



Insights, Spring 2008

March Mayhem; Spring Training; and a Question

March Mayhem

All across the United States, amateur sports fans are going bonkers over basketball. From high school to college, teams are competing for sectional, regional, state, or national championships. It is indeed a high-energy, full-octane, pressure-packed time for the teams, the coaches, and the fans. Like us, they all want to be winners!

Recently, I was fortunate enough to attend a conference championship game. Sitting close to the action, I was swept up in the festive atmosphere: The college bands were loud. The fans were louder. The arena was buzzing. The teams were poised to compete. The local team, representing a small college in a mid-sized conference, had worked hard all year to earn a Top 15 ranking. They won the game, won the league championship, and advanced to the NCAA tournament—a real Cinderella story.

What amazed me, though, and what links this story to Kiwanis and the Kiwanis International Foundation, was the overwhelming effort of the team, its fans, the alumni, the local supporters, and the media in working together toward a single goal: performing at their best to earn a shot at victory. The results: a big win, a massive celebration, a march to the next big game, and, regardless of the outcome, a bright future for the “little team that could.”

Kiwanians should duplicate this competitive spirit, this will to win, this pulling together in a positive, can-do way. We need this team spirit to make Kiwanis the service club of choice; the service organization the world looks to for answers about critical children’s issues; the competitor that stands up for children’s rights; the go-to organization for leadership in the neighborhood, the community, the business sector, and the family; and the International Foundation that is making a big difference. With a positive attitude and team spirit, anything is possible. Without it, we’re just another team on the sidelines, waiting for next season.

Spring Training

Continuing with my sports theme, this is the time of year that professional baseball players begin arriving in camp to limber up, work out, and get rested bodies back in

shape for a rigorous season of competition. In warmer parts of the country, owners, managers, coaches, and players, have come together to plan, strategize, exercise, and bond, all in preparation for a single goal: to compete at the highest level and make it into the playoffs, and, ultimately, the World Series. And many of their fans are with them now to join them in dreams for a great season.

Now, just how does this relate to Kiwanis? We are in the spring-training phase of our push to grow to 1 million members, to establish credibility and increase recognition on the national and international stage, and to gear-up for our next Worldwide Service Project. Now is the time for Kiwanis service leaders from the International to the club level—Board members, International staff members, and all members of our more than 8,000 clubs worldwide—to come together with one voice and define our Kiwanis identity and purpose, and chart our future. This may be the most important spring training effort in Kiwanis history, as this next cause will affect us on many levels—from membership, to fund raising, service to children to service to humanity. So, I encourage everyone to report to training camp ready to get Kiwanis in the best shape of its life, and prepare to compete at the highest levels for the sake of the organization, and the children.

A Question: Is the Kiwanis International Foundation a topic of interest in your club's new-member orientation? Does your club proudly discuss the KIF, its mission, and its accomplishments? Do we need to market ourselves better to clubs and districts? I'd like to hear from you.

Hail Kiwanis,

John