

10-19-2017

Coaching Character

Eric F. Spina
University of Dayton, efspina@udayton.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/president_blog_spina

eCommons Citation

Spina, Eric F., "Coaching Character" (2017). *President's Blog: From the Heart*. 87.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/president_blog_spina/87

This Blog is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of the President at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in President's Blog: From the Heart by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact mschlangen1@udayton.edu, ecommons@udayton.edu.

Coaching Character

 udayton.edu/blogs/president/2017/10/coaching_character.php



Thursday October 19, 2017

By Eric F. Spina

It didn't surprise me to hear that Alexis Kiehl is one of 10 finalists for the prestigious 2017 Senior CLASS Award in women's collegiate soccer.

It's not because she leads the Atlantic 10 in goals scored this season, an impressive achievement. This recognition goes beyond competition to character.

Listen to our new women's soccer head coach Eric Golz, and you'll know why I think our coaches stand out in intercollegiate athletics for the way they develop character, resilience, focus, and teamwork — all leadership skills that will serve our students in life, beyond the playing fields and courts.

"The areas of community, classroom, character, and competition are all core components to well-rounded excellence, and Alexis has exceeded the standards in all areas," Eric said about his star forward on a squad that won the A-10 championship last season but has endured some heartbreaking losses this fall.

Nationally, we are one of five universities to have players from both the women and men's teams selected as finalists for the Senior CLASS Award. Soccer standout James Haupt made the men's Top 30.

Karen and I love to root on the Dayton Flyers, whether it's taking in a football game at Welcome Stadium on a gorgeous fall day or watching the volleyball team maintain its perfect winning record in A-10 play. Our athletics program is broad-based and successful: We were one of a handful of schools to win seven conference championships last year.

Quietly, away from game day, these students are making a difference in the classroom and in the community, too.

Our athletic program consistently ranks among the top 10 in the country for academic performance and currently places 26th in the nation for graduating student-athletes. I attribute that to the priority placed on academics by our coaches.

Just last month, more than 100 student-athletes volunteered at the Buddy Walk at Fifth Third Field, cheering on individuals with Down Syndrome. On Saturday, more than 80 will participate in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk downtown. This is just a sampling of service projects our student-athletes are involved in throughout the year. I attribute that to the expectations our coaches have for community service. It's central to our Marianist mission that our students give back.

As we welcome new coaches this academic year — Erica Echko (women's tennis), Eric Golz (women's soccer), Anthony Grant (men's basketball), Jayson King (baseball), and Jason Ordway (women's track and field/cross country) — I'm impressed by the way they've resonated with our ethos. In the wake of recurring scandals in intercollegiate sports, I value the standards Athletic Director Neil Sullivan and our coaches set for our programs.

We have a long history at the University of Dayton of doing things "the Dayton way," with integrity. In December, Don Donoher — the winningest coach in men's basketball history — will receive the esteemed Dean Smith Award. Recipients are chosen for "their principles of honesty and integrity, for treating all people with courtesy and respect, for accomplishments off the court, and for the impact they have made on their community and the lives of their players."

All coaches want to build performance, but great coaches — University of Dayton coaches — build character, too.