



“JOURNALING”

Depending on the specific writing exercises and what primary purposes the coach wants to accomplish through this strategy, journaling can strengthen coaches and athletes in all three dimensions. For this strategy, athletes need some form of notebook. For serious performance development of high school and college athletes, [The Athlete's Workbook](#) by Richard Kent is an excellent resource. For coaches, his book explains a process called, “Writing on the Bus.”

Overview

Journaling requires time. It offers the opportunity to put feelings into words and thoughts onto paper. Many elite level athletes journal to help them understand the relationship of performance to things like sleep patterns, diet, moods, emotions and fears. Research shows that putting emotions and fears into words on paper gives us a level of power over those emotions and fears.

Journaling also helps athletes understand and chronicle the process of growth and change in all three dimensions. Because understanding is the basis of care, this process helps them better care for themselves and the team. As a coach this also gives you more information on how to better care for each athlete.

There are so many different ways to use journals. For those new to journaling, it will require coaching and guidance. One way to get people engaged in the initial process is it to have each athlete design their own cover. Perhaps you can bring some magazines, tape, glue and scissors and have them cut out stuff that represents their story, what they value, and create a cover montage. Then, sometime during the season, each person should have the opportunity to explain what their cover means to the rest of the team.

Suggestions for Implementation

- Journals could be used while watching game film.
- Have them write on the bus ride to a competition: "What are you thinking/feeling?"
- Have them write on the bus ride home from the competition: "What went well? What things do we need to work on?"
- Give them a weekly character attribute and ask them to write about it personally and where they see it in their culture and on their team.

This strategy may or may not require more time. It could just be better use of present time like bus rides and film sessions, but it can also be an "outside of practice" discipline. In whatever way you use this strategy, here are some of the potential benefits:

- Journaling can help athletes think more like coaches.
- The exercise allowing athletes to explain their cover helps create value for the individual and gives insight to you as a coach and the rest of the team.
- It is a gift you are giving to the athlete for a lifetime! They now have a written record of a season.
- Coach-Parent problems are reduced as it creates a feedback mechanism for athletes to ask questions and seek clarity. This is a big issue for parents. It does not work to tell athletes to "come see me if they have a problem." They have problems, but they won't come to your office. They can however, write it in a journal and allow you to read it.

TAKEN FROM 3DIMENSIONAL INSTITUTE – 3rd DIMENSION STRATEGIES (also see Video)

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