

Significance in Sports Ministry

For the last fifteen years I've watched various sports ministries, including the one which employs me, with alternating feelings of excitement, gratitude, disappointment, dismay, wonder and dilemma. A number of factors lead to these conflicted feelings and questions. One of the hardest questions I've asked myself follows.

Is ministry with the highest profile and among those with greatest influence more significant than ministry with the most obscure and least influential? Is my ministry with an American college football team more significant than my work with a rural junior high girls basketball team? I'd like to think that the answer is simple and obvious, but our actions and attitudes often betray our true values.

This becomes magnified when we gather sports chaplains and leaders in sports ministries together. Often those who serve with the highest profile teams are given the spotlight and the microphone while those who work with the less prominent sports programs are relegated to the corners of the room and given little thought or consideration. Sadly, we sometimes fall prey to the world's way of elevating the powerful and prominent while neglecting the gift of God in the simple and obscure.

Do we really think that the ministry which occurs among Division III female tennis players is less significant than that which happens among the players and coaches of the Division I BCS national champions? I would hope not. If so, we stand in direct opposition to James chapter 2:1-4, "1My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. 2Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. 3If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?"

There is no doubt that the more high profile coaches and players whom we serve have a greater "platform" for the sharing of their faith and that is certainly

