

# Educational Tools for the High School Coach

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**THE PURPOSE OF THIS COLUMN** is to suggest to the high school coach effective and efficient methods of educating their student athletes.

The high school coach has to wear several different hats, often serving as teacher, counselor, sport coach, administrator, and strength and conditioning coach. The offensive line coach of the Denver Broncos, Alex Gibbs, holds a doctorate in education and has referred to coaching as more of an educational experience than anything else. Looking at professional sports as a model, you will find that there are many classrooms in their facilities. Instruction in the classroom is critical to developing the athlete to reach his or her fullest potential.

At the turn of the last century, people probably looked at one of the first automobiles and said, "That is a wonderful invention, but it will never replace a good horse." Regardless of individual perceptions, resistance to technological change, complacency or lack of motivation to learn, advancement in technology will continue to shape the future of edu-

cation. When thinking of the infant stages of the fax machine, the concept of sending a piece of paper over telephone wires seemed incomprehensible. With some exceptions, that technology today is dated. There are several resources available to high school strength and conditioning coaches that make teaching more effective and efficient.

The use of a well-prepared presentation to assistant coaches and players can make a coach's chalk talk extremely effective. Microsoft PowerPoint presentation software is an easy-to-use program that lends itself to an effective learning experience. As our staff and team members become more and more tech savvy, they will expect a more entertaining educational experience. Today, the younger generation expects to experience sound, animation, video clips, and content in a well-organized format. Near gone are the days of slide carousels.

Visual demonstration of exercise technique, flexibility exercises, training progressions, and more can be stored on disk, reused, and modified to meet

many different requirements for topic presentation. Slides can be easily converted into handouts for the student with a click of the mouse.

The National Strength and Conditioning Association offers videos for the coach, student athlete, and parent that lend to an educational content. Some of the videos available cover topics such as plyometrics, training for football, speed agility and quickness, steroid abuse prevention, Olympic-style lifting techniques, and more. If educators are willing to spend a small fee for a video, they can use and reuse the tape for class and team presentation again and again. A short segment of a video will hold the attention of the student and adds variety and value to teaching methods. Call the NSCA National Office to request brochures or ask for the products department.

Last, there are individuals in the community that can act as resources for short lectures on personal development to inspire and educate student athletes. Some of these individuals will come from professional sport teams, not-for-

profit organizations, high school alumni, and community-based organizations. Most of society would agree that the younger generation has issues with work ethic, discipline, substance abuse, integrity, and so on. Many times, sports teams have athletes that are willing to speak to schools about character building, relationships, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, their personal athletic experience,

and more. The high school student will listen to someone who has "been there." High-profile athletes, alumni, and community leaders are usually a phone call away. For a professional athlete, an appearance may be scheduled with a call the public relations department of their team.

Human nature often leads to taking the course of least resistance. Many coaches use the same

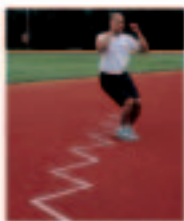
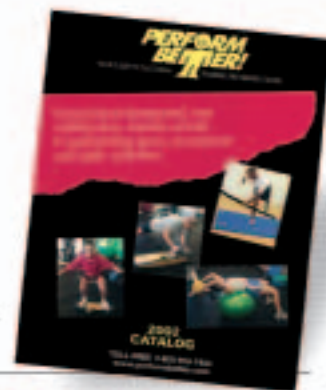
lesson plans, the same coaching techniques, the same practice schedules day-to-day, week-to-week, and year-to-year for good and valid reasons. What this column suggests is that there are highly effective teaching and coaching resources available to the high school coach that can be used with minimal effort. ▲

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