

# Connecting with Schools and Recruiting Athletic Directors

As you prepare to implement Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) in your community, it's important to build good relationships with participating schools and key stakeholders. This guide provides key recommendations for making your program pitch to school administrators and recruiting Athletic Directors (ADs).

## Start with Administrators to Achieve Buy-In

**Ensuring buy-in for CBIM is your first priority.** Whenever possible, work the hierarchy when you connect with schools. For instance, you may want to consider setting up a pitch meeting with a school Superintendent, Principal, and/or Athletic Director (AD). If after this pitch meeting the administration or AD are still hesitant to support CBIM, make sure you have a clear understanding of their concerns or other barriers for bringing CBIM to the school. It is also important to know whether the school, AD, or coaches you are partnering with have the autonomy to make decisions about implementing the program.

## Recruiting Athletic Directors

**Athletic Director's play a pivotal role in the success of CBIM.** Their buy-in and influence are key to the success of the program. Consider whether or not the principle will assist you in getting buy-in from the AD and before meeting with an AD try to get an assessment of who they are, their roles, responsibilities, commitments, and strategize your logistics. Some questions to consider:

- ✓ Are they an interim or permanent AD?
- ✓ What kind of influence do they have in the school?
- ✓ What expectations does the AD have of their coaches? Do they ask for a lot? Or not much at all?
- ✓ How much support is your AD going to provide for you and your program?
- ✓ Does the AD teach, coach, or have other school duties that may interfere with their ability to commit to the project?
- ✓ What is the best way to correspond with the AD? Phone, text, or email?
- ✓ Does the AD hold any parent or coaches meetings during the school year? Would they be willing to provide you with time to speak about the CBIM program?

## Strategies for Handling Different Types of ADs

Once you know what type of AD you are working with, you can begin to strategize how you can get buy-in and begin to partner with them. For some, such as 'Star ADs,' you will need to put little to no work into convincing them to buy into the program, setting up logistics, or asking them to support getting coaches' buy-in. With others, such as challenging ADs, you will need devote more time creating buy-in, negotiating space to speak about the program, and maintaining communication. In most cases an AD will have both star qualities and challenges requiring little attention in some areas and a lot in others.



## STAR ADs

A star AD is an AD that:

1. Has strong relationship with the school principal.
2. Looks for programs that will impact students and athletes.
3. Sees the value of the program.
4. Creates the time and space to devote to CBIM.
5. Provides time and space at parent and/or coaches meetings to allow advocates to speak about CBIM.
6. Takes the lead in pitching the program to coaches and/or parents.
7. Fosters good communication with their coaches.

### SUMMARY:

- ✓ A Star AD has strong school and coaches' engagement, buys into CBIM, connects you with coaches and others, and makes good use of everyone's time. A Star AD requires little work on your part.



## CHALLENGING ADs

ADs can be challenging in different ways:

1. **ADs that are less bought-in:** some ADs might be influential with their coaches but don't necessarily see the value of CBIM requiring some negotiating on your part. Consequently, it may be necessary to do some of the legwork for them such as providing them with a template email and having them forward it to the coaches directing them to get in touch with you.

### SCRIPT:

- ✓ "I understand your hesitation in taking on more responsibilities. I'd be happy to draft an email for you to send out to coaches which will direct them to get in touch with me to get the program going."

2. **ADs with less rapport with coaches:** other ADs may be interim or new and therefore haven't established a good rapport or connection with their coaching staff. In this case it is best to be direct, providing concrete instructions for recruiting and training their coaches and providing a timeline for guidance. Also, while it is important to allow the AD to set the direction for engaging with coaches, it may be necessary to provide them with helpful suggestions on how that might occur.

### SCRIPT:

- ✓ "I found that maybe having a pre-season coaches meeting is a little bit more effective - it allows the coaches to hear the program together, to raise questions, and to hear from other coaches."

3. **ADs that are unresponsive:** finally, some ADs may not even respond to inquiries and/or refuse to move forward on implementation. If this happens it may be necessary to speak with the principal and get another official assigned to be the primary contact.

### SCRIPT:

- ✓ "The AD has not been responsive, and we really need your help to find another contact to help us"

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#### **FINAL THOUGHTS:**

- ✓ Recognize that you will be taking the lead in connecting with the coaches.
- ✓ Be diligent in your follow up and email communication.
- ✓ Respect whatever information they are willing to provide.
- ✓ Have the attitude that “You’re going to respect their time because the program is voluntary.”
- ✓ Keep your ADs in the loop, cc’ing them to emails sent to coaches and others so they know who you have reached out to and so you can reference them in the future.