

## Supporting the New Coach

By Jim Tapley, CAA

A critical responsibility for Athletic Directors is filling the coaching positions at his/her school. Once the new coach is on staff, many Athletic Directors turn their attention to other pressing tasks. The wise Athletic Director gives the new coach attention and support. The following is a list of ideas of how an Athletic Director can support the new coach effectively.

1. Provide the new coach with a job description, list of expectations, and stipend information.
2. Talk with the new coach about the role of athletics and how it interacts with academics, sportsmanship, and leadership development.
3. The Athletic Director should emphasize the coach's positive impact on the student-athletes, rather than pressure the new coach to win games.
4. Review specific policies (such as scheduling, practice times, transportation, fundraising, issuing and collection of uniforms, etc.) with the new coach so there is a clear understanding of what is expected.
5. Go over a checklist of tasks that the new coach needs to complete and include specific deadlines.
6. Provide resources such as administrative handbooks (school, county, and state levels) and a sport specific rulebook.
7. Provide the new coach with samples of expectations of players/parents, practice plans, schedules, and calendars.
8. Welcome the new coach by providing him/her with some clothing that includes the school's name and logo.
9. Personally introduce the new coach to the players and parents at a special meeting.
10. Send out a press release to local newspapers about hiring the new coach. Also, post the announcement on the school's web site.
11. Introduce the new coach to the faculty and the specific staff members (administrators, security staff, business manager, building service manager, etc.) that the coach will be working with.
12. Assign a veteran coach as a mentor to work with the new coach.
13. Attend some of the new coach's practices and games to observe how things are going.
14. Have weekly meetings with the new coach. The AD can listen to the new coaches concerns and make recommendations as needed. The AD can also provide encouragement and assist with problem solving.
15. Assist the coach with developing a specific "Emergency Plan" that coincides with the school's overall plan.
16. Assist the coach with player and/or parent conferences as needed.
17. Send a handwritten note of encouragement to the new coach before his/her first game.
18. Present the game ball to the coach after winning his/her first game.
19. Encourage the new coach to join professional organizations, such as the state coaches association.
20. Have an end of the season meeting to review the season and make recommendations for improvement.

In summary, the Athletic Director who supports a new coach is not just helping that person with professional development, but is also strengthening his/her overall program.

