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“No one can become really educated without having pursued some study in which he took no interest. For it is part of education to interest ourselves in subjects for which we have no aptitude.”

That quote by famous poet T.S. Eliot has many applications, but perhaps none as pertinent as its application to today’s high school athlete.

As Eliot suggests, part of getting a well-rounded education is learning things that might not directly interest us. We can all remember classes we had during high school and college that we did not particularly enjoy, but to this day we use the knowledge gained from those classes on a regular basis. Every successful adult probably has had such an experience.

In today’s society in which everyone strives to be the very best in their respective areas, oftentimes a high school athlete’s focus narrows to the sport of choice, and unfortunately to the exclusion of academic endeavors in which he or she might be disinterested or indifferent. Therefore, the message being sent to these students is that as long as their three-point field-goal shooting average stays high, their grade-point average doesn’t matter.

In our opinion, adults are to be partially blamed for this mindset, as they have started schools for reasons of athletics and not academics. In the past few years, there have emerged many so-called high school “basketball factories,” where highly regarded athletes are recruited from not only across the nation but also from around the world.

In the process, they are brought to a school in which their education focuses primarily on the fundamentals of basketball, and not on their academics. These purported schools often enroll a limited number of students who might even live with the coach. In schools such as these, it seems that the 3PA takes precedence over the GPA, and a well-rounded and holistic education is both secondary and difficult to obtain.

The NFHS and its member state associations have always emphasized education as their top priority. Regulations on practices and season lengths, as well as restrictions on travel and transfers, limit loss of class time and encourage student-athletes to focus on their classroom responsibilities. Although being a member of a high school athletic team is an excellent educational experience in and of itself, it should not be the only one that comes out of high school.

Students at these basketball-focused schools are not getting the traditional and well-rounded high school experience they deserve. A high school education is not just about “book smarts”; rather, it’s about everything that goes into becoming a respectable, successful adult. A high school education should include the development of students’ social skills, manners, work ethic and good behavior. Traditional high school teachers work to instill in their students the notions of making good choices, avoiding bad influences and being held accountable for their actions. When a school’s focus is solely on basketball, students miss many of the life lessons that are learned during the everyday activities that occur in the classrooms and hallways of a conventional high school.

Students from these basketball factories often enter college with the misconception that their education is secondary in importance to their athletic ability. Our response to that then becomes, what happens if one of those players suffers an injury that ends his or her athletic career? What does that individual then have to fall back on?

And, while it’s true that in some instances an athlete can make it through high school, college and even to the professional ranks based solely on athletic ability, the vast majority of the population will end up going professional in some other field.

People often ask if we think “early exits” to become a professional athlete will destroy high school sports. Our reply is always the same – “No.”

When they ask why, the answer is simple. Some other young person will always wear the uniform left behind, and that person might someday perform open-heart surgery, saving a life in the process. How many 360-degree dunks can save a life?

The NFHS and its member state associations are proud of their educational mission and their emphasis on the well-being of their student-athletes. The students competing for our member high schools understand responsibility and exhibit teamwork both on and off the court. Those are our well-grounded collective priorities, and always will be.
Huddle Up

The Wylie (Texas) High School football team huddles before the 2008 Texas University Interscholastic League Class 5A-II State Football Championship against Katy (Texas) High School.

Photograph provided by Texas University Interscholastic League.
Welcome

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

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Before Derek Jeter was the captain of the New York Yankees, a four-time World Series champion and a 10-time all-star, he was a standout in both baseball and basketball at Kalamazoo (Michigan) Central High School.

Kalamazoo Central, which had eight graduates in its inaugural graduating class in 1858, has fostered other professional athletes as well, including Green Bay Packers wide receiver Greg Jennings and Cleveland Browns running back Jerome Harrison. However, Jeter, who graduated in 1992, is the first professional baseball player to hail from Kalamazoo Central since Mike Squires, who retired professionally in 1985.

Jeter played varsity baseball for all four years of his high school career, and also played varsity basketball for his final three. Although he was honorable-mention all-state in basketball, baseball was always his strong-suit. After hitting over .500 in both his sophomore and junior seasons, Jeter was named the 1992 High School Player of the Year by both the American Baseball Coaches Association and USA Today and captured the 1992 Gatorade High School Player of the Year Award.

After being drafted sixth overall in Major League Baseball’s 1992 First-Year Player Draft by the Yankees, Jeter opted out of college and his scholarship offer at the University of Michigan, choosing to play baseball professionally.

During his rookie season, in which he was the American League (AL) Rookie of the Year, Jeter founded the Turn 2 Foundation to promote healthy choices among youth. As his professional baseball career took off, so did his foundation, as it has granted more than $9 million to youth programs throughout the country.

As captain of the Yankees since 2003, Jeter has earned three American League (AL) Gold Glove Awards, three AL Silver Slugger Awards, more than 2,500 career hits and a career batting average over .300.

Sean Jordan was a summer intern at the NFHS and is a senior at Indianapolis (Indiana) Lawrence Central High School.
A 12-year-old boy was playing soccer with his friends during lunch period when one of the heavy iron soccer goals toppled, hitting him in the head and killing him. In another instance, a 19-year-old player was doing pull-ups on a soccer goal crossbar when the poorly balanced goal tipped over and crushed him. Four boys were attempting to move a soccer goal when it tipped over, striking one of the 15-year-olds in the head, causing his death. What was the cause of these tragedies? Unanchored soccer goals.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), since 1979, at least 35 people have died from injuries by falling soccer goals with many more serious and catastrophic injuries. It has also been estimated that there are typically between 120 and 200 soccer goal-related injuries treated in U.S. emergency rooms each year.

Many soccer goals are designed in such a way that they are top-heavy and do not need much force applied before they will tip over. It has been reported that only 22 pounds of force is needed to tip over some soccer goals. Typical causes of injuries by falling soccer goals include kids climbing the uprights or grabbing the crossbar, someone lifting the rear support, and tipping over when hit by a gust of wind. Many other incidents have occurred when the goals were being moved from one location to another.

Soccer goals can be deceptively heavy, weighing anywhere between 150 and 500 pounds, and can land with tremendous force when knocked over. In order to save money, many schools have constructed their own goals either in shop class or by maintenance people. These homemade goals are often very heavy and poorly designed. Many of the reported incidents have occurred with these homemade goals.

Putting several safeguards in place can reduce the risks of accidents involving unanchored goals. Experts report that practically all of these deaths and injuries are preventable by following some basic safety precautions:

- **Properly Anchor All Goals** – Securely anchor or counterweight movable soccer goals at ALL times. There are several types of anchors available, both permanent and portable. Permanent anchors might consist of concrete poured in a hole or a buried concrete block. The goal can then be chained or cabled to the anchor. Portable anchors include augers, pegs and j-hooks that can be driven into the ground. Counterweights like sandbags offer an alternative and may be necessary on surfaces that cannot easily be penetrated. The appropriate number and type of anchors will depend on the type of soil, soil-moisture content and weight of the goal.

- **Store Portable Goals Safely** – Most accidents occur when goal posts are unattended. If portable soccer goals cannot be stored in a secure area, ensure that they are in a position that they cannot fall over. Goals can be chained to a fence, post or other sturdy fixture so they cannot fall over or
chained face down on the ground. Additionally, two goals can be chained face to face. Remove the nets when the goals are not in use.

- **Inspect Goals Regularly** – Check for structural integrity and proper connecting hardware before every use. Replace damaged or missing parts or fasteners immediately. Ensure goals are properly anchored prior to every use.

- **NEVER Allow Anyone to Climb on the Net or Goal Framework** – Warn players, coaches and parents of the potential dangers associated with movable soccer goals. Establish rules and enforce those rules.

- **Warning Labels** – Ensure that the safety/warning labels are clearly visible and readable.

- **Do Not Alter Goals** – Follow the manufacturer’s directions for use, maintenance, assembly and disassembly.

- **Don’t Use Homemade Goals** – Only use goals made by reputable manufacturers.

- **Fully Disassemble Goals for Seasonal Storage**

- **Use Extreme Care When Moving Goals** – Always exercise extreme caution when moving goals and ensure adequate manpower is used. Portable soccer goals should only be moved by authorized and trained personnel.

- **Movable Soccer Goals Should Only be Used on LEVEL (flat) Fields**

- **Buy Safe Goals** – There have been many recent improvements to the design of commercial soccer goals. When buying new goals, specify that they be of the new tip-resistant design.

It is the responsibility of coaches and athletic administrators to ensure that facilities and equipment are as safe as possible. There continues to be too many children needlessly injured and killed by unanchored soccer goals. By making a commitment to follow the aforementioned safety guidelines, the number of injuries and deaths can be greatly reduced. Now, it’s up to you.

For further information, the following Web sites are recommended:

- Anchored For Safety – http://anchoredforsafety.org

Todd Seidler, Ph.D., is professor of sport administration at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
Swimmer Sets National Record in 100-yard Breaststroke

BY ALLISON BROWN

Swimmer Kasey Carlson’s primary competition is herself. The Walnut Creek (California) Las Lomas High School swimmer broke the national high school record in the 100-yard breaststroke on May 9 with a :58.8 clocking at the Diablo Foothill Athletic League meet.

Unfortunately for Carlson, who was a junior at the time, the record couldn’t be counted because of a timing error. That didn’t stop Carlson, however. Less than a week later on May 14 at the California Interscholastic Federation-North Coast Section Championships, Carlson swam the 100-yard breaststroke again in record time with a :58.75 performance.

"It was a big weight off of my shoulders," Carlson told the Contra Costa Times. "I was able to exhale because I showed everybody [breaking the record] wasn’t a one-trick thing and I could do it again."

The previous record was held by Jessica Hardy of Long Beach (California) Wilson High School, who posted a time of :59.20 in 2005.

Sarah Wondolowski, assistant swimming coach at Las Lomas, said it was incredible to see Carlson break the record. "It took a few days for the magnitude of it to really sink in for us coaches," she said. "We have always known Kasey is special, but this was the first time the rest of the United States could really see it."

But Carlson wasn’t ready to just tread water at the national level. When summer vacation arrived, Carlson didn’t relax like some students. Instead, she qualified for the World Championships in Rome, bringing home a bronze for the U.S. team in the same event.

"We knew she was a world-class caliber swimmer," Las Lomas Athletic Director Tim Kruger said of Carlson’s achievements. "What she has accomplished so far is amazing. We’re extremely proud of her."

Wondolowski attributes part of Carlson’s success to her natural talent. But she said Carlson’s motivation and drive to succeed are even bigger factors.

“She understands her potential and does not accept anything less of herself,” Wondolowski said.

As a senior, Carlson has one more year of swimming left. So, she still has plenty of time to beat her own records – maybe even more than once.

Allison Brown is a fall intern for the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University, double-majoring in journalism (news editorial) and English Literature.
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To learn more about this free program and request Guard Fit Challenge in your school, visit www.guardfitchallenge.com/school.

FITNESS TOOLS AND RESOURCES INCLUDE:

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- Fitness Tracking Mobile Application
- Exercise Technique Videos
- Exercise Technique Handouts
very December for the past 39 years, the National Federation of State High School Associations and the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association have co-hosted the National Athletic Directors Conference. You didn’t know that it existed? Here’s what you have missed.

During the five days of the conference in mid-December, about 35 workshop sessions are presented by outstanding, experienced athletic directors from around the country. These sessions cover topical issues involved in athletic management and provide the attendees with great practical ideas and solutions.

In addition to practical workshop sessions, the conference also offers a full complement of NIAAA Leadership Training Courses. The first 4-hour professional development courses were developed more than 10 years ago and have now evolved into 32 different, unique offerings covering every imaginable topic. About 1,500 athletic administrators sign up and take these courses at the conference.

In addition to the obvious opportunities for professional development, the conference also features more than 250 vendors in the convention center. Attendees can visit this area, meet with the various representatives and come away with new ideas concerning the latest developments. The vendors exhibit equipment, software and computer products, fundraising possibilities, uniforms and countless other products that can help athletic administrators in their positions and their programs.

While you are sitting in a workshop session or taking an LTC course, you should also exchange business cards. Oh, and it is always a good idea to write on the back of the card the date and where you met this person for future reference. This is one application of networking that is also an extremely important benefit of the conference.

Networking is a valuable outcome? Sure! The person sitting next to you may become a great resource. You now have another contact, and not one from your neighboring school, but someone who might be able to provide a different perspective or share their solution to a similar problem. These “new friends” and colleagues may make your job easier, but you can’t develop these relationships if you don’t attend.

Also, the conference has a complete schedule of committee meetings that provide the organizational support services for the association. Sprinkled throughout the conference schedule, general sessions feature outstanding humorous and motivational speakers.

Considering the outstanding benefits, we need to get the word out that every athletic administrator in the country needs to attend. Actually, principals and superintendents should require their athletic director to attend.

Typically, many athletic directors give several reasons for not attending and actually they are just excuses. The most commonly expressed excuses are:

- It is expensive. While there is a registration fee involved, there are ways to minimize the cost of travel and hotel lodging.
Most schools or districts have professional development funds annually built into the budget and many athletic directors use gate or fundraising monies to help finance their conference expenses. Others may approach their booster club, explain the benefits to the program and submit a request for a stipend to help defray the costs.

The expense of a hotel room at the conference can also be reduced by sharing one with one or two friends. Also, if roommates plan their conference schedules and go to different workshop sessions, they can share the respective handouts and increase the amount of practical information that can be gained.

During this time of the year, there are games that need to be covered at your school. Sure there are, but with a little preparation – by providing detailed instructions – someone can cover for the athletic director. This is not unlike preparing lesson plans for a substitute teacher; it can easily be done. Actually, those individuals – assistant principal or coach – covering the home contests in the athletic director’s absence may gain a much greater appreciation of what is involved in the position and this may be an another ancillary benefit of attending the conference.

For more information, visit the NFHS Web site (www.nfhs.org) or the NIAAA Web site (www.niaaa.org) and look for the conference icon on the respective home pages. On both sites, the conference registration form and procedures, hotel information, an explanation of the airport shuttle possibilities and other important details will be provided.

If the Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus can be proclaimed as “The Greatest Show on Earth,” the National Athletic Directors Conference is easily the greatest professional development opportunity in the world. They both feature three rings of activity and entertainment, and the athletic directors conference is also inspiring, informative and provides practical help for all professionals.

The annual NFHS/NIAAA National Athletic Directors Conference represents the five most important days of the year for anyone involved in athletic management on the high school level. Every athletic director owes it to his or her athletes, coaches and program to attend. And every principal and superintendent should not only support attendance, but require it!

Dr. David Hoch is 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 275 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.
On June 25, 2009, in an 8-1 decision, the United States Supreme Court struck down the strip search by school personnel of a 13-year-old, eighth-grade girl suspected of violating district policies by bringing to school prescription-strength drugs without advance permission.

The Court ruled that officials in the Safford (Arizona) Unified School District violated the Fourth Amendment rights of Savana Redding when they subjected her to the strip search after a tip from another student that she was in possession of the drugs. The decision also addressed the circumstances under which various types of school searches are permissible and issues related to the personal liability of school officials for violations of the constitutional rights of students.

The Facts

In early October 2003, a student told the assistant principal at Safford Middle School that “certain students were bringing drugs and weapons on campus” and that he had become ill after taking some pills that “he got from a classmate.” The boy gave the assistant principal a white pill, later identified by the school nurse as prescription Ibuprofen 400mg, that the boy asserted had been given to him by a female classmate.

The assistant principal summoned the girl to his office where she was found to be in possession of a day planner containing several knives, a cigarette and cigarette lighters. Acquiescing to a request by the assistant principal to turn out her pockets, the girl produced several of the white Ibuprofen 400mg pills and a blue pill later identified as a 200mg dose of a prescription anti-inflammatory drug called Naproxen. School policies strictly prohibited the use, possession or sale of any drug on school grounds without advance permission. The girl claimed that the day planner, all of its contents and the pills had been given to her by her friend, Savana Redding.

Redding was then called into the assistant principal’s office. She admitted ownership of the day planner, but denied knowledge of any of the pills or other contraband. The assistant principal had previously received reports that Redding allegedly had hosted a pre-dance party for students at her home where she had served them whiskey, vodka and tequila.

Redding agreed to let the assistant principal search her belongings and, assisted by a school administrative assistant, a search was conducted of Redding’s backpack, yielding no evidence of drugs or other contraband. The assistant principal then instructed the female administrative assistant to take Redding to the school nurse’s office and search Redding’s clothes.

Redding was first instructed to remove her jacket, shoes and socks, leaving her in stretch pants and a t-shirt, neither of which contained pockets. There were no bulges or other indicia of items concealed beneath the pants or t-shirt. Redding was then instructed to remove both of these articles of clothing, leaving her in a bra and underpants. She was then told to pull out her bra and shake it and to pull out the elastic on her underpants, thereby exposing her breasts and pelvic area. No pills or other banned items were found.

After the incident, Redding never returned to school in the Safford district. She completed high school elsewhere and now attends Eastern Arizona College, where she is majoring in psychology with the intent of eventually earning a Ph.D. and becoming a counselor. Redding’s mother filed suit against the Safford district, the assistant principal, the administrative assistant and the school nurse, seeking monetary damages for their violation of her daughter’s Fourth Amendment right against being subjected to unreasonable searches and seizures.

A federal trial court for the District of Arizona granted a summary judgment for the school and school officials on the ground that no Fourth Amendment violation had occurred. A three-judge panel of the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals initially affirmed the trial court’s decision. However, after a rehearing en banc (by all of the judges on the Ninth Circuit), the Court of Appeals reversed the lower court, concluding that the strip search was unjustified under the Fourth Amendment test for searches of children by school officials. The Ninth Circuit also decided that statutory immunity shielded the school administrative assistant and the school nurse from personal li-
ability, but that the assistant principal and the district could be held financially liable because they were “independent decision-makers” with regard to the impermissible search.

The Supreme Court’s Decision

In reviewing the Safford case, the U.S. Supreme Court relied on its 1985 ruling in New Jersey v. TLO that established the standards for determining the legality of a school administrator’s search of a student. In TLO, the search of a high school girl’s purse for cigarettes was upheld when the Supreme Court ruled that a school search “will be permissible in its scope when the measures adopted are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.”

Applying that standard to the search of Savana Redding, the Court decided that reasonable suspicion existed to justify searching Redding’s backpack and outer clothing because the totality of the circumstances—the report to the assistant principal, the contraband found in the day planner, the pills held by the classmate that allegedly belonged to Redding, and the alleged prior bad acts of Redding—gave rise to a “moderate chance of finding evidence of wrongdoing” and that such a search “was not excessively intrusive.”

As to the strip search, however, the Court stated that “both subjective and reasonable societal expectations of personal privacy support the treatment of such a search as categorically distinct, requiring distinct elements of justification on the part of school authorities for going beyond a search of outer clothing and belongings. In sum, what was missing from the suspected facts that pointed to Savana was any indication of danger to the students from the power of the drugs or their quantity, and any reason to suppose that Savana was carrying pills in her underwear. We think that the combination of these deficiencies was fatal to finding the search reasonable.”

With regard to the personal responsibility of the assistant principal, administrative assistant and school nurse for the unreasonable search of Redding, the Supreme Court decided that because of the prior-existing lack of uniformity across the country of legal standards regarding the permissibility of strip searches, all of the school officials in the Safford case should be shielded from individual financial liability. In the future, however, given that the Court’s ruling has in Safford now established a nationwide, uniform legal standard regarding the issue, school officials will likely incur personal, financial liability for impermissible strip searches.

Going Forward

It is important to note that the Supreme Court’s ruling does not outlaw all “under-clothing” searches. The Court struck down the strip search of Redding as excessively intrusive because of two primary factors: (1) the lack of immediate danger to other students from the items being searched for and (2) the lack of specific evidence that the items being searched for were being concealed by Redding under her clothing at the time of the search.

For instance, an “under-clothing” search conducted by school officials for a weapon such as a knife or gun, the presence of which is indicated by a direct report of concealment by another person or by the outline of the item bulging through clothing, would appear to be permissible under both the TLO and Safford legal standards because of the high level of immediate danger posed and the presence of specific evidence indicating the location of the item. Similarly, an “under-clothing” search for harder street drugs posing a greater danger than the Ibuprofen in the Safford case, the presence of which has been indicated by a direct report from another person or by other substantial evidence, would appear to be legally permissible.

The challenge for school officials will be in dealing with “gray area” situations where suspicions of wrongdoing are based on indirect reports or unverified tips and the level of the immediate threat of harm to others is unclear. The Supreme Court’s ruling in Safford fails to provide clear guidance regarding the required levels of threat and evidence sufficient to justify a strip search. And as Clarence Thomas warned in his dissent, the majority opinion also sends a message to students as to where they should hide contraband. Arguing that courts should not second-guess school officials and that the search of Redding should have been upheld, Thomas stated “Redding would not have been the first person to conceal pills in her undergarments … nor will she be the last after today’s decision, which announces the safest place to secrete contraband in schools.”

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 may be contacted at Lee.Green@BakerU.Edu.
Wrestling with Obstacles — Student-athlete Overcomes Cerebral Palsy

BY ALLISON BROWN

In the three years Cliff McCormick has wrestled at Towson (Maryland) High School, he has never missed a match or a practice.

It is impressive for any student-athlete to have such an excellent attendance record, but perhaps even more so for Cliff. This is because McCormick has cerebral palsy, a disorder that affects the part of the brain that controls muscle tone. He has little strength or agility in his legs, gets around on a walker or a cane and often needs to be carried up stairs.

Despite these obstacles, McCormick still participates in grueling two-hour wrestling practices every day.

Head coach Phil Simmonds admits that his practices are extremely intense, filled with high-paced exercises and drills. “All the kids say wrestling practice is, by far, harder than any of the other sports,” Simmonds said.

McCormick, who has little control over his legs, participates right alongside his teammates.

“He gives 100 percent, and that’s all you can ask,” Simmonds said. “Some of his physical limitations may keep him from doing certain things, but that doesn’t stop him from trying.”

McCormick, who is a senior this year, is on the varsity team and will compete in the 103-pound weight class. He begins each match by crawling onto the mat and shaking his opponent’s hand. He starts the match on his hands and knees while his opponent remains standing.

His opponents wrestle him just as hard as any other wrestler. His tremendous upper-body strength has even surprised a few of them.

Simmonds said one opponent left the mat and said, “Man, is that guy strong!”

McCormick said the hardest part about wrestling is lasting all three, two-minute periods. But, he said “being out there and getting the pin really makes me happy and gets that emotional flow going.”

McCormick, who hopes to wrestle in college, first began wrestling after his physical education teacher, Bill Yosca, suggested to his parents that he give it a shot. Yosca had seen a wrestler with disabilities similar to McCormick’s compete at his son’s high school, Susquehannock High School, in southern Pennsylvania. Yosca, who has coached wrestling since 1989 and currently is a volunteer wrestling coach at Towson, said he warned McCormick’s parents, Patrick and Gerry McCormick, that the coaches wouldn’t do their son any favors. But, he would become stronger and develop a circle of friends.

“And that’s exactly what happened,” said Yosca, who also is a health and special education teacher at Towson.

Simmonds didn’t know much about Cliff’s disability at first.

“I just kind of thought that if he does come out for the team, I’ll just treat him like everybody else,” Simmonds said. “I try to make every effort to not make any special conditions for him.”

McCormick readily accepted the equal treatment given to him by his coaches and teammates.

“Cliff is never looking for any favors,” Yosca said. “He prides himself on doing the best that he can and not making any excuses.”

And wrestling is a sport where excuses can be tempting. It is a tough, physically intense sport. “You get beaten up, and you get sore,” Yosca said.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the sport’s challenges, McCormick has made great improvements since he began wrestling three years ago as a freshman. After his first season, he was able to dispose of the leg braces he had previously worn.

“Most people with cerebral palsy fatigue easily, and he somehow overcomes that,” said his mother, Gerry. “He pushes himself to the limit.”

She said his doctor was so thrilled by his improvement that he has used Cliff as an example to encourage his younger cerebral palsy patients to try sports.

Wrestling has altered more than Cliff’s physical strength.

“Wrestling has gotten him some notoriety at school,” Simmonds said. “It’s helped him to become more social and be part of a team.”

So much so that even when Cliff is knocked out of a tourna-
ment, he stays until his last teammate is out. Even though he is on varsity, he goes to junior varsity matches to support his teammates.

Although wrestling at Towson was certainly a new experience for McCormick, it wasn’t the first time he was exposed to sports. Since he was three years old, Cliff, whom his mother describes as a “walking encyclopedia of sports trivia,” has played a variety of sports including track, discus and javelin through a league called the Bennett Blazers, which is associated with the Baltimore-based Kennedy Krieger Institute. The Blazers, which is a part of Kennedy Krieger’s Physically Challenged Sports and Recreation Program, sparked Cliff’s interest in sports.

McCormick, who mainly competes in track events, flies past his opponents using his walker for aid. He runs 100-meter, 200-meter and 400-meter sprints. “I usually do pretty well,” Cliff said.

Although he doesn’t have a winning record in wrestling, everyone knows that doesn’t matter. Simmonds said his record “doesn’t reflect his true effort.” McCormick himself said his main goal for his senior year is to simply get more pins that he did last year.

Yosca agrees that Cliff’s record is irrelevant; it’s what he has learned from competing in high school sports.

“He is the reason we have sports in our public schools,” Yosca said. “Sports teach more than textbooks — they teach about life.” Simmonds emphasizes dedication and “a willingness to get in there and do it” as a few of the important lessons that Cliff has learned.

“It’s a big challenge to go out there and wrestle one on one in front of an auditorium full of people,” Simmonds said. “For him, it takes even more guts to go out there and do that.”

“Allison Brown is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University, double-majoring in journalism (news editorial) and English Literature.”

“He prides himself on doing the best that he can and not making any excuses.”
One issue of a non-academic nature facing high schools today is Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) and the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). According to the Journal of the American Heart Association (AHA), SCA affects 300,000 persons annually. The largest factor in the survival rate for victims of SCA is the time span between collapse from SCA and defibrillation (use of an external device to reset the heart’s rhythm). The survival rate drops seven to 10 percent for each minute that action is delayed. The AHA Journal reports that whether administered by trained or untrained bystanders, survival rates range from 41 to 74 percent when CPR and defibrillation occur within three to five minutes of initial collapse.

An Inter-Association Task Force convened by the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) in 2007 reported that SCA is the leading cause of death among high school athletes. In a study conducted by the AHA, it was estimated that 4.4 in 100,000 high school athletes suffer from SCA every year. A cardiac condition known as hypertrophic cardiomyopathy accounted for 25 percent of the Sudden Cardiac Deaths (SCD) in high school athletes, while coronary artery abnormalities accounted for 14 percent of SCD within this age group.

Commotio cordis, a conditioned caused by a blunt, non-penetrating blow to the chest, causes ventricular arrhythmia in an otherwise normal healthy heart. This could occur after getting hit in the chest by a baseball or lacrosse ball. Commotio cordis accounted for approximately 20 percent of SCD in young athletes.

In addition to athletes at the high school level, spectators, faculty and staff can also become victims of SCA. As public attention has focused on SCA incidents, state agencies and high school administrators are determining that AEDs are a necessity for the health and welfare of individuals using and visiting their campuses. With the cost of the typical AED unit in the range of $1,500 to $3,000, administrators are faced with sizeable budgetary concerns.

Some states are mandating that AEDs be available at high schools during events, including outdoor athletic contests. Many states have gone so far as to determine the distance between the event and the accessible AED. If today’s economic crunch has not put enough burden on education, these new unfunded mandates have not made this situation any easier. Schools are looking for ways to fund these AED programs, protect their investment in equipment and make the units readily accessible.
The “Chain of Survival”

Time is of the essence when dealing with SCA. The AHA identifies four links in the “chain of survival” when intervening with victims of SCA:

1. Early recognition of the emergency and activation of the EMS or local emergency response system: “phone 911”
2. Early bystander CPR: immediate CPR can double or triple the victim’s chance of survival from Ventricular Fibrillation SCA
3. Early delivery of a shock with a defibrillator: CPR plus defibrillation within three to five minutes of collapse can produce increased survival rates
4. Early advanced life support followed by post-resuscitation care delivered by health-care providers

Developing an AED Program

Schools are urged to partner with a local hospital or fire department when developing a school-based AED program. Many municipalities have a EMS coordinator who may assist schools with the development of their program.

A program director within the school needs to be appointed by the administration; a person familiar with SCA and the development of Emergency Action Plans (EAP) would be the logical choice. This individual may be the athletic trainer, school nurse or school safety coordinator.

The outside partnering organization can be very helpful when determining which type of AED unit to purchase and where to locate the units. When schools first began purchasing AED units five to 10 years ago, there was little thought as to the location and accessibility of the units, especially for after-school activities. Due to concerns about the security of the AEDs, many schools were keeping two to three units in the same location, such as the main office or the nurse’s office.

Many times, these units were not accessible for after-school activities such as athletics, musicals, theatrical productions or even band practice. The potential concern with security appears to be unfounded as a survey conducted in 2008 by the Texas University Interscholastic League revealed that only 1.3 percent of schools reported problems with AED thefts or vandalism.

It has become apparent that “just having” AED units is not enough. Accessibility and visibility are important factors as well. Signs indicating the location of the units are an important component of the program. Maps with the location of every AED within the school building should be posted in every classroom and office. Special note should be made of the nearest AED.

Additional resources:

Project ADAM www.projectadam.com
American Heart Association www.americanheart.org
National Athletic Trainers’ Association www.nata.org/statements

Additional funding sources for AED units may come from local fund raising initiatives, organizations championing the placement of AEDs within schools and providing funding assistance to purchase the units. One such organization, Project ADAM, helps schools across the country establish public-access defibrillation programs. Project ADAM, based in Wisconsin, presently has affiliations in Atlanta, Philadelphia, Alabama and Illinois.

Although SCA cannot always be prevented, all high schools should be well-prepared in the event that it does occur. The most important factor for increasing the survival rate of SCA is the presence of a trained rescuer who initiates CPR and has access to early defibrillation with an AED. Any collapsed or unresponsive athlete should be suspected of suffering from SCA. The EAP should be implemented immediately in these cases.

High schools are in a unique position to have many individuals such as athletic trainers, coaches, school nurses and team physicians available and trained for these types of emergencies. By developing an EAP, practicing the procedures designated by the EAP and establishing an AED program, added protection will be available to all who use the high school facilities.

Brian Robinson, MS, ATC, LAT, is the athletic trainer at Glenbrook South High School in Glenview, Illinois. Robinson is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee.
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Emilio Martinez is lucky to be starting his junior year of high school this fall. If Cienega High School in Vail, Arizona, hadn’t been equipped with an automated external defibrillator (AED) last spring, he probably wouldn’t be alive.

Deana Contaoi, the school’s athletic trainer, first urged Assistant Principal Nemer Hassey to place an AED in the high school after she attended an athletic training seminar in May 2008 at the University of Arizona. It was at this seminar that she saw a presentation about AEDs given by Cardiac Science, a company that manufactures AEDs. Contaoi felt that obtaining an AED for the school was imperative “for the well-being of anybody,” not just students, but teachers and staff as well. She also pointed out that AEDs were useful not just in the school, but at athletic events as well. Spectators, officials and athletes could all potentially need the device.

The AED was placed in the school in July 2008, and a little less than a year later, it saved a life. On Monday, April 20, 2009, Martinez, who was a sophomore at the time, was in the weight-training room when he passed out. The weight-training teacher, Jay Johnson, sent for Contaoi, who is certified in first aid, CPR and AEDs.

“When I got there, he was unconscious and gasping for air,” Contaoi remembered.

She knew immediately that Martinez needed the AED, and when she attached the electrodes to his chest, the machine instructed her to give him a shock by pressing a button. After doing so, she administered CPR.

“He started breathing, but was not conscious. He started coughing almost like he was choking, so I rolled him over on his side,” Contaoi said. The AED continued to monitor his vital signs until the emergency response team arrived 10 to 15 minutes later.

Martinez was sent to University Medical Center in Tucson. The doctors did a variety of tests because he had no medical history of heart problems. The AED came to the rescue again when doctors couldn’t find anything wrong with Martinez. The AED Contaoi used – a Cardiac Science Powerheart G3 – was able to print out a detailed, second-by-second report of everything that happened during its use. Contaoi turned in the report to the doctors after Martinez was hospitalized. Using the report, doctors diagnosed him with atrial fibrillation.

“It means his electrical activity [in his heart] was abnormal, and his heart was fluttering instead of beating, which caused him to pass out because blood wasn’t reaching his brain,” Contaoi explained.

Doctors performed surgery three days later to insert a pacemaker-like device beneath Martinez’s skin, which sends shocks to his heart when it reads abnormal activity. The device will prevent him from having another incident like the one in the weight room.

Contaoi admitted that if an AED had not been available that day in the weight room, ”it definitely would have been a worst-case scenario.” She said that doctors told her that the AED and the CPR saved his life. “They didn’t think he would have survived without it.”

Although Martinez could have died, Contaoi didn’t panic at the time. “Truthfully, I didn’t think,” she said. “I didn’t have time to think. I was just doing what I had been trained to do.” Luckily, a person doesn’t have to be a certified athletic trainer to use an AED.

“AEDs are dummy-proof,” Contaoi said. “It’s voice-activated and takes you through every single step.”

Since Martinez’s incident last spring, Cienega High School has added an additional AED. Cienega plans to purchase a third AED by the end of this year and a fourth by the end of next year. AEDs cost around $1,500, but Contaoi knows they are worth the expense.

“People think things like this can’t happen, but there have been many cases,” she said. “This could have cost Emilio’s life, and $1,500 is worth a kid’s life. If you don’t use it for 15 years, that’s great. But I’d feel a lot safer knowing I had one just in case.” 

Allison Brown is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University, double-majoring in journalism (news editorial) and English Literature.
High School Sports Participation Increases for 20th Consecutive Year

BY ALLISON BROWN

Despite cutbacks in funding in many high schools across the country, participation in high school sports has never been higher – increasing for the 20th consecutive year and establishing records for both girls and boys participants.

Based on figures from the 50 state high school athletic/activity associations, plus the District of Columbia, that are members of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), participation for the 2008-09 school year set an all-time high of 7,536,753, according to the 2008-09 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS.

In addition, boys and girls participation figures reached all-time highs, with 3,114,091 girls and 4,422,662 boys participating in 2008-09. The girls figure increased by 56,825 this year, while the boys figure increased by 50,547.

Based on the survey, it was also determined that 55.2 percent of students enrolled in high schools participate in athletics – a slight increase from last year’s 54.8 percent.

“Given the state of the economy, this year’s survey makes a great statement about the interest in high school sports in our nation’s schools,” said NFHS Executive Director Robert F. Kanaby. “The record participation levels for boys and girls reflect the fact that participation in high school sports is of great value to our nation’s young people. Also, the survey’s results support the NFHS 2008-2011 Strategic Plan, in which the organization vowed to provide stronger leadership and support for high school athletics and fine arts activities.”

In addition to its chief task of writing playing rules for high school sports, the NFHS – through its “Take Part. Get Set For Life.” initiative – is striving to promote participation and gain awareness and support from state and local governments, media, corporate partners, and especially students and their parents.

Swimming and diving gained the most combined participants in 2008-09, with an increase of 29,967, followed by outdoor track and field with 19,396 and cross country with an additional 18,193 participants. Lacrosse, one of the emerging sports in recent years, had an additional 9,579 participants in 2008-09.

With an increase of 4,017 participants, 11-player football again was No. 1 for boys this year with 1,112,303 participants, followed by track and field (558,007), basketball (545,145), baseball (473,184), soccer (383,824), wrestling (267,378), cross country (231,452), tennis (157,165), golf (157,062) and swimming and diving (130,182).

Outdoor track and field supplanted basketball as the most popular girls sport with 457,732 participants. Basketball was in second place with 444,809 participants, followed by volleyball (404,243), fast pitch softball (368,921), soccer (344,534), cross country (198,199), tennis (177,593), swimming and diving (158,878), competitive spirit squads (117,793) and golf (69,223).

Texas remained the state with the most participants with a combined total of 781,000. California was second with 771,465 participants, followed by New York (380,870), Illinois (341,763), Ohio (330,056), Pennsylvania (321,324), Michigan (311,277), New Jersey (257,798), Florida (242,356) and Minnesota (242,220).

The participation survey has been compiled since 1971 by the NFHS through numbers it receives from its member associations. The complete 2008-09 Participation Survey is available on the NFHS Web site <www.nfhs.org>.

Allison Brown is a fall intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University, double-majoring in journalism (news editorial) and English Literature.
### TEN MOST POPULAR BOYS PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Basketball</td>
<td>1,112,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Track and Field – Outdoor</td>
<td>558,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Basketball</td>
<td>545,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Football – 11-player</td>
<td>473,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cross Country</td>
<td>231,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Wrestling</td>
<td>157,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Soccer</td>
<td>157,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Tennis</td>
<td>130,182</td>
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</table>

### TEN MOST POPULAR GIRLS PROGRAMS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Track and Field – Outdoor</td>
<td>457,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Basketball</td>
<td>444,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Volleyball</td>
<td>404,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Softball – Fast Pitch</td>
<td>368,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Soccer</td>
<td>344,534</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Cross Country</td>
<td>198,199</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Tennis</td>
<td>177,593</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Competitive Spirit Squads</td>
<td>117,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Swimming and Diving</td>
<td>69,223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Improving Student-athlete Codes of Conduct

BY JOHN UNDERWOOD

Just as a physical and parental permission are required to engage in high school athletics, student-athletes also are required to follow rules and standards put in place to ensure health, safety and optimal performance. Unfortunately, codes of conduct, which came into being in the early 1980s, have often failed to function, with regard to negative behavioral issues and youth.

The No. 1 negative issue reported by high school athletic directors is the problem of enforcing student-athlete codes of conduct. School leaders must understand the purposes of a code of conduct, what it can impact and how to rewrite codes for today’s athletes and parents.

Codes should also include strategies for controlling adult fan/stakeholder behaviors of concern, parental issues and the seven non-negotiable conditions for involvement in high school sports.

Many modern-day codes are reactive, punishment-based documents. Codes need to be re-written as proactive character-based documents, in support of our young athletes by telling them what we want them to do, including our rationale, rather than telling them what we don’t want and what we will do to them if they go for it.

The Basics: A Statement of Purpose

Is your code designed to catch student-athletes breaking the rules and punish these individuals for their mistakes, or to educate them and set clear and consistent boundaries for their behavior? A well-written code should be a positive document that establishes a comprehensive structure for running a program of excellence.

First, it should define the positive expectations for coaches, parents and athletes. Common values in the program need to reflect shared goals and a framework of principles agreed upon by all stakeholders. The need for active support from other stakeholders, such as the school board, school administration, other school staff and the community at large must be established in the code.

Administrators need to stop telling kids what they don’t want them to do (reactive) and simply tell them what they expect (proactive). Administrators should establish an understanding and agreement to these standards with all stakeholders. This cannot be done by sending home a piece of paper … Example: “Hey Dad, sign this so I can play football!” All you have is a signature and unfortunately most parents will sign anything and agree to anything until it is their child who gets caught in a violation. Then the fun begins.

Most school districts realize that mandatory seasonal meetings are the only way to get this done effectively. In New York, mandatory seasonal meetings were started for the majority of the 700-plus school districts statewide. Parents were informed that if they don’t attend the meeting their child can practice, but cannot play in any contests. They came in droves. This was our opportunity to

"Codes of Conduct-Conditions for Involvement” has helped nearly 800 high schools begin the process of rewriting their codes for today’s challenges, while sending a clear message to community, youth and adults that student-athlete drug use will not be tolerated.

This mandatory workshop helped attendees discover the purpose of a code, the components of a code and valuable examples of clear and consistent boundaries to guide young student-athletes toward adulthood in a program of excellence.

The Life of an Athlete Program Mandated by the NYSPHSAA

Every school year, New York state’s 500,000-plus student-athletes sign a code of conduct. The lacking perception of consequences for chemical-health violations was fueling a culture of rampant underage drinking and partying in this population. Data collected by the American Athletic Institute substantiated previous claims that athlete alcohol use actually surpasses general student population use between 10th and 11th grade. Much of the problem was attributed to ineffective codes of conduct.

"Raise the standards for your athletes, coaches and parents and they will surprise you.”
discuss seven non-negotiable areas of behavior with parents for their child to be afforded the privileges of being a student-athlete and representing their community.

Strongly stated, “These seven standards are absolutely non-negotiable if your son or daughter wants to wear a blue-and-white uniform and represent this school and community.”

**The Seven Standards**

1. Academics
2. Serious criminal acts, such as felony, assault, rape, drugs, weapons possession, etc.
3. Out-of-character behaviors
4. Cyber-image violations
5. Drug use – possession or association
6. Hazing
7. Performance-enhancing drugs/supplements

**Second**, as in a clearly laid-out playing field, the code defines how the school will establish and maintain a healthy environment in which student-athletes can mature through athletics, while considering the responsibilities of all stakeholders.

**Third**, this Athletic Code is meant to be a usable, dynamic document to guide the educational process through our school’s athletic program. It defines the mission, philosophy, goals and parameters of the program, and the priority activities.

**Fourth**, it spells out the consequences for behavioral issues and violations, but links the identified individual to a process for help and change.

Never forget that your athletic code is school district policy. The paramount purpose of your board of education and administrators is to enforce school district policy. If they don’t, they are not in compliance with their duties. When violations to your code occur, you shouldn’t be in turmoil ... rather a logical series of events should commence resulting in a process aimed at helping a student-athlete learn from a mistake. The “Educate/Correct/Restore” process must be employed to help them learn (the parents are required to be involved).

Always remember that as an extension to the classroom, athletics is a valuable venue to impact youth behaviors of concern, to give athletes a perspective of character and moral decision-making and to teach them that when you join a social order, you are held to the established standards of the group. This is not the norm for today’s youth. “Just Do it” has influenced much of their decision-making when it comes to issues of personal or collective responsibility or accountability.

Codes of conduct are necessary for student-athletes. Young people are learning how to live their lives, to fit in society and prepare for their adult futures. Adults need to set standards for youth behavior, gain from athletes and their parents, knowledge, understanding and agreement to the established standards and, above all, enforce them universally.

Raise the standards for your athletes, coaches and parents and they will surprise you.

For a free download of a 54-page document: “CODE ONE THAT WORKS” or “12 THINGS TO ADD TO YOUR CODES,” go to <americanathleticinstitute.org>.

A former NCAA All-American, International-level distance runner and World Masters Champion, John Underwood has coached or advised more than two dozen Olympians, including world and Olympic champions. He holds three International Olympic Solidarity diplomas for coaching and has been a crusader for drug-free sport at all levels. Underwood’s innovative program, “The Life of an ATHLETE,” has gained international prominence. He is the chemical-health consultant for the New York State Public High School Athletic Association drug prevention program.
Balancing Athletics and Fine Arts Opportunities

BY ROB REARDON

Essex High School – the largest school in Vermont for the past 10 years – has large numbers of students who participate and excel in athletics and the arts. Many students play more than one sport, many participate in more than one fine arts event and some students participate in both athletics and theatre. This does not occur by happenstance.

One major reason that both the arts and athletics flourish at Essex is the regular, ongoing communication by Athletic Director Ed Hockenbury and Julian Bradshaw, chair of the fine arts department. These two meet each April, when schedules are solidified, to cross-reference each athletic season with major fine arts events, beginning with auditions.

Potential conflicts are identified before the new school year begins, and the students are kept at the heart of calendar decisions. This is no easy task with 32 varsity sport options for boys and girls and numerous sub-varsity offerings as well, along with 42 possible course offerings in fine arts. Students choose from performing arts and visual arts options. Advanced-placement offerings and internships are part of the package. Many arts activities occur after the school day. There is tremendous appreciation for what participation can offer students – in either athletics or the arts – with regard to learning skills that will assist them beyond their post-secondary years.

The Essex community values both the arts and athletics from kindergarten to 12th grade. Also, there are numerous opportunities for further experiences in recreational activities – both after school and during the summer for elementary students. As a result, students enter Essex High School with a yearning to continue what they have experimented with and experienced in their earlier years.

Recent evidence of community support occurred three years ago when the voters supported a $12 million bond vote for both new educational space and converting existing space. Two of the identified pieces of this vote were the construction of a Black Box Theater and building a weight room. The Black Box Theater has allowed our performing arts groups to hold classes and after-school activities in a professionally designed space specific to their needs. The new weight room has been a huge boost to our physical education classes and our athletic teams. Both spaces are tightly scheduled and used throughout the school day and into the evenings and weekends.

Another key aspect is hiring. Obviously, we want qualified people when we hire for varsity coaches, directors and conductors. In addition, we want people who will work together and check their egos at the door. It is imperative that communication is ongoing and that student opportunity is the main focus. This philosophy has worked well for us. For example, we have been recognized by Sports Illustrated the past three years as having the top high school athletics program in Vermont. Likewise, Essex sends the most students to the All State Music Festival, which is an annual event with high prestige.

Best-selling author, speaker and former White House speechwriter Daniel Pink claims that the future will belong to those “right-brain” thinkers who will have the fundamental human abilities of design, story-telling, symphony, empathy, play and meaning. Pink states in his book, “A Whole New Mind,” that gone are the days of simple “left-brain” dominance and associated skills as a result of abundance, Asia and automation. In order to thrive in an ever-competitive global economy, students will need these additional attributes. At Essex High School, students are well-positioned based on the aforementioned balance between the arts and athletics.

Rob Reardon is principal of Essex High School in Essex Junction, Vermont.
Saluting States Qualifying for the NIAAA Membership Commendation Program

States with 100% NIAAA membership:

- Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors, District of Columbia Athletic Directors Association
- Indiana Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, Maryland State Athletic Directors Association
- New Hampshire Athletic Directors Association, Rhode Island Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association
- Utah Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, Virginia Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association

States that have reached both NIAAA membership commendation levels of 10% growth and 70% membership among athletic directors in their respective state:

- Arizona
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Hawaii
- Indiana
- Maine
- New Hampshire
- Nevada
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Dakota
- Utah
- Virginia
- Washington
- West Virginia

States that have maintained at least 70% NIAAA membership from among the number of athletic directors in their state:

- Connecticut
- Hawaii
- Rhode Island

States that have raised NIAAA membership by at least 10%:

- MIAAA

Connecticut, Hawaii, and Rhode Island are the only states to earn commendation awards every year since the program began in 1991.

Acknowledging state athletic director associations that raised 2007-08 and/or 2008-09 NIAAA membership. State association either increased membership by at least 10% or maintained at least 70% membership among those athletic administrators, directors, liaisons, or coordinators at schools belonging to the respective state athletic association.
FaceBook – Communication in the 21st Century

BY BRYAN DOUGHTY

It has been said many times that “communication is everything.” Although this can be debated, communicating with each other sure does help. In the 21st century, communication comes in many forms – face-to-face, a letter sent through the mail, a note left on a kitchen table, a quick e-mail, a phone call, a text-message or one of the latest fads, FaceBook.

For those of us already on FaceBook, we know what it is all about and how powerful it can be. For the people not on FaceBook, it may be time to take a look and see how one can increase communication to relatives (even long-lost ones), students, friends, clients and new friends with whom you share a common interest.

Let’s start with an obvious question: What is FaceBook? Aptly nicknamed a social network, FaceBook has found success by building on what we all do in our lives on a daily basis. We meet someone who knows someone, who knows someone (Kevin Bacon ring a bell for anyone?). The concept is simple – build a page and someone will come along and ask you to be their friend. As time passes, another friend will find you or you might find them and your network has begun.

Building a FaceBook page for the first time may seem like a daunting task, but in reality FaceBook will take you step-by-step through the process with its built-in templates. Let’s say you are a teacher at a high school and want to create a FaceBook page to communicate with your students and their parents. FaceBook will take you through the process with questions pertaining to your birthdate, occupation, high school and college attended, etc. These would be items you might cover when meeting someone for the first time, but instead of face-to-face, this information is posted on a Webpage. After the questions have been completed, you can then modify the page to your liking. If you don’t want your birthdate to be shown, take it out. If you want your favorite color added, just add it in. You can also add videos and pictures to enhance your page.

Now that you have a page, it is time to start building your network. On FaceBook, your Webpage or profile is protected. In order for it to be viewed, someone must ask to be your “friend.” Like winning the lotto, people who you have not heard from in forever (like a lifetime or longer ago) will probably ask you to be their friend. The first people to ask will most likely be friends or co-workers. Eventually it will trickle down to the friends of people you work with who you have never heard of in your life. It might make sense to only allow people you actually know to become your friends until you get used to how FaceBook works. It can get out of control!

Now let’s fast-forward a week. You have a FaceBook page and 50 friends. It is time to communicate. The simplest way to communicate is through your status update. This appears at the top of the page and can be updated whenever you feel the need through FaceBook.com, a Blackberry, iPhone or other similar device. These devices will be all you need to be in contact with your FaceBook page at all times (kind of a scary thought). At any time, your status could read: shopping, going to concert, playing hoops with the kids, coaching a soccer game, etc. Some people choose to leave the status blank and others choose some very odd things to post on their page. Because the user controls all
aspects of his or her page, it is all up to the user what is displayed and what is not displayed.

On each person’s homepage, there is also a “wall.” The wall is a place where you can communicate publicly with your friends. If there is a basketball game tonight at the elementary school and you are wondering if one of your friends might be attending, you can post a question on their wall. You will get a response posted on your wall when he or she has time to respond. If you need a little more privacy, a message can be sent via the messenger. This is similar to an e-mail and the friend will get a notification after your message is sent so he or she can view and respond. What if you need an immediate response? Use the “online friends” feature at the bottom of the page. You can text back and forth as long as both you and your friend are online.

Moving away from your personal page a bit, there are other ways to communicate on FaceBook. One can create an event page and invite people from your list of friends or make an event open to public viewing. A high school band director can create an event page for an upcoming concert. The director can give the time, place, program, etc. and instant publicity is created. Without even knowing, it is possible students have already created a page advertising your upcoming event! You can also create pages for “Fans of _____,” a business page, a page honoring a departed friend or relative and like everything on FaceBook you choose to allow users to comment or not comment on the pages you create. It might be worth looking up your name, because there may already be a page called “Fans of ______.”

One of the interesting things about FaceBook is who is using it. It appears that all ages and walks of life are using FaceBook. You will probably connect with former classmates you have not even thought about for decades, relatives you may hardly know and even your own kids who may be so busy that you do not see them as often as you would like!

Learning how to communicate with students and parents in the 21st century is one way to keep teachers, parents, friends and students in the loop. FaceBook should be one avenue of sharing information with those who need to know, one way among many. But given the popularity of individual and group pages, and their ease of use, quick access and simple process, FaceBook is likely to continue as a significant use of technology by an increasing portion of the education community.

Bryan Doughty is a music arranger, engraver and publisher. His works can be found at www.cimarronmusic.com and www.bvdpress.com.
Expanding its long list of varsity sports, the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) has added a bass fishing state championship – the first of its kind in the nation.

The big fishing championship story starts with sectionals that were held across the state as qualifiers for the one-class state tournament. Sectionals were held April 24 at 18 different lake locations, and the state championship was conducted May 8-9 at Lake Carlyle in Carlyle, Illinois.

“We had about 2,450 students participate from 199 high schools in our sectionals,” said Dave Gannaway, an assistant executive director of the IHSA.

“Prep anglers from around the state were lured into the opportunity to compete in a varsity sport at their high school while still competing in the sport they loved. “Sixty percent of the kids that were involved in the tournament were not involved in any of our other activities,” Gannaway said. “It’s a rewarding chance to get kids involved who otherwise wouldn’t have been.”

During the sectional at Sangchris Lake, coach Kerry Trueblood of Athens (Illinois) High School kept students back at school enthralled with the fishing saga by giving updates of the conditions on the lake, and also how the fish were biting.

In an interview with The State Journal-Register, Trueblood said, “We called the office at 9:30 a.m. and had Principal Mike Curry announce over the intercom system that we already had a limit of fish in the boat. And then we called back about an hour later and told them we had a big fish in the boat weighing about four pounds and that it was looking good (for an Athens victory).”

Many Illinois high schools, such as Athens, could not pay for the expensive lures, bait or tackle. Each team had to come up with its own boat, boat driver (coach) and tackle. This expense was one that many schools could not afford, so students and local bass fishing clubs helped provide teams with boats and even came up with rods and reels for some high schools.

After sectionals, 52 boats made it on to Lake Carlyle for the state championship. Just like the sectionals, anglers tried to catch five fish per boat to be weighed later in the afternoon. Although some teams did not catch anything in the two-day tournament, other teams pulled in hefty bass that tipped the scales in front of more than 1,000 spectators.

From the IHSA’s perspective, the tournament was a success.

“We expect more than 5,000 kids with 300 to 350 schools participating next year,” Gannaway said. “Some high schools took a ‘wait-and-see’ approach to the tournament, but next year will be larger. We may have to add a few more sectional sites.”

Frankfort (Illinois) High School won the state championship by pulling in three fish in the first round and five in the second round that totaled 16 pounds, 4 ounces. Frankfort out-fished Zion-Benton (Illinois) High School by 13 ounces.

“It’s been a great addition to our list of activities,” Gannaway said.

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The Million Dollar Dream Committee was formed by a group of women in Ohio this past February to lower the pay-to-play fees charged by the Newark City School District. With a fee of $200 to play sports and $55 for other activities, participation for Newark students in activities like band or basketball can become pricey.

The 12 women who comprise the committee mailed 1,500 letters to people in the Newark City Schools District asking for donations. As the title of the committee suggests, the women hoped to raise $1 million. While they didn’t reach their original goal, they did raise $45,000, which they donated to the school district. According to its Web site, it enrolls nearly 7,000 students.

The Million Dollar Dream Committee was formed when committee member Sandy Mercer’s 82-year-old mother literally had a dream about raising $1 million for Newark City Schools.

“At first we both chuckled about the dream, but I decided to start making phone calls to women I knew in the community, and everyone I talked with thought the concept was possible,” Mercer said.

At the time of Mercer’s mother’s dream (late January 2009), the school district was suffering from financial problems. Mercer, who has a 13-year-old daughter who plays volleyball, said millions had already been cut from the budget and there was a risk that all sports and other activities would be eliminated.

By late February, the committee officially had 12 women. Some had children in high school, some in elementary school, and some had none at all.

By mid-July, they were able to submit the money they had raised to the school district and the fees were lowered. Now, it costs $165 to play a sport and $45 to participate in an activity like orchestra.

The fees were put in place by the Newark Board of Education to help cover costs such as coaches’ salaries and buses for athletic events. Mercer said after the fees were established, the school system’s student participation in activities decreased by more than 25 percent.

In addition to sending out letters, Mercer said the committee sent out e-mails to Newark High School alumni, guest-bartended at a local pub, and guest-served at a local restaurant, keeping 10 percent of the proceeds that night.

The women hope to create an ongoing fund so that future students won’t have to pay such high fees either. Mercer said the committee’s future plans potentially include hosting a theater event showcasing Newark City School students, holding an auction and hosting a signature fundraiser event.

“We are still hoping to meet our goal and raise $1 million,” Mercer said. “This amount would allow the school system to eliminate the pay-to-participate fees for at least the next four years.”

To make a donation to the Million Dollar Dream Committee, send checks made out to the Licking County Foundation to Million Dollar Dream Committee, PO Box 4872, Newark, Ohio 43058 with “NCS: Million Dollar Dream” in the memo line.

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