

Successful Programs Winter Clinic 07

Intro

I'm very fortunate to be given the opportunity of coaching Hinsdale Central.

May thanks to the HOF coaches that came before me and built this program the past 50 years:

John Schaefer who started the program and had the foresight of what the program could become.

Tony Canino who gave the program structure, team concepts and a winning tradition.

Paul Omi who assisted Canino and won State championships as a head coach of the Red Devils.

Neil Krupicka The Winningest coach in Illinois history, who developed and created the Hinsdale Gymnastics program consisting of the boy's & girl's high school teams which he was head coach, the Age Group and Girl's & boy's club program.

There is no secret to a successful gymnastics program. It's hard work and long hours that create success. Nothing has changed from Canino, Omi to Krupicka. Dedication to a common team goal and hard work. You must train all year round in open gym, clubs and camps all within the IHSA rules of course.

Expectations

One of the most difficult things to do is start or change a program. Schaefer was the pioneer in Hinsdale Central Gymnastics; Canino instilled the concepts that produces success. Hard work and dedication will payoff maybe not in the scores or in the gym but most importantly in life. Getting a team and young man to buy into this concept is not easy because success is not a sure thing. For them to realize that by working hard and challenging themselves it will make you a better gymnast and that makes their team better. This is not an easy task. All of this builds character and that is just as important as scores.

Hinsdale Central

Expectations at Hinsdale Central haven't changed over time. They are to win all dual meets & Invitationals, win conference & Sectionals and to make State. These are clear and consistent expectations from year to year. Expectations for each practice are, be on time, work hard the entire practice, make every turn count, condition hard leave the gym spent. Three things that guide every decision in the gym are to be firm, fair and consistent.

Consistency

Young adults need structure, they need to know what to expect in practice. Like anything that has to do with teaching it's important to be flexible. Include the team in decisions that are appropriate and gymnasts will have ownership in their practices and their team. Also important, which we have little control over is a consistent coaching staff. The most important coach is the freshman coach. We have had 2 outstanding freshman coaches in our program. Harrison Bull was the freshman coach during the 70's

and 80's. Myles Laffey is the current freshman coach. He does an outstanding job getting freshman interested in gymnastics and willing to work hard. He also educates them about gymnastics and the many traditions of Hinsdale Gymnastics.

Tradition

You can develop team ownership through traditions. These traditions can help a team feel the uniqueness of gymnastics and feel proud of being a part of the program. Many traditions both in gymnastics and outside of the gym have been handed down through the years they are the connection to the past gymnasts. It's never too late to start new traditions. Traditions are also born from success as a team. We stress making it to State as a team. Our philosophy is it's better to make to state as a team than as an individual.

Team

Gymnastics is an individual sport and it's important to stress that it is also a team sport. We stress the team as much as we can. Things we do as a team include: warm-ups, and conditioning (weight room, run & swim). Each event is a team within the team and at meet the team dresses then all walk out to warm up together. We also try to include team activities outside of gymnastics like floor hockey and community service.

Program

To be successful it takes long hours and getting kids involved before they get to high school. In this day an age of "the team with the most club kids wins" it's important to have a feeder program. We have an Age Group program and a girls and boys club team. We build our teams around the 4-year gymnasts not the club gymnast. Having gymnastics in the PE curriculum can expose students to gymnastics although many schools have dropped it, which makes open gym very important. Making kids aware of open gym and getting them to come will give freshman a head start before the season. Flyers, announcements and anything creative you can think of to get kids, especially freshman, involved will your program. Also, seniors have a huge impact on freshman both in recruiting and helping them in the gym.

Gymnastics is a unique sport (It's the only sport all the rest are games & races) a gymnastics team is a unique blend of individual and team. We stress that no one person is more important than the team. That the 4th & 5th people on an event are just as important as the counters. The challenge in this day and age is that kids are involved in so many other activities that take any from time in the gym. We have to accommodate for a wide variety of kids and their wide variety of activities. Success is like a quote that has been handed down from Canino, that, "Luck is when preparation meets opportunity."