

# They Call Me Coach

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Over two years ago I applied for admission into graduate school at Michigan State University (MSU). During that time period I have gone from being engaged to celebrating my 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary. It is hard to believe the time has gone by so fast. One of the requirements for admission into MSU was to write about my professional goals. After re-reading the paper I submitted in April 2010, I realize that I am still striving toward these same goals. Although I have not yet attained all these objectives, the progress I have made through my graduate work has been instrumental in my journey as an educator.

The biggest career goal I had prior to entering the Masters of Arts in Education (MAED) program was to become a varsity basketball coach. Although I have not yet attained this distinction, I have made strides toward doing so. In the last two years I have grown professionally as a coach. I began my graduate work as an 8<sup>th</sup> grade coach; since then I have been promoted to the role of junior varsity coach. During my time in the MAED program I have taken courses that will help me to become a varsity coach. I completed three required Kinesiology courses to fulfill my concentration for the MAED program, and I also took the only remaining 800 level Kinesiology class as an elective.

The knowledge I gained from these courses has helped me to think differently about my coaching. Prior to beginning graduate school, I saw the role of a coach as being one-dimensional, coaching. Over the last two years I have realized that a coach must wear several different hats: sports nutritionist, youth sports liaison, promoter, safety inspector, etc. The coursework I have completed has given me resources to use with the athletes I coach. For instance, I have developed: a proposal for a youth sports program, a professional network of medical personnel, a nutritional guide, and a strength and conditioning circuit. When I become a varsity coach, these will be valuable resources for my players and their parents.

Another goal I set forth to achieve over two years ago was to take more of a leadership role within my school district. The knowledge I have gained in pedagogy and best practice has helped me to feel more confident in my teaching and in staff meetings with colleagues. I now feel comfortable expressing my opinions, along with being an active member in my professional learning community. I still have not developed an interest in becoming an administrator, though I am actively seeking new leadership roles throughout my school district.

Prior to beginning graduate school, I knew where I wanted to go professionally, but was unsure of how to get there. The MAED program has helped to provide me with the roadmap and tools I need to achieve my goals. The lessons I have learned in the MAED program have helped me become a more effective teacher and coach.