



Coach salaries: Florida high school football pays for most extracurriculars. Coaches' pay should reflect that

Jon Santucci, jon.santucci@tcpalm.com Published 3:06 p.m. ET Feb. 26, 2018 | Updated 5:38 p.m. ET Feb. 26, 2018



(Photo: PATRICK DOVE/TCPALM)

High school football coaches don't get into the profession for the big payday.

[Fullscreen](#)

But there's no reason why they can't get paid appropriately for their work.

High School Football: Port St. Lucie vs. South Fork

Mike Lavelle calculated that his coaching responsibilities at South Fork School demand more than 750 hours per year, which works out to little more than \$7 per hour based on his supplement. Minimum wage in Florida is \$8.25 per hour.

And very few minimum wage jobs have the demands — or generate the revenue — of high school football.

"One of things frustrating about it, is that at some point in the late (19)80s or early '90's, the job started to change," Lavelle said. "When I was a child and my dad was coaching, it was an August to November job and then the kids went on to other sports. Then weight rooms became a big deal and there were more things coaches had to do in the offseason. All these hours started to become normal, but the pay wasn't adjusted."

More: [Treasure Coast high school football coach: I can make more at Taco Bell \(https://www.tcpalm.com/story/sports/high-school/football/2018/02/23/st-lucie-county-high-school-football-coach-can-make-more-taco-bell/367235002/\)](https://www.tcpalm.com/story/sports/high-school/football/2018/02/23/st-lucie-county-high-school-football-coach-can-make-more-taco-bell/367235002/)

The easy thing to do is say high school football coaches should get paid more. The reality is school teachers deserve a bump in pay, too. But football might be the easiest position to justify a raise.

Because football is the extracurricular activity that keeps all the others going.

"We have 49 varsity and sub-varsity teams that all require coaches and officials and transportation, and we're all dependent on what we bring in at the football gate," Vero Beach athletic director/football coach Lenny Jankowski said. "Football pays for all the other sports. It has to be that way. Football is the only one that comes out to be profitable at the end of the season."

It's not just athletics, either.

At Martin County High School, the marching band gets 90 percent of the revenue from concessions during football games. That's thousands of dollars each game. Every other sport or activity keeps the profits from concessions sold during their events.

[Fullscreen](#)

High School Football: Vero Beach vs. River View

At Vero Beach High School, the band gets 100 percent of the revenue from the football program — and the profits from selling the advertisements inside. All the other sports keep the proceeds from their concessions and programs.

At Sebastian River, the band gets 100 percent of the concessions during football games, while the ROTC gets 100 percent of the parking revenue.

More: [3 thoughts on Central coach Brad Paulson resigning \(https://www.tcpalm.com/story/sports/columnists/jon-santucci/2018/02/21/jon-santucci-thoughts-central-coach-brad-paulson-resigning/361695002/\)](https://www.tcpalm.com/story/sports/columnists/jon-santucci/2018/02/21/jon-santucci-thoughts-central-coach-brad-paulson-resigning/361695002/)

If so many other activities are reliant on football, why not say the people entrusted with the program — the head and assistant coaches — be compensated accordingly?

ADVERTISEMENT

What is my home worth?

Take the guesswork out of selling your home

Request Free Report

COLDWELL BANKER PARADISE

State	Percentage
AK	0.0%
AL	4.9%
AR	4.0%
AZ	0.0%
CA	3.4%
CO	3.0%
CT	0.6%
DC	13.9%
DE	-2%
FL	8.1%
GA	6.6%
IA	4.6%
IL	8.7%
IN	5.8%
KS	5.3%
KY	7.9%
LA	5.0%
MA	5.0%
MD	3.8%
ME	3.4%
MI	7.8%
MN	5.0%
MO	3.9%
MS	1.8%
MT	0.0%
NC	8.3%
ND	0.0%
OH	4.8%
OK	3.8%
OR	5.3%
PA	3.5%
RI	8.3%
SC	3.4%
SD	0.0%
TN	7.9%
TX	7.2%
VA	3.7%
VT	0.0%
WA	6.3%
WI	5.8%
WV	6.3%
WY	0.0%

The assistant coaches in St. Lucie County receive a supplement of \$1,785 for the fall season and \$510 for spring practice. If an assistant coach only works during the fall — and considering the large coaching turnover the past few years, it's not unlikely — they receive less than assistant coaches in other major team sports. Assistants in baseball, basketball, soccer, softball and volleyball receive a supplement of \$2,040 during their respective seasons.

There's no easy fix because, obviously, there's not a pile of money sitting in the corner of the school board offices they just haven't allocated yet.

My suggestion, if it were possible, is have head coaches get paid 12-month salaries that would combine their teaching and coaching responsibilities. It doesn't have to be as exorbitant as the six-figure salaries that several public school coaches in states such as Alabama, Georgia or Texas receive, but head coaches in Florida should be paid for the year-round work they do.

If coaches were paid salaries instead of supplements, it also would allow them to be rewarded for staying at their schools and building programs. Right now, a first-year coach in St. Lucie County gets the same supplement as Treasure Coast coach Irvin Jones, who's heading into his ninth year and has four playoff appearances. (Jankowski said former Vero Beach basketball coach Chuck Loewendick, the area's all-time winningest coach, never received any kind of a supplement increase for his longevity during his 29 years as head coach.)

It would be ideal if coaches could be financially rewarded for on-field successes. But with the Florida High School Athletic Association allowing students to transfer schools more easily, an incentive-based program would likely prompt some coaches to recruit student-athletes.

As for the assistant coaches, give each school a pool of money to divide among the coaching staff with a cap on what any individual coach can receive. An assistant who runs the weight room all year shouldn't get paid the same as one whose responsibilities end when the season ends.

It's just one suggestion, but at some point something should be done or we risk losing even more coaches in the future.

Santucci has been covering high school sports on the Treasure Coast since 2000. Contact him at jon.santucci@tcpalm.com.

1st Month Free

NOW OPEN

The Brick Oven Pizza Company

AWARD-WINNING COZZI'S ENLIGHTENED PIZZA

[WWW.TCPALM.COM/SPECIALOFFER?](http://WWW.TCPALM.COM/SPECIALOFFER?UTM_SOURCE=BOUNCE&UTM_MEDIUM=EXCHANGE&UTM_CAMPAIGN=WELove2018)

EXCHANGE&UTM_CAMPAIGN=WELove2018)