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TECHNOLOGY

iPads to the Court

IN AN ERA WHERE MOST STUDENT-ATHLETES HAVE SMARTPHONES GLUED TO THEIR HANDS AND SUBMIT ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENTS ELECTRONICALLY, the Duke University men's and women's teams have embraced current technology by issuing each of their players an iPad. Catering to their athletes' learning and communication preferences, the 64 GB tablets are used for team and interpersonal communication. They've also replaced paper playbooks and scouting DVDs distributed by Blue Devil coaching staffs in the past.

"Everything the players do now is digital—they text, tweet, and use Facebook," says Kevin Cullen, Basketball Director of Information Technology at Duke. "By putting our team information on a digital platform, the coaching staffs can share more information, and the players can learn more efficiently."

"The iPads connect our team in ways the players understand and are quite comfortable using," says Duke Head Women's Coach Joanne P. McCallie, adding that she thinks the tablets could impact future Blue Devils as well.



"Recruits want to feel like they'll be supported, and the iPads are a great tool for demonstrating how much Duke backs its athletes."

As a learning tool, the tablets provide Blue Devil players a streamlined way to prepare for opponents. "Prior to every game, coaches have a half-hour meeting to plan for our upcoming opponent," says Cullen. "Before, we'd hand out paper scouting reports to our athletes. Now we just send that information directly to the players' iPads."

Likewise, to study video of opponents in the past, an athlete had to request a DVD in advance or plan to set aside time to watch film in the basketball building. Duke players now have access anywhere at any time. "They can tap into all of our video libraries from home, while traveling, and even in a hotel room before a game," says Cullen.

For McCallie, the iPads have changed the way she scouts her opponents' game strategies. Before using the tablets, she had DVDs and scouting reports scattered throughout her office. Now, all of that information is organized and at her fingertips. "I have files for every school in the ACC, plus other non-conference schools we face," she says. "With the touch of a button, I can pull up everything we have on Virginia Tech, including video and statistics from last season."

In addition to helping Duke's teams prepare for upcoming games, the iPads help each player with individual development. "The athletes are expected to take notes during film sessions," says Cullen. "If we're scouting another team and one of their plays doesn't make sense, a player can make a note and later ask for clarification from a coach."

"We also film our practices and include that footage in our video library," Cullen continues. "If a player is making mistakes on the practice floor and wants to improve, he can watch the video later to find where he went wrong."

The men's squad is also using an app to promote individual improvement. SportsBoard Basketball Scout allows Duke

At Duke University, Chelsea Gray and other members of the men's and women's teams were issued iPads to access video footage and communicate with coaches and teammates more easily.

managers to gather and evaluate Player Efficiency Ratings (PER) for each athlete during practices and games. The PER is a scoring system that awards points for made shots, assists, rebounds, blocks, steals, and so on. It also subtracts points for missed shots, turnovers, and personal fouls.

Before the iPad technology was available, student managers carefully tallied these statistics on paper and transferred them to a spreadsheet—a process that

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could take hours—before distributing the information to players. Now, PER reports are generated during practice or games and sent to each player's tablet immediately afterward. Athletes can instantaneously review their performance and pinpoint areas to focus on in the future.

While some schools have distributed iPads to their athletic teams and placed limits on what they can be used for, Duke has no restrictions. Both coaching staffs felt the players would use the tablets more for basketball if they were able to incorporate their personal technology preferences as well.

"If we told our athletes they couldn't use the tablets for Facebook, Twitter, or iTunes, the chances they'd bring them everywhere would diminish greatly," says Cullen. "We want the players to use the iPads primarily for basketball. But we also understand that if we took away the things they enjoy, they probably wouldn't use the tablets at all."

Despite the potential for distractions on the iPads, Cullen says the tablets have increased the players' engagement with basketball. "They've asked for more video footage than ever before," he says. "I'd

say the requests have gone up 10-fold.”

McCallie also thinks her team has found a happy medium with the devices. “The players were like kids in a candy store when we first got the iPads,” she says. “Of course, they downloaded plenty of video game apps, but we’re also broadly using the tablets for basketball. I think they give us a wonderful competitive advantage.”

SPORTSMANSHIP

On The Same Page

STUDENT-ATHLETES FROM OPPOSING HIGH SCHOOLS FREQUENTLY VIEW EACH OTHER AS ADVERSARIES. So what happens when you bring them together to pen a Sportsmanship Code of Conduct? For the Southwest Washington 1A League (SWW1A), the experiment allowed students to look past their athletic rivalries for a common purpose.

meeting came from Rainier principal Bryan Bahr, who orchestrated a similar exercise at a previous job.

For Bahr and Rainier Athletic Director John Beckman, who also helped facilitate the process, it was important to have students, not administrators, write the sportsmanship statement. “It means more when it comes from the student-athletes and reflects what they want,” says Beckman. “There’s automatic buy-in from the other members of the student body.”

The student-athletes met at Rainier, and the day began with icebreaker activities. “Even though they all come from different schools and backgrounds, it was important for the students to see that they’re very similar, and they’re all going through the same things as teenagers,” says Beckman. “Once we got them to understand that, the students took care of everything else.”

Champlin admits the collaboration was strange at first, but the awkward-

dents broke up into smaller groups to discuss what they wanted the SWW1A Sportsmanship Code of Conduct to entail. Each group was given pamphlets with other leagues’ codes to use as a reference. With those examples and their own brainstorming, the groups eventually combined their ideas into the following statement:

In order to demonstrate sportsmanship, citizenship, spirit, and pride in our schools, we must show respect and conduct ourselves in an appropriate manner. We shall refrain from profanity, derogatory comments, and other intimidating words or actions directed at officials, participants, spectators, coaches, and advisors. Accept both victory and defeat with pride, integrity, and composure.

The statement was adopted in various forms by each school in the league. “Several schools are printing it on the backs of their game programs,” says Beckman. “We periodically have our announcers read it over the PA before a contest begins. At one of our Friday night football games, a cheerleader and her parent, a school board member, read the statement in front of the crowd, and it was really well received.”

Champlin believes the added emphasis on sportsmanship has changed the way the home crowd behaves at Rainier basketball games, as well as how she views her opponents. “The crowd isn’t as negative as it used to be,” she says. “We are seeing and hearing more positive cheering. And knowing the players on the other team as a result of working with them at the meeting makes the games more fun. They’re still competitions, but I don’t view my opponents as enemies. I see them as friends.”

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Hang Time

SCALING DOWN A SKYSCRAPER ON A WINDY MORNING MAY NOT BE AT THE TOP OF MOST COACHES’ TO-DO LISTS. But when Rutgers University Head Men’s Coach Mike Rice was invited to rappel down a 50-story high-rise in Jersey City, N.J., as part of the American Cancer Society’s “Over the Edge” fundraiser in September, he had no reservations in accepting the offer.

“Anthony Marino, who works for the American Cancer Society and coordinates with Coaches vs. Cancer, called my wife and asked if I would be interested,” Rice says. “I love doing adventurous things and knew participating would be a unique opportunity to do something not a lot of people get to do—while also highlighting a good cause.”

Thanks to previous rock climbing and rappelling experience he gained during



Last fall, student-athletes from rival high schools in the Southwest Washington 1A League gathered together to discuss and craft a conference-wide sportsmanship statement.

The need for a statement defining sportsmanship was evident at athletic competitions throughout the league, says Elyssa Champlin, a sophomore who plays basketball and runs cross country at Rainier (Wash.) High School, a member of the SWW1A. “Sometimes crowds would get a little bit too excited, and they would make negative comments towards players and officials,” she says. “We wanted to come up with a sportsmanship statement that could promote positivity—and help show athletes and officials they are doing a great job.”

Champlin and seven other students from Rainier joined 30-plus students from five schools in the SWW1A to create the statement. The idea for the league-wide

ness receded quickly. “It was weird in the beginning, but it became easier once we all started talking and got to know each other,” she says. “We set aside our differences to discuss our goals and what we wanted the statement to reflect. I think it’s important to be open to other opinions and to converse and interact with new people.”

After getting acquainted, the stu-