



PRE-SEASON MEETING

A Case Study



The Newport School District decided it wanted to implement Life of an Athlete (LoA) in the 2013-2014 school year but needed to find someone to help get the program started. Jeff Miller, a special education teacher and coach, expressed interest in the program and before he knew it, was participating at the LoA Statewide Implementers Training in Concord in March of 2014. At the LoA training, Jeff learned the different components of the LoA program and how lifestyle choices impact athletic performance. Jeff was compelled to put on a strong pre-season meeting to ensure

expectations were clear and that everyone understood the impact lifestyle choices have on performance.

In the summer of 2014, Jeff worked with Newport High School Athletic Director Doug Beaupre to organize a training for all of their coaches for the upcoming school year. This meeting was to introduce LoA, review program materials, and prepare for the pre-season meeting. The two administrators went over how to effectively pick captains on a team based on LoA's 5 Cs of an Effective Leader document, and expectations of leaders of their sports teams. The training was very well received by the coaches, and they enjoyed a nice BBQ as well! As part of LoA, team captains sign a pledge to commit to leading by example which means living a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

As the school year got closer, Doug and Jeff sat down with the LoA materials they had received at the statewide conference. Their goal was to hold Newport High School's first-ever pre-season meeting for athletes and parents to learn about the logistics of the season and the importance healthy choices have on succeeding as an athlete. They used the materials to create an agenda and presentation for the pre-season meeting.

The night of the pre-season meeting there were so many people in attendance that some had to stand out in the hallway! Doug welcomed the athletes, parents and coaches and went over material such as scheduling, registration, family ID forms, and concussion protocol. Jeff then introduced the community to the LoA program, which they adapted to "Life of a Tiger" to incorporate their whole school community. After reviewing "Life of a Tiger" Jeff went over the impact of lifestyle choices on performance. The audience really responded to the scans that showed how different substances affect the brain.

"As I presented the material, the parents' and students' eyes lit up. Everyone was so fascinated with the information you could tell it really made them start thinking about what these substances do to your body. You could hear a pin drop in the cafeteria it was so quiet", said Jeff. "Life of an Athlete helps student athletes to learn proper nutrition, recommended sleep habits, lifestyle choices and helps them to treat their bodies with respect and understanding," he said. "It also offers coaches training to help coaches teach character development, how to effectively communicate expectations

"We want to help our kids be as successful as they can be both on and off the field. Athletics seems like a logical and effective place to teach students and parents about healthy lifestyles and choices that can negatively affect every aspect of their lives."

and properly address issues with students, parents, and even fans. Fans may not realize how much they affect student athletes. Most of our fans are family members and friends, and we want to let them know that their encouragement is much more important to the athletes than their thoughts about a bad call or a botched play," he said.



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After Jeff presented, each represented sports team broke into sub-groups to review the expectations for being part of the team and details of the season. The athletes and parents both signed the athletic contract at the end of these break-out meetings.

After the success of the first pre-season meeting, Doug and Jeff held a second in the winter. This was a more condensed version of the pre-season meeting because many student athletes at Newport participate in two or three seasons. They also gave the coaches more time in the break-out sessions. The extra time was very beneficial to coaches, because they were excited to meet the new athletes and parents. Moving forward after implementing LoA this year, Doug and Jeff plan to enhance the pre-season meetings by having their student athlete leadership team present the LoA material to their peers and parents. Doug and Jeff also plan on bringing in guest speakers such as successful alumni, college coaches, or a nutritionist. At each pre-season meeting, Jeff plans to incorporate different material into his PowerPoint presentations so athletes and parents are getting new messages at each event.

Doug, Jeff, and the group of 20 students at Newport High School who serve on their student athlete leadership team have been hard at work. They plan to participate in community service projects and create “Life of a Tiger” bulletin boards that will be featured in all different areas of the school. Through the pre-season meeting, the student athlete leadership team will continue to build support for “Life of a Tiger” and a commitment to a healthy lifestyle with parents and students.