

MIDDLE LEVEL



***EDUCATION GUIDE
FOR COACHES***

**DEVELOPED BY:
WIAA MIDDLE LEVEL COUNCIL**

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Course Overview

It is the expectation that this education program will be a resource for athletic administrators at the middle level. Many coaches begin their careers at this level; therefore, they start with drills, game preparation/plans, and motivation techniques similar to their most recent experience. Since this is the middle level, and the needs of the young adolescent are unique, the strategies for preparing middle level coaches must focus on those unique needs. Further, much of this information should lead to an interaction between coaches, administration and parents since middle level athletic program expectations need to be consistent with the middle level philosophy.

Suggested Use of this Material

1. A large group coaches' meeting prior to the beginning of the school year

OR

A separate large group meeting prior to the beginning of each sport season

2. Hand out all materials to the coaches ahead of time for independent study, include a date for a meeting to discuss major topics from the unit materials and complete an assessment
3. Individual meetings with each coach prior to the beginning of their sport season.
 - a. Hand out all materials to the coaches ahead of time for independent study, include a date for a meeting to discuss major topics from the unit materials and complete an assessment
4. Classroom instruction type presentation – Power Point
 - a. Use one entire day covering all material and an assessment
 - b. Use several different days/nights with shorter time periods, dividing up the material accordingly, and an assessment
 - c. Hand out materials ahead OR at the time of class

** Assessment is provided at the end of this booklet

Additional types of assessment may be included, as determined by the local athletic/activities directors and/or administrator.

WIAA has sport specific tests and rule books available.

UNIT ONE

PHILOSOPHY OF MIDDLE LEVEL ATHLETICS

OVERVIEW: In 1992, a Middle Level Athletic task force was formed to gather and evaluate information about middle level athletic programs. The result of that committee was the DPI's publications Middle Level Athletic Programs (referred to as the *Blue Book*). This publication discusses the history of middle level athletics and the intended outcomes and philosophies of successful middle level athletic programs.

MAJOR TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. The history of middle level athletics and the development of the *Blue Book*

2. The basic premise of the *Blue Book*
 - a. Parents become informed about the issues surrounding middle level athletics and the program in their schools
 - b. The role of athletics at the middle level school
 - c. The need to clarify the term "To have fun"
 - d. The issue of middle-level athletics success and how this will indicate the future of athletes at the high school

1. THE HISTORY OF MIDDLE LEVEL ATHLETICS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE *BLUE BOOK*

- a. The *Blue Book* was developed basically due to membership and nonmembership schools requesting a need for guidelines.
- b. A more appropriate name for this periodical would be:

A Common Sense Approach to Middle Level Athletics

- c. The book was written to provide schools an opportunity to examine their programs and initiate change.
- d. Why were schools looking for guidelines?

Because the educational community raised important issues about middle level athletics and asked the following questions:

- Why did so many of these programs fail to promote physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle?
 - Why did increasing numbers of young adolescents "drop out" of organized athletic programs as they got older?
 - What happens when young adolescents hear conflicting directions from coaches, who didn't model the very behavior they expected from their athletes?
 - What is the result on athletes when coaches' and parents' behaviors communicate that winning was everything?
 - What happens when athletic seasons extend or overlap with other sports' programs, non-athletic school programs, or family activities.
 - What is the true purpose of middle level athletic programs for the young adolescent?
- e. What is the basic mission of the *Blue Book*?
 - The *Blue Book* provides resources for school district and community-based athletic programs seeking to develop, evaluate and/or revise athletic programs for young adolescents.
 - f. Compare your present program with the philosophies discussed in the *Blue Book*.
 - Middle level athletics is an essential part of the total educational process, and an excellent opportunity for the home, school and community to work together.
 - Middle level athletics offers young adolescents an opportunity to work cooperatively with others, while developing and improving physical skills.

2. THE BASIC PREMISE OF THE *BLUE BOOK*

- a. The program Philosophy found in the *Blue Book*

- The mission of middle level athletics is to provide a safe enjoyable educational experience for young adolescents based on their developmental characteristics and needs.
 - The development of the young adolescent’s self-esteem, citizenship, responsibility, skills in cooperative and leadership behaviors are positive outcomes of appropriate middle level athletic programs.
- b. The primary purpose of middle level athletics
 - Discuss what you feel is the primary purpose of middle level athletics.
 - c. The developmental characteristics of young adolescents should provide the foundation for the middle level athletic program philosophy and goals.

3. PARENTS NEED TO BE INFORMED ABOUT THE ISSUES SURROUNDING MIDDLE LEVEL ATHLETICS AND THE PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN THEIR SCHOOLS

- a. Philosophy of the district middle level athletic policy as it relates to parents
 - Discuss your district’s middle level athletic philosophy.
- b. Parents’ role in middle level programs
 - What role should parents play in the middle level athletic program?
 - Sports is an arena where parents are especially prone to projecting their fantasies onto their adolescents.
- c. Parental meetings each season
 - Why are parent meetings important?
- d. Parental expectations
 - What do you expect from your parents?
- e. Student expectations
 - What do you expect of your student athletes?
- f. Expectations of the coach by parents and student athletes.

4. THE ROLE OF ATHLETICS IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

- a. Athletics should be a part of a total educational experience
 - What do you see as the important role of athletics in the total educational experience?
- b. Policies should promote participation
 - What policies need to be developed to promote participation?
- c. Season length should be set so time and energy are not taken away from academics
 - In your opinion, what should be the ideal length of your particular season to avoid taking time and energy away from academics?
- d. Well-designed programs should appeal to a variety of student participants
 - Discuss what a well-designed program means to you.

5. THE NEED TO CLARIFY “TO HAVE FUN”

- a. It is the coach’s responsibility to provide a good experience for the student participants
 - If you were a student participant in your program, what would constitute a positive experience?
 - Abusive and foul language has no place in athletic programs.
- b. The term “to have fun” does not mean the absence of rules and discipline
 - Discuss appropriate rules and discipline, which will insure a fun experience.
 - Coaches must recognize their responsibility to model appropriate behavior at all times and they must motivate their athletes to do the same.
- c. Fun means fairness in treatment, communication and a sense of self-worth established in every athlete

- Discuss how you would make sure all student athletes are treated fairly and in a way that builds self-worth and open lines of communication.
- d. Student athletes need to make progress in skill development and a sense of team pride
- What will you use to measure skill improvement and team pride?

6. THE MISCONCEPTION OF MIDDLE LEVEL SUCCESS (WINNING AND LOSING) AND HOW THIS MAY INDICATE THE SUCCESS OF THE ATHLETE AT THE HIGH SCHOOL

- a. The prima donna athlete.
- What is the best way to control prima donna athletes?
 - What is the best way to control their parents?
- b. Middle level athletics, not a determining factor in the success or future of athletes at the varsity level.
- Be aware that skill levels can change dramatically from the middle level to high school. i.e. Michael Jordan
- c. The late bloomer
- How would you nurture the potential “late bloomer” to insure a successful experience?
- d. Club Sports
- How can school and clubs work together for the good of the student athletes?

UNIT TWO

PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT

OVERVIEW: Young adolescents are faced with a wide range of emotional, physical, psychological and social needs between the ages of 10-14. Participation in middle level athletics directly relates to these needs. It is essential for coaches to assist their athletes in meeting their needs.

MAJOR TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. The meaning of “fair treatment for everyone”
2. The attention span of the young adolescent in planning practices and in game preparation
3. The emotional needs of the young adolescent
4. The physical development of young adolescents and what affects that has on planning and in game preparation
5. Time commitment expectations for young adolescents – in and out of season

1. THE MEANING OF FAIR TREATMENT

- a. Does fair play mean equal?
 - Participation in practices and contest
 - Organizing groups, squads and teams
 - Assistance, attention, time to individuals and different groups
- b. What is fair and unfair treatment?
 - Favoring some over others
 - Different rules for athletes, groups
 - Different expectations for athletes in the group
- c. Should expectations of an athlete be considered and included?
- d. How should practices/contest attendance be handled for your athlete? (excused, unexcused, which athletes)
 - Medical and other appointments
 - Academic help or discipline consequences
 - Other activity involvement
 - Vacations

2. THE ATTENTION SPAN OF THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT

- a. Their typical **attention** span is approximately five minutes.
 - Should athletes be expected to give full attention for whatever length of time a coach needs? Why?
- b. Their typical **retention** span is approximately eight minutes.
 - How much time should coaches give athletes to learn different parts of the activity’s components?
- c. What are some examples of lack of attention by athletes?
- d. How should the following lack of attention situations be handled?
 - Wandering around
 - Day Dreaming
 - Fooling around
 - Looking around

- e. What can coaches do to accommodate the attention and retention span of their athletes?
 - Varied types of presentations
 - Varied drills and activities with repetition
 - Breaks in intensity
 - High level of participation
 - Regular, continual coach interaction and attention

3. THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT

- a. Use a combination of giving directions, making suggestions, praise and encouragement, constructively criticize, provide understanding, set reasonable standards, expectations, accountability and fairness.
- b. Do not embarrass, belittle, humiliate, demean, make fun of, put down, scream/yell, intimidate, negatively single out an athlete OR allow athletes to do the same to each other.
 - What negative effect do these things have on the emotional state of young adolescents?
 - How can this affect a coach's situation?

4. THE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT

- a. Characteristics to understand and consider
 - Uneven growth of bones and muscles
 - Varied development resulting in a wide range of differences in height, weight and body structure.
 - Disproportionate growth in arms, legs, hands and feet
 - Varied physical abilities, strength, endurance, coordination and performance abilities.
- b. Why is it important for coaches to consider physical characteristics when organizing, planning, implementing and evaluating each of the following?
 - Practice
 - Squads/teams
 - Game plans
 - Expectations
 - Individuals
- c. What are some of the short term AND long term problems that may result, for young adolescents, by ignoring their physical characteristics when organizing, planning, implementing and evaluating your programs?
 - Young adolescents tend to have feelings of social and personal inadequacy. A poor athletic program can inappropriately strengthen these feelings, yielding damaging results that can last a lifetime. Children in the age group also crave positive relationship outside the home by seeking social experiences within their peer groups. A good middle school athletic program can provide for these needs in a positive way that will strengthen children for life.

5. TIME COMMITMENT FOR YOUNG ADOLESCENTS – IN AND OUT OF SEASON

- a. School programs should be set up on Monday through Friday basis, unless facility conflicts require some contest on a weekend.
- b. Length of a season, length of practices, number and type of contests should be limited.
 - Refer to the WIAA Official Middle Level Handbook – Grades 6-8
- c. Specialization in a specific sport is not philosophically in line with middle level concepts.
- d. Tournaments (state, regional, national, weekend), out of season, summer, and certain camp programs in addition to school programs could lead to elitism, excessive pressure to attend, and burnout.

UNIT THREE

ADMINISTRATION OF MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS

OVERVIEW: The administration of middle level athletics is crucial to the success of middle level programs. The middle level coach's awareness and knowledge of first aid and injury procedures, possible legal concerns, the coaching evaluation process and the interaction with officials, contributes to the success of middle level athletes.

MAJOR TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. First aid and injury procedures coaches should be expected to know and follow
2. Legal issues for coaches to consider
3. Evaluating coaches
4. Coaches and officials working together

1. FIRST AID AND INJURY PROCEDURES

Coaches should be expected to know and follow:

- a. School Board/building policies included in all emergency and safety procedures.
 - Who will be contacted if there is an injury to an athlete?
 - What forms need to be filled out and submitted to the office?
 - What is the time frame for submitting these forms?
- b. Emergency information (including medical concerns) present at all practices and contests.
 - Where is the emergency information kept during practices and contests?
- c. General first aid procedures.
 - What first aid procedures may be needed to be administered to athletes?
 - Who is responsible for taping needs?
 - As a coach, how will you prepare yourself for emergency/first aid situations?
- d. Emergency procedures for serious injuries. (911 calls)
 - Where is the nearest phone and do you have access to that phone?
 - How will parents/guardians be contacted?
 - What follow up procedures need to be completed?
- e. Physicians' directions for injured athletes upon their return.
 - After an injury, to whom will the rehabilitation referrals be made and by whom?
 - Athletes should have a signed physician's release before being allowed to return to practices or contests.
 - Keep all physicians' directives for at least one year from the date of the athlete's return.

2. LEGAL ISSUES

Coaches should make sure:

- a. All equipment is inspected and is safe for use by their athletes.
 - Has the equipment been reconditioned by a certified reconditioning company?
 - Is your equipment passed down from the high school and is it safe to use?
- b. Athletes are appropriately supervised at all practices and contests.

- How are your athletes supervised before practice and after practices prior to being picked up by their parents?
- How are athletes supervised before, during and after contests?
- Do you have rules for athletes on away trips?
 - Transportation to away events
 - Not returning with the team from an away event
- c. They use reasonable, responsible, and good coaching techniques appropriate for the young adolescent.
 - What are reasonable expectations to have for the athletes at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the season.
- d. They understand the differences in opposite gender coaching.
 - What are the differences between coaching female and male athletes?
 - How do female coaches gain the respect from male athletes?
 - How do you coach athletes who are opposite your gender?
 - How do coaches approach working with female athletes on male teams?

3. EVALUATING COACHES

Coaches should:

- a. Know what their expectations are prior to the start of the season.
 - What is expected of you as a coach? (head/assistant)
- b. Have a clear understanding of the evaluation process. (head/assistant)
 - How will the evaluation be conducted based on the expectations of the program.
 - Who will conduct the evaluation?
- c. Have an evaluation tool or plan that includes interaction between athletes, parents and officials.
 - How should you respond when challenged about a decision or action?
 - How should you respond when challenged by a parent about their child's playing time? An athlete about their playing time?
- d. Know and respect the rules.
 - State association rules
 - Individual sport rules
 - School rules
 - Conference rules, if appropriate

4. COACHES AND OFFICIALS WORKING TOGETHER

Coaches:

- a. Should go over standards of play, conference rules/differences and other expectations.
- b. Must be a positive role model
 - How do you respond to an official's decision that goes against your team?
 - How do you respond when an athlete is disrespectful to an official?
 - What is your responsibility, when a parent is heckling an official?
- c. Must keep their emotions under control and the event in perspective.
 - How do you maintain a positive attitude during a controversial discussion with an official?
 - How do you react and respond, when your contest is officiated by someone you have had difficulty with before?

UNIT FOUR

THE ROLE OF THE MIDDLE LEVEL COACH

OVERVIEW: The middle level coach is a key part of the total school program. Coaching decisions made at this level can have a lifelong impact on young adolescents. This unit, "The Role of the Middle Level Coach" provides appropriate direction and insight for those assuming the critical role of a **middle school coach**.

MAJOR TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. A successful middle level coach
2. Coach's expectations at the middle level and who will influence them
3. Forming teams around different levels of talent
4. Season limitations and participation with outside select and special interest teams
5. Parental involvement in the program
6. Parental meetings
7. Dealing with scheduling conflicts in athletic and other school activities in the lives of the young adolescent
8. Athletics as a motivational tool for the young adolescent
9. Middle school versus high school

1. A SUCCESSFUL MIDDLE LEVEL COACH

- a. Is winning an expectation? If so, whose expectation?

Winning should not be the primary goal of the program

- Programs should promote behaviors that include cooperation, sportsmanship and personal improvement.
- Middle level athletes should receive positive reinforcement regardless of the outcome of a game.

- b. A good coach is a good teacher.

- What do you see as the characteristics of a good coach at this level?

- c. A good coach has a workable knowledge of the young adolescent.

- Should coaches at different levels be judged with different expectations?

- d. A good coach promotes cooperation, sportsmanship, and personal improvement.

- How can you help other coaches, so they will make sound coaching judgements for the good of the young adolescent and not based on wins or losses?
- As a coach what can or should you do when you observe inappropriate coaching practices?

2. COACH'S EXPECTATIONS AT THE MIDDLE LEVEL AND THE INFLUENCE OF OTHERS

- a. The middle school principal:

- Is the educational leader of the building.

- b. The athletic director:

- Works in cooperation with the principal in administering all aspects of the middle school program.

- c. High school coaches:

- Want athletes ready to compete at the high school level.

- d. Community

- May influence the direction of the program (positive or negative).

- e. Parents:
 - Want what is best for their child.
 - May be over reactive. Be ready with strategies to defuse the situation.

3. FORMING TEAMS AROUND DIFFERENT LEVELS OF TALENT

- a. Will the talent be on one team or equally divided?
- b. Who should you schedule?
- c. What is the conference's philosophy on forming squads?

4. SEASONS LIMITATIONS AND PARTICIPATION WITH SELECT/SPECIAL INTEREST TEAMS

- a. Tie these issues in with the educational expectations, the physical needs and the limitations of the young adolescent.
- b. How do these outside activities affect your athletes academically? Physically?
- c. Could these types of teams create a one-dimensional person?

5. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROGRAM

- a. Have parents attend preseason meetings.
 - These meetings are a good time to inform parents regarding the rules and regulations concerning your program. These rules and regulations should be in writing and handed out to parents so they have a copy.
 - Keep attendance of who attended your meeting. This may be of value if you have a confrontation with a parent later in the season.
- b. Ensure that their son/daughter attends all practices.
- c. What level of commitment do you want from your athletes and their parents?
- d. How will you deal with upset parents?
 - Set parameters before talking with parents (have someone with you; meet at a later time, etc.). Inform the athletic director and principal so they are not left out on a limb – they can defend you much better if they are at least alerted.

6. PARENT MEETINGS (AGENDA ITEMS)

Discuss:

- a. How scheduling physicians' appointments will effect participation.
- b. The commitment to the program you expect both from the parent and from the athlete.
- c. The expectations of how you will administer the program as you have been directed by district policy.
 - What is your district philosophy?
 - Winning versus losing.
 - Playing time.
 - How team will be formed?
 - Will there be cutting? How will the cuts be made and by whom?
 - Who to call when parents have a problem?
 - When is it appropriate time to make those calls or talk with a coach? (Be sure to emphasize that right after a game is not a good time)
 - Athletic Code
 - Discipline
- d. How absence from practice will be dealt with, and how it will effect your athletes' playing time.
 - Staying after school for academic help.
 - Staying after school for disciplinary reason.

- e. How your program will be different from a varsity program.
- f. How **WINNING IS NOT THE PRIMARY GOAL AT THIS LEVEL.**
 - What is the primary goal? (Commitment to team, skill development, teamwork, etc.)
- g. How your program fits into the total academic community.
 - School and academics should always be the **number one** concern of everyone.
 - Performance in the classroom directly affects how your athletes will perform on the athletic field or court.
 - *If an athlete is not dedicated and committed enough to turn in all academic work and perform at a passing level – how can they turn the switch on after school when the going gets tough?*

7. DEALING WITH SCHEDULING CONFLICTS IN ATHLETICS AND OTHER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- a. Scheduling conflicts for practice time and attendance at play practice, music events, and field trips should be resolved by the adults and not your athletes.
 - Conflicts should be worked out between the adults. Athletes should not be forced to work out scheduling conflicts – it is too emotional and pulls your athletes in all different directions.
- b. Schools should have a master calendar with all scheduled activities listed on the calendar.
 - To avoid scheduling conflicts for your athletes, you should develop your schedule early and in cooperation with administration.
- c. Practices must end at the assigned time, since parents may have traveled or changed their schedule to pick up their child after practice.

8. ATHLETICS AS A MOTIVATIONAL TOOL FOR THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT

- a. Coaches need to be aware that athletics are an integral part of the total middle school program. They must understand the importance of the school's academic and behavioral expectations for their athletes and themselves.
 - Research studies have established the following conclusions: On an average, when students are involved in extracurricular activities they maintain higher grade point averages and have better attendance patterns than the rest of the student population.
- b. Athletes, parents, and coaches need to understand that, **ATHLETICS IS A PRIVILEGE NOT A RIGHT.**
 - Discuss that term. What does it mean and how does it affect your program?

9. MIDDLE SCHOOL VERSUS HIGH SCHOOL

- a. Policies need to be consistent keeping in mind the length of seasons between high school and middle school, as well as the difference between the two programs including philosophy.
- b. Coaches need to be consistent in the administration of all rules/policies, taking into consideration the length of the middle school season.
 - Usually shorter than the high school season.
 - Can be during a different time frame than high school seasons.

UNIT FIVE

PRINCIPLES OF COACHING

OVERVIEW: This unit was developed with the premise that many middle level coaches may be new to coaching, as well as coaches moving to the middle level from the varsity level. In both cases, there needs to be an awareness that athletes at the middle level must have practices, drills, offenses, defenses, which are appropriate for their age, physical development and psychological needs. It is the desired outcome to have all athletes respond in an enthusiastic manner, by providing them with a safe and enjoyable learning experience.

COACHES NEED TO BE AWARE THAT MIDDLE LEVEL ATHLETES ARE VULNERABLE AND ARE EXTREMELY INFLUENCED BY THEIR COACHES. YOU, THE ADULT LEADER, HAVE THE POWER TO GREATLY AFFECT THEIR FUTURE.

MAJOR TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. A good teacher/coach
2. Individual philosophies
3. Organization of practices
4. Strategies and game preparation
5. Motivation of your athletes
6. The importance of communication (with the athletes, parents, colleagues, and administration)

1. A GOOD TEACHER/COACH

- a. A good coach should be a good teacher.
 - Your ability to help your athletes to improve their skills is a key to winning their respect.
- b. What do you expect from your athletes?
 - What kind of commitment?
- c. **YOU** are the role model for your athletes, **YOU** must lead by example, **YOU** are the teacher.
 - What do you remember about a coach or teacher that greatly influenced you?
 - What attributes impressed you?
 - What do you remember about practices that you enjoyed?
 - What caused you to be bored at practice?
- d. Don't cheat your profession.
 - Remember your commitment to the classroom and your students.
 - Attend all required meetings.
- e. Attend your athletes' other activities.
 - Show an interest in what your athletes do outside of your program.
- f. Be an active member of the educational community.

2. INDIVIDUAL PHILOSOPHIES OF COACHING

- a. Never forget how it felt when you were an athlete.
 - What made you feel good or want to perform at your peak?
- b. Set your "game plan" to the skill level of your athletes.

- When an athlete cannot accomplish an assigned task, reflect, is it too difficult and did I communicate my expectations clearly.
- c. Athletes will make mistakes – they are part of the game.
 - As their coach, how will you react? Punishing for mistakes can lead to a fear of failure and harm a player’s future performance. Your reaction to mistakes can affect how they feel about themselves, sports, and you.
 - d. Never leave an athlete without discussing why you yelled at them.
 - Coach John Wooden called mistakes “stepping stones to achievement.” By teaching your athletes that mistakes are not to be feared, that they are a way to improve performance, your players will accept and learn from their mistakes. And they won’t be afraid to try.
 - e. Experts recommend a three-part approach to giving corrective instruction:
 - Find something the athlete did right and compliment him/her to reinforce that behavior. (“Way to hustle”)
 - Give constructive suggestions, emphasizing not on the error, but the good things that will happen if they follow your instructions. (“Next time follow the ball all the way to the glove. Soon you’ll be catching them all”)
 - Offer encouragement. (“Stay with it! You’ll improve even more if you work at it”)
 - f. What motivated you and create a similar atmosphere for your team?
 - YOU ARE THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN THEIR LIFE: BE CAREFUL
 - g. Surveys support middle level athletes play to have “FUN.”
 - Never lose that thought
 - h. What is fun?
 - Consistency of the rules
 - Good coaching and teaching with well-organized practices
 - Very little emphasis placed on winning
 - Help them to improve their skills
 - Always end practice or contest on a high note
 - i. What is your philosophy?
 - Should all athletes be treated the same?
 - Can all athletes be treated the same?
 - How will you motivate your athletes?

3. ORGANIZATION OF PRACTICES

- a. Remember the attention span of this age athlete.
 - How do practices need to be adjusted to meet the physical and psychological needs of your athletes?
- b. Each drill should have a purpose
 - to teach a skill
 - for conditioning

They have different expectation
- c. Watch for boredom or fatigue.
 - Change format of practices if you are losing them.
- d. What constitutes a good practice?
 - Remember back when you played?
 - Use the good stuff.
- e. Look at the entire practice as a part of teaching. This will help keep a more active practice.
 - What will you do if the practice starts to drag and you are losing their attention and effort?

4. STRATEGIES AND GAME PREPARATION

- a. Learn your athletes' individual strength and weaknesses and develop your game plan within those limitations.
- b. Don't be afraid to look for outside resources for developing your game plan.
- c. Take into account the skill level of your athletes.
 - How does your game plan need to be adjusted to meet the skills of your athletes?
 - If you cannot run off tackle on Thursday night, you will not see a miracle on Friday night.

5. MOTIVATION OF YOUR ATHLETES

- a. Make the effort to deal with each athlete as an individual.
- b. Always remember what motivated you.
- c. Communication is a key to motivation.
- d. Know the difference between motivation and manipulation.
 - What is the difference between motivation and manipulation?
 - What are some key issues you like or dislike from your playing days in regards to motivation?
- e. Surveys show that athletes are looking for fairness in rules and their application.
 - Coaches need to be firm, fair and **CONSISTENT**.
- f. Apply all rules equally.
 - If you bend a rule, all your athletes and their parents will know and they will judge you accordingly.
 - Use communication at this point or you may lose their respect.

6. COMMUNICATION: With athletes, parents, colleague and administration

- a. Knowledge is power. Know when to empower your athletes.
- b. Athletes and parents can deal with what they know.
 - How much information will you share with the athletes, and/or their parents?
 - Your expectations of the program
 - Your philosophy
- c. If a coach cannot communicate, they will never be able to motivate.
 - When or how will you share information?
 - Limitations you would place on talking with you?
 - After games
 - Shopping
 - Out with your family
- d. Keep your emotions on an even keel at all times. Your athletes need to have a comfort zone.
 - When are you too close to your athletes?
- e. If you are not feeling well, let your athletes know, they can adjust for that day.
- f. Good communication will create an atmosphere in which you can gain trust and confidence from your athletes.

ASSESSMENT

Questions to be used upon completion of the Middle Level Coaches Education Course. Along with additional types of assessment as determined by the local athletic/activities directors and administrators.

Unit One: What do you feel are the five important aspects of middle level philosophy? Explain each of your answers.

Unit Two: Keeping in mind the physical, psychological and emotional needs of the young adolescent, what do you need to do as a coach to provide the most meaningful, effective, appropriate, responsible experience for your athletes?

Unit Three: Name the four areas of administration, explain why these areas are important to middle level athletics, and how they affect you as a coach.

Unit Four: Immediately following a middle school basketball game, a visibly upset father approaches you on the court. Before you can even acknowledge him, he tells you that if his son had played more minutes, your team would/could have won the game.

- How would you respond including key components from Unit Four?

Unit Five: What is your coaching philosophy, and how does that fit into the main responsibilities of a coach as listed in the unit (planning, modifying communicating, performances, etc.)?

ASSESSMENT: UNIT ONE
PHILOSOPHY OF MIDDLE LEVEL ATHLETICS

Based on the materials and information from Unit One, complete the following assessment.

1. The Blue Book provides a background of appropriate outcomes/philosophies for successful middle level athletic programs.
Circle the correct response True / False

2. Check all of the following topics needed to be included when providing parents information about your middle level athletic program(s).
 - _____ expectations of your student athlete
 - _____ the school and your goals/objectives
 - _____ explanation of your budget
 - _____ middle level athletic philosophy to be followed
 - _____ roll of parents
 - _____ school academic descriptions
 - _____ expectations of you for the parents

3. Athletics are an entity separate from and not related to your student athlete's academic performance.
Circle the correct response True / False

4. Two ways to promote participation in our program(s) are...

5. In your opinion, what are the two most important features for you to include in providing a well-designed program?

6. Check all of the following that need to be part of your program, so your student athletes "have fun".
 - _____ abusive, inappropriate language
 - _____ reasonable rules and discipline
 - _____ constructive, positive experiences
 - _____ favoritism, selective participation
 - _____ varied activities
 - _____ opportunities for success
 - _____ high expectations and goals

ASSESSMENT: UNIT TWO
PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT

Based on the materials and information from Unit Two, complete the following assessment.

1. Check all of the following that fit into the meaning of fair treatment of your student athlete.

- working with higher ability student athletes more than those with lower ability
- uniform rules and expectations & enforcement
- participation for all
- unorganized activities and practices
- considering other responsibilities and commitments of your student athletes when planning your program(s)

2. Your student athletes should be expected to give you and your program(s) their full attention at all times, for the entire practice or contest, and learn what is needed in whatever time frame you set.

Circle the correct response True / False

3. During one of your presentations, a student athlete is looking around and day dreaming. A positive way to handle that situation is...

4. Student athletes, who are behavior problems or make mistakes, can be effectively handled by making an example of them/singling them out/yelling at them, so they and others get a clear picture of your authority.

Circle the correct response True / False

5. Your student athletes vary in physical development, therefore, their physical characteristics are important when organizing, planning, implementing, and evaluating your program(s).

Circle the correct response True / False

6. Three time commitment considerations for your program(s) are...

ASSESSMENT: UNIT THREE
ADMINISTRATION OF MIDDLE LEVEL ATHLETICS

Based on the materials and information from Unit Three, complete the following assessment.

1. Check all of the points you as a coach are expected to know and follow, relative to first aid and injury procedures.

School Board, your building, and athletic department policies and guidelines
 general first aid and emergency procedures
 not my responsibility
 location of necessary information, materials, supplies and equipment

2. The safe condition and quality of the equipment for your use is legally your responsibility along with your athletic director.

Circle the correct response True / False

3. You are responsible for appropriate supervision of your student athletes before, during, and after practices/contests/trips.

Circle the correct response True / False

4. In your opinion, what are the two most important considerations you need as an opposite gender coach?

5. As a coach you will be evaluated. Check all points you need to know, understand, and follow before you begin your duties.

expectations and responsibilities of the position
 form of evaluation and process
 salary and benefits
 those involved in the process
 rules and guidelines

6. Coaches must work together with officials by being a positive role model, which includes control of emotions and perspective of the event.

Circle the correct response True / False

ASSESSMENT: UNIT FOUR
THE ROLE OF THE MIDDLE LEVEL COACH

Based on the materials and information from Unit Four, complete the following assessment.

1. Winning should be the main focus and primary goal of your program.

Circle the correct response True / False

2. Four characteristics of a good/successful coach are...

3. As a coach you are influenced by your athletic director and school administration, but can ignore parents, community, and high school coaches.

Circle the correct response True / False

4. Check all of the following items that you need to include at your parent meeting.

- how student athletes spend their free time
- procedures, rules, regulations and schedules
- commitment/expectations of student athlete
- who the student athlete has to be friends with
- school and your philosophy
- codes, discipline, practices, playing time
- absence from practices and/or contests
- academic considerations

5. Your program, and its schedule for practices and contests, takes priority over church activities, other school activities, academic situations, vacations, and medical appointments that your student athlete may have.

Circle the correct response True / False

6. Athletics, including your program, is a right not a privilege.

Circle the correct response True / False

7. Two ways middle level athletic programs need to be different from high school activities are...

ASSESSMENT: UNIT FIVE
PRINCIPLES OF COACHING AT THE MIDDLE LEVEL

Based on the materials and information from Unit Five, complete the following assessment.

1. You as a coach, the adult leader, have the ability and power to greatly affect the future of your middle level student athletes because they are...

2. To be a good coach, you need to be a good teacher, a role model, and lead by example.

Circle the correct response True / False

3. As a coach your philosophy needs to reflect positive instructional and motivational techniques, consideration for varied ability levels, consistency, age appropriateness, and little emphasis on fun or self esteem.

Circle the correct response True / False

4. List three considerations you need to include when organizing your practices.

5. An overall key to being an effective, good, successful coach is appropriate communication. List the five most important groups of people you as a coach need to include in your communication network.
