

How to Fund Professional Development for Coaches

By Dr. David Hoch, CMAA

Many school budgets, and this would extend to the athletic program, are stretched to their limits. There never seems to be enough money even for the most basic and necessary items. It is understandable that some athletic administrators find it difficult to be able to pay for their professional development program for their coaches, even though this is highly recommended in two of the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association's Leadership Training Courses – 504 and 723.

Rather than throwing your hands in the air, and proclaiming, "We don't have any money. We just can't provide professional development," there may be some solutions. You may have to be a little creative and put forth a little effort. The following are some practical and possible methods for funding educational initiative for your coaches:

- **Use a portion of your gate receipts.** This, of course, would be dependent upon if you have control of this revenue source and that it doesn't revert back to the district's

general fund. If you can use this money, prepare a brief proposal as to why your professional development program is needed and what it hopes to accomplish. This would include something to the effect that this training will help your coaches to grow, develop and improve, which will benefit your student-athletes."

Get your principal's or superintendent's approval, and you can get started. It would also be a good idea to be transparent and intermittently show these individuals how the money is being spent.

- **Host a golf tournament or other fundraisers in which the profits are totally dedicated to coach education and professional development.** Not surprisingly, many coaches will volunteer to help with the tourney, and some will play in it because they understand that the money will ultimately come back to benefit them.
- **Submit a proposal to your booster club requesting**



fundings, or partial support, for your professional development program. This request could be very similar to the one that you used with your principal or superintendent. Again, point out that the ultimate beneficiaries will be your student-athletes, and this educational effort will help all teams.

- **Seek sponsorships by local businesses such as McDonald's, Burger King, Chick-fil-A or any other reasonable possibilities.** Often, franchises have an advertising and promotional budget, and you might be able to tap into this source by highlighting the purpose and value of your program. Just as with any sponsorship for scoreboards or sound systems, you would also post signage recognizing the business and make announcements at your contests. "Please frequent - insert the name of the restaurant or company. They are the proud sponsor of our Coaches' Professional Development Program that will benefit our student-athletes. Thank you very much."
- **Check with your principal or superintendent to possibly use some of the funds they have for professional development for teachers.** This money normally supports teacher attendance at conferences, allows them to take courses, and to pursue other educational opportunities in order to increase competencies that will benefit students. In your request, you should point out and emphasize that you operate an education-based program, and

coaches are teachers. Real learning takes place just as it does in the classroom.

- **Reach out to state coaches associations to see if they have any grant money that you might be able to use to supplement your efforts.** There would be criteria that would have to be met, and you would have to complete and submit an application. But this could be one more possibility.

Since money is tight, you might want and be able to combine one or more of these approaches. But do keep in mind that if there is a will - and in this case, it is a need - there is a way. You just have to be a little creative, and put in the time and effort. But you can fund your professional program for your coaches! **HST**

Dr. David Hoch is a former athletic director at two high schools in Baltimore County (Maryland) for 16 years. He has 24 years of experience coaching basketball, including 14 years on the collegiate level. Hoch, who has a doctorate in sports management from Temple (Pennsylvania) University, is past president of the Maryland State Athletic Directors Association, and he formerly was executive director of the Maryland State Coaches Association. He has had more than 800 articles published in professional magazines, as well as four textbook chapters. Dr. Hoch is the author of five books: *Coaching within the Education-Based Athletics Concept*; *The Parents' Guide to Education-Based Athletics*; *Leading an Education-Based Athletic Program*; *A Lifetime of Memories from Education-Based Athletics: Humorous, Inspirational and Occasionally Sad*; and *Refocusing on Education-Based Athletics - A Call to Action*. Hoch is a member of the NFHS *High School Today* Publications Committee.

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