

SAN ANTONIO ACADEMY OF TEXAS

Educating Boys for Life Since 1886

SPECIAL REPORT: FOOTBALL AT SAA

This year twenty-nine SAA 6th -8th graders participated in the Saints football program, comprising 60% of the team's roster. Next year we anticipate that upwards of forty 6th -8th graders will participate in the Saints program, which will conduct practices four times a week on Saint Mary's Hall's campus.

For more than 30 years many Academy boys, parents and alumni have requested that SAA add an upper school tackle football program. During this period SAA has consistently lost boys who moved to public schools so that they could play on a school football team.

The Academy's March 2008 Strategic Plan, p.9, directs us to "evaluate after-school programs," a natural sequitur to the November 2000 Strategic Plan, p.6, which charged the School to "consider adding a greater variety of after-school activities for a range of age groups so that our boys will develop and enrich skills outside the classroom" (November 2000 Strategic Plan, p.6). NAIS and SAA both emphasize the importance of participation in after-school activities to foster in students a sense of ownership in their school experience. Football would provide Academy boys with a worthwhile new program.

A Board committee has looked at the feasibility of adding a tackle football program for grades 6-8 to meet the requests of a growing number of Academy boys and parents. Attached is the report of the Football Feasibility Committee, which recommends that SAA establish a 6th -8th football program beginning in August 2009.

As Head of School I support the establishment of a football program for the following reasons:

- SAA will respond to the request of a sizable number of boys. I do not want to deny them the opportunity.
- SAA will retain, and perhaps even attract, good students who also want to play football.
- As we enter a period of economic stress, SAA will create a vibrant new program that will attract positive attention and generate school spirit. In my opinion, this is a good strategic move.
- The football program will be open to all Academy 6th -8th graders. As with other Academy sports, no one will be cut.
- Academy teachers will coach football to ensure absolute congruence with SAA's values, culture and standards.
- Academy football will complement existing athletic programs. No program will be curtailed or eliminated. The fall soccer, tennis, and cross-country programs will continue under the direction of Academy personnel, while fall lacrosse clinics will be moved to November to avoid overload in September.
- I suggest that SAA finance the expense for 2009-2010 football via the projected increase in net income in this year's operating budget. In subsequent years the expenses can be embedded in the operating budget.
- Mike Heineman is ironing out the many details that undergird each and every athletic program. Mike is available to answer questions.

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