

Coaching Winners at Colby High

The Bigger Faster Stronger Program is alive and well in Wisconsin

t's been said that the Midwest is sometimes a bit behind the rest of the country when it comes to trends and breaking news, but that may not be such a bad thing in this time of recession. Especially if you're a student-athlete at Colby High School in Colby, Wisconsin.

"The summer job market may be a little thin from the people I've talked to, but overall I haven't noticed a pessimistic attitude in our community," says athletic director Jeff Rosemeyer. Helping to keep a positive attitude is the school's success in athletics, which this year included a state championship in football and conference championships in boys basketball, baseball, volleyball and girls swimming.

Colby High School is located in central Wisconsin. With an enrollment of 320 students, it is classified as

Division 5, with Division 1 the largest and Division 7 the smallest. Athletes can compete in football, cross-country, basketball, swimming, baseball, golf and track. With so many sports and a relatively small number of athletes, it's especially important that athletes compete in multiple sports to stay competitive.

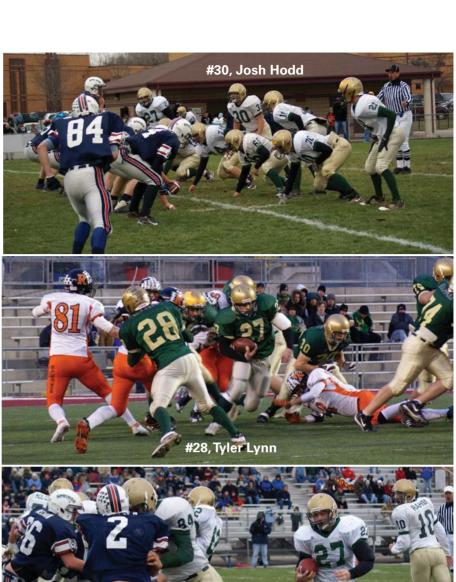
"In the past we might have lost a kid for much of the year because he or

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she wanted to be a little more specialized in a different sport, but right now most of our athletes compete in three sports. And to tell you the truth, I've really not seen that type of specialization to be a successful venture, and I believe that a lot of college coaches want high school athletes to be playing three sports." Rosemeyer adds that he may be a little biased because he is the athletic director and wants to see the best athletes representing the school in all their sports. "As the head football coach, I like to see our football players wrestle or play basketball, and then go on to baseball or track - I want them to be competitive year-round."

With the emphasis on multi-sport athletes, Rosemeyer says it makes sense to focus on a unified strength and conditioning program. That's why in 1998 he had a BFS clinic with Doug Ekmark, and the immediate impact was that in the fall they won a football state championship. Then in 2004 he brought out John Rowbotham for another clinic. "I felt we needed a refresher to get the kids excited about the lifting program and the overall benefits we could get from it. He also did a Be an 11 clinic, which I thought was very good because it addressed some things that are very important to us, not just in athletics but also in regard to general conduct and performance in the classroom."

Rosemeyer says that although he had success with BFS, he did look at other programs. "You get brochures in the mail, and we have explored some options, but we decided to stick with the BFS program because we know it works for us." One reason, he says, is the emphasis on developing the total athlete. "You can't just lift weights anymore and be successful – the speed and agility program is important to get the most transfer to performance on the field."





The Hornets football team has always been a source of pride for this small-town school. This year was no exception, as they finished the year with a perfect 14-0 record.

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A unified approach to strength and conditioning has enabled the Hornets to achieve success in numerous sports, both girls and boys.

As far as their weightroom is concerned, the focus is on core lift stations. "We have three power clean stations, three squat stations and three bench stations. We have an area to perform the dot drill, and we also have some aerobic equipment. I really can't complain about our weightroom, especially for a school our size."

Rosemeyer has been coaching at Colby High for 28 years and says that not much has really changed since he joined the school staff. "A lot of people will say kids just are not the same anymore, but I really don't see that. You always have a group of kids who want to work hard to be successful, and some years you have more of those individuals than others. For example in 1998 when we won that state championship, we had about five guys who played for us who were just not going to let you

beat them. Their leadership was such an important factor in our success, as their attitude carried through to the other team members."

Asked about the advantages of coaching and teaching at a small school, Rosemeyer says that Colby is a great place for a new teacher to start. "With a school our size you are going to get a chance to do a lot of things - I'm a math teacher, the head football coach and the head baseball coach - but at the same time you're not going to be overwhelmed as you might be at a larger school. And there is not as much pressure to win." As for the students, he says that with larger schools some students tend to get lost - here the teachers and coaches get to know their kids. He adds that the parents are very involved in school programs, and that there is a lot of community involvement to help

the school.

Asked what advice he would give to other coaches who want to emulate his long and successful career, Rosemeyer replies, "Do not expect success to happen overnight – it takes time and commitment. But if you hang in there and give time to let things work, it's going to turn in your direction."



A tractor prepares the ground for a new practice field. The owner of the tractor is donating his time, just one example of the support the local community gives to the high school and this team.

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