Get better this summer

By Larry Pritchett
Past PCHS Activities Director

It is hard to believe that in the next three weeks or so another school year will be completed and the athletic equipment will be put away for another year.

This week the P.C. boys and girls track teams will travel to Hershey for their district competition and on the following Monday, the golf boys will head to Ogallala where they will actually host the district golf competition.

Although the school activities are still pretty busy with banquets, districts, finals etc. going on, the pace is still slowing. Although I still hear the old joke now and then about the three best things about education are June, July and August, I have to admit I always appreciated when school was over for the summer. But I was always excited about when it started the next fall.

For high school athletes and for coaches, the June, July, and August months don't really slow down all that much.

Those three months are probably the most important months for athletes because it is the time table they have to make themselves better for the coming year. Coaches can plan activities for the summer but the players have to push themselves to get the work in and get it done in a manner that will improve their skills.

In basketball for example, there are all kinds of programs where the coaches want you to "log" the shots that you take during the summer time as they want you to get the "bulk" shooting in during that time.

The key, though, is to work on your "game" shots at "game" speed. That takes planning and dedication by the athlete because not practicing at game speeds doesn't help you much.

The same example can go for volleyball players working on serves, football players working on passing, or any skill connected with a sport that involves muscle memory in order to be consistent.

Planning is important and I have always thought that you need to plan. It is not the particular plan you have, but it is the fact that you have A PLAN and you work that plan to get better.

I remember growing up we didn't have a lot of summer activities other than baseball. Coaches didn't work with you on other sports and if you didn't play baseball (in my case anyway) you drove a tractor. I didn't like baseball all that much, but driving a tractor was way behind baseball.

I was lucky because for most of my high school time, my father was still alive and he had this idea that if you shot baskets every day in the summer, you would improve your accuracy. I had a great practice place inside our equipment shed. It had the cement floor and everything, and Dad gave me the time to be able to use it.

One of the things that my Dad had figured out and accepted was that his oldest boy wasn't coming back to the farm and that I wanted to be a coach. He might have been disappointed, but

he never discouraged me from participating in athletics in high school and trying to get a little better during the summer months.

Some things don't change much over the years. I remember our college track coach saying "You can't just go to bed at night and roll out the next morning an All-American." It takes work. I know better now what he was talking about and it wasn't really about making "All-Americans" out of kids, it was about improvement and making yourself better than you were the year before.

June, July and August will be here before you know it and then September through May will be here again and it will be interesting to see those who put the extra time in during J, J and A.

Thunder is only talking, lightning does the work. We hope that PCHS athletes create lots of lightning during the summer.