leave work early or travel long distances in some cases to make the earlier kick times.

Some DEC's have opted to allow for the host site to provide coaches as game officials for sub varsity and junior high level games. This helps lessen the load on the need for game officials and saves money for the district. While this can help remedy the situation on Tuesday and Thursday nights it will never be part of the solution on Friday nights in Varsity level competition.

Some districts have gone to Saturday morning games for sub varsity levels. In most areas this ensures crews are available however most high school coaches are not in favor of this as it takes time out of Saturday coaches film review and scout work. In addition some fields are used for youth sports on Saturdays and even some of those officials are already working those aforementioned youth sports.

But let's get at the meat of the matter and call it what it is. The real reason for football officials' shortage is the verbal abuse that officials are subject-



ed to from both the coaches and fans. This is leading to a shrinking pool of officials for most chapters across Texas. TASO reported in 2020 they lost 10% of their pool of officials. Many of those grew tired of losing scheduled games as a result of COVID and understandably those officials needed to secure other sources of steady income. Long-time TASO - Abilene Chapter Official Darrin Cox states "the overall age of officials is older across the state and the younger crop of officials are leaving the profession after a short time". TASO backs this up with the annual stats showing more officials over 60 years of age than those who are under 30 years of age. Cox realizes that it's a group effort to help grow the chapters. The chapter can train and equip better, schools can help with scheduling better and coaches can show the level of respect that is due to this group of officials who are working on behalf of the kids and in support of this great game. The fans critique is one thing and it's at a distance but the coaches up close belittling and language that is driving many good officials out of the game.

TASO is doing their part in an

effort to hold school districts accountable for player, coach and fan behavior towards officials. The TASO adopted a three strikes policy that extends beyond football to include all sports. If a school reaches that three strike threshold they will then report before the TASO council and potentially lose TASO officials until the culture is corrected within that district. As of Mid-October no districts have reached the three strike threshold.

Additionally, the THSCA has created a Texas Officials Appreciation Night for various sports. For instance, home football teams would select a designated game as Official Recognition Night in which a banner would be displayed, PA announcements and graphics on the video board. This is just another effort to show game officials that they are appreciated and recognized. Hopefully we will be able to look back in a few years and see the number of football officials rise across the state as a direct result of concerted efforts by TASO, UIL, THSCA and most importantly local school district administration



Coach Van Meter's 200th Win

Friday Night Lights,” in New Braunfels, Texas the New Braunfels Unicorns are hosting the Weiss Wolfpack. The stadium crowds are shouting and encouraging their team. It is a close competitive game, which ends with Weiss 49 and Unicorns 42. The players are jumping, shouting, and celebrating their win, as a large ice water bucket is lifted and poured over Coach Steve Van Meter's head. Coach Van Meter shrugs and laughs, but as he gets his composure from the icy shower, he notices the cheerleaders holding up a sign congratulating him for his, “200th win.”

This article takes a glance into the son, the athlete, the coach, and Director of Athletics Steve Van Meter. He has been called, “The Jimmy Buffet of High School Football,” “Van the Man,” “Van,” and even, “The Van Meter.”

Growing up in Friendswood, TX, Van played football, baseball, ran track and at the age of 12, his father introduced him to golf. Between his high



school coach, Coach Winston and his father who passed away when he was 15, Coach Van Meter learned the love for competition, how to be a role model and the belief there is no room for excuses.

During high school his father passed away, his mom moved out of state, but allowed him to stay and live with Coach Winston. His love for football and competition continued to grow at Friendswood. He was a part of the UIL Division 2A State Football Champion Team in 1973, beating Hooks 28-15. His team had a 15-0 record that year.

Graduating from Sam Houston State in 1979, Van began his coaching career under his high school coach (Coach Winston). Coaching for Van seemed to be natural. As a first year, 8th grade teacher and coach students responded to him and positive bonds were created naturally. He enjoyed being in the classroom building relationships and treating others with respect.

He became the 3rd head football coach at Friendswood from 1992-2011, where he was only one of 4 that coached there with in a 60-year period.

He held onto the character traits he had been taught and followed in Coach Winston leadership, “doing something for someone, knowing that nothing maybe done for you.”

While at Friendswood his record was 148-81-1 which included two state semifinal and two state quarterfinal appearances. A memorable game was vs Waller for Regional Semifinals they were down 2 touchdowns and came back to win. Before leaving Friendswood Coach Van Meter's had the opportunity to be an Athletic Director and was fortunate to retire in 2012, from Friend-

swood ISD with a legacy. He was thankful to have leadership such as Superintendent Dr. Mark Griffon and Principal Dr. Myrlene Kennedy.

However, in 2013, only a year after retiring Coach Van decided retirement was not for him and instead moved to Central Texas and became the head football coach in Hutto. He was there for 5 years and in the last 4 he took the football team to the playoffs. He left Hutto with a record of 187-101-1 and decided to try retirement again. Nevertheless, his love and connection to football kept him in sports by holding quarterback camps in the Houston, Texas area.

Then in 2019, an opportunity came available back in Central Texas for Van Meter. He missed the athletes, the competition and found the perfect program in Central Texas, at Weiss HS, which had only been in existence 2 years before he was hired.

Have you ever heard of Dave Campbell Texas Football? Well, if you have lived in Texas and have been a



Van Meter Continued on next page



part of the world of Texas football in the last six decades, then you would know about Dave Campbell's Texas Football. Dave Campbell's Texas Football (DCTF) remains the leader in Texas High School Football, Texas College Football, and more. They are known for maintaining historical records, scores, rankings, playoff data, coaching changes and stats, and so much more. Why do I bring them up well, what does Steve Van Meter (Weiss) have in common with Dan Stallworth (Baytown Lee), J. Murray Stephenson (Sinton), Mike Johnston (Katy), and Ronald Bickham (Paul Pewitt)?

Van the Man is now listed in the state's most widely respected and cited organization for his 200th win. Coach Van has become the only active football coach in the Austin area with 200 career wins. Congratulations to Coach Steve Van Meter! Because of his leadership role he understood the assignment. It requires focus, staying organized, creating pride for not just your sport but for all sports, supporting players being multi-sport athletes, and work to ensure things are done right and students are treated right.

One final thought from Coach Van Meter: that, "200th win wasn't about me as much as it was about my staff who stayed with me through the course and my wife Lisa who's been there through it all. He smiled and said, "She keeps me centered and grounded."

(Special Thanks to: staff writer, Ted Dunman of Friendswood Journal.//Friendswood Sports tdunnam@hcnonline.com; www.texasfootball.com) Submitted by: Deena Bosier Pflugerville ISD

With the Teacher/Coach Shortage Across the State and Country, Texas A&M University is Providing Students an Opportunity to Learn How to Become a Coach through the Thornton-McFerrin Coaching Academy – Dena Scott, CMAA Director of Athletics, Fort Bend ISD

Students from across the state gathered at Texas A&M University on October 5, 2022, to attend the Thornton-McFerrin Coaching Academy Student Seminar.

Leading the seminar were TMCA Program Manager, Kelli Campbell, TMCA Program Director, Dr. Mike Thornton, TMCA Program Coordinator, Rashard Thurston, and several current members of the TMCA program.

Upon arrival, students were checked in and grouped randomly for icebreaker activities. Then, Kelli Campbell provided the welcome message along with the Effective Communication topic that would be emphasized throughout the rest of the seminar. Next, students were divided into groups again and given skill cards for the sports they were going to coach. All students were allowed to coach their peers in volleyball, football, strength and conditioning, track, soccer, and basketball. Chaperones on the trip, mainly consisting of current coaches, served as observers who took notes on what they saw the students doing well and what they could work on relating to their coaching skills.

Following the coaching clinic



Students coach fellow peers by demonstrating skills in the sport of basketball and volleyball.

stations, the students and facilitators shared their experiences and feedback with the entire group over a working

Academy Continued on next page



lunch. During this time, several students were recognized for their outstanding coaching skills. Kelli Campbell led an interactive discussion tying back to effective coaching communication strategies. It was great to observe so many students sharing their experiences from the coaching session. Some noted they had to keep the group engaged due to distractions. Others indicated that they had to spend one-on-one time with those who needed more help with the skills. Most acknowledged that communication was vital to the success of the coaching of the skill to the group. Other topics discussed included positive vs. negative communication and positive vs. negative body language while coaching. It was also noted that the students gained a better understanding of what their current coaches deal with when coaching them.

After the working lunch and discussion, the students could choose which TAMU Athletics practice they would observe. Some watched the throwers on the track and field team, others watched the Women's soccer team practice, and another group of students attended a volleyball practice. During this time, the students could see how college coaches interacted with and instructed their players. It was a unique experience and very beneficial to observe.

The group gathered for an interactive discussion on their practice observations and closing remarks after the



Students recognized for their exceptional coaching skills during the coaching clinic session.

practices. Dr. Mike Thornton spoke to the group about the TMCA program at TAMU and provided some great words of wisdom for all those in the room to take back with them for their coaching toolbox. One of his comments was, "It's not what you know, or who you know, but Who Knows YOU?" He encouraged those in attendance to step out of their comfort zones to network and meet other people because you never know if that person will be the one to help you get your next job.

A current TAMU student in the program, Anyia Duhon, had this to say about her experience. "In my time here at Texas A&M, I have been fortunate to come across an organization that has turned my life completely around. This organization is known as the Thornton- McFerrin Coaching Academy. The coaching academy has equipped me with the skills and knowledge to be the best coach that I can be. The leaders of the organization work hard to help undergraduate students to grow and



TAMU student, Anyia Duhon, working with high school students during the clinic skill sessions.

gain experience in the coaching field and successfully transition into the desired career fields of their choice. With being a member of the Academy, I have gained a lot of coaching experience locally, obtained lots of knowledge regarding the coaching world, and continue to improve my abilities of becoming a well-rounded coach. The Students Coaching Association, which is a part of the Coaching Academy, is an organization that helps undergraduate students that are interested in coaching find their way and gain coaching experience while still in school. As an active leader within this student association, my love for coaching has grown immensely with the countless hours spent learning and shaping my coaching skill set. The Coaching Academy and Students Coaches Association has truly given me more than I would have ever imagined from making strong connections, building lasting relationships, and an abundance of opportunities near and far."

As the students loaded up and began their trip back, they noticeably enjoyed their experience in Aggieland with the Thornton- McFerrin Coaching Academy team. Another seminar is planned in the spring, and the program plans to host prospective students twice a year. As this program continues to grow, more and more students will be able to gain hands-on coaching practice that will enable them to become our future teachers/coaches.



Group of high school students who attended the Thornton-McFerrin Coaching Academy Seminar



A Seat at Our Table – Sandra Flynn HCISD

Harlingen CISD, THSCA and Hudl hosted A Seat at Our Table on September 14. This event is a new program pioneered by the Texas High School Coaches Association. The evening included dinner, networking, and intentional conversation around the needs of a female coach, both professionally and personally.

The goal of this program is to enhance the female coaching experience by providing networking opportunities and support within the district, region and state. Each initial Seat at Our Table event begins with a small group setting. THSCA was on site and led a deep dive into issues that affect women in coaching. A goggle document was maintained throughout the evening with conversation topics, responses and shared ideas. The evening ended with networking time. The Harlingen CISD event was comprised of 30 female coaches, 2 female school board members and Superintendent,



Dr. Alicia Noyola. The conversation was an eye opener into the needs of our female coaches and has led to additional conversations on how we can best support those needs. Topics included childcare, balancing personal relationships, building a positive team culture, communication skills, mental health and how to be a strong leader. Coaching experience ranged from 1st year to 30 years.

Our coaches were appreciative of the time, effort and support they received from THSCA and the attendance of district leadership. Reflections shared during the evening were honest, personal and deeply intense on potential solutions to issues they face. Coaches also gained professional development hours for attending the event. Harlingen CISD intends to continue this movement with quarterly meetings. THSCA leadership visiting campuses to visit with coaches and programs preceded the event. This was the second THSCA Seat At Our Table event, with more planned across the state. For more information, contact LibbyPacheco@THSCA.com



Swimming: An Aquatic Sport for Terrestrial Creatures – Coach Ron Lee - Amarillo ISD

Anyone who has spent time in or around large bodies of water can testify that humans are out of their element there. When we enter the water, all rules change. As we lack gills, breathing goes from involuntary to controlled. Balance goes from vertical to horizontal. Vision is blinded without the aid of technology. Hearing is muffled until we learn to equalize our ears, then it is amplified. Blood vessels constrict causing our hands and feet to wrinkle. Subtle temperature changes in water shock our system. Even gravity seems to reverse course. Where things fall on land, things rise against the density of water. Compared to any aquatic creature, we come up short in this alien environment. Human beings are simply not biomechanically designed for life in water, let alone traveling efficiently through it. Yet water captivates us. It stimulates our senses, it mesmerizes us and sometimes can even threaten our life. Still, we are drawn to bodies of water like the proverbial moth to a flame.

How did our species, with no aquatic advantage become enraptured by environments we are most vulnerable in? Historians believe that swimming sprang from a leisure sport in Egypt some 4,500 years ago. If the origin of swimming is found in leisure, it certainly didn't stay that way for long. Archeologists have uncovered Greek and Roman swimming pools where their soldiers trained for war. Our conquering spirit launched human aquatic activity forward toward greater skill and challenge. Fast forward to present day, and humans are still training in swimming pools, but now we hone athletic skill rather than train for battle.

Sport scientists spend countless hours evaluating the nuances of how

to swim faster. They have concluded this happens only by eliminating drag, and increasing propulsion. That is it. But it is not so easy when you consider that water is 800 times denser than air. Swimming has evolved and advanced most, even at the high school level, in pursuit of these two ambitions. These scientists have done an incredible job but an argument can be made that they have done all they can do given our biological limitations. Looking at the world record time drops in the men's 50 meter Freestyle long course, (arguably the fastest event, we see less than a 1 second improvement over the last 32 years. We have not had a world record since 2009. The numbers are similar in the women's 50 meter Freestyle where there has been only about a 1 second improvement in 30 years with the last world record set in 2017.

If the science has approached its limit, coaching certainly has not. Coaches nurture and reinforce flourishing athletic talent. Any high school coach can testify that the single most terrifying realization is recognizing that their hopes and dreams, their successes and failures, rest on the shoulders of high school athletes. The smallest comprehension of this reality is paralyzing; however, great coaches are intrinsically compelled to foster talent by the same alluring charm that water holds on the human heart.

The swimmers with the greatest talent are those who can *feel* the water. Feeling the water is the most difficult facet of swimming to teach, yet the most important to learn. Nobody really knows what it means to feel the water until they do. Explaining how swimmers learn this is complicated, but good swim coaches are indispensable at showing that mechanically sound, but robotic swimming loses

every time to someone who can *feel* the water) this is why unorthodox strokes sometimes work.

It's no secret in the swimming community that the elements needed to make Olympic swimmers are talent, work ethic, and a fearless mindset. Here in the Lone Star State, these qualities also define the Texas spirit. Maybe that is why Texas has such a healthy attendance of swimmers competing internationally for Team USA and at the Olympic Games every four years.

Texas swimming shares another commonality with the Olympic Games in that the approach of many Texas teams is both serious and ruthless. To qualify for the Olympics, swimmers must finish in the top two spots of their individual events at the U.S. Olympic Trials. Likewise, each year tens of thousands of high school swimmers battle to try and earn one of two coveted qualifying spots in each event for the UIL State Swim Meet. Third place at Olympic Trials or one of the Regional meets rarely earns you more than a bronze medal.

In Texas, swimming has successfully kept the competitive qualities that have propelled it season after season. Similar to martial arts, swimming has transcended combat training to become an art form. No matter how scientific the sport becomes, swimming's aesthetic qualities are exclusively responsible for the growth that we are witnessing in the sport today. Our expanding attraction to swimming is precisely because in it, we are participating in something beautiful and perpetuating that beauty will serve to nourish and enrich both ourselves and the sport. Human beings cannot live without water. Our enchantment with water is an extension of that most basic fact.





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