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As we write this report, the annual rhetoric continues about the need for establishing a college football playoff to replace the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) method of determining a national champion.

We have no reason or desire to enter the debate about the preferred method of determining the top college football team, but the alarming undercurrent is the pressure placed on college coaches – pressure in the form of winning being the only option – and the concern that this mindset works its way down to the high school level.

Many college coaches have incentive-laced contracts whereby they can earn additional sums of money for a certain number of victories, a conference title or an appearance in a BCS bowl game. This extends to basketball as well with NCAA tournament selections and advancement providing the measuring stick.

In college basketball and football, the focus on winning is so intense that the top Division I coaches in those sports are paid more than their respective university presidents. In announcing the new contract given to Tom Izzo, the Michigan State University men’s basketball coach, the MSU athletic director said that Izzo provides so much value to the state of Michigan and to Michigan State University that coming up with his true worth is difficult.

This is by no means an attempt to throw stones at the NCAA Division I model. It is, rather, a message to high school leaders throughout the country that interscholastic coaches who are teaching the more than 7.6 million student-athletes in high school sports must be judged, assessed and rewarded on accomplishments and contributions other than their winning percentages and state championships.

The measuring stick for success at the high school level must remain different from the NCAA Division I model. While winning as many games as possible is a goal for all high school coaches, the final outcome of a contest – in the long run – is not the all-determining factor for judging success.

Success at the high school level has more to do with preparing students for their lives after sports than the number of victories or state championships. Two studies from NFHS member state associations are published in this issue on pages 34 and 35 and document the value of high school athletic programs.

A study of 26 high schools in Arkansas indicated that athletes had a higher grade-point average than non-students. Those in high school sports also had fewer absences and disciplinary referrals than non-athletes, and 99 percent of the athletes surveyed graduated, as opposed to 91 percent for non-athletes.

Similar results were recorded in Kansas, with higher GPAs and a higher percentage of graduation among student-athletes. Only six percent of the 2,016 students who dropped out of Kansas schools in the 2008-09 academic year were athletes.

These are but two examples of the measuring stick for successful high school coaches – helping students to succeed in school and in life. High school sports provide many students a reason for being or an identity. They can be somebody and be a part of a team without necessarily being the star of the team.

Unlike their NCAA counterparts, high school coaches cannot recruit outside their local school district. They must develop the players they have to reach their potential – both in the classroom and on the field or court.

In the NFHS Coach Education Program’s online course, Fundamentals of Coaching, the term “teacher-coaches” is used to describe high school coaches. From a philosophical standpoint, “successful” coaches at the high school level are those who have a student-centered focus rather than a focus on winning at any price.

While some want to measure success by the number of victories or state championships, principals, superintendents and school boards should judge, assess and reward high school coaches based on the successful implementation of the following educational components: citizenship, life skills, healthy lifestyles, learning and sportsmanship. The emphasis should be on helping students recognize the proper attitude toward competition and winning to be in line with the educational mission of interscholastic athletics.

We salute the thousands of high school coaches who, indeed, are teacher-coaches. Although we have no question about Tom Izzo’s worth to Michigan State University, we would suggest that there are many high school coaches scattered throughout the country whose value to their respective communities matches or exceeds Izzo’s because of the difference they are making in the lives of young people – helping them to get set for life.
A Legal Stick?

It appears as though the Osseo (Minnesota) High School ice hockey team exceeded the length of a legal stick in its December 7 game against Plymouth (Minnesota) Wayzata High School. In reality, the end of one player’s stick was momentarily caught in the glove of one of his teammates. Credit photographer Rich Moll with great timing on the camera.

Photograph provided by Rich Moll – Sports Photos Now, Maple Grove, Minnesota.
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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Editors .......................... Bruce L. Howard, John C. Gillis
Production ..................... Randall D. Orr
Advertising .................... Judy Shoemaker
Graphic Designer .......... Kim A. Vogel
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**Total**

$17,225 | $9,400 | $33,500

## Around the Nation

**Question:** Do you have a requirement that student-athletes have health insurance in order to participate in sports?

![Map](image-url)
Don Henley was raised in the small town of Linden, Texas, where he grew up listening to the radio late into the night as a form of comfort and solace from everyday life.

When Henley reached high school, he joined the football team and struggled to play well. Being fairly small for his age – especially in comparison to the other members of the Linden-Kildare football team – Henley’s coach politely suggested that he quit the team. But Henley wasn’t going to let his relative lack of size and athletic ability hurt his opportunity to be successfully involved in high school activities programs.

Henley decided to join the school band instead. He started out as a trombone player, but when his band teacher noticed Henley drumming on his textbooks during class, he quickly moved him to drums. Henley’s involvement in the school band, and his love of listening to the radio, sparked his interest to create a band. Henley and two of his friends formed a garage band named “The Four Speeds.” The fact that Henley also became the band’s lead singer is a strange twist of fate as well. No one wanted to sing, so the three bandmates drew names and Henley’s was the one that was chosen.

After Henley graduated from high school in 1965, he attended Stephen F. Austin (Texas) University and later transferred to North Texas State University, all the while still playing in his original band. One day, the band met country music legend Kenny Rogers while shopping in Dallas and asked Rogers to come listen to their band. After hearing the band, Rogers invited them to Los Angeles to record a single. In 1971, the band rearranged to become the Eagles, which charted its first Top 20 hit – “Take It Easy” – in the summer of 1972.

Henley has helped the Eagles become the best-selling American band of all time with album sales exceeding $120 million and three Grammy Awards. As a solo artist, Henley has had four platinum albums and two Grammy awards.
Shane Rhodes, football
Spring (Texas) Klein Collins High School

Rhodes, a junior running back for Klein Collins, scored six touchdowns on just nine touches in an October 28 victory over Houston (Texas) Westfield High School. Rhodes amassed 307 total yards on his five rushing attempts and four receptions, an average of 34.1 yards each time he touched the football. The victory clinched the Tigers’ second straight Texas University Interscholastic League Class 5A-District 13 title and improved Klein Collins’ record to 22-1 since Rhodes joined the varsity.

Record-setting football game goes 12 overtimes

It took nearly six hours and more than 1,000 combined yards, but Jacksonville (Texas) High School finally defeated Nacogdoches (Texas) High School, 84-81, in the 12th overtime of an October 29 matchup. The NFHS’ National High School Sports Record Book lists two previous contests that each lasted nine overtimes. Tied at 28 after regulation play, the two teams proceeded to match one another on the scoreboard – time after time, overtime after overtime – eventually finishing when Jacksonville’s Rodrigo Carreon kicked a 19-yard field goal to send his team to the Texas University Interscholastic League District 14-4A playoffs.

Minnesota girls soccer team victorious after 16 penalty kicks

The October 19 Minnesota State High School League Class 2A Section 5 championship game between Arden Hills Mounds View High School and Circle Pines Centennial High School was scoreless at the end of regulation and remained that way after a 20-minute overtime period. Then came the penalty kicks and more drama than most anyone in the stands or on the field bargained for. It took 16 penalty kicks for Mounds View to win the title. Each team scored three goals on its first five attempts, in which penalty kicks are a best-of-five. From then on, the sudden-death format forced Centennial, kicking second, to answer Mounds View each time. For 10 consecutive tries, either both teams scored or both teams missed. On the 11th penalty kick for each side, Mounds View’s Alex Ronchak scored the winning goal, and Centennial was unable to answer, finally ending a tense and memorable shootout.

High-scoring six-player football game in Texas

In the November 5 Texas University Interscholastic League six-player Division II District 8 championship game, Paint Rock High School prevailed over Novice High School, 112-109, in what turned into a shootout at the O.K. Corral. Paint Rock’s Tony Diaz scored 72 points courtesy of his 12 touchdowns. According to the National High School Sports Record Book, the previous mark for points in a six-player football game was 64, set by Paige Miller of Turrell, Arkansas, in 1937. Diaz also set a national record with 621 rushing yards. Paint Rock’s 112 team points fell short of only Trent (Texas) High School’s 132-point outburst in 2009.

Rushel Shell, football
Hopewell (Pennsylvania) High School

In a November 12 Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association Class AAA playoff loss to Jefferson Hills Thomas Jefferson, Shell ran 29 times for 238 yards, surpassing Emmitt Smith and Steve Worster with his 29th consecutive game of 100 or more rushing yards. The National High School Sports Record Book lists Smith and Worster tied for third at 28, trailing Billy Sims’ national mark of 38 100-yard outings in a row set in the 1970s. Shell will enter his senior season next fall with an active streak in pursuit of Brad Hocker, who is listed second with 33 consecutive 100-yard games.

Unusual Nicknames

The Itasca (Texas) High School athletic teams are known as the Wampus Cats and as far as anyone can tell, Wampus Cats don’t exist. The name apparently became connected with the school in the 1920s when after a football game, team captain Trav Burks shouted “Wow! We really played like Wampus Cats tonight!” According to sportswriter Burt Henry, Burks died in a car accident shortly after graduation, so an explanation of what a Wampus Cat was never confirmed.
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Participation Fees Fail to Deter Popularity of School-based Sports

BY MIKE DYER

Undoubtedly, “pay-to-play” – or perhaps more accurately “pay-to-participate” – is one of the hot-button topics in high school athletics across the country these days.

There are reports of a $400 price tag to play high school football in Connecticut. In Ohio, reports of an initial survey indicated the most expensive form of pay-to-participate is $660 for varsity and junior varsity competition. And there is discussion of how school boards of education are facing budget crunches and making high school athletics more and more self-sufficient.

Not surprisingly, the nation’s tough economic times have impacted virtually every high school athletic budget in one way or another as pay-to-participate continues to emerge. But, it’s also worth a look beneath the surface at some of the realities.

The costs for each sport vary across the country, and there is often a cap for families who have multiple children participating in athletics. In other words, no one size fits all when it comes to pay-to-participate. Some school districts may not use the term “pay-to-participate,” but prefer to charge transportation or uniform fees or other related charges with another name to avoid a negative connotation.

Although fees are becoming more common, the one constant is the fact that schools generally don’t turn down a student-athlete because of family income level, according to Bob Gardner, executive director of the National Federation of State High School Associations.

Schools often look for creative methods within the business community or find other means to generate income. While pennies continually get pinched in school districts, Gardner said families still see the value in their children participating on a school sports team.

Gardner takes it a step further when he adds that overall participation in the nation’s high school athletic programs actually increased slightly during the past year. According to the NFHS, participation in high school sports increased for the 21st consecutive school year in 2009-10, eclipsing the 7.6 million mark for the first time.

While that fact alone is very significant, if the NFHS had its druthers, there would not be pay-to-participate. But, Gardner said the organization understands there can be a workable model if schools manage their resources and “choose wisely” on how to best divide economic resources for the student-athlete.

**BENEFITS OF HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS**

Karl Heimbach has been on both sides of the coaching spectrum. The Magruder High School (Rockville, Maryland) athletic director was a longtime boys and girls soccer coach who also coached club teams.

Rockville is a hotbed for club soccer and the athletes will sometimes pay $150 to $300 a month to be a part of those club teams, Heimbach said.

While he acknowledges the significance of club soccer, Heimbach said his school’s pay-to-participate fees are just $30 for up to three sports per school year. Some counties in Maryland charge up to $100, Heimbach said.

With the tightening of state coffers, Heimbach doesn’t expect pay-to-participate to go away anytime soon. Despite the fees, Heimbach said there is still something to be said for student-athletes being able to participate in a school sport.

“Our costs are still lower and we offer a tremendous number of sports,” Heimbach said.

There are also the social benefits of playing for a high school team versus club. Heimbach said the Magruder student body often shows significant support for the volleyball team.

Whatever the high school sport, there is potential for significant camaraderie among fans not often found on the club scene.
“This can have huge impact on the school climate, which research has shown improves test scores and attendance rates,” said Troy Warehime, who is coordinator of athletics and facilities at North Carroll High School in Hampstead, Maryland. “It can also make for some pretty special community bonding on Friday nights in our local towns.”

Dr. Dan Ross agrees. The commissioner of the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) since August 2004, Ross said student-athletes should enjoy the benefits of sportsmanship and community pride while playing for their high school team.

“I think there is a lot of merit to the thought of putting on that uniform and representing the community,” Ross said. “… The fact you belong to that community is immeasurable.”

Last summer, the OHSAA took a proactive approach by sending surveys to its 828 member schools to determine what form of pay-to-participate schools use. About 45 percent of member schools reported pay-to-participate in some form, according to preliminary results at the start of the fall season.

While data is sought for pay-to-participate, the OHSAA doesn’t worry about competition with club sports. Ross said if a school’s student-athlete is a standout, scouts will find him or her.

“Why would you ever develop a program to leave 96-plus percent of the kids out?” Ross said. “It doesn’t make sense to gear a program toward elite athletes.”

Gardner said school programs “stand on their own merits” when it comes to a positive experience for student-athletes.

“The focus of our program — through life lessons — is to help kids become great doctors, postal carriers, coaches or whatever,” Ross said. “The lessons they learn will help them become better at what they are doing every day for the rest of their life.”

**DOLLARS AND SENSE**

When it comes to understanding the financial realities of high school versus club sports, Warehime has a unique perspective. He said Carroll County (Maryland) schools have a pay-to-participate fee of $100 per student-athlete per season and a $140 cap per family per season.

“My daughter plays club lacrosse, which I can tell you by a quick glance at my checkbook is far, far more expensive than $100 per season,” Warehime said.

Lane Green, director of athletics for the Olathe District Schools in Kansas, said his board of education explored the idea of pay-to-participate, but decided against it. Still, compared to a club team, Green said he agrees “that a small charge is still a much better value than most youth leagues or club teams.”

Despite the cost, Warehime said participation on some club teams may have its benefits for some athletes competing on an elite level of competition and training. But, he doesn’t see it as an “end-all/be-all answer for higher-level athletics.”

Warehime points out some club-level play has been “watered down in recent years as parents whose children didn’t make an elite club team now start their own club team along with other middle-of-the-road players.”

Warehime said coaching at the club level may not be educationally based and winning is “usually the top priority when it comes to philosophy.”

Gardner said club sports have a place to offer opportunities and certain value if a participant wants to concentrate on a sport during the entire calendar year. But, he also had a sobering assessment of the financial cost for one particular family he knew. He said the family’s son had played basketball since the age of 8 and was later involved with high school competition. The family told Gardner they could have paid for a college scholarship with all the money they spent on club teams throughout the years.

While Gardner doesn’t discount the fact that the family spent time together during those club tournaments, the finances tell another story.

Ross points out so few student-athletes receive college scholarships that when you look at the numbers, about one percent advance to an NCAA Division I program and another roughly three percent go on to participate at another college level.

“Many non-school coaches make unrealistic promises of a rosy future that often don’t pan out,” Ross wrote in the OHSAA magazine’s fall issue.

“They tell student-athletes and their parents that the only way they will get exposure to earn a college scholarship is to play for their elite teams. I not only find that very hard to believe, but when I hear about the costs and fees associated with non-school teams, I don’t believe it’s very hard to see who is really ‘profiting’ from the exposure.”

Mike Dyer is the assistant high school sports editor at the Cincinnati Enquirer. He has been covering high school sports in Southwest Ohio since 2004. Prior to arriving in Cincinnati, the Akron native was a high school sports correspondent for the Akron Beacon Journal and the Sun Newspapers. Some of his articles have also appeared in the Washington Post, Orlando Sentinel, Cleveland Plain Dealer and Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.
Increasing Participation in Athletic and Activities Programs

BY DR. DAVID HOCH, CMAA

In some settings around the country, perhaps due to community preferences and culture, there are teams that struggle to fill all roster spots. The valued sports in many schools exist because the youngsters involved started playing in youth leagues and the parents supported their participation.

If interest wanes, however, junior varsity teams or entire sports can be dropped from the program. While economic pressure may force schools to cut sports, dropping a team due to insufficient participants creates a philosophical concern.

In education-based athletics and activity programs, one of the major barometers of success should be the participation rate. The more young people who participate in athletics and activities programs, the more who gain educational benefits such as leadership skills, perseverance and time management, to mention a few.

The challenge for a school, therefore, is to increase participation in the sports that may not be viewed as the most popular or traditionally valued sports in a community. A major goal should be to provide an opportunity for as many students as possible to be involved.

One possible solution is to hire a coach who is a pied piper. While a quality coach is vital for all teams, it is especially important for those struggling to stay afloat or new ones trying to get established.

A pied piper is an individual with infectious enthusiasm, optimism and extremely high energy. This is a person to whom the young people will gravitate, which is a necessity for a struggling or emerging sport.

In order to increase participation, the qualities of a pied piper are much more important than the actual knowledge of the game that he or she may or may not possess. An individual who will go into the cafeteria during lunch periods and generate interest in the hallways is vital. Extra, unusual steps may have to be taken.

Putting on clinics at middle schools and elementary schools is an important step as well. The goal is to create interest and expose new sports to the young students who will eventually become high school athletes. Sowing the seed is vital to creating or rebuilding a program.

For existing programs that need revitalization, varsity players could be used to help conduct these clinics. Not only will the kids learn something about the sport, they will also have an opportunity to identify with and form a bond with the high school’s players.

In addition, local colleges, along with their coaches and players, will also usually offer a helping hand. They can be among the best goodwill ambassadors for the sport. The involvement by college coaches and athletes can open the eyes of young kids to other interesting opportunities beyond what they normally were exposed to in the community.

A school may also want to take a page out of P.T. Barnum’s book to draw attention to and promote a new emerging sport. Barnum, known as the Shakespeare of Advertising, stated that “Without promotion something terrible happens … nothing.”

The promotion of a new sport can be as easy as taking some equipment – field hockey or lacrosse sticks, for example – and placing the items, along with a few action photos, in a display case in the school’s media center or main lobby. Make some entertaining, creative daily announcements and put together a two-minute skit prior to an assembly.

Schools could receive help from others in sport, such as professional associations and recreation departments. Coaches from other schools are often willing to help with instruction, and they may even donate equipment in an effort to get a grassroots effort started.

Developing future lacrosse players in Baltimore City is a good
example. Inner-city kids grow up playing and aspiring to become football or basketball players, so lacrosse isn’t usually a possibility. Lacrosse is usually considered more of a suburban game.

In the past few years, former college players created the Baltimore Youth Lacrosse League, and with the help of the Baltimore City Police Department, formed the Baltimore Middle School League. Through these efforts, young people receive instruction and donated equipment.

Since lacrosse equipment is not cheap, corporate sponsors were located and stepped up to help purchase the needed gear. A bigger issue than money is finding enough volunteer coaches. One of the original volunteers—a retired corporate executive—said, “We need the right people in the right places.”

Even though this individual was referring to the effort to introduce lacrosse to the inner-city youth of Baltimore, the same can be said about all new sports. Beyond the obvious need for uniforms and equipment, nothing is more important than a great leader—the coach.

In addition to introducing a new sport, the Baltimore City Police Department recognizes the value of providing an activity as a means of keeping young people off the street. This effort is, therefore, meeting another vital objective—keeping young people away from gang influence and helping to make communities safer.

While increased participation opportunities are important for students, they are vital for everyone connected to a school.

It has been demonstrated that athletes who participate in sports and activities have:
- Higher grade-point averages
- Better attendance rates
- Fewer behavioral problems

Everyone, therefore, should want as many young people as possible participating in the school’s athletic program. Participation is a win-win opportunity for all schools.

In education-based athletics and activities programs, victories or championships should not be the major outcome when measuring success. Instead, the participation rate is one of the barometers that should be utilized. Providing an opportunity for as many young people as possible to be involved should be the ultimate goal of every program.

Borrowing from a quote known as the “Barnum Effect” in reference to P.T. Barnum’s circus, “We’ve got something for everything.” Do you have something for all students in your athletic program?

Reference
The Legal Issues
Throughout 2010, court cases were decided, legislation was enacted and state association regulations were created dealing with the legal issues that impact school athletic programs. In each instance, the legal principles thereby established illustrate the importance for athletics personnel and school administrators of understanding contemporary issues in sports law and proactively applying that knowledge to policy development and day-to-day management of school athletics programs.

Liability for Sports Injuries
In July 2010, a settlement was reached in Felix v. Barre Supervisory Union, a catastrophic injury case involving a 16-year-old football player who sustained neck and spinal cord injuries resulting in permanent quadriplegia. The injury occurred in the first game of the 2005 season when the boy, an out-of-state transfer new to Spaulding (Vermont) High School, lowered his head and made helmet-to-helmet contact with an opponent. The lawsuit alleged violations of the duties of proper technique instruction, supervision and warnings, including claims that coaches had failed to teach players the dangers of head-down contact and that the injured player had been allowed to play without having completed a state association-mandated, pre-participation requirement of 10 practices. Pre-settlement, the Vermont Supreme Court ruled that the injured player had not assumed the risk of such an injury because he had not been specifically informed of the dangers involved in head-down contact and that the school district would not be shielded from liability by statutory immunity. Although financial terms of the settlement were not disclosed, the structured payout was intended to cover the cost of the boy's lifetime medical care, an amount estimated to be approximately $9 million.

In September 2010, a similar case, Hunt v. Public School Athletic League, was settled. The plaintiff, a football player at Flushing (New York) High School, suffered a broken neck during a 2007 scrimmage, rendering him a paraplegic. The lawsuit alleged negligent supervision, technique instruction, warnings and medical response at the time of the injury. The suit also claimed that coaches failed to properly match and equate athletes by allowing the player, who weighed 140 pounds, to compete against significantly heavier and stronger players by whom he was injured in a violent collision while attempting to make a tackle. The pleadings in the case also alleged that Hunt had negligently been allowed to return to action too soon after a previous injury and that his partial incapacitation contributed to the catastrophic injury. The settlement was for $8 million, the estimated cost of Hunt's lifetime care.

In September 2010, the Jefferson County (Kentucky) Public Schools and Jason Stinson, the former football coach at Pleasure Ridge Park High School, settled a wrongful death lawsuit with the parents of Max Gilpin for $1.75 million. In September 2009, a Jefferson County jury acquitted Stinson of reckless homicide and wanton endangerment in the heat-stroke death of Gilpin, who collapsed on the practice field after a series of gasser drills on a hot August day in 2008. The trial was the nation’s first prosecution of a football coach in a player’s heat-related death and Stinson had faced up to 10 years in prison if convicted. The civil suit had been scheduled to go to trial in May of 2010, but was delayed so that the parties could engage in mediation over the summer, a process that led to the court-approved settlement. Gilpin’s parents have donated the lump-sum payout to the Max Gilpin Beat the Heat Foundation, the mission of which is to educate coaches, parents and student-athletes across the country about the risks of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
In January 2010, a settlement was finalized in *Reese v. New York City Public Schools*, a case involving a dodgeball injury sustained by a student during a physical education class at P.S. 219 in the Bronx in December 2008. The injury occurred when, as a rainy-day activity, teachers consolidated six physical education classes totaling more than 100 students into a small gymnasium and distributed hard soccer balls in place of the soft, rubber dodgeballs normally used for the game. The injured plaintiff was struck in the face by a soccer ball thrown from a short distance and he suffered extensive injuries to his mouth and jaw. The lawsuit alleged a lack of reasonable care by school athletics personnel in planning the activity, supervising the participants, providing a safe playing environment, and using safe equipment during the activity. The suit did not challenge the reasonableness of the sport of dodgeball; the alleged negligence was in placing too many participants in a space too small to safely accommodate the game and in using hard soccer balls for the activity. The case was settled for $20,000, the cost of the injured boy's corrective dental surgery.

In July 2010, a high school referee filed a negligence lawsuit against the Springfield (Oregon) School District for injuries he suffered when, just before kickoff in an October 2008 game between Thurston High and North Eugene, he was struck by a golf cart driven by a two-year-old boy. The cart had been left unattended by school athletics personnel with its ignition key turned on when the boy, the son of a Thurston assistant coach, climbed into the vehicle and stomped on the cart's accelerator pedal. Video of the incident shows the vehicle entering the football field through the end zone with the panicked two-year-old hanging onto its steering wheel and the cart overtaking the unaware referee from behind at the 10-yard line. The injured referee is seeking $265,000 for his injuries.

**Concussions**

In September, legislation was introduced in Congress titled the *Protecting Student-Athletes from Concussions Act of 2010*. A hearing was held on the bill, H.R. 6172, by the House Education and Labor Committee, during which testimony was presented by doctors and medical researchers regarding the frequency and severity of traumatic brain injuries in high school and youth sports. The proposed law would impose uniform national concussion management standards on schools across the country and would require school districts to develop education programs for coaches, trainers, student-athletes and their parents. The full-text of the bill may be read and its progress through the legislative process tracked at [www.thomas.gov](http://www.thomas.gov). The proposed law is a follow-up to a piece of legislation introduced in Congress in December of 2009, the *Concussion Treatment and Care Tools Act* (ConTACT).

The mandates included in these proposed federal laws are similar to those set forth in state legislation like the Virginia law, Senate Bill 652, enacted in April 2010, that requires athletes suspected of having sustained a concussion to be immediately removed from play, not returned to action that day, and cleared to return only after being evaluated and given a written release by a licensed health-care provider. Washington, Oregon, Massachusetts and Texas also have recently enacted state laws establishing concussion management guidelines and bills are currently pending in at least seven other states.
State associations have also been active regarding the issue. In August 2010, the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) adopted a new concussion-management rule based on revised guidelines implemented by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) for the 2010-11 school year. The IHSA rule requires that if an official, coach or trainer suspects a player of having sustained a concussion, he or she must remove the player from the contest and the athlete can return to action only after being cleared by a medical professional. Numerous state associations have recently created such concussion management mandates or revised pre-existing concussion management protocols and school athletics personnel should consult their state association’s Web site or hard-copy publications to ensure that they are in compliance.

One tool available for the education of administrators, coaches, trainers, officials, student-athletes and parents is an online course offered free of charge by the NFHS. Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know takes approximately a half-hour to complete and provides printable resources, including a coach’s guide to concussion in sports, an athlete fact sheet, a parents’ guide and materials for schools to use in implementing a protocol for concussion treatment. The course and materials are available at www.nfh-slearn.com.

Freedom of Speech and Social Networking Web Sites

In March 2010, in T.V. & M.K. v. Smith-Green Community Schools, a federal court in Indiana refused to certify as a class action the lawsuit by two Churubusco High School students who were suspended from their volleyball team after posting pictures on their MySpace pages that were deemed by school administrators to be in violation of the student-athlete code of conduct. The pictures were taken at a summer 2009 sleepover and featured the girls pretending to kiss and lick a large phallus-shaped lollipop as well as photos of the girls in lingerie with dollar bills tucked into the clothing. The suit, yet to be docketed for trial, argues that the girls’ free speech rights were violated because the conduct took place away from school property, when school was not in session, and failed to create a disruption of the educational environment. The district claims that athletics participation is a privilege, not a constitutionally protected right, and that the school’s autonomy in enforcing its code of conduct for extracurricular activities outweighs the students’ free speech rights.

In a similar case, a U.S. District Court recently ordered mediation in a lawsuit filed by two Bothell (Washington) High School cheerleaders who were suspended from the team after an August 2008 incident in which the girls sent nude pictures of themselves to their boyfriends via text message, resulting in the photos “going viral” and being distributed first to the entire football team and then throughout the student body. The suit claims that the dissemination of information on privately owned cell phones constitutes protected free speech and that school administrators violated the due process rights of the girls because they were the only students disciplined and all of the other students who forwarded the texts escaped punishment.

In October 2010, the federal lawsuit by a Pearl (Mississippi) High School cheerleader against her school and coach was docketed for a March 2011 trial. The suit asserts that the coach required each member of the cheer squad to provide her with their Facebook account passwords so that the coach could monitor compliance with the school’s student-athlete code of conduct and that the plaintiff’s suspension from the squad for posting profanity-laced messages directed at the cheer captain was in violation of the plaintiff’s constitutional rights to free speech and privacy.

The coming wave of rulings in free speech cases such as these will facilitate school policy development by providing clearer guidelines as to the extent of school authority in sanctioning student-athletes for digital communications and postings on social networking Web sites.

Freedom of Religion

In October 2010, in Iacono v. Croom, a federal district court judge issued a temporary restraining order requiring Clayton (North Carolina) High School to re-admit a student who had been suspended four times for wearing a nose stud in violation of a district policy banning piercings. The plaintiff is a member of the Church of Body Modification, a non-theistic denomination which encourages piercings and tattoos as a path to spiritual enlightenment. In such cases, the courts do not attempt to evaluate the legitimacy of the religious beliefs involved, but instead focus only on the sincerity of the affected party’s belief in that faith.

Also in October, in Marszalek v. Dearborn Public Schools, a former wrestling coach settled his lawsuit claiming discrimination against his Christian religious beliefs. The plaintiff was a coach at Fordson (Michigan) High School, where Muslims comprise a majority of the student body, and his coaching contract was not re-
newed after complaints by wrestlers and their parents that the coach and his assistant, a Christian minister, were trying to convert Muslims to Christianity at a wrestling camp. Complicating the situation was the fact that the school’s principal, the individual who decided to not renew the coach’s contract, was himself a Muslim. Although the school district claimed that religious beliefs played no role in the coach’s termination, the district settled the case for $25,000 to avoid the cost of a trial.

Drug Testing

In September 2010, in Brown v. Shasta Union High School District, the California Court of Appeals upheld a lower-court ruling in which a state court judge struck down the district’s random, suspicionless drug-testing policy for students involved in extracurricular activities, drawing a distinction between participation in athletics in which students expect increased scrutiny of their physical status and activities such as band, choir and academic clubs where scrutiny of bodily condition is unexpected and irrelevant. Unlike the 1995 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Board of Education v. Earls, which interpreted the federal constitution as permitting drug testing of all students involved in extracurricular activities, the California judge decided that such testing schemes violate the explicit privacy protections incorporated into the California state constitution. The Shasta case is the most recent in a series of state court decisions that have struck down school drug-testing programs by ruling that the controlling state constitution provides greater privacy protections than does the U.S. Constitution.

Hazing

Hazing continues to be a widespread problem in high school athletics programs and one of the most highly litigated claims against districts and athletics personnel, with verdicts typically imposing liability either because of the failure to create an anti-hazing policy or for developing a policy that is substantively inadequate or ineffectively implemented.

In late August, the varsity football program at Elk River (Minnesota) High School was temporarily suspended pending investigation of a hazing incident in the school’s wrestling room in which upperclassmen struck and poked underclassmen near their buttocks with a broomstick. Although the victims were not forced to disrobe, initial reports characterized the hazing as sodomy-like and the serious nature of the incident led to an immediate investigation by the district. Four players were dismissed from the team; three others were suspended for four games, and two for one game. Although no coaches were accused of being present or participating in the hazing, the lack of supervision of student-athletes on school property and the lack of measures to deal with the culture of hazing in the school’s athletics program resulted in six coaches being disciplined by the Elk River School Board. In September, the Board announced the implementation of an anti-hazing education program that will be mandatory for athletics personnel, student-athletes and parents.

In May, four Carmel (Indiana) High School basketball players were charged with assault, battery and criminal recklessness related to alleged hazing incidents that took place in the high school locker room and on a team bus. Although the precise nature of the hazing was not disclosed by the school or in court documents, the school’s head basketball coach resigned and three freshman team coaches who were on the team bus when some of the incidents occurred were relieved of their coaching duties. A $2.25 million tort claim was filed by victims against the school district alleging “a lengthy history of sexual abuse and bullying by students” in the athletics program and stating “no coach or other adult staff member remains in the locker room with the players before or after practices and there is no protection provided for younger student-athletes from older student-players.”

In August, cell phone video of a summer football camp hazing incident that took place involving beatings suffered by underclass members of the Clarksville (Tennessee) High School team was posted online and then reported to school district administrators. An investigation of the incident led to the suspension of six players and to the resignation of the team’s head coach. The findings concluded that the players had not been properly supervised, that hazing had been taking place during the camp for years, and that a culture of hazing permeated the school’s athletics program.

In June, the final sentencing hearing was held related to the August 2008 Robertson (New Mexico) High School hazing incident in which seven underclass football players were sodomized with a broom handle at a summer football training camp. Five of the six attackers had already pleaded guilty and been sentenced, with the final perpetrator, the alleged organizer of the hazing who held
down the victims as they were assaulted, receiving a one-year prison sentence for his actions. Also in June, a civil lawsuit was filed against the school district, the athletic director and the football team’s coaches alleging that the district and its personnel have long tolerated an ongoing, widespread and pervasive culture of hazing towards student-athletes.

**Sexual Harassment**

In September 2010, USA Swimming, responding to a sexual abuse scandal involving multiple victims in swim clubs nationwide, announced a new athlete protection policy that mandates criminal background checks and other screening procedures for all coaches, club owners and chaperones, along with revised oversight and reporting procedures for incidents of sexual harassment or abuse. During 2010, five lawsuits were filed against USA Swimming alleging offenses against young swimmers in five separate swim clubs across the country ranging from harassment and inappropriate touching to molestation and sexual abuse. USA Swimming’s new guidelines, titled *Policies & Guidelines for Athlete Protection*, might serve as a model for school districts wishing to implement an anti-sexual harassment policy for student-athletes. The full-text of the policy is available at www.usaswimming.org.

**Title IX**

A trend in Title IX litigation is the filing of complaints against school districts by advocacy groups. In November, the National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) filed complaints against 12 school districts, one in each of the U.S. Office for Civil Rights (OCR) regions, alleging the districts failed to provide equal sports participation opportunities for their female students. The districts named in the complaints are Clark County (NV), Columbus (OH), Deer Valley (AZ), Henry County (GA), Oldham County (KY), Wake County (NC), Sioux Falls (SD), Irvine (CA), Worcester (MA), Houston (TX), Chicago (IL), and New York City (NY). The complaints indicate that in each of the districts, the percentage of girls playing sports is substantially lower than the percentage of female enrollment, with gaps ranging from eight percent to 33 percent. The filing of the complaints was controversial, with district spokespersons arguing that the statistics cited were at least four years old, that several of the complaints contained factual errors, and that the NWLC did not contact the districts to obtain current data or discuss compliance issues prior to filing the complaints. To read the complaints against specific school districts, go to www.nwlc.org/rallybriefing.

In April 2010, the OCR rescinded the 2005 clarification to Title IX policy that allowed schools to use an e-mail survey of students to demonstrate compliance with the third component of Title IX’s “three-prong test.” The 2005 clarification permitted a school to demonstrate that it was “fully and effectively accommodating the athletics interests” of its female enrollment by mass e-mailing a sports-interests survey and counting non-responses as a lack of interest in athletics participation. Given the typically low response rate to any e-mail survey, the 2005 policy provided schools with a means to falsely show compliance and thereby avoid the duty to provide equivalent participation opportunities for girls.

In October 2010, a federal district court in Indiana ruled that a school district’s scheduling of boys and girls basketball games so that the boys’ team had more “prime-night” games (Fridays and Saturdays) did not constitute a Title IX violation. The court in *Parker v. Indiana High School Athletic Association* stated that “a disparity in a single program component such as scheduling can constitute a violation of Title IX if the disparity is substantial enough,” but that Title IX “does not require identical scheduling for boys and girls sports.” The court distinguished night-of-the-week scheduling disparities from non-traditional season disparities, noting that a long line of court case precedents made it clear that the scheduling of girls sports in non-traditional seasons is substantial enough that it constitutes a Title IX violation.

During 2010, two bills introduced in Congress in 2009 to mandate annual reporting by districts of Title IX-related data regarding school sports programs continued to progress through the legislative process. *H.R. 2882 The High School Accountability Act* is being considered by the House Education and Labor Committee and its number of co-sponsors has increased from 59 to 89. The Senate version of the bill, *S.471 The High School Sports Information Collection Act*, is being considered by the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and its number of co-sponsors has increased from eight to 11. Both pieces of legislation would mandate the completion and submission of annual Title IX self-audits by school districts to the U.S. Department of Education, a reporting requirement intended to parallel that applied to universities by the federal *Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act.*

Lee Green is an attorney and a professor at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, where he teaches courses in sports law, business law and constitutional law. He is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee. He may be contacted at Lee.Green@BakerU.Edu.
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Toriano Baker, athletic director at Central-Hayneville High School in Alabama, said he didn’t know what his school’s high school football team was going to do after a fire destroyed the school’s football fieldhouse and all the team’s football equipment in the early morning hours of September 28.

What Baker and the players learned over the next few days, however, shouldn’t have surprised him. He said, “But it did. It was just overwhelming.”

A quick e-mail blast from Steve Savarese, executive director of the Alabama High School Athletic Association, asked member schools to step forward and help the school, which is located in Lowndes County in the quaint community of Mosses. In that e-mail, Savarese asked the schools if they could find enough equipment and uniforms so the team could play its regularly scheduled game at Isabella High School on Friday, October 1.

“We only had three days to find equipment to suit our 25-player team,” Baker said. “And to top it off, the wife of our head football coach Keith Scissum had a baby on Wednesday and he had to be gone the rest of the week.”

Baker, considered one of the state’s top young basketball coaches, also served as head football coach last season at Central and had been working as an assistant this year. It was only natural for him to take over the role as head coach once again for Central principal Peggy Grant.

Once the schools received the e-mail blast, phone calls started rolling in. Baker said he was overwhelmed by just how many coaches and principals called to offer help. Other groups, like Riddell, the chief manufacturer of football helmets, also responded.

One school in particular came to the rescue in a big way despite being located almost three hours away in Jackson County. Skyline High School was forced to shut down its Class 1A football program just three weeks earlier when injuries depleted the team roster to fewer than 11 players. Principal Kevin Dukes got in touch with Baker and offered his team’s uniforms, pads and other equipment. He even drove the gear to Montgomery, where Baker met him on Thursday morning.

“What they had was a perfect fit,” Baker said prior to his team’s 48-12 loss at Isabella Friday night. “Their team was about the same size as ours and the school colors (green and white) are exactly the same as ours. There was no school identification on the jerseys. It was like we had never lost anything.”

Dukes, who was scheduled to attend a school meeting in Montgomery later that day, said it was a perfect opportunity for his school to help another school – even out of their own adversity.

“I was glad there was something we could do,” Dukes said.

The help didn’t stop there, however. Homewood High School
gave the Lions close to 100 white-and-red game jerseys that could be worn in games or practice. Hoover High School donated some white practice pants and other equipment, and the school’s athletic director, Myra Miles, contacted Nike, which started plans to provide Central new uniforms for next season.

Pelham football coach Brett Burnett sent some pants, pads and mouthpieces. He also contacted Riddell, which sent some more jerseys and enough helmets to supply the entire squad.

There were many others, such as Luverne coach Les Sanders, who found enough shoulder pads to equip the team, and Chilton County coach Brian Carter, who also donated hip pads. Sumiton Christian provided some coolers, footballs, mouthpieces and medical supplies. Holt High School coach Tim Gillispie managed to get a full sideline medical supply wagon donated — including enough supplies to last the rest of the season. He also sent two kicking tees.

Montevallo players took up an offering to buy shirts for the Central players. Many others stood ready to help, including schools in Foley, Tallassee, Opp, Andalusia, Sweet Water, Arab, Montgomery, Tuscaloosa and many other communities across the state.

More than 50 organizations offered immediate assistance, while groups such as the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame and Hibbetts are standing by to offer more long-term help. An article in the Montgomery Advertiser also generated more response from the general public.

At game time, host Isabella offered its kicking tee for the Lions to use — plus any other items they might need.

“I just never expected this kind of response,” Baker said. “But I know I shouldn’t be surprised. Like one coach told me on the phone, ‘We are in this business to help kids, and anytime we can help kids play this great sport, then that’s what we are here to do.’ We are a community of modest means, so I really don’t think we would have been able to continue our season without this help. We have been blessed.”

Ron Ingram is director of communications for the Alabama High School Athletic Association.
Although the United States is one of the few major countries in the world to offer interscholastic sports in its schools, it is time to refocus on its original mission and purpose or we could very well see it disappear from schools within the next 20 years. There are several myths that need to be dispelled before we can begin to preserve sports in our schools. By dispelling the myths, it will become apparent why we must require training of individuals who coach middle school students.

**MYTH 1** – Sports is a frivolous activity that has no educational value and, therefore, should not be a part of our schools.

Sports began in American schools in the mid-1800s to teach discipline and respect for authority in the event the country had to go to war, to socialize an immigrant population and to teach attributes that are more easily learned on the playing fields than in the classroom. Educators have long believed that sports and activities are an extension of the classroom where students can learn life skills in an extracurricular setting.

Research shows, however, that learning positive attributes in sports does not happen automatically. The coach must intentionally teach and model the behaviors he or she expects the students to learn. Extracurricular sports and activities, which cost just one to three percent of the total school budget, are still one of the least expensive learning opportunities a district can use. However, it is vitally important that interscholastic coaches learn to take advantage of the unlimited number of teachable moments available in these activities to teach life lessons to their students who participate.

**MYTH 2** – If you played the sport, you are qualified to coach the sport. Furthermore, the higher the level played, the better the coach.

The skills of playing are very different from the skills of coaching. Understanding the sport from the player’s perspective is a good start, but we should expect to train coaches and prepare them for the
role of coaching. We owe it to the students who participate to provide them a trained coach, just as we do with classroom teachers.

**MYTH 3 – Coaching is the same at all levels and for all age groups.**

While it is true that all coaches at all levels must understand the same general principles of coaching, it is not true that coaching a student of middle school age is the same as coaching high school students. Some of the critical differences of which coaches must be keenly aware include:

1. **Length of practice is shorter for younger participants.**
2. **Intensity and duration of conditioning is much less at younger age levels.**
3. **Practices and drills should be appropriate for the age level of the student.**
4. **Having fun and developing skills – not winning – are the primary focuses at the middle school level.** Even at the high school level, winning should never come before the educational outcomes. At all levels in education-based sports, the experience should be enjoyable first and foremost.
5. **Understanding that at the middle school level, this could very well be the student’s first organized sport experience. Students feel the importance of representing their school and playing in front of their peers. Coaches must be sensitive to this and not damage the social development of the child.**

**MYTH 4 – Requiring interscholastic coaches to have training will do nothing but scare them away. After all, we have a hard enough time finding coaches now.**

Currently, the majority of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) member state associations require some level of coaches’ training before coaches have contact with students on a sports team. There has been some verbal pushback on the part of a few coaches, but these states have not experienced a reduction in available coaches. In fact, training helps increase the pool of coaches and aids in their retention because there are a number of individuals who would tell you they couldn’t coach because they don’t know how to. Training provides these individuals the confidence that they can do it.

**Where to do we go from here?**

With the myths dispelled, coaches must have training to ensure that the students who participate have a positive sports experience. The NFHS is in the development of an online course entitled “Coaching Sport in Middle School.” This course is being developed in cooperation with the National Middle School Association (NMSA) and the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA).

The course is being built around the work of C. Kenneth McEwin and John Swaim. Their book, “Clearing the Hurdles – Issues and Answers in Middle School Sports,” provides a wonderful starting point for the content that can be delivered to individuals who are coaching or would like to coach at this level.

The course will provide coaches content and resources in the following areas:

- Developing a student-centered philosophy that supports the mission and purpose of middle schools.
- Providing students who want to participate in sports and have been “cut” from the school team an opportunity to be a part of an intra-school team. Athletics at the interscholastic level should never have as its purpose identifying the elite athlete. We should provide an opportunity for all to participate.
- Providing interscholastic and intramural programs that encourage participation in, and maximize enjoyment of, multiple sports and not specializing in just one sport.
- Establishing and communicating eligibility rules that support the academic mission of the school.
- Completing initial coach training and encouraging continual professional development to stay current in the profession of coaching.
- Minimizing the risk of participation. Inspecting equipment and facilities and teaching methods of play that minimize the risk of injury to the students who participate.
- Communicating to parents the proper middle school athletic philosophy and policies and suggesting ways parents can support their child and the program.
- Providing the coaches the best practices to allow all students an enjoyable educational experience through participation in sports.

The NFHS, in cooperation with the NMSA and IESA, plans to launch the course in the spring of 2011 at www.nfhslearn.com. Tim Flannery, CMAA, is an assistant director of the NFHS and is responsible for the development, implementation and promotion of the NFHS Coach Education Program.
Forensics Teachers Play Role in Developing Future Business Leaders

BY LUIS MUÑOZ

Editor's Note: The following speech by Luis Muñoz was presented at the annual conference of the Virginia Association of Speech, Debate and Drama Coaches in October 2010.

Those of us who direct forensics and theatre activities stand at a fork in the road. One path takes us to our past; the other begins a trek to the future.

We know the benefits of what we do. We know all about teamwork and character-building. We know that our activities improve test scores, bolster confidence and improve critical thinking. We know this because we experience it every day and because there is enough empirical evidence to support these statements.

But where do we stand in our efforts to survive as monies and other resources get scarcer and our allocation of funds is under constant scrutiny? How do we justify what we do and why we do it in our ever-changing world?

Last year I listened to Dan Pink, former Clinton speechwriter and author of A Whole New Mind, speak before the Texas Senate Education Committee. The state of Texas was considering the elimination of a 25-year-old high school fine arts graduation requirement. I expected to hear the usual arguments.

Instead, I sat there and heard about current business models, outsourcing and survival in a new world. I listened as the committee discussed our evolution from an agrarian age to the industrial age to the information age and now into what Pink was calling the conceptual age. An age in which a mastery of abilities heretofore “overlooked and undervalued marks the fault line between who gets ahead and who falls behind.” An era with a business model that at its core is dependent on those very things that we teach on a daily basis – skills that have been “overlooked and undervalued.”

It used to be that the abilities that mattered most at work, in business, in achieving professional success and personal fulfillment, were abilities characteristic of the left side of the brain – the logical, linear, sequential, analytical – the spreadsheet and calculator – the retrieval of known facts, the things we measure through the SAT and most standardized testing.

According to Pink, those abilities are still absolutely necessary today, but no longer sufficient. Abilities characteristic of the right side of the brain – artistry, empathy, inventiveness, big-picture thinking – are assuming a new and far greater importance.

The argument is clear. The world is experiencing a period of abundance – an abundance of “things.” We are no longer satisfied with a phone. We need choices in phones. We need colors, bells, whistles, sizes, shapes.

Functionality no longer suffices. It has to look nice. It has to be special. It has to be “you.” Abundance is there because the world demands and will continue to demand choices.

Along with that, automation and cheaper labor from outside the United States are replacing many left-brain activities, including legal, medical and accounting functions, with software programs and outsourcing: Turbo-Tax, Divorce.com, tech support, Yourdiagnosis.com (a little scary) and many, many more.

And still those who pave the paths for our next generation of students call out for more math and science, more regurgitating answers to multiple-choice questions, more looking at what is and never taking the time to teach HOW to consider what might be. Is this a society on pause and stagnating? Not if we can help it.

YOU stand waiting for the students of the future at the other path, the path that makes geniuses out of scientists, innovators out of engineers, creators out of re-creators, leaders out of followers. Our role as teachers who “build better citizens through student activities” must be clearly and dynamically redefined. We must market ourselves as THE source for the future’s business leaders.
Pink proposes that our students develop six abilities crucial to the conceptual age: Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play and Meaning.

We know we produce students who can understand design in its many forms: the design of a poster, costume or set or the design for a multifaceted plan to deal with world issues in debate. General Motors Vice Chairman Robert Lutz said, “We are in the arts and entertainment business.” GM? The CEO of Procter & Gamble said, “I don’t think anyone thinks we’re not in the design business . . . it’s all design.”

Our oral interpers, actors, playwrights and public speakers learn to tell stories, to market and make relevant, to touch the heart and the mind, to persuade and move.

Our students learn to see the big picture, to tear it apart, to see all its sides, to look at its components, to argue their advantages and harms and then to put them back together into something new and exciting. Analysis and synthesis; be it playscript or policy – it’s the same thing.

Empathy is a skill that has no better classroom than the theatre or oral interpretation. By trying on life, our students gain a global understanding of others and through that understanding, become better world leaders, doctors, counselors and inventors. Many medical and corporate programs are using simulation programs to better understand their customers or employees — how to design signs or instrument panels, how to make devices more usable.

For example, the XTreme Aging program has medical students wear clouded glasses to simulate vision problems or has them walk around with corn kernels in their shoes to simulate certain types of foot pain. This sounds very familiar to theatre educators who teach improvisation. You try on life to understand life.

From Einstein to Maslow, big thinkers believe we have to become childlike again if we want to create and innovate. After spending a great part of our childhood being told to “grow up,” we need permission to play and to feel safe in doing so and, in doing so, to find satisfaction and meaning in what we do.

We do all that. We are the playground of the mind and the safe haven for individuality.

So, coaches, sponsors, directors – teachers all – stand your ground, know that you hold and teach something that is precious and important – something that can change the world. Plant those seeds and watch them grow and watch the winter turn into spring.

Luis Muñoz is the theatre director for the Texas University Interscholastic League and oversees the state’s One-Act Play Contest. He has been involved in theatre education for more than 30 years.

China, Space Final Choices for 2011-12 National Debate Topic

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) recently tabulated debate ballots from 31 states, the National Catholic Forensic League (NCFL), National Debate Coaches Association (NDCA) and the National Forensic League (NFL). The returned ballots narrowed the five proposed topics to two for placement on the final ballot to select the 2011-12 national high school debate topic. The five topic areas were ranked 1-5 with the two topic areas receiving the lowest totals – China and Space – placed on the final ballot. On January 7, 2011, the NFHS will announce the preferred topic area and resolution.

In addition to the NFL, NCFL and NDCA, the following states returned ballots:

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Within each of the five topic areas appears one resolution. The resolutions within the two final topic areas are:

**CHINA**

**Resolved:** The United States federal government should substantially increase its economic engagement with the People’s Republic of China on one or more of the following issues: trade, currency, environment.

**SPACE**

**Resolved:** The United States federal government should substantially increase its exploration and/or development of space beyond the Earth’s mesosphere.

**Overall Topic Rankings:**

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Antibiotic resistance is a significant problem in our society. It’s a known fact we are running low on options for handling infectious diseases. What was once considered a simple choice has now become a difficult one requiring that we weigh the options of treatment against the risk of promoting drug resistance, as well as the possibility of reducing available antibiotics for use in the future. Antibiotic and antiviral medication usage is now highly scrutinized for every infection.

For the first time in 50 years, the annual Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy failed to introduce a new antibiotic. The consequences of limited antibiotic availability directly affects the management of skin-related infections in sporting activities where CA-MRSA (community-associated methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus) has reached epidemic proportions. In certain athletic activities, proper treatment is fraught with controversy among medical experts, as well as the lay public.

Several years ago I wrote an article about CA-MRSA that was first brought into the sports limelight with the St. Louis Rams professional football team. Since that time, CA-MRSA has spread rapidly into other sports, too.

As we evaluate sports that are prone to skin infections, it’s important to review the different types of infection. Bacterial skin infections are due to organisms such as Staphylococcus aureus or beta-hemolytic streptococcus. They cause localized skin infections such as cellulitis and folliculitis and may develop into deeper infections such as a boil, also called an abscess or carbuncle.

CA-MRSA classically presents as boils that can require drainage and the use of antibiotics to heal. Recurrent outbreaks are due to persistent presence of the bacteria in the athlete’s environment or on the skin. It is a difficult bacteria to eradicate due to its ability to “hide” in the nose of the athlete or those in close contact, such as team members, friends or family members. Spreading bacteria to these contacts is quite common and abscesses may also occur. Treatment focuses on general hygienic measures (see box), antibiotics and possibly draining the area if an abscess is present.

Fungal infections (ringworm or tinea corporus) can appear on the skin or in the scalp. Due to the dermatophyte Trichophyton tonsurans, it is considered a nuisance infection but can infect the groin, feet and even the scalp, where a deeper type of infection can develop (kerion). Fungal infections require treatment with antifungal creams and occasionally must be treated with oral medications. Scalp infections require up to four to six weeks of oral medication.

Viral infections such as Herpes Gladiatorum (HG), verruccous warts and molluscum contagiosum can be difficult to treat. Herpes Simplex-type 1 accounts for more than 90 percent of all HG outbreaks. Treatment with antiviral medications serves to clear an outbreak and may be used to reduce transmission when used prophylactically. It’s important to remember that this virus will remain with the athlete for life. Recurrent outbreaks are the rule, not the exception.

Proper Hygienic Principles Needed to Combat CA-MRSA, Other Skin Infections

BY B.J. ANDERSON, M.D.

Hygienic Principles for all Sports

1. Shower after each practice and competition at the event or school.
2. Use clean workout clothing for each practice.
3. Clean equipment on a routine basis.
4. Use your own towels with showering and don’t share personal toiletry products.
5. Don’t shave groin area due to increased risk for CA-MRSA.
6. Use pump bottle soap dispensers in the shower. Bars of soap have been implicated in spreading CA-MRSA among their users.
7. Notify your coach, ATC about any suspicious skin lesion. Have them evaluated by a health-care provider before returning to competition/practice.
8. Certain sports require specific guidelines to be followed when skin infections occur. Consult your state or NFHS guidelines for recommendations.
Molluscum contagiosum is due to a pox virus and also considered a nuisance type of infection. Along with verrucous warts, their removal is primarily to prevent their spread. Cryotherapy, hyfrecator or chemical/topical treatments can be used, but repeated treatments are necessary. They are not considered serious, yet it is necessary to remove them to prevent transmission to an opponent or teammate.

Two common facts serve as a reasonable explanation for the rapid rise in these skin-related infections: single-sport athletes competing year-round and a lack of proper hygiene. A recent study showed that military recruits had increased rates of skin infections due to living in close quarters for a prolonged period of time. Athletes in certain sports with repeated close contact show similarly increased rates of skin infections. High school wrestlers show a huge increase in skin infections during the month of January when teams participate in tournaments almost every weekend and more than 60 percent of seasonal matches occur.

Unfortunately, basic hygienic principles are not being followed. Many students do not shower after practice. During the past 20 years, the practice of showering after gym class appears to have been virtually abandoned and apparently physical education instructors are not demanding that students shower. These practices carry over into afterschool sports where a recent study performed by this author showed that nearly 10 percent of high school wrestlers did not shower even at the end of weekend tournaments!

Certain sports are more problematic due to equipment, increased skin-to-skin contact and the environments in which the athletes compete and perform. Football and ice hockey are high-impact, contact sports that are equipment-intense activities. Bacteria can be transmitted via direct contact with opponents and can be harbored on the equipment.

Several articles have been written about equipment in these sports serving as a source for bacterial spread from one athlete to another. Abrasions or cuts can regularly occur during the course of a season. Once the skin is open, infectious agents can easily seed the wound and develop into an infection.

Wrestling has more direct skin-to-skin contact than other sports. The constant rubbing of the skin can lead to increased risk for skin infections to develop. Sports with lower risk include baseball, basketball, swimming and golf. These sports have less direct skin-to-skin contact, but infections do occur from environmental contacts. Plantar warts and tinea pedis have been documented from floors surrounding pools.

With the progression of antibiotic resistance and increased year-round single-sport participation, it is important to focus on basic principles to help prevent and reduce the risk of skin infections and their complications. Good hygienic principles are a must and with the development of drug resistance, these rules serve as the first line of defense to prevent skin infections from developing.

If followed, these guidelines will reduce the athlete’s risk of contracting and spreading skin infections. As medical treatments change, it is important that schools adapt accordingly to ensure the safety of these athletes for now and generations to come.

B.J. Anderson, M.D., is a family practitioner at Boynton Health Services at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He currently serves on the Minnesota State High School League Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and is a former member of the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. Dr. Anderson is the team physician for the Augsburg (Minnesota) College wrestling team, and medical advisor for Minnesota/USA Wrestling.
School districts are funded by a combination of local, state and federal dollars. They are charged with the responsibility of educating students, but in accomplishing that task, they operate like a business. They must be good fiscal stewards of the taxpayers’ money.

School districts attempt to be good partners with the community, but they also have to be aware of the bottom line. As such, devising a workable “Use of School Facilities Rental Fee Plan” is often a touchy subject, but one that needs to be clearly defined (ahead of time) and consistently followed.

Sometimes there is a misconception among various groups and organizations about this issue. Some people believe that their tax dollars are used to pay for school facilities and that they should be able to use those facilities free of charge. But they often don’t make the distinction between “school/student” use and “public” use, nor do they take into consideration the operational expenses associated with each facility.

In developing a proper “Use of Facilities” rental plan, school district personnel should spend time determining the actual operational costs of each facility, including custodial, utility and personnel costs. Those costs need to be appropriately incorporated into a procedural plan that is clearly delineated.

In the Stephenville (Texas) Independent School District, a three-tiered system has been developed that seems to work well. Groups requesting use of campus facilities such as cafeterias, gyms, auditoriums, libraries, etc., are categorized into one of three areas as follows:

**User Group “A”** – Includes all non-local organizations, other school districts, churches and individuals.
- The cost for these groups, depending on the size and complexity of the facility being requested, ranges from $75/hour to $350/hour (three-hour minimum), with an additional fee range of $25/hour to $85/hour for each additional hour.

**User Group “B”** – Includes all nonprofit local organizations, civic organizations and youth groups as defined below:
- Must certify that at least 50 percent of the children participating are residents of Stephenville ISD; and
- Must demonstrate nonprofit status as defined by Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code; and/or
- Must be parallel to the purpose of enriching the lives and education of children. The cost for these groups is one-half of the “User A” rate.

**User Group “C”** – Includes Stephenville ISD events/programs, educational meetings (including all staff and/or student meetings) and affiliated Stephenville ISD support organizations (such as PTOs, booster clubs, etc.)
- There is no charge to these groups.

School district athletic field rental fees are slightly different. Depending upon the size and use of the field, and whether or not
lighting is required, rental fees range from $60/hour to $200/hour (with a three-hour or four-hour minimum).

In addition to these fees is the cost of custodial workers, child nutrition workers, and/or security workers, which are $25/hour for each worker with a three-hour minimum for each. Any exception to the above fees must have prior approval of the campus principal, maintenance department and/or central office administration.

**Facility Use Procedures**

1. Requests for the use of a school facility shall be approved in accordance with the administrative procedures of the district.
2. Charges will be calculated from the time the facility is opened to the time it is closed.
3. Requests for the use of a facility shall be presented to the building principal for approval.
4. Any changes in a scheduled event shall be approved in advance by the building principal.
5. On nights prior to school days, the building/facility may not be used after 10 p.m. without the prior approval of the building principal.
6. The activity shall not interfere with the normal use of the building/facility by school personnel or students, nor shall the use of the facility cause undue wear judged harmful to the facility.
7. No areas will be rented where personal property is not properly secured.
8. Kitchen facilities shall not be used unless specifically requested. When kitchen use is required, a member of the school cafeteria staff must be present at all times – and the kitchen must be left in a clean and orderly condition. School breakfast/lunch supplies shall not be used.
9. Permission shall be obtained if furniture or equipment is to be moved, or if decorations or signs will be attached to walls, ceilings or fixtures. No alterations to the facilities are allowed.
10. The sponsor of an activity has direct responsibility for the safety, welfare and actions of the persons participating in the activity; for seeing that building regulations concerning the use of food, drinks and tobacco are observed; and for damages to the building or equipment. The sponsor or a qualified representative shall be present when the first participants are expected to arrive and shall remain until all have departed.
11. Economical use of utilities is required.
12. All fire safety codes and regulations shall be strictly followed and adhered to at all times.
13. Failure to leave the facilities in good condition or failure to use the facility in adherence to this policy shall result in denial of future requests by the individual or group for a period of one year. Requests by a violating party after one year shall be considered on a case-by-case basis by the principal of the campus or a central office administrator.
14. The district shall not be responsible for props, non-school equipment and/or personal items belonging to persons using school facilities.
15. No food, drinks or gum will be allowed without prior approval.
16. The use of any type of tobacco or alcohol is prohibited in all school buildings and on all school property.

Dr. Darrell G. Floyd is superintendent of schools in Stephenville (Texas) ISD and is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee. He may be reached at darrellfloyd@sulle.us.
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The start of a school year brings an exciting time – the beginning of the high school sports season. While most student-athletes and parents would rather dive headfirst into the season, there are certain administrative tasks that first need to be completed.

One such task is spearheaded by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA), which requires a meeting among parents, coaches, players and administration before the start of an athletic season. At least one parent is required to attend these meetings.

“The object of the meeting is to give [everyone] the ‘nuts and bolts’ of the expectations required of them throughout the season,” said Beaufort (North Carolina) East Carteret Principal Ralph Holloway.

Two years ago, Holloway and East Carteret High School created a new type of parent meeting that fulfills the requirements of the NCHSAA and provides the community with a fun, social atmosphere.

Known as the “Mariners’ Feast,” East Carteret’s annual fall meeting incorporates a “three-prong approach,” according to Holloway. The first part is the information round, which gives coaches, administration, athletic directors and medical personnel an opportunity to cover a variety of topics. The session includes eligibility rules and how to file athletic injury claims, and includes a special section about parent and coach communication. A handout is provided to parents that outlines a “code of conduct,” as well as what information parents should expect from their children’s coaches. The handout is intended to provide clear communication expectations for both parents and coaches throughout a season.

“Parent communication is so important and crucial to running a quality program,” Holloway said.

After the group meeting, everyone is divided according to sport for more thorough, personal sessions among coaches and parents. Then, parents have the opportunity to ask questions and coaches also can explain their expectations and goals for the upcoming season.

The next component of the meeting is a pep rally. Dressed in their uniforms, the players are introduced to the community while the band plays. The pep rally is designed to be a lighthearted and fun transition from the information round to the dinner.

The final element of the Mariners’ Feast includes the dinner, fundraiser and silent auction, and all the profits benefit East Carteret’s athletic program.

“We are lucky to have a tremendous amount of community support; they are very receptive to this Mariners’ Feast. Even though it makes for a long day, there is a lot that is accomplished,” Holloway said.

There are different packages that can be purchased for the Mariners’ Feast. Holloway explained that individual plates of food can be purchased, but most people buy the Mariners’ Feast package, which includes two VIP tickets to the feast, two athletic season passes and the East Carteret Mariners’ Feast license plates. Those who have the Mariners’ Feast license plates receive preferential parking for athletic events. The ticket sales from the feast as well as the proceeds from the silent auction and fundraiser all benefit East Carteret’s athletic program.

“Because of our location in North Carolina, our parents get involved in almost all of the school activities, and a great deal of our community’s entertainment is focused around the school. This meeting really gets people excited about the students and what they do,” Holloway said.

Holloway explained that, from an educational standpoint, giving parents as much information as possible at the start of the season is crucial to success.
According to the 2009-10 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS, participation in high school sports increased for the 21st consecutive year. Those impressive numbers support the importance that athletics has on high school students’ lives across the country. But, what are the benefits of participation in athletics? How do athletes and non-athletes compare in the academic world? Two recent studies in Arkansas and Kansas help answer those questions.

Two years ago, a study was sent to the University of Arkansas that researched the academic performance of high school student-athletes and non-athletes in Arkansas. The study was done by Dick Johnson, assistant superintendent of Fayetteville (Arkansas) School System, in collaboration with the Arkansas Activities Association (AAA) and its member schools that participated in the study. Aptly named, “Smart Jock” was conducted over a year, and involved 26 high schools and more than 24,000 high school students across Arkansas. The study was comprehensive and examined a wide variety of schools, including rural and urban, high-minority and low-minority, large and small, and affluent and low-income schools.

“We wanted to take a look at the ‘dumb-jock’ stereotype, blow that up and really show people how athletes are comparing to the non-athletes in school,” said Lance Taylor, executive director of the AAA.

“Smart Jock” was based on seven criteria: grade-point average, advanced placement (AP) enrollment, attendance, graduation rate, dropout rate, scholarships received and disciplinary actions taken.

Out of the 24,061 students who were surveyed, 17,709 were non-athletes who did not participate in any high school sport and 6,352 were athletes who participated in at least one high school sport. The survey found athletes to be higher achievers in the classroom than non-athletes in two ways: athletes carry higher GPAs and have higher enrollment in AP classes. The average GPA of the student-athletes is 2.9, while non-athletes earned a 2.5 GPA. Also, 35 percent of athletes participate in at least one AP class, while only 26 percent of non-athletes are enrolled in AP classes.

The survey results also demonstrate that athletes maintain higher attendance rates. Non-athletes averaged 11 school absences, while athletes only averaged seven. There was also a significant difference between athletes and non-athletes with regard to disciplinary referrals. Almost half (49 percent) of non-athletes experienced some form of disciplinary referral in school, while only 19 percent of athletes experienced similar disciplinary actions.

According to Taylor, perhaps the most important statistic revealed by the survey was the graduation rate. Athletes carried a high school graduation rate of 99 percent while the graduation rate dipped to 91 percent for non-athletes. According to the survey, 1,293 non-athletes dropped out of school, while only 15 athletes did not complete their education.

“I’ve seen other studies about how students who participate in athletics perform better in school, but the dropout rate is really impressive,” Taylor said. “This tells me that the students who are participating are going to graduate and finish school. This is what we want, and I think athletics is providing that.”

According to the study, athletes perform better overall in the classroom, take more challenging courses, come to school, stay in school, and are less likely to be in trouble. As such, it is not surprising that 44 percent of student-athletes receive college scholarships, while 35 percent of non-athletes receive college scholarships.

“There are always naysayers who criticize athletics because they say it takes up too much money of a school’s budget,” Taylor said. “But this survey really shows legislators, parents, teachers, coaches and the students themselves that if you are involved, you will perform better in school and better prepare yourself for a successful life.”

Using data from the Kansas State High School Activities Association and the Kansas State Department of Education, Angela Lumpkin of the University of Kansas, and Judy Favor of Baker (Kansas) University, analyzed the academic performance of high school athletes versus non-athletes during the 2008-09 school year. Similarly to Arkansas’ survey results, high school athletes had higher GPAs, graduated at a higher rate, dropped out of school less often and scored higher on state assessment tests.
During the 2008-09 school year, 139,349 students were enrolled in Kansas high schools, of which 62,297 (44.7 percent) were athletes. Among the 9,347 athletes who reported their GPAs, 80.1 percent reported a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Out of the 9,221 non-athletes who reported their GPAs, 70.5 percent of them had a 3.0 GPA or higher. Overall, both male and female athletes reported higher GPAs than did their non-athlete counterparts.

“Although it is important to note that we cannot yet prove a direct cause-and-effect relationship, there is definitely a connection between those individuals who participate on high school athletic teams and those who perform better in the classroom,” Lumpkin said.

Out of the 17,249 non-athletes surveyed, 88.1 percent graduated and 2,323 dropped out of school during the 2008-09 school year. Of the 12,218 athletes surveyed, 97.6 percent graduated and only 303 dropped out of school during the same year. Overall, 2,016 students dropped out of Kansas high schools during the 2008-09 school year; 94 percent of those students were non-athletes.

“The data relative to dropout and graduation rates is unequivocal. The dropout rates are so much lower for high school athletes,” Lumpkin said. “My speculation is that those students, who have a group of teammates and a deeper connection with a coach and a community of support, do better because those are important affiliations and connections to have as an adolescent.”

Furthermore, Lumpkin explained that her survey demonstrated how significant of a problem dropout rates are in high schools.

“I think we anticipated that athletes would stay in school, but we weren’t prepared for the number of how often the non-athletes drop out,” Lumpkin added. “As a person who believes in education, I would love to see every student graduate. Schools need more opportunities such as sports and other activities that give young people that feeling of family and community — something that they can connect with and something that plays a part in their lives.”

Both Taylor and Lumpkin stated that their respective surveys will be tools that they definitely want to continue to use in the future in order to further measure the performance of athletes in the classroom as compared to non-athletes.

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

“We wanted to take a look at the ‘dumb-jock’ stereotype, blow that up and really show people how athletes are comparing to the non-athletes in school.”
Intense rivalries, close games and calls that don’t go your way can all cause temperatures to rise in high school athletics. It is natural that disagreements and heated situations will occur during athletic play. But when that temperature reaches a boiling point, how do member state associations handle player and coach ejections in athletic contests?

Many state associations implement consequences and penalties for coaches and student-athletes who are ejected from sports contests for unsportsmanlike conduct. In a survey in which 38 states responded, the most common penalty for both student-athletes and coaches was a one-contest suspension for first offenses. In all of these states, the one-contest suspension had to be served immediately following the game in which the student-athlete or coach was ejected and the suspension being served had to be at the same level of play in which the ejection occurred.

The New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) requires ejected student-athletes to sit out the next contest of an equivalent level and ejected coaches must sit out the next two contests. Additional sanctions for ejected athletes may occur depending on the member school and on a case-by-case basis.

“New Hampshire, typically, is a very locally controlled state,” NHIAA Executive Director Pat Corbin said. “There is limited state government, but there has always been a strong feeling that sportsmanship is a primary goal of our organization. As such, there has always been a feeling that there is a need to spell out a minimal set of sanctions for those who are ejected.”

However, there are some variations regarding penalties among various member state associations. While first-time offenders are typically required to sit out one contest, the penalty sometimes varies depending on the sport.

For example, the Wyoming High School Activities Association (WHSAA) requires a one-contest suspension for both ejected student-athletes and coaches. But, for basketball, volleyball and wrestling, the penalty is two contests for first-time offenses. Similarly, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association penalizes student-athletes and coaches the next contest for all sports except ice hockey, soccer and baseball. Ejected individuals in these three sports are penalized two games. Some states, such as Georgia and West Virginia, set the penalty for first-time offenders as 10 percent of the sport season.

As evidenced by the preceding, the penalty for coaches and student-athletes varies and is determined by the sport and length of the season. Some states, such as Alabama, Florida and Mississippi, fine the school for coach ejections and the school can decide who pays the fine.

Wanda Gilliland, assistant director of the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA), strongly supports the AHSAA’s policy on student-athlete and coach ejections.

“Because of our policy, we have seen a decline in the number of ejections during contests,” Gilliland said. “Sportsmanship is high on our priority list because it is something that has really made a difference.”

Many state associations require the completion of a remedial sportsmanship course, while others simply give warnings to ejected student-athletes and coaches, as in Louisiana. In contrast to that,
there are state associations that choose to not take any action and leave it for the member schools to establish penalties, such as in the states of Kansas, Texas and Maryland.

Gary Musselman, executive director of the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA), explained that the KSHSAA leaves the decisions up to its member schools not because the association doesn’t support good sportsmanship, but rather because that is how the member schools wish it to be handled.

“Our membership is pretty adamant that they want to handle it themselves. We support them and we give them a chance to clean up the problems themselves,” Musselman said. “If we ever feel that enough hasn’t been done to punish a player or coach, we will impose an additional sanction. We take sportsmanship really seriously. Activities are an extension of the classroom and our member schools embrace that. We are here first to provide an educational experience.”

Musselman also stated that additional sanctions for ejected student-athletes and coaches have rarely occurred during his tenure as executive director.

The penalties for second-time offenses are more varied among member state associations. Some of the penalties include an automatic two-contest suspension, an automatic four-contest suspension, an automatic suspension for the remainder of the season and fines. There are some member state associations, such as the Indiana High School Athletic Association, the Missouri State High School Activities Association and the Virginia High School League, in which first-time or repeat-offense ejections are all treated equally or on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, there are state associations that choose to leave the decisions up to member schools or have other consequences such as required community service or sportsmanship courses.

Regardless of how a state high school association decides to handle the consequences for player and coach ejections, good sportsmanship is the prevailing objective in high school athletics.

“Educational-based athletics remains one of the only areas where wins and losses are secondary to the lessons being taught,” said Jerry Snodgrass, assistant commissioner of the Ohio High School Athletic Association. “In the day of million-dollar contracts and new end-zone dances scripted each week (at the professional level), sportsmanship continues to be one of the best lifelong lessons our coaches can teach our student-athletes.”

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

BY CHRIS GOFF

The NFHS Coach Education Program has launched a new instructional course for parents of high school athletes. *The Role of the Parent in Sports* was made available online this past October at the program’s Web site www.nfhslearn.com. The course is free and can be taken by any individual – parent or not. Its main intent, however, is to provide parents with tips and strategies to best help their student enjoy, and succeed in, high school activities.

“Parents of students who participate in athletics make a huge difference in the quality of the sport experience for their sons and daughters,” said NFHS Assistant Director Tim Flannery, who directs the NFHS Coach Education Program. “Parents unintentionally spoil the educational experience of their children at times by the way they talk to them after games, behave in the stands, and interact with coaches and officials. This online course provides information and resources to help parents understand their role in ensuring an educational experience for their son or daughter.”

The course takes roughly 20 minutes to complete and outlines for parents the best methods to use when interacting with coaches, athletic directors, officials, other parents and fans. Moderators stress that the goals of the teenage athlete are most important and that determining those goals can help a family pull in the same direction. Included is a self-assessment quiz to help parents gauge their effectiveness in being supportive and resourceful during their son’s or daughter’s athletic career.

The NFHS Coach Education Program, started in 2007, provides a personalized and printable certificate upon completion of *The Role of the Parent in Sports*. 

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NFHS appoints Strategic Planning Committee members

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Board of Directors has appointed 17 state high school association administrators to serve as the NFHS Strategic Planning Committee. The committee is scheduled to meet later this month to draft the 2011-2016 NFHS Strategic Plan.

When members convene January 28-30 at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis, they will begin work on the sixth plan created since the inception of the strategic planning process in 1996. Unlike previous plans, this document will set an agenda for five years rather than three. Goals will also now be concentrated in one of two areas: Programs or Services.

Kenny Henderson, executive director of the Louisiana High School Athletic Association, will serve as the overall chair of the committee.

Serving as committee members for the Programs Subcommittee are: Mark Beckman (chair), Montana; Gary Musselman, Kansas; Lance Taylor, Arkansas; Karissa Niehoff, Connecticut; Denarvise Thornton, Florida; Theresia Wynns, Indiana; Lisa Giles, Virginia; and Becky Anderson, Utah.

Serving as committee members for the Services Subcommittee are: Jack Roberts (chair), Michigan; Marcus Ellis, Washington, D.C.; Bernard Childress, Tennessee; Eddie Bonine, Nevada; Larry White, New Jersey; Sheila Henderson, Texas; Stacy Schroeder, Missouri; and Julie Hammons, Idaho.

All members accepted their invitations to serve in October.

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

Why do you participate in sports?

Brittany Floyd
Huckabay High School
Stephenville, Texas

The primary reason that I choose to participate in sports is that it keeps my life on track. Athletics has taught me discipline, respect, teamwork, unity, and most importantly, to be a humble person. I have learned that I must work at everything I do. Some say “honesty is the best policy” and that “practice makes perfect.” But, I say that honest practice is the perfect policy. Your character is then reflected in your play. My activities revolve around good character, and participating in athletics helps ensure that.

Carson Arthur
East Carteret High School
Beaufort, North Carolina

I participate in sports to be active in my school. While participating in volleyball and soccer, I enjoy having the chance to represent my school in a positive way. Also, I’ve learned many life lessons and values from the sports I play. By being part of a team, one learns how to have a good work ethic and how to work with others. Another example – sportsmanship – is one value that will still be with me once my playing days are over. The memories, friends and values I’ve acquired are why I participate in sports.

Sidney Chadwick
East Carteret High School
Beaufort, North Carolina

I play sports to be well-rounded, to form friendships, and to take in every possible experience that I can at my school. Playing sports allows me to focus on a goal and push myself to excel, all the while forming bonds with my peers that I will carry on for the rest of my life. I play sports to get that jittery feeling right before a game, which will prepare me for bigger “games” later in my life. I play sports because I am driven, I desire to play my best, and to set an example for my teammates.

Brandi Morris
Alvarado School District,
Alvarado, Texas

I have played softball and basketball since I was four years old. Over the years, it has become a passion instead of a hobby. I love the excitement that playing brings me every time I step on the field or court. As I grew older, I started to realize the importance of the life lessons that sports have taught me. It has taught me discipline, patience and teamwork. I believe that I would not be the person I am today if I had not participated in sports.