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## [What It Takes to Be A Great Athletics Director](#)

The success of the athletics director lies in five important dimensions: (1) informed, ethical and fair decision-making, (2) hiring and retaining the most competent, passionate and committed employees, (3) fulfilling the educational, resource and inspirational needs of employees and student-athletes, (4) by example and action, inspiring excellence in the performance of employee and student-athlete duties and responsibilities and (5) creating policies and procedures that enable employees to work efficiently and effectively and mitigate the occurrence or repetition of problems. Success within all of these dimensions, the difference between being good and being great, is dependent on specific skills and attributes, all of which can be learned:

- **Leadership** - personal attributes that produce respect, trust and an enjoyable working environment that result in employees and student-athletes wanting to demonstrate excellence to meet the expectations of the athletics department
- **Values and Principles** – ethical standards and ways of working promoted by the manager that engender feelings of pride, dignity and honor in one’s work
- **Knowledge** – a mastery of the subject matter of educational sport and administration coupled with critical thinking skills that enable the manager to be a wise decision-maker and problem solver
- **Administrative Philosophy** – beliefs about how people best work together to produce a desired outcome that creates an efficient and productive team of workers
- **Political Acumen** – wise, strategic and diplomatic skill in influencing the decisions of others toward the end of acquiring the resources necessary to support the work of the organization
- **Teaching Commitment** – creation of an athletic department culture of shared learning that affirms the value of each employee’s knowledge and contributions to the success of the team

The athletics director should be a lifelong student of these subjects.

-- Donna Lopiano, Ph.D., President, Sports Management Resources

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Topics

[Leadership](#)

[Philosophy/Vision/Mission/Goals](#)

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