



CSCS LIONS

Christ and Sports Culture

Living God-Centered in a “Sports is god” World

FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S DESK

A Missional Athletic Culture

Throwback time! I pulled out a piece I wrote back in 2016. It highlights what CSCS Athletics should look like. Here's a portion of it. To live it out...CSCS coaches should model this...players should follow this...and parents should support it and reinforce at home.

Recently I picked up a Journal from the NSCAA which is the largest national organization for coaching education in soccer. As I was flipping through the articles, I came across an article titled “Soccer Field, Mission Field: What does it look like when a follower of Jesus leads a team?” by Michael Zigarelli. I couldn't believe it! This is not a Christian organization and with so much pressure on non-religious institutions to stay “neutral” in this area, I was curious to see what this was going to communicate.*

To my surprise, Zigarelli shared his extensive research of over 2 years interviewing 100 Christian soccer coaches at the high school, college, club and professional level to find what the implications were to being a Christian and a coach.

After all these interviews were complete, Zigarelli found 3 distinct approaches each Christian coach had in common:

1. EXCELLENCE

The pursuit of excellence is critical to the overall goal of living a life honoring to God. Colossians 3:23 says, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...” Giving your heart towards something means giving everything you have to it. What are we to give everything to? Whatever we are doing. Everything we do. This is no more apparent than in the athletic arena. Not giving your all in athletics does not reflect the purpose of competing. As believers in Christ, we lose our testimony if we do not pursue excellence.

2. INREACH

Zigarelli calls this “the pursuit of inreach” where we are transforming individuals through mentoring and discipleship within the context of sports. Romans 12:2 calls us to “...be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” It's not just about winning, learning the X's and O's or preparing a game plan for success. Those are vital to the pursuit of excellence, but it's not at the expense of a person's growth in understanding God's plan for his life. Modeling, shaping and challenging athletes in all areas of their life is just as important as pursuing excellence. It's living life in the right way, for the right reasons and with the right motives.

3. OUTREACH

Jesus' final words on earth were to “...go and make disciples of all nations...(Matthew 28:19). To go translated more accurately means “as you go.” Jesus charges us to think outward, to teach and obey everything He has taught us. And the most wonderful conclusion to his words in this passage?... “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

One of Zigarelli's interviewees, Jurgen Klopp, a professional coach in Germany and a outspoken Christian said, “To be a believer, but not want to talk about it? I do not know how it would work! If anyone asks me about my faith, I give information.” The heart of Jesus' command to go and make disciples is to live out your faith as you go from day to day and in everything you do and say. Jurgen couldn't imagine a believer not wanting to talk about a God who has set us free from a life of sin and death.

EXCELLENCE, INREACH and OUTREACH are exactly the goals here at CSCS and particularly in the Athletic Department. We strive to provide an “Excellent Education from a Biblical Perspective for Lifelong Service.” All the components of our CSCS mission statement pattern what Zigarelli found most common in all the Christian coaches he interviewed.

--Jason Rollins, *Carpe Aeternitatem*

*NSCAA Soccer Journal. Soccer Field, Mission Field. March/April. 2017, Vol. 62, No. 2