



MOUNTAIN BROOK SCHOOLS

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“SUCCESS FOR ONE IS SUCCESS FOR ALL” MOUNTAIN BROOK’S ATHLETIC PROGRAM



In recent issues of THE REPORTER, we have focused on Mountain Brook Schools’ academic programs, fine arts programs, and other aspects of a balanced school experience. In this issue, we look at the school system’s broad-ranging, highly successful athletic program. We began by speaking with Terry Cooper, who is approaching 20 years as the system’s Athletics Director.

During that time the Mountain Brook High School Spartans have won 136 state championships. “We believe this is the highest number of any public school system in the state,” said Coach Cooper. “By no means is it our primary focus, but winning is a boost for all of us and a tribute to the hard work of our athletes and our staff.” Mountain Brook’s athletic program has been recognized as the best overall program in the state and recently was named the *Birmingham News* Metro Area Program of the Year.

Coach Cooper credits the success of the Spartan program to the outstanding student athletes who have participated, the coaches who guided them, and the support provided by the faculty, administration, and the Mountain Brook parents and community. Coach Cooper also recognizes the outstanding contributions of the various sport booster clubs and of the Mountain Brook Sports Corporation. “The community is critical to the athletic program and, really, athletics is critical to the community,” said Cooper.

Because of his longevity at Mountain Brook, Coach Cooper has perspectives to share about how Mountain Brook’s athletic programs have changed over the years. “First, girls’ sports have progressed tremendously. In a way, this began with Title IX, which insures that female athletes have full access to athletic programs. But, far beyond that, I have seen the level of competitive-

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ness and the athleticism of the girls grow tremendously. They have come so far in a relatively short time. Just as is true of the boys, they just aren't involved in their sports seasonally. They are in the training process year-round."

A second major change Cooper notes is the addition and upgrade of athletic facilities. "We have the arena at the high school, the competition gyms, baseball fields, the softball complex, an Olympic track surface, the new artificial turf on the football fields. But, these upgrades to facilities aren't limited to the high school. System wide, we can be proud of the facilities we provide our students."

Third, Coach Cooper has seen major changes in the training programs for all athletes. "Sports never really stop for our student athletes, even though the actual competitions are seasonal. To be competitive and to maximize the health benefits, our student athletes train all year."

One of the best features of the school system's athletic programs, according to Coach Cooper, is the integration of the junior high program with the high school program. "By design, we want to make this a true joint program. We want the programs to blend as much as possible and to be seamless. We are preparing our junior high athletes to be high school athletes." This approach is illustrated by the track program. (See article below).

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— Terry Cooper

Coach Cooper shared an interesting perspective on coaching student athletes who are often also excellent students. "Our students are often interested in the knowledge part of the game. We take advantage of that by going beyond the physical athleticism of training and teaching more of the strategic elements of the sports. And, of course, many of our students are very much driven to be successful overall, in academics, extra-curricular activities, and in sports."

We asked Coach Cooper about the coaching staff at Mountain Brook Schools. "We have a philosophy we feel strongly about that our coaches are educators first and foremost. Of course, many

teach academic classes and are teachers in that regard, but they are also educators and teachers when they are coaching. These are people who are passionate about helping kids maximize their abilities and reach their potentials. I would add that we have a number of assistant coaches who are capable of being head coaches, but have chosen, for example, to remain at the junior high level because they have found their passion in working with students at that level."

Coach Cooper has ideas about how to measure the success of a school athletic program. "I don't want to say that winning is unimportant, and we have done our share of winning. But I remember that some years ago I asked all our coaches to talk about their own measures of success. Not one coach mentioned the importance of winning. Instead, they talked about the team reaching their potential, about character, discipline, sacrifice, and teamwork."

But, Coach Cooper believes there is another factor that motivates students to be involved in sports. "One question we ask ourselves all the time is 'are the kids having fun?'" said Cooper. "I really believe that is probably the chief reason, and one of the real benefits, of participation in sports. Our students tend to work very hard at school and, while the competitiveness is there, they come out to have fun, and that's a good thing."

COACH GREG MORROW: Culture Of MBJH Athletics—Loyalty, Respect, Collaboration



When Greg Morrow talks about the Mountain Brook Junior High athletic program, he gets almost misty-eyed. The 20+ year veteran coach and assistant athletic director has a passion for coaching sports and for students at the adolescent level. Terry Cooper told us that he tells the Junior High athletes "how lucky they are to play for Greg Morrow."

Coach Greg Morrow described his vision and focus for the junior high athletic program as one that is cohesive with the high school athletics program. "Terry Cooper's vision is for the JH and HS programs to be cohesive and seamless and I support that vision," Coach Morrow said. "Our goal

at the junior high is to get the student athletes ready for varsity athletics. Kids develop and progress at different rates, but we train and teach all our athletes on their skills. There is something about a 12- or 13-year-old, they have that naive eagerness to know more and they absorb everything we teach them because they want to be really good. They realize their coaches know what they are doing, and they want to learn from them. "

On its own, the Junior High athletic program has been highly successful. As a member of the Metro South League, Mountain Brook Junior High has won the all-sports trophy 10 of the last 11 years by winning league championships in several sports in the same year. Membership in the Metro South League is competitive and member teams have the best athletes and best coaches in the area. Morrow credits the coaching staff at the Junior High with making the athletics program successful. While any of the Junior High coaches has the skills and knowledge to coach varsity, each has chosen to work and coach at the Junior High. "Our coaches are highly competent and any would be capable of going as high up in coaching as they want to go," said Coach Morrow, "but all our coaches choose to stay here because they like working with this age group of students, and they like who they work with. They are all professionals and great people to work with."

The success of the program and of each sport comes from the culture of loyalty and collaboration among the coaches at the junior high. Morrow takes that culture very seriously. "Loyalty and trust are everything. You've got to keep building it every day. If you get that right, the coaches perform like great athletes. When everyone is on the same page, everything else takes care of itself."

Another measure of the program's success is the legacy of the coaches, according to Morrow. "Many of our current coaches are children or relatives of former Mountain Brook coaches, or friends of former coaches. Many are children of former students and athletes from Mountain Brook. Our program's reputation, built by our coaches and students, speaks volumes and people want to be a part of it."



ATHLETIC TRAINERS PROVIDE EXPERT CARE OF STUDENT ATHLETES



In our conversation with Terry Cooper, he included in a list of the three most significant changes in the school system's athletic programs the role of training. "A successful athletic program has a number of unsung heroes," Cooper added. "Examples of these would be our athletic trainers."

Athletic trainers play a significant role in the prevention of injuries among student athletes, as well as the recognition, management, and rehabilitation of injured athletes. They develop athletic injury prevention and treatment programs using their knowledge of biomechanics, anatomy and pathology.

Athletic trainers also provide a critical communication link between the injured athlete, the coach, and sometimes the athlete's family, to determine when it's right to return to practice and competition.

We spoke to Mountain Brook athletic trainers Jake Jordan and Kristie Harris.

How long have you worked in Mountain Brook?

Jake Jordan: This is my 6th school year. Wow, time really does fly by.

Kristie Harris: This is my 7th year

What are your responsibilities?

Jake Jordan: The prevention, care, and treatment of all athletic injuries.

Kristie Harris: I teach four P.E. classes, a lunch duty, and monitor auditorium (quiet study). As far as the athletic training side-I order supplies, collect and file physical exams, treat and evaluate injuries, tape/pad/bandage before practices, set up doctor appointments for injured athletes, and fill out an injury log for coaches.

What sports and activities do you work with?

Jake Jordan: I primarily work with Varsity Football in the fall, and oversee the athletic

training coverage for the rest of the sports with my two assistant athletic trainers, Lesley Bearden and Errol Lewis. They are provided to us by a partnership with Champion Sports Medicine. They are actually paid by that organization and spend part of their time with us.

Kristie Harris: This year I will work with 7th and 8th grade football, volleyball, cross country, girls & boys basketball, wrestling, and off season track.

Do you work together with the junior high trainer at games or do you each have assigned games/events to split up the responsibilities?

Jake Jordan: Kristie is the head athletic trainer at the JH, and I am the head athletic trainer at the HS. We typically don't have any crossover coverage; we both have our hands full with our own group.

Where did you learn your skills? What schools did you attend?

Jordan: I have a bachelor's degree in athletic training, as well as a masters in kinesiology from the University of West Alabama.

Harris: My high school did not have an athletic trainer, I was introduced to the profession as a collegiate athlete. I graduated from Samford University.

What led you to an interest in athletic training and sports medicine?

Jordan: I am a sports fanatic, and am not a fan of manual labor, so it seemed like the perfect fit.

Harris: I had torn my ACL in the 9th grade, but didn't have the repair until my 1st year of college. I spent a lot of time in the training room over the following 5 months.

What can you do that others/coaches cannot?

Jordan: Just about everything we do is a trained skill that fits under the National Athletic Trainers Association guidelines. Coaches often have a lot of knowledge that overlaps with ours, but an advantage to having trainers is it allows for some specialization of skills. We are very much focused on the injury prevention and response aspects.

Why is it important to have a sports medicine program and athletic trainers at games and practices?

Jordan: It is in my opinion the most important aspect of a sports program. The safety of the athletes comes first, and any of our coaches will tell you that. Having a trained health care professional there to take care of the hundreds of situations that may arise is vital to the success and well-being of that team.

Harris: We are trained to handle everything from ingrown toenails to broken necks. We are first responders and are an extension of the sports medicine doctors. With coaches having increased demands on them, they should not be expected to give the same care that a health care professional can give.

Child Find Notice

Special education services for children with disabilities are provided in accordance with the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, Amendments of 2004 and Alabama Act 106. Child Find is an attempt to locate and provide appropriate educational and related services to all children with disabilities between the ages of birth to 21.

If you are the parent of a child with disabilities who is not receiving services, or if you would like more information, please contact Shannon Mundy at the Mountain Brook Board of Education, Special Education Department, 414-3836.

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Mountain Brook City Schools Foundation



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Contact Information:

Carmine Jordan
 Executive Director,
 Mountain Brook City
 Schools Foundation
 Post Office Box 530834
 Mountain Brook, AL 35253
 (205) 414-0042
 mbcfoundation@bellsouth.net



The Class of 1971 40th Reunion organizing committee presented a check for \$40,220 at a gathering to celebrate their fundraising success and a wonderful reunion with classmates. Seen left to right front row are Allene Parker Parnell, Chole Perry Still, Ann Beck Thomas, Bari Cotton, Cathy Herren Nick, Em Corr Lee, Diane Stubbs Mills, Kathy Trafton Leaver, Judy Wilson Matthews. Left to right on the back row are Principal Vic Wilson, Ross Mason, Rebecca Washington Mason, Lissie Pfrimmer Stewart, Nancy Logan Seymour, Philip Plotka, David Pittman, Nancy White Griffin and Barbara Scott Sandner.

Class of 1971 Celebrates 40th Reunion

In celebration of the 40th Reunion of the Mountain Brook High School Class of 1971 classmates raised over \$40,000 in donations that will go to projects at the high school and for the Mountain Brook City Schools Foundation. The leadership committee for this milestone reunion for the Class of 1971 worked with Principal Wilson in choosing projects that would have a significant impact at MBHS and also have the potential to help students in other school systems.

David Pittman who was one of the organizers of the Reunion for the Class of 1971 describes the selected projects as follows:

In recent years, Mountain Brook High School students have participated in several initiatives where MBHS clubs or departments partner with area schools. There have been two joint drama productions - one with Fairfield and one with Holy Family. In addition, during Annual Heritage Panel days, MBHS students spend two days at Wenonah High and Wenonah students spend two days MBHS. In order to expand this collaboration, Mr. Wilson will use some of the funds raised by the Class of 1971 to establish a Larger Community

Fund to support and expand efforts to bring MBHS more directly in contact Metropolitan Birmingham schools.

The following student and teacher testimonials highlight the success of the current efforts:

"The Heritage Panel program is extremely important to me as an educator because it provides Mountain Brook students with a chance to interact with students from completely different backgrounds with whom they may never otherwise have a chance to interact. It is terribly exciting to watch our students find common bonds and build relationships with students who seem as though they are often a world away. I have also found that the Heritage Panel provides a home base for students who sometimes do not seem to fit in with the "norm". It allows for an accepting and diverse environment welcoming to all. With bullying at an unfortunate all time high in today's society, all students need a place to feel welcomed; the Heritage Panel provides just such an environment." (teacher)

"Although Heritage Panel may have at first seemed like an appealing way to

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miss a couple of days of school, once I actually listened to a roomful of strangers from two different worlds, the initial difference of skin color between us melted away, taking with it my ignorant view of racism. It made me re-think who I was drawn to talk to based on an inconsequential exterior. This quote says it all: "Choose your friends by their character and your socks by their color. Choosing socks by their character makes no sense, and choosing your friends by their color should be unthinkable." (Senior girl)

"The Heritage Panel has been a life-changing experience. Over the two years I have been involved in the Heritage Panel, I have freed myself from all stereotypes, prejudices, and "isms" of all kinds. Through involving myself in this club, I have gained respect, knowledge, and most importantly love for all people. This club truly brought hope for a more inclusive world for me." (Senior boy and Heritage Panel president)

A portion of the Class of 1971 Gift will go to support an ongoing, multi year plan to enhance campus security in that the safety of student, faculty and staff is of utmost concern.

Remaining contributions will go to the Mountain Brook City Schools Foundation which provides academic support for the entire school district in the areas of technology, staff development and library enhancement.

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS to the CLASS OF 1971