Protecting Education-Based Athletics in Texas

Expanded Talking Points for Coaches

Introduction: Defining the Problem

- Texas high school athletics are deeply tied to community identity—Friday night lights, rivalries, hometown pride.
- Our model is unique: student-athletes represent their schools, coached by certified educators who care about both academics and athletics.
- This system is under threat from **sport-centric academies** that recruit students away from public schools, prioritizing performance over education.
- The danger: If this model takes over, Texas could lose what makes our athletics special—community connection, whole-student development, and long-term success beyond sports.

Key Differences: Education-Based vs. Sport-Centric Programs

1. **Academics & Rigor**
    - Education-based schools offer AP, dual credit, and career-prep classes taught by certified teachers.
    - Students explore fine arts, STEM, leadership, and other interests—not just sports.
    - Academies often lack rigorous academics, leaving students underprepared for college or careers.
2. **Support Systems**
    - Education-based schools provide counselors, academic advisors, and daily teacher contact to catch problems early.
    - Academies often miss academic or mental health warning signs.
3. **Balanced Student Life**
    - Education-based schools offer pep rallies, prom, clubs, leadership, and multi-sport opportunities.
    - Multi-sport athletes are more versatile, less prone to burnout, and highly valued by college recruiters.
    - Academies narrow experiences to only sports, limiting personal growth.
4. **Preparation for Life Beyond Sports**
    - Few athletes play in college; even fewer go pro.
    - Public schools prepare students for *all futures* through academic and extracurricular exposure.
    - Lower academic rigor at academies can jeopardize both college admissions and scholarship opportunities.
5. **College Readiness**
    - Education-based schools mirror the demands of college life: daily schedules, practices, classes, time management.
    - Multi-sport competition, teamwork, and resilience prepare athletes for the next level.
    - College recruiters value athletes who are adaptable, disciplined, and academically strong.

6. **Student Well-Being**
    - Education-based athletics focus on long-term development and student well-being.
    - Sport-centric academies often commercialize athletes, creating pressure, burnout, and short-term thinking.

Call to Action for Coaches

- **Don't legitimize sport-centric academies**:
    - Refuse to schedule games or tournaments with them.
    - Don't rent school facilities or allow ISD access.
- **Educate parents** about the risks of sport-only programs and highlight the many benefits of public schools.
- **Promote your program** intentionally:
    - Share stories of success, both athletic and academic.
    - Showcase your impact on students and community pride.
- **Be active in recruiting support for your athletes**:
    - Communicate with college recruiters.
    - Help families navigate opportunities.
    - Show parents and players that staying in public schools opens real doors.

Conclusion: Why This Matters

- This isn't about resisting change—it's about protecting the values that make Texas high school athletics strong.
- Education-based schools create **well-rounded, resilient citizens**, not just athletes.
- If academies replace education-based athletics, we risk losing traditions, pride, and student well-being for short-term wins.
- Protecting education-based athletics is protecting the **future of Texas schools, towns, and youth.**

Educate. Excel. Play

The following associations endorse this statement:

Texas High School Coaches Association (THSCA)
Texas High School Athletic Directors Association (THSADA)
Texas Girls Coaches Association (TGCA)
Texas Six-Man Coaches Association (TSMCA)
Black Coaches of Texas (BCTX)
Cross Country Coaches Association of Texas (CCCAT)
Hispanic Texas High School Football Coaches Association
Texas Association of Basketball Coaches (TABC)
Texas Association of Golf Coaches (TAGC)
Texas Association of Soccer Coaches (TASCO)
Texas High School Baseball Coaches Association (THSBCA)
Texas Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association (TISCA)
Texas Tennis Coaches Association (TTCA)