

OCTOBER 10

HighSchool

TODAY™ THE VOICE OF EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETIC AND FINE ARTS ACTIVITIES

Connecticut Cheerleading Case – Implications for High Schools

Annual Survey

High school sports participation tops 7.6 million

Athletic Directors

How to keep the principal's plate clean

Superintendents

School district leaders involved in activity programs





High School Sports Participation Continues to Rise

BY ROBERT B. GARDNER, NFHS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AND NINA VAN ERK, NFHS PRESIDENT

The streak continues! As you will see from the article on page 10, participation in high school sports increased for the 21st consecutive year in 2009-10. Given the economic challenges that exist in America today, this is tremendous news and yet another affirmation of the desire to keep education-based sports in our nation's 19,000-plus high schools.

An additional 91,624 participants from the previous year pushed the all-time record to more than 7.6 million, which equates to 55.1 percent of students enrolled in high schools associated with NFHS member state associations. Soccer gained the most participants among girls sports, while track and field gained the most among boys sports.

Given the budget reductions implemented by many school districts across the country, the streak appeared to be in jeopardy. But, seemingly, with a "whatever it takes" mindset, there is a resolve by high school administrators and coaches, community leaders, parents and others to make sure these once-in-a-lifetime programs continue to thrive, and in the process, continue to benefit America's young people.

In Arizona, where the Tucson schools had considered eliminating sports altogether, voters passed a one-percent state sales tax increase, with two-thirds of the increase going to schools. As is the case with a growing number of schools, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District in North Carolina implemented a district-wide pay-to-play policy.

Rest assured, having parents pay for their son or daughter to play sports in high school is not the desired method of funding these programs; however, given the educational benefits and lifelong values derived from school-based sports, most parents are stepping to the plate. When matched against the enormous amount of money that some parents spend for their kids to play club sports, where the educational benefits pale by comparison, pay-to-play fees generally are less than \$100 per sport. Additionally, many schools waive the fees for students who are unable to afford them.

This year's participation survey indicates that 1,109,278 boys participated in football last year, and 540,207 boys played basketball. Why are these students participating in high school sports? Of the 1.1 million who played football, only about 1,000 will make it to the Na-

tional Football League. And of the 540,207 who played basketball, a meager 158 will be drafted by a National Basketball Association team.

While there will be a precious few who turn sports into a career, the vast majority of high school student-athletes have a different focus. Studies suggest that the No. 1 reason is simply to have fun and to be a part of a team.

Many students who join a high school team and become successful in a sport gain a new sense of confidence that changes their lives. Amazing stories about the benefits of high school sports and fine arts programs happen every day, and one such story is profiled in this issue on page 12.

The story of Lyndon LaPlante is an example of how high school sports can change lives. This special-needs player with Down syndrome, through an arrangement by caring high school coaches, got the chance to play football as a senior in 2005. He ran almost the length of the field and scored a touchdown and thereby changed his life forever. No one remembers who won the game that day or the score of the game. That day was about making a difference in the life of Lyndon LaPlante.

Another lifelong value that many of the 7.6 million participants learned last year was how to overcome adversity. While academic success in the classroom is the first priority, there are many life lessons learned by being a part of an athletic team that are equally important. Working together as a team to achieve a common goal prepares student-athletes for many life experiences.

A story in the "Spotlight on Sports" section of our Web site (www.nfhs.org) details the story of the Augusta (Georgia) Butler High School football team, which won its season opener this year after 41 consecutive losses. Coach Ashley Harden said, "You'd think we had won a playoff game or a state championship." These students believed in themselves, remained positive and achieved their goal.

High school sports – as well as other activity programs such as speech, debate, music and theatre – change lives. By whatever financial means necessary, we must keep the lights on the fields and in gymnasiums aglow; there may be another Lyndon LaPlante awaiting that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. ●





Great Shot

Marching Tubas

The Pomona High School (Arvada, Colorado) marching band performs at the 2008 Class 5A Colorado Bandmasters Association contest.

Photograph provided by Pam Wagner, Colorado High School Activities Association.

HighSchool

TODAY™ THE VOICE OF EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETIC AND FINE ARTS ACTIVITIES

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We hope you enjoy this publication and welcome your feedback. You may contact Bruce Howard or John Gillis, editors of High School Today, at bhoward@nfhs.org or jgillis@nfhs.org.

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Cover photography provided by Pam Wagner, Colorado High School Activities Association.

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The Cost

BUSES AND SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION



Cost of a new 72-passenger bus with air conditioning: **\$87,000** (in 2009-10); **\$93,000** (in 2010-11)

Average hourly rate of bus driver:

- \$8/hour (Monday-Friday);
\$9/hour on weekends or holidays
- For a trip leaving at 6 a.m. and returning at 10 p.m. – \$128

Bulk rate fuel cost: \$2.34/gallon

For a two-hour trip: Fuel cost estimate – \$80

Insurance cost per bus: \$411/year

*These prices serve as approximate costs and are not intended to reflect any specific manufacturer's prices.

Unusual Nicknames

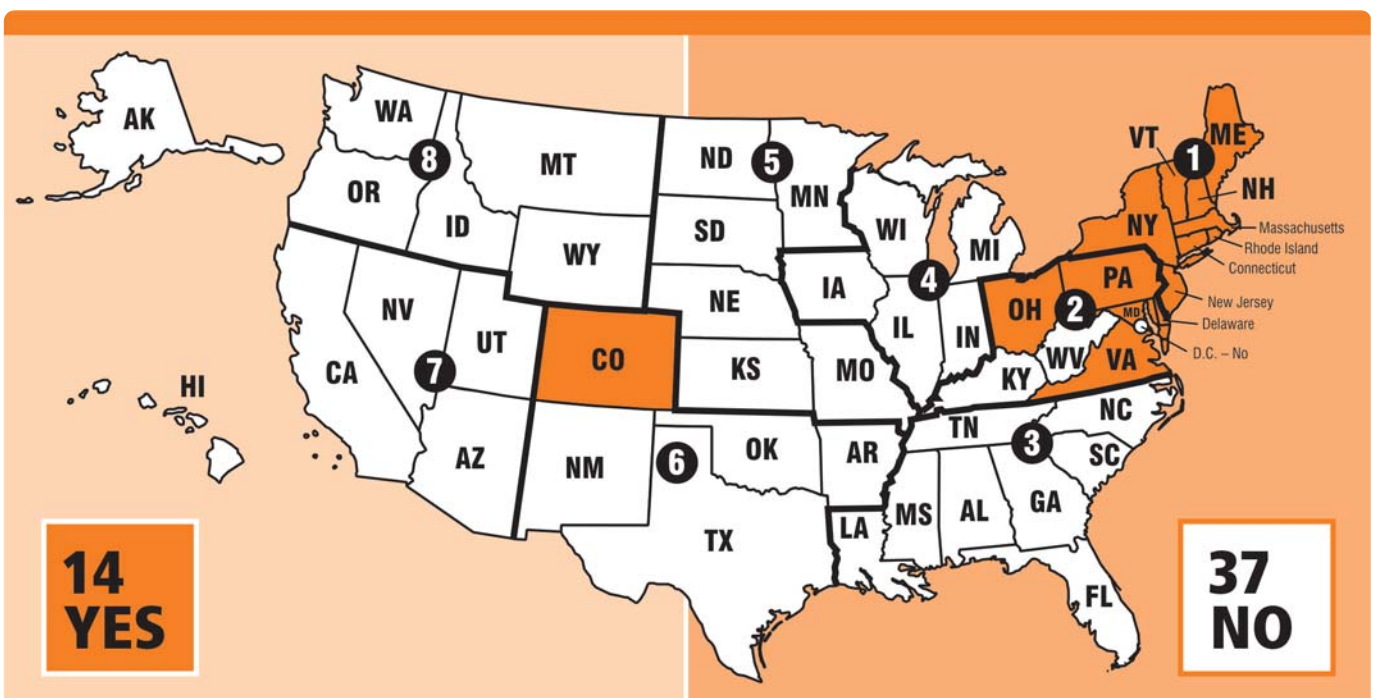


Yuma (Arizona) High School was created in 1909 in a small three-room building. Needing more room in 1910, the school was moved to the recently abandoned Yuma Territorial Prison, where classes were taught in the cellblock area and school assemblies were held in the prison hospital. The school remained in the prison until 1913 when it was re-opened as a correctional facility.

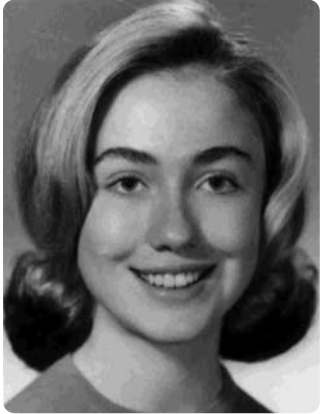
In 1913, with a newly built school to call home, the Yuma High School football team was dubbed the **Criminals**, both based on their former home and the way they played football. While the nickname originally was an insult to the school, it has grown to embrace the moniker and is now the "Proud Home of the Criminals."

Around the Nation

Question: Does your state association sponsor a girls state championship in field hockey?



It All Started Here



Hillary Clinton

BY ARIKA HERRON

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton wasn't always in such a position of power. In fact in high school, Clinton ran for student council president of newly built Maine Township (Illinois) High School South in her senior year, but lost the race because she was a girl.

Although girls weren't given the opportunities that they are today, Clinton was still very active at Maine Township High School East, and later South in Park Ridge, Illinois. She successfully ran for both student class and junior class president at Maine East, and was a member of the National Honor Society and a National Merit Finalist.

Clinton was also active in her school's Young Republicans group. Her interest in politics developed very fast and at a young age. It was no surprise that she helped stage Maine South's first mock presidential debate for the 1964 election and played a star role. Because Clinton was an ardent supporter of Barry Goldwater, a teacher had Clinton represent Goldwater's opponent – Lyndon Johnson – in the debate.

Learning both sides of the argument would become a turning point for Clinton, who changed political affiliations by the time she graduated from Wellesley (Massachusetts) College. After Wellesley, Clinton attended Yale (Connecticut) Law School where she met her future husband and 42nd president of the United States – Bill Clinton.

Rare though it is, Clinton has had such career success that she has stepped out of the shadow of being first lady. Today, she is first recognized as being one of the most able secretaries of state in recent history and remembered second as a former first lady. ©

Arika Herron was a summer intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in journalism and minoring in French and international studies.

For the Record

11-PLAYER FOOTBALL

Most Receiving Touchdowns

83

Abram Booty (Shreveport Evangel Christian, LA), 1993-96

74

Brandon Barrett (Martinsburg, WV), 2000-03

66

Earvin Johnson (Los Angeles Cathedral, CA), 1998-2000

62

AJ Green (Summerville, SC) 2004-07

60

Tyrone Vaughans (Marrero Ehret, LA), 1980-82



Abram Booty

Source: 2010 National High School Sports Record Book. To order, call toll-free 1-800-776-3462, or order online at www.nfhs.com.

Readers Respond

Fan Sportsmanship at Athletic Events

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” – the “Golden Rule.” I remember my fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Hamilton, at Falk Elementary School saying this to our class on a daily basis. Little did I know some 40 years later, I would long for the days of the “Golden Rule.” Why, in the year 2010 in high school athletics, is this rule important? Why should athletic directors be concerned about the Golden Rule at athletic events?

Over the past five years, I have seen in the athletic arena a decline in and even an acceptance of a lack of sportsmanship from fans in the stands. It appears that it is easier to turn our backs than confront unacceptable behavior. Adults in the stands have no problem telling supervisors to mind their own business. As supervisors and administrators turn their backs, the behavior reaches new levels.

I attended the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) State Ice Hockey Championship all three days and a large number of the WIAA Boys State Basketball Championship games. The most common negative comment to come from a crowd is “boo.” After attending a sportsmanship meeting at the National Athletic Directors Conference in Dallas, Texas, I left wondering if it was just me who felt that booing was still considered unacceptable from fans. It was mentioned at the conference that we succeed as athletic directors when our supervisors are actually allowed to watch the game and not spend the night disciplining poor behavior. I could not agree more with that statement. At the end of the speaker’s talk, it was mentioned that only one poor cheer is allowed at the games. Imagine my confusion when the word was “boo.”

At the hockey tournament and the basketball tournament, a common song played by the band was the song I call the “you suck” song – I’m not sure of the real name. I remember during the Michael Jordan days that when the song was played everyone would yell “hey” at a certain point during the song. Now people yell, “hey, you suck.” As a child growing up at Wisconsin Badger hockey games, “sieve” has always been a mainstay cheer. It wasn’t until I got to high school and our athletic director would not

allow this I began to realize that a goalie really does not need to hear that demeaning cheer towards himself or herself. I have never joined in again.

“Airball, airball, airball” is another chant directed at a player during basketball games. “Bull___, bull___, bull___” is commonly directed at officials when someone in the crowd has determined that the call was not a favorable call. Another fan favorite is for fans to yell out the opposing player’s names or even comments about their families. I have heard people defend this by saying “it is just a part of the game.” I believe we need to teach fans to cheer for their team – not against.

I bring these examples out because they are real. As educators, we must be the first to confront these behaviors and we must believe that these behaviors are not good for our athletes or for our community. Working with young people is, in my opinion, the most rewarding job one can have. The learning curve is always tested, and it is up to us as educators to stand strong in our beliefs. As we begin to win the battle of promoting good sportsmanship behavior, our students will most likely present us with a new challenge. Isn’t that what makes our profession one of the most exciting professions in the world?

When it comes to athletics, we will ALWAYS be scrutinized under the guise of “educational soundness” because the athletic arena is an extension of the classroom. What is educationally sound about using profanity or putting an opponent or their community down, or singling out individuals to embarrass, bully, taunt, ridicule, harass, etc.? Would we allow booing the classroom teacher or “you, you, youing” the individual who received the lowest test grade in science class? I think not.

I am now reminded how lucky I was to have Mrs. Hamilton in my life. I wish I could still thank her. I only hope that we as educators can spread the “Golden Rule” to our young people now, so they will be able to pass the message on to the next generation. ☉

Tim Ritchie, Athletic Director, Madison Memorial High School, Madison, Wisconsin

If you would like to respond to any issues in high school athletics or fine arts, please direct your comments electronically to **Bruce Howard** (bhoward@nfhs.org) or **John Gillis** (jgillis@nfhs.org).

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Participation in High School Sports Tops 7.6 Million

BY LAUREN FELLMETH

Participation in high school sports increased for the 21st consecutive school year in 2009-10, eclipsing the 7.6 million mark for the first time.

Based on figures from the 50 state high school athletic/activity associations, plus the District of Columbia, that are members of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), participation for the 2009-10 school year reached a record-breaking total of 7,628,377 participants, according to the 2009-10 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS.

Boys and girls participation figures also reached respective all-time highs with 4,455,740 boys and 3,172,637 girls participating in 2009-10. Boys participation increased by 33,078 this year, while the girls figure increased by 58,546.

“It is a significant achievement for our member state associations that in these difficult economic times, student participation increased for the 21st consecutive year,” said NFHS Executive

Director Bob Gardner. “This reinforces the values that high school sports provide as part of the education of our students. The NFHS actively promotes participation in, and support for, the programs throughout the nation.”

Based on the survey, 55.1 percent of students enrolled in high schools participate in athletics, which emphasizes and reinforces the idea that high school sports continue to have a significant role in student involvement in schools across the country.

Outdoor track and field gained the most combined participants in 2009-10, with an increase of 25,561 participants, followed by soccer with 19,597 combined participants and cross country (11,925). In girls sports, soccer gained the most participants (11,582), followed by outdoor track and field (11,445) and fast-pitch softball (9,290). Outdoor track and field led the way in boys sports with 14,116 additional participants, followed by cross country (8,156) and soccer (8,015).

TEN MOST POPULAR BOYS PROGRAMS

SCHOOLS

1. Basketball	17,969
2. Track and Field – Outdoor	16,011
3. Baseball	15,786
4. Football – 11-Player	14,226
5. Cross Country	13,942
6. Golf	13,693
7. Soccer	11,375
8. Wrestling	10,363
9. Tennis	9,916
10. Swimming & Diving	6,820

PARTICIPANTS

1. Football – 11-Player	1,109,278
2. Track and Field – Outdoor	572,123
3. Basketball	540,207
4. Baseball	472,644
5. Soccer	391,839
6. Wrestling	272,890
7. Cross Country	239,608
8. Tennis	162,755
9. Golf	157,756
10. Swimming & Diving	131,376



The top participatory sports for boys remained the same from 2008-09: 11-player football led the way with 1,109,278 participants, followed by outdoor track and field (572,123), basketball (540,207), baseball (472,644), soccer (391,839), wrestling (272,890), cross country (239,608), tennis (162,755), golf (157,756), and swimming and diving (131,376).

Outdoor track and field continued to be the leading sport for girls with 469,177 participants. Second was basketball (439,550), followed by volleyball (403,985), fast-pitch softball (378,211), soccer (356,116), cross country (201,968), tennis (182,395), swimming and diving (158,419), competitive spirit squads (123,644) and golf (70,872).

“This reinforces the values that high school sports provide as part of the education of our students.”

The top 10 states based on combined participation also remained the same from last year’s survey. Texas led the way with a combined total of 780,721 participants. California was second with 771,465, followed by New York (379,677), Illinois (344,257), Ohio (334,797), Pennsylvania (317,426), Michigan (313,818), New Jersey (253,097), Florida (247,428) and Minnesota (230,043). ●

The participation survey has been compiled since 1971 by the NFHS through numbers it receives from its member associations. The complete 2009-10 High School Athletics Participation Survey is available on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

Lauren Fellmeth is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department and a recent graduate of Elon (North Carolina) University.

TEN MOST POPULAR GIRLS PROGRAMS

SCHOOLS

1. Basketball	17,711
2. Track and Field – Outdoor	15,923
3. Volleyball	15,382
4. Softball – Fast Pitch.....	15,298
5. Cross Country	13,809
6. Soccer.....	10,901
7. Tennis.....	10,166
8. Golf.....	9,651
9. Swimming & Diving.....	7,171
10. Competitive Spirit Squads.....	4,879

PARTICIPANTS

1. Track and Field – Outdoor	469,177
2. Basketball	439,550
3. Volleyball	403,985
4. Softball – Fast Pitch.....	378,211
5. Soccer.....	356,116
6. Cross Country.....	201,968
7. Tennis.....	182,395
8. Swimming & Diving.....	158,419
9. Competitive Spirit Squads.....	123,644
10. Golf.....	70,872

Sports Changes Life of Texas Special-needs Player

BY CHRIS GOFF

The new head man stood proud, a presiding figure who had coached in three state championship games, now surveying the eighth-graders who might play football for him at Keller (Texas) High School.

Lyndon LaPlante also stood proud, ever the devotee of sport, helping out his classmates on the team in whatever way he could.

Then LaPlante saw Kevin Atkinson and made his approach.

"I want to be on the team," LaPlante said to the coach.

Just seven words, uttered by many a cocksure dynamo, but for a person with Down syndrome, seven words that meant everything.

"My dream was always to play football," said LaPlante, whose father, Don, competed on the high school gridiron. "I had football blood in me."

LaPlante would indeed be a Keller Indian, first as a freshman equipment manager, then as a sophomore assistant to the head coach, and finally as a player who suited up his junior and senior seasons.

"We were just happy he was involved," said Lyndon's mother, Genni.

He became more than involved. Lyndon, who turns 24 in November, is currently in his ninth year serving the Keller football

team, and participating in high school athletics has changed his life.

"My dream came true," Lyndon said. "I love to be an Indian."

A life-altering moment occurred in his senior season in 2005, when Lyndon made headlines by going into a game, taking a hand-off, and running almost the length of the field for a touchdown.

It was an event the LaPlantes couldn't foresee, but Lyndon came home from school one Wednesday grinning wide.

"I think I'm going to get in the game!" he said to his mother.

"I said, 'Why would you think that?'" Genni said. "And he told me they'd been practicing a play. We never expected him to get in a game, but Kevin is that kind of person."

Atkinson had phoned Richland (Texas) High School coach Gene Weir the previous Sunday afternoon, and together they scheduled Lyndon's entry for the first snap of the fourth quarter.

"At first, the play was for Lyndon to take the ball and run directly to me on the sideline," said Atkinson, not wanting to expose his "Secret Weapon" – as Lyndon was referred to in each week's game plan – to an accidental hit.

"My dream was always to play football."





“It changed my life. I have millions of best friends because of football.”

But then the stars aligned when a Richland punt was downed just shy of the goal line. Atkinson decided to send Lyndon all the way to the other end of the field.

“I want you to score,” Atkinson said.

Lyndon looked back with big, excited eyes, and then did exactly that.

“I did the ‘Vince Young’ arm into the end zone,” Lyndon said. “That made me feel good.”

“He was out of breath,” said Atkinson, who called the moment his most memorable in high school football. “But, he’s not light on personality. He really enjoyed the fans cheering.”

Atkinson estimated the run to be 99½ yards. Lyndon, now a quarterbacks coach, still feels the impact.

“Some athletes say, ‘There goes coach LaPlante,’” he said. “‘Is that you who ran it?’ I say, ‘Yes, that was me.’ As a person who has special needs, it was great to score a touchdown the way I did it.”

What made the run even more rewarding was that the handoff came from quarterback Cal Farley, Lyndon’s friend since first grade.

And, just as Lyndon bonded with Farley through football on the playground, Genni believes the fraternal atmosphere continues to be important to her son.

“He owns that fieldhouse,” she said, “and that’s a neat feeling for a child with special needs to have a place where he belongs.”

She thinks the touchdown run gave Lyndon confidence, and his coach agrees.

“It made him feel a part of the team,” Atkinson said. “Plus, anytime you have success, it gives you the confidence to reach out and do special things in all areas.”

Lyndon is doing that and more. Initially bothered by news coverage that identified him as having Down syndrome, Lyndon and Genni are now scheduled to become Global Messengers for the Special Olympics.

“He does love to speak,” Genni said, “and he’ll tell them to dream big.”

Based on his experience, Lyndon encourages high school students to get involved in athletics.

“Do it because they love the sport,” he said. “It changed my life. I have millions of best friends because of football.”

Genni takes her own lesson from Lyndon’s time on the high school gridiron.

“The message is: Look what happens when one coach or one teacher believes in one kid,” she said.

Atkinson said going the extra mile paid off for everyone.

“Football teaches you about life,” Atkinson said. “People feel wanted, but Lyndon really taught us a lot, too.”

Chris Goff is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a junior at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in journalism (news editorial) and minoring in history.

National Federation of State High School Associations



National High School Activities Week

October 10-16, 2010



National Federation of State
High School Associations

www.nfhs.org

National Be A Sport Day	October 10
National Fine Arts Activities Day	October 11
National Officials Day	October 12
National Youth Health Awareness Day	October 13
National Coaches/Sponsors/Advisors Day	October 14
National Fan Appreciation Day	October 15
National Community Service/Participation Day	October 16

TOP HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCES

Texas Wide Receiver Scores Five Touchdowns Four Different Ways

BY LAUREN FELLMETH



➔ **C.J. McElroy**, senior wide receiver for the **Clear Creek High School** football team in League City, Texas, has been an instrumental player in the Wildcats football program since his freshman year.

McElroy's final season began exceptionally as well. In the opening game of the season August 28 against Pasadena (Texas) Memorial, McElroy accounted for five touchdowns in four different ways. Remarkably, he only played the first half and two snaps of the second.

Head coach Darrell Warden said, "C.J. is 100 percent all the time. He brings so much confidence and makes big plays that ignite the whole team."

McElroy carried the ball five times for 149 yards and two scores. He also caught four passes for 85 yards and a touchdown, threw a 74-yard touchdown pass and had a 97-yard kick-off return for another score. Altogether, McElroy accounted for 388 total yards in the game.

In a conversation before the game, McElroy told Warden that his plan was to score six touchdowns against Pasadena Memorial. Although McElroy was one short of his goal, Warden had no

doubt that McElroy could have accomplished his goal of six by the end of the game. Clear Creek defeated Pasadena Memorial, 49-14.

McElroy spent his first year at Clear Creek leading the freshman football team before earning a starting position as wide receiver during his sophomore season. McElroy has earned numerous awards throughout high school, including first-team all-district and first-team all-county wide receiver.

McElroy is also a talented baseball center fielder for the Wildcats, with a .385 batting average last season, and has been a regional track and field qualifier in the long jump and relays.

"Dynamic," answered Warden when asked to describe McElroy in one word. "Athletically and as a person. He is the highest-character kid that I've ever coached. He sets good examples and makes good decisions."

McElroy has committed to playing football and baseball at the University of Houston next fall. 📍

Lauren Fellmeth is a fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a recent graduate of Elon (North Carolina) University with a bachelor of arts in corporate communications and Spanish.

Athletic Directors: How to Keep the Principal's Plate Clean

BY KEVIN HORRIGAN

A very wise principal once said that if he had a good secretary, a good custodial/maintenance person and a good athletic director, his life would be easy. With these three individuals in place, the school year would go smoothly and he would be able to remain a principal for a long time.

In the same vein, if you insert a good principal into the formula and keep the other two, for the most part the same would be true for the majority of athletic directors.

Hopefully, the athletic administrator has the good fortune to work for a principal who understands the role athletics plays in a school setting, is supportive of him or her on a daily basis, and is someone the athletic director can trust and respect.

Following are some ideas for a school's athletic director to develop a strong relationship with the principal and to keep as much off of the principal's plate as possible.

In this day and age, everyone in education is busy. Certainly the athletic director has a busy job on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. Consider what the athletic director has to deal with and compound it times every other group and activity in the school. Add in curriculum, student discipline, a superintendent, a school



board, state and national education departments, and parents and more parents, and you get an idea of what the principal is dealing with on a daily basis. Take notice that this list does not even include one's own family.

As with most people, principals love the positives and hate the negatives. The athletic director should involve the principal in as many of the good things going on in the athletic program as possible. Let the principal congratulate the coaches and players, let them be interviewed, let them hand out the awards.

No one likes to deal with the negatives that arise in a job and principals are no different. The athletic director should try to keep as many negatives from reaching the principal's plate as possible.

As President Harry S. Truman used to say, "The buck stops here." If a principal has to take time from his or her busy day to solve athletic department problems, pretty soon the principal will start to regret seeing the athletic director and will not feel good about attending athletic events. Eventually, the principal may get to the point of wondering why he or she hired the athletic director!

A better situation is for the principal to look forward to visiting with the athletic director. How are the teams doing? How are the coaches holding up? Did we win last night? Are we ranked? Is there anything you need? These are much better questions to have your principal asking on a daily basis.

The school's principal wants basically what the athletic director wants out of his or her coaches – that is, not to be blindsided and for things to run smoothly and efficiently. Athletic directors tell their coaches that no matter how bad something is, they would rather hear it from them first than from someone else. The principal is the same way.

No matter how hard one tries, there are going to be those days when things will go wrong. The principal should not be blindsided and first hear the negative news from someone other than the athletic director. And that "someone" should definitely not be the

media. One of the worst things that can happen is for a reporter to ask a school's principal for a quote on something about which he or she knows absolutely nothing.

The athletic director wants his or her principal to be supportive of all individuals in the department. In order for that to happen, the athletic director must be open and honest with the principal.

Many times, the athletic director will prepare the principal for an expected situation, such as a problem with a parent, only to discover nothing ever developed. However, by informing the principal that it might happen, a level of trust was developed.

In those times that a problem does make it to the principal's plate, he or she will be appreciative of the heads-up from the athletic director and that he or she had enough time to prepare an appropriate response to the situation.

In America, most people like a full plate of food; however, when dealing with athletics, whatever the athletic director can keep off of the principal's plate is a good thing indeed. ☉

Kevin Horrigan has spent more than three decades as a teacher, coach and athletic director in Indiana. Since 2002, he has been athletic director at Greenfield (Indiana) Central High School.

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Anderson, Indiana, Schools Unite to Win State Band Title

BY LAUREN FELLMETH



Cory McClain, member of the Anderson High School Marching Highlanders.



The 2009 Anderson High School Marching Highlanders perform at the Indiana State Fair Band competition.

Despite differences and rivalries in the past, the consolidation of crosstown Anderson (Indiana) and Highland High Schools produced a surprisingly harmonious result. Composed of 115 total members, the Anderson High School Marching Band placed first in the Indiana State Fair Band Day competition August 6 at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in Indianapolis.

The Indiana State Fair Band Day competition is the culmination of a series of contests among high school marching bands that occur during the summer. Forty-nine total schools competed and were graded on a 100-point scale by six judges. Two judges graded the musical performance, two examined the visual aspects and two graded the “general, overall effect” of the band’s presence.

Due to budget cuts and declining enrollment in the Anderson Community School District, Highland High School closed at the end of the 2009-10 school year. The recent merging of the Anderson

and Highland high school band programs was one of the district’s first consolidation efforts. Despite some opposition to the recent union of the two schools, it seems that the new, united high school was always destined for musical greatness.

Among the three high schools of Anderson, Highland and Madison Heights, the city of Anderson has continually produced winning band programs during the past 50 years. In recent years, Highland High School won the state competition in 2005, 2007 and 2009. Anderson High School Band Director Douglas Fletcher has won state titles more times than any other director and is the only one to win the title at three different schools, in three different decades. With the closing of Madison Heights in 1991 and the recent merging of Anderson and Highland, these changes have forced three musical powerhouses to unite in one high school.

“I didn’t know what to expect,” Fletcher said. “But, I had a

pretty good feeling that we were going to do well. It was nice to win. The kids were really excited.”

This recent title indicates a strong beginning for the recently merged high schools. With the two schools coming together, there was the potential for animosity. When Fletcher accepted his new responsibility of band director at Anderson in early May, he recognized the opportunity for possible conflict. “But we didn’t have any trouble and the kids really came together,” Fletcher said. “Winning the competition speaks for itself. Everyone cooperated and complemented each other. It all came together quite well.”

One of the compromises in the merging of the two bands was its new name. The Anderson High School Marching Highlanders became the name around the time that Fletcher became the new band director because he needed to make some quick decisions about uniforms to accommodate more band members. Because of its Scottish connotation in years past, the Highland marching band had always worn kilts. Along those same lines, the Anderson High School marching band formerly was known as the Marching Indians.

Since Highland originally had a larger band and Fletcher thought that Marching Highlanders in kilts seemed more appropriate than Marching Indians in kilts, the new name stuck. “Why

not blend it? It’s a little bit of both schools,” Fletcher said. Histories, rivalries and mascots aside, the new Marching Highlanders became an example of how the two schools could come together.

Anderson’s winning band program was called “The Six Pillars of Character,” which was taken from the largest character education program in the country, “Character Counts.” The six pillars of character include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Because of the current situation in the Anderson Community School District, it was key for the band to exhibit all six of these pillars, as well as demonstrate that the formerly rival band members were able to play together harmoniously.

“I felt like I had more to teach this summer than just a traditional marching band show. I wanted to teach a concept,” Fletcher said. “The concept being that we all had to stand up with great character and support one another. That was one of the reasons we picked the show theme.” No matter their previous school affiliations, the Marching Highlanders displayed these six pillars and joined together amicably for the 2010 Indiana State Fair Band Day victory. ☉

Lauren Fellmeth is a fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a recent graduate of Elon (North Carolina) University with a bachelor of arts in corporate communications and Spanish.

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Federal Court Rules on Cheerleading as a Sport for Title IX Proportionality

BY LEE GREEN

Biediger v. Quinnipiac University

On July 21, 2010, in a decision with implications for high school sports programs, a U.S. District Court judge in Connecticut ruled that members of Quinnipiac University's competitive cheerleading squad cannot be counted as varsity athletes for purposes of the school's compliance with Title IX.

In March 2009, Quinnipiac administrators announced that, beginning with the 2009-10 academic year, as a cost-cutting measure designed to address budget shortfalls resulting from the current economic downturn, the school would eliminate three sports: the men's golf team, the men's outdoor track team, and the women's volleyball team. The volleyball squad was to be replaced with a competitive cheerleading squad. Represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, five members of the volleyball team and its coach

filed a federal lawsuit arguing that the school's plan violated Title IX and seeking reinstatement of the volleyball program.

In May 2009, a preliminary injunction was issued delaying implementation of Quinnipiac's plan pending a full trial on the merits of the university's actions and the case was certified as a class action on behalf of "all present, prospective and future female students at Quinnipiac University who are harmed by and want to end Quinnipiac University's sex discrimination in athletics."

A bench trial was held from June 21 to June 25, 2010, at which testimony was heard from school administrators, coaches, student-athletes and expert witnesses. In its July 2010 written decision, the court found that Quinnipiac, in its attempt to comply with Title IX's "substantial proportionality" option, had engaged in roster manipulation by artificially deflating the size of its men's rosters and ar-



Quinnipiac University's volleyball team photo provided by John Hassett, Quinnipiac Bobcats.com.

tificially inflating the size of its women's rosters. The court also held that members of the competitive cheer squad could not be counted as varsity athletes because the squad was not operated in a manner that would qualify it as a legitimate varsity sport (read the full-text decision at <http://courtweb.pamd.uscourts.gov/courtwebsearch/ctxc/KX330R32.pdf>).

Relying on the legal standards set forth in a 2008 pronouncement from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) for determining when an activity will be considered to be a sport under Title IX, the court's 95-page decision included a detailed analysis whether competition was the primary objective of Quinnipiac's competitive cheer squad; whether the team operated under the umbrella of a governing organization; whether consistent rules and scoring systems were used for all competitions; whether the squad competed against appropriate levels of competition; and whether the team was structured and operated similarly to all other varsity sports at the university (for more information on the OCR's criteria for a sport, see the May 2010 *High School Today* article *Cheerleading as a Sport for Title IX Proportionality* at www.nfhs.org).

The court acknowledged that Quinnipiac and seven other schools had founded a governing body, the National Competitive Stunt and Tumbling Association, but concluded that inconsistency of competition and scoring systems doomed Quinnipiac's compliance with the standards necessary for classification of its competitive cheer squad as a sport. In the 10 events in which the team competed, five different scoring systems were used. Furthermore, the squad's competition included a mixture of college competitive cheer teams, college sideline cheer squads, all-star teams with no school affiliation and high school cheer squads.

In addition to its conclusions regarding Quinnipiac's competitive cheer team, the court took issue with the university's requirement that all of its female cross country runners also compete on both the indoor and outdoor track teams, a mandate that did not apply to male cross country participants. The school thus triple-counted all of its female cross country athletes, thereby skewing its female participation ratios for purposes of computing substantial proportionality. Essentially, the court decided that Quinnipiac had attempted to game the system in a form-over-substance way to demonstrate compliance with Title IX.

The ruling was highly fact-specific and it is important to note that the court did not decree that competitive cheer squad members could never be counted toward Title IX compliance. Instead, the court's analysis was limited to evaluating whether the structure and administration of Quinnipiac's competitive cheer program satisfied the standards for an activity to be considered a sport under Title IX.

In his written decision, U.S. District Court Judge Stefan R. Underhill stated that, "in reaching my conclusion, I do not mean to be-

little competitive cheer as an athletic endeavor. Competitive cheer-leading is a difficult, physical task that requires strength, agility and grace. I have little doubt that at some point in the near future – once competitive cheer is better organized and defined, and surely in the event that the NCAA recognizes the activity as an emerging sport – competitive cheer will be acknowledged as a bona fide sporting activity by academic institutions, the public and the law."

On August 11, 2010, Quinnipiac submitted a plan to the federal court to reinstate its women's volleyball team, along with adding women's golf and rugby teams to provide more participation opportunities for female students. The university also plans to keep its competitive cheer squad and modify the structure of the program to satisfy the OCR's criteria for a varsity sport. As of the deadline for publication of this issue of *High School Today*, the federal court had not yet acted to approve or reject the school's proposal.

Implications for High Schools

After the Quinnipiac decision was announced, Rhonda Blanford-Green, associate commissioner of the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA), consulted with the OCR regarding the impact of the case on interscholastic competitive spirit teams, specifically those in Colorado where spirit is a highly structured, state championship-level sport that is administered under the umbrella of a governing organization (the CHSAA and its Spirit Committee) using uniform rules and scoring systems and operating in the same fashion as any other varsity sport in the state.

Blanford-Green, who is the chairperson of the CHSAA Equity Committee and oversees the CHSAA Spirit Program, was advised by the OCR that it "would evaluate high school competitive spirit programs on a case-by-case basis using the criteria set forth in the agency's 2008 'Dear Colleague' letter titled *Athletic Activities Counted for Title IX Compliance* and that it is OCR's policy to encourage compliance with Title IX regulations in a flexible manner that expands, rather than limits, student athletic opportunities." (The full text of the 2008 pronouncement is available on the OCR's Web site at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters.)

Although the OCR has not yet issued a determination letter concluding that the spirit team at any specific one or more of the 338 public and private CHSAA-member high schools does in fact satisfy the criteria to be deemed a varsity sports team under Title IX, the structure of the CHSAA Spirit Program may provide a model for state associations seeking to operate competitive spirit programs that satisfy the criteria set forth in the 2008 OCR letter. According to Blanford-Green, "Our goal at the CHSAA is to shape the sport of competitive spirit here in Colorado so that it is aligned with the OCR's criteria and standards for a varsity sport. Our spirit handbook establishes a structure for the operation of our state championship-level spirit program that is equivalent to the structure of other varsity sports sanctioned by the CHSAA."



Cheerleader photo provided by Paynter Pics, Arizona Interscholastic Association.

Indeed, the 76-page CHSAA Spirit Bulletin sets forth in detail every aspect of the spirit season, roster sizes, tryouts, facilities requirements, uniform scoring systems, certification processes for coaches, safety and sports medicine issues, sportsmanship mandates, state tournament information, and eligibility requirements (read the full-text of the handbook at www.chsaa.org/sports/spirit/spirit.asp).

For instance, the Spirit Bulletin section on tryouts states that the athletes constituting a competitive spirit team must be chosen, as they are for every other varsity sport, by the coach and not a panel of third-parties as has often been the case historically in the non-sport activity of sideline and performance teams. The tryout rules specifically state “the football coach doesn’t have a panel to choose his quarterback ... you have to break the old mentality that you and your staff cannot be trusted to pick your squad ... it is important that you [the spirit coach] conduct your tryouts.”

As Blanford-Green emphasizes, “Our mission with the CHSAA spirit program is not, in any way, to attempt to circumvent the intended purposes of Title IX, but rather to offer a meaningful, highly competitive sports activity consistent in nature and structure to

other varsity sports programs that will provide young women with additional, legitimate, sports participation opportunities.”

“It is also important to note,” Blanford-Green says, “that there is a significant difference between considering an activity to be a sport and satisfying OCR guidelines for a sport. CHSAA members, and schools across the country, may choose to maintain sideline spirit programs that serve as a valuable extracurricular activity for students but which do not satisfy the OCR’s criteria for a sport. Others, however, may choose to operate their programs in a manner consistent with OCR standards so that when, as the judge stated in the Quinnipiac decision, at some point in the near future competitive spirit is acknowledged as a bona fide sporting activity, schools may be allowed to count participants in such programs towards Title IX compliance.” ☉

Lee Green is an attorney and a professor at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, where he teaches courses in sports law, business law and constitutional law. He is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee. He may be contacted at Lee.Green@BakerU.Edu.

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Cutting Activity Programs Only Hurts Students

BY PAULA FISHER

Throughout the nation, school districts are experiencing budget shortfalls. Invariably, they must find ways to slash programs and trim expenses or face unpopular tax increases. As education leaders examine potential cuts, one inclination is to focus on extracurricular activity programs, especially in the areas of academics and the fine arts. Although an easy choice, such a decision only hurts students.

During the 1990s, extensive research concluded that participation in high school activity programs directly related to a student's success in school. In fact, the National Center for Education Statistics released a report in June 1995, stating, "... it is clear that participation and success are strongly associated as evidenced by participants' better attendance, higher levels of achievement and aspirations to higher levels of education."

sap, working for the College Entrance Examination Board, released their conclusions. "Our study provides compelling evidence from the SAT, a national high-stakes test, that participation in extracurricular activities provides all students – including students from disadvantaged backgrounds, minorities and those with otherwise less-than-distinguished academic achievements in high school – a measurable and meaningful gain in their college admissions test scores." Involvement in activities appears to be one crucial way to develop the reasoning and higher-level thinking skills measured by tests like the SAT.

In an eight-year longitudinal study in 2003, Joseph Mahoney, Yale University, and Beverley Cairns and Thomas Farmer, University of North Carolina, reported, "There was a significant reciprocal association between consistent extracurricular activity participation

"Involvement in activities appears to be one crucial way to develop the reasoning and higher-level thinking skills measured by tests like the SAT."

In a similar finding in 1995, James O'Dea, Drake University, studied 424 students at Valley High School in West Des Moines, Iowa. The results showed that "there is a significant difference between the grade-point averages of those involved in extracurricular activities and those not involved in extracurricular activities."

We have learned that extracurricular school activities (ESAs) build learning skills and help students prepare for the future. They integrate neurological functions, which aid performance in other subject areas. Anecdotes from teachers, parents and students tell us that ESAs encourage logical thinking and organizational competence. In short, individuals develop the ability to multitask. By advancing expertise in effective communication and the ability to collaborate with others, ESAs help create well-rounded scholars.

Even stronger supporting evidence about the value of ESAs was published more recently. In 2005, Howard Everson and Roger Mill-

and the development of interpersonal competence ... These skills, are in turn, associated with high educational status at young adulthood." The authors explained that the confidence gained from activity participation helped students set high goals for the future and to advance to postsecondary education.

Besides improving scholastic performance, educators must find ways to prevent teens from dropping out of school and devise techniques to close the substantial gap in academic outcomes between socioeconomically advantaged and disadvantaged students.

H.W. Marsh and S. Kleitman presented a persuasive case for ESAs in the *Harvard Education Review* in 2002, explaining, "ESAs actually reduce the inequality gap ... the benefits tend to be larger, certainly not smaller, for more disadvantaged students."

Joseph Mahoney and Robert Cairns, conducting research at the University of North Carolina in 1997, found that involvement in ex-

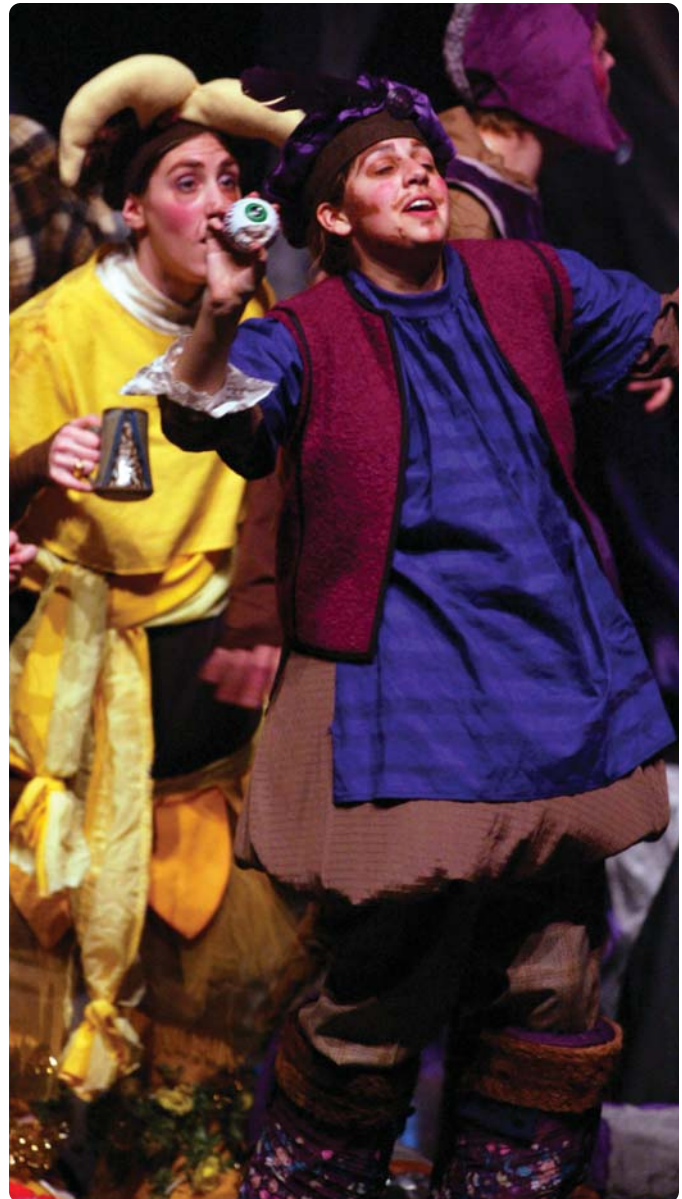


Photo provided by 20/20 Photographic, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

traccurrucular activities keeps at-risk students in school. Their study indicated, "... engagement in school extracurrucular activities is linked to decreasing rates of early school dropout in both boys and girls. The outcome is observed primarily among students who were at highest risk for dropout."

The reasons are evident why ESAs encourage at-risk students. They help develop a positive emotional response to learning by promoting access to a variety of human insights and enriching the learning environment. Because ESAs improve a student's overall academic performance, socioeconomically disadvantaged teens are more likely to find school a positive place to be; therefore, they stay involved in the educational process. Most of all, ESAs challenge individuals to explore – creating curious, lifelong learners. Students actually desire to continue their education.

The argument is made; the evidence is clear. ESAs, especially

academic competition and the fine arts, prepare students for college and the workplace. Yes, cutting extracurrucular activities might be a simple approach to balancing a budget, but it is certainly the wrong one. It eliminates improved test scores, higher academic achievement and dropout reduction. As educators, we are in the business of finding the best ways to teach our students. We need to think carefully before we cut extracurrucular activities from our budget so that we do not throw the baby out with the bath water.

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Paula Fisher presently serves as the Academic Grant Coordinator for the Texas University Interscholastic League. She has been a high school administrator, department chairman, academic coordinator, and a speech, debate and English teacher. In 1989, she authored the national high school debate topic and in 1990, was named the National Outstanding Speech Educator by the NFHS Speech, Debate and Theatre Association.

Facebook: Communication Tool for Schools

BY PATRICK BURKE

Those who work in high schools need to accept that Facebook and other social networking Web sites (MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter) are omnipresent and here to stay in some format. This breed of technological application was initially used primarily by young adult “digital natives” as they boldly employed the technology to meet their primary developmental needs – hence the word “social” being placed appropriately before the word “network.”

Much like once-reluctant parents who discovered that text-messaging is a highly effective way to communicate with their teen and young adult children, high school teachers, advisors, coaches and school leaders would be well-served to recognize that Facebook – for all its trivialities – can help improve school communities.

Social network sites can be used to create and maintain connections, broaden our learning community, and support students’ activities and academics. Schools can look to social networking as an additional way to assist in students’ participation in their schools’ governance, to help students feel valued by adults in the community, and to support the social emotional development of their students. Ultimately, these tools could help high schools as they strive to meet their broad mission.

First of all, even though it was “founded by the young,” it is acceptable, and increasingly common, for adults to maintain a presence – called a Profile – on Facebook. Many adults are enjoying the social network in exactly the same manner as their younger counterparts – connecting with family and friends, sharing photos and stories, and joining groups based on interest or affiliation.

In addition, an adult presence in this “virtual community” can be akin to the difference between the unsupervised Saturday party and the supervised, presumably more appropriate event. Sometimes, the simple presence of adults encourages and supports a more healthy environment for youth.

Many parents have allowed their children to use Facebook with



the caveat that their child grants them access as a member of their “friend network.” While parent opinions will differ on this matter, Internet safety experts suggest strongly that this kind of supervision is certainly warranted.

It is important to recognize that, true to the medium’s name, much of what happens on Facebook is in fact social.

Thus, before using Facebook for any purpose related to school, employees must be hyper-aware of possible issues regarding actual or perceived adult-student boundary issues. School employees should make sure local or school district appropriate-use technology policies support use of Facebook.

The primary way Facebook members engage in direct communication and information-sharing is via what’s known as “friending.” As much as school employees value meaningful relationships with students, the term “friend” does not describe an appropriate adult-student relationship. School employees with Facebook accounts are best served to avoid “friending” current students.

There are still, however, a number of ways schools and prudent school employees can use other features of Facebook to help increase communication and send appropriate educational messages out into the online world. And in addition to being the primary mode of communication by most young people, Facebook is free.

Groups

Facebook allows members to create and manage what are called Group pages. Establishing a Group page allows Facebook members to communicate with others without having them listed as “friends.” Groups can be available to the general public, closed (invitation only) or secret (invitation only and only members may see content). Group pages are rapidly becoming the primary means for institutions to communicate and maintain connections with young alumni. If you are a school employee, it is likely there are already groups connected to your school in existence. You can use

Google or another search engine to locate and visit Facebook groups even without a Facebook membership.

Schools can use public Group pages to promote school unity as well as to broaden their learning network to include people who do not attend or work at the school. Most school Web sites are the avenue for schools to promote activities and distribute information, which could be enough if the students visit the pages with any regularity.

Facebook groups can help manage and promote school activities and public events. All official promotions should link to school Web pages for more information. If your school has a solid Web page, Facebook can simply become a billboard that leads people down the road to your school's Web page.

While individual schools need to decide if they want to create the institution's primary Facebook presence, many have discovered that it is a good idea because the school can control the privacy settings and content. Facebook can improve and enhance communication between members of a school group, allowing the director/advisor to send reminders, changes schedules, etc., with just one entry, as opposed to multiple phone calls or e-mails.

Fan pages

Students and school community members can become "fans" of a specific team school or event. Fan pages can be created for short-term or long-term opportunities and not only communicate information prior to a specific game or team's season, but can col-

lect and retain commentary about the team or event. Fan pages can also provide members the chance to cheer for their students, providing more direct and meaningful support for their efforts.

Event pages

Specific events can be publicized via Facebook. Concerts, award nights, parent nights, open houses, fundraising events, any school or community event where the more information the public can access, the more likely they will participate and support that event. Linked from a school's Web site, Event pages can be easily updated as circumstances warrant and contain a week's or month's worth of upcoming items worthy of the school community's support.

While there are certainly Facebook pages that are just for fun – some making fun of an event, time or place – there are thousands of high schools that maintain pages to communicate with their students, parents, alumni and faculty on a regular basis. Many provide not only a way for the school to announce events and share information, but contain feedback from members – feedback that can lead to improvements in school policy, become a gathering of public opinion, or provide a way for issues to be discussed and changes considered without the need for a formal meeting where few might attend. Facebook's broad use allows for more interaction by more people within a shorter amount of time and little effort. Social networking that makes a difference. ☉

Patrick Burke is principal of South Burlington (Vermont) High School.



Superintendents Play Key Role in Administration of Activity Programs

BY LAUREN FELLMETH

Superintendents of school districts across the nation have enormous responsibilities – whether they direct a one high school district or oversee a large district with multiple high schools.

There are budgets to be planned, state and federal guidelines to be implemented, curriculum to be approved, personnel issues to handle and a school board to direct.

So, is there any time left for involvement in the school district's athletic and fine arts activities programs? With principals and athletic directors in place in the district's various schools, what role does the superintendent play in athletics, speech, debate and music?

"In various levels of organizational design, there are times where you have direct responsibility and other times where you have an oversight role," said Dr. Mike Copper, former superintendent of Lawrence Township (Indiana) School District.

Decisions are made by principals and athletic directors in cases when a superintendent cannot have a direct role in the daily decision-making. Instead, superintendents rely on and trust their principals, athletic directors, teachers and coaches to set good examples and remain strong leaders in the school district. For example, it is not the typical function of the superintendent to hire and fire coaches.

"Superintendents review the process. They make sure the forms and the hiring process are fair," Copper said.

However, there are circumstances that require direct superintendent involvement, such as policy and practice issues involving co-curricular activities. Also, if there are potential violations in the school district, it becomes the responsibility of the superintendent to fully investigate any wrongdoing.

Keith Scharnhorst, who is currently in his seventh year as superintendent of Grandview (Texas) Independent School District, said, "When a decision or event has the great potential to impact the entire district, they must call on me."

Constant communication is also a must. Scharnhorst claimed that his weekly meetings with his athletic director allow him to remain strongly connected to the athletic program, and he is "aware of how the schools are doing on a week-to-week basis."

Superintendents are responsible for monitoring the decisions made by athletic directors and principals, as well as keeping the right people notified of impending changes or changes in programs and policies, according to Dr. Chester Juroska, the current superintendent of Alvarado (Texas) Independent School District.

Even though superintendents may not make daily decisions regarding individual schools in the district, one very crucial responsibility that resides with the superintendent is the school district's budget. After reviewing all budget requests, the superintendent is responsible for re-evaluating the list of "needs" versus "wants" in a district. Principals have the opportunity to sit down and speak in depth with the superintendent about the details of their school budget.

"Finances in the district are managed according to what we think is going to have the greatest success," Scharnhorst said. "If we are going to do it, and give money to a program, we need to try to be successful."

Dr. Wayne Rotan, current superintendent of Glen Rose (Texas) Independent School District, said the budget for co-curricular activities is done on a per-student basis. "If we notice an increase in student participation in a particular activity, we are going to try to allocate more money for that activity," Rotan said.

"It helps to have a supportive school board. I have an extremely supportive board that helps me to be successful," said Juroska, who has 23 years of experiences as a superintendent. In order for a school district to be successful, superintendents also should have a supportive school board to rely on and trust. Superintendents show support for co-curricular activities by committing to these programs in the school district's budget and also by attending different events, programs and functions.



Being a superintendent is a full-time, around-the-clock job. Despite those demands, many superintendents attend as many athletic events, music programs, shows and co-curricular activities as possible. On any given day, a superintendent might appear at a handful of different events within the school district. "I attend activities to show support for kids and parents. I also will watch practices and attend fundraisers," Juroska said.

"It is important for me to be there. I like going. I need to go. I want to make sure that [the students] know that I support them in their successes and endeavors and that I support the staff as well," Scharnhorst asserted.

Juroska mentioned the evolution of the superintendent's role in attending co-curricular activities. "At first, people were surprised to see the superintendent at a practice or event; now it has become an expectation because it is my practice."

"It is very important to be there, and has become part of our family lifestyle to attend events. I want to be behind the students," Rotan said. "It also shows that there is stronger communication among parents and community members."

Regardless of the school district, most all superintendents agree that co-curricular activities have an increasing importance in the

"I want to make sure that [the students] know that I support them in their successes and endeavors and that I support the staff as well."

lives of students. "Businesses are telling more educators that they want more kids who are prepared for college, can manage their time, and who are decision-makers," Copper said.

"Activities are so important because without these programs, many students would not have the motivation to attend school or do well at all," Juroska added.

Scharnhorst said that co-curricular activities are a largely positive aspect of the education system because of the experiences and opportunities that they provide to students. "Kids learn loyalty, commitment, discipline, the balance of timelines and schedules, and ultimately, they may also learn to overcome adversity at some point. Those are real life skills."

The superintendent roles in a district's co-curricular offerings are more extensive than analyzing budgets. Even though principals and athletic directors help make daily decisions, the superintendent has a larger role in the eyes of students. They are the fundamental fans of the school districts and work hard to continually support not only the co-curricular activities themselves, but also the students who participate in them. ●

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Team-building Activities Key to Successful Teams

BY DON SHOWALTER



Team building is extremely important to the development of a successful team. In my 36 years of coaching, team building and chemistry have been as important – if not more so – than any of the coaching strategy or X's and O's that take up so much time and energy.

There are several characteristics of championship teams and team building that coaches in any sport should consider.

- All members of a team including coaching staff, players and managers must have a common goal – conference champion, district champion, state champion – and all other goals will revolve around this primary goal.
- Commitment is probably the single-most important factor

that separates championship teams from mediocre teams.

- Championship teams are made of individuals who willingly take pride in playing specific roles on the team.
- Clear communication between coaches and players in an open, honest manner is essential for success on a team.
- Conflict will happen on a team. The good teams have the ability to keep conflict under control and not let conflict interfere with the goal.
- Players on championship teams like and respect each other. Most successful teams spend a great deal of time socializing together outside of practice or game times.

- Coaching is essential to championship teams – it takes a good coach to create an environment that allows a team to reach its fullest potential.



Photo provided by 2020 Photographic, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

Team-building challenges and games allow players to experience being on a successful team outside of the playing arena. These activities will help the coach learn a lot about the team, such as who the leaders are, how the players communicate and interact under pressure, and how they handle obstacles and adversity. The activities are not necessarily the key, but the processing of the team concepts generated by the activities and games.

1. At the end of practice, form a communication circle. Players stand in a circle holding hands. One player will turn to the player on his left to start the communication and tell that player what he has done well in practice that day. The players go around the circle in this manner, each telling the player to his left what he has done well in practice. Players look each other in the eyes and talk loud and clear so all can hear the comments. The coach can change the communication topic each day – another topic may be to say what the team needs to do to improve or what they need to do themselves to get better.

2. The human knot is a team-building challenge. You will need an even number of players with at least six players forming a small circle. First, everyone raises their right hand and joins hands with the player across from them. They then raise their left hand and join hands with a different player. This should result in a tangled mess of arms in the middle of the circle – the human knot. The group's challenge is to untangle themselves while still hanging on to each other's hands forming one circle again or two smaller interconnected circles like two rings joined together. Discussion takes place by asking players how the activity relates to the team and what they needed to do to successfully complete the challenge.

3. Place a 9-foot by 12-foot tarp on the floor. All players stand on the tarp. The job is to turn the tarp over without the players going off the tarp. The players end up standing on the opposite side of the tarp. This will be interesting to see your leaders and how they attack this activity. Discussion follows on how teamwork was needed to accomplish the activity and how it relates to your team.
4. Divide your team into two lines. This will be a competition between the two teams. A balloon will be placed between each player in line at chest level and the object will be to get from the starting line to the finish line with the balloons between each player. Players may not use hands to make the balloon stay between each player. By moving together, the team will work to cross the finish line with the balloons between each player. The competition is more difficult if the lines have to "snake" their way around objects rather than go a straight line from start to finish. If a balloon falls to the floor, the entire line of players must go back to the start and try again. Discussion will follow as to what each team did to try and keep the balloons between each other. Leadership and roles can be discussed with this activity.



Photo provided by www.alwaysincentives.com.

Team building must take place the entire season – not just at the beginning of the year – in order for the team members to have confidence in each other and learn the true value of teamwork, leadership and roles. There are many other activities that you can do as a coach and many of these may seem "elementary" to your players. However, these activities will be remembered far longer than some of the contests. ☉

Don Showalter is the athletic director and boys basketball coach at Mid-Prairie High School in Wellman, Iowa, a dual position he has held for the past 24 years. Showalter is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee and just recently rejoined the Publications Committee of the NFHS Coaches' Quarterly. He previously served 12 years on the committee, including seven years as chair.

Graduation Requirement: 100 Hours of Community Service

BY DR. DARRELL G. FLOYD

One of the objectives in the Stephenville (Texas) Independent School District's five-year Strategic Plan proposes that by 2014, 100 percent of all students will participate in some form of community service annually. This objective goes hand-in-hand with two of the plan's strategies – community involvement and character education – as well as two of the plan's beliefs – social interaction and contributions to society.

The community involvement strategy states that the district will energize and integrate all aspects of its diverse community into full support and implementation of the mission and objectives. The character education strategy states that the district will develop and reinforce the character of each student with emphasis on a solid values-based system that respects the district's tradition of excellence.

These strategies fold nicely into the community's beliefs that 1) social interaction is critical to developing positive relationships, and 2) every person has the responsibility to positively contribute to society.

In an effort to do its part in accomplishing these lofty goals, Stephenville High School has implemented the Texas Scholars Program. This program recognizes students at commencement each year who have achieved both academic excellence and earned at least 100 hours of community service during their high school career. The requirements for this very special recognition are as follows:

Academic Requirements

- Completion of the Texas Recommended or Distinguished High School Graduation Plans (more rigorous academic standards), and
- Earning an additional fine arts or technology credit.

Community Service Requirements

Community requirements are based on the belief that community service is an important part of learning to be a good citizen and learning to positively contribute to one's community. General guidelines are:



Stephenville (Texas) High School Principal Travis Stilwell (podium) and Dr. Darrell Floyd (left) at 2010 graduation ceremonies.



Brandon Hall participates in the community service blood drive last year.

- A total of 100 hours of community service are to be completed by April 1 of the student's graduating year. Students are encouraged to earn at least 25 hours per academic year toward their goal of 100, but students may earn all 100 hours in fewer than four years.
- Students are encouraged to turn in appropriate, verifiable documentation of earned hours as soon as they are completed. All community-service hours must be approved by the SHS Texas Scholars Board.
- A maximum of eight volunteer hours per day may be earned.
- A maximum of 40 hours of the required 100 may be earned through school-related volunteerism.
- Nonprofit agencies (such as 501c3s) are examples of recommended sources for community service.
- It is the responsibility of the student to keep up with his/her hours, turn them in for verification, and keep a copy of all earned hours. These copies are then of benefit to the student as an aid in completion of their college applications.
- And finally, no compensation may be received for earned community service.

Stephenville High School, Stephenville ISD and the surrounding community believe that having a sense of community awareness through service, volunteerism and helping one's fellow man will have lasting effects and will set the stage for students becoming better, more productive citizens in the future.

This program has taken on a life of its own and has instilled a sense of pride among students who have never before considered performing community service. Students are now able to help those in the community who need assistance while also earning special recognition at graduation time. Each Stephenville High School Texas Scholar proudly wears a gold medallion at commencement, and their names are appropriately denoted in the program with special recognition of their 100 hours of community service.

To learn more about this program, please visit www.sville.us, click on the campus of Stephenville High School, then click on Texas Scholars and Community Service. ●

Dr. Darrell G. Floyd is the Stephenville ISD Superintendent of Schools in Stephenville, Texas. He may be reached at: darrell.floyd@sville.us or by phone at (254) 552-6517. Floyd is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee.

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NFHS Holds Press Conference to Launch Concussion Education Program

BY LAUREN FELLMETH

At an August 25 press conference at Howe High School in Indianapolis, Indiana, the NFHS publicly announced its new concussion education program and emphasized the importance of minimizing risk for the 7.6 million students who participate in high school sports across the country.

Taking a lead in concussion awareness, the NFHS has created a free online course titled **Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know** and strongly encourages all coaches, parents, players and officials to participate. The 20-minute course is intended to emphasize how to recognize and respond to concussions.



NFHS Executive Director Bob Gardner at August 25 press conference.

In addition to educating course participants about the signs, symptoms and problems associated with concussions, the course explains the proper protocol as well as the responsibility of coaches, parents, officials and student-athletes when a concussion occurs. Other printable resources are available, such as a parent's guide to concussions, a coach's guide, an athlete fact sheet and other ma-

terials for schools to establish proper procedures involving concussion-related injuries. The course is hosted by Michael Koester, M.D., chair of the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and director of the Sports Concussion Program at the Slocum Center for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine in Eugene, Oregon.

With the Howe High School football team practicing in the background, NFHS Executive Director Bob Gardner spoke to Indianapolis media about the new education course: "Although coaches, parents and players involved with football will certainly benefit from Concussion in Sports, research shows that concussions occur in other sports as well. With more than 7.5 million young people involved in high school sports, minimizing the risk of injury is extremely important. The course is a 'must do' for anyone associated with high school sports."

Indiana High School Athletic Association Commissioner Blake Ress also supported the NFHS education course at the press conference, explaining that "in the whole scheme of things, it is better to miss a game than to get hit a second time and be worse off."

More than 70,000 persons – about 1,500 per day – have already registered and completed the course, which is available as part of the NFHS Coach Education Program at www.nfhslearn.com.

Combined with the education courses, the NFHS has established new playing guidelines in order to combat concussions and its related injuries. In all 2010-11 NFHS rules books, the procedure is that any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors related to a concussion should be immediately removed from play and is not permitted to return until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

The NFHS estimates that 140,000 athletes suffer from concussion-related injuries every year. The incidence rate for concussion for boys sports is highest in football, ice hockey and lacrosse. In girls sports, the rate is highest in soccer, gymnastics and lacrosse.

©

Lauren Fellmeth is a fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a recent graduate of Elon (North Carolina) University with a bachelor of arts in corporate communications and Spanish.

High school injury rates stable; concussions on rise

BY CHRIS GOFF

Injury rates in high school athletics competition have remained constant while the number of diagnosed concussions continues to increase, a study shows.

The High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study found that injury rates in the competition of nine major sports have either held steady or decreased slightly over time.

However, the proportion of injuries diagnosed as time-loss concussions (those which cost the athlete at least one day of participation) has increased again. The 2009-10 data, released in August, indicate that 14 percent of sustained injuries are identified as concussions, up from 8.4 percent in the 2006-07 survey.



Dr. Dawn Comstock, associate professor of pediatrics at Ohio State University, prepared results of the survey for the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). According to Comstock, concussions that may have gone untreated in the past are now being diagnosed and managed.

“The rise is a little concerning,” Comstock said. “But I think that can be attributed to education.”

The NFHS estimates 140,000 athletes suffer a concussion each year. Ongoing public awareness campaigns and stricter concussion guidelines help, but Comstock said concussion rates may have yet to peak.

Though injury rates varied among the 20 sports included in the survey, 16 sports featured higher rates in interscholastic competi-

tion than in practice. Only girls volleyball, cheerleading, and both boys and girls swimming and diving sustained equal or greater rates of injury in practice.

With the exception of boys ice hockey, the most common diagnosis of injury in every sport was a strain/sprain. Concussions were the leading diagnosis for boys who suffered injury on the ice.

Knees, ankles, and the head or face were frequently nicked body sites in most sports.

The highest injury rate occurred in boys football, with a rate of 12.7 injuries per 1,000 athletic exposures (AE), where an AE is defined as “one practice or one competition involving one athlete.” Boys ice hockey endured the second-highest injury rate at 5.6. The combined rate for the 20 sports included in the study was 1.86 injuries per 1,000 AE.

“Overall, injuries are not alarming in high school sports,” Comstock said. “We can never prevent all injuries, but we are doing a good job of keeping our athletes safe.”

Comstock said having access to detailed data ensures high school athletics remain healthy.

“Coaches may compare their team’s data to the national team data and see discrepancies,” she said. “For athletes, understanding the injuries in your sport can aid prevention.”

Comstock recommends high school competitors always wear proper equipment and assure that it is fitted properly.

In its fifth year, the surveillance study consists of nine original sports (boys football, soccer, basketball, wrestling and baseball, along with girls soccer, volleyball, basketball and softball). It has expanded to survey 11 additional sports and is now the longest-running sports surveillance study. The data is randomly selected from 100 representative high schools across the country. Certified athletics trainers report the data online each week during the school year.

The study is funded by the NFHS as well as a research grant from the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE). ●

Chris Goff is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a junior at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in journalism (news editorial) and minoring in history.

Two of interscholastic athletics’ finest pass away

BY ARIKA HERRON

Two pillars of the high school sports community died this summer with the passing of **Charlie Wedemeyer** and **Herman Masin**. Both members of the National High School Hall of Fame, Wedemeyer and Masin showed unparalleled commitment to in-



Charlie Wedemeyer



Herman Masin

terscholastic athletics and the students and coaches who participate in them.

Wedemeyer was a high school standout in football, baseball and basketball. He was selected as Hawaii Athlete of the Decade in the 1960s and went on to be the first Hawaii athlete recruited to play Division I football on the Mainland. He was a member of Michigan State University's 1965 national championship team.

In 1970, Wedemeyer settled on the West Coast to coach football at Los Gatos (California) High School. In 1978, at the age of 32, he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and given two years to live. Though the disease took his ability to walk, talk and even breath on his own, Wedemeyer survived 32 years with ALS – the better part of which he spent on 24-hour life support.

He couldn't speak and was only able to move his facial muscles, but he continued to coach with his wife, Lucy, reading his lips and verbalizing instructions. The fact that he chose to undergo a tracheotomy and extend his life is incredible, but even more so is what he did with that life. His legacy will continue to serve as inspiration for all who knew him and many who didn't. He passed away June 3, 2010, at the age of 64.

Just five days after Wedemeyer's death, the world of high school sports lost another friend when Masin passed away at age 96. Masin began his career in interscholastic athletics when he landed the job of editor in chief of Scholastic Coach. The year was 1936 and he had just graduated from NYU.

It wasn't until 72 years later, in December 2008, that Masin retired his typewriter and his career. In those 72 years, Masin became one of the most influential contributors to high school athletics. He wrote and edited some of the first articles on strength training, steroid abuse and the danger of players blocking with their heads in football.

Masin's influence reached high school and collegiate coaches across the nation and cultivated some of the best and the brightest. He counted among his colleagues and friends coaches like John Wooden, Al Davis and Bill Walsh, and published articles on their techniques before they were household names.

The influence of Wedemeyer and Masin on interscholastic athletics has been immeasurable, just as is the loss. ●

Arizona passes Prop. 100 to save school sports

BY ARIKA HERRON

In a last-ditch effort to fill part of the large gap in funding for primary and secondary public schools left by Arizona's \$4 billion state budget deficit, voters passed a proposition to raise state sales tax 1 percent, from 5.6 percent to 6.6 percent.

One of the biggest winners in the passing of Proposition 100 is high school sports. If Prop. 100 had failed, schools would have been facing cuts in education funding up to 20 percent. For many school districts, this would have meant choosing between teachers and sports. Some districts, including the Tucson Unified School District, had considered eliminating athletics altogether.

But the passage of Prop. 100 does not mean that schools are floating on a sea of cash – it just means they haven't sunk yet. Many schools are still cutting back. Mesa schools have instituted pay-to-play fees for the 2010-11 school year. Yuma schools have banned all out-of-area travel for the year. Tolleson has already cut golf, swimming, tennis and cross country. Administrators there say they are just thankful they don't have to cut any more sports.



The one-cent tax increase will generate between \$800 million and \$1 billion each year for the next three years. It will automatically be repealed May 31, 2013. Two-thirds of the revenue generated from Prop. 100 is set to go to schools; the other third will go to health and human services and public safety programs. ●

Arika Herron was a summer intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in journalism and minoring in French and international studies.

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VOICES OF THE NATION

Q | *How have you dealt with adversity relating to a serious injury?*



Danielle Luers

Franklin High School
Baltimore County (Maryland) Public Schools

Last fall was the most difficult athletic experience of my life. During (cheerleading) practice, I was simply doing a standard round-off and collided with one of my teammates. The next thing I know, I was lying on the ground with a broken femur! At first, I thought it was just a bruise, but I then discovered how damaging this injury was. At the emergency room, the doctor explained how critical this break was and immediately scheduled surgery to repair my femur. I never thought I would compete in cheerleading again.

The weeks after my surgery, my teammates and coaches were my biggest inspiration as they kept me company at home and made me come out to all the games. I truly believe that they are the reason that I was able to come back from this injury and compete the following spring. Everyone was astonished by my recovery, but I must admit, it was my love of the sport and my love for my teammates that helped me to full recovery.



Dylan Hochstetler

Mid-Prairie High School
Wellman, Iowa

It was the night of our first football game. But instead of battling it out alongside my teammates on the field, I was stuck watching the game from the sideline in a sling, only a few days removed from a major shoulder surgery. My family and friends greatly helped me to get through it. I was taken aback at all the concern and support I got from everyone. It also helped to know that I still had at least part of basketball season before my high school ca-

reer came to an end. I will soon begin rehab and am looking forward to my return to the court this winter.



Jake Bayer

La Plata (Maryland) High School

“Someone’s got to get out on that kid.” I sprint out to the three-point arc to cover him, and next thing I know, I’m on my back writhing in pain. I find out I’ve got a bucket tear in my meniscus and a nonexistent ACL. I needed surgery that would keep me out of lacrosse next season. Sweet.

Four stitches and three months of rehab later, I’m back on the field, playing the sport I love. Through the motivation of my coach and work ethic my parents have instilled in me since Day One, I was able to get back up and turn around and play in three months. The absence of being able to even walk under my own power pushed me through the first couple weeks, and when I could see that finish line, it was a straight sprint (okay, maybe with a little limp) to the end. With a little help from a brace and the support of my family, I was able to continue my career in high school sports.



Kyle Horsford

Stratford (Texas) High School

It is tough not being able to play, but you still have to prepare yourself every week. When you are the leader of the team, everyone looks up to you no matter if you are playing or not. Even though missing games is one of the worst feelings in the world I have experienced, I know that I can’t let everyone else on the team see that I am not having fun and I must be supportive of their efforts. You have to have a positive attitude and know that everything happens for a reason. ☺