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Bullying and harassment – legal obligations of schools

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Enhancing the relationship with local media

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As a leader in high school administration in this country, we want to make you aware of the significant role that the NFHS plays in the writing of playing rules for the more than 7.6 million student-athletes involved in high school sports.

For the majority of its 92 years of existence, the NFHS has directed the rules-writing process at the interscholastic level with a three-pronged focus: 1) minimize risk of injury, 2) maintain sound traditions of the game and 3) encourage sportsmanship. While all three factors are important, risk minimization – without a doubt – is at the top of the list.

As the NFHS prepares another round of rules publications for the upcoming 2011-12 school year, rest assured that the 15 sports rules committees have made risk minimization a high priority as they consider possible rules revisions. Last year, the NFHS led the way nationally in the area of concussion management.

All NFHS sports rules require any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) to be immediately removed from the contest and not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

In baseball, the NFHS has adopted new bat standards to reduce the potential of injury from the speed of the ball coming off aluminum bats. In wrestling, a comprehensive weight-management plan has been implemented recently to curtail the harmful effects of the sport's longstanding tradition of cutting large amounts of weight in a short time span.

About 35 years ago, the NFHS was at the forefront of change as well when it outlawed spearing in high school football. The 1976 rule changed the landscape of high school football from an injury standpoint – from a high of 36 direct fatalities in 1968 to an average of about two per year today.

Because of the sheer numbers and the varying scope of programs throughout the country, NFHS rules committees also weigh financial implications to schools when considering equipment or uniform rules changes. For this reason, along with the aforementioned risk minimization issues, NFHS rules may vary in some sports from their counterparts at the collegiate and/or professional levels.

Rules committees are composed of NFHS-member state associations staff experts in particular sports, as well as high school coaches and officials. These committees receive input both from the grassroots level through a nationwide questionnaire process, as well as the professional guidance of the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. Questionnaires are distributed annually in all sports to high school coaches and officials identified by NFHS-member associations, and the rules committees evaluate this information as potential rules changes are considered each year.

A focus on sportsmanship is another distinctive feature of NFHS rules written for the high school level of play. As our rules committees consider rules changes and possible penalties for violations of rules, they do so with the understanding that playing the games the right way and treating others with respect are far more important than the final outcome of the contests.

NFHS rules are written with the understanding that appropriate behavior begins with the coach, who is responsible for ensuring that his or her team exhibits good sporting behavior. Many penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct by a team are first directed against the coach. In the area of sportsmanship, high school sports must remain committed to the values of participation by all in clean, healthy competition.

In addition, NFHS rules committees attempt to maintain the sound traditions of the game and keep a balance between offense and defense. Surveys are distributed to member associations on a regular basis to determine scoring trends and other factors that would assist the committees as they consider implementing rules revisions.

The NFHS writes playing rules in 17 sports for boys and girls competition at the high school level. While member associations are not required to use NFHS rules, we are pleased to report that the majority of the associations use and enforce our playing rules.

As we mentioned earlier, there is opportunity for grassroots involvement in the rules-writing process. If you have a concern or question, contact the NFHS-member association in your respective state. At the national level, we will continue to make the games as risk-free as possible.

NFHS playing rules are available in baseball, basketball, field hockey, football, boys gymnastics, girls gymnastics, ice hockey, boys lacrosse, soccer, softball, spirit, swimming and diving (and water polo), track and field (and cross country), volleyball and wrestling. ©
Crowded Field
Runners head out and ascend a hill at the start of the 2009 Oregon School Activities Association 5A Boys Cross Country Championship at Lane Community College in Eugene, Oregon.

Great Shot
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.

Contents

COVER STORY

Designing Facilities: Get Involved to Avoid Building Bloopers: Athletic directors, coaches and other school leaders should work with architects from the outset to avoid costly mistakes. – Todd L. Seidler

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ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATION
Challenges and Obstacles of Weather Cancellations: After the decision is made to cancel a game, the athletic director has many tasks to complete. –Dr. David Hoch, CMAA

ACTIVITY PROGRAMS
Benefits of a Unified Booster Club: A unified booster club benefits everyone, including parents and sponsors. –Steffen Parker and Bud Krawczyk

PUBLIC RELATIONS
Enhancing the Relationship with Local Media: Schools should regularly report results of games to the media – win or lose. –Tim Stevens

FIELD MAINTENANCE
Innovative Ways to Reduce Costs of Maintaining Athletic Fields: While finding ways to cut costs is possible, safety must remain top priority. –George G. Bernardon

You can access previous issues online at www.nfhs.org/hstoday.

DEPARTMENTS

1 NFHS Report

6 Quick Hits
Interesting Facts and Information

14 Legal Issues
Bullying and Harassment: The Legal Obligations of Schools

20 Above and Beyond
Being a Team On and Off the Field

24 Ideas That Work
Iowa Takes ‘Pride’ in Making Scrimmages Worthwhile

25 Fine Arts
Music Educator Awards

28 Sports Medicine
Do I Need an Athletic Trainer?

31 Did You Know?
Towson Students Expand Education as Sports Reporters

36 In the News

40 Voices of the Nation
It All Started Here

Mike McCarthy

By Lee Green

More than three decades before he would hoist the Lombardi Trophy at the conclusion of Super Bowl XLV, the love of sports and the blue-collar work ethic of Green Bay Packers head coach Mike McCarthy were forged near Pittsburgh’s J&L Steel Works within the confines of the Greenfield neighborhood of the City of Bridges. Located on a hill rising from the north side of a bend in the Monongahela River, the roughly one-square mile district is bisected by its namesake Greenfield Avenue, along which are located the baseball diamonds, basketball courts and football fields on which McCarthy spent much of his youth.

McCarthy played for the Little League Baseball team sponsored by the Greenfield Baseball Association – an organization which he and the Packers now support with a joint $100,000 annual donation negotiated into a charitable contributions clause in his contract.

In middle school, he starred on the basketball team at St. Rosalia Catholic School, leading his squad to a Pittsburgh Diocesan championship with a 39-1 record and developing such an appreciation for the devotion of the priests and nuns who served as the school’s teachers that he also negotiated a $100,000 annual donation to St. Rosalia into his deal with the Packers.

In high school at the now-closed Bishop Boyle, he became a ferociously hard-hitting defensive end and soft-handed tight end for the Lancers’ football team, and as a high-scoring power forward he led the school’s basketball squad to a Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association Class AA state title in his senior year.

One of five children in an Irish-Catholic family, McCarthy learned the value of hard work from his father, Joe, whose day jobs as a Pittsburgh police officer and firefighter were supplemented by his operation at night of a family-owned business – Joe McCarthy’s Bar & Grill.

Football became Mike McCarthy’s path to higher education, earning him a scholarship to attend Baker University (Kansas), an elite, private liberal arts college and NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) football powerhouse coached by legendary Hall of Famer Charlie Richard, who inspired McCarthy to pursue a career in coaching. After leading Baker as a team captain during his senior year to a national runner-up finish and graduating with a degree in business, he took an unpaid, volunteer position on the staff of University of Pittsburgh head coach Paul Hackett. There, McCarthy worked alongside future NFL head coaches Jon Gruden and Marvin Lewis and, to support himself financially, worked full-time on the overnight shift at a toll booth on the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

When Hackett joined the Kansas City Chiefs as Marty Schottenheimer’s offensive coordinator, McCarthy was hired as a quality control coach to edit game film and was soon promoted to the position of quarterbacks coach. A stint as Green Bay’s quarterbacks coach was followed by offensive coordinator jobs with New Orleans and San Francisco before McCarthy was hired in 2006 as the Packers’ head coach.

McCarthy’s current contract includes a $100,000 annual contribution to his alma mater – Baker University – to fund scholarships for academically outstanding students lacking the financial means to attend college. In just five years as a National Football League head coach, McCarthy’s legacy already extends far beyond being the man who occupies Vince Lombardi’s chair and who has brought the Lombardi Trophy home to Titletown USA. The true measure of the respect he commands is in his appreciation of education and his loyal support of those who made his own success possible. ☺
Unusual Nicknames

Hampton Talbots

Believed to be the only high school in the country with its nickname, the Hampton High School Talbots in Allison Park, Pennsylvania, can trace its origins to old England.

A Talbot Hound is an extinct hunting dog possibly originating in Normandy and brought to Great Britain by William the Conqueror in the 11th century. With its keen sense of smell and large stature, Talbots are most closely compared to bloodhounds and the term “Talbot” is used to refer to a good hunting dog. The Talbot also has athletic connections in England as the town of Sudbury uses the dog on its town crest and as a mascot for its local sports clubs.

The Cost

BRASS INSTRUMENT SECTION OF THE ORCHESTRA

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<th>Item</th>
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<th>High</th>
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<td>$700</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

**Total**………………………….. $15,550 ....$11,100 ....$27,800

(SS Model) = Student or School Models and (I Model) = Intermediate Models

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

Bret Loviska, ice hockey // Brandon (Michigan) High School

On January 5, Bret Loviska scored a natural hat trick in a mere 23 seconds. While playing the Lapeer East High School Eagles, Loviska scored his first goal of the game with 4:42 remaining in the second period. Ten seconds later, he scored his second goal, and 13 seconds after that he completed his hat trick. Most impressive of all is that his team was short-handed at the time, playing 3-on-5 due to two penalties on teammates. Loviska’s three goals contributed to an 8-0 win. Loviska is a junior center for the Blackhawks.

Bob Hurley, boys basketball coach // Jersey City, New Jersey, St. Anthony High School

Bob Hurley won his 1,000th game as a coach February 2, when the undefeated St. Anthony Friars beat their community rival St. Mary, 76-46. Hurley, who has led St. Anthony to more than 20 state titles, is the 10th high school boys basketball coach in the country to win at least 1,000 games, and each win strengthens his position as the winningest coach in New Jersey boys basketball history. A former Hudson County probation officer, Hurley was inducted into the National High School Hall of Fame in 2009 and is also one of three high school coaches in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

Gladbrook-Reinbeck (Iowa) and West Marshall (Iowa) High Schools // New national record for combined points in a girls basketball game

The Gladbrook-Reinbeck Rebels defeated the West Marshall Trojans, 122-118, on February 7, in a game that yielded 240

For the Record

GIRLS SWIMMING

50-Yard Freestyle
Top Six Performances, All-time

Kara Lynn Joyce (Ann Arbor Pioneer, MI), 2002
Maddy Shaefer (Mountain View St. Francis, CA), 2010
Maddy Shaefer (Mountain View St. Francis, CA), 2010
Christina Swindle (Miami Gulliver, FL), 2002
Christina Swindle (Miami Gulliver, FL), 2001
Liv Jensen (Palo Alto, CA), 2008

combined points. In the process, the two teams set the national record for the most combined points in a game, surpassing the previous record of 222 combined points set by Mississippi’s Thrasher and Wheeler High Schools in 2004. The Rebels’ 122 points was their third consecutive game with more than 100 points.

Carmel (Indiana) High School, girls swimming // 25th consecutive swimming title

Continuing a streak that began in 1987, the Carmel (Indiana) High School girls swimming team took home its 25th consecutive Indiana High School Athletic Association state title on February 12. It equals the fourth-longest state championship streak in high school sports history and is the longest currently active streak in the nation. The Greyhounds won the first four events of the meet on their way to totaling 382 points.

Around the Nation

Question: Does your state association sponsor a state championship in skiing?

13 YES

38 NO
It happens way too often. A new gymnasium or field complex gets built, and from the day it opens, there are problems. Planning, designing and constructing a large sports facility is a complex project and presents many opportunities for mistakes.

Each facility has its own unique design challenges. If each of these challenges is not properly addressed, the completed facility will likely be built with problems that the users must deal with for the next 40 to 50 years. Often, details are overlooked and sometimes even major mistakes are made and not discovered until the facility opens. For example, most of us have seen facilities that have inadequate lighting, poor ventilation or are laid out in ways that do not make sense.

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for an athletic/physical education facility to be designed by an architect who has little or no experience working with that type of building. Architects do not have to have any special experience or qualifications to bid on a job designing a physical activity facility. Additionally, schools often have to select the low bidder for a job rather than the one more qualified.

A poorly designed facility can usually be traced to a lack of expertise or effort on the part of the planning and design team. For individuals without the proper background and understanding of the unique aspects of sport and physical activity facilities, many opportunities for mistakes exist that may lead to increased problems related to safety, operations and staffing.

Inadequate planning has resulted in countless design problems in sports and physical education facilities. Have you ever walked through a facility and wondered how it could have been built with so many problems? Can you imagine a high school football field only 80 yards long? How about a competitive swimming pool that was one-half inch too short so that no competitions could be held there? Or the new high school gym with the large glass windows directly behind the basketball backboard? And then there's the gym that had a restroom in the basement where the toilet was one foot lower than the septic field that it was supposed to drain into. Finally, there's the competitive pool where the seats were located in the balcony such that spectators could not see the first three lanes of the pool. Impossible? These design problems, often called “building bloopers,” are real and not as uncommon as we would like to believe. Such mistakes can be embarrassing, expensive, amazing and sometimes even humorous (if it’s not your facility).

Other design problems commonly found in activity facilities include a lack of adequate storage space, poorly planned pedestrian traffic flow through activity areas, inadequate buffer zones around courts and fields, the use of improper building materials and poor access control and security. Such design-related problems are often difficult, expensive or impossible to fix once the facility has been built, and especially once the facility is in use.

When designing a new facility or renovating an existing facility, it is recommended that every effort be made to hire an architect who has previous experience designing similar facilities. When evaluating the credentials of the architects bidding on a job, check references, talk to those using facilities designed by each firm and, if possible, go visit some of the facilities and see their design work for yourself.

Once a qualified architect has been selected, get involved! Sometimes architects and administrators don’t want input from the users of the facility. This is a mistake. Good architects want input from those who truly understand the uses and needs of the new facility. It is highly recommended that athletic directors, coaches and physical education teachers be involved in the planning of a new facility or renovation from the beginning. They are the pro-
professionals who know what is going to take place in the facility and understand the special needs of each activity.

All too often, facilities are designed and built without an in-depth knowledge of the programs that will be offered there. It is important to understand that a facility is a tool that supports the programs housed there. The better it is planned, designed and constructed, the better it will support the objectives of the activities that will be offered. Unfortunately, many of the design-related problems that commonly occur in school facilities are related to safety.

Probably the most common design problem found in sport facilities is a lack of storage space. This typically occurs either by not understanding the amount of equipment needed for the activities, or if the design is coming in over budget, storage space is often the first thing that is cut from the plans.

Another very common design mistake is an inadequate buffer zone and/or a lack of padding of obstructions adjacent to activity areas. Buffer zones refer to the space between the out-of-bounds lines of a playing court or field, and a wall, pole or other obstruction. It is not uncommon to see basketball courts with only two or three feet from the end line to an unpadded wall. We must ensure there are adequate buffer zones around all activity areas.

It is important that facilities be planned and designed by professionals with activity-related knowledge and experience and with the input of the coaches, staff and administrators. If you’re fortunate to be a part of a planning team for a new facility, educate yourself as much as possible. Visit as many similar facilities as you can. Ask staff from those facilities what is good and what is bad about the design. Read and do as much research as possible. The more work done early in the design process, the better the final product will be. Remember, hire an experienced architect, get involved and educate yourself. If you do these three things, you can minimize the number of “building bloopers” in your new facility.

Resources for Planning Sport Facilities


Todd Seidler, Ph.D., is professor of sport administration at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
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Bullying and Harassment: The Legal Obligations of Schools

BY LEE GREEN

A Typical Bullying Scenario

Shortly after enrolling at a new high school, a female student had a brief romance with another student. After the couple broke up, other male and female students began routinely calling the new student sexually charged names, spreading rumors about her sexual behavior, and sending her threatening text messages and e-mails. One of the student’s teachers and an athletic coach witnessed the name-calling and heard the rumors, but identified it as “hazing” that new students often experience. They also noticed the new student’s anxiety and declining class participation. The school attempted to resolve the situation by requiring the student to work the problem out directly with her harassers.

This hypothetical example, which contains elements taken from actual harassment complaints filed with the U.S. Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and federal court cases, is one of a series of examples of bullying that are included in a comprehensive policy guidance recently issued by the U.S. Department of Education.

In August 2010, following an 18-month period in which five teen suicides related to bullying occurred, President Obama empaneled a Presidential Task Force on bullying prevention. The first-ever National Bullying Summit was held in Washington D.C. and brought together 150 leaders from the worlds of education, medicine and government to develop strategies for combatting bullying in schools.

On October 26, 2010, a press conference was held at the White House during which U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the release by the OCR of a “Dear Colleague Letter” clarifying the legal obligations of schools regarding harassment and bullying. The 10-page guidance details the types of harassment and bullying that typically occur in schools and which fall under the coverage of the federal statutes the OCR is charged with enforcing.

Legal Standards

The law is clear that school districts have an affirmative obligation to prevent harassment and bullying and to take action when they occur. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discriminatory harassment on the basis of race, color or national origin. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits gender-related harassment. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits disability-related harassment. And all but five states (Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Mississippi and Alabama) have enacted state legislation that requires school districts to proactively develop anti-bullying policies and implement professional education programs on the issue for district personnel, including teachers and coaches.

Federal courts have clarified the circumstances under which schools and school personnel will be liable for harassment and bullying. In 1998, in Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that districts are liable for employee harassment of a student when a district official in a position to take remedial action had knowledge that the harassment was occurring and exhibited deliberate indifference to remedying the situation. Under Gebser, a school district will be liable if four criteria are satisfied: 1) a school official has actual knowledge of the harassment; 2) the school official has authority to take corrective action; 3) the school official fails to take action to end the harassment; and 4) the school official’s inaction rises to the level of deliberate indifference.

In 1999, in Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, the Supreme Court extended the Gebser ruling to cover peer harassment – situations where the perpetrator of the bullying or harassment of a student is another student. The Court acknowledged in Davis the challenges for schools of regulating interactions between students and noted that “simple acts of name-calling will not necessarily give rise to damages.” Instead, the conduct must be “serious enough to have the systemic effect of denying the victim equal access to an educational program or activity.” As in Gebser, the Davis ruling emphasized that in order for the district to be held liable, school officials must have “actual knowledge” of the harassment and exhibit “deliberate indifference” to remedying the harassment.
Most recently, in its 2009 ruling in *Fitzgerald v. Barnstable School Committee*, the Supreme Court expanded the range of civil remedies available to victims of bullying and harassment when it held that both Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment can be used in the same lawsuit as the basis of a claim against a school district and its personnel.

**The OCR’s Dear Colleague Letter on Harassment and Bullying**

With regard to the harassment and bullying legal standards established by the Supreme Court, there has been confusion among school districts across the country as to the precise meaning of the phrases “actual knowledge” and “deliberate indifference.” The OCR’s October 2010 Dear Colleague Letter clarifies the circumstances under which districts will be liable because personnel had actual knowledge of bullying and exhibited deliberate indifference to remedying the harassment.

As to the meaning of actual knowledge, the OCR guidance states, “a school is responsible for addressing harassment incidents about which it knows or reasonably should have known. In some situations, harassment may be in plain sight, widespread or well-known to students and staff, such as harassment occurring in hallways, during academic or physical education classes, during extracurricular activities, at recess, on a school bus, or through graffiti in public areas. In these cases, the obvious signs of the harassment are sufficient to put the school on notice. “In other situations, the school may become aware of misconduct, triggering an investigation that could lead to the discovery of additional incidents that, taken together, may constitute a hostile environment. In all cases, schools should have well-publicized policies prohibiting harassment and procedures for reporting and resolving complaints that will alert the school to incidents of harassment.” The guidance effectively broadens school liability to include situations where a district “reasonably should have known” that bullying or harassment was occurring.

As to the meaning of deliberate indifference, the OCR guidance states, “when responding to harassment, a school must take immediate and appropriate action to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred … if an investigation reveals that discriminatory harassment has occurred, a school must take prompt and effective
steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate any environment and its effects, and prevent the harassment from recurring."

The guidance effectively broadens school liability by defining deliberate indifference as including any delay in initiating an investigation of bullying or delay in taking action to end and properly remedy the harassing behavior.

**How a School Should Respond to Harassment Cases**

So how should a high school respond to a scenario like the hypothetical one that appears at the beginning of this article? Each example in the OCR guidance is followed by an explanation describing how schools are legally required to respond under the circumstances. In the case of the female victim of harassment and cyberbullying after the breakup with her boyfriend, the Dear Colleague Letter states that the school would be considered to have had actual knowledge of the harassment because school employees knew or should have known about the misconduct directed at the girl and they failed to recognize that what they considered to be innocuous “hazing” in fact constituted sexual harassment.

The guidance also concludes that school personnel exhibited deliberate indifference by failing to immediately investigate or remedy the harassment and by requiring the girl to confront her harassers. The Dear Colleague Letter states that the district should have conducted in-service training for all personnel regarding harassment and bullying, established an effective reporting procedure utilizing the district’s federally mandated Title IX officer, and implemented procedures for providing assistance and counseling to the victim as part of the remedy phase of dealing with the harassment and bullying.

The full text of the Dear Colleague Letter is available in the OCR’s online Reading Room at [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr).

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.
New Award Honors Strength and Conditioning Programs

The President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition and the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) are working together to honor high schools that represent the gold standard in strength and conditioning programs.

The Strength of America Award recognizes superior achievement among high schools in four major categories: Supervision, Education, Program, and Facilities. The goal is to acknowledge those schools whose strength and conditioning programs exceed the recommend national standards published by the NSCA—the nation’s only accredited strength and conditioning association. Applications are due by May 15 annually.

"More than 20 student-athletes have died in the past 10 years as a result of improper conditioning programs," said Boyd Epley, NSCA’s Senior Director of Special Projects and a 40-year strength coaching veteran. "High school strength programs are largely unregulated and their success depends greatly on the leadership of the school administration and the strength coach. It's important to raise awareness of high school strength and conditioning program standards to improve the education and safety for all young athletes."

Submissions are evaluated against the NSCA’s guidelines for high school strength and conditioning program design and implementation, which are included in the application packet. Top programs are honored during the NSCA’s National Conference Awards Banquet in early July and receive a certificate suitable for framing as well as a banner to be hung in the facility.

For more information regarding the Strength of America Award, visit www.nsca-lift.org/StrengthofAmerica/ or contact the NSCA at 800-815-6826.

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The National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) and the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition have teamed up to honor excellence in high school strength and conditioning programs, supervision, education, and facilities.

Shellie Phol, Executive Director of the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition, flanked by the 2010 Strength of America Award recipients, from left: Steve Szymkowski, Homewood-Flossmoor HS (IL); Mike Nitka, Muskego HS (Wis.); Bob Tim, Wadefield HS (Colo.); and Patrick McHenry, Castle View HS (Colo.).

Applications are due by May 15, 2011
www.nsca-lift.org/StrengthofAmerica/
Challenges and Obstacles of Weather Cancellations

BY DR. DAVID HOCH, CMAA

Spring rains may bring flowers, but they also create headaches for athletic directors. Saturated fields and falling rain may mean postponements and subsequent rescheduling.

**Any decision to postpone a contest should be made based on two essential considerations:**

- Whether playing will put the athletes at risk of injury, and
- If playing on the field will potentially damage it and necessitate expensive repair.

With rain in the spring and snow in the winter, the Weather Channel becomes the athletic director’s constant companion and most frequently used resource. If a TV isn’t available, weather.com is certainly listed as a “Favorite” on the list of Web sites on an athletic director’s computer.

In many leagues, a decision to postpone a contest has to be made by a prescribed time during the day – often noon or 1 p.m. This protocol is necessary in order to allow sufficient time for the visiting team to cancel its bus and for the athletic director to notify the officials.

Failure to notify the bus dispatcher or the officials will often bring about an additional fee. Once a bus appears, even if there is no longer a game, a “show-up fee” may be charged to cover the cost of gas, driver’s fee and inconvenience to the vendor. In the case of officials, once they show up at the venue, they have to be paid.

While checking forecasts is obviously important on rainy days, “walking the field” is absolutely essential in order to make a decision to postpone. Most athletic directors know how quickly their fields drain and all of the normal problem spots. The visual inspection of each field is necessary to make the best decision.

Once the field condition and the forecast are analyzed and a decision is reached, several steps should be taken for each game scheduled on that particular day. Organized athletic administrators would follow a prepared checklist to cover each responsibility.

**The following items need to be covered in priority order:**

1. Consult with your grounds crew, if you are lucky to have one. Get their expert opinion and determine how realistic it is to prepare the field for play.
2. Post the cancellation on the athletic department’s Internet scheduling Web site and the school’s Web site. Often, scheduling sites include an “e-mail notification to parents” feature and this saves enormous time of answering phone calls inquiring about the status of the game.
3. E-mail or phone the opposing athletic director. If possible,
include in the message a possible date for rescheduling the contest.

4. Call and cancel the bus or officials depending upon if you are the home or visiting team. If these individuals also sign onto your scheduling site at the beginning of the season, they will automatically receive the notification. For many officials associations and bus companies, e-mail is preferred because this mode of communication provides a time and date. The e-mail can also be used for reference.

5. Notify your coaching staff. A seasonal e-mail distribution list is an excellent tool to quickly update your entire coaching staff as to any and all daily changes. This can be done constantly throughout the day if or when anything changes.

6. Record a message for your answering machine to handle the slew of phone calls that usually arrive asking about the status of the game.

7. Pass along the cancellation information to the main office secretaries so that they can handle any incoming inquiries.

8. Post signs at the locker rooms for your student-athletes or submit an announcement to be read over the public-address system at the end of the day.

Normally on any given day, there are multiple contests that are scheduled. This same procedure must, therefore, be followed for each contest on any particular day.

Once the decision and notifications have been completed, it is time to start the rescheduling process. In many leagues, postponed contests must be rescheduled for the next available date to prevent ducking strong opponents in order to play weaker ones.

It is fairly common that all sports have a mandated number of contests that can be scheduled in a week and regulations usually allow for one additional make-up game. As rescheduled contests mount, available dates decrease rapidly. There may come a point when there are no more open dates.

Not only does an athletic director have to consider field playability and availability during the rescheduling process, he or she may also have to first determine if officials are available. The opponent also has to check to see if it is possible to reschedule its bus. Both of these items are not guaranteed.

In addition to starting the rescheduling process, an athletic director will need to communicate with the coaching staff concerning what options are available for the afternoon’s practice sessions now that the game has been postponed. If more than one contest has been postponed, it would be wise to switch to your prepared indoor practice schedule.

Based on usable space in your facility and the number of teams at your school, an experienced athletic director usually has a rotational schedule. In this manner, all sports are treated fairly with respect to the practice times and the various facilities – gyms, auxiliary gyms, weight rooms and meeting rooms – that teams will be able to use.

It is always wise to remind your coaches to notify their parents – via their e-mail distribution lists, team Web page, etc. – of the day’s newly scheduled practice time. This step is important so that parents can adjust their schedules to pick up their son or daughter at the conclusion of the practice session.

At the end of a day when inclement weather strikes, please excuse the haggled, crazed look on your athletic director’s face. He just survived a tornado of tasks and responsibilities regardless of what the forecast indicated.

Dr. David Hoch recently retired as the athletic director at Loch Raven High School in Towson, Maryland (Baltimore County). He assumed this position in 2003 after nine years as director of athletics at Eastern Technological High School in Baltimore County. He has 24 years experience coaching basketball, including 14 years on the collegiate level. Hoch, who has a doctorate in sports management from Temple University, is past president of the Maryland State Athletic Directors Association, and he formerly was president of the Maryland State Coaches Association. He has had more than 350 articles published in professional magazines and journals, as well as two textbook chapters. Hoch is a member of the NFHS High School Today Publications Committee.
If you know of Loch Raven High School near Baltimore, Maryland, you may very well know of its girls lacrosse team. The team was a semi-state finalist in 2009 and a state finalist in 2010, and the amount of young talent that has led it to those two recent finishes all but ensures that 2011 won’t be a letdown.

But more impressive than the lacrosse team that succeeds on the field is the one that succeeds off it through its selfless efforts to help individuals stricken with cancer.

This spring will mark the high school’s third year hosting the “Relay for Life,” a fundraiser in which teams gather at a track and always have at least one team member walking for the duration of the event. The Raiders girls lacrosse team has been an integral part of Loch Raven’s Relay for Life since its start in 2009.

The school held its inaugural Relay for Life after it had just lost a principal to ovarian cancer and a boys lacrosse player was diagnosed with cancer. That year, 75 percent of the team either participated on relay teams or on committees that combined to raise $47,000.

One year later, its participation increased to all but a few players being involved – and one player even chaired the whole event. The school raised $51,000 that year and increased participation from 377 to 493 individuals in a school of approximately 1,000 students.

“I saw that a lot of people at school were involved and once I learned more about Relay, I realized what a great cause it was,” said Samantha Eckels, who is a sophomore and a varsity squad
member. “When I saw all the survivors at the event, it hit me that everything we were doing was really helping people.”

And after two years of heavy participation, why should this year be any different? Every returning player on the 2011 girls lacrosse team will be involved with this spring’s Relay for Life.

“I wanted to stick with it because it feels good to help others who need it,” said Christie Moyer, a junior on the varsity team. “It’s a lot of hard work, but it pays off the night of the event when we find out how much money we raised.”

The goal this year is to have at least 600 people on at least 60 teams to raise at least $60,000.

“These kids are the best of the best,” said Loch Raven girls lacrosse head coach Tracy Mabe. “I never really had to ask any of them to do it. They all just stepped up and did it on their own.”

Maggie Wagner, a junior on the varsity squad and co-chair of the entire event this spring, wanted a way to get involved with cancer research support after her mother died of colon cancer in 2006. After her neighbor told her about Relay for Life, Wagner got involved and found the event more than worthwhile.

“I saw how many people cared and wanted to join the fight after I gave a speech about my mother,” Wagner said. “I enjoyed seeing all of the committees, team captains and participants from all different segments of the school and the community come together for one night, and they all had the time of their lives raising money for cancer research.”

The camaraderie and cause were attractive to Moyer, who will co-chair the Survivor Dinner Committee for 2011’s Relay.

“I got involved in Relay for Life after attending the event my freshman year,” Moyer said. “I had such an amazing time with my friends, and I loved it so much that I wanted to step up and have a bigger role the following year.”

Mabe said that an extra perk of her team participating in Relay for Life was the way it bonded them together on the field.

“It was easy for me to see its impact on the field because last year was the first in awhile when we had freshmen make the varsity team,” she said, “but Relay brought the young and the old together.”

Moyer and Wagner both said that Relay translated into trust on the field.

“You need the help of your team to get things done,” Wagner said. “You definitely cannot do things on your own and it is better to trust your team to help you and for you to help them.”

Wagner added that she has fallen in love with the people and the event because of how much they have been able to help each other.

“Relay is a really good way for people from all over to come together and fight for a great cause,” she said. “Everyone knows someone who has been touched by cancer whether it be a parent, grandparent, sibling or friend.

“This is why Relay can bring together everyone from all different walks of life to fight for one great cause.”

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

BY STEFFEN PARKER AND BUD KRAWCYZK

The financial needs of high school athletic and fine arts activity programs in our nation’s high schools often cannot be fully met by budgeting from the school district alone. Other sources of income are needed for those programs to remain viable, provide quality experiences for students and involve as many as possible, often all that wish to be involved.

In most schools, there are supportive adults – often the parents of the students involved – who provide the energy, organization, leadership and manpower to run fundraising activities to provide those needed funds . . . booster club. And while separate booster groups are often the norm, the number of adults who have the time to provide the support needed is declining in many schools. And for parents who have multiple students in the same school or students who are participating in multiple activities, there is often a strong desire to support multiple booster clubs.

To help the parents who wish to support their students, some schools are creating unified booster clubs where one organization provides the leadership and manpower needed to generate the funding for all athletic and fine arts activities. Doesn’t it make more sense to combine those efforts into one unified group? A unified booster group would have the same goal as each separate one – to raise money for after-school activities. Shared goals, shared resources, shared leadership and a larger pool of parents to contact and involve. What is not to like?

The first and probably most obvious benefit of having one group means fewer meetings (always a sticking point to involving more parents), but it also means larger financial goals, more funds to raise and, therefore, more events. One has to balance the increase in time requirements with the increase in available manpower. And everyone needs to feel that their efforts have value, even if their son or daughter is not directly receiving support from any particular effort. But does having one group mean that there’s less money for our sport, our activity? Not if the group’s plan encompasses everyone’s needs into its goals and then uses the increased manpower available to reach them.

Thus the key to a successful unified booster group is in the planning – 1) determine what activities you are supporting and the accompanying funding needs, 2) set an overall goal to meet those needs, 3) plan the events needed to reach that goal, 4) organize the leadership and manpower to operate those events and 5) and be flexible along the way as things do change. With a unified goal, inspired leadership and a collectively developed plan, the benefits of having one booster group multiply exponentially.

For each event, only one group is fundraising for everyone, making one sales pitch to those attending the event so the audience isn’t asked to decide where to spend its discretionary dollars and be confused as to which activity it is supporting. One concession stand where any purchase helps student activities makes everything clearer and easier. And now the booster club has the manpower to expand its fundraising opportunities to all school sporting events, all of the music concerts and all of the drama presentations. And by doing so, patrons become aware that there will always be someone available to provide that purchase opportunity.

Game after game, event after event, as people realize this, they can now spend their money with the school knowing it will benefit the students. Additional value can be made by the combining of resources through purchasing of supplies, consolidation of equipment and the use of one accounting process, one checkbook and one treasurer.

Perhaps one of the greatest pluses is to the parents of the students involved in supported activities. Wouldn’t it be great for the football parents to watch their students play for the entire game rather than trying to flip a burger and get someone a soda? Or for the soccer parents who instead of making popcorn, get to watch their son or daughter play on senior night?

With a unified booster group and a yearlong schedule of events and efforts, parents and supporters can select the activity they can work on the nights their student is not involved. They would now be free to watch the game or concert or play without feeling guilty because they are not actively involved in raising funds for their students.

One school in southern Vermont has taken that level up one
more notch. It holds a “lottery” before the fall games and another before the winter games. Through this lottery, all sports teams and co-curricular activities are invited to take part. Each activity draws a game or event to cover and that allows them to directly “earn their money,” while giving some relief to the booster group members.

For that event, a booster group member is there to help organize the manpower provided by the students. This can bring in good money for some groups, while others may not fare as well – it depends on the night, the game and often the weather. But this is why they call it a “lottery” – it’s the luck of the draw. The booster group keeps half of the money on those nights to cover the cost of the product while the activity gets the other half. The activities don’t have to front anything, other than manpower. This allows those that are receiving funding for their group from the unified booster group to more directly support a single fundraising event.

Can a school make as much money as a unified group as opposed to individual booster clubs? It’s hard to say. But to support individual booster clubs, parents often have to give up watching their son or daughter participate without interruptions or are asked to provide support multiple times per week. And from the standpoint of the local business owners, the unified booster club is the ticket. They now have fewer people knocking on their doors looking for some sort of support and can feel better (and safer) in offering a larger single donation to that group, knowing that they will not be asked again that year.

Booster clubs and the needs of athletic and fine arts activities vary from town to town, state to state. What works for one may not for another. But if manpower is running thin, if local businesses feel overwhelmed by multiple requests or if conflicts are keeping everyone from being successful, you might consider a unified booster club. That change may not be easy at first, as it will take some time and effort to work out the details. It will be a learning experience for everyone, but once in place you will wonder why it wasn’t done earlier. After all, shouldn’t it be about the students’ best interests anyway?

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

Bud Krawczyk is a parent of both musicians and athletes at Mt. Anthony Unified High School in Bennington, Vermont. He served as the vice president and president of the Mt. Anthony unified booster club for many years and remains active as a supporter of the booster club’s activities.
Fans tend to overlook scrimmages because they do not count toward teams’ records or the standings.

But the Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union have found a way to make fans take notice and make scrimmages worthwhile.

In an effort to both raise funds for the Iowa Hall of Pride and to aid individual communities, committees from the state’s boys and girls high school associations allowed for basketball scrimmages between November 15 and December 18, 2010, to be used as charity events. The fundraising effort, known as the “Pride Challenge,” did just that — it challenged high schools to find a local charity or local service effort that their community could support before, during and after a basketball game.

“The Hall of Pride was looking for a way to broaden the impact of service,” said IHSAA Marketing and Communications Director Chad Elsberry. “We found that a lot of high schools were already doing some incredible service-based things, and we wanted to support that.”

Seventy-six high schools responded to the call and 65 officials donated their services to the games.

Some of the money from each of the 76 participants went to the Richard Jacobson Education Fund at the Iowa Hall of Pride. The fund was established to fulfill the Hall of Pride’s specific mission to “educate the future,” and is responsible for hosting and

“We’re looking to encourage the positive things that people are already doing for their communities and also trying to demonstrate the value of service to students.”
teaching those who visit, such as individuals on school field trips. However, the education fund has also begun branching out into the state rather than waiting for people to come to the Hall of Pride. The Pride Academy is a community initiative in which its administrators visit member schools to discuss sportsmanship and role modeling in the community.

To date, Elsberry and his peers in the Pride Academy have visited more than 2,000 students at 14 schools. “Our mission at the Pride Academy is to make things come full circle,” Elsberry said. “We have been raising funds for people to visit the Hall of Pride, but we also wanted to go back to the schools in some way to reach out to their communities.”

Those local communities were also directly benefited by the Pride Challenge. Each participating school chose its own additional cause to donate to and method to fundraise.

The United Way and Coaches vs. Cancer were among the chosen recipients. Common service methods were canned food drives or “penny war” competitions in which grades or other groups competed by donating their spare change.

“I thought these methods were very meaningful,” Elsberry said, “because local control was a key component. It made things more fun and worthwhile.” Nearly $20,000 was donated to the fund and far more was raised for community groups, but Elsberry also said there was an intrinsic value to the Pride Challenge.

“Things like the Pride Challenge only do more to create well-rounded students,” he said. “We’re looking to encourage the positive things that people are already doing for their communities and also trying to demonstrate the value of service to students.

“That’s one of our state association’s primary missions.” Elsberry said the IHSAA received a lot of positive feedback from community groups that were thrilled with what they saw.

“Many groups were thankful for the initiative,” he said, “and others starting asking if we could collaborate on events in the future. We will definitely continue doing this for basketball and also consider doing it for other sports in the future.”

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

**MUSIC EDUCATOR AWARDS**

-Thirteen individuals have been selected to receive the 2010-11 Outstanding Music Educator Award, given by the NFHS Music Association.

The Music Advisory Committee selected the recipients based on their outstanding contributions to high school music programs and activities. The awards recognize high school or college band, choral or orchestral directors, supervisors and adjudicators.

This year, five individuals were selected as section winners and eight were selected as state winners.

For complete biographical information on this year’s Music Educator Award winners, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org/hstoday.

**The following is a list of this year’s winners:**

**SECTION WINNERS**

Leon Kuehner – Section 4
Dana Hamant – Section 5
Thomas Waggoner – Section 6
Norman Lister – Section 7
Dean Peterson – Section 8

**STATE WINNERS**

Martin Kohn, IL
Dave Klein, NE
Steve Litwiller, MO
Cathleen Britton, SD
Jim Meiller, OK
Virginia Nickels-Hircock, NM
Joe Trusty, AR
Regina Weeks, MS
“It’s not my job.”

Years ago, a high school athletic director explained his view of the media very succinctly.

“I don’t ask you to coach. Don’t ask me to do your job,” he said.

As a philosophy, it was short, to the point and easy to remember. But as far as helping to publicize his program, to expound on what the school is accomplishing or wants to accomplish, to explain his program’s underlying values, to spotlight achievement, to explain the difference in high school competition from other levels of athletics, or to celebrate the high school experience, this attitude was totally lacking.

Media markets vary a great deal throughout the country, but it is a pretty good bet that the people covering your high school athletic teams don’t know nearly as much about your program as you think.

The News and Observer in Raleigh, North Carolina, covers more than 150 schools. Many of the schools field 20 or more teams each year. There are more than 20,000 high school students in our database, and we track every soccer goal, every basketball point, every rushing yard and a whole lot more information for each of those students.

But even with all of that, we’ve missed the opportunity to share stories that would have made our community a better place.

We’ve told some great stories within the last few years:

- A successful wrestler who had been blinded when mauled by a tiger as a child.
- A football player who was told that he’d be able to walk again in 12 months, but returned to his team and started at running back and linebacker in less than 12 weeks.
- A wheelchair athlete whose life changed after discovering high school athletics.
- A liver transplant recipient who returned to the basketball court within months of surgery.
- A football team that made a student with spina bifida a member of the squad and rolled him out in his wheelchair before games.
- A high school basketball team that averaged 100 points per game.
- An athlete who was all-state in football, baseball and track and was a state champion in tennis, but who died days after graduating. He had played his entire senior year not knowing he had cancer.
- A high school cheerleader who won two national championships less than 18 months after joining the high school track team.
- An effort by the state association to teach sportsmanship.
- An athlete who had to quit sports after a series of concussions.

Enhancing the Relationship with Local Media

BY TIM STEVENS

A
The only disappointing thing about all those stories is that for every story that we told, we probably missed four.

Coaches and administrators know great stories that should be told. Sometimes you have to tell the story first. Regularly, a coach or athletic official calls or e-mails with the opening line, “I don’t know if you’d be interested, but …”

Yes, the media is interested. That doesn’t mean every story gets a big picture on the front page or 30 seconds on air, but, as a general rule, the media likes to tell good stories because people like to know about them.

Unfortunately, every story does not have a feel-good ending. Sportsmanship, eligibility issues, injuries and other problems are a part of high school athletics everywhere. When bad things happen, the best policy is to be honest. Sometimes, coaches and athletic officials can’t talk about an issue. In general, media people understand those situations.

Recently, there was a tragedy involving an athlete at an area school. The school long ago had developed a plan to respond. Coaches referred all media questions to one person, who was responsive to each media request.

Most problems don’t rise to the level of a tragedy, but sometimes details can’t be discussed. In such cases, an honest “I can’t talk about it” or “I’m not going to talk about it” is a lot better than being untruthful and saying “I don’t know anything about that.”

One of the values high school athletics cherishes is integrity. Lying may be a tempting temporary way out of an unpleasant situation, but is that really what you are trying to teach your students? Honesty starts at the top. The kids know, and in most cases, so do the media members.

In tough situations, coaches and administrators should relish the opportunity to have their voice heard, if possible. “No comment” doesn’t look good in print or sound good on the air.

And speaking of “no comment,” one of the things that baffles me, and probably every other media member, is the lack of cooperation from coaches. Each season our newspaper sends out thousands of letters to the area coaches asking for basic information—contact numbers, a few players to watch, last year’s records and a few general questions that can be answered months before the season start.

The entire questionnaire probably takes less than five minutes to fill out and can be mailed, e-mailed, faxed or phoned in. The questionnaire is a great place to mention a story that the coach wants to be told.

But the return rate often is abysmal. Once, 100 forms were mailed to area schools. Six were returned. The fact that coaches don’t care enough to cooperate is a mystery for media members all over the country.

The other thing that baffles the media most is that some coaches don’t report game results—win or lose. Almost every day there are calls or e-mails to newspapers about why the results of a particular game weren’t in the paper or online. The answer almost always is that no one reported the results. To some coaches, reporting scores is not a part of their job. The coach may think the local media should be at all of his or her team’s games, but from the media side, there are dozens of events that could be covered.

Ultimately, working with the media is a matter of perspective. If a coach believes that responding to media requests and helping the media is not a part of the job, then the school shouldn’t be surprised when the program’s good stories are never told. Remember that the local media might be covering 25, 50, 100 or more schools—not just yours.

Tim Stevens has covered high school athletics for more than 40 years for the Raleigh (North Carolina) News and Observer. He is a member of the National High School Hall of Fame.
To determine a school’s athletic training needs, school administrators need to perform a comprehensive review of the medical risks associated with their interscholastic athletic programs. Administrators know the value of interscholastic athletic programs in keeping kids motivated and in school, but they also need to review the medical risks and plan how best to reduce those risks.

A comprehensive study of medical risk should include:

1. Reviewing injury rates for each sports program that your school sponsors;
2. Reviewing potential catastrophic medical events that can occur such as heat illness, head and neck injuries, lightning strike, cardiovascular pathologies (Marfan Syndrome, Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, Long QT Syndrome, Commotio Cordis and Sickle Cell Trait);
3. Creating an emergency plan to react to both the everyday athletic injury incident and potential catastrophic events;
4. Developing an Athletic Health Care Response Team to plan for both prevention and response to athletic injury;
5. Providing proper equipment to deal with both the common athletic injury and potential catastrophic events.

To assist in reviewing injury rates, the form on page 29 can help determine a rough estimate of the number of time-loss injuries to expect in each program. Complete a form for each sport that your school sponsors.

Schools have a legal duty under Title IX to provide equal opportunities and facilities to both genders. In addition, if you sponsor an athletic program, you probably also have a legal duty to offer some level of medical care to respond to the injuries that occur in athletics participation. The school administrator should plan and develop an Athletic Health Care Team (2), which should include:

1. a team physician, usually a volunteer;
2. a certified athletic trainer;
3. the school nurse;
4. the director of athletics; and
5. all members of the coaching staff as first-responders.

The team physician directs the Athletic Health Care Team. He or she should be an M.D. or D.O. because of the comprehensive nature of their unrestricted license.

The core or central member of the Athletic Health Care Team is the certified athletic trainer. The certified athletic trainer is a college graduate from an accredited program (Commission on the Accreditation of Athletic Training Education).

According to the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA), “Athletic training is practiced by athletic trainers – health-care professionals who collaborate with physicians to optimize activity and participation of patients and clients. Athletic training encompasses the prevention, diagnosis and intervention of emergency, acute and chronic medical conditions involving impairment, functional limitations and disabilities.” (3) The profession of athletic training is recognized by the American Medical Society as an allied health provider.
Duties of the Athletic Trainer include:

1. Ensuring that each student-athlete has completed a Pre-Participation Medical Exam (PPE);
2. Reviewing the health history portion of the PPE to see which student-athletes have a history of chronic illness (such as diabetes or asthma, which can affect participation) and which athletes are at risk of potential catastrophic pathology such as Sickle Cell Trait, Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, Marfan Syndrome and Long QT Syndrome;
3. Coordinating the development of an Emergency Action Plan;
4. Caring for acute injuries;
5. Managing and treating sub-acute injuries;
6. Rehabilitating and reconditioning surgical and non-surgical injuries.

When a school administrator determines the need for an athletic trainer to coordinate the Athletic Health Care Team, several options are available: 1) outsourcing services to a local clinic or hospital, which can provide athletic training services (usually part-time); 2) hiring a licensed teacher/certified and licensed athletic trainer; (3) hiring a full-time certified and licensed athletic trainer (duties only in the athletic program).

The school nurse is a great resource to other members of the Athletic Health Care Team, especially in providing information about athletic participation during illness. The school nurse will also see student-athletes during the school day if the certified athletic trainer is either not present or if he or she has other duties such as teaching. The school nurse is not regularly present after school, so he or she will have a limited role in management and care of the acute injury.

The athletic director administers the Athletic Health Care Team. The athletic director communicates with the rest of the school administration to ensure that all team members know their roles and expectations. Each member of the team should be properly trained, certified, licensed and meeting continuing education requirements. The athletic director is also involved in the school budgeting process to ensure that funds are available for adequate continuing education and emergency equipment such as an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), CPR masks, stretchers, splints, etc.

Each member of the coaching staff is also a critical member of the Athletic Health Care Team and it is strongly recommended that each member of the coaching staff be certified in first aid, CPR and the use of an AED. (2) AEDs should be readily available – not locked up in the administration building after school where response personnel may not have access. Evidence indicates that AEDs are most effective when administered during the first five minutes after collapse (response time usually not possible for paramedic/EMT Units).

“Do you need an athletic trainer?” The question probably should be, “Can you afford not to have an athletic trainer?” Athletic train-
High School Today | March

30

High School Today | March

Since 1987


drs are key to managing and preventing athletic injury risk to student-athletes. It is strongly suggested by the NATA and supported by both the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Family Physicians that high schools have a certified or licensed athletic trainer as an integral part of the high school athletic program. (2,4,5)

With budget restraints in high schools nationwide, hiring a full-time certified athletic trainer may not be possible. In those cases, schools should consider outsourcing to a local medical clinic. Larger schools with availability of funds should consider hiring a full-time teacher/certified or licensed athletic trainer. In schools with a very large athletic program that includes multiple high-risk sports and multiple playing and practice sites, more than one athletic trainer may be necessary to provide adequate health coverage for the student-athletes.

Our district has chosen to staff each school (13 in the district) with one teacher-athletic trainer and supplements this coverage with some outsourcing to a local sports medicine clinic for additional personnel when the number, location and injury-risk level makes it difficult for the school-based athletic trainer to adequately cover all events and practices.

Hiring an athletic trainer should not be a large financial burden to the school district since a variety of models can be used, including outsourcing, the teacher-athletic trainer model or the full-time athletic trainer model. If you can afford to hire teacher/coaches, shouldn’t you be able to afford to hire teacher/athletic trainers?

Source Documents:


Appropriate Medical Care for Secondary School Age Athlete.

American Medical Association Support Statement.

American Academy of Family Physicians’ Support Statement.

Robert N. Evers, MS, ATC, is the athletic trainer at Sandia High School, Albuquerque, New Mexico. He is a past president of the New Mexico Athletic Trainers Association and past member of the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.
DID YOU KNOW?

Towson Students Expand Education as Sports Reporters

BY STEVEN PEEK

Students at Towson High School in Baltimore County, Maryland, are getting some true hands-on experience as members of the sports media and simultaneously providing the area with coverage of its high school sports.

Every year for the past 26, eight selected students are accepted as volunteers to report for "High School Sports Scene," a monthly program produced by the Baltimore County Public Schools' Education Channel.

As reporters for the show, the students conduct on-location interviews and write their own voice-overs for the programming, which spotlights local athletes. John Bushman, producer of the show since 1997, said that the students are provided with background information, write the interviews and then combine efforts with him and others to tweak the questions before filming.

"It's very educational, but it's different than learning in a classroom," Bushman said. "[The students] learn with their experiences and the coaching we give in the studio and out in the field."

The eight students work as volunteers and film at a studio four miles away from their high school when they’re not on location, which perhaps cements how much worth Towson reporters have found in what they do.

"Honestly, I’m not the biggest sports fan," said Sydney Callahan, a Towson sophomore and reporter for High School Sports Scene, but I really like being on camera and talking to people, so I thought this is something that I would enjoy doing.

"I'm really glad I did it because I got a new perspective about sports."

Since the program was founded by longtime basketball coach Randy Dase, it has served to promote an interscholastic perspective on sports by showcasing the high school athletes as students as well. The fact that some of the reporters are also athletes bolsters the program’s mission.

“It’s part of the whole-child education,” Bushman said. “We really look at the educational component and how the lessons that are learned in athletics fit in with the lessons that are learned in the classroom."

The program also provides some validation for high school student-athletes, who might not otherwise be showcased.

"You don’t get to hear a lot about high school sports on TV," said Angelique Abel, a soccer player from Kenwood High School. "When you hear their stories, you can really relate to the other athletes."

Rebecca Laubner, a senior soccer player and reporter for High School Sports Scene, said that the interest in high school sports should not be overlooked solely because the athletes are not paid.

"These athletes could go on to play professionally or they could be lawyers or whatever," she said. "It’s interesting to see how much potential they have and where they’re starting out."

Some High School Sports Scene reporters have seen the show as their own personal starting point. Some have gone on to study broadcast or print journalism after high school.

Bushman said that it is rewarding to hear of past students' recent accomplishments or jobs. Kristin Hunter, an assistant producer at WJZ in Baltimore, and Ben Worsley, a member of FOX 45 sports staff in Baltimore, graduated from Towson in 2006 and are the “graduates” of the show who Bushman has heard from most recently.

Each month, a different Baltimore County school is featured; and Hereford High School was the featured school in February.

Steven Peek is the NFHS Publications/Communications Department’s intern for the spring of 2011. He is a senior studying journalism and history at Butler (Indiana) University.
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A common theme in management of athletic fields these days is “How can we do more with less and not impact safety or aesthetics?”

The best and easiest way to ensure that an athletic director is receiving the most for the least is to hire a professional field manager. Even though this individual may cost a little more to employ, savings will come through stewardship and efficient purchasing decisions that a professional makes.

The second-best way is to outsource to a company that has a proven track record in providing athletic field management. Before outsourcing, however, have a competent sports field manager (Certified Sports Field Manager preferably) develop specifications that meet your objectives – both agronomic and financial. It would also be wise to keep this individual on retainer to ensure compliance of specifications or make necessary adjustments.

Recognizing that neither of these possibilities may exist for many schools, following are some ways to help an athletic director implement management strategies and tactics to manage safe fields while maintaining aesthetics. The order in which the ideas are presented does not represent an order of implementation, but more of a checklist. Not all of these ideas may be applicable to your situation.

**Dedicate personnel to manage athletic fields (even if it is Joe the custodian).** By having a dedicated person, a consistency of deliverables can be provided (people are creatures of habit). When dedicating a person, always ensure that the individual is dedicated, determined and dependent and has the desire to succeed. To be a successful field manager, a person must be 4D. The technical aspects of managing athletic fields can be learned, but no one can teach the four D’s.

Successful sports field managers come from all walks of life – former teachers, custodians, coaches and others who just have a passion for creating safe and pleasing environments for student-athletes. Managing athletic fields should not be viewed as a job, but an adventure. Once the position is awarded, provide the appropriate tools and membership to Sports Turf Managers Association national and local chapters (this is less than $200 per year in most instances). Membership provides technical resources and networking – invaluable resources.

**Field Inventory:** How many fields and types (baseball, football, field hockey, multipurpose, etc.) does the school have? Each field requires different cultural management techniques. Baseball outfields receive minimal compaction compared to a football field. In an effort to reduce labor and fuel, aerate the outfield once a year, while the football field should be aerated between the hash marks as needed, with less frequent treatment outside the hash marks. Start looking at the “field within a field” when making applications or performing other tasks.

**Fertilizer Savings:** Conduct soil tests to determine nutrient needs – don’t just assume and apply. Too many people throw fertilizer at problems when in fact, fertilizer was the culprit. Reduce application by 25 percent, but recycle all clippings. Grass clippings do not contribute to thatch; they do, however, provide nutrient and organic recycling.

For cool-season grasses, focus 75 percent of applied fertilizer in the fall and the balance in spring/early summer. This will reduce the growth rate, thus reducing clipping yield in the spring. With warm-season grasses, after the initial fertilization for spring growth, the rate applied should be reduced by 25 percent. Fertilizers with iron can be used to enhance color. The results are savings realized, reduced mowing frequency/clipping yield, less stress on turf and less fertilizer used.

Heavily used fields should receive more nutrition because they are burning more energy. Spreaders should be calibrated to ensure proper amounts are applied. The application calls for .75 pounds on N using a 30-percent nitrogen base, and treated area is 100,000 square feet. If your bags are 50 pounds, you will need five bags. More or less indicates a problem in application, so you should check the spreader and applicator/methods.
Aeration: Do more core aeration – open the soil up to ensure a positive gaseous exchange between atmosphere and soil. How much? On heavily used areas, treat 12.5 percent of the surface area (using a ¾” tine will require 18 holes per square foot/4+ passes). On areas less prone to compaction due to exposure, this can be reduced based on need. Aeration also reduces hardness of soil surface; test surfaces to determine need for aeration.

Contrary to popular belief, sand will compact, and aeration frequency may be reduced – not eliminated. Drag cores after aeration, mixing with soil and organic matter pulled up during the process. This will aid in filling minor divots and reduce thatch layers.

Irrigation: When was the last time an audit of your systems was conducted? Is the right amount of water being applied, too little or too much? Is water applied uniformly or are there localized wet/dry areas on the field? Have you considered upgrading your system to an Evapotranspiration system (ET)? By conducting an audit and implementing an ET system, a West Coast park system reduced water consumption by 60 percent, while improving turf quality. How much could you save?

Mowing Equipment: Evaluate your mowing equipment. Does it cost more to maintain than replace? What are the production rates? Is it a piece of equipment that can be used unilaterally for other areas or is it designated to fields only? Many manufacturers now have Zero Turn Radius mowers that will cut uniformly to 1½ inches and have a roller on the deck for that neat rolled appearance.

How often do you sharpen your blades? Having sharp blades is critical in providing a uniform cut. Has your maintenance team been trained? Does it understand that going faster is not good for the grass? If ground speed is too great, the grass is ripped, not cut. On a thick dense field, ground speed for a rotary mower should not exceed 3.5 miles per hour. Beyond this, the mower no longer cuts – it starts ripping the grass blade. Ripping creates a larger opening/wound on the turf plant – further stressing or predisposing it to other biotic agents. When purchasing mowing and other equipment, study the features and make sure they mirror associated tasks.

Mowing Height: Lower is not better for cool-season grasses. You can cheat up one-fourth to one-half inch in height. This helps reduce mowing frequency slightly, but enhances turf health. Having more canopy aids in root production, and it also shades soil-reducing soil evaporation and weed germination. If possible try to keep cool-season grasses at 2½ to 3 inches throughout the year. Warm-season turf (Hybrid Bermuda), depending on variety height, will range from .675 inch to 1½ inches. Seeded Bermuda may work better for taller mowing heights. Another advantage to seeded Bermuda is that it can be re-seeded when it gets thin. Hybrid Bermuda is produced by vegetative means; therefore, it must be sodded or sprigged, which costs more.

Paint: A trick that many athletic field managers use when painting is to include a small amount of a turf-growth regulator in the paint. By slowing turf growth, paint is not removed from the surface as quickly. Growth regulators are not required with each paint application; read the product label to determine frequency requirement.

The key is working smarter – not harder – and having someone who is committed and focused on the task at hand. Even with school budgets being reduced and cost-cutting measures being taken, putting student-athletes at risk of injury by reducing or eliminating funding to properly manage athletic fields would be ill-advised.

George G. Bernardon is regional vice president of grounds management for SSC Service Solutions in Knoxville, Tennessee. He is a certified playground safety instructor and a member of the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association Sports Turf Committee. He can be reached at George.Bernardon@sscserv.com.
Kentucky Adds Bowling to Slate of State Sports

BY STEVEN PEEK

The Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) has approved bowling as its newest state-sanctioned sport, beginning with the 2011-12 school year.

According to Angela Passafiume, the KHSAA assistant commissioner who will oversee bowling for the association, approximately 60 schools are already participating in the sport. When a survey of member schools showed that more than 20 percent were interested in sponsoring bowling teams, the association approved sanctioning the sport.

"Everybody is very excited about it, and a lot of people throughout the state think it’s a great idea," Passafiume said. "Everybody has the attitude that it will grab on to another group of kids in schools and welcome them into sports.

Passafiume also said that her goal is to double the number of schools that are participating in 2010-11 by next season.

“We’ve made contact with the ladies and gentlemen currently running things, especially people running the bowling alleys,” she said. “They have been out in the state talking to other bowling proprietors and encouraging the growth of the sport.”

The KHSAA is also striving to be consistent with the way other states manage bowling, the way Kentucky groups have been playing the game, and the way the KHSAA operates its other sports.

“We want to mold bowling the same way we mold other sports without turning over the apple cart and making a mess,” Passafiume said. “That’s why I’ve been comparing things in the state to things in other states.”

Passafiume has also been assuring schools already with teams that the minor things, such as scheduling, would not be altered so long as the number of required games are bowled prior to the state championship.

The KHSAA will operate bowling as a winter sport with its state championship coming in late March.
Tennessee welcomes homeschooled students into athletic programs

As a result of new bylaws passed by the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) Legislative Council in December 2010, home-schooled students will be eligible to participate in member schools’ athletic programs beginning with the 2011-12 academic year.

The result of that legislation is that home-schooled students will have the opportunity to try out for a TSSAA member school’s athletic teams, as long as students are in a public school’s district or within 20 miles of the private school for which they want to play.

Matthew Gillespie, TSSAA assistant executive director, said the rule applies to home-schooled students registered with their local education district and does not include church-affiliated programs or other umbrella groups. Gillespie noted that member schools are not required to adopt the new guideline.

The TSSAA has listened to calls from concerned member schools and the state legislature and found a way to appropriately integrate home-schooled students into member schools’ athletic programs. Home-schooled students will be held to the TSSAA’s typical academic standards, while also making allowances for educators and parents to aid in making their children eligible for athletics.

For instance, home-schooled students will be held to many of the same coursework standards that students in member schools are — among those, that a home-schooled student must be learning five academic subjects.

At the same time, there is a provision that a director of schools may help parents develop “an alternative measure of academic progress,” if approved by the TSSAA.

Utah raises bar for sportsmanship

The Utah High School Activities Association (UHSAA) has implemented a new sportsmanship program entitled, “Raise the Bar.” The UHSAA Sportsmanship Committee, which includes coaches, athletic directors, principals and trustees, developed the program to complement and package its individual sportsmanship models – “Do Rowdy Right,” “We Will” and TEAM (Teach, Enforce, Award, Model).

“The state association wanted to provide materials and guidance because we knew we had to do more,” said Becky Anderson, the UHSAA assistant director in charge of sportsmanship. “We knew we had to do more, and creating the program was a true team effort between leaders at all levels with the strong support of the Utah Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (UIAAA).”

Raise the Bar promotes the philosophy of education-based athletic and fine arts activities. This philosophy is founded upon the belief that activity programs are an extension of the school day with a classroom that differs in appearance but not necessarily mission.

“We really wanted to push the education-based message that the NFHS already promotes,” Anderson said. “We decided we wanted to step to the forefront and have a statewide sportsmanship program to give us a direction and the strength that comes with a common vocabulary among our schools.”
The new program challenges any and all participants to live by six characteristics during their time in their activity or elsewhere – respect, teamwork, personal responsibility, honesty, integrity and leadership.

Those characteristics are spelled out in the “We Will” sportsmanship pledge. By taking the pledge, students vow to play fair and by the rules, to treat opponents with dignity, to respect coaches and officials, to value the opportunity to compete, and to always do their best to achieve things as a team.

“That pledge reminds the students of the things they hear about,” Anderson said. “Sportsmanship is always out there, but sometimes you need something fresh to remember it.”

Schools can also show their sportsmanship on a UHSAA-issued banner to which they may add a star each year that they meet certain criteria. Five-star schools will be honored at a future celebration to honor their accomplishments from 2011 to 2015.

In working toward those yearly stars, schools have been jumping into action to increase the overall sportsmanship of their events.

Among those efforts, Timpview High School handed out cards with its sportsmanship statement to students and patrons at basketball game, Timpanogos High School utilized a sportsmanship council comprised of student leaders, and Riverton High School even provided oranges and Gatorade to their visiting football opponents during the season.

The UHSAA and the UIAAA will hold a Statewide Student Sportsmanship Summit on June 23, 2012, to assess the success that Raise the Bar experienced with instilling good sportsmanship within participants during the previous two school years.

Football fatality update

According to the 2010 Survey of Football Injury Research, there were two direct football fatalities and nine indirect football fatalities at the high school level this year. As a result, the number of combined fatalities decreased from 14 in 2009 (two direct and 12 indirect) to 11 in 2010.

“We are trying to do everything we can to minimize risk – whether through NFHS football rules changes, working with football equipment manufacturers on equipment design or a variety of other things,” said NFHS Assistant Director Bob Colgate, who is liaison both to the NFHS Football Rules Committee and the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.

The survey classifies direct fatalities as traumatic injuries that resulted directly from participation in the fundamental skills of football, while indirect fatalities are initially non-fatal injuries or complications caused by a systemic failure as a result of exertion during a football game or practice.

One of the two direct fatalities was a brain injury, and the other was a commotio cordis (blow to the chest which stops the heart) after being tackled. Of the nine indirect fatalities, four were heart-related, one was an asthma attack, two were associated with the sickle cell trait, and two were heat-related.

“We would like to see the numbers at zero,” Colgate said, “but is it likely to happen? No. With more than 1.1 million playing high school football at more than 15,200 high schools, we just know by the very nature of the game that it’s going to happen no matter what we do.

“If I had a solution to get the number to completely zero, I would use it.”

Heat stroke continues to be the most consistent cause for concern for indirect high school football fatalities.

Dr. Frederick Mueller, chairman of the American Football Coaches Committee on Football Injuries and director of the survey, said in his report that there is no excuse for any number of heat-stroke deaths since they are preventable with the proper precautions, mainly having water available in unlimited quantities.

Since 1995, there have been 35 heat-stroke deaths in high school football.

Mueller believes that open communication is the best means of preventing heat-stroke fatalities.

“Players must feel that they can tell the coach when they are not feeling well, dizzy or have a headache, and coaches should not make them feel like they are not tough if they report these problems to them,” Mueller said.

The survey, which is conducted by the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has resulted in rules changes, improved equipment, improved medical care and improved techniques for coaching football.

For example, a rule forbidding players to lead with their heads while tackling and blocking was implemented in 1976 as a direct result of the survey, even though it continues to be a problem today.

“The problem has been that players see the pros on Sunday afternoon with the head contact and think that is the way to hit,” Mueller said.

Mueller also said that some responsibility rests on coaches and officials.

Mueller in the survey said that keeping fatality numbers low hinges on proper technique instruction. Coaches should drill athletes in the proper execution of fundamental skills – primarily that contact should always be made with the head up and never with the top (or crown) of the helmet.

As for the officials’ responsibility, it exists on the field.

“Rules are in place, but officials sometimes are not calling penal-
ties for illegal helmet contact,” Mueller said. “Until they start calling penalties, it will continue.”

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

2011 Record Book posted online

The 2011 edition of the National High School Sports Record Book has been posted online in a PDF format on the NFHS Web site. As in past years, it contains records and top performances in 16 sports for boys and girls, and is a history of the top achievements of high school greats. More than 6,500 teams and individual record-holders are featured in this 33rd edition of the Record Book.

This 2011 edition marks the first time that the Record Book will be posted online and not published in hard copy format. It will serve as a transitional format between the former hard copy publication and a fully interactive online version that will be posted around the beginning of the 2011-12 school year.

NFHS Coaching Today available online

The National Federation of State High School Associations’ new online publication for high school coaches – NFHS Coaching Today – officially launched February 1.


This new resource for high school coaches replaces the NFHS Coaches’ Quarterly, which was published for members of the NFHS Coaches Association from 1996 through the winter 2010 issue.

New material, including feature articles and department columns, will be updated monthly. Other items will be updated on a more regular basis.

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Amber Riopelle  
Mandan High School  
Mandan, North Dakota

For me, student activity participation has impacted my academics greatly. Student activities keep me out of trouble, allowing me to stay focused on my goals in life. Through athletics, I have learned valuable life skills: cooperation, organization and determination. These skills have given me an advantage academically by allowing me to manage my time efficiently and effectively. Overall, my participation in activities tremendously benefits my grades and success in school, and in the end, academics will get me where I want to be in life.

Kristen Spradlin  
Wade Hampton High School  
Greenville, South Carolina

Student activity participation has helped my academics by forcing me to prioritize. My parents have always drilled into me that, “School comes first.” Playing a sport taught me responsibility and helped me to understand the true meaning of sacrifice and commitment. It made me realize that procrastination was never an option. Getting schoolwork done early, so I could participate, was the key. By having the schoolwork finished, I was better prepared for my classes, thus I was able to give full attention to my sport.

Michael Dempsey  
Lake High School  
Uniontown, Ohio

The education system’s primary function is to teach students about English, math, social sciences and all of the various disciplines. Each of these subjects requires a certain level of thought and study. However, the discipline and time-management skills required to excel in these classes oftentimes is not attained by solely being in the classroom. To achieve these essential life skills, it is important for the student to look beyond his or her studies and enroll in extracurricular activities. These activities, whether they are sports or clubs, are catalysts for learning skills that can be used life-long. These skills can transfer to not only academics, but to all aspects of one’s life.

Katie Fitzpatrick and Kim Conboy  
Upper Darby High School  
Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania

First and foremost, athletic participation has given us a school family. Teammates are our friends, our support system and our reason to get up in the morning and come to school. We are each other’s study partners and the seniors and juniors are always there to guide and sometimes tutor the freshmen and sophomores.

Being part of a team motivates you to keep good grades. It would be awful not to be able to play, and if you can’t play, you are letting the rest of your team down as well. To manage team and school you have to be organized and you learn how to get your work done and not procrastinate. As a team member, you set goals for performance and this carries to the classroom. When you reach a goal it is gratifying.

Finally, our coach is someone to depend on in school. It gives us an adult, besides our parents, who we know is always there for us.