

Building Champions at Brodhead High

How this Wisconsin school grew its great strength and conditioning program

BY KIM GOSS, MS

Dirty Jobs is a reality show hosted by Mike Rowe on the Discovery Channel. Rowe profiles jobs that most people would consider undesirable, but these jobs are necessary for us to maintain our lifestyle. Although athletic directors don't have to dig ditches in worm-infested caves or slaughter farm animals, being an athletic director in today's economy would probably not be considered a particularly desirable profession. That is, unless you're the athletic director at Brodhead High School.



Athletic Director
Jim Matthys

Jim Matthys has been at Brodhead High for 15 years. He serves as both athletic director and head football coach. Matthys says that with the economy tightening the

budgets in so many schools, this often trickles down into lower salaries and reduced benefits for teachers – as such, getting involved in the field of education is not as popular as it once was. “What’s discouraging is that the economy is affecting our ability to attract good young teachers and coaches. We are fortunate here because our staff is

dedicated, but our staff is getting older and it’s hard to attract young people to this profession, as there is so little hiring going on throughout the country, but especially in Wisconsin.”

Brodhead, Wisconsin, has a population of about 3,000. The school district has an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school of about 375 students. Matthys believes this type of environment has its advantages. “I can walk out into the hallway and see pretty much all of our athletes during the course of the day, and as such we can do a pretty good job of keeping track of what they do on and off the field and how well they’re staying on top of their grades.”

In terms of a BFS connection, Matthys invited BFS clinician Jeff Scurran to do a clinic in 2004, and they have been keeping it up – they even brought out Coach Scurran for three more clinics to reinforce the principles of BFS. Three years ago they started the BFS Readiness program in both the middle school and the elementary school. Matthys says, “I’ve even seen my first-grade daughter doing box jumps!” He adds, “It was real easy to get our staff involved with the Readiness program, and it helped

bring a sense of consistency throughout the entire school district. BFS teaches our athletes to be explosive – it’s not a football program, as some people believe; it’s an athletic development program that teaches a lot of explosive movement drills.”

So how well is the Brodhead athletic program doing? “Since making the complete jump to BFS, our athletes have been extremely successful,” says Matthys. “We have been our conference’s athletic program of the year for the past four years. Over the past six years we have won 17 conference titles in our 12 male and female sports, and our football team has been in the state semifinals four times in the past seven seasons.”

Another reason for the school’s success in athletics, says Matthys, is their supportive community. “We have a great booster program! Our annual golf tournament alone brings in about \$10,000 a year. We are just a small town with a lot of hardworking people, but if our community sees that our school really needs something to help our programs, they can usually find a way to make it happen.”

One of the unique aspects of Brodhead’s program that Matthys is



Brodhead High has been their conference's athletic program of the year for the past four years.

especially proud of is the increased participation of girls in the program. “Before we started BFS, we had pretty good participation in terms of getting guys in the weightroom, but we could not get the girls to participate – they just didn’t feel right about working out next to guys. Now you see the girls squatting and bench pressing right next to our football players, and not only is it accepted, you’d be

hard-pressed to see who is working harder. The results can be seen with the success our girls are having in their conference with not only the increased number of wins, but also the number of girls who graduate and go on to play at the college level. What’s more, I see the more talented girls encouraging girls who are not as talented to get into the weightroom – and now it’s typical to see about 40 girls come in to work

out in the summer.”

Although Matthys would like to have larger facilities, he said this is simply not an option with the environment. “As with any coach, I’d like to have a bigger weightroom, but with the economy we just have to be creative with our scheduling, dividing up the classes so that half will be lifting and half will be doing plyos and agilities, and then we flip-flop the

next day. That being said, we do have nice equipment and do a good job of maintaining our equipment – and we are always looking for more efficient ways to run things.”

As any athletic director should be, Matthys is concerned about safety in the weightroom. “We have safety posters up, of course, but our kids are always supervised. We have up to three coaches at a time in the weightroom, which is a lot when you consider that our weightroom isn’t that big. And we don’t let our kids put a lot of weight on the bar until we are satisfied with their technique.” Matthys adds that having athletes in the weightroom

decreases the risk of injury in competition, which is why he insists on running a strong summer program where kids can use the weightroom four days a week. “I don’t have any precise statistics on this, but I do know that our total injuries are down since we started the BFS program.”

Encouraging athletes to play multiple sports is a must at Brodhead High. “I’ve seen a few kids who when they are freshman want to concentrate on one sport, but by the time they are seniors they are doing multiple sports. Our coaches do a good job of making certain our kids are involved in at least two sports. It’s important, being such

a small school, to have kids playing multiple sports to keep our programs going.”

Although many think that sports programs should be the first to be cut in a struggling economy, Matthys says this is a mistake. “Sports teach our kids life lessons. What happens on the basketball court or the football field is a lot like life – there are good things that happen, and there are bad things. We have an eight-period day, and I look at sports as our ninth period; that’s how important it is to our curriculum. If our kids didn’t have the opportunity to play sports, I cannot imagine what our school would be like.” BFS



Taylor Douglas



Jesse DeLorme



Jaron Harding



Taurie Burns

A strong co-ed weight training program is one reason for this small school's monster success in athletics.

“Be An 11 has
changed my life!
I WILL
BE AN 11!”
- Katie Heinlen

11 BE·AN Seminars

“The most inspiring night of my life!”

~Kyle Meyers, Rutherford B. Hayes High, OH

“Reaffirmed the reason
I entered coaching
25 years ago.”

- Coach Al McFarland

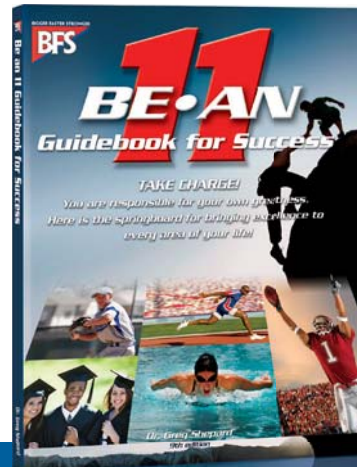


“Every school in the nation should schedule a
Be An 11 Seminar today!
It is without a doubt the best thing that has
happened to our school.”

- Coach T. Cox



“This is exactly what our school
- and community - needed.” - Coach Fox



HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

- ▶ A BFS Presenter will come to your school and will spend up to three hours inspiring, motivating and educating your athletes how to become true elevens!
- ▶ The cost is only \$1,700 up to 50 athletes. Add'l athletes only \$20 each. Includes the Be an 11 Guidebook!
- ▶ Christian B11 Seminar is also available
CALL FOR DETAILS

INTERESTED SCHOOLS CAN REQUEST A FREE BE AN 11 BOOK & SEMINAR LITERATURE

BIGGER FASTER STRONGER

- ▶ OTHER CLINIC OPTIONS: 2 Day & Be an 11 Seminar / 2 Day Clinic / 1 Day & Be an 11 Seminar / 1 Day Clinic / Certification Clinic

BFS

DEDICATED TO HELPING ATHELETES SUCCEED SINCE 1976

TAKE CHARGE! - CALL 1-800-628-9737

online at www.biggerfasterstronger.com • email us at info@bfsmail.com
843 West 2400 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84119 • Fax (801) 975-1159