

Abington Heights School District

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Summary of the Abington Heights Captains Initiative:

Prior to each of the three sports seasons, we offer a leadership workshop that is open to all student-athletes. At the leadership workshop we discuss the following:

Our athletic programs provide students the opportunity to compete and learn valuable lifelong skills. As the athletes strive together as a team, it is important to keep the following fundamental principles of the athletic programs in mind:

- Athletes can control their attitude & effort
- Athletes need to respect the decisions of coaches & sports officials
- Athletes represent themselves, their school, and their community
- Athletes need to follow the rules of the school & the sport
- Athletes need to establish a competitive spirit & integrity

The goal of the athletic program is to provide student-athletes with a positive, successful experience. It is important for parents to encourage the students to give their best at all times. No matter what happens on the scoreboard, athletes need to focus on what they can take away from the game to get better. Setbacks and mistakes are inevitable, but what is crucial is how the athlete responds to them. We respectfully ask our parents and spectators to support the principles of our athletic programs and to abide by the PIAA sportsmanship guidelines. Working together, we can cultivate a spirit of support for our student-athletes and allow them to enjoy the experience.

We discuss the captains' role & responsibilities.

- The KEY is that EVERY MEMBER of the TEAM knows, understands, and VALUES their ROLE (as identified by the coach). The captain needs to get the members of the team to "believe".
- People
 - Everyone wants to feel important
 - Everyone wants to be accepted
 - Everyone wants to be heard (they may choose to be silent, but that is as powerful as taking a verbal position)

- Your Words and Actions – think about what you say and how you say it (verbal and nonverbal actions)...think about what you do...are you leading or following??

During the workshop, we focus on how the captains will address conflict, motivate teammates and be involved in public speaking opportunities for their team, school & community.

During the workshop, the athletes do a team communication analysis and then practice/record statements that they can use at practice (reflecting big idea/specific technique: for example, instead of stating “don’t foul”, the statement would be “play tough defense”)

Level of communication among teammates:

(-): negative comments and gestures

(0): no communication, no one talks

(0+): positive, only when something “good” happens

(+): focus on “what to do” and “how to do it”; stated in an affirmative manner

After captains are selected by the coach (2 captains per team, unless the team has more than 30 members, such as football, and in that case, there can be 3-4 captains), all in-season captains meet with the administration once a week for 30-40 minutes to address conflict, motivation, and public speaking. The main goal is to highlight the student leadership opportunities that arise each and every day at practice, during a game, and/or on & off the playing field.

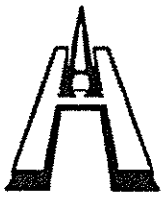
The captains identify a teammate who is acknowledged as the “carrier of the cup” (they provide the energy and positive outlook at all times)

The captains identify a teammate who is acknowledged as the most competitive (they provide the intensity in all practice drills)

At the end of the season, the captains provide feedback which then drives changes to enhance the program for the next group of captains.

We bring in one guest speaker each season.

The students sign their book (Elevate Your Game) and pass it along to an underclassman who demonstrates leadership (potential future captain).



Protocol for Captain's Leadership Initiative:

The steps identified below serve as a guide for initiating and maintaining a captain's leadership program in high school sports.

Purpose:

- To identify the roles and responsibilities of a team captain
- To identify the purpose, vision and culture of the school's athletic program
- To provide on-going leadership training for team captains
- To provide team captains with opportunities to exercise their leadership skills

Steps:

1. Initiate a steering committee (10 -15 members): student-athletes, administration, athletic director, coaches and community sport leaders meet and discuss the current status of athletic programs within the school and the role of team captain(s). TIME: 1 HOUR

Key concepts: What is the current culture of the athletic programs? What is leadership? How can the students develop leadership skills as a team captain? (Get as much student-athlete feedback as possible.)

2. Offer a leadership workshop for any athlete interested in leadership TIME: 1 HOUR

Key concepts: Discuss the school's vision of the athletic program and the school's expectations for team captains. Discuss the skills and traits of leaders. Identify three areas of focus for the captains (ex. conflict resolution, motivation, public speaking, service) and have students practice leadership skills within each of the three identified areas. Students practice by discussing different scenarios associated with each area. (See leadership handout for examples). Identify resources (book or readings on leadership) that captains will use throughout the season.

3. Select captains. Each team captain meets with coach to discuss team goals. Captains then meet with AD/Administration to review goals of athletic program and discuss team goals. TIME: 15 MINUTES
4. All team captains meet together on a weekly basis with AD/Administration. Each session focuses on the resources (book or readings) on leadership and on the three areas of focus (ex. conflict resolution, motivation, public speaking) in which the captains discuss the leadership skills that they are using in the identified areas of focus. TIME: 20-30 MINUTES (BEFORE SCHOOL, LUNCH, OR WEEKEND)

5. End of the season: AD/Administration provides feedback to captains in regard to their leadership skills. Captains provide feedback on program and identify the three areas of focus for future captains. Captains select leadership resources (book or readings) for next season. Captains pass on book, with a personal message regarding leadership to an underclassman who has demonstrated leadership potential. TIME: 1 HOUR
6. Repeat steps 2-5 each season (fall, winter, spring)
7. Summer – steering committee meets and the process repeats. Identify a summer reading assignment pertinent to leadership that all students interested in the captains position can read.

The key concepts are educating students on leadership, allowing students to practice leadership while working with a school leader (AD/Administration/Coach), and providing the captains with feedback on their leadership development.

It is recommended that conflict resolution and motivation be two of the three identified areas each year.

It is recommended that captains keep a journal/notebook for the weekly meetings. The weekly meetings must be run in an organized, time efficient manner. The recommended time is 20 minutes. Agendas should include an educational component (from selected leadership books or readings) and the three identified areas.

Captains could be invited back to speak with athletes interested in being team captain.