

A SUCCESSFUL ERA

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An era has abruptly come to a finish. Its achievements have been marvelous and significant in fulfilling its role at Ricks College. Athletics, over several decades, responded to a need and fulfilled that need. The role was to create an arena of entertainment for student and college, for the citizen and community; to develop a community, patron unity—bringing community and college together for the betterment of both, and to provide an avenue for athletic expression. Athletics provided an arena for the participants to obtain physical strengths (many for lifetime use), to develop decision-making skills, to interact in companionship associations developing a capacity to care, to be concerned about others, to develop patterns of responsibility in fulfilling assignments, to develop an appreciation for obedience to rules and laws. These experiences formulated traits and created an understanding of team unity and effort which enabled Ricks athletes to be better prepared missionaries; to be more employable; to be caring members in their family, community, and church; and to become leaders who have strengthened their spiritual capacities for the good of all concerned.

In these athletic settings, many student-athletes had their finest training ground, enabling them to have this care and capacity of concern for the needs (love and respect) of the group. These participating athletes of Ricks College enhanced their capacity to be successful in living a quality life. And it should be noted that the athletic influence was only one of a myriad of experiences found on the Ricks College campus.

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One should note that coaches during the early part of Ricks College's athletic decades were educated to coach but were also prepared in the letters and sciences. Thus, their role was not only to coach but also to teach in the academic disciplines. So, affected by this scholarly preparation, they applied the concept of being a wholly educated individual to their coaching of the athletes. Prominent leaders in business, education, and church were prepared at Ricks College, influenced very much by their coaches, who were knowledgeable and trained to be effective both in the classroom and on the playing field and floor. What revered examples were these fine mentors! The training for the individual to gain a quality of life was superb.

In time, as Ricks College moved more and more into this modern era, the coaches became more centralized into the athletic and physical

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education areas. Much of the philosophy of those who went before was retained with some coaches, who even at the end in 2002 were teaching in the academic endeavors. Whether teaching on the sports field or in the academic environment, these modern coaches, like the Ricks College coaches of the past, have been, for the most part, superb teachers and mentors. Ricks College, as a junior college, provided the nearly perfected balance for athletics. Ricks College was considered the premier example for other junior colleges in providing for its students and patrons a setting for entertainment by student-athletes who set bench marks in scholarship, leadership, sociability, as well as winning and being championship teams and individuals.

However, with the move to a four-year educational institution, to have a similarly successful athletic program (which the students, faculty, administration, alumni, and patrons of Ricks/BYU-Idaho would desire) would require millions of dollars for facilities, scholarships, and annual budgets for athletics. This would have been a horrendous expense just to build the base. Note: The BYU-Provo program foundation has long been in place. While athletics has ended at Ricks College, BYU-Idaho will now give each student an opportunity to achieve many of the same qualities that have been achieved in the athletic past.

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The fledgling activities program, like the efforts in athletics in the early 1900's, will take tremendous time and great efforts to blossom as the athletic program did which carried into the 2000's.

Changes in this rapidly moving world are inevitable. The educating process to prepare students for success today calls for adjusted approaches to meet new challenges and opportunities in the future. New challenges in a changing society impose express new needs—new skills for more than a few are required. The demand is for all to be prepared to fulfill the demands of society. In time, the new system will grow in capacity and quality to enable us to say that the activities program of this great institution helps to prepare one spiritually, physically, and socially, enabling all to be among the best in what they do.

Like the student-athletes of the past, some students come already loaded with the needed qualities and characteristics to be successful in lifetime achievement, qualities which others have yet to find. Therefore, the unfolding of the activities-centered environment for the present and future students is necessary, to provide a setting for all students wherein the individual might garner some of the same skills and qualities as did the student-athletes of the past. Perhaps the past focused on the development of principles in an atmosphere that would benefit the group or team. Maybe the student of the future will receive more training in an individual sense that will enable him or her to be just as effective in society as have the team-centered traits of the past.

Many challenges face the mentors and teachers assigned to direct this new approach in preparing students. Those who are selected to guide the students in the activities program need to exhibit a great range of abilities like the very well prepared leaders of the past. To fulfill the charge assigned to BYU-Idaho by those who give guidance and direction for educating students in the colleges of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the teachers in the sports activity process of this adapted program must ensure that, like the program of the past, more young men serve missions, sisters have more opportunities, scholarship in the classroom is strengthened, goals that can be reached are set, that excellence is expected and attained in all areas: spirituality, conduct, character, physical fitness, and citizenship, to enumerate a few. This fledgling program can also become a model for other institutions to emulate.

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Will I miss athletics at BYU-Idaho? You bet I will. Will the employees and students of BYU-Idaho miss the former athletic association? You can assume that they will. Will the patrons of BYU-Idaho miss athletic events to attend? They say they will.

Do I think that a new direction and approach is necessary and acceptable? Yes, the charge to become a four-year institution has created a change in the approach to sports activities here. What must be assured is that the participation in the BYU-Idaho activities program will enable the student to hone physical abilities, to become skilled in making decisions, to find love and respect for others by developing care and concern, to assume responsibility, to recognize the importance of obedience and law, plus other traits found in participation and competition in sports activities. Doing such will ensure that BYU-Idaho students will become successful leaders in business, education, church and family, having been influenced by their teachers and leaders who were knowledgeable and trained to be effective both in the classroom and on the playing field and floor.

To summarize the role played by athletics in this era as it ends: it is the loss of the results of a successful program that we hold in some sorrow, not just the passing of the sports events.

Let a new, and also successful, era begin! ☺