

October 30, 2012

To: Smitty

From: Monty Aldrich

**THOUGHTS FROM THE UNIT OFFICE...**

It's crazy weather time, and with that, we will notify of any cancellations, early dismissals, activity/game cancellations, etc. via our Alert Now phone messaging system. If you do not have your phone numbers updated, please do so. Our backup plan is to always check with WNOI radio station FM 103.9. We also post all cancellations on their website. A continuing problem is all of the callbacks we receive when our Alert Now system sends a message. PLEASE do not call the number back as it clogs our system.

It's again time for basketball season and with that, I want to express my opinion as to how I feel about the state of North Clay sports. HOW MANY "NORTH CLAY" FANS DO WE HAVE? We have many people at the games, but are we concerned about "North Clay" or just one in particular? I've been told in the past few years that I would think differently once my child was involved. Well, my child is involved and I don't think differently. Centering attention on my child is not what it is all about. I am not his personal coach and I don't interfere with his practices or games. We hired a coach to do that. I know that in some people's view, the coach is not capable, but it's time to allow our kids to fail or succeed on their own. Do you remember when we used to play all day, then go out and play an organized game at night? We weren't exhausted, we weren't on a pitch count, we didn't stretch out first, we didn't have a shooting device, and we still survived. We drank from an old, rusty water spigot if there was water. Otherwise, we just sweat and continued playing. We didn't have cold towels, Gatorade, people to fan and comfort us, etc. We didn't wear Under Armor to keep our bodies cooler. We survived. We didn't notice the difference. As a matter of fact, we were tougher and stronger from that.

When I was a small child, I remember hearing and experiencing the same exact nonsense that I am hearing now. Some things will never change, even when you do everything in your power to make change for the better. Looking back, I remember the good times of "getting to start", winning, receiving awards, etc. I also remember the bad times of "not getting to start", losing, having people say things about me, having others jealous because I was getting to play, being jealous because others were playing ahead of me, etc. I also remember the viciousness of student and parental relationships because of one person getting to play in front of another for a variety of reasons that many stated. Some of those reasons included brownnosing, playing because of the kid's last name, playing because the parents gave the coach a side of beef, playing because a kid told bad things about another kid (true or not), and not getting to play because a parent told something bad about another kid. I also remember playing ahead of some older kids and having to deal with my teammates excluding me from their group and calling me names. Even after all of that, I survived and my "self-esteem" wasn't crushed. I didn't have to seek counseling and I wasn't destroyed for life. All of the certificates, trophies, and other awards that I received in grade school and high school are gone. Not in a box. Gone. I'm still not damaged by that.

Now, we can still list the same types of things going on as I mentioned above, but there's a different philosophy and a different approach in how many parents deal with the issues. Back then, it was an embarrassment for a parent to approach a coach and "chew him out" for fear that the other players would humiliate the child. It was also a very rare occasion when it did happen

and it was in private away from children and fans. After all, the coach was the coach and the result was that we just had to deal with rejection, disappointment, etc. These issues were not the kind of issues that a parent went to school to complain about. These issues weren't the kind that caused us to generate discussions and lengthy meetings. This wasn't the focus of conversation among our staff and community.

We may or may not have the greatest coaches in the world, but it's North Clay. We are a small district and a small town and we cannot attract world-class coaches. We've had a great history in sports and a great amount of awesome athletes and teams throughout the years. I've also seen teams with "great potential" that never achieved because of the dissention and viciousness that existed. Again, I've heard a great deal of coaches being scared to even continue coaching because they know how this is. Whether we want playing time for all kids or whether we want to "win at all cost", we will have difficulty getting and keeping coaches because some things never change. Please step back a bit, enjoy being there, and cheer for "NORTH CLAY".

Recently, several people have talked to me about the topic of "bullying". There are all sorts of organizations around the country trying to solve this issue. Bullying has occurred since I can remember and before that. It has always gone on and will continue to go on. It's not just children that are bullies. We have many adults who bully to get what they want. Ways that children now deal with being bullied are much different though. There are shootings, hangings, suicides, and all sorts of other happenings. The use of social media is huge now. Cell phones and computers have taken over as a source of a coward's way to bully. Schools can develop the most elaborate plans and policies with all sorts of bells and whistles, but that doesn't solve the problem.

Our district takes this approach on bullying...our administration MUST know who is doing the bullying before we can do anything about it. If we see it, it will be addressed. If there are paybacks or revenge after it is addressed, then it is addressed much more severely. Most "successful" bullies are way too good to get caught in front of staff. Our best source of discipline when it comes to addressing a bully is for the parents at home to enforce punishment. If they will support us and take care of it, it will stop. If they fight us on it, it will be difficult to stop it. Bullying will continue to go on well after we are all gone. I often hear that many don't report it because the school won't do anything about it anyway. That's not correct. We need to know what occurs with the entire story, including both sides.

ARE THE DOORS GETTING HEAVIER? I see less and less people holding doors open for others, especially the elderly. Apparently they are making the doors heavier these days, and with the obesity issue we have in America, kids apparently aren't strong enough to open them. Well, the government is trying to fix these problems. It's not going to happen! Our responsibility is still **"responsibility"**! It needs to come from home. Until we see this change, test scores will be down, unemployment rates will be high, crime will continue, and our deficit will rise. This world wasn't made to issue free passes and always put the responsibility on someone else. The solution to these problems is the "home". If you want today's children to be more responsible, the parents must:

- Be responsible to make sure their children go to school on a regular basis
- Teach manners and etiquette at home
- Teach them to respect others and their belongings
- Discipline them when they are wrong, and promote "tough love"
- Teach them how to act in public and punish them if they don't act properly
- Teach them "how to work" with good work habits
- Teach them how to help others and care for others

- Teach them to be responsible for their actions
- Allow them to fail on their own a few times
- Teach them that some things come with hard work, time, and patience
- Teach them to be humble and modest, and to overcome jealousy

I say this in practically every article, but please take the time to come in and visit our schools. Rumors can fly out in public from a child, disgruntled employee, or others. Find out what's true and what's really going on by coming in and sharing in an activity, eating lunch with a child, or by coming to some events. It's your school, so walk in and be welcomed. If you don't feel that way, let me know how we can change.