

BFS High School of the Year

Susquehannock High School earns BFS's most prestigious honor

Susquehannock High School is a great place for young men and women to get an education. Along with its challenging academic program and commitment to promote character and responsibility, this four-year program in Glen Rock, Pennsylvania, offers students opportunities to participate in numerous extracurricular programs. From spring musicals to clubs dedicated to sewing and even an organization of students who want to help with the problem of drunk driving, there is something for everyone at Susquehannock High. But it's the school's exceptional physical and athletic fitness programs that have earned Susquehannock the title of the "2008 BFS High School of the Year."

"Our aspiration is simple: to become a *true* BFS school," says Kevin Lawrence, a former head girls basketball coach at Susquehannock who took over the organization of the strength and conditioning program last June. "While some schools may falsely profess to be BFS schools, we aspire to not only be a true BFS school – we aspire to be *the consummate* BFS school in America." Lawrence admits that fully accomplishing such implementation will take time, but the progress this school has made so far is remarkable. Let's look at some history.

Until 2004 Susquehannock was relying on a haphazard conglomeration of strength and conditioning programs. The result was that throughout the first 42 years of Warrior athletics, from 1961 through 2003, the school's athletic teams won just 39 league championships, an average of fewer than one championship per school year. Seeking to upgrade its athletic reputation, in the spring of 2004 the school introduced the BFS program to the coaching staff.

BFS was embraced first by the football team and the girls basketball teams, as these teams really needed help. In 2003-04 the football team had won only one game and the basketball team had gone 9-14. The next



Megan Sheaf

The Warrior softball team has won back-to-back state championships.

season, the football team finished 8-2 and the girls basketball team 20-9, each winning their league championship! The basketball team also advanced to postseason play for the first time in more than a decade, finishing fifth in the PIAA District III Championship Tournament. As a bonus, the girls basketball coach promoted the BFS concept of eliminating the five lethal foods; and as a result, two of his players lost a combined weight of 68 pounds – in fact, the coach himself lost 39 pounds in just six months!

“The BFS program is yielding big results, fast, at Susquehannock High School, and the effect that the BFS program is having for our Warrior athletes seems as though it should be obvious to any educated observer,” says Lawrence. However, for the skeptics who wonder if the success of the Warrior football and girls basketball teams is directly attributable to the school’s adoption of the BFS program, here are a few success stories for your consideration.

Last year, the Warrior field hockey team finished its season with a disappointing 4-15 record, motivating them to implement the BFS program in the spring – with two of its coaches earn-

ing a BFS certification. The team lifted and conditioned religiously three days a week before increasing to four days a week during the summer months. The result? This season they finished their season with a school-record 14 victories, won the school’s first field hockey league championship, and earned the school’s first-ever berth in the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) District III Championship Tournament. Not only did the field hockey team qualify for the postseason for the first time in school history, they also did one better by tallying the school’s inaugural postseason win by an impressive 5-0 score. And there’s more.

Over the past three seasons, the Warrior golf team won eight matches and lost eight. Between the end of last season and the time this golf season teed off, the golfers became a fixture in the weightroom, strictly adhering to the BFS training regimen. This year the team enjoyed the best golf season in the school’s history, finishing undefeated and earning the school’s first-ever postseason berth.

Not to be outdone, the Warrior softball team has won back-to-back

PIAA State Championships in the state’s largest softball classification. Also since the adoption of BFS, the Warrior baseball team won the school’s first-ever PIAA District III Championship and advanced to the PIAA State Baseball Championship Tournament for the first time in school history. There’s more.

The Susquehannock boys soccer team won not only the first soccer PIAA State Championship in school history but also the first soccer state championship in the history of the entire league, including boys and girls – that means 46 teams from other schools have been outrun to state gold by the Warriors.

Finally, the girls volleyball team also has experienced an impressive spike in success since unification under the BFS program. The most successful era in Warrior girls volleyball includes three PIAA District III Championships.

Let’s check the scorecard. In the past five years – the five years since Susquehannock has become a BFS school – Warrior athletic teams have won 30 league championships, including three just this fall, in girls volleyball, boys soccer and golf. Put into numbers, unification under BFS has led to



The Warrior girls volleyball team also has experienced an impressive spike in success since unification under the BFS program, winning three district championships.

a 600 percent increase in the success of the Warrior athletic program! Says Lawrence, “The past half-decade has been a remarkable one in the history of Warrior athletics. Not surprisingly, the five most successful years in the history of Warrior athletics have corresponded perfectly with the unification of the school’s strength and conditioning program with BFS.”

BFS in the Classroom

Lawrence says that the design of the BFS program fits into a curriculum that can be used in the classroom setting, and that by continuing with BFS he and his organization are demonstrating their commitment to the “student” aspect of being a student-athlete. “Our school district and community have embraced BFS to the point that the BFS curriculum was adopted by the Board of Education for senior high physical education classes,” says Lawrence. What’s more, the BFS program is presently being considered for introduction into the middle school physical education curriculum, along with the BFS Starter Package that the elementary schools will use.

Continues Lawrence, “Three of our



Josh Heyne

Last year the Warrior baseball team advanced to the state baseball tournament for the first time in school history.

coaches have implemented a mandatory study hall as part of their in-season training program to ensure that their student-athletes dedicate the appropriate time and energy to their number-one priority: their studies. Additionally, every one of Susquehannock’s head coaches – varsity and junior high alike – receive a weekly report not just of the students who are failing but of every single one of their students who is earning a “C” or lower, and they are absolutely vigilant

about helping their students to better their grades.”

In this regard, it’s worth noting that since the BFS program was first introduced at Susquehannock, 80 percent of the school’s valedictorians and salutatorians have been BFS athletes!

“We are thinking outside of the squat box, if you will, and are creating web-based course materials to use with the advanced weight training classes in which BFS is being taught,” says Lawrence. “Also, those web-based resources BFS has available are going to be used to recertify every athlete every year in the safety and lifting protocols. Susquehannock student-athletes will not be allowed in the weightroom during a new school year until they earn a 100 percent score on the safety and lifting protocols.”

Where Character Counts

To develop well-rounded student-athletes, Susquehannock has been introducing elements of the BFS Be an 11 program to its students. Lawrence elaborates, “Although formal use of the Be an 11 curriculum will not begin until at least the spring, our student-athletes



Jordan Robertson

Tyler Ward



Peter Grove



Dylan Keil, Lindsay Miller, Jessica Franz



Dylan Keil, Jordyn Malone, Lindsay Miller



Jessica Franz

and their coaches are already embracing the positive character traits taught and espoused in this program. And proof of how personally our student-athletes are embracing the introduction of the BFS program is that Warrior athletic teams have won the league sportsmanship award nine times!”

There’s still more: Annually, the York Chapter of PIAA Basketball Officials honors one girls basketball team and one boys basketball team with the Gretchen Wolf Swartz Sportsmanship Award. The award provides a \$3,000 scholarship to one of the recipient team’s seniors. The officials award the recognition based on sportsmanship and character demonstrated throughout the program by the junior high teams and coaches, as well as by the junior varsity and varsity teams, their coaches, managers, cheer-

leaders and, perhaps most impressively, the fans’ behavior. The most impressive fact: The Chapter has been awarding the Gretchen Wolf Swartz Award for eight years. There are 48 basketball programs in the YAIAA. In seven of those eight years, Susquehannock has received the honor; and in one season, 2003, both the boys and girls programs were honored.

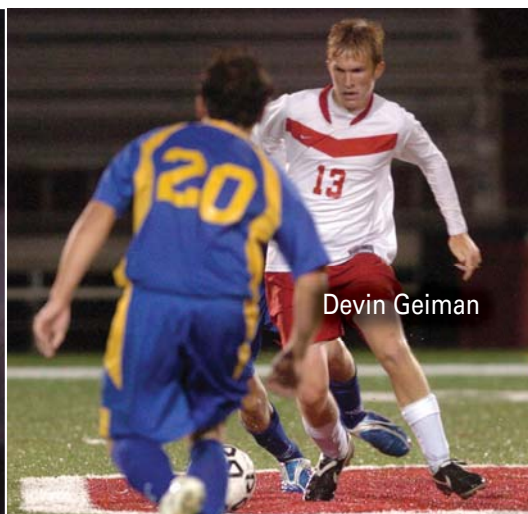
The positive effects of character development that began in Susquehannock athletics are being felt even beyond the school: Each year the Warrior varsity football players join the varsity cheerleaders and travel to Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, to spend a day visiting with terminally ill children, sharing self-made crafts with them and trying to do what they can to help sick children enjoy their day together.

Unification at its Best

Lawrence summarizes his school’s athletic success this way: “Since BFS has been implemented at Susquehannock, we have won three state championships, almost a dozen all-state athletes, a number of district championships and a slew of county and conference championships, many of which are the first in the history of those sports. In fact, mathematically, the past five years have been the best in the history of Susquehannock High. Beyond the numbers, Susquehannock is a great place to go to school because it embodies the concept of unification at its highest levels, and for these reasons it truly deserves to receive the honor of being the 2008 BFS High School of the Year.” **BFS**



Joseph Ferraracci



Devin Geiman



Nicholas Amberman



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