

## STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL GOALS

Much of my life has been devoted to playing, coaching, organizing, and volunteering in youth and amateur sports. A natural desire grew in me to expand my knowledge of what has become a passion. From my first coaching experience at sixteen years-old I learned the importance and the reward of providing proper and passionate instruction to young athletes. The experiences have shown me that the most successful coaches are actually the students. I always felt that my players taught me more than I was able to teach them. Successfully coaching youth athletics is one of the most challenging endeavors that I attempt. However, it is the reward of watching the young player become a confident and successful competitor that drives my desire. Paying back the benefits that I receive from young athletes can only be accomplished with the knowledge that an advanced degree program can provide.

When my wife and I began building our family we desired for our children to participate in athletics as a part of their educational development. With my playing and coaching experience it was natural for me to take an active role in this important process. Nothing has been as difficult or as rewarding as teaching and coaching my own children. With my baseball background I began to develop a local youth baseball club where we could teach proper baseball. With the program's rapid expansion it soon became apparent how many families valued my experience and developmental approach. While working with almost 40 families in our small town I quickly felt a real responsibility towards my players, their families, and our community. Many wanted me to produce good baseball players but my focus was broader. My desire was to provide more for the kids and many of these families were counting on my instruction and influence.

With my experience I was able to easily put together drills, camps, and practices. I researched the best instructional tools. I networked with other coaches to better understand what was working for them. I organized activities off the playing field to build team identity. However, I began to hear questions that I did not feel qualified to answer. There were questions about nutrition as well as physiological and psychological development. There were sociological issues that I did not understand. There were legal issues which challenge. Administrative duties were starting to take up much of my time. I became aware that spectrum of my understanding was limited. I was not the best coach that I could be.

My search for knowledge intensified. I wanted my players and their families to have the best that I could give. My competitive spirit drove me to find a deeper understanding of coaching in order to meet the responsibilities that I felt towards my athletes. I was driven towards the latest information and research that was available. I needed to interact with and learn from elite coaches, experienced professors and established administrators. I wanted to network with others who felt similar in their passion and understanding of youth athletics. I required knowledge that only professional level instruction and development can provide. I needed an institution of higher learning to get what I was searching for.

Spending the past fourteen years in telecommunications has allowed me to provide for the financial wellbeing of my family. However, my passion remains with coaching. I spend much of my time coaching or preparing to coach. People in my community trust me to provide athletic opportunities for their players. I am fully possessed of the desire and energy to do so. I believe that a career in coaching may be possible. However, in order for my knowledge to match my passion professional instruction is required. The Master's Degree in Education with a concentration in Sports Leadership and Coaching can provide the latest knowledge and research. This will allow me to provide the absolute best that I have to offer to my community.

A full time job and a family with four children will not allow the pursuit of a traditional education. The on line program offered at Michigan State will allow me to maintain my current career while advancing my education at the same time. When I complete the program I will have cultivated my life's passion, been empowered with the knowledge to provide a valuable service to our youth athletic community, and opened up potential career opportunities that I will most certainly pursue with the confidence that an advanced degree from an elite university provides.

In reflecting upon the goals that I had upon entering Michigan State University I am compelled to share the fact that those goals have not changed much. I still have a strong desire to teach my own children the value and rewards associated with youth sports participation. Perhaps, from a strictly developmental stand point, I can now see the absolute essential fact that sports must be fun above and beyond anything else. The push to excel at sport must always take a seat in the back. Children will not gather the full benefits and life lessons that sport can offer if they are not enjoying themselves. Play should always be fun and educational. The same lessons apply to the kids and families in my community that rely on me to provide youth sports opportunities and advice. With the knowledge gained I now have access to the research and the knowledge that can and will enrich the lives of not only the kids who choose to participate in sport but also the families who believe in their inherent benefits as well. I can think of no greater endeavor and reward than to share the knowledge that will benefit others for a lifetime.