



To whom it may concern,

I am writing to comment on Middlebury College's efforts to integrate a sustainability ethos and spirit of leadership in its athletic programs and among its student-athletes and coaches. I believe our approach is innovative and unique and worthy of a STARS innovation credit for the following reasons.

The focus of the greening of athletics effort at Middlebury College is as much on making a cultural shift as it is on an operational shift. This has been an intentional focus, as we believe the cultural shift is important for two reasons. First, a sustainability ethos integrated into Athletics should pave the way for integration of future operational principles. Second, by integrating this ethos throughout the department we are creating more sustainability fluency and potential change agents. In fact, within our first year of establishing athletic sustainability liaisons, one of our liaisons enrolled in a graduate program for sustainability, citing her role as a liaison as a primary spark for her interest.

While there have been many substantive "greening" changes in how we manage our athletic program from a sustainability perspective, we are also institutionalizing the effort in the following ways:

- designated 1/3 of a full time coach's job to be the department's sustainability liaison between the department and Middlebury's Sustainability Integration Office;
- developed a set of sustainability principles in collaboration with the coaches and players to guide the thinking and behavior of all Middlebury teams and athletic personnel
- established a program and process whereby each athletic team designates one or more team sustainability liaisons who meet regularly to identify and implement practices that reduce waste, conserve energy, improve transportation efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and others

We have also carried out the following more specific, successful efforts:

- Conversion of ski team truck to biodiesel, using biofuel from kitchen waste oil
- Changed outdated lighting to a motion sensor system
- Helped to institute conference no-idling guidelines
- Purchased Fair Trade Intramural equipment
- Liaisons held a "Green Day" for a home fall weekend, handing out educational materials, green laces and bracelets and encouraged fans to make sustainability pledges
- Several teams including Nordic and Alpine Skiing and Men's Lacrosse have been carbon neutral
- Organized a high profile panel, "Jocks and Treehuggers" to discuss greening athletics with the panelists including Natalie Spilger, professional soccer player; Alex Wolff, Sports

Illustrated; Bill McKibben, Middlebury College Scholar in Residence in Environmental Affairs; Dhani Jones, Cincinnati Bengals.

Furthermore, our student liaisons have begun initiatives to explore or implement the following:

- Additional “Green” weekends
- Increased bike use by athletes on campus
- Concessions improvements
- Participation in a pro sports carbon counting independent study

These efforts and accomplishments are innovative, especially for a small, liberal arts college and represent significant progress in demonstrating how constructive progress can be made in broadening a cultural norm from a narrow focus solely on athletic performance and achievement to creative ways that incorporate institutional norms and sustainability. We look forward to doing and learning more in this area in the coming years, and we are currently working with members of the Sustainability Integration Office and the Dean of Environmental Affairs to create an Athletics Sustainability Strategic Plan.

Sincerely

Erin Quinn  
Director of Athletics

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