

# COUNTING ON CHARACTER

• *SCHOOL ADOPTS "CHARACTER MATTERS" CURRICULUM FOR ATHLETICS*



Hot Springs School District became the first school in South Dakota to introduce the "Character Matters" curriculum into their athletic program.

Designed by Wade Salem, the Character Matters program has been used to help coaches build strong successful teams and programs by incorporating a focus on character.

Hot Springs School District introduced the program at their athletic ceremony with Salem addressing the athletes, their parents and coaches on the importance of making right decisions and how character can be the difference maker in propelling one to greater success both on and off the field.

Coaches in Hot Springs have participated in face-to-face trainings of the Character Matters curriculum, received year-round e-mail instructional enhancements and been provided definitions of the character trait and questions to pose to their team.

Hot Springs Soccer Coach William Collignon said before the implementation of the Character Matters curriculum he would have to remind his athletes to finish out runs past the line, give their all and not drift out during team laps, but after

the Character Matters presentation, he noticed a change.

"During one of our final team laps, one of the younger players fell behind. I could not tell who started the gesture, but I heard 'Let's jog in place at half and wait for him,'" Collignon shared.

"All the team ran there in place and waited, they all finished together... just nice to see that some things 'just click.'"

Darci Rogers, one of the soccer team captains, said the focus on character has helped her and other school athletes understand why they should not cut corners and encourage younger players.

"Everyone appears to be trying more this year," Rogers said.

The extra effort paid off for the soccer squad. The team made it to the semi-final round of the 2014 Class A State Soccer Tournament, with Ty Wynia named to the Class A All-State First Team and Darci Rogers received Honorable Mention on the All-State team and was named to the SD Soccer 605 2014 Elite Eleven "A" Girls team.