



Gus Lane

Staying Strong at John Carroll High

How this Maryland football program keeps winning

When Rich Stichel Jr. started coaching football at John Carroll High School five years ago, he had a tremendous challenge ahead of him. In the previous two

seasons, the Patriots had won only three of their 21 games. Stichel, however, had never coached a losing team in the seven years he had been coaching high school football, and he wasn't going to

start losing now. He knew exactly what needed to be done to help turn around this Maryland school.

The first thing Stichel did as the new head football coach was to rebuild

the program starting from scratch. He got the parents involved in the program and together they raised the funds to install lights for Friday night games. Stichel also adopted a team slogan, "Run to Win," which he says "goes with our triple option offense and really hits home with our kids." Another aspect of Stichel's program was to develop a team vision reflecting this Catholic school's values:

At John Carroll we will:

1. Serve GOD, Family, and Football in that order.
2. Relentlessly Pursue a Championship.
3. Provide a Foundation of Leadership, Academics, and Life Skills.
4. Enhance the Reputation of the School through our Actions and Dealings with Stakeholders.
5. Contribute to the Community in Which We Live.

On the physical side, Stichel took special measures to develop team unity, such as a team camp in the summer and establishing record boards in the weightroom. "When I took over the Patriot program, we had a lot of kids who were seeing personal trainers in the off-season, because many of the parents thought their kids would get a better program working in small groups with certified trainers," says Stichel. "What they don't understand is that when the players work out as a team, they push each other and strengthen team unity." He also says that sports coaches have a personal interest in their players on and off the field, so their motivation is different from that of personal trainers, who may see these kids simply as paychecks. Asked if the players were in better shape after working with the trainers, Stichel replied that he would often joke to his colleagues after watching these players start the preseason, "You paid for that?"

Another conflict Stichel says he



Alex Gambrell



Devon Ruane

encounters from some strength and conditioning programs is that many football coaches are using fast-paced offenses and defenses that result in a less physical game. “These coaches think that speed is much more important than strength, but they don’t understand that a stronger muscle is going to be a faster muscle. Work on strength and power with core lifts such as squats and cleans, and your players will get faster.”

Having used the BFS program with his teams since he started coaching, Stichel implemented the program at John Carroll. Stichel gives credit to his weightroom success through a

partnership with Baltimore County Public Schools and BFS to become Weight Room Safety Certified. Says Stichel, “What I like about BFS is that it’s easy for the kids to keep track of their progress, and in fact this is one reason I also like to use it in my physical education classes. I also like the idea of using the same core exercises that you do in-season as you do in the off-season, and that it focuses on high-intensity work so the kids can get stronger and faster.”

That was the plan five years ago – so what was the result? In Stichel’s first season, the Patriots went 7-3. That was followed by seasons of 6-3, 6-4, 7-4 and

finally 9-3 with a place in the championship game. Going into that game the Patriots were not even on the radar to offer any sort of challenge, having lost to the same team early in the year by a score of 34-0. “I just told my kids they needed to play better and keep working. We were ahead most of the game but ended up losing that championship game in overtime on a busted play.”

For the 2013 season, Stichel will face another challenge because much of his senior leadership is gone after graduating this year. “We’re young, but we’re continuing to do the things that make us successful, so I expect John Carroll to continue to ‘Run to Win.’” BFS



Brandon Lewis



Allen Bryant

Motivated by the team slogan, “Run to Win,” the Patriots went from being a 3-18 team to having five straight winning seasons and playing in the state championship game.



Paul Lorick



Head coach Rich Stichel



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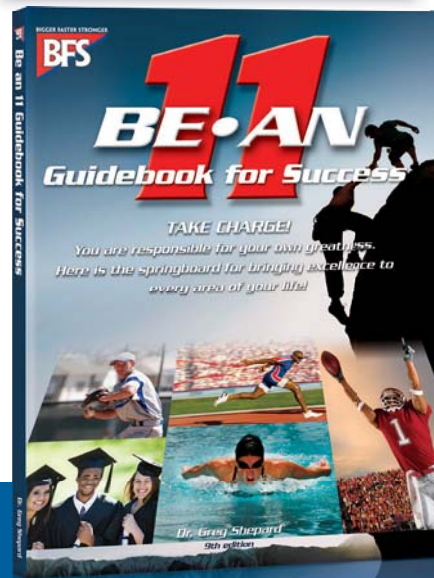
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