



Catalina Coaching and Camp Update June 2024

30 Catalina Athletes are attending FCA Camp this weekend!

Dear Co-Laborers,

I have just finished week four with our players at Catalina High School. It still seems surreal that I am the head coach of this very broken football program (and athletic program in general). I would be lying to you if I told you that it has been all smooth sailing since my last update letter. The reality is that I have experienced emotional highs and excitement and emotional lows and discouragement. I have had moments and days of strong resolve and excitement for what the Lord has done, is doing and what He will do in the future in this program, school and community. And then there have been the days of fear of failure as a coach and the fear of failing the Lord in this task that I believe He has called me to. And then there are the feelings of being overwhelmed - from a coaching perspective - trying to teach high school athletes the disciplines and fundamentals they should have had as young players. And feeling overwhelmed at all the needs that this school and the kids have just to begin to be able to see structure, organization and to have HOPE. I know there is a price to pay this season to dive deep into the lives of these young men and community. My greatest sense of being overwhelmed is at the pain and difficulties in the lives of these young men that I have learned about by spending time with them on and off the field. No fathers, no direction, no plan, no guidance, no future hope.

My being overwhelmed is also very good for me. I have a large group of young men that need mentors- that need love and that need Christ. God has made it very clear to me that I am helpless as I have wrestled in prayer for Him to move in great and mighty ways in the lives of these young men that He has entrusted to me. I know I have nothing to offer the Lord. I know I have nothing but Christ to offer these young men. And I know *that apart from Him, I can do nothing....* John 15:5. *That unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it...* Psalm 127:1. The Lord has also revealed to me how utterly dependent I am on Him in this process. I have moments of wishing I had nothing to do this summer... the idea of just being idle this fall would be very nice... but His Word reminds me in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10: *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.* It is amazing how TRUE these verses really are.

In the next couple pages, I am going to update you on the team and share some urgent needs for the program. This school is in the pit. This school simply pushes kids through the system and on to the broad path to nowhere. Please pray for me to glorify God in this role He has allowed me the privilege to be in and that He would use me and this coaching staff to make an eternal impact on the souls of these young men. Our coaching staff has come together, and it is a great crew that shares the same mind and heart for these kids.

Practice and Progress Updates



The above photo is Day 1 of practice. Overall, we have been getting 3x the number of players this summer than the low turnout in the past three seasons. We are averaging 20-25 young men at each practice. Our roster is at 39 players (if they all make it to the season). The past three summers, 7-9 participants coming out for summer practice (in the entire football program) would be the norm so something appears to be happening inside of these kids.

I have been freely sharing my testimony and sharing Christ with these guys. Coach Ingram (good looking guy on the far right up above) is also pouring his heart into these kids. This is a very different world at Catalina – we are getting to know the kids and it is humbling to know that the majority of these boys have homes and lives that are completely broken – words can't express some of what these young men have confided in us... yet they are showing up, listening and buying in to all that we are seeking to accomplish in football and the game of life.



85% of the players do not live with their biological parents and I have not yet met a player that has a relationship with his father. I am realizing how disinterested I have become in the game of X's and O's. The only reason I participate in the "futility" of X's and O's is to build relationships with these young men that will hopefully blossom even more after football is over. If we find success, more young men will be drawn into the program – that is more young men that we get to share Christ with and hopefully influence into a personal and growing relationship with the Lord.

We also have numerous refugees from Africa on our team that are coming out. The young man next to me wearing the maroon covering is Mohamed Kallo from Guinea. He speaks five languages, and this is his first year playing football. English is not his strong suit, but we hope rushing the passer will be! I will update you with reports on him and other players as the season goes on.

PROGRAM NEEDS

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT, BASIC NEEDS AND WEIGHTROOM

I like to be ahead of schedule on things when at all possible. Though the AD said the school had plenty of equipment for our increased numbers, I still decided it was best to fit all the summer athletes in gear to make sure we had helmets, shoulder pads and necessary team equipment when the season starts next month. I did this last week and after only getting through 2/3 of our 35 rostered players, we were 2 helmets and 7 shoulder pads short already. We still have about 12 athletes to fit this week. Helmets are falling apart, many of the shoulder pads are garbage and the school did not have funds to recondition, repair and clean the helmets and shoulder pads... it is awful. As of today, we can't even suit out all the kids showing up to practice.

There is no money in the football foundation account and the program has historically not fundraised being part of "the system". These kids and this school are used to just scraping by on handouts. There is a box of donated, used (some very used) cleats that I have been dispersing to kids – we are almost out. We do not have enough protective equipment for the kids. We have no team gear for competitions – no team shirts, no team shorts, rotting field equipment and a shell of a weight room from the 1970's.

I would like to ask you – or friends you may know or business owners that you may know – if you would consider helping get this program on its feet. There is a foundation set up by Catalina alumni that is a 501c3 tax deductible way to help these kids and bring some team and school pride back to this school on its 70th anniversary. How can you or others help?

If you'd like to commit a donation that we can count on so that we can order necessary equipment by next week to ensure we have it in four weeks as the season gets started, simply do the following:

1 - Email me at coachfetsis@gmail.com the commitment amount that the program can count on from you. (so that we know we have the funds committed to get equipment needs ordered)

2 - Mail (and make check out to):

CATALINA HIGH SCHOOL FOUNDATION - in the memo write: FOOTBALL ACCT

3143 E. LESTER STREET, TUCSON, AZ 85716 c/o Jennifer Bond

All donations are fully tax deductible.

We need helmets, shoulder pads, additional uniforms, team gear, game balls and some field equipment. I am looking to raise \$8,000+ to get these kids what they need and help them become self- sufficient this season. Our team fundraising that we will do early in the season will bring in funds that can be used next season. We have 10 days to order this equipment to outfit the guys.

Additionally, if you or owners you know of larger businesses may want to sponsor all or part of a new weight room or help with an overhaul of the weightroom that will be used by football and all athletes in the school, please let me know and we can set up a time to talk. The athletic

department and many coaches are buying in to the need to follow a structured, universal strength and conditioning program here at the school. These kids need structure.



Everything about this program – the equipment room, field equipment, weightroom, locker room.... It just feels broken and is just run down...just like the lives of most of these kids. It is a dark, scattered, messy feeling, but I hope we can give these kids some fresh change to get excited about. Let me know if you have any questions on donating to the program.

Lastly, please pray for our FCA Camp at NAU this coming weekend! It runs from June 29th – July 2nd. By God's grace, I was able to recruit 42 athletes to camp from 6 different schools. The most amazing part is that **30 of those athletes are from Catalina High School:**

20 football players – 1 soccer player – 1 golfer – 2 wrestlers – 6 girls softball players – That's 5% of the school population! Praise the Lord. May the Spirit move in the hearts of every athlete, coach and FCA staff present at camp this weekend. Please pray for a mighty work of the Holy Spirit.

I am getting older and wearing out a lot faster these days. Please pray for my endurance, steadfastness and faithfulness in the harvest and to keep my eyes fixed on the Prize. I will update you in the next few weeks on the NAU Camp and the summer bible studies (Huddles) that are going on as well as plans for the Fall semester. The Fetsis Family thanks you for your unwavering support and prayers.

With much love in Christ,

Andy