

The Inter-Mountain

WVU AD speaks at Arts Center

ELKINS – The skills learned from participating in sports and other organized activities are essential in shaping young adults, West Virginia University Athletic Director Oliver Luck said during a speaking engagement Monday at the Randolph County Community Arts Center. The presentation was part of the Smithsonian Institution’s traveling exhibit, “Hometown Teams.”

Luck told the group sports and education go hand-in-hand in shaping young men and women. Aside from the physical aspect, he said the skills learned from participating in sports can have a multitude of benefits.

“We’re the only nation in the world that does college sports the way we do,” Luck said. “You don’t find college sports in Europe, or South America or Asia or anywhere else in the world. I think it gives us a unique insight into college athletics and how important sports can be in developing young men and women.”

According to Luck, kids involved in organized activities are more prepared to face adulthood challenges.

He said studies indicate students who are involved in sports and other organized activities do better academically.

“Any organized activity with others is a great training ground for young people,” Luck said. “Because ultimately, you have to work with other people to be successful. The idea of that solitary genius may apply to Einstein or some others, but most of us are social animals and we have to

work together.

“The bottom line is, in high school and middle school, kids who are on sports teams do better academically than kids who aren’t on sports teams. I’m not saying they are smarter than the other kids, but I think they have that discipline and they learn that they have to do their home work and go to bed and get up early and go to practice, repeat, repeat, repeat. and that’s an important skill to learn. I think there are all sorts of skill sets that teach kids how to function well in society. Again it’s not just sports that does that, it’s participating in the band, or the theater or running the student newspaper. Any group activity is important, but sports has that additional benefit of encouraging kids to have physical fitness,” Luck said.

Luck’s career has spanned from his days as quarterback for the WVU Mountaineers (1978-1981), to being an NFL quarterback for the Houston Oilers, to receiving a JD degree from University of Texas Law School, and later to coaching professional sports teams such as Germany’s Frankfurt Galaxy and Rhein Fire. Luck was also named to the post of president of the Houston Dynamo Major League Soccer team.

Hired as athletic director at WVU in 2010, Luck has instituted a number of changes to the school’s programs, including the move to the Big 12, and the promotion of Dana Holgorsen to head coach of the football team.

The Randolph County Community Arts Center, a non-profit organization promoting and supporting the arts in Randolph County and surrounding areas, is located at the corner of Randolph Avenue and Park Street in Elkins. This exhibit is made possible by the West Virginia Humanities Council, First Energy Corporation, Elkins Fordland, Friends of the West Virginia Symphony and the Randolph County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

“Hometown Teams” interweaves images and text with almost 70 artifacts, video, audio and other interactive elements that present perspectives on sports in popular culture, as well as local sports

traditions. It offers information about mascots, marching bands, cheerleaders, game day traditions, tailgating, player/coach relationships, sports equipment, stadiums, rivalries, and athletes who broke racial, gender or physical barriers in sports. The growth of alternative and extreme sports also is explored.

The exhibit is free and open to the public. Hours are Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Additional information about “Hometown Teams” is available by calling the RCCAC at 304-637-2355.

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