

Cutting into their lane

The survival of Track & Field in Philadelphia

By Tariq Smith

This past year as most of us are aware of, the Philadelphia School District has been facing many different issues. Many of which happen to be financial issues that have been impacting the future of several student athletes. At the beginning of the 2012 school year, the district decided that it in everyones best interest if they cut a sport from the each schools budget. After much deliberation the sport that was under the chopping block for many schools including the was Track & Field.

The canceling of one of the most popular sports throughout the world in wasn't taken too kindly by many members of its community. Many have their own reasoning by which their motivation to run comes from and a vast majority will admit that their future is the #1 reason why they run now. High school senior Kristopher Robbins from Bok Tech is one of the premier runners in District 12, and has been running for seven years to date. He quoted: "Canceling track is like canceling my future. I have several colleges looking at my performance and the opportunity to attend these schools through scholarship solely depends on my performance this year." Robbins' last chance to prove to universities that he is worthy of recruitment was almost hindered by the rule mandated by the school district of Philadelphia.



Cutting into their lane (Cont.)

The cut of Track & Field not only affected the athletes who participate in it's many events, but it also deeply affects the coaches and staff members. Numerous event specialist coaches were out of jobs and had no way to provide for their loved ones. The schools who decided that Track & Field was the team to be cut, were typically the one's who didn't have large programs at their schools. Coaches who weren't teachers depended on their position for income that helped sustain their everyday needs. Coach Devorski of Overbrook High School said: "Seeing these young men and women lose their dreams is sad. Back when I ran all you had to worry about was competition. Now you have to worry about being able to worry about your competition." Devorski was near professional back in the 90's and was extremely sad to see some of his athletes limit their futures because of money issues.



Although several schools cut their Track & Field programs, many found the means to raise enough money to sustain the program, pay the coach, and convince the school district that they should've been allotted the opportunity to still compete. The Athletic Coordinator from Science Leadership Academy Matthew Kay reiterated "Every school had to drop one sport. We dropped track" from the budget, said Mr. Kay. "The district isn't funding it anymore. Luckily, our Home and School are now paying for the coach. As of my meeting last week, none of the sports are going away in the immediate

future. That can all change tomorrow, I have no idea," said Kay." Although Kay isn't the most optimistic athletic coordinator he certainly believes that nothing is promised and that you can not expect anything because it can all change in the blink of an eye.

Although Track & Field was dropped in many schools, athletes who were lucky enough to have places who still allowed them to run certainly made the best of the opportunity. Coaches stopped taking their job for granted, and members of the community have realized how blessed they were to not have it cut. All in all those who still are participating this season have even more motivation to go reach their dreams and create their own future in the process.

Bibliography

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