

Working With Athletes

OFF SEASON SQUADS

Daily Competition

Learn how to compete (develop mental & physical toughness)

Leaders get identified to lead squads

Learn how to compete as a team

Builds accountability to each other during off season

Breaks up monotony of simply lifting



TEAM APPRECIATION

Players need to be rewarded for their achievements and individuals need to be praised to keep morale high, however, these rewards cannot interfere with the TEAM concept. All rewards, regardless of whether it is individual or team, must support of our mission, **“Better Today, Not as Good as Tomorrow”** and the premise that **“Success comes through Hard Work.”**

WEIGHT ROOM

The weight room is a place where ALL players can be rewarded and anyone, from first string to third string, can improve and set personal records. Some obvious extrinsic rewards are:

- Membership into the 800 / 1,000 / 1,200 pound clubs based on lifts
- shirts to wear around campus
- Name placed on lift boards.

It is important to understand that these extrinsic, materialistic rewards will only motivate in the short term. To have long term accountability and motivation in the weight room, the successful coach ensures that players are experiencing intrinsic motivators.

The most obvious example of this are when players achieve new personal bests in the amount of reps or weight on a specific exercise. Regardless of size, speed, or age, every player can be constantly achieving personal bests several times every month. Another intrinsic motivator is the bonds that are formed when teammates help others achieve success, whether by "spotting," encouraging, or mentoring.

BAR-B-QUES & TEAM MEALS

I am a strong believer that families should break bread together. Sharing meals together as a team is a constant theme in my blueprint for a CHAMPIONSHIP program. We will have BAR-B-QUES after our spring and fall scrimmages to not only celebrate the end of a training period, but also to give the community opportunities to meet the team and see their progress. Players will be introduced and recognized for all their hard work at these Bar-B-Ques. We will also eat together as a team every Thursday night during the season. These are mini-awards banquets which include an alumni guest speaker, highlight video, and passing out of helmet decals. Captains are also announced. We save the left overs and eat again as a team during a pre-game meal right after school.

***A Family that Eats
Together Plays Together***

PLAYER OF WEEK

It is crucial that team emphasizes stand-out players in its program.

If what you emphasize is what you get, then the championship-minded coach will be sure to emphasize the best scout team player every week. This will provide the key intrinsic motivation you need in the players who help prepare your team for gameday. Some of the weekly recognition traditions we have used include:

- Scout Player of the Week: Carries the flag out of the tunnel. Coach buys him lunch.
- Tackled on Fakes: Coach buys them lunch.
- Offensive Linemen: Watch Monday Night Football together.

MEDIA

Today's social media environment has been unlike any other media environment since the game was invented. As a leader of your team, it is significant to the program and to the school, that you learn how to model being a good "digital citizen" in the social media world. For coaches where this may be too time-consuming, it is important that to whoever you delegate as your social media spokesperson understands how to publicize the proper image of the program.

Your internet campaign can and should include: a website, a social media page or account, & an electronic newsletter. The focus on these outlets would contain: calendars and schedules, player achievements, and alumni updates.

SENIOR NIGHT & CANDLE LEGACY CEREMONY

A culture is defined by its traditions. To develop a championship culture, special consideration should be applied to regular and special traditions. All teams have a homecoming and a senior night, but as a coach who strives for excellence, extra effort should be given to see that your traditions are unique and memorable. In our program, our senior night was preceded by what we call our "Candle Legacy Ceremony."

In this ceremony, seniors invite family to a catered team meal on Thursday. We all move out to the 50-yard line where coaches thank them and then seniors will say a few words. After speaking, they will "pass-on" their candle light to an underclassman with the instructions to stay in the program so that their candle stays burning and can be passed down in next year's ceremony. What happens is the younger players feel a powerful obligation to live up to all their legacies.

For Senior Night, parents & players will be recognized on the field immediately following the JV game. Traditionally, we will spotlight the seniors and their achievements, both on and off the field, in a program/pamphlet that can be read out loud over the PA system.

BANQUET & POST SEASON AWARDS

This will be a very formal affair and have all the flair that a banquet should have. The idea is to have it like your own ESPY awards. Volunteers, cheerleaders, faculty, and players will be recognized in a very formal manner. This is a time for you and your staff to demonstrate how much effort has been put in to the program, and that it is in the community's interest to invest in this great sport and program. The booster club then recruits members for next year.

It will be our philosophy that no award will recognize a player as being "more valuable" than his team. Some of the post-season awards that we have used include:

Highest GPA	Perfect Attendance	Outstanding Line	Outstanding Defense	Ultimate CHAMPION
Scout Player	Iron Man	Outstanding Offense	Coaches Award	Captains

ALL-STAR GAMES

If your league or section of the country allows for an All-Star game at the end of the season or during the summer, you should make every effort to see that your seniors have every opportunity to play as possible. Ideally, no senior will play in more than one event. This is a fantastic event for your players to look forward to as a way of capping off their careers and rallying your underclassmen behind your senior players in one last game.

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Other Ideas

Combatives (Hoover Ball, Stick Wrestling)

Monitor Attendance Daily

WEEKLY Grade Checks – Study Hall

Online grade checks

Outreach Program (Rebel Buddies/Burro Buddies/VB Visit)

Leader's Council/Position Leaders/Squad Leaders

Find ways to feed your players.....DAILY nutrition (protein most important)

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Other Ideas

Lockdown Meeting

Outline To Success Contract

Commitment Sticks

Pride Box

Legacy Numbers

Involve them in community service projects

Youth clinics/camps/orientation night for 8th graders at feeder schools

Weekly Awards (Practice Player of the Week, Lifter of the Week, El Nasty Trench Warrior, Rock Award)

Reward/acknowledge the "Program Builders" (OKG's)

Make it SPECIAL, Keep it FUN!!



TEAM BONDING

Arguably the most important chapter in the book. Having sound offensive knowledge is standard for an offensive coordinator. Knowing how to stop an offensive attack is a prerequisite to be a defensive coordinator. But if you know how to get a team to play for each other, and not just with each other, you not only be a head coach, but a championship coach. We believe that getting players to play for each other and for a purpose BIGGER than themselves is the 2nd most important priority after the weight room.

THE FOUNDATION: THE WEIGHT ROOM

This is so much bigger than getting strong. There is daily interaction and intervention from the coach, which builds the first level of trust between player and coach. Players bond with each other as they motivate, spot, and encourage.

The message is **"I got your back, you can count on me."** Everyone also lifts as a team on my command: **"Lift to Win!"** Which is followed by three claps. Nobody starts the next rep until every last player is finished. This is very powerful.

SPRING TRIPS FOR TEAM BUILDING (May)

The point is to have a variety of activities such as bowling, paintball, Madden tournaments, a visit to a college practice, and even lifting with other teams. This variety will allow you as coach to really develop a sense of community among a diverse set of environments. This also helps demonstrate how football leadership extends beyond the football field.

Personally, some of these events are some of the most powerful, life changing experiences I have ever been a part of. As mentioned, leadership is meant to extend beyond the football field, as such there is no football. Instead we compete in paintball (**for sportsmanship**), dodgeball (**for integrity**), and relay races (**for teamwork**).

These events are then capped off with at least two nights of intimate campfires where the team really connects. There are many strong, proud 17-year old boys crying at these fires. Many players will refer to these moments as some of their most memorable of their football careers.

7on7 TOURNAMENTS (June)

When possible, try to find tournaments that would require travel. This will help create the standard with the team of your expectations and of their conduct when traveling during the season. This will also help establish moments of bonding when in a competitive environment. But you should always look to create a fun atmosphere on these trips.

In our program, we've competed in tournaments at Morro Bay along the Central California coast. Once there we camp on the beach, laugh around a Friday night bonfire, and swim on Sunday morning. Remember to always look to connect and establish a positive culture.

AUGUST RETREAT

This is the culmination of August conditioning, which in our program is affectionately called "Hell Week." It is a one night campfire to revisit goals that were set in spring. Players receive shirts signed by all their loved ones that they wear under shoulder pads on game night.

SENIOR RETREAT

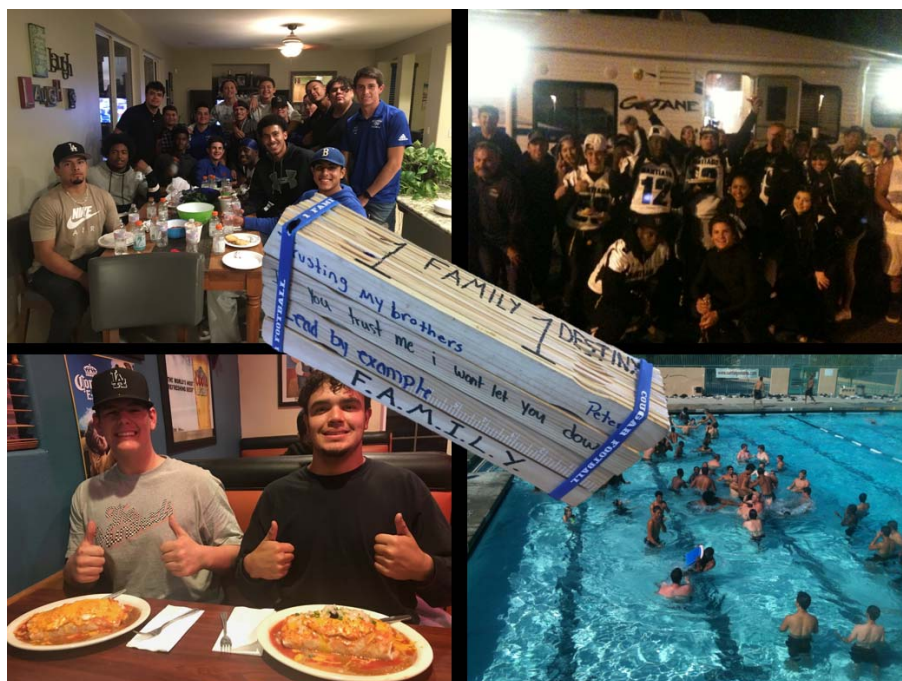
This is just head coach and seniors during the last week of August before school. Magic Mountain, Pismo Beach, fishing trip...they decide.

TEAM MEALS

As stated on previous page, families break bread together.

LEGACY CANDLE CEREMONY

At the last team dinner, every senior will speak on the 50-yard line to the underclassmen. They state their "Greatest Memory as a [insert school mascot]," and their "Greatest Regret." Next they give any advice they have to next year's team. When finished, they give a candle with their number on it to an underclassman who now has the task of keeping that senior's legacy burning in the program. Powerful motivator.





The Cougars Way

1. ***Never underestimate your opponent.***
2. ***Work on your weaknesses until they become your strong points.***
3. ***Remember that great effort is usually the result of a great attitude.***
4. ***Dedicate yourself to a mighty purpose.***
5. ***Win with humility, lose with grace.***
6. ***Ignore those that discourage you.***
7. ***Work to improve your moral and spiritual strengths as well as your physical ones.***
8. ***Remember that how you conduct yourself off the field is just as important as how you conduct yourself on the field.***
9. ***Talent is God-given- be humble. Fame is man given- be thankful. Conceit is self-given- be careful.***
10. ***Don't ask to be deprived of tension and discipline- these are the tools that shape success.***
11. ***Do what has to be done, when it has to be done, and as well as it can be done.***
12. ***Remember that when you're not working to improve, your competition is.***
13. ***Always give your best.***
14. ***Practice like a champion.***
15. ***Play like a champion.***
16. ***Live like a champion.***