



CIAC COACHES UPDATE

CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

www.ciacsports.com

2014 Volume V Issue II *Dr. Bob Lehr, Editor*

This month's Update is about the development of new, well rounded coaches for our nation's youth. The Coach Across America program began in 2009 and is primarily committed to training and supporting coaches in under-resourced communities. This movement has gained traction and is rapidly growing throughout the United States.

By the time you receive this edition of Update, the spring season will be well underway and the CIAC championships will be rapidly approaching. Good luck to all of the spring coaches and their respective teams. For the coaches of fall sports teams or winter sports teams, now is the time for planning, organizing off-season conditioning program and studying the art and science of your sport. It might also be a worthwhile exercise to study all that is involved in coaching a different sport and then transferring relevant coaching insights into your own efforts.

Included in this edition is a copy of a coaches self-reflection. Feel free to use it for your personal assessment of your coaching efforts.

Bob Lehr, Editor

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Creating a Workforce for Sport-based Youth Development: A Three-tiered Coach Mentoring Program for Coach Across America

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A growing number of programs are beginning to utilize the vehicle of sport to engage youth through an approach called sport-based youth development (SBYD). Such programs often work with young athletes from underserved neighborhoods and call for the integration of social and emotional development—along with personal and social responsibility—with athletic skill development. So, does this innovative programming call for a different kind of coaching, and in turn, a different kind of coach training?

In the United States, we often look toward professional sport for answers about coaching, so when most people think of coach development, they are likely to think of top-level coaches learning how to help elite players reach the highest levels of performance. They might also imagine those coaches learning cutting-edge information from experts in sport science or the latest tactical innovations from coach educators. The vast majority of youth coaches, however, never receive any sort of specialized training. Furthermore, professional and elite sport training offer little insight into developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive coaching, which is what is needed when the goal is youth development.

Another obstacle is time: the few hours of required training usually available to most novice coaches are unlikely to produce a cadre of coaches equipped to meet the daunting challenges of working with youth. No matter the kind of training or modeling received, a youth coach will likely feel unprepared, especially in the long term, to deal with the challenges of supporting youth development.

Finally, we might ask from where this cadre of youth sport coaches will come. The need is great, but the preparation, incentives, and support have largely been absent. The local individuals who volunteer to coach in youth sport organizations, most without training, are a critical resource but not a predictable pipeline.

Yet, in spite of these challenges, the basic idea of coaches supporting youth development through sport has tremendous potential for young people, their coaches, and their communities. This is why “Up2Us,” a coalition of sports-based youth development organizations and supporters, started the Coach Across America (CAA) program in 2009. The mission of CAA is to place, train, and support coaches in mostly urban, under-resourced communities throughout the United States. With support from AmeriCorps, the federal program that has also supported Teach for America and America and VISTA, along with private sources, CAA has been able to achieve rapid growth around the country in the last four years.

The question of what kind of coach training would be most beneficial for coaches was central as the CAA program model was developed. From the beginning, the coaches enrolling in the program were young and mostly inexperienced, which presented both exciting opportunities and special challenges. After a highly successful first year, the program nearly doubled in size, at which point Up2Us approached the Boston University Institute for Athletic Coach Education (BU-IACE), to collaborate to devise a more comprehensive coach support mechanism. Earlier in 2011 BU-IACE and Up2Us convened a panel of nationally renowned coach educators and researchers for a facilitated discussion about the future directions of youth coaching in the U.S. Some of the findings from this roundtable were the backdrop for the design of our collaboration with the Up2Us team. The takeaways from the roundtable included the need to create a model of coach education that took a longer look at how youth development occurs, as well as the need for creating “communities of practice” for youth sport coaches.

The Collaboration: Multiple Goals, Multiple Challenges

The collaboration between Up2Us and the BU-IACE started with defining shared goals about the ways in which to shape and enrich the CAA coach experience through support and training. We wanted the coaches to feel they had made a difference in the lives of young people. Additionally, we endeavored to create an environment in which coaches felt supported throughout their service terms and could gain an increased sense of competence in their ability to coach and

work in SBYD environments. Perhaps most importantly, we wanted the coaches to become committed to working in youth development in some capacity for the long-term. Our ultimate goal has always been to increase the size of the workforce devoted to working with kids in underserved communities by providing clear pathways for career development to their youth sport coaches.

On the BU-IACE side, we immediately saw that coaches would have to feel efficacy both in sport coaching and in mentoring and supporting development, so training would need to address both. Our design aimed to support coaches in gaining both an understanding of key principles of positive youth development as well as key considerations of effective coaching. This training would have to be useful for inexperienced coaches – most of the people joining CAA. In addition, these coaches would be scattered across the country, so spatial proximity would be a challenge. Another challenge was time. We know that the development of coaching expertise is a long-term process, so we had to think ahead about what would happen after the one-year service term of a CAA coach. Would they leave the complicated work of sport-based youth development without further support and connections to help them solidify what they had learned? Or, would they choose to stay involved in youth development in some capacity? And, if they remained in youth development, what pathways would these coaches choose?

The Coach as Mentor Model

In the broader context of sport, coaches are admired for their technical and tactical expertise, particularly their ability to help their teams win games. The traditional view of the sport coach is that of a highly directive or “top down” motivator. Such emphasis may be acceptable in elite and professional sport, but youth sport demands ways of coaching that are developmentally and culturally sensitive and “athlete-centered” (Kidman & Lombardo, 2010). Additionally, we took into account what is known about promoting effective coaching and the coach’s role as an educator (Jones, 2009). Our approach with the CAA coaches, therefore, sought to redefine the traditional role.

The “coach as mentor” model we designed for CAA coaches draws from results in the field of mentoring research (Karcher & Nukkala, 2011). We worked directly with Michael Karcher to learn from his work on effective mentoring relationships. In their TEAM model for mentoring, Karcher and Nukkala identified the mentoring styles that are most effective with young people. By adapting their understanding of mentoring to sport coaches, we believed the CAA coaches would benefit from learning about how their own interactional styles – their natural tendencies when interacting with young athletes – might impact their developing relationships with the participants of their programs. Learning about effective mentoring would help them serve youth, and might have the potential to be mutually transformational – enriching the lives of both the youth and the coaches themselves.

In this model, the content of what coaches would learn would include supporting their understanding of these mentoring styles (known in Karcher’s work as the “developmental” and “instrumental” styles of mentoring). But how are inexperienced coaches supposed to become good at mentoring young people, particularly those in under-resourced settings, who are often coping with a variety of stresses and life challenges? What are the tools and methods we used in this work with the first-year coaches? We wanted to provide weekly support over the first year, knowing that this would be a long-term intensive developmental process.

Core Elements and Methods of the Coach as Mentor Model

There are several principles that guide our work at the BU-IACE. One principle is that positive coaching change is a process that takes time. As many others have learned, it is unlikely that meaningful learning would result from a quick fix or a single workshop.

Moreover, coaches who are committed to SBYD can best learn from a triad of sources that work together over the long term. These are (1) self-reflection, (2) peer-assessment/sharing, and (3) occasional mentor assessment and advice. We have found that while there are many places to learn about coaching, and many resources can be found on the web and in print, real insight about one’s own coaching practice is likely to come from these three reflective and interactional sources.

We reasoned that working successfully with CAA’s first year coaches would depend in large part on how well we could do

three things: (1) facilitate their on-going self-reflection, (2) promote peer-sharing and facilitate the connection between CAA coaches, and (3) foster the habit of new coaches seeking assistance from their mentor or other experienced professionals. These three pathways to development aligned well with CAA's configuration: a group of first-year coaches to which we could add a group of "coach mentor" graduate students from the Boston University programs in coaching and in sport psychology. At the top of the pyramid would be an expert mentor who could provide feedback and support to the Level II coach mentors. In the initial year, the way the coach mentoring structure was organized can be seen in Figure 1. Later, we will describe the ways in which the structure differed in the second year.



Given these elements and methods, and taking into account the geographically distributed nature of the coach training sites, we designed the intervention to include the following experiences and tools.

Intense Initial Training - National Training Institute

We utilized intense initial training that took place over three and a half days at Boston University. During this time, coaches attended sessions focused on aspects of culture building, mentoring and youth development, and leadership. Most of the learning was facilitated in hands-on workshop style. This included an entire morning of "coaching circuits," where coaches played attention-getting games, learned to facilitate active warm-ups and discussions, and ways in which to teach sport skills and give effective demonstrations. By the second day of training, the coaches were challenged to take their new skills and apply them locally by working directly with children in youth centers across Boston.

On-line Resources and Meetings

New technologies offer exciting new possibilities for delivering coach education and training. We were able to make use of several online resources in a synergistic manner to help coaches reflect and to use their reflections in order to provide targeted support. The first component was an online tool for reflection used to make online meetings more focused.

Reflection logs "America Learns" is an online platform that supports reflective journaling. Used by many AmeriCorps programs around the country, America Learns has been a part of CAA from the start. Our coach mentoring team created a sequence of America Learns questions that were posed to participants throughout the year. From year one, we studied the type of questions that the coaches would find useful to answer. These questions, provided monthly, were aimed at learning about their challenges, as well as acting as a refresher on key topics presented at the initial training.

For example, we emphasized the importance of providing a clear and consistent structure in youth sport programs during initial training. One of the follow-up America Learns questions to support this learning asked: Now that you have been at your site for a few weeks, what are the ways you have established clear and consistent structure in your program? The Learns logs were arranged to revisit such key concepts at least three times throughout the year. Aside from supporting the original training with variations on the same theme, we were also able to mine CAA coach responses for productive ideas regarding the ways in which to accomplish creating clear and consistent structure in different types of programs. At the same time, we were able to assess a range of issues that the coaches face to see their struggles.

Remote learning (webinars) Webinars are a relatively new tool, implemented monthly throughout year two of the model that helped us solve multiple problems. First, we know that development of coaching knowledge takes time, so our training would have to continue through the year, and we knew that there were many topics that we could only touch upon during the initial national training institute. Second, because the new coaches were scattered across the country, we would have a hard time creating a sense of community that could aid their development. To solve these problems, we provided monthly webinars at a designated time during the day. We usually received 25-30 participants at the time of the webinar. Because of time differences, we understood we would not be able to reach everyone at the same time, so we made the webinar content available to all when it was convenient for them. The webinars were rich with multimedia videos, Prezis, diagrams, interactive chats, and whiteboard and other participation options, such as video conferencing.

This really brought home the idea of a “community of practice” (Lave & Wenger) because the format prioritized as much participation as the platform would allow. The webinar format also helped reinforce initial training content: “Institute Flashbacks,” reviewed material from the initial training institute. Most importantly, at least half of the webinars were designed as direct responses to concerns that the coaches themselves raised in their America Learns logs. As the mentors read these logs, what they learned fed back into the design of the webinars.

Mentor contact: The graduate students serving as coach mentors during the first year of our collaboration worked with their mentor trainer, an experienced coach and coach trainer with a strong background in SBYD. This constituted the first two layers of our three-tier model.

The six graduate student mentors in year one served to provide some “expert” advice and occasions for self-reflection for the first-year CAA coaches. In addition, mentors often provided a friendly ear – someone to listen to whatever the coach needed to discuss. Mentor-mentee interactions were meant to aid coaches in their overall development as well as provide suggestions and resources for day-to-day interactions with youth.

One of the challenges we encountered concerned the variety of circumstances in which CAA coaches worked. The mentors tried to take into account the specific circumstances of each CAA coach in training, but this was not easy. After their initial training in the intensive summer institute, CAA coaches go back to work in their host site for the entire length of their one year service term. Since host site organizations vary considerably in the type of programming they offer, a coach’s work can differ depending on the host site. For example, if a coach worked at America SCORES, they would be working with seasonal programming around soccer and poetry, whereas if they went to SOS Outreach they would be working with youth in six-week programming slots around skiing and snowboarding and other outdoor sports.



Figure 2. CAA’s Second Coach Mentoring Model

Of course, not all coaches sought the advice and counsel of their mentors, in spite of our best efforts.

The structure of delivery in terms of personnel changed from year one to year two (see Figure 2 above), but the premise remained the same: to provide an experienced person to support and be a sounding board for new coaches. While we are still studying the data to understand and communicate what was effective, it seems mentors also served as a connector between coaches—linking sometimes isolated coaches with other coaches in their region. While some coaches easily made connections with their peers at the initial training, others did not. We aimed to have mentors foster the relationships between coaches.

In the transition from the first year to our second year of working with CAA, there was a clear need for creating a sustainable in-house model for Up2Us, coupled with the organization's original goal to create a career pathway to help young coaches stay involved in youth development. As a result, we utilized the expertise of a handful of young coaches by creating a second year option, in which they would provide peer-leadership for first-year coaches in their region. During the second year, the mentors in Level II were CAA coaches who had finished year one, and showed promise of being peer-leaders. Some of the graduate students who served as direct mentors in the first year shifted to tier III, primarily providing support for second year coaches serving as tier II of the model. These graduate students also had occasional interactions with first year coaches, tier I of the model.

Alignment with National Standards for Sport Coaches: While there is an on-going debate regarding how to get sport coaches at all levels to align their work with the national standards set forth by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), it is somewhat paradoxical that the work we are conducting with CAA coaches and their mentors seems to have the potential to encompass all of the domains of the National Standards for Sport Coaches. These coaches are serving in places that have extreme challenges to everyday programming, but their work within our collaboration with Up2Us has demonstrated potential to show new pathways to pursue alignment with the national standards.

In particular, emphasis was placed upon Domains 1, 4, 5 and 8. In NASPE's coaching standards the first benchmark is "implementing an athlete-centered philosophy" (Domain 1). Domain 4 is a standard that encourages sport-based youth development programs to "utilize sport as a vehicle for developing transferrable life skills." Additionally, training sessions and mentor-mentee conversations were focused on how to best interact with youth from developmental and instrumental perspectives (Karcher, 2010) (Domain 5). Lastly, there was a strong emphasis on coach reflection throughout the year to encourage coaches to consistently evaluate and reflect on their work (Domain 8).

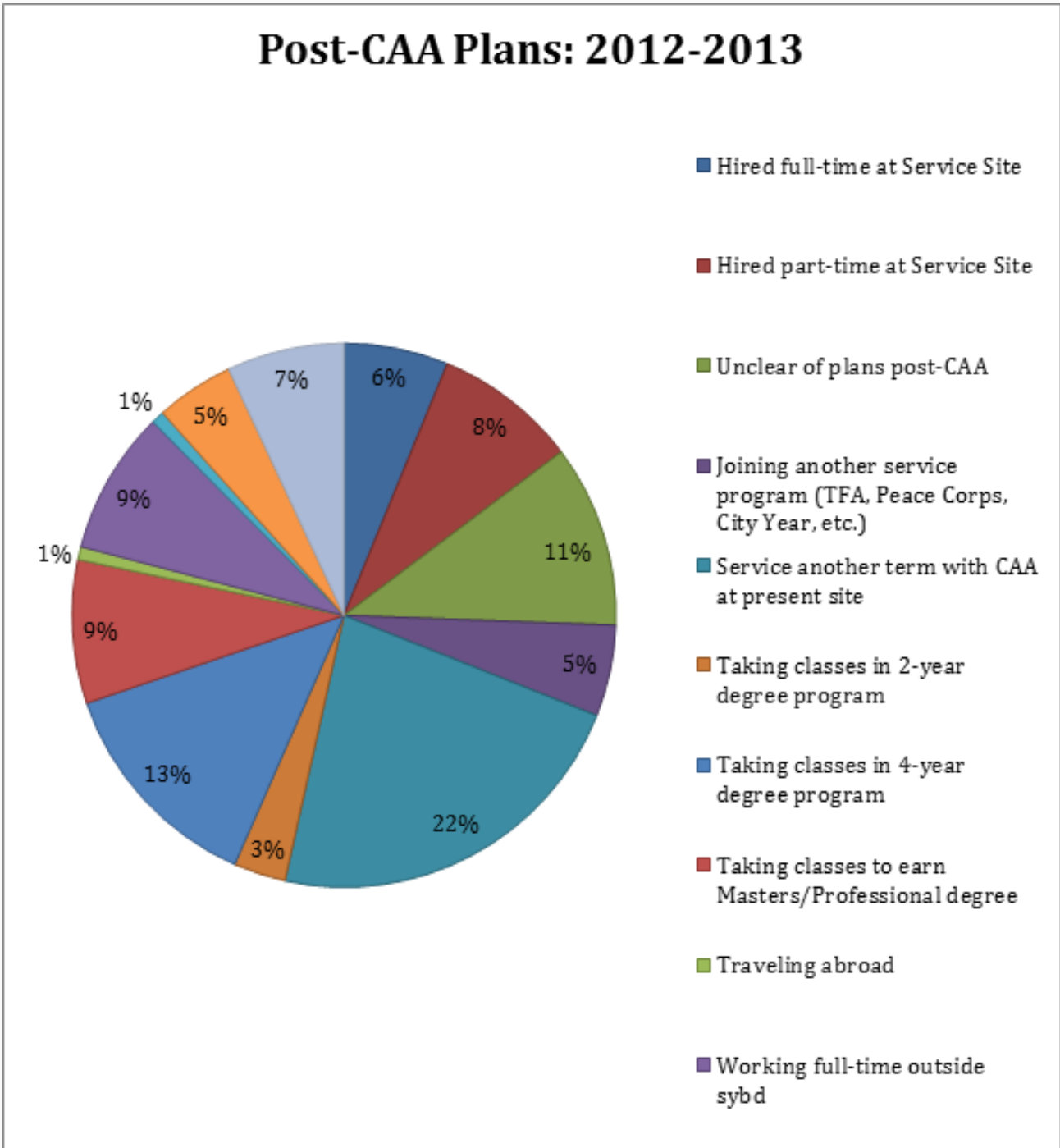
Conclusion

Up2Us has made considerable progress toward their original goal of developing a professional pathway for youth sport workers. The program has made strides in supporting the development of young people as well-trained and competent coaches. While these objectives are a long-term endeavor, we are continuing to examine progress of these goals. For example, we have collected data on coaching efficacy from the viewpoint of CAA coaches, and we will analyze the ways in which this aspect changes or stays the same throughout the year.

Because career pathways are influenced by a variety of factors and take individual turns, it is always a challenge to induct young people into a career pathway. Early data from Up2Us, however, indicates that a high percentage of the young people who choose to participate in a year of service with CAA remain involved in the SBYD sector. At least 75% of CAA alumni from 2009-2012 are staying in the SBYD field in some capacity. Of the coach alumni from 2011-12, 36% are working in a youth serving capacity, either part-time or full-time. A third (34%) are pursuing some form of continuing education (two-year, four-year, or masters or professional degree). Eleven percent were unclear about their future pathway, and others who worked outside the network traveled or followed another career path. In 2012-13, the coach alumni are continuing in a similar way as the previous year, with 41% continuing in a youth-serving capacity either part-time or full-time, 25% pursuing some form of higher education and 11% again unclear about their future pathway.

In this collaboration between CAA/Up2Us and the BU-IACE, we have been able to test several new approaches and tools for youth sport coaching. One tool is the coach as mentor model. Another tool is our two consecutive versions of distance mentoring. Both years of data collected from the America Learns reflective journals will provide further insight

into what young coaches think about their coaching and what they find challenging and helpful in their development. We will also study the usefulness of the webinars initiated in year two, particularly as they are targeted to coaches' stated needs. In our ongoing study of the impact of these models and methods of delivery, we are conducting focus groups with various coaches in the program to gain a better understanding of what methods are most effective and whether the method of delivery is adding value. For example, we are exploring the impact on those coaches who in their first year had no Boston University mentor, in comparison to those in their second year who received mentorship. We will also seek to understand the experience of second-year CAA coaches who took on the role of mentor with Boston University support. We hope this collaboration will continue to provide a dynamic site to both test and evaluate new modes of coach education.



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COACHES SELF - EVALUATION / REFLECTION

Personal Rating Scale:

1. Insufficient / not done
2. Done, but not satisfied or done infrequently
3. Sometimes / average
4. Done most of time, satisfactory
5. Always done, highly satisfactory

TEAM MANAGEMENT

- 1. I remain contemporary by advancing my skills through clinics, readings, etc.
- 2. I collaborate with others to advance my knowledge of my sport.
- 3. I have the knowledge of skills and strategies necessary to coach my sport.
- 4. I effectively use my knowledge to teach the skills of my sport.
- 5. I effectively teach the tactics of my sport.
- 6. I am an effective coach while my team is in competition.
- 7. I plan well-organized practices each day, complete with goals for the day.
- 8. I have a year round plan and a seasonal plan in place for my athletes.
- 9. I use a well-conceived plan for selecting my team.
- 10. I judge talent well.
- 11. My athletes have shown improvement as the season progressed.
- 12. I am an active participant in the coaches association or the conference.
- 13. My team reflects my passion for my sport.
- 14. I submit required paperwork in a timely fashion.
- 15. I submit my scores to the news media as soon as possible after a contest.
- 16. I adhere to CIAC rules as well as school policies.
- 17. I have clearly stated goals and objectives for the season.
- 18. My team knows the goals and objectives for the season.

- 19. I interact with each of my athletes on a daily basis.
- 20. I seek input from my athletes.
- 21. I communicate effectively with each of my athletes.
- 22. I communicate with my athletes parents.
- 23. I do a good job of dealing with conflict or disagreement.
- 24. My team's morale was good.
- 25. I have regularly communicated my training rules and expectations to my athletes and their parents.
- 26. I attempt to develop leadership skills in my athletes.
- 27. My feedback to my athletes is effective and it is timely.
- 28. I provide positive comments to my athletes, often in the form of praise.
- 29. My athletes know that I care for them in their non-sports efforts.

STAFF RELATIONS

- 30. My staff knows my philosophy of coaching.
- 30. I communicate the goals and objectives for practices with my coaches.
- 32. I solicit input from my assistants before making major decisions.
- 33. I treat assistants or other staff members with respect.
- 34. I present opportunities for my staff to develop coaching skills.
- 35. I conduct myself with professionalism at and away from my coaching venue.
- 36. I provide clear direction for my coaching staff.
- 37. My organizational skills set a good example for my staff.
- 38. I encourage cooperation within my staff.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 39. My paperwork is submitted on time and it is done properly.
- 40. All aspects of my program are well organized.
- 41. I promote our program throughout the community.
- 42. I maintain a good relationship with school administrators, teachers, staff, etc.

PERSONAL

- 43. I maintain an appropriate balance between my coaching efforts and my personal life.
- 44. I show concern for others.
- 45. My coaching efforts have been self-rewarding.
- 46. My coaching efforts have positively influenced my student-athletes.

List three things that you thing went very well during the past season:

List three things that you might have done differently or better:

List three things that you will focus on throughout the next season:



SPRING 2014 CEU MODULE OFFERINGS

NO WALK IN REGISTRATIONS

Being offered at CIAC OFFICE
30 Realty Drive, Cheshire, CT

Friday, May 9 - 2014 from 6-9pm

Module 13 - Nutrition, Performing Enhancing Supplements

Saturday, May 10 - 2014 from 8:30-11:30am

Module 5 - CIAC Rules and Regulation

Saturday, May 10 - 2014 from noon-3:00pm

Module 19 - The Impact of Ethical Standards on Youth

Saturday, May 10 - 2014 from 3:00-6:00pm

Module 11 - Coaching the Female Athlete

Monday, May 12, - 2014 from 6-9pm

Module 4 - Legal Aspects of Interscholastic Coaching

Registration for any or all of these 5 modules
must be done online at

<http://www.ctcoachinged.org/CEU.html>





SPRING 2014 CEU MODULES

2 NEW COURSES FOR SWIM AND FOOTBALL COACHES THAT OFFER CEU'S

Saturday, May 10 from Noon-2:30pm

Module 50 - Swimming Pool Safety Training for Swim Coaches and PE Instructors (Classroom Portion Only)

IMPORTANT: Module 50 is a new 2 part module has been developed to help those swim coaches and PE teachers who are not lifeguard certified and who need to comply with the new law. The final completion of this course is predicated upon each participant successfully completing Part 1 of this course "In-Pool" skills prior to taking this classroom portion. For more Information and details about this course visit

<http://ctcoachinged.org/Swimsafetycourseform.pdf>

Monday May 12 from 6-9pm

Module 51 - Safety Training for Football Coaches

This course is designed to assist football coaches to better understand the many new mandates that have been put in place about concussions, contact time in practice, spring contact time limitations, scrimmages contact time, heat, dehydration and other safety techniques to reduce the amount of injuries.

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NOTES FOR COACHES:

* In the event you are audited by the State Department of Education they will first check our database electronically, which will save you time and aggravation. If you have the correct number of hours you will not have to produce the necessary documentation. Our database will ONLY display courses taken from our program. Be careful of any other entities offering courses that claim to be CEU's to make certain they can be used in Connecticut.

* ORIGINAL CONCUSSION CERTIFICATES ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED FOR A RENEWAL APPLICATION.

* ONLINE FIRST AID/CPR CLASSES ARE NOT ACCEPTED BY THE STATE UNLESS THEY HAVE A HANDS ON COMPONENT.

<http://www.ctcoachinged.org/CEU.html>

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