

THE GAME ANALOGY

UNDERSTANDING THE ESSENTIAL NETWORKS

First Priority works if the local community takes the time to organize each component of the strategy. To explain this, we will compare life as a Christian in the U.S. to a football player playing his game. What if the coach asked the football player to come study the team playbook twice a week, but only planned to play him in one half of a game throughout the entire season? Maybe. That is if something else didn't get scheduled the same day. Would he ever show up to practice? Yet, that is what most local churches expect out of students in their youth ministry: to come twice a week to learn how to live for Christ; and once a year go and share Christ together on a mission trip... unless something else prevents you from going. First Priority is the game plan for the students in your community to come together at school and live the game of faith every day.

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STUDENTS: PLAYERS ON THE FIELD

The students are on the greatest mission field in America: a school. Engaged in the middle of the "game," students are the players we are here to train, pray for, and support, just as we do for foreign missionaries. The Student Guide (FPOA Phase 3 resource) gives the student missionaries the action steps and direction they need to reach out to their peers at school. Each month it helps them focus on a group and share the message of Jesus Christ with unbelieving students.



CHURCH LEADERS: COACHES ON THE SIDELINE

These are the youth ministers and pastors who are training and equipping the students in the "game."

Coaches basically do two things:

1. They help schedule "games" via the Student Guide
2. They hold practices and study the playbook (Bible) on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. Look at it this way: we are going to schedule a mission trip nine months or more out of the year at school. Can you think of a better place to have a mission trip or a more exciting thing to train students for?

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EDUCATORS: THE REFEREES IN THE GAME

These are the faculty volunteers that open their room and the doors of the school for the club to hold their meetings. At the school, they are the people who help the players stay in line with the rules of the local district and state. At the monthly leadership meeting, they are the ones guiding and showing wisdom to navigate the school as only someone on the “inside” can do. They do not participate in the game even though they are right in the middle of it.



PARENTS: FANS IN THE STANDS

These are adults who are watching and cheering on the game. Up front, these parents are dedicated to praying and supporting the students as they work to minister to their school. Behind the scenes, these parents are waking their son/daughter up early for practice, rearranging schedules, encouraging when the “game” does not go well, and running the “booster club”. Putting fans in the stands is really an easy task when students are passionate about playing in the game.

BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS: OWNERS

The business community is so important to the First Priority strategy. Like a professional team, coaches and players come and go, but the team lives on. Without business leaders involved in the FP strategy, the longevity of the ministry will diminish when students graduate or staff in our local churches move on. The business community has a vested interest in their community, and will be the ones that will be there through this entire generation. All the cities that have a successful First Priority team have a board of committed business leaders.

