

It is in this section that we will try to keep you informed about those things that may interest you about our Athletic Program, our philosophy, rule changes, what to buy, issues, concerns, etc.

GAA has completed building a field house at the football field. The new facility has a Gladwin Flying G's team room, a visiting team room, a dressing room for the officials, two additional ticket booths, a GAA storage with a window for selling cold beverages, a small storage area for field equipment, and restrooms for our fans. Each restroom includes a changing area. Numerous local businesses worked on the project or made donations.

Reminder: Officials evaluate the behavior of all involved in an athletic event ...players, coaches, administration, and spectators. The purpose is to place a much stronger emphasis on good sportsmanship. MHSAA has been promoting good sportsmanship for decades, but some schools, or fans, refuse to make changes. Unsportsmanlike behavior will be reported to the MHSAA by the officials, and it will go against the reputation of the school. It could also impact our ability to host tournaments and could involve the school's athletic program being punished. Conversely, a very good report can work in the favor of our community and school district.

In what direction is our athletic program going? Here are our goals and our philosophy.

### Goals

Goals give us direction. They help in decision-making. Kept in focus, they keep us from being arbitrary, and from wandering away from what is important. They function as our foundation, on which we build policy and program.

Goals must be established first, so that the decisions that are followed will be sound ones. The goals listed below are on one hand lofty ones based on the highest of ideals. On the other hand, they are basic ones, that our history dictates, and what we will come to expect.

With those things in mind, I offer the following, as the

Goals for the Athletic Program of Gladwin Community Schools.

To restore the Pride and Character of the Gladwin Flying G's Athletic Program.

To lead, teach, and encourage the coaching staff to become "significant" adults in the lives of their athletes, and to become the role models that they are needed to be.

To restore enthusiasm and work ethic.

To restore discipline and improve behavior of athletes, coaches, and fans.

To lead by example and high expectations.

To stress the improvement of fundamental skills at all levels.

Make sure all decisions are based on what is educationally sound, and what is right.

Purpose and Philosophy

Interscholastic athletics exist for one purpose only. Education. Yes, education.

There is no other part of our educational system, that provides a more pure environment for education ... a small group of students motivated to learn, and highly trained teacher who enthusiastically teaches, trains, motivates, and critiques the learners, quantities of quality time to focus on the whole picture, and the small parts that make up the whole, competition to keep interest and motivate, and repeated evaluation opportunities, showing how much you have learned and practiced compared to one's opponent.

The number one predictor of success as an adult, is participation in extracurricular activities. To provide the opportunity for students to learn the skills and habits in extracurricular activities that lead to success, is the reason that Boards of Education all over our nation, support having an athletic program. Through an athletic program, a student can learn:

Self-discipline

Teamwork

Synergy (the whole being able to accomplish more than what the sum of the parts can accomplish)

Hard work

Dedication

Sacrifice

Following directions

Making decisions and reacting under pressure

Muscle-memory

Advanced fundamental skills and strategy of the activity

Mental toughness

The advantages of physical conditioning and being in shape

How to keep one's self motivated

All of the qualities that athletics develop come from the day to day practice sessions. They come from the relationship with the coach. They come from the time spent in practice. They come from the time spent in the off season. They come from the desire to be a part of something bigger than one's self and from the willingness to follow directions, even when it is hard or you don't want to.

The purpose of our athletic program is not to win trophies. The purpose is not to create college athletes, or eventually professional ones. The purpose is not to entertain parents, make them happy, or provide them with bragging material. It is not to make money. The purpose is to provide another educational experience, an intense, quality opportunity for each child to learn some of the toughest, but most important, lessons on what it takes to be a successful adult. To that goal, it is working.

Realistically, we want to win. We love winning. Winning can make learning the tough lessons easier. It is always a goal, but it is not the most important one. Striving to win, not the winning itself, is where all of the lessons come from. Day in and day out, the lessons of life that can be learned through athletics are learned on the court or field of practice. They are not learned by those who play the most on game nights.

We are very proud of our Flying G's who have gone on to become college athletes. Athletics, however, can not be looked at as the ticket for your child to go to school with his/her way paid. It probably won't happen. Therefore, we are not working toward that goal. That is not what is educational. Certainly, if a child is extremely gifted and has worked profoundly hard to be an outstanding athlete, we will do everything in our power to open as many doors as are possible.

Your child's role on the team is not a reflection of the quality of person that he/she is. It is not about the quality of the parenting, the coach, or the strategy. A child on the field or court is not a better person than one on the bench. Whether your child is playing much or not, is not a reflection of you, nor is it your responsibility to change it. It may be that others are bigger, stronger, or more naturally athletic. Some know the game mentally, but struggle physically. Some are physically talented, but don't have their heads in the game. Some are more selfish. Some are too unselfish. Some have an intense desire to compete. Others just like to be involved day in and day out. Some have put in an immeasurable number of extra hours in the off season, while their teammates may have not done a thing since their last season almost a year prior. Some fit into a strategy better than others. Some only want to play a position or be in an event that they are not best suited for. Some are afraid of losing, while others are afraid of being hurt. Some don't want the pressure of having to be hero, or the fear of potentially being a goat. Some participate because of their love of the sport and some because their best friend is there, or their parent expects it. None of these influence the value of the child, but they may influence how much playing time the child gets in a particular game. All is not fair in the world of athletics, but that is one of the reasons why it is such a great teacher about life. All is not fair in the real world either, but we learn how to strive to be successful, be a part of something

important, give our best efforts, and be a contributing part of a team.

We are in financial straits as a school district, and as an athletic program. We are one of the two lowest counties, economically, in the state that is last in the nation in its economy. All schools are struggling. As an athletic program we have many needs, and little money to get the jobs done. Certainly, we have to make more money in order to maintain our program. So, yes, money is important. However, the purpose of the program is not to make money, and we will not sacrifice our philosophy of that, for the sake of the dollar.

A great many of our alumni continue to express their intense love for Gladwin athletics. They consider their coaches to be extremely special influences in their lives. Their memories of school live and revolve around their experiences as an athlete. The successes that our Flying G's have accomplished after graduation is profound. As a major component of our total educational process, the Gladwin Athletic Program is being extremely successful.