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BY ROBERT F. KANABY, NFHS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AND RON LAIRD, NFHS PRESIDENT

The NFHS and its members take every opportunity to espouse the values and lessons that are continually learned through participation in interscholastic programs, but those lessons should never come at the expense of an individual.

In high school activities, there is an inclusiveness that incorporates all facets of the educational community, including students, school administrators, activities directors, coaches, parents and involved individuals. However, at the end of the fall season, a sequence of unwarranted actions belied that inclusiveness and unfortunately negatively affected a Maine cross country runner.

The New England Cross Country Championships were held November 10, 2007, in Cumberland, Maine. A great day of friendly competition was primed, but a dark cloud soon cast its shadow.

According to a Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram report, Lewiston (Maine) High School senior runner Mohamed Noor, the Maine Principals’ Association Class A champion and a Somalia native, had sand thrown in his eyes by an unidentified man before and during the race.

Noor’s eyes were red, had a “burning sensation” and required medical care in an ambulance immediately after the event and later at a local medical center.

The first occurrence took place just before the race started. A man tossed what appeared to be a sandy substance into Noor’s eyes.

Despite the attack, Noor still started the 3.1-mile race and actually led the other 270 New England runners for the first quarter-mile.

But as the leading pack entered a wooded area, Noor was once again blinded by a sandy dirt substance hurled by an individual he believes was the same man from the beginning of the race. He finished in 124th place.

These incredibly heinous acts upon a student-athlete, who did no wrong and was merely running in an interscholastic event in which he excels, have no place in high school sports and activities, or anywhere else, for that matter.

The NFHS firmly believes that interscholastic participation develops good citizenship and healthy lifestyles along with a sense of fairness. However, those actions taken against Noor – those uncalled for and universally wrong in nature – attempt to undermine those fundamental and closely held beliefs.

As part of an education-based community that strives for equitable opportunities in the deepest sense, we have a responsibility to protect all students. This seems to be a very simple concept (which it is), but emphasis should always be placed on the comprehensiveness of including and looking out for each other.

It is unknown for sure what the man’s motives were, but however the situation is regarded, those motives clearly are not justified.

School-based athletics and activities are unique to the United States of America, and people from all around the world are familiar with the benefits that can be derived from these authentic learning experiences.

Participation in different sports and fine arts activities correlates with future successes, but an attack such as this attempts to diminish the important values of sportsmanship, teamwork, benevolence, discipline and good citizenship that characterize this system.

About 15 years ago in Connecticut, members of a cross country team were brutally attacked by runners and students from an opposing school. And now lightning has struck again.

These actions go against everything that interscholastic activities and basic human rights stand for and defend.

The NFHS and its national membership of state associations and their member high schools do not tolerate any of these actions. As such, we must challenge ourselves, as a unified group of people that strives toward the same goals of achievement, proper stewardship and equitable settings, to never let these types of incidents occur again.

When it comes to the well-being of student-athletes, administrators and others involved with athletic and activity programs, we must do everything possible to safeguard each other and to include each other in our thoughts.

Although these scenarios are certainly anomalies in the broad scope of interscholastic events, it does not mean they will never happen again. That is why it is so important that we constantly remind ourselves of our missions and principles. These types of actions are completely unacceptable and inexcusable, as the welfare of everyone should always be of utmost importance.
Water Polo Pow-wow

Members of the girls water polo team from Homewood-Flossmoor High School huddle up before taking to the water during the 2007 Illinois High School Association state tournament at Lincolnshire (Illinois) Stevenson High School.

Photograph courtesy of the Illinois High School Association.
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State funding for public schools in South Dakota is insufficient to operate curricular and co-curricular programs in an optimal manner. Funding for academic programs should be the priority during the budgetary process.”

The words of Brookings (South Dakota) High School Activities Director Steve Berseth have resonated similarly from the voices of many other athletic directors in their respective states, as funding for activities programs continues to be a profound problem.

The degrees of financial hardship vary nationwide. Some athletic and activities departments in affluent environments endure relatively minor setbacks, but others – many of which are located in the northeastern, northern, northwestern, midwestern and western parts of the United States – have seen major reductions.

Dave Stead, the executive director of the Minnesota State High School League, said more than 100 school districts have held levy referendums to raise money for their educational programs (activities included). For some schools, the levy failed, resulting in a mass cutback in athletic and fine arts programs.

“One coach came in the day after a levy failed to ask that all programs be cut and to tell the community the district couldn’t decide how to keep 11 and cut 18 because all of them are important for the kids,” Stead said.

One of those school districts, the White Bear Lake (Minnesota) Area Schools, offered a scenario that athletic and extracurricular offerings would be reduced or eliminated, and fees would be further increased if the levy was not renewed by voters.

The Janesville (Wisconsin) School District is another representative example of other school districts, as the athletic department’s budget has been cut twice in the past two years and had to institute higher fees and ticket prices.

South Dakota High School Activities Association Executive Director Wayne Carney also noted that high school educational funding is always under scrutiny in South Dakota. However, he thinks many school districts recognize the tangible and intangible positives of extracurricular activities and will do anything to keep the programs afloat.

“I think many administrators and school boards have long ago concluded that activity programs are one of the best investments they can make for their schools. I think many administrators and school boards have long ago concluded that activity programs more than pay for themselves in increased attendance, lower dropout rates, lower drug and alcohol use, et cetera, that they have found a way to fund these programs,” Carney said.

Because many public schools rely on tax dollars that are allocated to school districts, and those dollars have continually dwindled for most schools, some athletics options have to take the fall.

“I think there is bound to be some reduction, due to the way the economy is,” said Bud Legg, Iowa High School Athletic Association information director. “I think the old-age saying, ‘Making do with less,’ has pretty well been accepted.

“If a coach’s salary becomes a question, booster clubs are the groups that help if needed. The last-ditch move is to cut programs, and the first programs to be cut are lower-level programs. Freshman/sophomore teams have combined, and junior high “A” teams and “B” teams get cut. That really curtails participation, but that has been one way (school districts) have done things.”

Ruidoso (New Mexico) High School Activities Director Todd Garelick mentioned that transportation and fuel costs, which are a dilemma for everyone across the country right now, have only added to the diminishing funds.

“The bus that we use costs around $2 each mile,” Garelick said. “That is a 50-percent increase from previous years. We have to travel to Albuquerque (180 miles each way), Deming (200 miles each way), et cetera, for some of our road games. In addition, rising fuel costs have made uniforms and equipment more expensive, and transportation/shipping costs are making things difficult to purchase.”

As was reported in the February 2004 issue of the NFHS News,
Alaska was in one of the most inauspicious situations. Due to the state’s sparse population and isolated location, much of the funding for school activities must be paid for through a small portion of the school budget and other media.

“Funding for interscholastic activities in Alaska will always be a problem because of the relatively small number of people spread over a vast state with very few roads,” Alaska School Activities Association Executive Director Gary Matthews said. “Three-quarters of our member schools are not connected by road. This means that most travel is done either by air or ferry, and that means it’s expensive.”

Travel is so expensive in Alaska that an endowment had to be set up to help offset some of the outrageous transportation costs.

“The Alaska Endowment for Youth Activities has been formed to raise money to help support travel costs to state tournaments,” Matthews said. “Most schools will not fund this travel. In 2004-05, state tournament travel, not including ground transportation at the site or room and board, exceeded $1.5 million. This was for roster players only, not including coaches or other support personnel.”

So how exactly are other school districts and high school activities programs able to get by? Fund-raising, and creative uses of it, has to be the answer.

“We do have internal funding provided by the school district,” Garelick said. “I think that the pay-to-play concept is the obvious next step if we are to keep athletics and activities in the schools and not create a situation where we farm them out to clubs.”

**Types of Fund-raising**

Booster clubs, participation fees and fund-raisers are ever-present among high schools today in order to make ends meet.

For many, fund-raising is not always enjoyable. Parents, students and coaches all dread knowing they will have to exert time and resources so they can make a few extra dollars for uniforms, supplies and transportation.

Participation fees, also known as “pay-to-play,” are one of the more popular and preferred ways to fund activities programs.

Berseth, who resides in South Dakota where participation fees have been ruled to be unconstitutional in public high schools, would prefer to see those fees implemented rather than removing a program altogether.

“I’m not a proponent of participation fees, but I believe a nominal fee would be preferable to eliminating programs that teach sports-specific, as well as life, skills,” Berseth said.

Richard Valdez, the athletic director of Tooele (Utah) High School, also has implemented various methods to raise money to help support his high school’s programs. Concessions, a sports calendar with advertising and all the sports schedules, business spots announced over the public-address system throughout football and basketball games and participation fees all assist in covering the costs for high school athletics.

A big moneymaker for the Tooele football team is a Buff card, which is a credit card-sized card that gives the holder discounts at local businesses.

Tucumcari (New Mexico) High School organized one central booster club that supports all athletics grades seven through 12.
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- Online logo shop
- Sports turf renovation effort
- Endowment program
- Professional outreach program
- College credit & degrees through leadership training program
- Web site Fundraiser Guide
- Buyer's Guide located on Web site
Because of the community’s small size and the support of local businesses, only one organization, assisting all sports, is necessary. Wayne Ferguson, Tucumcari’s athletic director, notes that four levels of involvement in the booster club are available. Businesses and families write a check once a year to pay for out-of-town meals and room accommodations for all of the high school’s athletic programs.

While student-athletes and booster clubs carry a significant amount of weight while generating funds, the athletic directors also must stretch to make sure all areas across the board are covered.

“As the athletic director, I do the legwork, selling advertising space and publishing the calendar,” Valdez said.

There are others, though, who have tried to make the best out of earning money for athletics. As funding has dwindled, schools have been forced to become more creative to generate revenue and revitalize the activity programs.

“Kids still want to be involved in activities and parents find ways to pay for their kids to play,” Stead said. “That may come to a halt in some schools where dollars are nonexistent and boards have to cut programs.”

According to Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference Executive Director Michael Savage, Connecticut has also enjoyed increased participation, mainly resulting from new programs being

Paradoxical Participation Rates

An interesting dilemma is the irregularity between the number of participants reported by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) 2006-07 High School Athletics Participation Survey and the shrinking of funds. In fact, according to the survey, participation was at an all-time high with 7.3 million student-athletes.

“I believe that the number of participants continues to increase because of the need and desire to be connected to their local high schools,” NFHS President Ron Laird said. “Getting a school letter is still important to our students.”

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Photo provided by the Illinois High School Association.

“We’ve had senior boys bake and decorate cakes in a football theme, which then are silent-auctioned,” said Karen Hand, the athletic director of Lincoln (Nebraska) Public Schools. “We also took pictures of the backs of the boys’ legs from the knees down, attached the picture to a jar and let the parents vote on the ‘best-looking legs’ by placing money in the jar. They incorporated much of their booster business and a scrimmage/meet in a fun type of atmosphere.”

For many states, these types of fund-raisers have been beneficial for both the programs and those who volunteer.

“In Colorado, we have no evidence to show that fund-raising has decreased the value of interscholastic participation,” Colorado High School Activities Association Commissioner Bill Reader said. “From my experience, the minimal fund-raising done by students can provide opportunities and experiences that students could not do on their own or with their families.”
“I think it’s a combination of two factors – creative uses of Title IX when implementing female programs and new programs in sports which were always funded by parents,” Savage said. “There are more participants than ever before, our fan base and the public interest has increased each year, and for the first time, we have begun to negotiate contracts for statewide media coverage.

“Interscholastic athletics and activities are available to all students, regardless of socioeconomic levels, who earn the privilege of participation,” Reader said. “In order to earn the privilege of participation, the students must meet expectations that will enable them to be better and more productive citizens. With club activities, winning is the priority for students who can afford the cost and are in a location that allows participation.”

“I think schools are seeing the value of educationally based, school-sponsored activity programs versus other forms of programs,” Carney said. “Most parents feel a certain level of comfort in knowing those individuals who work with these students have had some level of instruction in working with students.”

Another major difference between the two forms of high school activities involves the intangibles that students get out of the activity, such as sportsmanship, teamwork and similar relationship-based principles.

“The bulk of our interscholastic programs are directed by educators,” Legg said. “I don’t think there is anything at the club level that can ever replace anything at the education-based level. There are a lot more lessons about life than in the club sports.”

Interscholastic activities and out-of-school activities may differ in terms of what is received from the experiences, but interscholastic activities still rely on school district or private finances. In the end, activities programs petition time and time again for more departmental funds, but they are usually last on a high school’s allocation list.

“The activities programs provide relevant and authentic learning experiences that aren’t duplicated in the classrooms and that offer many teachable moments,” Berseth said. “It is important to continue to provide funding for activity programs because participation in interscholastic sports and fine arts activities correlates with adult success.”

### Education-based Activities versus Club Activities

With many high school activities programs resorting to extra fees, some student-athletes take the jump to club activities, particularly club sports. Each athletics medium offers a different way for a student to play the sport he or she loves.

“Education-based sports and activities programs are unique to the United States and have been highly successful for serving the student body in most schools,” Berseth said. “From my perspective, school athletics personnel usually seem to emphasize multi-sport participation, while club sports coaches often stress specialization.”

Although out-of-school programs offer the aforementioned specialization of a particular sport, many high school educators believe that may not be the best thing, especially since education-based athletics cater to the needs and desires of all those who attend a school.

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Emily Cerling was a fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in integrated communications. Bob Herman was a fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a junior at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in journalism (news editorial) and minoring in Spanish.
SCHOOL BOARDS FACE FUNDING CHALLENGES

BY BILL BOYLE

School boards across the United States face a challenge of securing the necessary funding to provide high quality education, including activities.

As the accompanying article outlines, a number of options are available that schools can consider while addressing the funding of school activity programs.

Some schools are able to tie the funding of activities to the larger funding of schools as a whole. Several years ago, after years of failed bond levies, a school district in Colorado finally convinced voters to approve funding for a new school.

The strategy was simple … the local building inspector condemned the school gymnasium, resulting in a full season of away games for the local basketball teams. After getting the attention of the community with the gymnasium condemnation, supporters of the bond levy led a successful effort to find and register recent school alumni as absentee voters.

The result of the effort was the construction of a beautiful new school.

Other schools face a public that may be skeptical of funding school activities.

The Arkansas State Board of Education recently created a series of new regulations governing the reporting of public funds spent on activities. Regulations approved in 2003 resulted in a wide variance in how school expenditures were reported.

The new rules standardize the reporting of expenditures, giving a similar set of criteria to each school district in the state. The rules require the reporting of all expenditures related to athletic programs, including coaching salaries, transportation, insurance, utilities and maintenance.

The new rules stipulate that 20 percent of the reports are audited each year by the legislature.

There have been allegations in Arkansas that some schools have funded athletic programs with money set aside for computer technology.

In addition to facing the challenging of funding programs, school districts face a possibly greater challenge of ensuring that the funds they currently receive are spent in an appropriate manner.

Taxpayers will be hesitant to approve new funding sources if they are skeptical about how public funds are being spent. As a result, it is imperative that school boards carefully manage how public funds are spent.

The San Juan School District, which operates 12 schools in southeast Utah, implemented a change in the oversight of school expenditures. While the school board had carefully (even obsessively) watched district-level expenditures, school-level expenditures had not been managed as carefully.

The board realized that school-level expenditures in the six secondary schools averaged $915 per student per year. This represented nearly 10 percent of general fund expenditures on a per-student basis.

These expenditures do not include district-level spending for activities such as bus transportation and coaching salaries.

Monthly financial reports were received from each school. Individual programs were carefully watched to ensure that there was no deficit spending.

As a result of the increased scrutiny, school officials uncovered several problems related to the collection of gate receipts at athletic events. The investigation culminated in the indictment of a longtime school employee.

Another benefit of the increased scrutiny was a new policy that event officials were paid at the district level instead of the school level. The result was an increase in the quality of event officiating, particularly for minor sports.

The number of programs that were running a deficit budget plummeted to zero with the increased scrutiny. The public perception is that the programs are more carefully managed.

The best way to convince voters and local communities to increase funding is to ensure that existing funds are carefully managed.

The goal, of course, is to build confidence in the administration of the public schools, so the public will respond positively when the inevitable crisis comes, and school boards turn to the public to seek funding.

Bill Boyle is editor and publisher of the San Juan Record in Monticello, Utah. He is a member of the San Juan (Utah) school board, the Utah High School Activities Association Board of Trustees, and the High School Today Publications Committee.
Proposed Legislation Would Impact Athletics Programs

BY LEE GREEN

**Background**

The Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA), federal legislation enacted in 1994, requires every university receiving federal financial assistance to annually file a report with the United States Department of Education detailing information related to the level of equality in the institution’s athletics program. In effect, the law requires each university to perform an annual Title IX self-audit and, through submission of the report to the Department of Education, make the results available to the public.

The information contained in EADA filings enable monitoring by the United States Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of institutional compliance with the mandates of Title IX. However, an ongoing criticism of the EADA throughout the years since its enactment has been that the legislation applies only to institutions of higher learning and provides no regime for similar reporting of information as to equality in K-12 athletics programs.

In February 2007, two bills were introduced in the 110th Congress that in practical application would extend the requirements of the EADA to K-12 institutions. The High School Accountability Act of 2007 (HSAA), introduced in the House of Representatives as H.R. 901, would “amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to direct certain coeducational elementary and secondary schools to make available information on equality in school and athletic programs, and for other purposes.” The High School Sports Information Collection Act of 2007 (HSSICA), introduced in the Senate as S. 518, would “amend the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 to require the Statistics Commissioner to collect information from coeducational secondary schools on such schools’ athletic programs.”

A year after their introduction, both the HSAA and the HSSICA remain at the first step of the legislative process, referral to committees that will deliberate, investigate and revise the bills before they proceed to general debate. School leaders, including superintendents, principals and athletics administrators, should familiarize themselves with the content of the proposed legislation and monitor the progress of the bills through Congress in preparation for the contingency that the legislation is enacted sometime during 2008.

**Goals of the HSAA and HSSICA**

The High School Accountability Act (HSAA), the House version of the legislation, was introduced by Rep. Louise M. Slaughter, D-New York, and is presently co-sponsored by 61 representatives. The HSAA includes 10 “Findings” setting forth the reasons for which the bill’s sponsors argue enactment of the legislation is necessary.

**Finding One:** Participation in sports teaches youth critical life skills and has a positive impact on all areas of their lives, especially for girls.

**Finding Two:** Participation in sports results in many long-term physical and psychological health benefits for girls, including combating obesity, lowering rates of heart disease, breast cancer and osteoporosis, and improving levels of confidence and self-esteem.

**Finding Three:** Participation in sports promotes responsible social behaviors and greater academic success among girls, including lowering rates of sexual activity, pregnancy, tobacco and drug use, and enhancing personal and professional growth. This finding incorporates statistics indicating that a high percentage of successful businesswomen in the United States played sports while growing up and that most report that athletics participation had contributed significantly to their success.

**Finding Four:** The opportunity to participate in high school athletics allows many middle-income and low-income students who would otherwise be unable to afford college to gain access to higher education.

**Finding Five:** Physical inactivity is more common among females than males.

**Finding Six:** Girls who are not involved in physical activity by age 10 have only a 10%-percent chance of being more physically active
when they are age 25.

Finding Seven: Girls receive 1,250,000 fewer opportunities to play high school sports than do boys.

Finding Eight: Girls’ teams often receive inferior opportunities and benefits in a variety of aspects of school athletics programs, including overall budgets, equipment, uniforms, locker rooms, practice and competition facilities, scheduling of practices, games and sports seasons, training and medical services, coaching and publicity.

Finding Nine: Students and parents should have access to information regarding the athletics opportunities and benefits that schools provide to male and female students.

Finding Ten: Without information regarding the allocation of athletic opportunities and benefits at the elementary and secondary school levels, students may be deprived of athletics opportunities.

The High School Sports Information Collection Act (HSSICA), the Senate version of the legislation, was introduced by Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, and does not contain a “Findings” section, instead focusing solely on the data mandated for collection if the bill is enacted.

Reporting Requirements of the HSAA and the HSSICA

The High School Accountability Act (House version of the bill) would amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to require each coeducational elementary or secondary school that participates in any program under the Act and has an athletics program to annually prepare a report containing the following categories of information:

Category One: Data regarding the male and female enrollments at the school.

Category Two: A listing of school sports teams and first-day-of-competition information on the total number and gender of participants on each team, along with year each team was established at the school.

Category Three: Budget data for each team, including information related to travel, equipment, uniforms, facilities-related expenditures, athletic training and medical services costs, and publicity items.

Category Four: Detailed information related to athletic trainers and medical personnel involved in the school’s athletics program.

Category Five: Detailed information related to the coaches involved in the school’s athletic program, including salary information broken down into gender-specific average compensation for head coaches and assistant coaches.

Category Six: Data regarding the revenues generated by each team and financial contributions from outside sources such as booster clubs, corporate sponsorships, fund-raising and donors.

Category Seven: Information on all competitions scheduled for every school sports team, including the day of the week and time the competition was scheduled.

Category Eight: Information on all practices scheduled for every school sports team, including the day of the week and time each practice was scheduled.

Category Nine: Information on the season of the year in which each school sports team competed.

Category Ten: Data on the postseason competition and postseason success of each school sports team.

The information mandated for collection by the HSAA, to those familiar with the requirements of Title IX, is essentially the data required to evaluate compliance with the so-called “three-prong test” measuring equality of sports participation opportunities and with the “other athletics benefits and opportunities” checklist of factors affecting the quality of the sports participation experience.

Upon compilation of the report, the HSAA imposes a disclosure requirement and a submission requirement. The disclosure requirement mandates that each school makes its athletics equity report available to students, potential students and the public. The Equity In Athletics Disclosure Act has a similar disclosure requirement with which most universities comply by posting EADA reports on their Web sites. Online postings at school district, high school or athletics department Web sites would likely satisfy the disclosure requirement of the HSAA. The submission requirement mandates that each report would also have to be provided to the Department of Education’s Commissioner for Education Statistics for use in monitoring Title IX compliance and ensuring public access to the information in the report.

The High School Sports Information Collection Act (Senate version of the bill) requires the compilation of essentially the same information as that required by the HSAA but includes no explicit disclosure requirement.

Present Status of the HSAA and the HSSICA

The High School Accountability Act (House version) is presently awaiting consideration by the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education. The High School Sports Information Collection Act (Senate version) is currently awaiting action before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. The status of both bills may be monitored using Congress’ official Web site for the tracking of legislation, www.thomas.gov. Additional information on the status of the legislation is available at www.govtrack.us.

Lee Green is an attorney and a professor at Baker (Kansas) University, where he teaches courses in Sports Law, Business Law and Constitutional Law. He may be contacted at Lee.Green@BakerU.Edu.
A critical piece of the relationship between an administrator and the teachers in his/her school is centered on each teacher's annual evaluation. While the two may be equal colleagues in their daily interactions, and friends or social acquaintances in and outside of school, they are boss and employee when it's time for the administrator to evaluate the effectiveness of the teacher in performing his/her duties for the school.

This interaction is not only important to both as part of fulfilling any contractual requirements, but can and should benefit both of them, their school in general, and the music students in particular. And while most administrators have had previous careers as classroom educators themselves, that experience only provides them with a solid understanding of how teachers function within a traditional classroom, not how music educators function within a sectional or rehearsal opportunity.

Given that a fair portion, if not the majority, of most music educators' positions are reflected within their assigned ensemble rehearsals, a fair portion of their evaluations should be conducted there as well.

Evaluating a band, chorus, orchestra, jazz or sectional rehearsal is an entirely different process than evaluating a history lesson or math class, and the administrator should be prepared for those differences. Those differences encompass a wide variety of classroom aspects that are endemic to just about every rehearsal situation and provide the administrator with a wide variety of challenges in providing an accurate, effective and subjective evaluation.

To help, following are some thoughts and suggestions. If you have an evaluation process (pre-evaluation meeting, post-evaluation meeting, evaluation form), please follow it, but I would suggest that you ask the music educator for his/her thoughts on the evaluation form and how it may or may not fit what you are going to observe.

DON'T HIDE: Come before the rehearsal starts, sit in the back, but speak with the students who come by your seat, stay to the end, be a part of the experience for all to see. Your presence will allow the music students to show off a bit just for you, so let them know you are there.

NUMBERS: Most school ensembles have more students in them than the standard classroom. And rehearsals, especially those involving band, orchestra and jazz ensemble instruments, require more time to begin than the standard class. Be aware that a lot of students will be moving about, preparing instruments, connecting with others, checking on information with the director or others in the group, and getting mentally and physically ready to rehearse. That process takes time and creates quite a bit of sound and confusion. The capability of the students to know what they need to do to complete that preparation, the availability of the resources for them to do it mostly unassisted, and the director's ability to bring that warm-up effort to a close and focus the students on the day's task at hand are the key elements in dealing with that many students getting ready to learn.

RESOURCES: It takes a lot of resources to run a school performance ensemble, and the ability of the student-musician to access them when they are needed, to properly maintain them (especially since most are school property), and to receive additional assistance when it becomes necessary allows the ensemble to make the progress it needs for each rehearsal to be successful.

Evaluate how well the students know their roles; how they handle their instruments, their music, their position in the rehearsal space; and how they solicit and receive help from older students or the director. Be aware that the director is also not only trying to prepare mentally and physically for rehearsal, but also deal with attendance, late slips, announcements, equipment issues and the like. The management of time and information at the beginning of rehearsal sets the tone for the rest of the period.

ATTENTION: While each music student knows his/her role in that large group, there are many sub-groups within the larger group, and each has a selected or perceived student-leader. Relating to others in each sub-group, as well as receiving instruction and direction from the student-leader, allows the learning to be more direct and better retained by each member. This interaction may seem unfocused and ineffective, but when appropriately supported by the director, can help move the group forward. Look for the di-
director to be aware of this interaction, to keep it under control, and to be able to bring the group back to one focus easily (and often).

ONE GOAL, MANY TASKS: A performance ensemble is made up of many individuals who all have one shared goal. However, each member’s task to successfully reach that goal, his/her current level of contributing to that task, and the amount of improvement expected is different for each individual.

Learning how to collectively perform a piece of music is a long-term process, successfully accomplished through a lot of little steps made along the way. The closer an ensemble is to the end of that process – its public performance – the more the rehearsal will involve all of the students focused on the same section of the music at the same time. But even at that point, and much more so the earlier in that effort the group is, the more the music educator will need to address specific issues with small groups and individuals – teaching, reviewing, reinforcing, complimenting.

RELATIONSHIPS: The successful ensemble is one that relates not only to the music being performed, but to each other while rehearsing and performing together. The seating of students, the support of their interactions, the highlighting of not only the issues to be addressed, but the small successes that occur each day allow the director to be connected to the students themselves and gives them the opportunity to extend those relationships to the music and to the world beyond.

Making the most of every teaching moment by providing acknowledgment for students’ successes, and correction and support for their failures, allows the music educator to share a deeper understanding of the music with each student. While there may be distractions in the room while the teacher is giving that individual attention to one student, the relationship being built will help that individual student to grow immeasurably as person and musician. Rehearsals have to have time for that relationship building to be successful.

SEQUENCING: Ensemble rehearsals are like building a house with lumber that isn’t quite the right shape, color or size yet. Put together, it’s not right, so you take a board off here, adjust it, put it back and then go on to fix another one that seems out of place.

In a rehearsal, the director will have the group perform a part of a piece of music (maybe at a slower tempo or without one aspect), but it’s apparent that some things are not right. The director will focus comments on one section of students, offer some suggestions, ask that section to try it (sometimes a few times), give some more suggestions (or hopefully some praise for accomplishing the task) and then either work with another section on their issue, or try the entire piece again. Some assembly required is how it goes, with the director building upon each success, extending the amount of the music that can be played without stopping, adding more elements, slowly getting it closer and closer to performance quality.

Making the most of every teaching moment by providing acknowledgment for students’ successes, and correction and support for their failures, allows the music educator to share a deeper understanding of the music with each student.

Through all of this, it should be apparent to the students what the director wants the music to sound like and what it will take to get there as individuals and as an ensemble. As an evaluator, be aware that the ultimate goal (the public performance) allows for the daily progress to vary as long as progress gets made each day.

VARIETY: Most ensembles are preparing multiple pieces for their next performance and each is at a different point in their steps to success. For every rehearsal, the director has had to analyze where the group was the last rehearsal on each piece, where it can improve, how much rehearsal time is left until the concert, and how he/she can best help the students reach their goals. Thus, some rehearsals are very focused on one piece (or even just one section of one piece), and others move from piece to piece quite often during the rehearsal. How smoothly those transitions take place, how the connections between one and the other are made, and how the director retains the group’s focus and energy are all evaluative quantities.

IT’S OVER: If you thought that the sound at the beginning was loud, the sound of an instrumental ensemble ending rehearsal can be deafening. Again, students who know what is expected of them, who know what resources are there, who maintain equipment properly, and who leave with clear instructions on how to improve and what is expected of them by the next rehearsal, are students who have a quality music educator teaching them and sharing their love for music. How that gets done is different in every music room, but it should be clear to each ensemble member what his/her role is in making things better.

BUT IT’S NOT OVER: Now that you have seen the effort being made and heard a small part of the progress required to be a successful music program, please make sure that you are there for the public performance (and bring some friends). The students and the director will greatly appreciate it.

Stefan Parker, a ninth-generation Vermonter, has been an instrumental music educator for 29 years, with degrees in performance, education and conducting. Parker organizes several music events in his state and region, and is in his 14th 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.
CONGRATULATIONS to the boys’ winner

St. Anthony Friars, NJ

Centennial Knights, GA
Lone Peak Knights, UT
St. Anthony Friars, NJ
La Cueva Bears, NM
They brought home a lot more than a trophy.

This year’s tournament featured eight powerhouse teams. Two days of intense play. And one unique opportunity for these high school student-athletes to learn skills they can carry throughout their lives. We salute the winners and all the student-athletes who made the games such a success.

CONGRATULATIONS to the girls’ winner

Long Beach Poly Jackrabbits, CA

Chaminade-Julienne Eagles, OH

Hampton Crabbers, VA

Gallup Bengals, NM

Officially sponsored by the National Federation of State High School Associations.
Alternative Energy Chosen as 2008-09 National Debate Topic

On January 7, ballots from 35 states, the National Catholic Forensic League, National Debate Coaches Association and the National Forensic League were tabulated at NFHS headquarters to select the 2008-09 national high school debate topic. Alternative Energy was selected over Health Care with 84 percent of the votes.

In October, the five topic areas were narrowed to two as part of a two-stage balloting process. Use of the second ballot assures that a majority of coaches across the nation favor the chosen topic area and resolution.

The following chart summarizes the state-by-state balloting on topic areas. The letters reflect a vote for Alternative Energy (A) or Health Care (H).

Choice of problem area and resolution by Official Referendum Vote:

National Debate Topic Area Balloting:

32: Alternative Energy
Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase alternative energy incentives in the United States.

4: Health Care
Resolved: The United States federal government should establish a universal health care system in the United States.

HOW THEY VOTED FOR 2008-09:
NFHS to hold Adjudicator Seminar at Walt Disney World in Florida

BY EMILY CERLING

Three years in the making, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) will unveil its music adjudicator seminar this spring at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. NFHS Assistant Director Kent Summers began the project because he believed adjudicators needed a consistent method to follow when judging performing groups.

Two weekend seminars – one held at the end of March and the other in April – will be used to better train adjudicators for both instrumental and choral groups.

Currently, no adjudicator seminars involve live performing groups. However, this conference will allow potential judges to witness live instrumental and choral productions. The seminar will be held in conjunction with Festival Disney, which runs for seven weeks in the spring. High school students from across the nation participate in the festival and are judged on their musical talents and abilities.

“When we got the idea to conduct this seminar, we thought Disney might be a great place to have it,” Summers said.

Two guest clinicians will assist in facilitating each weekend seminar. John Sinclair, the director of music at Rollins (Florida) College, will oversee the choral portion of the adjudicator seminar. In 1990, he was appointed artistic director and conductor of the Bach Festival Society of Winter Park, Florida. Sinclair also selects all choral and orchestral works performed for the Choral Masterworks Concert Series and the Winter Park Bach Festival. Instrumental facilitator Hal Gibson was a 2004 inductee into the National Hall of Fame for Distinguished Band Conductors.

Each weekend is limited to 12 choral and 12 instrumental adjudicator trainees. The seminar will begin on Thursday night with an introduction and a short class, and the remaining days will focus on judging practice. After each group performs, the designated clinician will critique the group and give the attendees advice on how to judge performing groups. Attendees will listen to a musical group while observing the icon adjudicator. After the performance, the clinician will discuss the recorded video of the performances and address the feedback notes.

Later in the weekend, trainees will receive an earpiece to listen to the adjudicator as he records a tape of the performing group. At the conclusion of each performance, the facilitating adjudicator will discuss the previous group. That same evening, trainees will be able to listen to a group and then fill out adjudication forms during the performance. Although they do not affect the scores, the attendees will gain valuable practice in filling out judging sheets for the live performances.

On the final day, trainees will be able to conduct a full adjudication of the performing musical groups. The attendees will be able to practice recording tapes and filling out forms to strengthen their adjudication skills for the future. Similar to the previous day, the attendees will discuss each group after it has performed.

The National Association for Music Education (MENC) has partnered with the NFHS in this event.

“The MENC is really excited about working with us to make this event successful,” Summers said.

Summers hopes this adjudicator seminar in Florida will be a benchmark for years to come.

“I would like to see this seminar going in the future,” Summers said. “Our hope is that we are able to make a national registry for our adjudicators.”

Emily Cerling was a fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in integrated communications.
Winning State Title Favorite Memory

Interview With Cal Ripken Jr.

Q. You have a legendary work ethic. What else did you gain by participating in high school athletics?

Ripken: Well, for me, high school was a big step. I was an undersized kid my first two years and I didn’t think I would ever make it. As a freshman, I was so undersized and overmatched physically. I had a growth spurt just before my junior year, but I guess high school is where I first started to understand how to make adjustments and how to persevere.

Q. What is your favorite memory of playing high school sports?

Ripken: Winning the state championship in baseball. It was a great feeling and I was the winning pitcher in the title game.

Q. You also played soccer. Did playing another sport help your athletic development? If so, how?

Ripken: Absolutely! I always encourage young athletes to play multiple sports as it definitely helps with your athleticism. Soccer helped me with my stamina and my balance among other things.

Q. Did you consider yourself as a leader on the field in high school? Did this come naturally for you or did it evolve over the years?

Ripken: I think it developed over time. There are so many versions of what people consider to be leadership. I was never very vocal on the field and I never wanted to show up my teammates. I believe that real leadership comes in the quiet times when you speak to a teammate one on one and he knows that you are helping him for the right reasons – not for the media and not for others to see – but because you really care.

Q. Obviously, with your dad being a coach and your brother also being an athlete, deciding to play in high school was probably a natural extension of being a Ripken. Why should young people participate in athletics?

Ripken: Despite popular opinion, dad never pushed any of us to play sports. He helped us in whatever we decided to do. For Billy and me, it was baseball. I think that athletics teaches you so much that can apply to what you will do for a living later in life.
from the health benefits, you learn important lessons such as teamwork and leadership – things like that.

**Q.** With all of the problems that are currently being reported concerning some professional athletes, do you feel that athletes have an obligation to be role models for young people?

**Ripken:** I don’t believe that anyone has an obligation in that area; however, I encourage athletes to understand that their words and actions carry meaning and they should be cognizant of that.

**Q.** From the youth leagues on through your professional career, you have played for many coaches. In your experience, what makes a good high school coach?

**Ripken:** Teaching is a key element to coaching and a “win-at-all-costs” mentality isn’t good at any of the younger levels. Use practice to teach, and then when the game arrives, let the kids play. Find a good time after the fact to break down what went right and wrong during the game.

**Q.** If you could wave a magic wand, what would you like to see on the high school sports scene?

**Ripken:** Just more kids playing all sports and enjoying all that sports has to offer.

**Q.** How did you manage to balance competitiveness and the desire to win and, all the while, demonstrating good sportsmanship, class and a respect for the game?

**Ripken:** Early in my professional career, when I first made it to the majors, I threw my helmet down and made a scene after striking out. After the game, a teammate, Ken Singleton, took me into the video room and made me watch the replay of my tirade and asked me if I liked how it looked. That was a great lesson and it always stayed with me. I believe you can play at the highest level of competition and still stay under control.

**Q.** How would you describe the ideal parent of a high school athlete?

**Ripken:** Someone who encourages and supports their child while, at the same time, not pushing them too much and standing over them to make them practice or play. If you do that to your child, they will be playing for the wrong reasons and the first chance they have to stop playing when you aren’t standing over them, they will take. The passion for the sport needs to come from within.
Jerome Singleton Jr. hopes he doesn’t remember when his extra thumb was amputated. He fears that he remembers waking up in surgery when he was five years old and seeing the thumb being removed, but he hopes that it is just a dream.

“If what I remember really happened, that would be too much,” Singleton said.

Singleton was born with an extra thumb and he recalls that it was cool at times to show his friends.

But he also was born without the fibula in his right leg, fibular hemimelia. His parents, Jerome and Jacqueline Singleton, faced the decision of having their son face surgery once a year for the next 18 years or so, or amputating his leg below the knee.

Singleton, the commissioner of the South Carolina High School League, weighed the options and opted for the amputation.

So the 18-month-old boy had his right leg amputated below the knee, but the missing limb has never hindered him from sprinting after his dreams.

Singleton, 5-foot-9 and 170 pounds, was a three-year varsity football player at Columbia (South Carolina) Dutch Fork High. He was the point guard for the basketball team for two years and was an outstanding hurdler in track.

Singleton was ranked among the top 100 senior football prospects in South Carolina by the High School Sports Report during his senior year, and he expected to play college football at either Davidson College in North Carolina or Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

Football left the picture when he learned of an academic scholarship package that would cover his college expenses at Morehouse. He had a grade-point average of 4.0-plus on a 4.0 scale with extra credit for advanced placement classes at Dutch Fork.

“I decided to concentrate on my studies for at least the first year,” he said. Few students have ever grabbed an opportunity with as much enthusiasm.

Some of the lessons he learned participating in high school athletics have helped him earn a 3.9 overall GPA at Morehouse, an all-male historically black college, and have helped provide international educational opportunities.

This past summer he studied in Geneva, Switzerland at CERN, the world’s leading laboratory for particle physics research, the answer to a trivia question from the movie, “The Da Vinci Code” and
supposedly where the World Wide Web was born.

During the summer, he also studied at the Park City Mathematical Institute in Park City, Utah, where he studied Brownian motion.

Singleton expects to graduate with a double major in math and physics at Morehouse and will complete his triple major by adding an industrial engineering degree at either Georgia Tech University or the University of Michigan.

But Singleton is still an athlete. His desire to build a better artificial limb was the catalyst for his areas of study and also was his pathway to the Paralympics, a competition for athletes with physical, mental or sensorial disabilities.

“I was researching artificial limbs when I came across a reference to the Paralympics,” he said. “I read about it, saw the times and figured I can run that fast.”

Singleton had always used a regular artificial foot in his sports, but obtained a sprinting limb while at Morehouse and soon was among the fastest runners Paralympics runners in the world.

Last summer, between his studies, he competed in the Parapan American Games in Rio de Janeiro and finished third in the 100 meters (.11.55) and second in the 200 (.23.9). He has been competing for less than two years.

“Running with the sprinting leg makes you faster,” he said. “With an artificial limb, it is like running with a weight around one leg. The energy just dies. The sprinting leg allows the energy you produce to work with you instead of against you.”

Looking back on his high school career, Singleton said the friends he made are a great memory.

“We became like a second family,” Singleton said. “I made lifelong friends. I was always busy and it was hard to get close to a lot of people. But my teammates became my closest friends. We still keep in touch.”

Tim Stevens is high school sports editor of the News and Observer in Raleigh, North Carolina. A sportswriter for nearly 40 years, Stevens was inducted into the National High School Hall of Fame last summer.
Chantae Miller, a senior at Williamsville (New York) North High School, ended her field hockey career in a way that few others could match.

Miller and the 23-0 Williamsville North squad won the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Class A state championship, defeating Shrub Oak (New York) Lakeland High School, 2-1, November 18.

The end of her season also resulted in more than 10 individual field hockey records for the 2008 NFHS National High School Sports Record Book – one of which is the national record for most career assists (117).

“I think it shows her unselfishness,” Williamsville Athletic Director Steve Ferenczy said. “It’s a team sport, not an individual sport, and she sacrificed individual goals scored in order to make the team better.”

Miller also holds three separate records for most assists in a season (35, 32 and 31), three separate records for most consecutive games with an assist (17, 11 and eight) and still finished with 126 goals in her career (ninth-most all time).

What’s unique for Miller is this was actually her sixth year on the Williamsville varsity field hockey team.

The New York State Education Department has “Selection/Classification” procedures in which a seventh- or eighth-grade student can participate in an approved sport after going through the required screening process, which includes a mile run and other exercise activities.

Miller was able to show that she had the physical ability and maturity to take a quick step up to the high school field hockey level, thus leading to her six-year varsity career.

“I had never played before seventh grade, except for a little bit with my sister,” Miller said. “I definitely looked up to her, but she was a defender, and I was geared a little more to go for the goal.”

Miller’s records, however, do not include any of her statistics from when she was on the team in her seventh- and eighth-grade years.

Ferenczy, who considers Miller to be the best field hockey player he has ever seen, said she has an ability to take over a game at any point.

“She can control the game with her stick skills and her vision,” Ferenczy said. “She’s been such a dominant player that she’s hard to defend.”

Miller, whose career record at Williamsville North is 79-6-1, will take her game to the next level at Michigan State University (MSU) next fall, but the honor roll student will actually start taking classes at MSU in the spring semester.

“I played for the coach, Rolf van de Kerkhof, when I traveled to Holland for the (USA Field Hockey) Futures Elite Team,” Miller said. “I loved playing for him and how he coached.

“I really miss (playing), even now after a month of it being done,” Miller said. “It was a great opportunity.”

Like father, like son

BY BOB HERMAN

High-definition televisions, iPhones, wireless Internet. Technology has advanced rapidly in the past decade, which has resulted in close communication between people – even people who are halfway around the world.

Bryce Jenkins, a junior cross country runner for Wahiawa (Hawaii) Leilehua High School, won his second consecutive individual Hawaii High School Athletic Association championship this fall with a time of 16:07.97 on the 5K course. And his father Bruce – who is a lieutenant colonel for Schofield Barracks in Hawaii and has been in the U.S. Army for 22 years – was able to follow all of Bryce’s events via the Internet while he was on assignment in Iraq.

“(The Internet) is a great tool,” Bruce said. “I had family and
friends take pictures of him racing, and those were e-mailed to me as well. The Internet was reliable most days. We did lose power several times a week, so delays were to be expected."

Bryce won the 2006 championship as a sophomore, which blew away his father for a reason other than his young age. "I was amazed, but not for obvious reasons," Bruce said. "Last year, Bryce broke his foot at the most critical point of his preseason training. He was unable to run for six weeks. The only thing he could do was run on the elliptical trainer. After the doctor cleared him to run again, Bryce ran his first race only four days later. Amazingly, he finished second out of 200 runners, and Bryce never lost another race all season."

Bruce was deployed in September 2006 and returned in mid-September 2007, just in time to see his son's state title run November 2. "It was not my first deployment, so I'm accustomed to being away," Bruce said. "I've been away from my family for four long periods of time now, and quite frankly, it never gets any easier. We are a very close family, so we talk on the phone and e-mail often."

Bryce's 5K time of 16:07.97 was 30 seconds faster than any other runner in the event (the second-place runner was senior teammate Paul Williams), and Bryce's father was able to coach him (electronically) during the fall season. "This year's course was very hard," Bryce said. "I had to push myself in order to run a good time. I wasn't really nervous, but I respected the field and did not take my previous (regional) win for granted. (My dad and I) were able to stay in touch throughout the season and stay on top of my running. We talked about my competition and strategies for the upcoming races. It was good that we could stay connected."

In honor of all of the deployed soldiers, Leilehua's team wore camouflage uniforms for the entire season. The team spirit paid off as Leilehua also won this year's team state championship. "The uniforms were great," Bryce said. "They were camouflage because our team (nickname) is the Mules, and we got our mascot from West Point, so I guess there was a military tie from the beginning of our school. (Also), the past two seasons, we had a lot of support from my dad's division and Schofield Barracks because a few other members of the team and I had family members in the military."

Bruce and his wife, Susan, have been married for almost 22 years, and Bryce's sister, Summer, is a freshman at Leilehua who also plans to run track this spring and cross country next fall. Although Bruce said leaving his family is one of the hardest things to do, he thought he had the easiest job of the bunch. "I just had to stay alive, keep my troops alive and accomplish my mission," Bruce said. "My wife had the hard job – full-time job, taking care of the family, handling house and car challenges, paying the bills – she did it all."

Bryce's father similarly ran cross country and track when he was in high school and college, and it's unfortunate the two running enthusiasts couldn't have raced each other in their primes – something that can't be technologically accomplished just yet. "I've never been known to be the humblest person, so I would say I could beat him," Bruce said. "We ran the Ford Island 10K together (during the summer) while I was home on (rest and recuperation). Bryce beat me by 30 seconds. He finished in seventh place, and I finished ninth out of a field of 1,000 runners. I joke with him and say, 'Just be glad the race wasn't one mile longer, or I would have caught you.'"

"I think it would be a good race, but I think I have much more endurance then he does," Bryce said. "He was a good runner back in the day, so it would have been a good race for sure." ❚

Field hockey streak continues

BY BOB HERMAN

In 1999, Britney Spears released her debut album that sent teenagers into a nationwide frenzy. That was a long time ago, but that was also the same year that the Voorhees (New Jersey) Eastern High School field hockey program began its incredible state championship winning streak.

On November 11, Eastern won its national record-tying ninth straight New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) Group 4 championship as it defeated Bridgewater-Raritan (New Jersey) High School, 4-0.

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Cross Country Meet – The Essence of High School Sports

BY JOHN JOHNSON

There are never more high school athletes gathered in a single spot for a Michigan High School Athletic Association championship during the school year than when about 2,000 runners representing more than 400 schools converge on Michigan International Speedway for the Lower Peninsula Cross Country Finals.

It’s an ocean of color – from the tent city set up on the infield of the racetrack, to the 250 runners taking part in every race as they burst off the starting line and then recongregate just past the finish line in an area commonly known as “The Chute.”

As a cross country family for a number of years, we found the sport to be competitive but cordial. The congenial way everyone treated each other, the camaraderie that existed – not just between teammates, but between the runners from different schools – made for an enjoyable experience.

At this year’s meet, a portion of my work was to walk down the chute at the conclusion of each race to oversee media interviews with the runners as they exited the course. In past years, I monitored this activity from the perimeter driving a golf cart, only seeing tired runners. But after the eight races this year, my eyes were opened and my faith in what we do in educational athletics was reaffirmed.

There was the entire range of human expression – exhaustion and exhilaration; celebration and concern; and plenty of respect and sportsmanship.

Three young men from three different teams walking down the chute, holding each other up, all seniors, asking each other if this would be their last race. One runner from the east side of the state talking to a runner from the west side, recalling the first time they ever ran together in a race as freshmen and how he brought out the best in him – and these were two guys who finished in the middle of the pack.

“Help me,” a weak voice called from behind as I turned around just in time to help keep a young lady from falling to the ground as she walked down the chute. With the help of a nearby trainer, we got her on her way. A few others weren’t so lucky, requiring the help of EMTs after their races, but they were eventually OK.

Kids wore different colored uniforms, of all different colors of skin, congratulating, celebrating and comforting the others around them.

The top-finishing individual runners and teams all enjoyed each other’s company in the chute – talking about the grief they were going to catch from their parents if they dared to go to the after-the-meet party when they got home. They also joked about roughing up a pair of new shoes before a race so they wouldn’t stand out. Basically being teenagers, they were enjoying the company of other teenagers with whom they had built relationships while having fun playing their favorite sport. And that’s what high school sports are all about.

Was there rivalry on this day? Sure. Did these kids want to win? Absolutely. Was there disappointment on the part of those who fell short of their expectations? Definitely. But in the chute, all that was set aside.

Their perspective was enjoyable to be around. I wish it was contagious and that kids and coaches in every sport would catch it. In a few weeks, 16 teams will gather at Ford Field for the MHSAA Football Finals, and I would love to see this same interaction at the conclusion of each of the eight championship games. For that mat-
ter, I’d love to see it at our Basketball Finals, our Soccer Finals and a lot of our other finals.

But if history repeats itself, I’ll see the team members coming up on the short end of the score keeping their helmets on throughout the postgame ceremonies, afraid to show their faces; and the head coach condoning it by doing nothing about it. It should be a time for celebration for both teams, but many times teams act like receiving the trophy that doesn’t say “champions” on it is the worst thing that has ever happened in their life.

By the way, if only being a finalist in an MHSAA Tournament is the worst thing that ever happens in your life, you’re going to have a pretty good life. For the kids in the chute, they enjoyed the competition, they enjoyed each other’s company, and they enjoyed the moment while keeping it all in perspective.

John Johnson is the communications director of the Michigan High School Athletic Association in East Lansing, Michigan.
Florida Adds Cheerleading State Championship

BY EMILY CERLING

For years, cheerleaders have been on the sidelines, decked out in their school colors, chanting and performing stunts to rev up the crowd – that’s sideline cheerleading. But this year, Florida high schools can call their cheerleaders something new – student-athletes.

In June 2007, the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) determined that cheerleading would be considered a state championship sport. The Competitive Cheerleading Advisory Channel, composed of 13 athletic directors throughout Florida, met three times in the past year to organize the sport. At the start of the 2007-08 school year, the cheerleading season kicked off at the first football game, and will end with a final state cheerleading championship in March.

The 2008 FHSAA state competition will take place March 7-8 in Boca Raton at a facility that can accommodate 6,000 individuals. Cheerleaders compete in seven categories, including both all-girl and co-ed teams, as well as a novice division. Categories are based on squad size. The all-girl squads can enter as small, medium, large or extra-large teams. Co-ed teams can register as either small or large, depending on how many boys participate.

Semifinal and final rounds will take place in each division. To help squads curb traveling expenses and time, the semifinal round will be held in the morning and the finals will occur the same evening of the designated division. As a result, competition will not be held over several days, lowering hotel costs and other expenditures.

Many FHSAA member schools wanted cheerleaders to be considered student-athletes, which helps schools reach their Title IX goals to engage more females in athletics.

“Sideline cheerleading is supporting another organized team within the high school itself,” said FHSAA Assistant Director Jamie Rohrer. “Competitive cheer doesn’t have anything to do with that activity. They strictly are participating in head-to-head competition based on skills and ability.”

NFHS spirit rules and judging guidelines will be used to administer the championship. In addition, the FHSAA will work closely with the Universal Cheerleading Association to acquire and train judges.
Although preparations for the first competition are off to a great start, safety issues are at the forefront of the FHSAA’s concerns.

“As far as competitive cheerleading is concerned, there is a lot more stunting and a lot more tumbling,” Rohrer said. “All head varsity coaches must be safety-certified by the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Administrators (AACCA). It’s also a state statute that all high schools offering cheerleading must adopt the NFHS spirit rules and guidelines.”

To minimize injuries, spring-assisted mats or mini-trampolines will not be permitted. Also, props must not possess sharp edges and should be tossed lightly when returning them off the mat.

Rohrer expects a strong turnout of squads, parents, coaches and fans at the first Florida cheerleading championship. In addition, she anticipates it will attract many media.

“We usually have pretty good media turnout at our events,” Rohrer said. “I expect lots of media entities at the championship because it is new.”

Already, coaches and squads are preparing for the inaugural state championship. As of the November 16 early-entry deadline, 200 schools had already registered to compete. The remaining Florida schools have until February to join the competition.

“Everything has been so positive, there’s been lots of positive feedback,” Rohrer said.

Emily Cerling was a fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in integrated communications.
Second Annual T-Mobile Invitational a Resounding Success

BY JOHN GILLIS

Second annual T-Mobile Invitational a resounding success
By John Gillis

Set in the breathtakingly scenic Land of Enchantment of Albuquerque, New Mexico, the second annual T-Mobile Invitational basketball tournament was a resounding success on all counts.

For starters, four of the nation’s top boys teams and four of the nation’s top girls teams converged on “The Pit” on the University of New Mexico campus December 28-29 to test their cage-playing mettle against each other. The entire tournament was televised live on the VERSUS Network.

The tourney kicked off with Long Beach (California) Poly High School taking on Dayton (Ohio) Chaminade-Julienne High School. In that contest, Poly edged C-J, 67-61, behind its talented front-liners Jasmine Dixon (19 points and 10 rebounds) and Monique Oliver (16 points, 11 rebounds and a tournament-record six blocked shots), while 5-foot-6 senior April Cook added 14 points. Samarie Walker (18 points and 13 rebounds) and Shene Fleming (11 points and 10 rebounds) paced C-J.

In the boys opener, tall and talented Highland (Utah) Lone Peak High School used its height advantage to defeat Roswell (Georgia) Centennial High School, 75-57. Six-four junior guard Tyler Haws led Lone Peak with a tournament-record 26 points, while 6-7 senior forward Josh Sharp added 22. Six-eleven senior center Justin Hamilton and 6-7 senior forward Bracken Funk patrolled the backboards by pulling down 10 and 11 rebounds, respectively. Six-five junior guard Lorenzo Brown led Centennial with 16 points, while Alex Coxworth chimed in with an even dozen.

In the second girls first-round game, Hampton (Virginia) High School outscored Gallup (New Mexico) High School, 55-33. Tiffany Davis (24) and Alyssa Bennett (16) paced the victorious Lady Crabbers, while Courtney Cowboy and Talisha Joe led Gallup with eight and seven points, respectively.

In the day’s final game, Jersey City (New Jersey) St. Anthony High School showed why it’s ranked among the nation’s top boys basketball teams by dismantling Albuquerque (New Mexico) La Cueva High School, 84-34. Twelve different players scored for the Friars, led by 6-3 senior guards Mike Rosario and Tyshawn Taylor with 15 and 14, respectively. Darren Palmer, a 6-4 senior forward, placed La Cueva with 10, while 6-5 senior forward Brett Koller chipped in nine.

In the girls consolation game, Chaminade-Julienne improved to 9-1 on the season with a 60-48 decision over Gallup, 8-3. Samarie Walker once again led the way for C-J, with a game-high 21 points and a T-Mobile Invitational-record 21 rebounds. Gallup’s Talisha Joe dropped in 20 points, while Sage Natonabah added 11.

Lorenzo Brown tallied 21 points to lift 9-2 Centennial over La Cueva in the consolation tilt, 64-63, while Alex Coxworth added 11. Tim Pino and Jason Randall each had 16, and Darren Palmer contributed 10 for La Cueva, 6-3.

As occurred in Poly’s first-round game, the formidable one-two punch of Jasmine Dixon and Monique Oliver helped lift the Jackrabbits to a 68-43 victory over Hampton in the finals. Dixon poured in 22 points, while Oliver collected 16 points and 11 rebounds for Poly, 8-1. Tiffany Davis (14) and Alyssa Bennett (11) paced Hampton, 6-2.

St. Anthony (6-0) held off Lone Peak in the boys finals, 54-43,
to claim the 2007 T-Mobile Invitational championship. Dominic Cheek, a precocious and well-rounded 6-6 junior guard, led the Friars with 16 points and seven rebounds, and Travon Woodall scored nine. Bracken Funk amassed 17 points and 11 rebounds for Lone Peak, 7-2, while Tyler Haws was close behind with 16.

The 2007 T-Mobile Invitational was more than simply a run-of-the-mill high school basketball tournament, as it had several interesting and exciting activities interspersed throughout.

For example, on December 26, the teams, coaches, administrators and guests from around the nation expanded their horizons at the National Hispanic Cultural Center as they enjoyed an authentic Southwest cuisine welcome dinner and entertainment in the form of flamenco dancing. The next day, the players were able to give back to the Albuquerque community when they participated in the T-Mobile “Huddle Up” community service project, which entailed refurbishing McKinley Middle School.

Following the tournament, the awards banquet was held at the Embassy Suites. Among the presenters were banquet emcee NFHS Chief Operating Officer Bob Gardner, NFHS Executive Director Bob Kanaby and T-Mobile Director of Marketing Mike Belcher. The Gallup High School girls and the Lone Peak High School boys won the T-Mobile Huddle Up Sportsmanship Awards as voted on by tournament administrators. In addition to an excellent meal, the attendees enjoyed a video highlighting the 2007 T-Mobile Invitational tournament that enabled them to reminisce about the tournament’s activities before departing for their respective homes.

“From all standpoints, we were extremely pleased with the second annual T-Mobile Invitational basketball tournament,” NFHS Executive Director Bob Kanaby said. “With considerably larger crowds than those at the 2006 tournament, an expanded set of activities for the participants and outstanding high school basketball, the 2007 T-Mobile Invitational would unquestionably be regarded a resounding success.

“However, the true success of the tournament might have been better evidenced by the participants’ opportunities to meet and interact with their peers from around the nation, to give back to the community through the “Huddle Up” project, and to sample a part of the country completely unlike their own. In this tournament, there were no losers — every individual who participated was a winner.

“We would like to sincerely thank everyone involved with the tournament, including T-Mobile, Samsung, the VERSUS Network, the University of New Mexico, and the New Mexico Activities Association under the leadership of Executive Director Gary Tripp. It was a true team effort from all of the individuals who worked together to make this tournament a successful and memorable one.”

John Gillis is assistant director of the NFHS.

Brandon wrestling streak ends

The longest team winning streak in high school sports has ended. On January 5, Brandon (Florida) High School, winner of 459 consecutive dual wrestling meets since 1973, took the fall, 32-28, to Homestead (Florida) South Dade High School.

Having graduated half of its starters last year, Brandon’s young team fell behind 22-3 to South Dade before rallying to 28-22, and keeping its chance of extending the streak alive. However, South Dade’s Tico Baez clinched the historic victory with a major decision win.

During the streak, Brandon won 18 state titles and had 66 individual state champions.
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