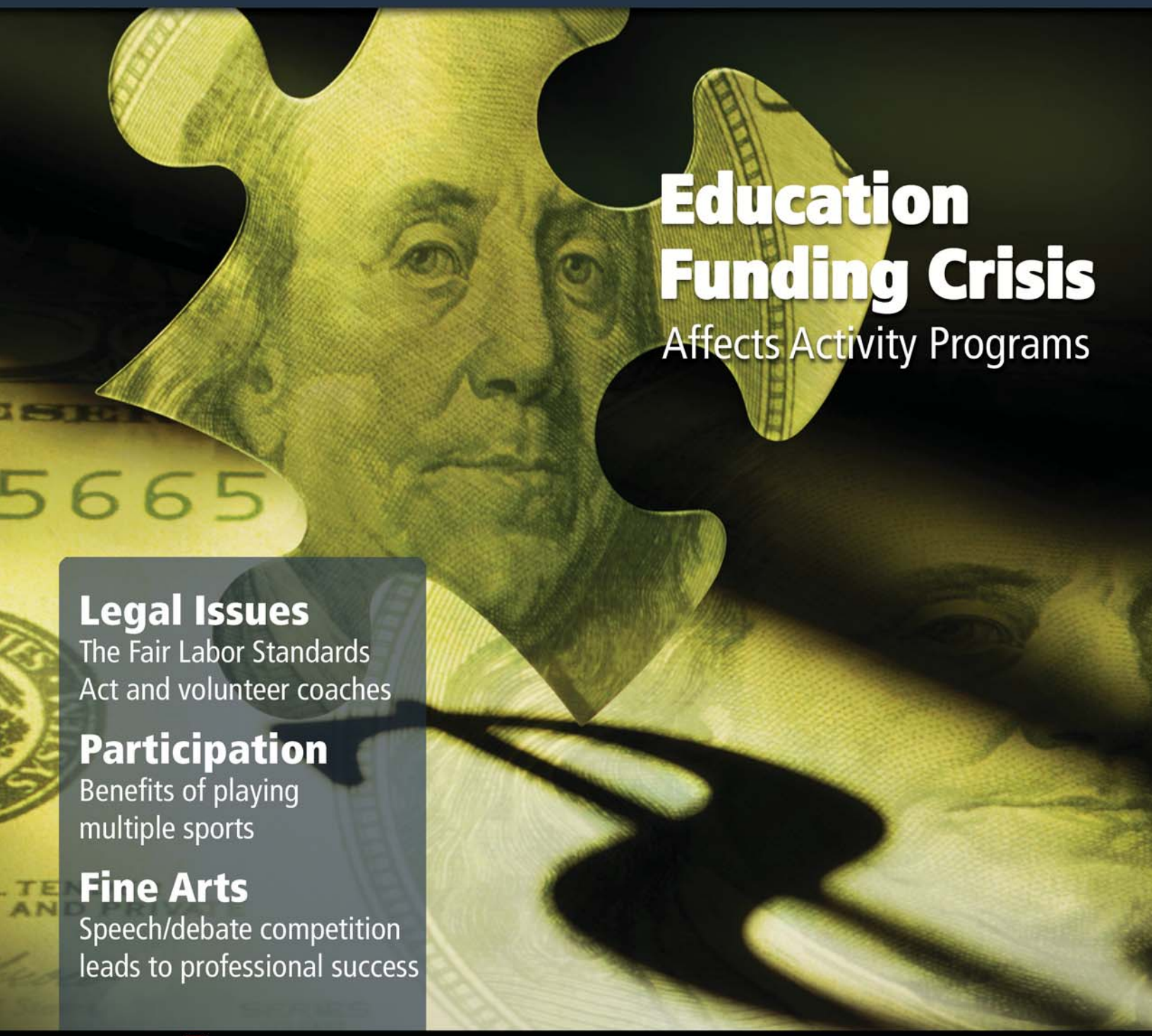
MAY 11

HighSchool TODAY™

THE VOICE OF EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETIC AND FINE ARTS ACTIVITIES



Education Funding Crisis
Affects Activity Programs

Legal Issues
The Fair Labor Standards Act and volunteer coaches

Participation
Benefits of playing multiple sports

Fine Arts
Speech/debate competition leads to professional success

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS




Even with Pay-to-play, High School Sports are Bargain

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

As the article on page 10 states, funding of public education in our nation's schools faces some serious challenges now and over the next few years. And as a result of a decreasing amount of assistance from state and federal governments, school leaders are looking at other options to fund school activity programs.

Among the ways that schools are offsetting reductions in the budget for athletics and other activity programs is the use of participation fees, or "pay-to-play" as it has come to be known. Although this concept was limited to some states in the Northeast 20 years ago, it is now commonplace in most areas. While 33 states indicated the use of participation fees in 2009, it is likely that some schools in every state have been forced to consider this option.

As Jim Tenopir, our chief operating officer, stated in the education funding crisis article, it is worrisome that more students (and their parents) are incurring additional personal costs to participate in education-based activity programs, which, heretofore, have been funded by the school district's budget. Certainly, short of an economic turnaround and funding increases from the state and federal levels, the hope would be that schools can offset these losses through corporate support or fund-raising rather than charging students and their families to play.

We would suggest, however, that even in those situations where students are being charged a modest (in most cases) fee to participate, education-based athletics and activities within the school system remain an incredible bargain. Even in those cases where schools are charging as much as $500 per sport, the fee is mere pittance of what some families spend to involve their sons and daughters in out-of-school club programs, where the educational component is missing.

The popular theory by many parents is that by involving their children in out-of-school club programs, the coaching and preparation will be better than what they receive through the high school team and will greatly enhance the chance for a full-ride athletic scholarship for their son or daughter.

We certainly acknowledge that there are a few high school athletes who may benefit from a year-round focus on one sport because they have the skills and talent to play at the next level; however, among the 7.6 million participants in high school sports, these individuals are few and far between.

Consider these numbers: About three percent of high school basketball players, five percent of high school soccer players, five percent of high school football players and six percent of high school baseball players will play at the NCAA level. From the high school to the professional level, the odds are better at winning the lottery. For example, less than one-half of one percent of high school basketball players will be drafted by an NBA team.

Many families incur huge debts trying to chase college scholarships for their kids – money they wish they had back for college tuition when the scholarship offers fail to materialize. Through research of articles on this subject, it is common for families to spend $5,000 to $10,000 a year funding their child's athletic pursuits in out-of-school programs. Three years ago, the College Board estimated the average annual cost at a four-year public school was about $6,200 – very similar to the annual expenditures by many families for club sports.

In some cases, participation in an out-of-school program in a particular sport could be beneficial, but often athletes (and their parents) are lured into giving up other sports in the high school setting – thereby forfeiting the educational component – to focus solely on one sport and to chase the dream of a college scholarship.

Following is a testimonial from Dave Ramsey's Web site: "In our town, travel soccer is $1,500 a season. There are three possible seasons – spring, fall and summer. Parents' rationale is that my kid will get a scholarship to college because they are going to be such a good player. Save the $3,000 to $4,500 a year and put it in a college fund. It will grow to fund college, plus some."

We couldn't say it better ourselves. Contrary to popular belief, a student doesn't have to play on an elite travel team to be noticed and receive a college scholarship. College coaches will find deserving athletes on high school teams.

Despite the current financial challenges, which might include paying a fee to participate, education-based high school sports remain the best choice for the majority of high school students and their families. ⊙


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SUN TAN CITY
Kroger
LOUISVILLE
10
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Great Shot

Grand Lineup

The awards ceremony at the 2010 Kentucky Music Educators Association State Marching Band Championship, held at Papa John's Cardinal Stadium at the University of Louisville.

Photograph provided by John Stroube, D.M.A., Executive Director, Kentucky Music Educators Association.

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

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Photo provided by Chris Knight, The Patriot-News.

Pennsylvania swimmer finishes career with national records

Hershey (Pennsylvania) High School's David Nolan swam into the National High School Sports Record Book last year with a record time in the 200-yard individual medley. This year, Nolan finished his high school career with one of the most impressive swimming performances in history. At the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association Class AAA state meet, Nolan notched three individual national records and was part of a relay record. His record-setting tally included the 100-yard freestyle (:42.34), 100-yard backstroke (:45.49) and 200-yard individual medley (1:41.39). His national-record lead-off time in the 400-yard freestyle relay propelled his team to another national record. At the same meet, Hershey's girls set a national record in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

North Carolina school belts 11 home runs in one game

The **Cameron (North Carolina) Union Pines High School** baseball team hit 11 home runs in its April 13th game against Biscoe (North Carolina) East Montgomery High School to set a state record for most home runs in one game. The 11 home runs ranks tied for third all time on the national list. The 13 combined home runs hit in the game also breaks a state record and rank tied for sixth nationally.

Georgia's Copeland retires after 862 victories

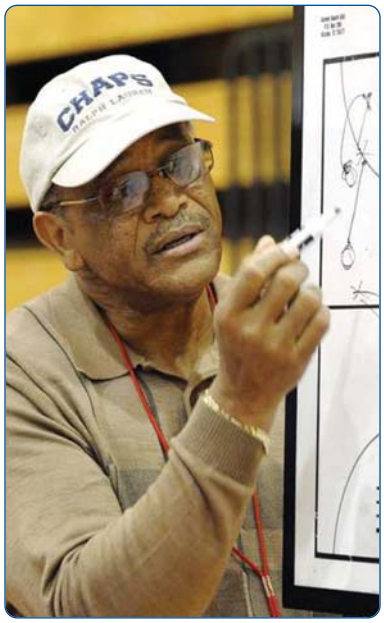


Photo provided by Woody Marshall, The Telegraph.

When his **Macon (Georgia) Northeast High School** girls basketball team lost in the Georgia High School Association Class AA Final Four, **Alvin Copeland** ended a storied coaching career with nearly 900 wins under his belt. His 862 wins rank 13th on the all-time list in the Record Book. Coaching nearly 40 years at Northeast, Copeland led the Raiderettes to five state championships, and the court at the high school is named in his honor.

Missouri baseball team pulls off triple steal

In its April 14th game against Warsaw (Missouri) High School, **Eldon (Missouri) High School** pulled off a rare feat. With the bases loaded, all three baserunners were credited with a stolen base on one play resulting in a triple steal.

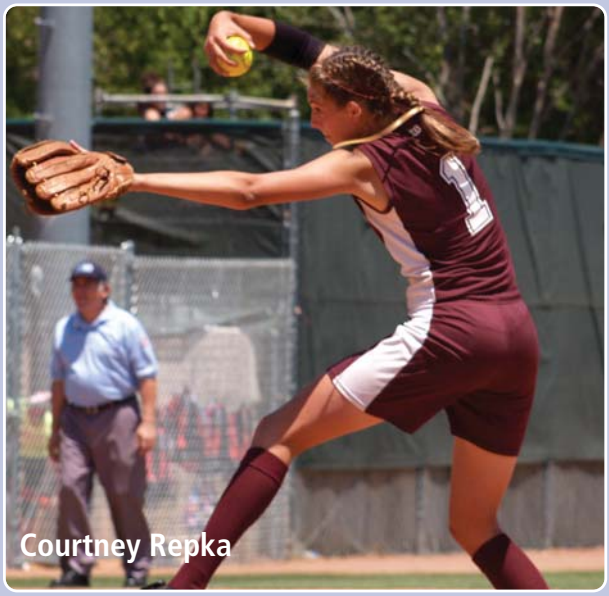
In the bottom of the third inning, Eldon put on a suicide squeeze play, but missed the bunt attempt. However, before Warsaw's catcher could react, Eldon's **Sam Lincoln** slid in safely to home plate. Both trailing runners moved up, each earning a stolen base.

The triple steal has been accomplished only twice in the past 25 years in the Major Leagues, the last time in 2008 by the Cleveland Indians.

For the Record

SOFTBALL

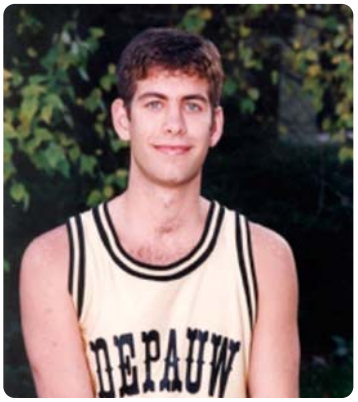
Most Perfect Games, Career


Courtney Repka

24	**Courtney Repka** (East Bernard, TX), 2006-09
20	**Marissa Marzan** (Fresno Bullard, CA), 1998-2001
17	**Crystal Cox** (Concord Central Cabarrus, NC), 1999-2001
16	**Jen Bice** (Woodward-Granger, IA), 1996-99
15	**Ashley Birdsong** (Lincoln City, OR), 2002-05

Source: 2011 National High School Sports Record Book. To view the Record Book, visit the NFHS Web site at **www.nfhs.org** and select "Publications" on the home page.

It All Started Here





Brad Stevens

Butler University Men's Basketball Coach Brad Stevens has already become a household name among the nation's college basketball coaches. In just four seasons to start his Butler career, he has won 110 games – the most in history – and has guided the Bulldogs to two national runner-up finishes in the NCAA tournament.

Stevens' path to success started at Zionsville (Indiana) High School, where from 1992 to 1995 he earned letters in basketball (three), track (three) and baseball (one). He still holds several school records in basketball, including most career points (1,508), most career assists (444) and highest season scoring average (26.8).

Stevens also excelled off the court and in the classroom. He was first-team academic all-state in basketball and a Straight A Gold Medal Award winner for four years. He also was a member of National Honor Society and was the Indiana male recipient of the AAU/Milky Way Scholarship.

After high school, Stevens played basketball at DePauw (Indiana) University and graduated with a degree in economics. ⊙

Unusual Nicknames



Rocky Ford Meloneers

A high school taking its mascot from the local industry and agriculture is not unusual. Some of the resulting nicknames, however, can be unusual. **Rocky Ford (Colorado) High School** is no different. Situated in the city that claims to be the "Melon Capital of the World," Rocky Ford High School's athletic teams are known as the **Meloneers**. Depicted as a surly-looking watermelon (with shorts), the Meloneers compete in the Melon Dome.

The Cost

BASEBALL BATS

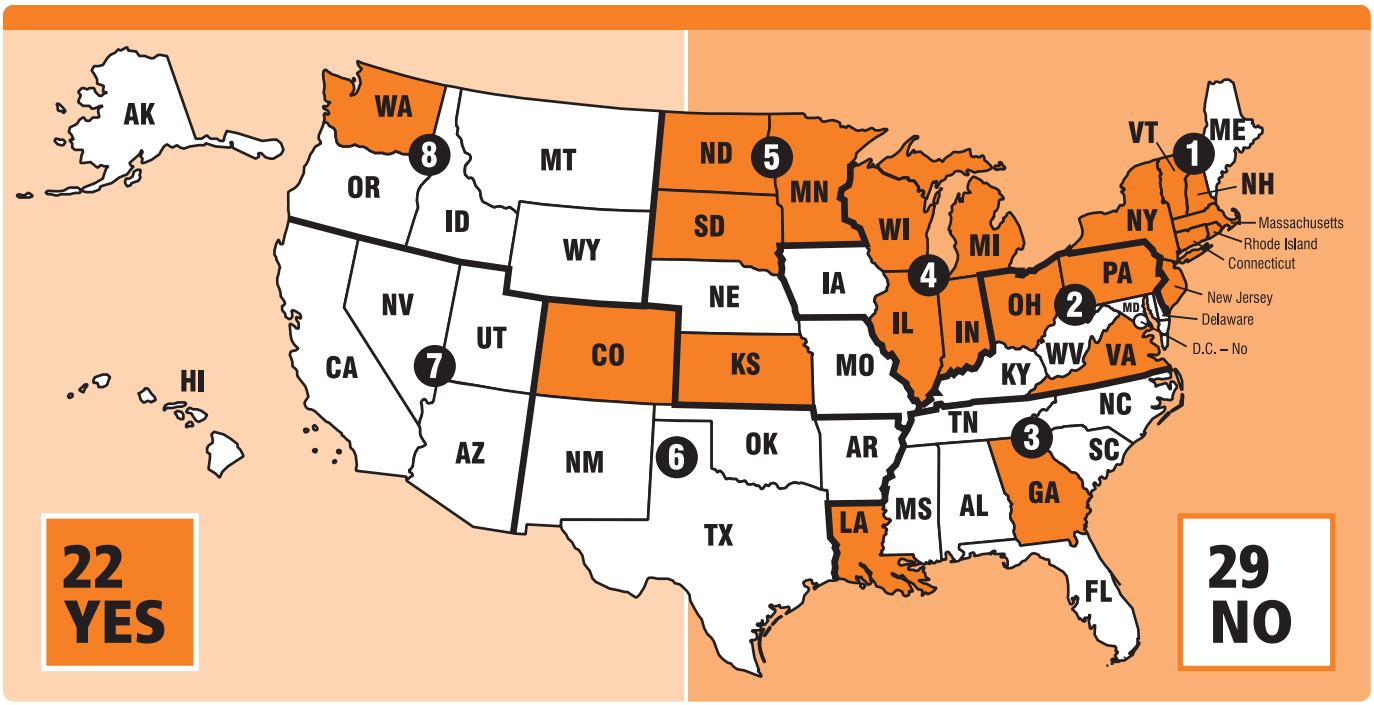


Item	Average Price	Low	High
(A) Wood (Ash)	$50	$25	$90
(B) Wood (Maple)	$85	$50	$180
(C) Composite Wood	$100	$60	$200
(D) Aluminum (BBCOR)	$300	$200	$400

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

Around the Nation

Question: Does your state conduct a state championship in girls gymnastics?



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Education Funding Crisis Affects Activity Programs

BY BRUCE HOWARD

The benefits of high school athletics and other activity programs are well-documented: better attendance records, lower dropout rates, higher grade-point averages, improved self-esteem and self-confidence, and preparation for a successful career.

Interest in high school sports has never been higher, with more than 7.6 million participants during the 2009-10 school year. In spite of competition from out-of-school programs, the number of students competing in school-based sports increased for the 21st consecutive year.

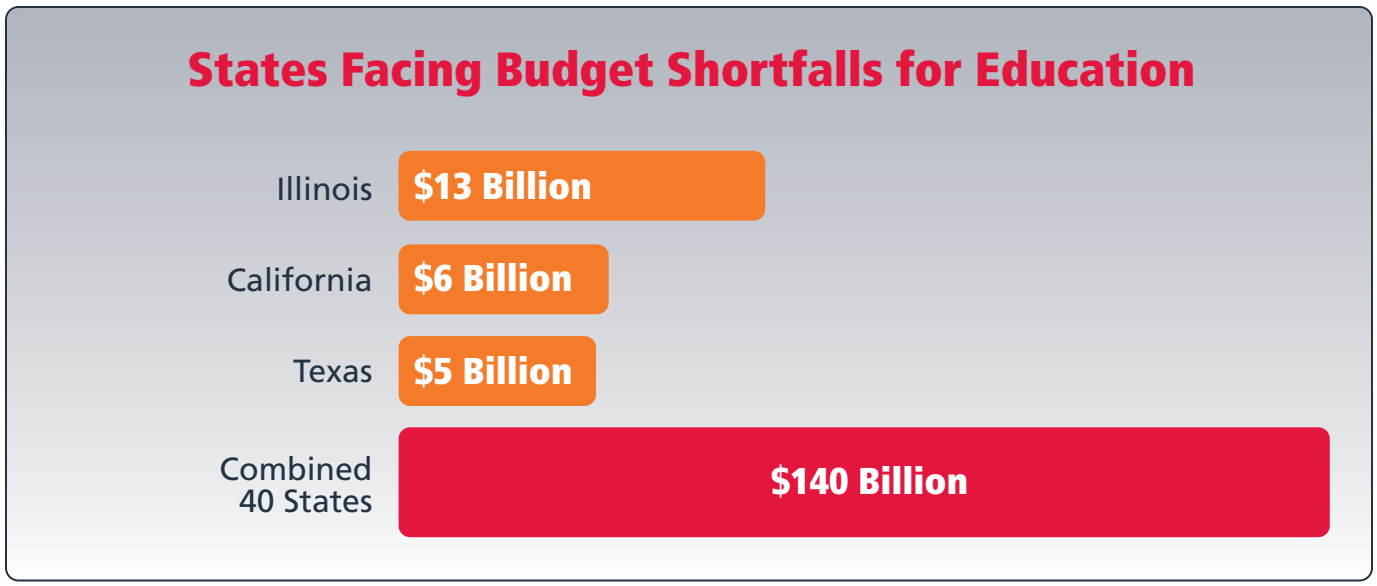
The United States is one of only a handful of countries in the world where students have the opportunity to compete in sports and other activity programs in an education-based setting as a part of the regular school day. It is a privilege that has existed for generations, and many individuals look back to their high school sports (or fine arts) experience as the springboard to success.

Keeping that door of opportunity open may get more difficult during the next few years, however, as state and federal funding of public education declines. While schools in some states have been dealing with financial woes from the nation's recession the past four years, state funding of public education is expected to continue its downward spiral for several more years.

At a recent conference in Denver sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, teacher unions, superintendent and school board groups, and federal education officials came together, and the funding crisis in public education was the main topic of concern. Currently, it is estimated that about 40 states are dealing with budget shortfalls for education totaling $140 billion.

About one-half of K-12 public school funding typically comes from state budgets, with another 10 percent from federal money, according to Dr. Darrell Floyd, superintendent of schools in Stephenville, Texas. And when reductions come from both directions, schools have tough decisions to make. If other sources of revenue cannot be found, something has to be trimmed from the budget.

"We have about a $5 billion public school funding deficit in Texas, and we have been told that the cuts for each school district could range from 10 to 15 percent," Floyd said. "We're unsure where we will fall in that range, but the only way to deal with a 15-



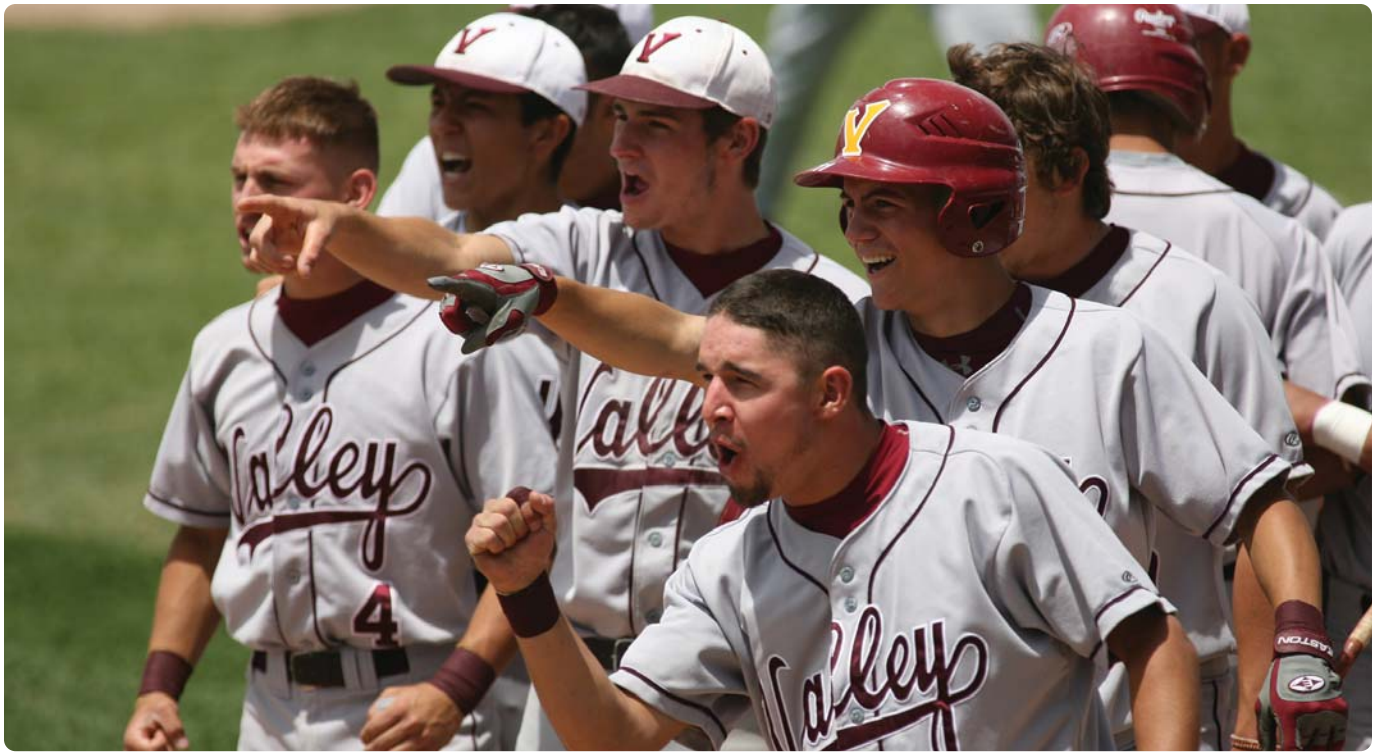


Photo provided by Kim Jew Photography, New Mexico.

percent reduction is through personnel and/or program cuts. It is definitely going to be ugly.

"Fortunately for us, our district's fiscal situation looks better than some because of some internal control and cost-saving measures implemented over the past few years. We have a healthy reserve fund to fall back on for two or three years if necessary. Some school districts, however, are going to 'pay-to-play.' This funding crisis in Texas will force districts to look at solutions that heretofore were untouchable.

"We will be making necessary cuts, but we are committed to the funding of school activity programs. We are certainly hopeful that the state's funding issues are resolved sooner than later and it returns to its constitutional charge to properly fund public school education in Texas."

Due in part to a reduction of $37.9 billion in federal stimulus funds, many other states are dealing with significant shortfalls, including Illinois at $13 billion and California at $6 billion. While previous surveys have shown that only one to three percent of the average school district's budget is allocated for athletics and other activity programs, many schools look in that direction as cost-cutting plans are formulated.

Dr. Jim Tenopir, chief operating officer of the NFHS, has a well-rounded perspective on the current education funding crisis, having served as superintendent of schools in Cambridge, Nebraska, for 18 years prior to his nine-year stint as executive director of the Nebraska School Activities Association and his current leadership role with the NFHS.

"There is not much of the country that hasn't been impacted by the shortage of funds for educational programming," Tenopir said. "In many cases, state legislatures have limited the amount of money that schools can generate through local property taxes. States are struggling to maintain past levels of funding from state aid to education, and the cost of educating students continues to increase on an annual basis. In an effort to provide for necessary educational programs and services, board of education and school district administrators are looking more and more to cutting district funds for the support of secondary athletic and activities programs.

"School administrators are forced to look at creative means to fund high school activities programs. Whether that be to seek corporate support, increase spectator admission fees, or implement or expand pay-to-play assessments, more and more schools are having to help their activities programs survive without funding from the school districts' general funds."

As schools scramble to deal with budget shortfalls for the coming academic year, many are looking at increasing participation fees already in place, while others are implementing fees for the first time. A survey of NFHS-member state associations in the September 2009 issue of *High School Today* indicated that participation fees were being used by schools in 33 states.

In Indiana, which reported no pay-to-play activity two years ago, athletic directors met recently for their statewide conference, and funding and program cuts were among the biggest issues. Some schools have cut or eliminated middle school sports, while others have implemented pay-to-play fees for the first time.

"I think in the next two or three years it is going to get tougher than it is right now," said Butch Zike, athletic director at Whiteland (Indiana) High School and president of the Indiana Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (IIAAA). "Obviously, the kids are going to pay for this because there are fewer opportunities, and you can't finance everything you've done in the past."

"If high school activities are indeed 'the other half of education,' it is worrisome to think that more and more students are being excluded from participation through increased personal costs to participate and decreased opportunities because of limiting squad sizes and cutting lower-level programs."



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

In addition to the emergence of participation fees, athletic directors at the IIAAA conference discussed naming rights and sponsorships as ways to make up for lost funding. Throughout Indiana, more company names and other advertisements will be appearing on stadiums, gymnasium walls and scoreboards.

Signs of troubling times are particularly evident in Florida, where the Duval County Public Schools face a $97 million shortfall and the Pinellas County School District has to slice $60 million from its budget. Unless a solution can be found quickly, athletics will be eliminated altogether in the Duval school district, which has 19 high schools in the greater Jacksonville area totaling about 15,000 student-athletes.

In an interview with the Florida Times-Union, Duval County athletic director John Fox said, "This one is as bad as it could be. When you think about the impact a coach can have on a kid, it just breaks my heart that we're in this position. Kids are different human beings because of the athletic experience."

Implementation of pay-to-play fees is unlikely in the Jacksonville schools since the additional revenue would cover only a fraction of the cost needed to revive the programs and more than 55 percent of the students are on the free-and-reduced lunch program.

Meanwhile, high school sports will continue in the Pickerington (Ohio) School District east of Columbus, but parents will pay some of the highest fees in the country for their sons and daughters to compete. Next year, high school students will be charged $500 per sport, while the per-sport fee at the junior high level will be $325. Currently, the fees are $210 and $135, respectively.

While the user fees have been a way of survival in some school districts, Tenopir said a return to previous levels of state funding is the desire.

"If high school activities are indeed 'the other half of education,' it is worrisome to think that more and more students are being excluded from participation through increased personal costs to participate and decreased opportunities because of limiting squad sizes and cutting lower-level programs," Tenopir said.

A longstanding commitment to the value of high school activity programs can certainly help in difficult economic times. Although many schools in Illinois will be feeling the effects of the nation's largest budget shortfall, Lincoln-Way North High School in Frankfort expects to maintain its current level of support for activities without implementing participation fees.

"We have not reduced any extracurricular program because we believe these programs maximize the social growth of kids," said Dr. Michael Gardner, principal of Lincoln-Way North High School. "While we have not received some state funds that we expected, we've been able to make up for this shortfall elsewhere. Our booster clubs have been super for us and have done many successful fund-raisers. Our superintendent is committed to keeping these programs alive, and our board of education has been fiscally responsible.

"A lot of kids nationwide wouldn't be attending school without activities. We impact kids through athletics and activities and are committed to keeping the programs going."

While the task is formidable, Tenopir believes there is hope with all working together.

"I believe that participation in school-based athletic and activities programs helps young people acquire life lessons that are sometimes more profound than lessons that can be learned in the many academic classrooms," Tenopir said. "The NFHS exists, in large part, to provide states the opportunity to share best practices. It is through this interaction that states can collectively work toward strengthening and enhancing high school activities nationwide, even in a time of funding shortfalls." ⊙

Bruce Howard is director of publications and communications for the NFHS and co-editor of *High School Today*.

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The Fair Labor Standards Act and Volunteer Coaches

BY LEE GREEN

Purdham v. Fairfax County School Board – a Significant Legal Ruling

On March 10, 2011, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled that a high school safety and security officer who receives a stipend for coaching a varsity boys golf team is a "volunteer" and not an employee in his capacity as a coach and is, therefore, not entitled to overtime pay under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

The case is a significant one for school districts nationwide because, although the court's decision is binding only within the states that constitute the Fourth Circuit (Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and South Carolina), it is the first U.S. Court of Appeals ruling to clarify the FLSA issues concerning the payment of stipends to non-exempt school employees who volunteer to serve as coaches of school athletics teams.

The Fair Labor Standards Act

The FLSA requires that a non-exempt employee must be paid at least minimum wage for each hour of work for his or her employer up to 40 hours per week and must be paid overtime (at least time-and-a-half) for each hour of work in excess of 40 per week.

In order to be considered exempt from the minimum wage and overtime mandates of the FLSA, an employee must satisfy three criteria: 1.) the employee must be salaried (all employees paid an hourly rate are automatically non-exempt); 2.) the employee must earn at least $23,660 per year; and 3.) the employee must have exempt job duties (those categorized as executive, administrative, professional or highly compensated).

As determined by the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD), the administrative agency responsible for enforcing the FLSA, and by judicial rulings, the common categories of individuals with exempt job duties in schools are superintendents, assistant superintendents, program directors, district athletics directors, principals, assistant principals, building athletics directors, teachers, counselors, nurses with an RN, and certified athletic trainers. The common categories of school employees with non-exempt job duties are teacher's aides, safety and security officers, custodians, receptionists, cafeteria workers, secretaries, bus drivers, maintenance workers, bookkeepers, media assistants, nurses without an RN, and non-certified athletic trainers.

In recent years, one of the challenges for school athletics programs has been the financial burden of satisfying the requirements of the FLSA with regard to non-exempt school personnel who serve as coaches, assistant coaches and a variety of support positions for school athletics events, including ticket sellers, ticket takers, concession workers, public-address announcers, statisticians, scoreboard or shot-clock operators, and event supervisors.

Over the course of the past decade, approximately 40 percent of all FLSA complaints filed with the WHD and FLSA lawsuits filed in federal court have involved non-exempt school employees seeking to recover unpaid overtime from their employers, a flood of litigation that has resulted in tens of millions of dollars of liability for school districts across the country.

The Volunteer Exception

An exception to the mandates of the FLSA is the non-exempt employee who volunteers to assist with an employer-sponsored activity or event. In order to qualify under the FLSA as a bona fide volunteer, an employee must satisfy three criteria: 1.) his or her services must be offered freely and voluntarily without any expressed or implied coercion by the employer; 2.) his or her volunteer duties and regular job duties must be dissimilar; and 3.) his or her compensation as a volunteer must be limited to reimbursement for expenses, reasonable benefits, nominal fees or any combination thereof.

Unanswered in the FLSA and its supporting regulations is the question as to what constitutes a permissible "nominal fee" for a volunteer. Until late 2005, no clarification had been provided by the WHD regarding the definition of nominal and the prevailing interpretation was that athletic program volunteers could receive only reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses such as meals, mileage, equipment purchases or similar expenditures that were



substantiated by receipts or other evidence.

In November of 2005, the WHD issued a guidance opinion establishing a 20-percent rule for determining whether a stipend paid to a non-exempt school employee who volunteers as a coach is nominal: a coaching stipend will be considered nominal when it does not exceed 20 percent of the prevailing wage for a full-time coach in the same sport.

Furthermore, in order to qualify as nominal, the stipend cannot be intended as a substitute for wages nor can it be based on the number of hours spent on coaching or the productivity of the team. In the written clarification, the WHD stated that its rationale for the 20-percent rule is that the "Fair Labor Standards Act recognizes the generosity and public benefits of volunteering and does not seek to pose unnecessary obstacles to bona fide volunteer efforts for charitable and public purposes." The full-text of the WHD guidance opinion is available at *www.dol.gov/whd/opinion/FLSA/2005*.

Purdham v. Fairfax County School Board

James Purdham is a full-time safety and security officer at Hayfield (Virginia) High School and, for 15 years, he has served as the school's varsity boys golf coach. In early 2004, because of the increasing volume of FLSA litigation occurring around the country, the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) developed a new policy instituting a time-keeping system for non-exempt district employees who assist with extracurricular school activities so that these individuals could be paid overtime consistent with the then-prevailing interpretation of the FLSA.

In the new policy, however, the district prohibited non-exempt employees from coaching because of the difficulties of keeping an accurate record of the extensive number of hours coaches devote to their teams and the likely high cost of overtime for coaches even if a system of accurate timekeeping was implemented.

In late 2004, following the issuance by the WHD of its guidance opinion containing the 20-percent rule, the FCPS abandoned its prohibition on non-exempt employees serving as coaches because the WHD ruling indicated the district's non-exempt employees receiving stipends as coaches could be classified as "volunteers." Purdham then brought suit against the FCPS claiming that he was entitled to overtime under the FLSA for his hours spent coaching the golf team.

The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia granted a summary judgment for the FCPS, ruling that Purdham had freely volunteered to be the golf coach, was not by coaching engaged in a similar type of work to his regular position as a safety and security officer, and had received a stipend constituting merely a nominal fee authorized by the FLSA to be paid to a volunteer.

A three-judge panel of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals (in-

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cluding retired Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Sandra Day O'Connor – retired Justices may continue to sit by designation on U.S. Courts of Appeals) upheld the lower court's decision, concluding that despite Purdham's assertion that as a golf coach he considered himself an employee, not a volunteer, Purdham was motivated at least in part by charitable or humanitarian instincts, was freely and without coercion offering his services as a coach, and could relinquish his role as a coach at any time without any adverse impact on his full-time employment with the district. The Fourth Circuit ruling also affirmed that Purdham's coaching responsibilities were dissimilar to his duties as a safety and security officer.

Most importantly, the Court of Appeals found that Purdham's coaching stipend – $2,114 for the most-recent school year in question – was nominal both compared to Purdham's annual income at the $25.69 per hour he was paid as a safety and security officer and the $30,191-to-$90,076 range of full-time salaries paid to exempt district personnel who served as varsity golf coaches at other FCPS high schools.

In so ruling, the Court of Appeals emphasized that the FLSA definition of a volunteer should be determined "in a commonsense manner" and that "full-time school employees who elect to coach athletics are clearly distinguishable from" employees for other government or private-sector employees who are at risk of being coerced by employers to work extra hours in violation of the FLSA. To rule otherwise, the Fourth Circuit concluded, would be "contrary to Congress's intent not to discourage or impede volunteer activities."

Finally, it should be noted that the Fourth Circuit's ruling is limited to non-exempt school personnel who receive a stipend to volunteer as a coach. Because of the Court of Appeal's insistence that "nominal" will not include any amounts paid related to the time or effort invested in the volunteer activity, it is unlikely that the Purdham decision can be applied to the other non-exempt school employees who serve as ticket sellers, ticket takers, concession workers, public-address announcers, statisticians, scoreboard or shot-clock operators, and event supervisors. Those positions require employees to work for fixed periods of time (a few hours, an afternoon, an evening, the duration of an event) and as such, even the payment of a stipend would likely be considered compensation for services rendered and not merely a nominal amount. ⊙

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*.



Benchmarks to Measure Success of Your Athletic Program

BY DR. DAVID HOCH, CMAA

Whether one looks at the rankings of high school teams produced by local newspapers or listens to the assertions of fans of respective schools that their program is the best, many people measure success by listing victories and championships. In education-based athletics, however, this method of determining the viability or value of a school's program totally misses the point.

So, if wins do not provide the basis for success, how do you rate a school's athletic program? The following items should provide a better alternative than totaling the number of victories in order to substantiate the effectiveness and value of a program.

- **The participation rate.** The number of students involved in a school's athletic program is a great benchmark of success. Most young people want to be part of a team in order to be with their friends and have a good experience. These factors are much more important – as shown in national studies – than winning.

  If a school's teams are filled to capacity and the school provides all the sports that are possible for the specific area of the country, this is an excellent indication of a successful athletic program. As a matter of fact, it should be a goal of every district to add as many teams as possible – taking into consideration facilities and funding – in order to accommodate as many young people as possible.

- **The number of coaches who have earned NFHS national certification.** All coaches who take the NFHS courses and complete their Level I certification demonstrate that they understand the importance of professional development. This step also provides a concrete example of being highly qualified; and even though athletics is not included in the Federal Bill referred to as "No Child Left Behind," this is an expectation for teachers and is also a great goal for coaches.

  The obvious outcome of having highly qualified and nationally professional certified coaches is that it benefits our athletes and programs. This is another very measurable item to help verify where a school's program falls on the spectrum.

- **The level of national certification attained by the school's athletic director.** The highest level offered by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association is the Certified Master Athletic Administrator. In order to earn this distinction, an athletic director has to take a number of professional development courses and complete a written project.

  Everything that is learned in these educational efforts will directly benefit the student-athletes, coaches and program. The correlation between professional development and certification and providing the basics for an education-based athletic program should be fairly high.

- **The number of athletes who attain scholar-athlete status.** In Maryland, for example, all athletes who earn a 3.25 grade-point average or above are awarded the State Scholar-Athlete Award. Regardless of the name of similar awards programs in other states, the number of athletes for each school can be totaled and a ranking can be created. This is a great standard to measure success of the school's athletic program.

- **The number of teams involved in community service projects.** While it may be a little more difficult to quantify than the previous four items, the number of teams that participate in community service projects is another standard to throw into the formula. The athletic director may have to use anecdotal information and a subjective approach to as-

certain a team's role and level of community service.

One possibility is to keep a tally and determine if more teams get involved year to year and gauge what percentage of the school's teams participate in community service. The concept of giving back to the community and developing a lifetime approach for compassion and service is a great measuring stick for success.

- **The stability of the coaching staff.** It is easy to track the number of new hires each year for a given period of time, and this can be done for head coaches, assistant coaches and junior varsity positions. If there is a constant turnover of coaches – other than for normal reasons such as the birth of children, family relocation and retirement – this can signal problems within the program.

  Staff stability is important in order to provide the best possible instruction and consistent direction for the school's athletic program. The obvious benefactors of maintaining a solid, quality staff of coaches are the student-athletes.

The real challenge of adapting a new method for determining the success of a school's athletic program may be trying to educate and change the thinking of the parents and community. Even though there are other outcomes that may be more valuable than winning, introducing this concept may take a little effort and time.

These six benchmarks provide a much better basis for determining the success of a school's athletic program than wins and championships. However, this doesn't take away the joy of winning games and championships – that can still exist as long as it isn't the only standard of success that is used.

Participation rates, professional development of athletic department staff members, academic attainment by athletes, community service involvement and the stability of staff are excellent benchmarks to determine the success of a high school's athletic program. ⊙

Dr. David Hoch recently retired as the athletic director at Loch Raven High School in Towson, Maryland (Baltimore County). He assumed this position in 2003 after nine years as director of athletics at Eastern Technological High School in Baltimore County. He has 24 years experience coaching basketball, including 14 years on the collegiate level. Hoch, who has a doctorate in sports management from Temple University, is past president of the Maryland State Athletic Directors Association, and he formerly was president of the Maryland State Coaches Association. He has had more than 350 articles published in professional magazines and journals, as well as two textbook chapters. Hoch is a member of the NFHS High School Today Publications Committee.



2011 Spirit of Sport Award Recipients Display Great Sportsmanship

BY JOHN GILLIS

It is said that in the face of adversity, one's true character is often revealed.

That time-honored axiom is probably most true in the world of sports, where split-second decisions can test the mettle of even the most resilient individual.

A controversial call by an official – regardless of whether it goes your way or not – can do just that.

One such incorrect call last summer by Major League Baseball umpire Jim Joyce cost Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Armando Galarraga his shot at a perfect game. Video of that sequence was repeatedly played on television and on the Internet.



Caitlin Nealer (third from left) and Casey Bonk (far right).

Another controversial call by a softball plate umpire – albeit this time a correct call – took place last year in a pivotal Pennsylvania high school playoff game.

That call – and the incredible acts of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity that followed it – have resulted in the New Kensington (Pennsylvania) Valley High School softball team and umpire Bill Dithrich being selected the recipients of the 2011 "National High School Spirit of Sport Award" by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). They will receive their awards June 29 at the Opening General Session of the NFHS Summer Meeting.

It all started on June 10, 2010, in a Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) Class AA quarterfinal game between 22-0 Valley High School and 19-3 Wilmington (Pennsylvania) Area High School.

The game was hotly contested and had gone into extra innings. With the score tied, 4-4, with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning and Wilmington at bat with runners on second and third, Valley High School catcher Casey Bonk stepped out of the catcher's box before pitcher Caitlin Nealer delivered the ball on an intentional walk.

As a result, plate umpire Dithrich correctly called "illegal pitch," which enabled Wilmington's Ashley Gardner to trot home from third and score the winning run.

So, in that split-second, Wilmington won the game, 5-4, and Valley's perfect season and shot at the state title were both summarily dashed.

The stunning call and loss left the Valley players distraught, shocked and in tears as they boarded the school bus for their somber drive home, and perhaps none more so than Bonk and Nealer.

"I was completely stunned by the call," Bonk said. "I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

"In that moment, it never entered my mind that I was doing anything wrong – not even for a second. The rule is in the rules book, so technically it is the right call. But in extra innings of a state quarterfinal game, I would have hoped for a warning first.

"I was absolutely unaware of the rule. The catcher's box is rarely – if ever – lined during the season. I had never in all my years of softball seen this call being made, and it had never been called on me until that game."

"When I saw Casey step out of the catcher's box, I had no idea what was going on at that moment," Nealer said. "All I saw was the umpire yell 'illegal pitch,' and I immediately turned around and cried. I thought it had been my fault."

"I heard the Valley coaches calling to Casey that they wanted to intentionally walk the batter and they were telling her to move out from behind the plate," Dithrich said. "I watched as she moved and they kept waving her further. I knew that she wasn't permitted outside the box when the pitcher took the rubber and pitched and that

it was an illegal pitch if she did, so I was prepared to make the call.

"At that moment, I wasn't thinking of the consequences of the call, that it would score the game-ending run, but then consequences should not be a part of making a call of a rule violation. I watched to see if she was out of the box when the pitcher got on the rubber and made the pitch and then called the illegal pitch. It was then – after making the call and assessing the penalty – that I called a ball on the batter and stepped out and signaled the runner from third home. That's when I thought to myself, 'Boy, it's going to hit the fan now!'

"Honestly, I don't recall the crowd's reaction at that moment. I think there was a stunned silence as they were wondering what had just happened. And then we walked off the field and away from the fans."

"I had never seen the call made before and when he first made the call, it was more disbelief than anything," Valley High School softball coach Carol Perroz said. "Obviously, my kids were very hurt so I was taking care of them and trying to get them composed to congratulate the winners.

"Casey had been a rock for our team the entire season. She was one of the reasons we were playing in that game to begin with. I felt badly for her, but the loss of that game was not her fault. All season, we won as a team and on that day, we lost as a team. The girls on the 2010 team were like a family and I was feeling for the family at that time."

While the game itself contained all of the requisite elements of high drama that anyone could possibly want, that was really just the beginning of the story.

A few days after the game, the Valley High School booster club sought a keynote speaker for its June 28th year-end softball banquet. Eric Felack, an umpire and a Valley High School team booster, came up with what many might have considered to be a very improbable choice – none other than Dithrich himself.

"The idea to invite Dithrich stemmed directly from the Detroit Tigers handling the perfect game that was taken away by an umpire's wrong call," Felack explained. "When I saw how the Detroit fans forgave the umpire (Joyce) the next day, my heart was touched. Joyce had tears in his eyes when pitcher Armando Galarraga met him at home plate the next day with the line-up card. The Detroit fans gave Joyce a standing ovation, and Galarraga forgave him. And, this umpire's call in that game was wrong. How could Valley High School do anything less for Bill Dithrich when he got the call right? I was impressed by Dithrich's courage to make the right call."

And so it was that Dithrich came to be the keynote speaker at a function honoring a softball team whose season ended following his call.

"I guess my very first reaction when I read Eric's e-mail inviting me to the banquet was 'Are you kidding me?'" Dithrich said. "I wouldn't say that I was reluctant to attend as much as questioning if it was a good idea to attend. I did discuss it with the PIAA office before accepting and we agreed with Eric that it would provide a teachable moment. Initially, the invitation was just to attend the banquet. My being the speaker pretty much developed between the initial invitation and the banquet."

During his banquet speech, Dithrich told the 75 attendees – including 13 Valley High School softball players seated in front of him – that he was faced with three choices at that fateful moment: ignore the infraction, call time and warn Bonk, or enforce the rule.

He said that the only real choice was the right one.





"We cannot choose which rules we like and which rules we don't like," Dithrich said. "Did I want to make the call? Absolutely not. I would rather see the game end with a batter ripping a single into the outfield or a walk-off home run or a fielder making a diving catch."

He thanked the team for inviting him to the dinner and praised the Vikings for their great display of sportsmanship.

After concluding his speech, Dithrich started to leave the podium. However, Felack asked him to stay and then called VHS softball players Maureen Pallone and Caitlin Nealer up, at which time they presented Dithrich with gift bags of Valley High School and New Kensington-Arnold School District memorabilia.

Bonk, who was in tears throughout Dithrich's speech, said that she appreciated him being at their banquet, adding that "it showed a lot of pride on his part."

After the banquet was over, Dithrich and Bonk had a chance meeting in the audience. In that encounter, Bonk shook Dithrich's hand, they spoke briefly and then shared an emotional hug before posing for a photo.

"When I first heard that Mr. Dithrich was selected to speak at our

year-end banquet, I had very mixed emotions," Bonk said. "Listening to him speak at the banquet brought back the memory of that unbelievable moment, which brought me to tears. I could barely focus on what he was saying. Once the banquet was over, I decided it was time to put it all behind me and move on."

"Casey and I did not speak until after the banquet, when we met, exchanged a greeting, and then shared an embrace," Dithrich said. "That moment touched me the most that evening and I don't remember what exactly was said."

Although no one had any idea of what would eventually transpire following that fateful game, the significance of what occurred was not lost on any of the involved individuals. And, receiving this national recognition and what it represents has had an equal impact on them.

"It's an honor for all of us to be receiving this award," Bonk said. "Going undefeated the whole season brought us closer together – we considered ourselves one big family. The team handled the disappointment of the way our season ended with a lot of class.

"In my opinion, I would define sportsmanship as being able to accept whatever comes your way – win or lose. We as a team were able to do just that in accepting this loss."

"Several words come to mind when thinking about this award," Dithrich said. "First of all, I am honored to be co-recipient with the Valley softball team. I am also proud to be a sports official receiving this award and yet humbled because there are so many other officials who go out there and do great jobs but do not receive this type of recognition.

"I feel I am a recipient in two ways. First and foremost, I was on the receiving end of a tremendous display of sportsmanship by the Valley team for inviting me to attend their banquet, and by their reception of me at the banquet.

"The second way was being recognized by the NFHS along with the team for their sportsmanship. I guess I can consider it a bit of sportsmanship on my part by doing what Eric and I both equated to 'Daniel going into the lions' den.'

"These ladies exhibited nothing to me but pure spirit of the sport. They conducted themselves on the field with excellent play and teamwork which showed how hard they had worked to get there. Then, at the banquet, I was received kindly, and even more so after I was able to speak to them and they were able to see the situation from my perspective. They are truly a class act."

"When Dithrich made the call, we were all numb at first and then we went out to compose the girls," said Rick Nealer, Caitlin's father and Valley High School assistant softball coach. "That call did not cost us the game. As we've always taught the girls, umpires do not win or lose games – the outcome is in our hands. This is not life or death – it is only a game that teaches us valuable life lessons.

"It took a lot of courage for Bill Dithrich to not only accept our banquet invitation but to come and speak to us as well. I have nothing but the utmost respect for him as both a Christian and an umpire. At the banquet, we got to see the human side of umpiring."

Dithrich and Bonk – and everyone else present at the banquet – were overwhelmed by the amazing evening in which life lessons were learned by all. And that evening was perhaps summed up best by the person who was responsible for making it all happen in the first place.

"There was never any consideration given to notoriety or publicity when the invitation was extended," Felack said. "It was simply a gesture of goodwill and sportsmanship. As a fellow umpire, I would never want to be in Bill Dithrich's shoes in a game moment like that.

"It became a teachable moment for all involved. The players, coaches and community will remember this National High School Spirit of Sport Award the rest of their lives. Losing a game now seems so unimportant. Sports teaches dedication, teamwork and skills on the field. But, it can also teach life lessons off of it. And those life lessons are more important than any medal, trophy or plaque that will ever be gained."

In addition to the selection of the Valley High School softball team and Dithrich as the national award recipients, the NFHS National High School Spirit of Sport Award Selection Committee chose seven other individuals for section awards. Following are the 2011 National High School Spirit of Sport section winners:

Section 1 – Juliann Tefft, student-athlete, West Greenwich (Rhode Island) Exeter/West Greenwich Senior High School

Section 2 – New Kensington (Pennsylvania) Valley High School softball team and umpire Bill Dithrich

Section 3 – Dylan Rebeor, student-athlete, Columbia, Tennessee, and Columbia (Tennessee) Central High School football team

Section 4 – Maynard Newhouse, student-athlete, Decorah (Iowa) High School

Section 5 – Anita Boeck, coach, and Chloe Gross, volleyball team manager, Arlington (South Dakota) High School

Section 6 – Nathan Potts, coach, Shepherd (Texas) High School

Section 7 – Jim Tracy, coach, and the San Francisco (California) University High School girls cross country team

Section 8 – Lucas Lish, student-athlete, Arimo (Idaho) Marsh Valley High School

Nominations for this award were generated through NFHS member state associations and reviewed by the NFHS National High School Spirit of Sport Award Selection Committee composed of state association staff members. While the national winner will be recognized June 29 at the NFHS Summer Meeting in Philadelphia, the section winners will be recognized within their respective states and will receive awards before the end of the current school year. ⊙

John Gillis is an assistant director of the National Federation of State High School Associations, co-editor of High School Today, and administrator of the National High School Spirit of Sport Award program.


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Louisiana Soccer Teams Show Caring Spirit

BY STEVEN PEEK

Teams and coaches usually compete against each other, but there are rare moments during which opponents become allies.

During the opening round of the Louisiana High School Athletic Association's (LHSAA) 2011 Division I boys soccer playoffs, No. 3 Lafayette (Louisiana) High School held a substantial lead over No. 30 Pineville (Louisiana) High School. Pineville head coach Grant Eloi used the final 15 minutes of the game to give non-starters some playing time. For seniors, this would be the final minutes of their high school careers.



"You look at Ross, and he's in the game and it just makes everything seem more exciting."

For one senior in particular, this would be a defining moment.

Ross Barron, a 19-year-old senior with Down syndrome, rarely saw playing time for the Rebels but was consistently praised by Eloi for unparalleled passion and heart for soccer.

"Any time we are having a bad game, no matter what the score is, Ross is having a good time," Barron's teammate David Evans said. "You look at Ross, and he's in the game and it just makes everything seem more exciting."

"Having him on the team is honestly the best decision I've ever made in my life," Eloi said.

Barron had scored a penalty kick goal but never one during live play. When Lafayette head coach Jeremy Cart realized that Barron was playing as a forward, he felt inspired.

"To work with him all year, to have him be such a special part of it, and to give him opportunities like that was overwhelming to me," Cart said.

Cart proposed to Eloi that everyone – his Mighty Lions included – help Barron score a goal; players and coaches alike were on board with the idea.

"As soon as [Cart] came up to me and mentioned that he would like to get Ross a goal, I just immediately started tearing up," Eloi said.

Lafayette's players shifted their focus when they noticed Barron on the field and received word of a new strategy from their coach. The two teams began to work as one, a team with Barron in mind.

"We were all really excited about it, and we definitely jumped on board," said Charlie Sapienza, captain of Lafayette's team. "We wanted to give this kid a goal."

Barron had a few shots from the left half of the box early during his playing time, but the perfect setup came after a corner kick. Barron received a leading pass from his teammate and sent a shot into the back net. His shot came from the center of the box, curling under a defender and to the left of the Lafayette goalkeeper.

It was his first-ever non-penalty kick goal – and in the playoffs of all times.

"Ross was on Cloud Nine," said David Evans, one of Barron's teammates. "We circled around him, just cheering him on and congratulating him."

Barron was jumping into the air and pumping his fist as he ran back toward his teammates.

After the game, Barron sat on his sideline crying tears of joy. Several players from both teams walked up to him in order to continue giving praise for his scoring effort.

Barron was not initially among the other boys, but many walked the extra distance just to shake his hand, which eventually brought more tears of joy.

"To see that one kid can make so many people so happy and



Photos provided by Grant Eloi, Pineville High School, Louisiana.

fill them with so much emotion is an amazing experience," Eloi said.

Afterwards, Barron called everyone – teammates and "opponents" alike – his friends.

"The gesture of selflessness taken by the Lafayette soccer players and Cart is an outstanding example of the sportsmanship and integrity that constitutes going beyond the game," LHSAA Public Relations/Media Coordinator Becky French said. "The leadership of Eloi and the compassion and brotherhood displayed by the Pineville soccer players are truly commendable as well.

"The actions and character exhibited by these two teams are the values and principles the LHSAA strives to promote."

Eloi said in the aftermath that the Rebels would be pulling for the Mighty Lions throughout the tournament, adding that karma was on their side.

Lafayette was one of the final four teams remaining in the tournament before losing to the eventual champion, St. Paul's, 3-1, in the semifinals. ⊙

Steven Peek is the NFHS Publications/Communications Department's intern for the spring of 2011. He is a senior studying journalism and history at Butler (Indiana) University.

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Speech and Debate Competition Contributes to Professional Success

BY PAULA FISHER

"Higher-level thinking," "better research and organizational skills," "more confidence when speaking," "improved ability to synthesize," "more intellectual curiosity" and "positive peer influence" are just a few of the phrases uttered by persons who describe the impact that high school speech and debate competition had on their careers.

By answering a series of questions, a scientist, a reporter/producer, an attorney and a president of a petroleum-consulting firm explain why participating in speech and debate helped them become successful leaders in their occupations.

Employed as a researcher for Centocor, a division of Johnson and Johnson Pharmaceuticals in Radnor, Pennsylvania, Dr. Branden Salinas explained that his past experience in speech competition "has been particularly beneficial … during my graduate studies, during presentations at national scientific meetings and seminars, during the job interview process and during routine business meetings with management … Communication skills are extremely important to scientists. Scientific and development work are only useful when communicated effectively." Salinas won second place at the state level in high school cross-examination debate.



Jonathan Ellis, president of Willis, Graves and Associates, a Texas consulting firm that provides expert business and economic services to the oil and gas industry, was a high school state champion in cross-examination debate and qualified for the national tournament in extemporaneous speaking.

Ellis explains that "the rigorous preparation promoted by academic competition has certainly been of obvious value in my business career, but perhaps more important … was the opportunity to meet exceptional students and dedicated teachers from high schools outside of my immediate community who provided positive role models that were extremely influential in shaping my choices as a young man."



A reporter/producer at Reuters Television, **Ruben Ramirez** covers business and financial news around the world. His assignments have taken him to such places as Russia, India, China, Brazil, Mexico, Luxembourg, Sweden, Nigeria and Bahrain.

> "Speech and debate provided the single-most important set of high school experiences, connecting directly to my professional life."

When discussing speech competition, Ramirez stresses, "I don't know any other extracurricular activities that expose you to what's happening in Asia and Europe. I don't know if there were very many (high school) kids out there who were reading *The New York Times, Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal* and the *Economist* on a regular basis. All that reading piqued my curiosity about wanting to know more about the world we live in, how governments function, how business is interconnected, how global trade works."

Illustrating the value of oral/dramatic interpretation and acting, Ramirez, who qualified for the state meet in several events, explains that working with literature "helped me understand how to construct a story that has a beginning, middle and an end. It gave me a better understanding about how to create tension and timing and

rhythm in a story. One of the biggest challenges as a television journalist when writing a story is that the writing has to be tight; you have to be able to say more with far fewer words that a print story…"

A partner in the Ogletree Abbott Law Firm in Houston, Texas, Bianca Martinez Reed uses the skills she learned in speech and debate competition daily. She openly expresses that "Lincoln Douglas Debate was my first real experience with legal research and learning to argue both sides of a case. LD helped me to develop and use critical-thinking skills … and to recognize potential weaknesses in my case that I would have to defend against and also to spot the weaknesses in my opponents' arguments."

Reed, a state champion in informative speaking, goes on to explain that "whether it's speaking in front of a judge or talking to a client, participating in speech and debate has made it easier to talk and communicate with people."

Speech and debate competition develops vital cognitive and judgment skills that serve students in whatever career they enter. They polish their public speaking, research, depth-of-analysis and persuasion proficiencies far beyond what they can learn in any other setting. Competitors are trained to remain calm under duress, think outside the box and resolve complex difficulties on short notice.

Salinas, Ellis, Ramirez and Reed learned many important skills that helped prepare them for their careers. As leaders in their present occupations, they use their experiences to help enhance their performance. Their stories relay a valuable message about education. Speech/debate competition is important. It provides that extra boost, encouraging our students to achieve, to strive for more, to reach their highest potential.

Ellis makes a persuasive summary by declaring, "Speech and debate provided the single-most important set of high school experiences, connecting directly to my professional life." ⊙

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 National Federation Interscholastic Speech and Debate Association.



Benefits of Multiple-sport Participation Outweigh Sport Specialization

BY MATTHEW R. SHOMPER, CMAA

There are many benefits for students who participate in co-curricular activities, which are inherently educational and support the academic mission of our schools.

Activities teach students lessons that lead to being better citizens, and they foster success for students in later life. Students who participate in school activities make higher grades and have better attendance than the average student. Participating students also have fewer discipline issues at school, are more likely to attend college and less likely to drop out of school.

Given all of these benefits, students need to be involved in school activities! However, changes in society have led to the expansion of "travel ball" and sport specialization. School programs are being devalued and students are dropping out of sports at an alarming rate, which has led to concern regarding the future or high school athletics.

Students participate in sports for a variety of reasons, according to a recent survey. The top five reasons are to have fun, to do something they are good at, to stay in shape, to learn new or improve current skills and to play as part of a team. Interestingly, "to win" was ranked eighth.

Despite these tremendous benefits of participating in sports, a number of students are dropping out of sports each year. The reasons given were no longer interested in sports, no longer having fun, problems with coaches, financial concerns, wanting to do something different and sport specialization.

Sport specialization is defined as limiting athletic participation to one sport, where students practice, train and compete solely in that sport year-round. Specialization has increased significantly in the past 15 years, championed on the national level by golfing and tennis greats Tiger Woods, Andre Agassi, Serena Williams and Venus Williams.

Why do students choose to specialize? The biggest reason is parents. Many parents encourage specialization because they believe it is an investment in a future scholarship. Students also specialize because of professional aspirations and the revenue that comes with being a professional, and to win the "national championship" with their AAU, Junior Olympics or travel team.

There are many other reasons that students choose to specialize – early college recruiting, pressure from coaches (if you work at it, you'll get to play or even start), weather/geography, socioeconomic factors, sport commercialization, increased pressure and opportunity to play with private club and travel teams, and the general influence of society that wants youth to be a productive age instead of an experimentation age.

Parents and students who choose to specialize believe that specialization increases the chance for college scholarships. Students think they will be able to develop their skills in that sport because of the increased practice time. Parents and students feel that specializing is needed in order to keep up with others, and it satisfies the student's desire to achieve excellence in their sport. Some view specialization as a way for a marginal player to make the varsity team. They also feel that specialization is a great way to avoid injury in another sport.

What about being a multiple-sport athlete? There are many great athletes who were multiple-sport participants, and at a high level. Just to name a few – Hakeem Olajuwon, Carl Crawford, John Elway, Dave Winfield, Jackie Robinson, Babe Didrikson, Jim Brown, Deion Sanders, Bo Jackson, Jim Thorpe, Tom Brady, Dan Marino, Donovan McNabb, Terrell Owens, Joe Mauer, LeBron James, Roger Federer, Alex Rodriguez, and the list goes on and on. With all of these multi-million dollar athletes being multi-sport participants, it's hard to argue against it.

Benefits of Participating in Multiple Sports

So, what are the benefits of being a multiple-sport participant? **Improved health and wellness is one of the benefits.** Students who participate in more than one sport have reduced risk of overuse injuries and stress that leads to burnout. There are many health benefits to varied physical activity.

Multiple-sport students also show improved athletic performance. Cross-training (using different muscles and skills) leads to better athleticism, better leadership and teamwork skills, and better mental development, and makes it easier for multiple-sport students to pick on new skills.

Being involved in more sports leads to character development as well. Students may not excel in all of their sports, so they learn humility and teamwork. They also learn from the different coaching styles and personalities in the different sports.

Multiple-sport participation also provides improved coaching. School coaches understand that there is more to teaching our students than just the sport. Being with our school coaches is better for our students than being with a select or travel coach who may not worry about teaching life lessons. There are many CEOs of major companies who believe that hiring a person who was a multiple-sport participant is important because people who do multiple things are capable of handling different situations.

With regard to scholarships, most college coaches prefer the multiple-sport athlete because he or she is "ready to go," and not likely to be burned out. He or she is usually more adaptable, less concerned with being a star and has better crossover skills.

Following are some things to consider when making the decision to specialize or play multiple sports:

1. Weight room and off-season conditioning is not a substitute for competition.
2. Specialization often conflicts with the educational mission of schools, where the goal should be to provide athletic programs that lead to the greatest personal growth.
3. There is little to suggest that specialization makes an athlete better at a sport. Yes, there are examples, but there are just as many "latecomer" examples as well.
4. When a student specializes, it is not what he or she is gaining, it is more about what a student is losing – the socialization with a slightly different peer group, a different coaching model and seeing things in a different context than if the individual played a variety of sports each year.
5. While this generation of athletes may become highly competent in a certain range of skills, a growing number lack the balance that diverse exposure to sports and other activities have traditionally offered.
6. With pressure to succeed hinging on one sport, the consequent anxiety often leads to burnout.
7. Playing sports in high school provides the best opportunity to learn time management in preparation for college and life after college.
8. Evidence shows that those who specialize in sports at a young age are less likely to be physically active as adults.

Some of the common arguments against sport specialization are:

- overuse injuries,
- burnout,
- dilutes the talent pool in schools,
- denies students meaningful contact with other coaches and students,
- denies students transferable skills,
- students might not discover their best sport, and
- may pit athletes vs. coaches and/or coaches vs. coaches.

The more frequently mentioned arguments for multiple-sport participation are:

- develops multiple identities,
- cushions against failure,
- reduces overuse injuries and burnout,
- positive skill transfer,
- sports sampling provides more options for later sport activity,
- positive values,
- reduces stress, and
- FUN!!

How do we reverse the trend and get students to value being a multiple-sport participant? First, school leaders must educate parents and students about the benefits of being involved in multiple sports and the drawbacks to specialization; then hire coaches with a similar philosophy and who coach multiple sports.

Multiple-sport athletes should be honored with special awards and recognitions, and multiple-sport participation should be promoted in athletic handbooks and publications. Students should be encouraged to develop diversified lifestyles.

Off-season workouts and camps should be scheduled so that students are not forced to choose one over the other. Students need to be reminded that they get only one shot at high school and they need to make the most of that opportunity by being involved in as many school activities as possible.

Interscholastic sports promote citizenship and sportsmanship. They instill a sense of pride in community and teach lifelong lessons of teamwork and self-discipline. Interscholastic sports facilitate the physical and emotional development of our nation's youth. Students and parents need to be educated on the benefits of our programs and multiple activity participation, and students will greatly benefit from multiple-sport participation through interscholastic athletic programs. ⊙

Matthew Shomper is athletic director of Tippecanoe High School in Tipp City, Ohio.

Establishing a Hall of Fame in Your School

BY STEFFEN PARKER

Establishing an athletic hall of fame allows you not only to recognize your school's past, current and future athletic stars, but it also can bring attention to some of your program's supporters. Highlighting the accomplishments of those who have excelled as members of your sports teams – in both a physical way and through an event – allows everyone in your school community to share in their successes.

But having a wall of plaques and an annual banquet does not necessarily provide the quality exposure that you are seeking. Clear guidelines for selecting members, adequate and ongoing funding for maintaining a quality presentation, and continuity in placement and coverage, can ensure that your hall of fame will be a source of pride, admiration and interest for generations of students, alumni and community members.

To create all of the specifics that need to be in place before the first nomination is made, a task force/committee of interested people needs to be assembled. The makeup of this task force should reflect both the majority of the sports that the hall of fame hopes to honor and the groups that are represented by your school's program. Thus, parents, faculty, coaches, administration, student-athletes and the student body in general need to have representation on this group, and they are there to contribute their perspectives, thoughts and energies to making the hall of fame a reality. The tasks they are charged with should include:



PURPOSE: To be successful, you will need to define the purpose of your hall of fame; what is it intended to do and for whom will it do this? How will the hall of fame be organized? A simple statement of purpose will do, but you should all agree to it and always return to this purpose whenever the discussion wavers.

GUIDELINES: Describing the process used to nominate and select members for induction to your hall of fame is the critical part of the process. These guidelines should be established with all sports, all groups and all possibilities in mind. They may be different for each group. A clear set of categories for nomination, each with specific instructions on who can be considered, who can submit nominations and what criteria are used for consideration, will allow the process to move forward smoothly each year. Be sure that all potential nominations are covered with a set of guidelines, and if you wish, have a set of guidelines for nominations that do not fit into the regular categories.

COMMITTEE: To ensure longevity, you need to establish the membership of the committee that will review the nominations each year. To be fair, the committee should provide representation of the involved groups and to allow for continuity, that representation needs to be based on positions within each group (coach, captain, athletic director, booster club president) or based on a selection within those groups (player at large, parent at large). Be sure that there is a clear committee chair or a process for selecting one so that each year's group has established leadership before they begin deliberations.

AWARDS: With predetermined categories, nominations accepted and reviewed, and a committee to determine award recipients, the final steps are how to honor your recipients, both in the present and



in the future. There are as many ways to do so as there are trophy styles, so part of the task force's charges needs to be to determine how the initial awards will look (both the ones each recipient receives, as well as the permanent ones on display in your facility) and how they will be awarded.

Some things to consider for the actual awards: inclusion of the school logo on both; photos of the recipients on the permanent display; clearly indicate the year and name of the award on both; a desk-type award for the recipient (easier to display on shelving than a plaque on a wall). As well, the coordination of an annual event to honor your recipients with another purpose (banquet that raise funds for the program; opportunity to collect food for local food shelf, etc.) provides extra incentive for those not directly connected to any year's recipients to attend.

FUNDING: Providing adequate funding for the continuity that the hall of fame needs may be the most difficult challenge of the task force. Certainly, a specific set of fund-raising efforts can be used to provide the upfront capital needed to establish the hall of fame's physical presence in the school, and one or more of that initial group of events can become an annual source of funding for each year's award process.

The hall of fame event may become its own funding source, collecting funds each year in order to provide the monies needed for the following year's awards. Designating funds from a school's annual athletic budget may the most common way, but it also may be the most risky based on the challenges of funding a school's programs properly each year as school funding fluctuates. Finding annual (or long-term) sponsorship is a tricky process when the sponsor may look for more acclaim in the award process than the committee may be comfortable with including (logos, names, etc., on each award, hall of fame named after the sponsor, etc.), but finding the right fit with a corporation or benefactor can also provide for long-term security in supporting your hall of fame.

As with any change or expansion that involves a school's facility and student body, the approval of your hall of fame plans by your school's administration and community leadership is a must. By having those groups represented on the task force, and presenting the task force's report to those groups in a timely manner, their support can be obtained and actively encouraged, making the path after the presentation much smoother. ⊙

Steffen Parker, a ninth-generation Vermonter, has been an instrumental music educator for 31 years, with degrees in performance, education and conducting. Parker organizes several music events in his state and region, and is in his 17th year as the Vermont All State Music Festival Director. He started a computer company, Music Festival Software Solutions, to help other states move their data processing online and provides that type of service to several groups, including the Vermont Principals' Association and the Vermont Superintendents' Association. Parker is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee.

Helping School Administrators with Hiring of Coaches

BY CHRIS STANKOVICH, PH.D.

One of the many tasks regularly challenging school administrators is attracting and securing talented athletic coaches for school sports teams. In best-case scenarios, newly hired coaches join the school staff and immediately make a positive impact on the student-athletes they coach, as seen through their commitment to integrity, role modeling and healthy life-skills development.

Unfortunately, not every new coach is fully prepared for the complexity involved with successfully guiding student-athletes through sports, and the athletic department may suffer as a result.

Making coach-hiring decisions even more difficult these days is the dramatic decline in the number of teachers who show interest in becoming a coach. Unlike previous generations where most coaches were also teachers in the building, today – in some parts of the country – a large percentage of high school coaches are non-teachers. In some cases, not only has the coach applicant never coached before, but he or she may not have ever previously worked with kids either.

Of course, not all teacher-coaches are perfect simply because they are teachers, nor are all non-teacher coaches bad because they are primarily employed outside of the school. The challenge, however, is for school administrators to quickly gauge the potential of an outside coach applicant with whom they have probably not had any previous experience.

Regardless of how well the coach applicant knows the X's and O's of sports, how do administrators accurately assess the potential for success when it comes to healthy training and positive life skills development? Of course, this challenge also exists when sizing up teacher-coaches, but at least there is a track record of how well the individual has done in the classroom, which provides at least some valid data to examine.

Leadership Styles of Coaches

Authoritarian – This type of coach looks to completely control kids and rules in a dictatorship style. The coach favors punitive and forceful measures, and looks to develop kids through absolute standards that do not include input from kids. In sports, these are known as "old school-type coaches," and they often gain the obedience of team members through yelling, intimidation, humiliation and even physical aggression. This way of leading kids can result in emotional and behavioral problems for kids – as well as potential lawsuits for the school.

Permissive – This type of coach regularly consults with kids about desires they may have, and makes few demands. The coach allows kids to freely do what they please and uses reason before exercising power when leading. Some professional athletes call this type of coach a "player's coach" as players are given free rein to make autonomous decisions and are rarely scrutinized by the coach. When working with school-age kids, however, this approach may be too loose, and may actually hinder the growth of kids due to the absence of any real type of leading.

Authoritative – This type of coach takes on a more balanced approach to leadership, which includes verbal give-and-take with kids and being open to suggestions. In these examples, kids are held accountable for their actions, but they are also encouraged to develop their unique individuality. Rather than threatening a child to not do something "because I said so," these adults offer rationale for the standards and guidelines they ask kids to follow. As you might imagine, it is the authoritative approach that results in the best overall outcomes when compared to the authoritarian and permissive leadership approaches.

As fewer teachers apply for coaching positions, administrators are faced with new challenges of having to make quick and responsible decisions about coaching candidates of whom they may know very little.

Making things even more difficult, especially for administrators with little to no background in athletics, is the age-old myth that suggests tough, yelling/screaming-type coaches are best-suited to lead kids and develop winning programs. The reality is that this coach prototype, while popular in Hollywood movies, is hardly the best way to develop positive relationships with student-athletes, increase their motivation or help them develop life skills through sports.

To help school administrators more accurately assess the potential for coach candidates during interviews, the following tips are provided:

- If the coach applicant is a teacher in the school, try to learn as much about his or her teaching style as possible. In most cases, people coach similarly to how they teach.
- For coach applicants who come from outside the school, it is important to inquire about previous coaching experience, especially with kids the same age as the kids in your school. For some coaches, making the transition to younger age groups from a higher level can be tough as they often forget how "winning" is far less important than kids having fun and developing holistically through sports at the youth and interscholastic levels.
- During the interview, try to come up with a couple of unique examples of potential problems to gauge how the coach would respond to the situation. Specific questions about how the applicant would handle angry parents and undisciplined student-athletes might be especially important to know.
- Try to determine how the applicant feels about using sports for life skills development, and what specific ideas the coach has for making holistic training and development a priority for his team.
- Ask the applicant when, if ever, it is appropriate to "dress down" a student-athlete (get in his or her face); or to resort to humiliation or physical contact in order to prove a point or teach a skill.
- Talk about how the coach applicant contrasts "old-school" coaching with "new-school" coaching and see how you feel about his or her responses. Does the coach seem to "get it," or is the candidate hyper-competitive about winning to the point where you are concerned that his or her approach might not work as well with kids?
- Try to establish the job applicant's knowledge of contemporary issues and trends commonly seen in interscholastic sports. How much does he or she know about things like sports burnout, performance supplement usage, and the realities of how few kids will earn full-ride athletic college scholarships?
- After you make a coach-hiring decision, be sure to stay close to the situation and closely mentor your new coach as needed. With interscholastic sports becoming serious business, it is important to help your coaches keep two feet on the ground and help student-athletes develop as people, not simply mini-professional athletes. ⊙

Dr. Christopher Stankovich is a sport performance scientist and clinician, and an advocate for safe and healthy student-athlete development through sports. Please visit www.drstankovich.com for sport performance and educational training programs and products.



Indiana's Calumet Region Honors Good Sports at 57th Annual Event

BY STEVEN PEEK



On February 21, the Northwest Sportsmanship Committee in northwest Indiana's Calumet Region hosted its 57th annual Sportsmanship Dinner, which exists "to instill sportsmanship and responsibility in the youth of northwestern Indiana."

The boys basketball teams from 30 high schools in six sectionals from four classes attended the dinner, which was held at the Villa Casare banquet facility in Schererville, Indiana. At the event, five teams were honored and all the sectional participants were brought together in a non-competitive environment to focus on the spirit of sport rather than the outcome of a game.

The dinner was founded in 1955 in order to let student-athletes "break bread together" before competing against each other on the hardwood.

D.N. "Mike" Nau, a local businessman, established the tradition with the help of the East Chicago Manufacturing Association and the Hammond Manufacturing Association after a group of unaffiliated and unruly fans exhibited unsportsmanlike behavior during the 1954 sectional competition at the Hammond Civic Center.

The dinner serves many purposes today, but it has recently served as a time to reward good sportsmanship with scholarships.

Since 1991, the Sportsmanship Committee has given more than $160,000 in scholarship money to student-athletes in the area.

This year, there were $1,000 scholarships given to five schools – St. John (Indiana) Lake Central High School, Whiting (Indiana) George Rogers Clark High School, Hobart (Indiana) High School, Hobart (Indiana) River Forest High School and Wheatfield (Indiana) Kankakee Valley High School.

Those high schools have yet to determine to how many people the money will go, but many will have decided by the end of the academic year.



Two seniors – **Brian Stolarz** (above) of Munster (Indiana) High School and **John Clymer** of Valparaiso (Indiana) High School – each earned $1,000 by sharing in the Leadership and Scholarship Award, which is given to an outstanding senior in the area.



Dave Ranich, NWI Sportsmanship Committee, presents **Kim Yelich** the 19th annual Stan Dubis Award, which is given to the year's outstanding officials for their contributions in both football and basketball.






Photos provided by NWI Sportsmanship Committee Web site at www.nwisportsmanship.com.

Don Bales received the Lifetime Achievement Award, awarded to a person of outstanding character and whose contributions and dedication to youth personifies the committee's goals.

Bales' commitment to the area is undeniable. A 1970 graduate of Hebron (Indiana) High School, he spent his 37-year career as a teacher and coach in northwest Indiana, most notably as athletic director for Lowell (Indiana) High School from 1981 to 2010.

During those 30 years, Bales was active in many local, state and national activities and organizations, including local youth sports programs, the Indiana Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (IIAAA) and the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA), of which he served as president in 1998.

While he was Lowell's athletic director, Bales received numerous individual accolades – the Charlie Maas Service Award in 1984, the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 1996, the IIAAA District 1 Athletic Director of the Year in both 1994 and 2003, the Indiana Athletic Director of the Year in 2003, and the NIAAA Award of Merit in 2008.

Bales will be inducted into the Indiana Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame this month.

There has been a keynote speaker at the dinner since the second annual event in 1956, when Michigan State University's then-head coach Hugh "Duffy" Daughtery spoke.

Past speakers include Hall of Fame quarterback Otto Graham (1957), ESPN analyst and former football coach Lee Corso (1973), Milan (Indiana) High School's famous basketball player Bobby Plump (1988), former Indiana University head football coach Bill Lynch (1996), and Purdue University's former head basketball coach Gene Keady (1992) and current head coach Matt Painter (2007).

The 2011 guest speaker was Mike Leonard, head football coach at Franklin (Indiana) College since 2003.

A graduate of Hanover (Indiana) College and DePauw (Indiana) University, Leonard holds a 57-28 record in eight seasons at Franklin. The Grizzlies have won the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference three of the past four years, and last fall they finished eighth in the final D3football.com Top 25 poll after advancing to the NCAA Division III quarterfinals.

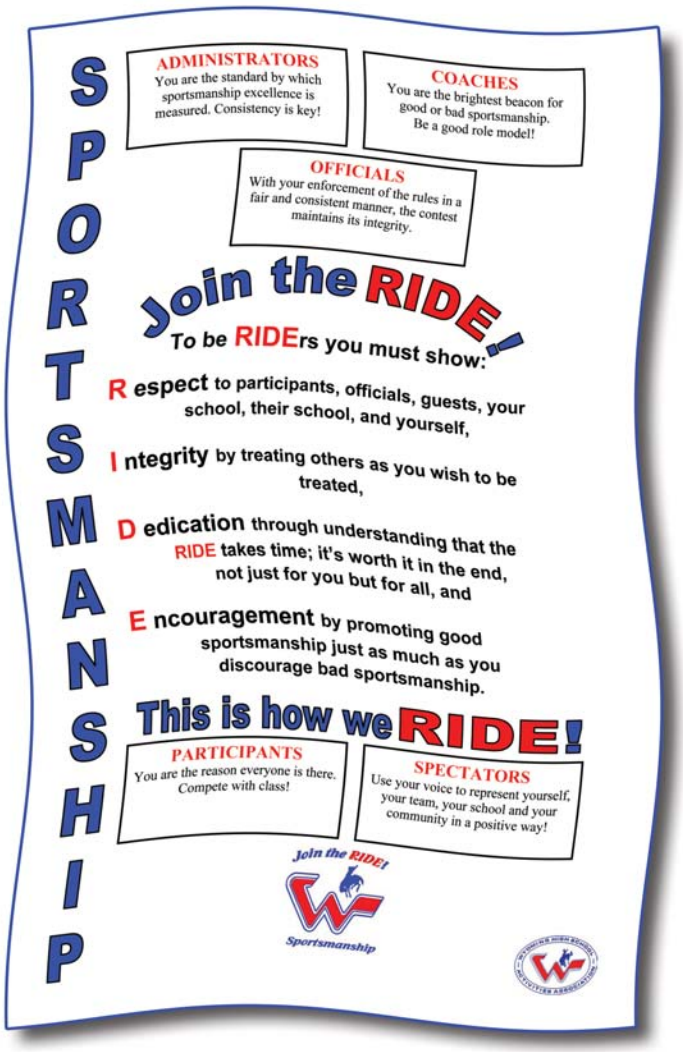
Leonard's program preaches staying positive, striving for perfection, staying aggressive and enjoying football and life – four things which he says will give a person the best chance for significance, no matter the profession or application.

"You can't go back and make a brand-new start," Leonard said in his speech, "But you can make a brand-new end." ⊙

Steven Peek is the NFHS Publications/Communications Department's intern for the spring of 2011. He is a senior studying journalism and history at Butler (Indiana) University.

Wyoming Students "Join the Ride" for Sportsmanship

BY CHRIS BOONE

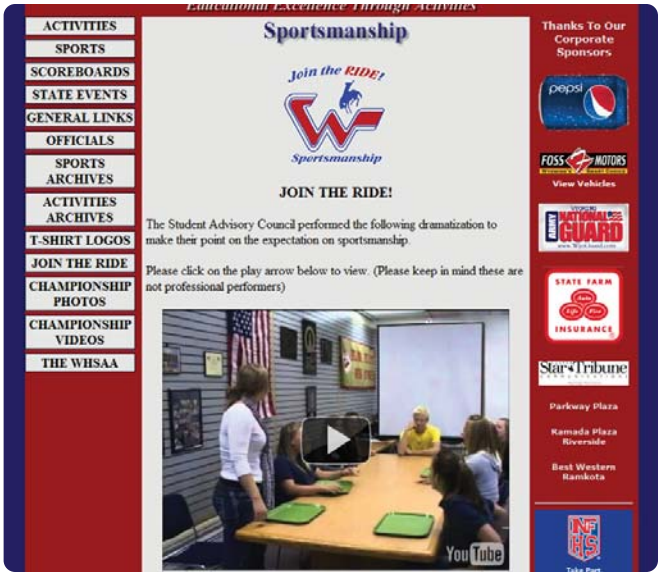


The Wyoming High School Activities Association (WHSAA) has enlisted a group of 16 students to help promote sportsmanship initiatives throughout the state's schools. The **WHSAA Student Advisory Council** was created earlier this year to address sportsmanship issues, and after its first meeting, launched the "Join the RIDE" sportsmanship initiative.

The Council challenges administrators, coaches, spectators, participants and officials to "Join the RIDE" by showing Respect, Integrity, Dedication and Encouragement. The group of students compiled a list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors for "RIDERs" during athletic contests, and created a sportsmanship warning card to be handed to unruly fans as a reminder that poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated.

In addition, the council demonstrated various examples of poor sportsmanship and encouraged students to make good sportsmanship a priority in a video posted on the WHSAA Web site and on YouTube.

During the upcoming fall season, the 16 students will be facilitating district summits for other student leaders so they can return these core values to their respective schools. ⊙



NIAAA becomes first association accredited by NCA

The **National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA)** was granted a five-year accreditation on February 3 by the Board of Directors of **North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI).**

This recent action makes the NIAAA the first "association" in the world to receive such an accreditation, which applies to the entire organization as an educational institution. The NIAAA is accredited as a career, technical postsecondary institution by NCA CASI. During each of the next five years, the NIAAA accreditation status will be reviewed through an annual reporting process.

The accreditation process began in March 2010, when representatives of the North Central Association visited the NIAAA offices for an initial review. As a result, the NIAAA was recommended for movement into candidacy for accreditation. This began a process of evaluation of NIAAA components and the preparation of supportive materials. The documents included the self-assessment report, executive institutional summary and completion of an artifact management tool.

The most recent evaluation process was performed in December when an NCA CASI team conducted a formal Quality Assurance Review of the NIAAA at the National Athletic Directors Conference in Orlando, Florida.

Review by NCA CASI was accomplished on the seven standards for quality schools including Vision and Purpose, Leadership and Governance, Teaching and Learning, Documenting and Using Results, Resource and Support Systems, Stakeholder Communications and Relationships, and Commitment to Continuous Improvement. The report to the NIAAA includes commendations, along with required actions over the next few months, and a compliance checklist. ⊙

Chris Boone is the online editor of *High School Today*.

Dawn Barger makes coaching history in Tennessee

BY STEVEN PEEK

With an 84-63 win over Middleton (Tennessee) High School on March 19, **Dawn Barger**, head coach of the **Tiptonville (Tennessee) Lake County High School boys basketball team**, led the squad to Division I Class A state title.

What makes that significant is, according to the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA), it was the first time that a female head coach led a boys basketball team to a state title in Tennessee.

Prior to Barger coaching Lake County to the state title, no female head coach had ever appeared in the boys state tournament, which consists of the remaining eight teams, let alone win the whole thing.

But despite this history-making win, Barger and her players are quick to dismiss that her gender deserves any attention or should create any amount of additional discussion.

"I haven't given it any thought yet," Barger said. "I'm just happy for our kids. They're the ones who did it, not me."

Senior center B.J. Gauldin said it doesn't matter if your coach is male or female.

"A coach is a coach, and she has pushed us just as hard as any man could push us," he said.

Barger led the Falcons past some staunch competition on the way to a state title. The Falcons' final three opponents had four or fewer losses – that is, until they played Lake County.

"It's all about teamwork," Barger said. "[We] played and worked together, and that's what carried our team this year." ⊙



Photo provided by www.actionpixtn.com.

Kentucky 'smartly' broadcasts basketball tournaments

The **Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA)** saw viewership of its Web site in March nearly double thanks to a new broadcast tactic for its Boys and Girls Sweet 16 Basketball Tournaments.

The KHSAA teamed up with iHigh.com to broadcast tournament games, not only on the Internet, but also on iPad, iPhone, Android, Windows or Blackberry smartphones.

The added accessibility for people on the go paid dividends.

During the month of March, nearly two million viewers tuned in to khsaa.tv to watch live games, and the association's khsaa.ihigh.com had six different days that exceeded 150,000 page views.



The largest single day of site traffic was March 19 for the KHSAA boys semifinals and championship game, when 254,000 people watched.

The second-largest day of viewership was March 12 when 245,000 people visited for the KHSAA girls semifinals and championship game.

In addition to games, iHigh.com's coverage included audio-only feeds, photo galleries and live video of pregame shows and postgame press conferences.

Tournament staff used Flip video cameras to capture on- and off-the-court content. Also, iHigh.com offered more than 7,000 photographs in online galleries that nearly a half-million people viewed.

iHigh.com is a national high school network that provides free Web site services and tools to high schools and their students. ⊙

Virginia expands contact time for coaches, athletes

Effective August 1, the **Virginia High School League (VHSL)** will allow coaches and athletes to work together nearly year-round.

On February 23, the VHSL Executive Committee voted 20-6 in favor of the change, which significantly expands training time from the previous rule, which allowed for only in-season instruction.

At a two-day meeting in March, principals from Groups A, AA and AAA high schools had a chance to overturn the vote, but the group gave the change its stamp of approval when it didn't bring the issue before the committee.

Coaches and athletes will be able to work together at any time during the year except on Sundays, a 10-day dead period at the beginning of each sport's season and a weeklong period in early July that falls in line with NFHS' standardized calendar.

There will also be mandatory dead periods during the school year during tryouts for other sports in order to allow students playing multiple sports to try out without interference.

Schools, districts or regions may add further restrictions at their discretion.

Multiple-sport athletes might be affected the most by the new open schedule, and those athletes are the ones on the mind of Bill Stearns, activities director at Potomac High School in Dumfries, Virginia.

Stearns said his Cardinal District colleagues and he will have to weigh the pros and cons of the schedule expansion, which gives more out-of-season practice time but could limit training for students on multiple teams.

"We want a direction that gives us something that protects our kids and does not put them at a disadvantage to other kids in the state," Stearns said.

Potomac boys basketball coach Keith Honore is in favor of the rule, regardless of any extra restrictions his school, district or region may add.

"As it stands, we get two weeks to prepare for our first game," Honore said. "That's not a lot of fundamentals you're going to teach them.

"[The new rule] is a good thing. Hopefully, it'll result in us as a state putting a better product on the floor." ⊙

Steven Peek is the NFHS Publications/Communications Department's intern for the spring of 2011. He is a senior studying journalism and history at Butler (Indiana) University.

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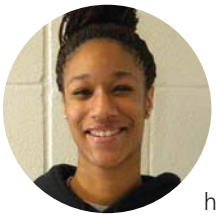
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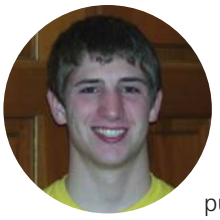
VOICES OF THE NATION

Q | *What does "being a good teammate" mean to you?*



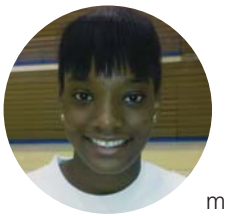
Bria Day
Millbrook High School
Raleigh, North Carolina

To be a good teammate you have to help others out. If you see a teammate struggling with a play or something, you should pull them aside and make sure they get it right. If a teammate gets something wrong, make sure they know their mistake so they can fix it. A bad teammate will not let that person know they're making a mistake. On every team there is at least a few people who don't like to be corrected by anyone but the coach. The coach does not see every single thing, so someone has to step up and help out; if they don't like it, oh well, it'll benefit them in the end. A good teammate is saying positive things when they're on the floor or on the bench. A good teammate will do whatever they have to do for their team. A good teammate is not selfish. They don't care about how many points they score; they just give it their all when they're in the game. A good teammate is cheering their team on whether they're winning or losing.



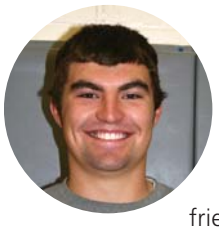
Jacob Sokol
Horlick High School
Racine, Wisconsin

Being a good teammate is all about putting others before yourself. Your team must be your first priority, even when it is difficult. Whether this means moving to a new position, putting extra hours in at practice or tutoring a teammate, you have to be able to unquestioningly follow through on things that may not be especially fun for you, or require sacrifice. If you are able to do this, you will be successful in all aspects of the game.



Lynette Akai
Castle High School
Newburgh, Indiana

To be a good teammate can mean so much. I interpret it as being a great support and crutch for your fellow peers. I would not label myself as the most perfect leader, but then again, being a leader means stepping up to a challenge and taking responsibility. I can do that for my team. Keeping a positive attitude is also an important aspect of being a good teammate. I try to stay positive for all members to maintain that "I can do this" attitude. Additionally, performing to my best ability gives the other athletes reason to do the same.



Andrew Renfrew
Air Academy High School
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Being a good teammate is a lot harder than it sounds. It means being a friend to everyone on your team but also holding them accountable for their actions. Athletes are held to a higher standard than normal students and a good teammate will help you uphold this standard. They must have the trust of the team, work hard at all times and be fully committed to the success of the team. A good teammate isn't necessarily always the best player; he or she just needs to be someone who brings the best out of everyone they play with.