

D2 ADA



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When I became director of athletics at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside in August 2017, I was a few years ahead of schedule, at least in my own mind. My experiences prepared me for the job, but I was not ready to walk in on day one as this buttoned up leader with my polished core values, expectations, and leadership speech.

With this in mind, through self-reflection I created #RangerIMPACT to show our student-athletes, campus and community my guiding principles and set the foundational values for Parkside Athletics.

- Inspire Others
- Mindful of Mission
- Positivity x Progress x People
- Appreciation of Differences
- Commitment to Community
- Telling Our Story

Communicating and living our core values on a consistent, daily basis is critical to successfully leading an athletics department. While there tends to be a lot of grey area in our day-to-day work, these values serve to be a more black and white blueprint to guide our culture, our decisions and our actions.

For the purpose of this column, I want to focus on the #RangerIMPACT value I consider a multiplier – **Positivity x Progress x People**.

Positivity. I'm a glass half full person, arguably to a fault sometimes. If I'm doing a basic SWOT analysis, the S and O lists are going to grow more rapidly than the W and T. A positive, optimistic focus on a day-to-day basis, even in the face of adversity, allows me as a leader to shift my mindset to the solution. It also fosters creativity, productivity, and vision. Acknowledging and understanding real challenges is critical, but what if we spent no more than 10 percent on the problem and 90 percent on the solution? As a leader, a positive, solution-focused outlook can spread quickly to those around you.

Progress. We have all heard a version of, "If you are standing still, you are going backwards." For me, that mindset of progress is fuel. My mind

moves when it comes to progress. When I ask myself questions, most are related to progress. "What is our next opportunity to improve?"... "What should we be doing better?"... "What do we need to accomplish?" I hope our staff would attest that we try not to miss opportunities to celebrate progress, but we do not rest on our laurels long before asking, "Now what, what's next?"

People. Most importantly, focus on people. Focus on the people you impact. People you serve. People you are working for. People you are working alongside. People that complement (and hopefully compliment) you. People that challenge you. Surround yourself with good people focused on working together to impact people.

The Multiplying Impact. If you multiply any two of the Ps, I believe you will inevitably accomplish the third. Multiply your positive attitude with good people, and progress is undeniable. Take good people and multiply them with a focus on progress, and your results will be positive. Concentrate on making continual progress with a positive outlook and environment, and you will develop, help, and impact people. Focus on all three Ps and multiply them together, and sit back and watch the magic happen!

D2 CCA



Mitch Cox

California Collegiate
Athletic Association
Commissioner

D2 CCA Tip-Off Classic - The Show Will Go On

If we have learned nothing else over the past 15 months, it's that flexibility, cooperation, teamwork and clear communication are some of the most important attributes those of us in college athletics can possess.

As we go forward into what appears to be a more optimistic 2021-22 season, those attributes will remain key. In my recent meetings with coaches' groups, I have reminded them about how all last year I heard them tell me, "I don't care if I have to play Team X, 10 times in a row, I just want to play!" I'm reminding them that while the future seems to be heading in the right direction, there is always a possible speed bump ahead that will require flexibility, cooperation, teamwork and clear communication.

This became clear again this past April when I was contacted by the great folks who have run the D2 CCA Tip-Off Classic in Southern California for over a decade. While it was a given that the 2020 Tournament would be canceled due to COVID, the hope was that the 2021 Tournament would once again return to the Orange County area providing visiting teams a great basketball experience as well as a fun time in the land of Mickey Mouse and friends.

But alas, when Rip Hunter from World Strides contacted me, things did not look so positive. Rip let me know that the venues he regularly works with to put on the tournament were unable to provide full approval and assurances that they would be able to host the event, thus leaving the distinct possibility the D2 CCA Tip-Off Classic would not be played for the second-straight year.

This was certainly disappointing to hear – for the players and coaches on the teams that had already shown a strong interest in participating to selfishly, our conference, because it's CCAA officials that work those games and that's experience and a few bucks in their pockets that would not be happening.

But here's where those attributes of flexibility, cooperation, teamwork and communication came into play. One of the schools that had planned on participating in the D2 CCA Tip-Off Classic, West Texas A&M, contacted me asking if there was a chance they might be able to host in order to keep these exempt opportunities available for both men and women. I discussed this idea with my fellow commissioners, and it was decided we would quickly put together a RFP and provide others the opportunity to throw their name in the ring as a one-time host as well.

We received three impressive proposals, but in the end, landed on the one from West Texas A&M. We are confident that Director of Athletics Michael McBroom, men's coach Tom Brown and women's coach Josh Prock and the rest of the A&M athletics department will put together a great experience for the participating teams, and the D2 CCA thanks them for their flexibility, cooperation, teamwork and clear communication throughout the process.