



VOLUME 8
NUMBER 3
FALL 1999

THE ATHLETE'S VIEW

CORNER

ATHLETE'S

When we have the ball in our territory, I have a sideline routine that I do. I don't do it because I'm superstitious, but because there are certain things I do to prepare myself to kick if we end up going for a field goal. It's a routine where I don't have to think about what I do. I just do it.

Once we're between the 45 and 35, I'll start to warm up by taking a few practice kicks into the net.

After the practice kicks, I try to be by myself and do some deep breathing, using my breath to help me focus on my center (an inch or two below the navel in the middle of the abdominal cavity), slow my head down, and just relax. At the same time, I'm building this internal energy by breathing through my center.

While I'm doing this, I go into soft eyes. This helps me relax and focus. Soft eyes is like seeing without trying to see. I move inside myself because there isn't anything outside of me that matters when I kick, and I want to get myself into that little cocoon mentally when I kick.

As soon as I step on the field, I have this mental switch that I turn on. When I do this, there is no *ready or not ready*. The switch is on and I'm focusing on my center.

Once I get to the spot on the field where I'm going to kick from, I stand there in soft eyes, taking some deep breaths. As the team breaks the huddle, I take my steps—three back and two to the left. Then I set up.

The whole time, I'm breathing from center and in



Doug Brien

SEE CORNER, INSIDE

Spirit and Physicality Are Missing From Education's Core

I hear and I forget. I see and I may not remember. I do and I understand.

—American Indian proverb

They are called education's *core* courses. Core as in essential. Essential as in determining whether or not a high school student qualifies to go on to a four-year college or university, receives a higher education, and eventually enjoys the fruits of that education.

What are the core courses and who determines what they are?

The courses include math, language arts, social studies, sciences, and foreign languages. They begin with the basic levels and grow in complexity in the advanced courses.

For example, most students wishing to go on to a four-year university directly from high school must go beyond basic math and take algebra in the ninth grade, geometry in the tenth grade, advanced algebra as a junior, and precalculus/calculus as a senior. The same is true for the other core subject areas.

The colleges and universities determine what these courses are. Some institutions have higher requirements than others as to how many advanced courses must be taken to qualify for entrance. And, along with college entrance test scores (SAT and ACT), students compete with one another to get into these four-year universities through the grade point averages they earn in these core courses.

What is so conspicuous about these core courses is not what they include, but rather what they omit. Core courses do not include sport, music (band, orchestra, choir), dance, and theater. These courses are not considered

essential to getting into a four-year university. They are not considered relevant to higher education.

Why is this so? Why aren't courses in these disciplines considered core?

What distinguishes these courses from the esteemed core courses are spirit and physicality.

While extremely important to the education of everyone, the core courses do not require that the students perform in front of others. With the turning in of assignments and tests, the only one who judges a student's performance is the course's teacher.

With sport, music, dance, and theater, not only are the students evaluated by the teachers to receive a grade in their respective courses, the students must also perform and/or compete in front of others and be judged accordingly. Not only do the students have to make the right moves, hit the right keys, turn the right way, or project their voices in the proper manner, they must do so with spirit to qualify as true performers or to compete at their best.

This intangible yet essential quality of spirit is what moves us. It touches us in a way that fulfills and enriches the souls of the observers. In the core courses, it's pretty much facts and information that go back and forth between the students and teachers. In today's schools, there isn't much spirit in our geometry classes.

But is spirit truly important in education? Does it count for anything in everyday life? And just how important is spirit to the growth and development of kids?

This point is, indeed, debatable. However, the

What distinguishes these courses from the esteemed core courses are spirit and physicality.

SEE SPIRIT AND PHYSICALITY, INSIDE

Message from the Director...

It is with a profound sense of regret and anticipation that I announce my changing role at the American Sports Institute after 14 years as its Executive Director. Having cofounded ASI with husband Joel Kirsch, I am stepping aside from the rigors of day-to-day operations.

Brainstorming in 1985, we coined the name American Sports Institute and raised a toast to a mission statement that concluded, "For it may well be that sports and physical education, reformed and refurbished, may provide the best possible path to personal enlightenment and social transformation in this age."

Since then, ASI has grown from the good-idea stage to having a talented staff along with some 60 volunteers.

The *Promoting Achievement in School through Sport* program is the cornerstone of our efforts. Over the years, PASS has helped thousands of sports-minded students transfer fundamentals of success they know through sports to their classroom endeavors. Frank Gold, former Tamalpais High School principal where PASS began in 1991, says, "PASS is a concrete program that has proven that it works." And a rigorous evaluation conducted by the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory concludes, "PASS is a model for total school reform."

Also, PASS has been featured in numerous media stories, including National Public Radio, ESPN, *The Osgood File* on the CBS radio network, and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Working with the people associated with ASI, the PASS program, and the annual PASS Benefit and Golf Classic has been a distinct privilege. You are treasured friends. I will be in touch as I continue to serve on the Board of Directors and work on special events.

ASI's pioneering efforts to integrate body, mind, and spirit in an educational context are just getting underway. There's still a lot of work to be done, and we hope you'll continue to support this important endeavor.

Susan Kirsch is the Executive Director of the American Sports Institute.



Celebrity guest Duane Kuiper (second from left) with Bank of America golfers at the Fourth Annual ASI Golf Classic at The Olympic Club.

A Great Day of Golf at The Olympic Club!

Some 150 golfers displayed their skills on the Lake and Ocean courses at The Olympic Club in the Fourth Annual ASI Golf Classic this past June. Special thanks to our lead sponsors **Pacific Bell** and **Trans Union Corporation**. Thanks also to our Eagle Sponsors **Bank of America** and **American Airlines**; to our Birdie Sponsors **Belvedere Group**, **Dii Semiconductor**, **DPR Construction**, **The Men's Wearhouse**, **Team Elrod**, and **Union Bank of California**; and to our Par Sponsors **BankBoston**, **Fox Sports Net Bay Area**, **Hitchcock Financial**, **NUMMI**, **Salomon Smith Barney**, **Takenaka USA**, **Team Olsen**, and **Team Streeter**.

Thanks to the celebrity guests who added to the day's fun, including **Dennis Richmond**, News Anchor for KTVU-TV Channel 2; **P.J. Carlesimo**, Head Coach, Golden State Warriors; tennis great **Rosie Casals**; and **Mike Krukow** and **Duane Kuiper**, broadcasters for the San Francisco Giants.

Thanks to Foundation Donors

ASI extends special thanks to the following foundations for their generous support: **Fireman's Fund** for firstPASS, the elementary school version of PASS; **Hartless**, **Hitchcock**, **Merrill Lynch**, and **Lurie** for operating support; **Kajima Urban Development**, **San Francisco**, **Wareham Development**, and **Wender Weis** for PASS expansion; and **Payne Weber** and **Winged O** for PASS training support.

The Golf Classic was a success because of the efforts of these coordinators: **Marnie McArthur**, Event; **Brett Benson**, Sponsors; **Dee Modglin**, Auction; and **Becky Hughes**, Volunteers.

Special thanks to all the businesses that contributed to the silent and live auctions, to the companies that donated products and contest prizes, and to the volunteers who generously gave of their time and talents. Proceeds from the ASI Golf Classic support ASI's mission to improve education through the study and practice of sport.

New Staffers Join the ASI Team

ASI is pleased to announce the addition of two new staff members to the organization. **Amber Cooper**, who grew up in Santa Barbara and went to the University of Colorado, is assisting with fundraising and public relations. **William Sieck**, who hails from the Baltimore area and Kenyon College in Ohio, is the marketing and public relations assistant.

A hearty welcome to Amber and Will!

THE ATHLETE'S
VIEW®

Published by the American Sports Institute
P.O. Box 1837, Mill Valley, CA 94942
Tel: 415-383-5750 • Fax: 415-383-5785
www.amersports.org • info@amersports.org

© 1999 American Sports Institute. All rights reserved.

Common Interest Promotes Enrichment

Enrichment can come through so many forms. Building physical assets that provide enjoyment and productive uses, creating opportunities that further careers, and helping today's youth see the value of a good education are all examples that enrich the lives of people.

The San Francisco Giants needed to find a way to get their ballpark built. The company I work for, Kajima Urban Development (KUD), had the expertise to guide them through the development and construction process. Together, the Giants and KUD embarked on a unique and rewarding journey to develop and build the first privately-financed, major-league ballpark since Dodger Stadium was built in 1962.

Ours is a business that depends on solid decision making, flexibility to go where the work is, the ability to quantify and take acceptable risks, and above all else, teaming with people and companies that have common interests. It's

this formula that allows us to do what we do well.

The business of sports is so much more than player contracts, sponsorships, ticket sales, and hot dog vending. It also means crafting a vision that ensures the future of a franchise for years to come. The modern-day renaissance of sports stadiums, arenas, and ballpark development exist primarily for this reason.

Kajima Urban's business is to help owners achieve their dreams. Whether it's a ballpark, an aquarium, a high school, or a museum, we perform the tasks necessary to accomplish the end result. During that time, we help build a city, provide jobs, and promote business development to a wide variety of companies and individuals. And while the legacy of that effort lives on with those enriched by the experiences, it would seem that more could still be done. I am referring to our collective responsibility to be good citizens in order to help the community in other,

nonbusiness related ways.

When researching community involvement opportunities in San Francisco, Kajima Urban sought organizations that use creative methods to help kids understand the value of a good education. A partnership of common interests was formed when the subject of sports and education produced a match for both KUD and AST's PASS Program. Programs such as PASS and the YWCA's *Come into the Sun Girls Mentorship Group* are working hard to educate the youth of today who will be the leaders of tomorrow.

Through community-involvement partnerships, we can all make a difference.



Dave Hatheway is the Project Executive for Kajima Urban Development, developers of Pacific Bell Park, the new Home of the San Francisco Giants.

SPIRIT AND PHYSICALITY CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

issue might be addressed best by what happened at a high school in the northern suburbs of Chicago, a high school from a very affluent community.

This large high school of 3,800 students is considered one of the academic leaders in Illinois. Most of its students go on to prestigious universities. The school has the predictable core-course offerings.

However, two years ago, when the administration decided to take a chance and offer one non-core, elective course on spirituality, the administrators wondered if anyone would sign up, especially with the requirement that the highly-educated and driven parents have to sign off on what courses their kids take. The administrators hoped they would get close to the 25 students they needed to justify the costs of the course. In total, 150 students signed up for the one course.

Another factor that characterizes this

community and all others like it across the country is the high-stress environment that leads to heavy alcohol and drug use by so many students.

While the high schools in these communities send their students to prestigious universities, they are in denial of the drug and alcohol use of their high-achieving students. This is easy to understand, though. When all that matters is from the neck up regarding going to college, it is easy to sweep this problem under the core-course rug and tout college entrance statistics. This denial is symbolic of the overall denial of the spiritual aspects of a true and whole education.

It appears that while our universities are searching for students with brains, the students are searching for their souls. And without finding answers to this search through core-course offerings, the students find refuge in mind-altering ways that, in the end, rob them of

It is no accident that the very disciplines that bring forth the human spirit are those that also have a physical component. Sport, music, dance and theater are all disciplines that involve the body. And, in the same way that spirit is missing from core-course offerings, this is also the case with the physical domain.

Looking at current core-course offerings, the physical domain is nowhere to be found. The reality of humankind's physical nature is relegated in education to extracurricular status, meaning *apart from* the regular curriculum as opposed to an integral *part of* it. In addition, grades in these subjects, as well as physical education itself, not only are not factored into core-course grade point averages, the courses themselves are called *electives*. They are not even worthy of being mandated by those who set the standards.

This very process perpetrated by our institutions of higher learning, although well-intentioned, is another way in which our humanity is denied. If anything, we are physical beings.

**We do not
elect to be
physical
beings. We
are physical
beings.**

Again, is it any wonder why students are not excited about their academic courses? Is it any wonder why drinking and drug-taking are so prevalent among students who are overloaded with core courses? A core element of our humanity is being denied, cast aside as an elective. We do not *elect* to be physical beings. We *are* physical beings. Descartes had it wrong. It isn't, "I think, therefore I am." In reality, it is, "I am, therefore I think."

The lack of spirit and physicality in the core-course offerings is offset by an extreme overemphasis on abstraction. Most core courses deal with abstract learning. In these courses, students deal with important concepts regarding the solving of equations, the components and flow of good writing, thinking through issues related to America's place in history and its governing process, the forces of energy, and the ability to communicate with those in countries other than our own in an ever-shrinking world.

All of this is, indeed, important. But, for the most part, the reality of these classes is that they are *about* math, *about* language arts, *about* history and government, *about* science, and *about* international languages. They are not math applied, they are not actual communication, they are not making history and governing, they are not impacting forces in nature, and they are not immersion in a culture where the relevance of an international language becomes obvious. No, our core courses are *about* these disciplines rather than the disciplines themselves. Using today's language,

this is virtual learning instead of real learning. Theories and concepts are very important. However, if they are not integrated into a total learning experience where they are brought to life with spirit and physicality, then real learning does not take place.

As the American Indian proverb at the beginning of this article points out, it is in the *doing* where real learning takes place.

Any system that is out of balance will eventually fall. A system with an overemphasis on abstraction and theory at the expense of spirit and physicality will fall, as will one that overemphasizes spirit or physicality at the expense of the mind and its limitless capabilities. Once students become overexposed to abstraction, they become indifferent at best, behavior problems for many, and violent for a few.

The problems in our schools today are not student related. Rather, they are related to standards and measurements from higher education that numb the mind, neglect the

body, and drain the spirit.

What's needed today to return our students to balance in their educational experience is an affirmation of spirit and physicality in the educational enterprise. We need to affirm all three aspects of our humanity, not just one.

We see this in sport, music, dance, and theater. Students work hard at these disciplines. They are even willing to put a great deal of time into these disciplines after school, knowing they have hours of homework ahead of them once they get home. But these are disciplines of the spirit and body as well as the mind. These

disciplines make the students whole, they enrich and fulfill the students.

In a survey, school superintendents, principals, teachers, and parents were asked two questions:

Question 1: "On a scale of one to ten, with ten being totally excited and one being totally apathetic, how excited are middle and high school students about going to school for their academic courses only. This does not include the social or extracurricular aspects of school?"

Question 2: "Are kids natural learners or unnatural learners?"

The range of responses for the first question was between 2 and 5, with the greatest number of responses being 3. However, *everyone* said that kids are natural learners.

If kids are natural learners but are not excited about school, then something is fundamentally wrong with how we go about educating them.

When the whole student is not acknowledged and valued in our schools, when an integrated body/mind/spirit approach is not taken, especially at the core of education, we have problems. We have problems manifested through indifference, we have problems manifested through disruptive behavior, we have problems manifested through drugs and alcohol, we have problems manifested through violence.

By excluding sport, music, dance, and theater from the core-course category, our university systems are telling us that we only have to be partial human beings to be enriched, fulfilled, and successful. These so-called institutions of higher learning perpetrate and perpetuate the fallacy that all that matters is what happens in our brains. These institutions deny our spirit, our physicality. The students become slaves to an educational process that only partially meets their needs, a process they drudge through rather than one in which they exalt.

To deny spirit and physicality in our high schools and universities is to deny core elements of our very existence. Is it any wonder, then, that most high school students are bored with school and just try to get through it all rather than finding education to be enriching and fulfilling for its own sake?

Due to the length of this article, the PASS Profile does not appear in this issue of The Athlete's View. The Profile will resume with the next issue.

Once students become overexposed to abstraction, they become indifferent at best, behavior problems for many, and violent for a few.

ATHLETE'S CORNER CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

soft eyes, generating as much energy as I can through my center, focusing on my center with my breathing and my mind.

Next, I'll take a glance up and pick a point on the crossbar. I then erase the point from my mind and focus on kicking on a line.

Finally, I give a slight nod to Tommy. He gives a *set* and we roll. Once the center snaps the ball and it enters my periphery, I go.

As I approach the ball, I have a saying. No, I don't say it to myself. I don't even sense it. It's just what I do. It goes, *Concentrate on my center. Kick with confidence. Let 'er rip.*

At this point, I'm in a cocoon. It's totally internal. I'm just on my center and letting 'er rip. It's my process.

Doug Brien is the placekicker for the New Orleans Saints.

PASS

Learning to Teach PASS

I didn't know what to expect when I walked into the PASS Teacher Training Program at James Logan High School in Union City, California that hot Wednesday afternoon in early July. A collegiate athlete myself, I liked the basic premise of the *Promoting Achievement in School through Sport* program.

Eleven teachers stood in a circle, rocking side to side with heavy French books on their heads. "Breathe from center," senior PASS instructor Pete Donoff told the group of teachers. "If your book falls, just pick it up and continue. Concentrate. Stay focused. Practice."

"Key words related to athletic success," I thought to myself, recalling my own efforts in track and field. But I wondered how these PASS teachers-in-training thought about PASS as an academic class to benefit middle and high school students.

I had the opportunity to speak with some of them later that afternoon. We discussed their views on education, the PASS program, and the training itself. Their comments reflected the richness of the PASS curriculum and the eight *Fundamentals of Athletic Mastery* or FAMS—concentration, balance, relaxation, power, rhythm, flexibility, instinct, and attitude—on which the PASS class is based.

I began by asking each of them, "Why do you want to be a PASS teacher?" The phrases *promote academic achievement, meet student needs, develop athletic and academic potential, and provide well-rounded education* echoed throughout their responses.

Matt Gillespie, English and physical education teacher at Kent Middle School in Kentfield, Calif., said, "PASS incorporates many of the individual elements of my personal educational philosophy—student-centered, multidisciplinary, and individualized. PASS fills a need that many students have."

"I've been looking for a challenge as a

teacher," said Brook Vasconcellos, physical education teacher at Yerba Buena High School in San Jose, Calif. "I've always wanted to incorporate sports into an academic class. We have many students that can benefit from this program academically, athletically, and socially."

Dan Palley, a physical education teacher at Encinal High School in Alameda, Calif., also sees the benefits of bringing PASS to his school. "PASS is a program that teaches students to maximize their potential in everything they do. I like the challenge of getting students to be their best," said Palley.

Each of the eleven teachers saw a need for PASS at their school. "It is important to include academics in athletics," said Brad Davidson, history teacher and track and field coach at Jordan High School in Long Beach, Calif. "The only way an athlete can advance to the next level is through discipline both in the classroom and on the field, court, or in the pool. PASS will benefit all subjects across the curriculum," commented Davidson.

"I like how the curriculum connects the FAMS to every part of a student's life. It gives the student something they can hold on to, to help in their personal, social, and athletic lives," stated Susan Kahn, physical education teacher at Richmond High School in Richmond, Calif.

The general consensus about the training was that it was long, challenging, and comprehensive. Yerba Buena physical education teacher Elizabeth Kilduff confidently told me, "After this training, I can definitely teach PASS."

Pete Donoff, himself a five-year veteran PASS

teacher, ran the three-week PASS Teacher Training Program. Teachers studied the FAMS and learned how to use them to engage, challenge, and inspire students to set and achieve athletic and academic goals.

"At a time when so much attention is put on test scores, PASS is a refreshing way to bring heart and meaning into the classroom," says Donoff. "Over the years, I've seen the class's power to build cohesiveness among a diverse group of students and impart practical skills for success in school and in sports."

Teacher David Brunner of Broughton High School in Raleigh, N.C., summed up the PASS ideal. "My experience in education has enabled me to see the importance of integrating physical and emotional well-being into one's intellectual development. Anything that can be done to instill a sense of accountability, responsibility,

and focus for all-encompassing achievement in our students must be done."

Donoff indicated that my interview time was ending. Brunner, the Athlete of the Day, took his place in front of the class. He fully extended both arms straight ahead, palms together. Remaining in their seats, the other teachers imitated him. Then, following Brunner's lead and in perfect unison, everyone gave two sharp claps, and the class was dismissed.

With that, I thought about my conversations with the

teachers. Each of them seemed to recognize the importance of the FAMS in a student's life, and since working at the American Sports Institute, so do I.

"PASS is a program that teaches students to maximize their potential in everything they do."

—Dan Palley, PASS teacher

"At a time when so much attention is put on test scores, PASS is a refreshing way to bring heart and meaning into the classroom."

—Pete Donoff, PASS teacher

Julie Urbansky, a journalism major at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania, worked as a summer intern at the American Sports Institute.

