

# Sibley East Football Success

## By Chuck Hartman, Head Football Coach

**High school:** Aquin Central Catholic HS, Freeport IL

**College:** Luther College, Decorah, IA

**Coaching Career:** Assistant Coach at Rochester Century and Hutchinson, head coach at Sibley East high school, Arlington, MN.

**Family:** Wife Kris, Charlie (10), Jack (8), Emma (4) these will be their ages in the fall

I would like to thank the MFCA for giving me the opportunity to write this article. I would also like to thank some people before I begin. My coaching staff of Rod Tollefson, Carl Bratsch, Todd Warzecha, Tom Webster, and Mike Haller. Without those guys our success this year would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Andy Rostberg of Hutchinson for being a mentor and sounding board. Brian Benning and Bill Pospischil, and the rest of my high school coaches, and my dad for teaching me how to be a man. Finally I need to thank my wife Kris, and kids Charlie, Jack, and Emma for being supportive throughout my career.

Our football program is not very innovative; I mean that in a good way. We beg, borrow, and steal what works from other successful programs and adapt it to fit our system and beliefs. As a staff we put in a lot of time to make football successful at Sibley East. The rest of this article will highlight some of what has helped us to go from 1-8 my first season in 2008 to 9-2 and MRC and Section Champs this past season.

### Weight Room

My first meeting with the players in May of 2008 took place in the weight room, and when we got off the bus after losing to Caledonia in the State Quarters in 2012 all the returning players met in the weight room for a few minutes. That's how important it is to our program. We would not be 21-9 the last three seasons, without the dedication of many boys in the Weight Room. Strength training became a priority whereas it was not on the radar before. As our squats and cleans started to increase the scores on the field started to get closer or turn in our favor. The kids not only got stronger but learned how to be tougher. It takes a mentally tough person to attack a loaded bar in the squat rack, drop your butt below parallel and stand up with it....and then do it again and again. We implemented the Bigger Faster Stronger program but have made a few tweaks along the way. There are several good programs out there but this has worked for us. We have a point system on a spread sheet that we use to reward kids for hitting certain poundages or achieving certain SAQ milestones. They get t-shirts and hoodies for their hard work. When a player reaches the status of "Bad Wolverine" they get their picture taken, framed, and put on our wall of fame in our weight room.

### Purpose

Our kids this year had a real purpose to what they did. We had a humbling loss week two in the season and our kids rebounded very quickly from that. We didn't play "Sibley East Football" that night. They realized they had to do things in practice with a purpose or they might as well not do them at all. About week six we started bringing up the goals the seniors set back in May. They wanted to win the conference. We told them that it wasn't so much about "winning" the conference as it was "giving" each other something nobody else in the world would ever be able to give. That they, and only they, had the chance to give each other a conference title. After winning the conference our focus changed to "One More Monday." We wanted to keep winning because we wanted to come back out to practice with each other one more week. I have never been around a group so focused on the task at hand (coaches and players). There were times we trailed in games but "We Believed" we would find a way because this stuff mattered to them.

### Defense

While I have always believed you win playing great defense we put a renewed emphasis on it in 2012. Just that fact I am listing it third (ahead of offense) shows you where we rank it. We understand that points are hard to come by vs. good teams in our conference and we knew if we wanted to get out of the section we would have to play great D. We implemented a higher tempo with our scout team and really put an emphasis on execution of fundamentals. We kept things simple and that allowed our kids to execute at a high level. More or less what we did in August was also what we did in November. I think we also used Hudl very well to get tendencies and game plan accordingly. Our players watched a lot of video on Hudl and they understood the importance of video study. We really put an emphasis on not chasing ghosts. Stop what your opponent does best and make him beat you with something else.

### Offense

At Sibley East they were used to some high-flying passing attacks. Starting in 2008 we changed that and by 2010 we were running the wishbone with two tight ends most of the time. Last year we lined up in some Wishbone variation 89% of the time. We believe you win by running the football and stopping the run. We

ran the ball an average of 55 times a game last year. When you run the ball that much in practice it makes your kids tougher. We believed we owned short yardage situations because of that. We are able to do this because of our commitment in the weight room. We don't do anything fancy. We run the ball and throw some quick game and play action. It's not so much what we do, but that we execute it well and our kids believe in our system. We do our best not to turn the ball over and stay out of bad situations. I can't stress that last part enough.

## **Conclusion**

I would like to thank the MFCA for this opportunity. It's hard to sum up five years of building the program in two pages. If you would like to talk more please contact me at [chartman@sibley-east.k12.mn.us](mailto:chartman@sibley-east.k12.mn.us). I think we are doing things right but by no means do we have the monopoly on the way to do things. My staff and I love to talk football anytime. ■

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# **Nevis Football Family**

## **By Shawn Klimek, Head Coach, Nevis Football**

### **A Football Family**

How do you define a successful football season or a successful football program? Is it by winning the State Championship? If so, then unless you are a very select group, you are not going to be happy. Don't get me wrong; I want to win as much as the next guy. My goal is to get to the State Tournament and win it every year. However, there is more to the game than winning and losing. Life-long skills and relationships are built on that field. I believe that "The Football Family" is the foundation to a successful program. Over the years, I have found that there are key components to building a cohesive "Football Family".

### **Culture Building Opportunities**

Building a football program takes a lot of time, dedication, and hard work. I believe all success starts by building a great relationship with your staff and players. If the players know that you care about them they are willing to work hard and lay it on the line for you and each other. Our guys don't want to disappoint each other or their coaches. We build this family style atmosphere by having team days. We go swimming, tubing, go to a Vikings game, and have team BBQ's. We also have a team meal every Thursday after practice. Last year we started "Date Night". Each player invited his mom to join him for team dinner Thursday night. This was a huge success with the moms. For some, it was the first piece of quality time they had spent together in a while. We need to remember that even though we are judged on how we perform on Friday nights, the real game that we need to win is the game of life. We can do that by making sure our boys turn into quality young men.

### **Youth Programs**

If you don't have a youth football program, I strongly suggest you get one. Youth programs are where you build your future. We currently have football available for all kids kindergarten through 12th grade. Students in kindergarten through 3rd grade participate in flag football. They spend one hour each Saturday in the fall learning the fundamentals of football and then spend 30 minutes participating in a flag football game. Students in 4th through 6th grade participate in a youth tackle league. Each fall they play an 8-10 game schedule. Our kids never used to start playing football until 6th grade. The addition of youth programs has caused our numbers and talent level to increase.

### **Coaching and Administrative Support**

If your program is going to be successful, you need to have great coaches and administrative support. I'm not just talking about people that can help organize events for you or draw up great plays. They must be outstanding people. They must care about kids and be excellent role models. They must be dedicated to you and your program. If your coaches are not loyal to the program, it is best to cut ties with them, as hard as it might be.

If you don't have administrative support, you are going to have a very hard time running a program. There are situations when people call and complain about the tiniest of details and you need people in power to stand by your side. I am very fortunate to have an AD that believes in me and has given me time to develop my skills and program. To be honest, my first few years were not the prettiest.

As coaches, we probably spend more time with our coaching staff than we do with our families, so you better get along as a staff. Some of my best friends are the guys that I coach with. They are the ones you can count on when the going gets tough. They are also the ones I want to share our success with.