2007 ECAC-SIDA Workshop – Baltimore, Md.

TABLE TOPIC
Tips for Effective Time Management and Office Organization

❖ *Using notebooks for storing information*
➢ Notebooks can be ordered any number of ways: by sport, by season or by school year. You could even have one notebook for rosters, one for schedules, one for stats, etc.
➢ They are easily portable if you shift from desk to desk or office to office.
➢ Keep your season stats, roster and schedule at the front of the notebook for quick reference.
➢ Only keep info you would store in an archive in your sport notebook. This will allow you to have an instant archive once your season is complete. Any other info can be filed in separate folders.

❖ *Managing your email inbox*
➢ Limit the number of messages in your main inbox to current projects/reminders, or about the number that comprise your main inbox screen. You shouldn't have to scroll way down to find important emails. Your main inbox can act as a form of "to-do list" for you. Items that have been addressed can be crossed off the list ("deleted") or moved into sub-folders off your main inbox. Tasks that still need attention can remain in the inbox.
➢ Create subfolders off your main inbox to store emails you need, but don't need immediately. One option is to create subfolders for each sport, then you can easily slide memos or correspondence with coaches into the proper sport folders for reference when you need them. You can also create a personal folder to keep those emails separate from work-related items.
➢ Make sure your "keep sent items" option is active and that the original email attaches to your reply. This will automatically keep a copy of all your email replies, so once you have successfully replied to an email, you can delete the message and keep your inbox uncluttered.
➢ Never let an email go 24 hours without a response. Even if it is a simple reply to acknowledge the inquiry and you don't have an immediate answer, always send an initial response as soon as possible. Always make checking your email and voicemail the first thing you do in the morning and last thing you do before you leave to ensure that you have responded to a request.

❖ *Organizing your computer*
➢ Keep your electronic documents in order as you would hard copies. Create folders on your main drive for each sport, season or year. Within those folders, keep sub-folders for rosters, schedules, recaps, bios, etc.
➢ Ideally, you don't want to have a bunch of stray papers cluttering up your desk. Similarly, you don't want stray word documents or jpegs floating around your desktop or hard drive. Even if you have to create a "Miscellaneous" folder for items that don't fit anywhere else, it will help you more if these items are all centralized rather than scattered about.
➢ Utilize "shared" drives or thumb drives to store large files and back up entire directories. Computers do crash (as we've all experienced) and even if you back up your info once a month, imagine how much you could save should the unfortunate happen.

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❖ ***Prioritizing tasks***
  ➢ There are numerous devices that will help you make sure you don't forget a meeting or a deadline. Some are more technologically savvy than others, but every SID should have some type of daily planner or portable personal calendar. Other options are blackberries, palm pilots. As soon as you are made aware of important dates or deadlines for awards, etc., write them down. You are more likely to remember a meeting if you have recorded it yourself.
  ➢ Obviously tasks relating to athletic contests normally take top priority. During the season, SIDs usually have a routine with the constant demand of games. Every Monday, I go through the week's slate of games and break them down into home and away contests. For the home games, I contact the visiting SID for rosters, stats and media lists. For away games, I also contest the SID to see if they need anything from me for the game. If I am unable to attend the game, I make sure that the host SID can send the stats from the game (in a timely manner!) and if not, make other arrangements with my coach.
  ➢ Sports which are currently competing in their primary season take top priority. Other requests from coaches not currently in season will be added to a secondary list and are attended to once the in-season sports have been satisfied.
  ➢ If you have a large project, like a media guide, start early and do a small chunk each day. Plan out a timeline for your project and have small deadlines to meet for different sections so you stay on track.

❖ ***What is paramount to do today and what can wait until tomorrow?***
  ➢ Many of us have enough on our plates to keep us occupied 24 hours a day, seven days a week. But the line must be drawn somewhere. Before you begin the day, compile a list of tasks that MUST be completed that day. Be sure to cross all items off that list before you begin anything else long-term.
  ➢ On days when you don't have games, make it a point to not start anything new after 5 p.m. so you can head home at a reasonable hour. Or even take a half-day so you can catch on time owed to yourself. Remember the saying, "Nobody on his deathbed ever said, 'I wish I'd spent more time at the office.'"
  ➢ Don't spread yourself too thin, have limits when it comes to requests from coaches, administrators, etc. Set the precedent early so that you won't get taken advantage of down the road.

❖ ***Making time for yourself***
  ➢ This is a recurring theme at ECAC-SIDA Workshops but it is essential for any successful SID and cannot be stressed enough. You are more likely to make a mistake or create more work for yourself if you work non-stop from the time you step in the office to the time you shut down your computer. Even taking a 10-15 minute break from an assignment to chat with a co-worker or take a walk around the building will do wonders for your productivity.