School Authority to Sanction Parents of Student-athletes

- Communication
  - Building a good relationship with the media

- Above and Beyond
  - Blind player achieves goal of playing football

- Sports Medicine
  - Injury surveillance helps risk minimization
Since the High School Athletics Participation Survey was started by the NFHS in 1971, soccer has been the runaway leader on the growth charts. That first survey indicated 78,000 boys and 700 girls played soccer at the high school level. Today, there are about 400,000 boys and 360,000 girls playing the sport at approximately 11,000 high schools.

Forty years ago, soccer was the 10th-most popular high school sport for boys. Today, having passed wrestling, cross country, golf, swimming and tennis, it has moved to No. 5. Only the longstanding entrenched sports of football, track and field, basketball and baseball have a higher number of participants than soccer.

In addition, there has been an increase in the number of boys participating in high school soccer for 32 consecutive years; however, that streak may come to an end when figures for the 2012-13 season are tabulated because of an unfortunate ruling by U.S. Soccer.

Earlier this year, U.S. Soccer – the sport's governing body in the United States – announced that it was moving to a 10-month season with its U.S. Soccer Development Academy effective with the 2012-13 season. As a result of this action, the approximately 4,000 boys who compete in the 78-team Development Academy will no longer be able to play soccer on their high school teams.

Since 2007 when the Development Academy was created, boys on these Olympic Development Program (ODP) clubs were able to play on their high school team in the fall – at least in those states that sponsor the sport in the fall – and then join the ODP club after the high school season concluded.

The “club vs. high school” debate has been a longstanding issue with the sport of soccer. The United States is unique among international soccer powers in that the sport has a strong tradition of scholastic participation and exists within an education-based school setting. While we believe this is a positive step, U.S. Soccer is trying to adopt the year-round, sell-yourself-out approach that exists in the majority of countries in the world.

Obviously, we are extremely disappointed with this ruling by U.S. Soccer, particularly given the fact that our schools have attempted to co-exist. Many NFHS member state associations have enacted specific bylaw provisions to permit ODP participation by high school athletes. There seems to be no spirit of unity or cooperation with this latest move by U.S. Soccer.

In addition, the Amateur Sports Act, which was revised in 1998, imposes on U.S. Soccer and other National Governing Bodies the “duty” to work cooperatively with entities such as state high school associations in order to protect young people and the institutions that serve them.

U.S. Soccer’s desire is to prepare players to compete against the best clubs and international teams around the world. It is preposterous, however, to think that having these elite players for another two to three months is the answer and will close the gap between the United States and soccer powers from other nations.

Jason Pendleton, soccer coach at Blue Valley Southwest High School in Overland Park, Kansas, said it best:

“I understand that the U.S. wants to be the best at everything, but I don’t think the reason the national team hasn’t flourished is because our kids are playing high school sports. Our best athletes in America still aren’t migrating to soccer. … My concern is that, at the end of the day, it’s going to be only about soccer. At the high school level, the focus isn’t just on soccer but also the development as a student-athlete and human being.”

While the number of boys involved in these programs is small – approximately 4,000 of 400,000 – it is unfair for these individuals to have to make a choice. But if any of these 4,000 elite players have any hopes or desire to play professional soccer or to be selected for the Olympic team, they are being told that path cannot include playing on their high school team. That is wrong.

This decision affects the other 396,000 boys on high school teams as well. They are made to feel separate and unequal, which seems to be at odds with U.S. Soccer’s mission of growing the sport.

We will continue our efforts to persuade U.S. Soccer to reverse this decision so that these 4,000 individuals can continue to enjoy the benefits of education-based interscholastic sports.
See the Finish Line

Competitors clear the hurdles at the 2008 Arizona Interscholastic Association’s Track and Field Championship. The event was held at Arizona State University in Tempe.

Photograph provided by Paynter Pics, Arizona Interscholastic Association.
Welcome

We hope you enjoy this publication and welcome your feedback. Please take a few moments to complete the Review Form on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org/hstoday. You may contact Bruce Howard, editor of High School Today, at bhoward@nfhs.org.

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Cover photo provided by Paynter Pics, Arizona Interscholastic Association.

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**Legal Brief**

**Editor’s Note:** This column features an analysis of a landmark court case highlighting a key standard of practice for scholastic sports programs. This material is provided by Lee Green, an attorney and member of the High School Today Publications Committee.

**L.A. v. Board of Education – Township of Wayne [BETW]**

**New Jersey Office of Administrative Law 2011**

**Facts:** Nine Wayne Hills High School football players were suspended from playing in the North New Jersey, Section 1, Group 3 state championship game for their involvement in an off-campus fight at a party following which they were charged with aggravated assault.

**Issue:** Does a school district have the authority to discipline student-athletes for off-campus conduct by suspending them from participation in a state championship contest?

**Ruling:** Although the players established that they would suffer irreparable harm – a once-in-a-lifetime chance to play in a state championship game – the N.J. Office of Administrative Law, later upheld on appeal by the state Commissioner of Education, ruled that the case law is well-established that participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege, not a constitutionally protected property right and that the BETW student-athlete code of conduct clearly stated that the privilege of participation could be revoked for on-campus and off-campus misconduct.

**Standard of Practice:** Schools should include in codes of conduct for students participating in extracurricular activities a statement consistent with the long-standing legal principle that extracurricular participation is a privilege, not a right, and clarify that students may be suspended for on- or off-campus violations of the code.

**Postscript:** On December 3, 2011, Wayne Hills High School, playing without the nine suspended players, won its state championship game, 15-12, over Old Tappan High School.

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**Around the Nation**

**Question:** Does your state offer a one-act play state competition?

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**Map:**

- **21 YES**
- **10 NO**

- Ratings only
- Information not available.
Baylor School sets national swimming mark

On February 11, the Chattanooga (Tennessee) Baylor School foursome of Kristen Vreveld, Bria Deveau, Kimberlee John-Williams and Ashley Yearwood swam to a national-record time of 1:31.18 in the girls 200-yard freestyle relay.

The quartet turned in its record-setting performance during the Tennessee Swimming and Diving Championship at the Centennial Sportsplex in Nashville.

According to the National Federation of State High School Associations’ National High School Sports Record Book, the former record of 1:32.75 was set by Megan Detro, Jessie Hammes, Logan Mason and Trish Regan of Carmel (Indiana) High School in 2009.

Davis sets national swimming record in 100-yard butterfly

On February 10, Maclin Davis of Nashville (Tennessee) Montgomery Bell Academy set the national record of :46.64 in the 100-yard butterfly.

Davis, who is a senior and will attend the University of Southern California next year, turned in his record-setting performance during the preliminaries of the Tennessee Swimming and Diving Championship at the Centennial Sportsplex in Nashville.

According to the National Federation of State High School Associations’ National High School Sports Record Book, the former record of :47.08 was set by Sean Fletcher of Vienna (Virginia) James Madison High School in 2009.

New Trier sets national swimming mark

On February 24, the Winnetka (Illinois) New Trier High School foursome of Sam Skinner, Reed Malone, Jack Mangan and Max Grodecki swam to a national-record time of 2:59.76 in the boys 400-yard freestyle relay in Illinois High School Association state tournament qualifying-level competition.

In the process, they both eclipsed Jacksonville (Florida) Bolles’ 2011 time of 3:00.67 and became the first relay team to break the 3:00 mark.

St. Anthony wins New Jersey basketball title again

On March 11, the Jersey City (New Jersey) St. Anthony High School boys basketball team defeated Gladstone Gill St. Bernard High School, 67-39, to win the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) Non-Public B state championship.

In the process, the Friars won their 27th state title as well as their 63rd consecutive game. According to the National Federation of State High School Associations’ National High School Sports Record Book, St. Anthony holds the record for most boys basketball state titles.

In the title game, the Friars exhibited great offensive balance as Jerome Fink, Kyle Anderson and Halice Cooke all scored 15 points. St. Anthony is coached by Bob Hurley, who is a member of the NFHS’ National High School Hall of Fame.

The Cost

BUYING PRINT MUSIC

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Average Total Cost</th>
<th>Average Price</th>
<th>Number in Average Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>Parade Marching Band</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$73</td>
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<td>$45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Orchestra</td>
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<td>$150</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$393</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$138</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female Chorus</td>
<td>$550</td>
<td>$138</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*These prices serve as approximate costs and are not intended to reflect any specific manufacturer’s prices.
**For the Record**

**BOYS GOLF**

**Most Individual State Championships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989-92</td>
<td>Greg Nordstrom</td>
<td>(Biloxi Mercy Cross, MS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-77</td>
<td>Rip Vaughn</td>
<td>(Camp Verde, AZ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-98</td>
<td>Brandon Davidson</td>
<td>(Columbus, MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-35</td>
<td>Reubin Narlin</td>
<td>(Sioux Falls Washington, SD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unusual Nicknames

**Fordyce Redbugs**

Redbugs are biting insects that apparently made quite an impression on construction workers at Fordyce (Arkansas) High School in the 1920s. During construction of a new football field at the school, workers were frequently bitten by the bugs. Even after the field was finished, football players would finish games covered in the bugs’ bites. A local reporter for the Arkansas Gazette decided the redbug would make a good nickname for the school’s teams.

*If you know of a school with an unusual nickname and want it to appear in High School Today, please submit your information to Bruce Howard at bhoward@nfhs.org.*
Jennie Finch

BY ALEX SWENSON

Jennie Finch spent her softball career making opposing players look lost in the batter’s box. She stifled opponents with an array of quality pitches and an impressive arsenal of skills from the pitcher’s circle. Over the years, Finch always proved to be a tremendous athlete and competitor, but looking back on her career, Finch will always be known first and foremost as a winner.

Finch grew up in a very close and competitive family just outside of Los Angeles in La Mirada, California. She inherited her family’s love of the Los Angeles Dodgers and the game of baseball in general. When she was just five years old, her career began in a local t-ball league. After watching her older brothers play, Finch was excited to get her start in the game.

After displaying superior athleticism at an early age, Finch began pitching at age eight. Her father, Doug, constructed a batting cage in their backyard and would work tirelessly with Finch to fine-tune her skills. He even turned a trampoline into a pitch-back that she could use when he wasn’t available to catch pitches himself.

The hard work and practice paid off. At the age of 12, Finch captured the first of what was to be many accolades when her 12-and-under team won the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) national title. She would go on to play on ASA championship teams in the 14-and-under and 18-and-under divisions as well.

At La Mirada High School, Finch continued to excel. She lettered all four years in softball while also playing volleyball and basketball. However, everyone knew where Finch would make the greatest impact. When her four years were completed, Finch was 50-12 with six perfect games, 13 no-hitters and a 0.15 earned-run average (ERA). She recorded 784 career strikeouts in just 445 innings.

Many top college softball programs had their sights set on Finch after high school, and she chose to continue her playing career at the University of Arizona.

At Arizona, Finch played both pitcher and first base, where she could display her batting skills as well. After impressive freshman and sophomore campaigns, Finch’s junior year was arguably her best. During the 2001 season, She was 32-0 with a 0.54 ERA and struck out 279 batters in 207 innings leading Arizona to a national championship.

During her senior year, the Wildcats lost in the championship game. However, Finch was still named National Player of the Year for the second time after recording 34 wins and 366 strikeouts. She also set the national record with 60 straight wins at one point and finished college with a 119-16 career record.

Her next stop was the U.S. National Softball team in 2004. She immediately became one of the best players on a team looking for its third straight Olympic gold medal. Finch wouldn’t disappoint, as she was impressive throughout the games, and the U.S. captured gold once again.

After a successful career with the Chicago Bandits of the National Pro Fastpitch softball league and a 2008 Olympic campaign that saw the U.S. come home with a silver medal, Finch retired from softball in 2010. She is now married to Major League Baseball pitcher Casey Daigle, and they have two sons. She continues her love of softball by holding numerous camps around the country and directing her own softball academy in Flemington, New Jersey.

Alex Swenson is an intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications department. He is a junior at Franklin (Indiana) College majoring in broadcast journalism and public relations.
School Authority to Sanction Parents of Student-athletes

BY LEE GREEN, J.D.

They Can’t All Be Starters!

A well-known anecdote about parental interference in school athletics programs – a story long-circulated in the coaching ranks – relates the actions of a high school basketball coach who at the beginning of a game sends all 12 members of his varsity squad onto the court for the opening tip. When a referee informs the coach that he has too many players on the floor, the coach replies that his starting lineup is the dozen on the court. After the official levies seven technical fouls on the team, the coach turns towards the parents sitting in the stands behind the bench, spreads his arms wide, and in an exasperated tone of voice makes a simple statement.

“See, I told you they can’t all be starters!”

Although the involvement in school sports programs of the overwhelming majority of parents is positive and focused on providing encouragement to student-athletes and support for coaches, an ongoing issue for schools and athletics personnel is the challenge of dealing with the excessively vocal minority of parents whose negative behavior rises to a level resulting in active interference with or significant disruption of a team or its games.

A recent case, Blasi v. Pen Argyl Area School District, decided in September of 2011 by a U.S. District Court in Pennsylvania, addressed the issues related to the authority of a school to suspend a parent from attending school athletics events for excessive and inappropriate interference with coaches and games. The ruling provides some important lessons for schools as they develop and implement parent and spectator behavior policies.

Blasi v. Pen Argyl Area School District

After a number of face-to-face interactions with school administrators and coaches during which he behaved in a threatening manner as he berated and harassed the personnel, and following a series of 17 e-mails in which he bombarded those school officials and coaches with scathing and racially tinged language, William Blasi, the father of two basketball-playing sons for Wind Gap Middle School in the Pen Argyl Area School District in Pennsylvania, was informed that he would be prohibited from attending one home basketball game for violating the school district’s Parental/Spectator Guidelines.

The Guidelines, a behavior policy for parents and spectators, is a two-page document that includes a statement of purpose explaining the objectives of education-based athletics and a list of specific “Do’s” and “Don’ts” for parents of children participating in the district’s sports programs and for spectators attending athletics events. The policy also explains three levels of sanctions for violations of the policy, ranging from the threshold penalty of a one-game suspension to the most severe penalty of a one-year prohibition on attending district sports events.

After receiving notice of his one-game suspension, Blasi filed a federal lawsuit claiming that the district’s action constituted “viewpoint discrimination” that violated his First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and freedom of expression to criticize the school and its coaches. He also claimed that his suspension constituted unlawful retaliation by the district for his contrarian views and that certain other team policies – a dress code for game days, closed tryouts and closed practices – interfered with his Fourteenth Amendment right of due process to raise his children free of school interference.

The court’s analysis focused on the content of Blasi’s face-to-face interactions with coaches in the presence of the team and the 17 e-mails to school officials and coaches in which Blasi claimed that his sons, who were of Chinese descent, were denied playing time and that “much-lesser-skilled white boys played more than his sons.” Blasi referred to other players on the team by name, describing them as “suck players,” “scrubs,” “not even players,” “should not be on the team,” “obese” and “laughing stock.” Blasi repeatedly used racially oriented language in the e-mails to imply ethnically biased favoritism by the coaches to other players and race discrimination against his sons. He claimed that the game-day dress code of slacks, shirt and tie was an embarrassment to his sons
because it associated them with “the white losers on the team” and that closed tryouts and closed practices had prevented him from videotaping the racial and ethnic discrimination that he claimed was rampant on the team.

In ruling for the school district, the court stated that the policy incorporated into the *Parental/Spectator Guidelines* “does not seek to regulate the content of Mr. Blasi’s speech or the content of anyone else’s speech. Instead, it merely prescribes the manner and circumstances in which a parent could talk to a member of the coaching staff. Furthermore, [the policy] reflects a substantial government interest in protecting young student-athletes from witnessing heated confrontations between a parent and a coach, or from hearing parents and spectators rant about a coach’s alleged incompetence.” The court found Blasi’s conduct to be in violation of the *Parental/Spectator Guidelines* because of its threatening nature, stating that “behavior like Mr. Blasi’s only serves to harass and disrupt the functioning of the entire basketball program to the detriment of all participants.”

The court emphasized that its decision does not ban e-mail, written correspondence, telephone calls or face-to-face communication between parents and coaches and that the *Parental/Spectator Guidelines* were constitutional because the policy imposed only minimal restrictions on the time, place and manner of the speech in question. The court also decided that no retaliation took place by the district against Blasi, nor did the game-day dress code, closed tryouts and closed practices interfere with Blasi’s parental-autonomy rights.

**Recommendations for Parent/Spectator Behavior Policies**

The federal court’s decision in Blasi v. Pen Argyl Area School District highlights a number of lessons for schools as they attempt to develop and implement effective and legally enforceable behavior policies for parents and spectators:

- Create a written policy that includes sufficiently detailed guidelines for parents and spectators so that the policy would not be considered overbroad or vague and thus legally unenforceable.
- The policy should begin with a brief mission statement explaining the purpose of the policy, the goals of education-based athletics programs, and the expectations of school athletics personnel regarding sportsmanship by all parties involved in the program, including parents and spectators.
- The policy should include a detailed listing of prohibited behaviors, including examples of inappropriate interactions between parents and coaches and inappropriate behaviors by spectators at sporting events.
- The policy should also provide a thorough explanation of the range of sanctions for parents or spectators who engage in prohibited behaviors, including ejection from a single sports event at which one-time misconduct occurs or a multi-event ban for multiple transgressions or a permanent ban when the actions become sufficiently severe so as to create a significant disruption of the education-based objectives and sportsmanship goals of the program.
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• Decide on the communication techniques that would most effectively convey the policy to parents and spectators, including posting the policy on the athletics section of the school’s Web site, incorporating the policy into the sports participation agreements signed by student-athletes and their parents, printing the policy in game programs or free-standing sportsmanship information distributed at sports events, using public-address announcements during games to communicate the policy to all spectators, and having event supervisors distribute copies of the policy directly to spectators engaging in questionable conduct during events.

• At meetings of student-athletes and parents (e.g., the meeting for all fall-sports athletes and their parents or meetings held by individual coaches for their players and parents), explain the policy, its purposes and its details, and have parents sign a copy of the policy. Even if a parent refuses to sign, he or she has been informed of the guidelines included in the policy and will not be able to disavow knowledge of the details of the policy.

• If non-parent spectators engage in prohibited conduct at sports events, have an event supervisor provide them with a written copy of the policy, along with an explanation of possible sanctions if the misbehavior continues. Consider implementing a yellow card (warning for first instance of misconduct) and red card (expulsion from the event for continuing misconduct) system.

• In the event the policy has to be enforced through the removal of a parent or spectator from a single event or the permanent ban of a parent or spectator from all future events, carefully document all instances of misconduct by the offending party and the level of disruption created by the misbehavior. Documentation should also include names and contact information for witnesses to the misconduct, any video available of the incident and a contemporaneous written report by the event supervisor(s).

• Attempt to make the policy itself and its implementation at events a positive process that emphasizes the mission of education-based athletics programs and the sportsmanship goals of the experience for the student-athletes who are the core of the program.

Lee Green is an attorney and a professor at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, where he teaches courses in sports law, business law and constitutional law. He is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee. He may be contacted at Lee.Green@BakerU.Edu.

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Since 1987
High school athletic directors and coaches are always looking for ways to gain more exposure for their programs, and building a good working relationship with the media is crucial to making that happen.

Very simply, the key factor in getting more coverage for high school sports teams is to call the local media outlets with results of games. Every school can use more coverage and recognition for all the hard work its student-athletes put in each week. It is difficult for any media outlet to get to every school that wants coverage. Television reporters, for instance, cannot be everywhere each Friday night; however, if schools call in scores, most media outlets will put the scores on the air—or on their Web sites.

One important factor to remember though is that scores should be reported whether the team wins or loses. Unfortunately, many coaches only call when they win. Based on the call status from some schools, there would appear to be several undefeated teams every year because losses are never reported. By reporting the results of all games, schools gain an increasing respect from the local media outlets.

Athletic directors and coaches have numerous other responsibilities after games, so schools might consider designating another individual—an assistant coach, trainer or perhaps a reliable student—to call local media outlets immediately following a game.

Since local media outlets cannot be at every game and keep track of all results and statistics, they must rely on coaches, athletic directors and even parents to keep them informed. Although some people believe otherwise, members of the media don’t know everything, so they need help from key individuals at the school to keep them informed.

Sometimes, schools might hesitate to contact a television station or newspaper because they figure the media outlet would not be interested. Never hesitate to plant story ideas with the local media—let the producer or editor make that call because there might be some angle to the story that he or she believes is appealing to local viewers.

Another suggestion for enhancing coverage for schools and strengthening the relationship with media is that when things go wrong or take a turn for the worse, they should be dealt with head on and immediately. Once a story is put on the air with all the necessary elements, it’s over.

When some type of negative story develops, news organizations will try to get reactions and comments from key officials. If no official wants to go on camera, the news will go on without a comment; however, the reporters won’t let it end there. They will usually try again the next day—and the next and the next—until they get the reaction and sound bite they want.

On the flip side, the school official could respond to the incident that same day and then say that there is nothing more to report. The story is over. Like a band-aid, just rip it off and let the wound heal. The longer a school waits to make a comment, the more the story gets recycled for several days.
State high school associations can play a significant role in helping schools receive good coverage for their teams. In New Mexico, for instance, the New Mexico Activities Association has made significant improvements to its Web site, which is a great source of information for media outlets.

Many times, it is challenging for media to find all the information it needs in one place—items such as schedules, rosters, matchups with names and numbers of all teams. The NMAA’s Web site has become a great source of information for media, and this in turn is a great benefit for schools throughout the state to receive proper coverage.

Equally important is the accuracy of the information on the Web site and the timely reporting of results from state events. The NMAA posts scores and results from state championships immediately following the events. Accurate and timely reporting of scores—whether it is being done by the local school or the respective state association—makes the job of media outlets much easier.

State associations also can enhance coverage of state championships by remaining on schedule with the running of events. Television reporters, in particular, will be arriving at set times to shoot footage. If events are not on schedule, schools may not receive coverage on the local sports that evening. As the NMAA does for the schools in New Mexico, the state association can be instrumental in its member schools receiving proper coverage at state events.

Athletic directors and coaches should not get upset if the media cannot get to an event that they think deserves attention. While the event might merit some local coverage—at least from the viewpoint of the athletic director or coach—there are always other factors that can come into play. Sometimes, breaking news stories might dictate where a reporter is sent. Other times, a lack of resources might prevent the local television station from sending a cameraman. Consistent communication of information from the school to the media source is the key factor.

The easier it is for media to get information and do their job, the more likely it is a media member will cover a school’s event. On the contrary, if a reporter has to jump through hoops to talk to someone, or to get results, rosters and other mandatory elements of a story, it is less likely he or she will want to come back.

Ultimately, the goal is to have schools receive the recognition they deserve.

J.P. Murrieta is the sports director at the NBC affiliate in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
Athletic administrators are always looking for new and better ways of doing their job and meeting their responsibilities. And this also holds true for sportsmanship.

Many may be looking for that one best sure-fire approach to ensure a very good, positive approach to sportsmanship. It is very much like the quest for the Holy Grail. While the search and effort to find the ideal method of providing sportsmanship is good and noble, the answer really starts with the athletic director.

Athletic administrators hold the key. It starts with creating expectations for their athletes and coaches. And since coaches are the role models, they in turn have to model the behavior and set the tone for the athletes, parents and fans. The coaches are the soldiers, but the athletic director is the general.

It may not be easy for athletic directors to guide coaches who lack the proper understanding and appreciation of sportsmanship. They may have winning seasons and community support. It may be awkward and difficult to correct and ensure proper decorum. But this is the athletic director’s responsibility.

Are there written expectations for fans and parents who attend contests? If not, it’s time to start. These guidelines can and should be distributed to parents at preseason meetings and should be available at venues. A copy should be mailed to each opponent’s athletic director and coach, if possible, in order to alert visitors of the school’s expectations.

“The coaches are the soldiers, but the athletic director is the general.”

Review existing programs to gather ideas and to uncover helpful tools, but ultimately the athletic director has to decide what and how to use this information. And the athletic director may even have to analyze, modify and create his or her own approach.

Fortunately, there are a number of extremely helpful resources for athletic directors to use in creating their own program. Consider the following.

▲ The NFHS Sportsmanship Course. This online offering only takes about 20 minutes to complete and it is free. Every coach should be required to complete this course, and the athletic director can easily check whether coaches have met this requirement by using the Coach Search feature on the www.nfhslearn.com site.

In addition, at preseason meetings, parents should be encouraged to take the course. They also should take the Role of the Parent in Sports course. This resource will present a great perspective for parents and it is also free.

▲ Two of the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association’s (NIAAA) Leadership Training Institute Courses – 703, Student Centered Educational Athletics-Performance Beyond the X’s and O’s, and 721, Positive Sporting Behavior-for the Love of the Game – are extremely valuable. The four hours spent in the class and the accompanying manual will be invaluable for new, practical ideas.

▲ A new feature of the NFHS High School Today magazine is the Sportsmanship in Action column. In this section, state associations and local districts outline and highlight aspects of their sportsmanship programs. These monthly articles may contain one or two ideas that could prove to be helpful.

▲ In addition to LTC 703 and 721, the NIAAA LTC 625 course – Management of Game and Event Announcing – provides great practical applications for public-address announcements at games. Every effort to communicate expectations to parents and fans is critical.

▲ In the September 2010 issue of High School Today, Joe Santa and Larry Kissinger outlined the steps that the Northern Lakes Conference (Indiana) took to create its league-wide sportsmanship program. In its workshops and meetings, the Northern Lakes Conference developed a list of
inappropriate behaviors and ideas to correct them. There should be no doubt that a league-wide approach with standardized expectations for all schools is an extremely important step in order to achieve good sportsmanship.

Articles from not only professional publications, but also newspapers and magazines, can and should be shared with coaches. While positive manifestations of sportsmanship may not be as common as the negative ones, these articles are important to share as examples. The coaches, in turn, can use these materials for Teachable Moments with their teams.

Several state associations and some leagues have existing sportsmanship awards for teams and entire athletic programs. While these efforts are important to recognize outstanding contributions, the athletic director should also create individual awards for athletes in addition to the traditional MVPs for teams. These awards elevate and demonstrate the value that the school places on good sportsmanship in education-based athletics.

Another ancillary LTI course that could be useful is No. 720, Community Centered Education Athletics – A Character Based Approach to Identifying and Unifying the Whole Team. After an athletic director completes this course, the contents could be extremely valuable to share with his or her coaches. Consider using this course as the basis of in-service development efforts for the coaching staff and sportsmanship should improve.

It is up to athletic directors to improve sportsmanship and develop a program for their schools. Roll up the sleeves, use these available resources and get started.

Dr. David Hoch retired recently 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. He is the author of a new book entitled Blueprint for Better Coaching. Hoch is a member of the NFHS High School Today Publications Committee.
From time to time, groups or organizations help local sports teams with jerseys, equipment and other fees, but how often do teams give back? That is exactly what the Mandan (North Dakota) High School boys ice hockey team did with its goal of giving back to those in the community.

Mandan, North Dakota — a small city in the heart of the Great Plains – is home to the Pucks 4 People hockey game. Pucks 4 People first started in 2010 when Mandan High School’s hockey team saw an opportunity to help a local family.

The team considered ideas about Breast Cancer Awareness, Support the Troops, Red Cross and many other organizations, but then the light came on. A Mandan High School teacher had lost his home due to fire in the fall of 2010, so the team unanimously decided to help his family by hosting the first annual Pucks 4 People hockey game.

The team suited up in custom-made Pucks 4 People jerseys donated by Universal Athletics of Bismarck, North Dakota, which were then auctioned off following the game. As a result, the Braves were able to raise more than $1,000 for the local Mandan family. After such a tremendous turnout, it was decided that Pucks 4 People would become a Mandan tradition.

After learning the ropes from last year, the Mandan Braves set out to up the ante. Universal Athletics of Bismarck again donated custom jerseys, but this time multiple sets, raising more than $2,000 on jersey sales alone. The next question was who would receive the money. The answer was a no-brainer: Chris Anseth.

Anseth was a 2011 Mandan High School graduate and hockey alumnus, making him a very close friend to many players on this year’s team. While at Job Corps during the summer, Anseth contracted a virus in his kidneys that later spread to his lungs. In mid-October, he was taken by helicopter to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, where he spent the next 2 ½ months in the Intensive Care Unit. Since then, Anseth has made almost a complete recovery and is back home with his friends and family.

The news of the second annual Pucks 4 People game spread quickly – even making its way across the state. As the news traveled, donations came in from local businesses, families and friends, and attendance at the game surpassed 1,300 people – a remarkable number for a city of only 16,700. The team raised a total of $4,331 for the Anseth family, making the event a huge success.

At Mandan High School, sports are a lot more than just entertainment. Sports are about caring, passion and friendship, and about bringing the community closer together. For the Mandan Braves hockey team, it is about building a bond that can be cherished forever. ☺

Lorell Jungling is athletic director at Mandan (North Dakota) High School. He is a former member of the NFHS Board of Directors.
WHAT MAKES UP YOUR GAME?

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size: 1 Bottle of Water
Servings Per Responsible Athlete

<table>
<thead>
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*Percent Daily Values based on a lack of commitment to the game. Your values may be higher or lower depending upon your consumption of alcohol.

Winning Champion Scholarship Pride

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Among the many exceptional high school students in America is Taylor Howell, a sophomore at Vasquez High School in Acton, California, a rural town located north of Los Angeles. Howell touches the lives of his peers and fellow teammates on a daily basis by modeling strength and perseverance in overcoming adversity.

At the age of 18 months, Howell was diagnosed with retinoblastoma, wherein he lost both of his eyes. Many surgeries and treatments later, Howell overcame the disease and remains cancer free. Although he had no sight while growing up, his family felt it was important for him to experience a normal childhood, so he has always attended regular public schools.

Upon meeting Howell, you would not know he is without any sight. He does not use a walking stick nor does he wear sunglasses. His spatial awareness is sharp, and he walks with confidence. Howell memorizes places he goes as well as the layout of his school in order to get around with ease.

In the spring of 2011, Howell approached the athletic department about his desire to be a football player. He then met with the coaches to make a plan to get him started right away. He began spring weight training to prepare him for the 2011 season.

As a snapper on special teams and as a lineman on offense, Howell contributed to the success of the junior varsity football team with a 5-3 overall season record and 4-1 Desert Mountain League record. According to Howell, the biggest challenge in playing football without sight is “making sure the snaps are dead-on and not being able to look back to see the quarterback.”

Relying heavily on repetition and sound has been the key to Howell’s success on the field. Some of the things he has learned from playing high school football are teamwork, never giving up and a feeling of independence. He also feels that being a football player has earned him respect among his peers and has freed him from being judged. In the fall, Taylor was spotlighted on the Los Angeles NBC Channel 4 Football Challenge with Fred Roggin, and he was interviewed in a National Public Radio Webcast.

When asked to describe the feeling of being in the center of a roaring crowd at a football game, Howell says he feels more determined than ever, and “It is a lot quieter on the field than you would think.”

Doug Turner, Vasquez junior varsity football coach, says, “We tell our players that football is a game of emotions and that you have to put your heart into it. Taylor plays football with heart. He is there every day doing everything that all his teammates are doing – all the drills, all the running and never giving up. He tries everything, while sometimes comical, he gets it done and has a great attitude doing it. Taylor has taught me and his teammates a lot about playing with HEART.”

In addition to playing football, Howell was a team manager for the Vasquez High School baseball team. A self-proclaimed “adventurer,” he enjoys wakeboarding, snowboarding, riding a dirt bike, hunting, fishing or anything outdoors. His favorite outdoor activity is horseback riding.

Howell is currently training to compete in barrel racing, horse shows and trail trials on his horse named “Bo.” Together with his friends/trainers, Taylor and Bo use audio technology to guide him in horseback riding as he trains for the various disciplines. Howell’s goal is to someday have a career that involves horses. Recently, Taylor and
Bo were featured on the Los Angeles ABC Channel 7 News as a Cool Kid, earning a $1,000 savings bond.

A member of the Canyon Coyotes 4-H Club, Howell has competed and done very well earning two second places in Horse Bowl quizzing. Horse Bowl quizzing is an oral test of extensive horse knowledge. Howell is able to use Braille editions of the horse bowl quiz materials he needs to study.

Jan Hudson, a former English 9 teacher and current dean of students at Vasquez High School, said, “The first time I met Taylor Howell, he was visiting our campus as he was wrapping up his eighth-grade year. That was the only time I ever saw him with an aide. As a new freshman, he could navigate our campus better than many of his sighted peers. Taylor is a bright young man who never lets his disability slow him down. He worked with me to troubleshoot the best way to provide his work, and we came up with some innovative ideas. Taylor is very bright and always participated in class discussions, sometimes to the point that I would have to ask him to let his classmates talk, too. He always had a great sense of humor. Many times I would use the phrase “so you see ...” and Taylor would raise his hand and say, “No, Mrs. H., actually I don’t” and then laugh. Taylor is a well-rounded student, and I consider myself fortunate to know him.”

Similar to any other teenager in America, Howell enjoys hanging out with his friends, using a computer and talking/texting on his cell phone. When asked whether Taylor sees himself as different from other high school students, he says, “I don’t see what they see is so different about me. I think of myself as the same as everyone else. I want to show people that it is possible for anyone to do. Sometimes people tell me I can’t do it, and I want to prove them wrong.”

Howell’s perseverance and courage to overcome any obstacles in his life without sight is what makes him an exceptional young man. He recently celebrated his 16th birthday, and he is looking forward to a bright future.

Charleen Klein is an athletic assistant at Vasquez High School in Acton, California. For more information, contact the Vasquez High School Athletic Department at 661-269-0451, extension 525, or cklein@aadusd.k12.ca.us.
Throughout the country, All-State honor groups provide opportunities for the finest student musicians to have an extended learning experience that cannot be provided in the normal classroom setting. For varying periods of time, these select students come together for intense rehearsals under some of the finest conductors in the world, culminating in concerts that are breathtaking. These are life-changing experiences for many young musicians, with unforgettable memories for all the participants.

In 1954, the Washington Music Educators Association (WMEA) held its first biennial high school All-State groups in conjunction with the state conference. More than 500 students participated in the four-day event, which cost each student $9. That fee included everything, with the students being hosted in homes. The hosts provided beds, meals and transportation to and from scheduled events. Through 1994, home housing was provided, and the cost per student rose to $75 – still a bargain considering inflation.

However, concern about home housing was increasing significantly. With more single-parent families or families having both parents working, there was reluctance to take students (or at least multiple students) in and truly host them. School music programs even had to advertise in local newspapers that hosts could earn $10/student/night by providing housing. Screening host families outside the music departments was difficult; the liabilities were becoming a great concern to the WMEA Board.

In 1996, the board decided to house students in hotels. That meant all meals had to be purchased commercially and in-city transportation to all events provided on some form of chartered transportation. Immediately, the price per student rose to $200, and even at that amount WMEA lost money. Unexpected charges for some services reared up, and another price increase was needed. While WMEA’s constitution prohibits WMEA from making money on student events, it also prohibits losing money, and the students’ fees soon rose beyond $300, enabling WMEA to just break even.

Since 1999, annual All-State groups have been a part of WMEA’s student activities. In 2002, at the request of our music teacher membership, the size of each of the All-State large groups was reduced while maintaining the same number of students (900), thus doubling the number of large groups from three to six. This meant more fixed costs (conductors, sites, music, etc.) had to be shared among the same number of students as before. More groups also meant that WMEA could not rely on volunteers and elected officers for all the tasks involved. A general manager, a housing manager and a student-events coordinator were hired to manage the groups.

Kevin Paustian receives a check from the Snowman Foundation to Young Musicians Excelling (YME) at the summer YME board meeting at Gerard Schwarz’ home. L-R: David Gannett (YME Board member), Jerry Schwarz (YME Board chair), Kathy Dewalt (YME Board member), Steve Dewalt (Snowman Foundation Board), Kevin Paustian (WMEA president) and Bruce Caldwell (WMEA executive director).

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### Changing Times

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### Elitism or Help

While everyone hopes that schools will pay for their students who are accepted into state-level groups, the reality is that many schools cannot or will not help students who receive such an honor.
The word was reaching WMEA that many musically qualified students weren’t even auditioning because they knew they would be unable to afford to participate. It was simply unacceptable to be pricing students out of the opportunity.

In 2002, WMEA began a foundation to help needy students participate in WMEA-sponsored events. The organization, Young Musicians Excelling (YME), received $10,000 seed money from the WMEA reserve fund and was off and running. Contributions trickled in as word spread about the foundation’s annual fund. A retired music educator donated $10,000 to begin an endowment fund, separate from the annual fund. While the cost of actually running the 2004 All-State event was about $350 per student, YME assistance helped keep each student’s fees at $325.

**Advisory Board**

While the “ownership” of YME rests with WMEA, those very busy people on the WMEA Board did not have the time, expertise or contacts to dedicate to raising funds. The concept of a YME Advisory Board made up primarily of non-WMEA local music supporters who could tap sources unavailable to teachers sprung up. The decision was made to approach Gerard Schwarz, then the Musical Conductor of the Seattle Symphony, to chair the board. Fully expecting him to say “no,” but hoping he might recommend someone who knew fundraising, the WMEA Board was delightfully surprised when he responded, “Why wouldn’t I?”

While much of the fundraising activity is undertaken by the WMEA staff, the visibility of the advisory board and its high-profile membership has given YME a stature of respectability to prospective donors. WMEA manages the donated money properly; it reaches the students. WMEA pays all operating expenses for YME.

**Backstage**

When the YME Board was looking for an “event,” it was suggested that prior to each All-State concert it would be wonderful to have a meal where the parents could meet and hear from the conductors, which led to the idea of Backstage with WMEA All-State. For $30, parents and guests enjoy a meal where the All-State conductors speak briefly, have the opportunity to attend the closed-to-the-public final dress rehearsal and obtain the capability to choose their seats for the concert prior to the public admission. Most important, though, is that advocacy and public relations from these events have been outstanding. Since the first Backstage in 2007, the event has grown to 350 participants this year.

**Blue Buckets**

Several years ago, one of the YME Board members said that since we had a “captive audience,” we should make a brief pitch for YME at the All-State concerts and ask people to donate as they left. The first concert garnered more than $1,000 in donations (collected in hastily cut-off lunch boxes) and now brings in nearly $5,000 per year from the concert-going public. Volunteers stand near the door with “classy” blue buckets at the end of each concert.

**In Summary**

Establishing any foundation takes time and trust. Corporations and the general public don’t want to give money to organizations that operate on a shoestring. They want to see a business model in place before they will help. YME is trusted; it is now approaching $40,000 per year in annual fund donations, and the endowment has reached nearly $150,000. When donors “renew” each year, the amount they donated the previous year goes into the annual fund, and any amount above the previous year’s donation is earmarked for the endowment. Our donors know this, and since that policy began in 2009 many donors have increased their gifts each year.

YME has raised more than $300,000 to help All-State students. Student fees have not surpassed $350, and no student who has indicated a need for financial assistance has been turned down. We use an honor system with a simple form: (1) This is the cost. (2) How much will your school pay? (3) How much can you truly afford (try to contribute something, please)? (4) What’s the balance you need to participate? The number of auditions is increasing; word is out that help is available. It works! If you have questions, please contact WMEA at info@wmea.org or by calling 425-712-9632.

Bruce Caldwell was hired in 1995 to be the first executive director of the Washington Music Educators Association, a position he has held since that time. He previously taught high school instrumental music and mathematics in the Edmonds School District, just north of Seattle, for 31 years. During that time, he spent 10 years as an elected member of the WMEA Board, including serving as president from 1992 to 1994.
New Online Coach Education Course
“Directing Forensics: Directing the High School Speech and Debate Program”
Truman State University

Significant Tuition Discount for NFHS Speech, Debate and Theatre Association Members!

This course seeks to serve the needs of those secondary school educators and co-curricular advisors who have been assigned the responsibility of supervising an interscholastic speech and debate program at the middle school or high school level. In this course, students will explore basic topics related to the pedagogy of forensics, the management of forensics programs and the professional issues associated with the role of a forensics coach/director. Discussion of theatre, mock trial and related programs is included.

For Information on Pricing, Registration and Availability in Your State Visit:
http://institute.truman.edu/DOF.asp

The NFHS Speech, Debate and Theatre Association has selected 20 individuals to receive the 2011-12 Outstanding Speech, Debate and Theatre Educator Awards.

The Speech Advisory Committee selected the recipients based on their significant contributions to high school speech, debate and theatre activities. The awards recognize outstanding high school speech, debate and theatre directors/coaches. This year, seven individuals were section winners and 13 were state winners.

For complete biographical information on this year’s Speech-Debate-Theatre Educator Award winners, visit the NFHS Web site at <www.nfhs.org/hstoday>.

STATE WINNERS
Mark Ingerson - Virginia
Scott Bertelsen - Iowa
Jeff Stutzman - Indiana
Amy Bushey - Michigan
Tina Winings - Illinois
Darrel Harbaugh - Kansas
Jason Olson - Minnesota
Matt Good - Missouri
Keith Denslow - Oklahoma
Rachell Grant - Texas
John Wolnutsy - Arizona
Chalise Ludlow - Idaho
Joel Underwood - Washington

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

SECTION WINNERS
Section 2 – W. Michael Nailor, PA
Section 3 – Darin Maier, MS
Section 4 – David Wendt, IA
Section 5 – Kenneth Pickering, SD
Section 6 – Robert Shepard, TX
Section 7 – Alyn Bone, UT
Section 8 – Rob Money, OR
USA Coaching Coalition Hosts National Coaching Conference

BY SHANE MONAGHAN

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), along with other members of the USA Coaching Coalition, will host the 2012 National Coaching Conference June 19-21 at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis in downtown Indianapolis, Indiana.

Other members of the USA Coaching Coalition involved in this year’s conference are the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE).

This year’s theme is Sports – Take Part, Get Set for Life, with the conference looking to “educate, collaborate and influence” by bringing coaches, coach educators, organizations and sport scientists together to share research and new ideas.

“We are bringing together people who are from the university setting, governing bodies, state associations and interscholastic sport, as well as coaches associations,” said Tim Flannery, CMAA, NFHS Director of Coach Education. “The conference is really for providers of coaches education, and for those individuals who value training coaches.”

The conference offers 23 workshops and general sessions presented by university researchers, practitioners and athletic administrators. Presiding as the keynote speakers this year are Dr. Darren Treasure and Dr. Stephen Norris.

Treasure, former tenured associate professor at Arizona State University, worked with the NFHS in the design and development of the highly successful “Fundamentals of Coaching” course. He has had more than 60 scientific articles published, and has made keynote presentations at conferences in France, the United States, Norway, Canada, Finland and the United Kingdom. He is currently the performance director for the Oregon Project, working with famed coach Alberto Salazar and the United States distance runners.

Norris, vice president of sport at WinSport Canada based in Calgary, Alberta, was previously the director of sport physiology & strategic planning at the Canadian Sport Centre Calgary, where he was responsible for Canada’s Winter Olympics sports teams. He also was adjunct assistant professor of applied physiology within the Human Performance Laboratory at the University of Calgary. He was a consultant to several national sports teams, taught and supervised graduate students specializing in applied physiology and sport science, as well as having a heavy involvement in coach education.

Conference registration fees are $350 – $150 for students – before April 15, and $425 – $225 for students – after April 15. The fees cover five meals, including two breakfasts, two luncheons and the Opening Reception at the NCAA Hall of Champions, as well as a free tour of Lucas Oil Stadium with registration.

Registration for the conference, along with a listing of the various workshop topics and descriptions, are available on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org/Conferences. Click on “National Coaching Conference.”

This article was written by Shane Monaghan, an administrative assistant on the NFHS staff.
Change is Inevitable, Growth is Optional

By Todd Whitaker

Change is ever-present and it is totally unavoidable. Technology, communication and the pace of information is so rapid that people often feel that even if they do their best to keep up, eventually even the best will get run over.

This same frenetic pace is facing schools in this country. Whether the setting is a large multi-school system, a single campus or an athletics or performing arts department, change is all around. Challenges such as “No Child Left Behind,” sweeping state and local mandates, continually increasing accountability, teacher and principal evaluations, and a general attack on the profession have everyone, at times, desperately trying to tread water, much less actually moving toward the shoreline.

How can these challenges be navigated? Is it possible? Should the effort even be made? Well, there probably is not much of a choice. Why do some changes seem to work well and others are fought kicking and screaming? What is different about the way things are introduced? It is similar to the first day of school where that first experience needs to be a positive one.

The New Restaurant

The most popular start-up business in the United States is an eatery. There are all types of restaurants – fancy ones, mom-and-pop styles, franchises and everything in between. Some of them explode with success and branch out exponentially. Others are quietly shuttered just a few months down the road. By the way, the business most likely to fail is also an eatery. What happens?

Well, of course, there are many reasons that affect the success of a restaurant. First of all, many people with little knowledge about running restaurants start them. It is a little like education. Since everyone went to school, everyone believes they are an expert at running one!

This same thing applies to the food service industry. People have all eaten at a variety of places and are sure they can do better. In some cases, they are correct, but most of the time they miss the mark. There are a myriad of reasons some make it – prices, competition, menu choices, appearance, location, service, etc. There are many factors; however, one thing that can go a long way to de-
up. The hours are posted, and finally, there is the much-anticipated grand opening. Well, for sure, people are going to check it out because their stomachs have been growling just thinking about it!

Unfortunately, the first visit is sometimes disappointing. Perhaps there was a big crowd, the kitchen crew was behind schedule, the lines were long and the cook had not worked out all the kinks for some of the recipes. Although the owner will try to turn it around, many people will not return. And what’s even worse, many of those first visitors will share experiences with others, who may not even give it that first visit.

So, does this mean that the new dining spot has no chance? Of course it doesn’t. Does it mean that it wasted its best chance? No question. Maybe people will give it another try – and even a third or fourth if needed. Maybe some individuals didn’t fight the crowd on opening day and will ignore any negative reviews. They will try it on their own and loyal customers will be created. Maybe. But there is a good chance that this will not be the result. What happened? The first exposure was not great. It takes eight more times to unlearn something than it does to learn it in the first place. In other words, an individual would have to return to that restaurant and have several successful visits in order to overcome his or her perception of the first stop. That is a whole lot of baggage to overcome.

What do many successful restaurants do? They have private openings just for invited guests. They practice numerous times with hand-selected full houses and refine the procedures before opening to the public. They want to make sure that first exposure is great so that a less-than-stellar visit will not offset the goodwill that was established on the initial visit. What does this have to do with your school or organization? There is a direct parallel.

The First Exposure

School leaders need to make sure that new ideas are well-designed before they are implemented. Too often, a blanket approach is used in an attempt to improve individual situations. It is impossible to mandate effectiveness, but it sure does not seem to keep people from continually trying. Because some places are dysfunctional, everyone is required to have a myriad of additional rules and procedures. This is true even in individual sites.

If some teachers are disorganized, all staff members should not be required to submit lesson plans in a dictated format in triplicate. When two students continually wear hats in school, there is no need for a schoolwide announcement. The necessary changes should only be implemented at the level that is appropriate. Why should the effective majority of people and schools be burdened at the cost of attempting to impact the dysfunctional few?

Like a new restaurant, rather than guess what potential customers want, they should be asked. As opposed to rolling out a multitude of untested mandates, schools first should make sure the changes are effective and appropriate. There are continual chants that schools should be more like businesses. The question that should be answered first is, “What business?” Since emulating a business model is easy and appropriate, why don’t all of the unsuccessful businesses do it also? If McDonald’s is the role model for schools, why isn’t it also the role model for all of the other fast-food restaurants that are not nearly as successful? Why aren’t all technology companies as innovative as Apple?

It is so easy to place expectations on others, but what about expectations for ourselves? The biggest reason teachers are under such a microscope is that what schools do is important. The toughest challenge is that what schools do matters every day.

Todd Whitaker is a presenter and author of books such as Shifting The Monkey, Leading School Change and What Great Teachers Do Differently. Whitaker is a professor of Educational Leadership at Indiana State University. His Web site is www.toddwhitaker.com and you can follow him on Twitter @toddwhitaker.
The National High School Sports-related Injury Surveillance System, also known as High School RIO™ (Reporting Information Online), is the official surveillance system of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Established in 2005-06 and maintained continuously since then by Dr. Dawn Comstock, an injury epidemiologist from Ohio State University and Nationwide Children’s Hospital, this surveillance system captures sports injury data from a large, national sample of U.S. high school athletes.

The NCAA has maintained an injury surveillance system that has successfully provided information used to improve collegiate athletes’ health and safety for three decades. Unfortunately, prior to 2005-06 there was no equivalent system available to provide information about high school athletes. No one was collecting information on high school athletes that could be used to keep these younger athletes as safe and healthy as possible while they enjoyed participating in sports. This was a problem because high school athletes are not merely miniature versions of their collegiate counterparts.

During high school, many young athletes are still growing and maturing. For example, joint and brain development often continues during the high school years. The High School RIO™ was started in 2004 to emulate the NCAA surveillance system at the high school level so those working to keep high school athletes safe and healthy would have the most age-appropriate information available to help drive their efforts.

Although High School RIO™ originally covered only nine sports, the system has been expanded twice and now covers 10 boys sports (baseball, basketball, football, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, swimming and diving, track and field, volleyball and wrestling); nine girls sports (basketball, field hockey, gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, track and field, and volleyball); and spirit (a co-ed sport).

To ensure that the most accurate information is collected, High School RIO™ relies upon trained sports medicine clinicians to provide information on injured athletes. Athletic trainers from high schools throughout the country use an Internet-based data collection tool to report information to High School RIO™ weekly throughout each academic year. Collected data includes athletic exposure information (which sports were in session at their school and how many athletes played and practiced each sport over the course of the week), as well as the number of athletes who were injured.

For each injury, the athletic trainer reports information on the injured athlete (age, height, weight, position played, etc.); information on the injury (diagnosis, body site injured, severity, etc.); and information on the injury event (sport-specific activity associated with injury, location on court/field/mat, time injury occurred during practice/competition, etc.). This detailed information is provided to the NFHS with reports on rates and patterns of high school sports injuries to describe differences between groups, to investigate injury risk factors and to evaluate injury prevention efforts.

In the past six years, High School RIO™ has captured information on 35,286 injuries sustained during 17,172,376 athletic exposures. High schools in all but four states have participated in this surveillance system to date.

Using this data to describe general patterns of injury can provide a general overview of injuries among high school athletes. For example, although practices account for 76 percent of all athletic exposures, 53 percent of the injuries to high school athletes occur during competitions. In fact, overall, student-athletes are three times more likely to sustain an injury in competition than practice.

The most common injuries sustained by these athletes are ankle sprains/strains (16 percent of all injuries) and concussions (13 percent). While six percent of these injuries are severe enough to require surgical repair and 14 percent of all injuries keep the athlete out of play for more than three weeks, 45 percent of all injured athletes are able to return to play within one week. Injury rates have decreased slightly over time in most sports.

Additionally, injury trends have shifted over time with ankle
strains/sprains falling from 21 percent of all injuries in 2005-06 to 16 percent of all injuries in 2010-11, while concussions rose from nine percent of all injuries to 20 percent of all injuries during that time.

The same pattern was seen when injury rates per 1,000 athletic exposures were evaluated – ankle strains/sprains fell from 5.24 injuries per 1,000 athletic exposures to 3.41 injuries per 1,000 athletic exposures while concussions rose from 2.27 injuries per 1,000 athletic exposures to 4.09 injuries per 1,000 athletic exposures.

High School RIO™ data also allows comparisons between different sports. Injury rates are highest in full-contact sports like football, boys ice hockey and boys lacrosse and lowest in sports like track and field, swimming and diving, and volleyball where little athlete-athlete contact occurs. In fact, the competition injury rate in football (12.2 competition injuries per 1,000 competition exposures) is more than twice as high as the sport with the second-highest rate of injury – boys ice hockey (5.6 competition injuries per 1,000 competition exposures).

In gender-comparable sports, girls have higher rates of competition injuries than boys. Rates of concussion are also higher among girls than boys in gender-comparable sports; however, it is unclear if this is because girls actually sustain more concussions or if girls are simply more likely to tell their athletic trainer, coach or parent when they are suffering from concussion symptoms.

While the most common mechanism of concussion is athlete-athlete contact, overall this varies by sport. For example, in boys baseball, being struck by a pitch while batting is the most common mechanism of concussion, while in girls softball concussions most commonly occur while athletes are fielding a batted or thrown ball. Understanding such differences between groups can help drive targeted injury prevention programs that are most likely to be effective.

On a positive note, concussion education efforts appear to be having the desired effect as demonstrated by High School RIO™ data showing that the proportion of student-athletes returning to play the same day they sustain a concussion has decreased dramatically and showing that a higher proportion of athletes are being held out of play until they are cleared by a medical professional.

Each year, summary reports of the information collected by High School RIO™ are provided to the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), as well as individual NFHS sport rules committees. Additionally, these committees frequently request additional information on potential risk minimization items they plan to discuss or emerging issues of concern.

When considering a potential rules change, committees often request High School RIO™ data. For example, in the past six years, the NFHS Football Rules Committee has requested data when considering possible rules changes to the onside kick. The NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee requested data when discussing revision of the weight classes, and the NFHS Softball Rules Committee requested data when it considered changing the pitching distance.

In addition to providing data to help drive such discussions, through continued injury surveillance over time, High School RIO™ data can then be used to evaluate the effectiveness of rules changes that are implemented and to ensure that no unexpected consequences occurred. Having access to such injury surveillance data provides facts that the NFHS SMAC and individual NFHS sports rules committees can use while they discuss ways to keep high school athletes as safe as possible.

Injury surveillance data, however, will always be only one tool these committees consider while balancing safety concerns with the culture of individual sports, the importance of ensuring a fair competitive playing field and encouraging more high school students to participate in sports as a means of including daily physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Dawn Comstock, Ph.D., is an injury epidemiologist from Ohio State University and Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, and is an ex-officio member of the NFHS SMAC. Dr. Comstock established High School RIO™ in 2004 to emulate the NCAA surveillance system at the high school level.
Customer Service Ideas from Disney for Your Athletic Department

BY DALE F. BLAIR, MS, ATC, CSCS

Disney has long been considered one of the frontrunners in positive “guest” (Disney’s term for customer) experiences. How can we “learn from the mouse” to better meet the needs of our athletic department stakeholders—staff, student-athletes, coaches, athletic trainers, parents and fans?

Training Your Staff

Disney calls its staff “cast members” to signify the important role each person plays and thinks the frontline people are vital. In your department, this might be the custodian. If this person is rude, lazy or ineffective, it reflects poorly on your entire program. The same is true with ticket sellers/takers, concession stand workers, game managers, coaches, athletic trainers, student aides, etc.

Disney provides intense training for all new employees, with emphasis on the frontline people. The orientation course is called “Traditions” and discusses the history and vision that originated with Walt himself. Shouldn’t you provide similar training to convey the legacy and the vision of your program? Make sure to include not only athletic department staff, but also volunteers and members of other departments who assist with athletics. Everyone needs to understand and buy into the vision so everyone can “walk the talk.”

First Impressions

Walt Disney wanted to stimulate the senses with the great smell of popcorn as a positive first impression in the Magic Kingdom, and you will find popcorn popping first thing in the morning until the end of the day to maintain this impression.

What is your athletic department’s first impression? A courteous greeting by an enthusiastic, friendly staff; a facility vibrant with photos, logos and energetic décor? Or, are people treated rudely or disrespectfully? Are your facilities dull and drab? Put your athletic department’s best foot forward to create a positive, meaningful and lasting impression.

Pay Fantastic Attention to Detail

One classic example of Disney’s penchant for details is the regular repainting of the horse-head hitching posts on Main Street at the first sign of paint wear. Another was in the production of the movie, “Who Framed Roger Rabbit?” There was a shadow from a swinging lamp bumped in the live action shot not present in the animated version. Animators paid attention to the detail and added the swinging shadow. Disney cast members still refer to any extra attention to detail as “Bumping the Lamp.”

In the preparation of fields/courts, the maintenance of the athletic training room or anything your department handles, strive to put forth a quality product or appearance. Not everyone will notice small details, but those who do will appreciate the extra effort.

Communications

“What time is the 3:00 parade?” might seem like a stupid question, but what is the guest really asking? What time will the parade be at this location? Where can I sit to have the best view? A smart-aleck response to this type question can lead to a communication breakdown.

Dennis Snow recounted an example of poor communications in his book, “Lessons From the Mouse.” A flight attendant made an announcement for passengers to turn off their “personal, portable electronic devices.” When one gentleman did not, she loudly said, “Sir, did you not hear my request to turn off all personal, portable devices?” Dennis leaned forward and quietly said, “She wants you to turn off your cell phone.” Embarrassed, he replied, “Why didn’t she just say that?” We all can improve the way we communicate. Think about the tone you use and make sure you can be clearly understood.

We have two ears and one mouth; we need to use them in that ratio. Listen to what people are telling you whether they are your staff, athletes, parents or fans. Snide or insensitive remarks can be hurtful and offending. To create and sustain program loyalty, we...
must look through the eyes of the person with whom we are communicating.

**Improving Outdated Processes**

In the past, Disney had more than 2,000 categories of paper tickets for its theme parks. Cast members spent more time dealing with tickets than serving guests. With new technology, this process has been streamlined, greatly reducing the time spent dealing with ticketing. Do you have processes and methods that can be updated? Improving communications with stakeholders through Web sites, e-mail, texting and social media can pay dividends. Virtual meetings through video conferencing, Skype or Moodle (an open-source Course Management System) for the posting of minutes and sharing of information is another area with endless possibilities for enhancing the efficiency and connectivity of your program. Use today’s technology to your advantage.

**Dream, Believe, Dare, Do**

Walt Disney explained his success like this: “I dream, I test my dreams against my beliefs, I dare to take risks and I execute my vision to make those dreams come true.” “Dream, Believe, Dare, and Do” was Walt's philosophy to get ideas from the planning stage to completion. He was able to transform dreams into reality when surrounded by like-minded individuals. A “vision conference” in the development of new ideas gives everyone a sense of commitment and buy-in to the project. This same teamwork concept carries through all four stages to the finished project.

When is the last time you made time for team brainstorming and feedback with your various groups of stakeholders? List the things you are doing well – and why – in your athletic department. Conversely, think about the things that can be improved and changed. Consider various ways all can become “agents of change” through these sessions.

**What Can We Do Better?**

Disney surveys guests to gain feedback about their experiences. For example, EPCOT Center started without any Disney characters, but their guests overwhelmingly responded, “Where’s Mickey and the gang?” Disney listened, and now the characters make regular appearances. Disney relies heavily upon cast member feedback in the decision-making process, as well.

Our stakeholders can tell us a lot. However, the most important thing is what we do with this information. If we obtain feedback, we need to make a commitment to be responsive to the information we gather.

**What Can We Learn from Disney?**

Walt Disney was a visionary who knew how to take care of people. He created Disneyland because he wanted a clean, safe place to take his kids where people were friendly and helpful. Some may say you can’t compare a secondary school athletic program to a Disney property. But isn’t our goal to offer a quality athletic program that embodies the Disney vision, where all parties have regular positive experiences and everyone enjoys working and playing?

**References**


Dale Blair is sports medicine instructor and head athletic trainer at Wenatchee (Washington) High School.
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These guys too!
A thletic directors have the responsibility of hiring coaches who have qualities and characteristics that most closely fit into the school’s athletic philosophy. Once a coach joins the staff, however, he or she begins a working relationship with this supervisor and there are many qualities that can be helpful to this effort.

Coaches really appreciate a leader who will listen to ideas, especially when a suggestion is important to their team. This concept of being receptive should include those decisions made about scheduling, staffing and equipment. Open, effective communication can be instrumental to the success of the overall program.

Not every idea offered by a coach will or should be accepted by an athletic administrator. But having the opportunity for input is a vital element to build trust and respect, and for the coach to feel like he or she is valued. Coaches who are allowed to openly voice their opinions will thrive in the professional relationship with their supervisor – even if both sides do not agree on all of the issues.

Since coaches are often totally immersed with their teams, they may have a narrow focus. An experienced athletic director, while understanding this phenomenon, has an obligation to maintain a much broader, inclusive perspective.

Taking a balanced, fair and consistent approach with all coaches and teams should be a major objective of an athletic administrator. Preferential treatment or even the perception of favoritism will do a great deal of harm and mistrust among coaches. No sport, team or coach should be considered more important than any other.

All coaches may experience a problem at some point. Having an athletic director who is willing and available to lend an ear can make the difference in the success and longevity of a coach. Everyone has a need to occasionally vent.

Of course, it is even better when an athletic director provides solutions and advice. Support can take different forms, but none is more appreciated than when an athletic director backs a coach versus challenging, misguided parents.

Knowing that the athletic director has the coach’s back often allows for situations to be handled in a smoother fashion. This support gives the coach more confidence, for example, with his communication and future contacts with parents.

In addition to support, coaches may also be looking for a mentor. Commonly, athletic directors are former coaches and probably have influenced the lives of countless student-athletes during their career. Advice, direction and guidance from an athletic director can help shape and enhance a coach’s philosophy and background. This effort will ultimately benefit the student-athletes.

Mentoring efforts by an athletic director could include:

- The ability to create a better balance with teaching, family and coaching responsibilities. This could help prevent burnout.
- The value of planning and organizing practice sessions.
- Tips to more effectively communicate with athletes and parents.
- Ideas to create better team rules, codes of conduct and efforts to maintain team discipline.

Even though an athletic director has a demanding position, finding time during the season to observe practice sessions or to talk after a game can make a huge difference. Knowing that their supervisor is interested in what is happening with their squad and that their team is a valued part of the overall athletic program can be an indispensable motivator to many coaches.

An additional benefit of an athletic director attending practice sessions and games is to get to know some of the student-athletes. With an unending amount of paperwork, e-mail and phone messages, it takes a conscious effort to spend time with athletes and coaches in their setting. This is not only important, but also appreciated.

It is very reassuring to have an individual who understands the pressure, frustrations and emotions that a coach may feel during a season. A few simple words offered from an athletic director such as “Great job” or “You can do it” can go a long way to help a coach through difficult times.
In various schools, athletic administrators may also be directly involved in team events and fundraisers. Coaches enjoy receiving this extra help, concern and contributions. These additional efforts demonstrate an athletic director’s commitment to the coaches, student-athletes and the overall athletic program.

Coaches also value an athletic director who is dependable. Someone who always follows through on what he or she says is something that is appreciated. Even having the athletic director take care of the smallest details could mean the world to a coach. These organizational items might include:

- Quick responses to questions or requests for help
- Notification of scheduling or transportation changes
- The status of equipment orders and their delivery

With teaching or work responsibilities in addition to conducting practice sessions and guiding young people at games, coaches do not have a great deal of free time. When athletic directors help set up the sidelines prior to games, provide reminders of upcoming responsibilities or make arrangements for professional development, it is greatly appreciated.

Through the assistance of a caring and dedicated athletic director, a coach can learn a great deal that will only assist in making the coach better. Coaches, like most people, want to feel appreciated along with looking to the athletic director for support when needed.

When athletic directors allow coaches to be involved in decision-making and help with organizational skills, it creates confidence in the coach. If athletic directors find a few minutes in their schedule when a coach knocks on their door, it may be the most important thing they do that day.

Mark Planamente is a social studies teacher, cross country and track coach at Kenwood High School in Essex, Maryland. He is also treasurer of the Maryland State Coaches Association.
Blanford-Green Makes History

Rhonda Blanford-Green spent her college years starring as a student-athlete at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Now, after 16 years in high school athletics in her home state of Colorado, she will return to the Cornhusker State to become executive director of the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA).

The NSAA Board of Directors voted 8-0 in favor of Blanford-Green to lead the NSAA, where she will become the first African-American woman to lead a state association.

After an outstanding prep career at Aurora (Colorado) Central High School, Blanford-Green earned track and field All-America honors 10 times while at the University of Nebraska. She qualified for the U.S. Olympic Trials in 1984 and 1988 and was named Colorado Sportswoman of the Year in 1985.

Upon finishing college, Blanford-Green worked for her home school district before accepting a position at the Colorado High School Activities Association. During her 16 years there, she worked with student leadership, cross country, boys soccer, spirit, skiing, track and field, and ice hockey.

Blanford-Green has also served on the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Track and Field, and Ice Hockey Rules Committees. She is currently the chair of the NFHS Citizenship and Equity Committee, as well as the NFHS Spirit Rules Committee. Blanford-Green is one of this country’s experts in Title IX, particularly as it relates to high school sports.

Blanford-Green succeeds Steve Shanahan, who served as NSAA interim director for the past two years.

OHSAA Addresses Competitive Balance Issues

Competitive balance is being discussed again by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA). The high number of state championships being won by non-public schools has been a cause for concern for some public school administrators, and the OHSAA has been addressing the issue for two years.

The OHSAA Competitive Balance Committee first met in January 2010 and has continued to study the issue since then. The topic first came to the OHSAA’s attention when a group of member schools came together to express their concern a few years ago. Despite only 17 percent of the OHSAA’s membership being non-public schools, there continues to be a much higher percentage of state titles being won by those institutions.

One possible solution includes revisiting a plan that would place schools into tournament divisions based on a sport-by-sport athletic count that would include a school boundary factor, a socio-economic factor and a tradition factor. The OHSAA discussed a similar referendum issue last spring, but it was defeated in a close vote.

Another suggestion was sent to the OHSAA Board of Directors by a member school superintendent, who asked that the OHSAA tournaments be separated between public and non-public schools.

The OHSAA has continued to work on competitive balance in all sports and has left open the possibility of a referendum issue placed on the May ballot to be voted on by the membership.

New Mexico High Schools Switch to Wooden Bats

High school baseball fans in New Mexico will be getting used to hearing the crack of the bat in 2012.
The state’s new regulations requiring wooden bats will place a much greater emphasis on “small-ball” techniques that include base-running and hitting for contact, as opposed to trying to knock the ball out of the park.

More than 70 percent of voters in the New Mexico Activities Association were in favor of requiring New Mexico high school baseball players to use strictly wooden or wood-composite bats. The North Dakota High School Activities Association and the New York City public schools are the only other organizations that exclusively use wooden bats.

Effective January 1, 2012, NFHS rules require all bats not made of a single piece of wood to meet the Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution performance standard.

Alex Swenson is an intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a junior at Franklin (Indiana) College majoring in broadcast journalism and public relations.

2012 National High School Hall of Fame Class Selected

Kevin Johnson and Fred Hoiberg – standout high school athletes in California and Iowa, respectively, and in the National Basketball Association – along with Bob Kanaby, longtime executive director of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), headline the 2012 class of the National High School Hall of Fame.

Joining Johnson and Hoiberg as athletes in the 2012 class are Pat Sullivan, two-time all-state quarterback from Birmingham, Alabama, who later won the Heisman Trophy at Auburn University, and Tracy Hill, the most prolific scorer in Colorado girls basketball history from Ridgway High School.

These five individuals, along with four high school coaches, two officials and one high school speech coach, will be inducted into the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame July 11 at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee. The 30th Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will be the closing event of the 93rd annual NFHS Summer Meeting.

High school coaches slated for induction this year include Ron Bradley, who won more than 1,000 basketball games at eight Georgia high schools during a 49-year career; Rod Harman, who just completed his 54th season as a head swimming coach in Oregon at the age of 84; Larry Luitjens, the winningest basketball coach in South Dakota history from Custer High School; and Catherine Neely, who has coached volleyball at East Ridge High School in Chattanooga, Tennessee, for 47 years and ranks third nationally with 1,371 victories.

Truman Owens, a multi-sport official for 50 years from Clinton, South Carolina, who is still active in football at the age of 80, and Robert “Bob” White, one of the top high school soccer officials in the nation from Caribou, Maine, are this year’s honorees in the Officials category.

Rounding out the 2012 class is Jan Heiteen, speech coach at Downers Grove (Illinois) South High School since 1980 who has led her teams to 14 Illinois High School Association state speech championships.

The National High School Hall of Fame was started in 1982 by the NFHS to honor high school athletes, coaches, contest officials, administrators, performing arts coaches/directors and others for their extraordinary achievements and accomplishments in high school sports and activity programs. This year’s class increases the number in the Hall of Fame to 398.

The 12 individuals were chosen after a two-level selection process involving a screening committee composed of active high school state association administrators, coaches and officials, and a final selection committee composed of coaches, former athletes, state association officials, media representatives and educational leaders. Nominations were made through NFHS member associations.
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Fuel Your School
The theme at Palmer Trinity School in Palmetto Bay, Florida, is “Sportsmanship is an Expectation.” In our gymnasium, we have had a small banner that reads as follows:

“Welcome to Palmer Trinity where Sportsmanship is an Expectation! Please let the players play, the coaches coach and the officials officiate.”

Recently, we have added two new identical banners – one on the end wall next to our student section and the other on the opposite wall next to where the visiting students sit. These banners read:

A Palmer Trinity Spectator WILL –
- Recognize and Acknowledge great plays from the opponents.
- Respect Decisions Made By Contest and School Officials.
- Refrain from taunting, booing, heckling and the use of Inappropriate language.
- Respect the Athletes, Coaches, Officials and Fans – BE A GOOD SPORT!

Attendance at this contest is not a license to verbally assault others or to be generally offensive.

These additions have been very well-received by our own community and our opponents. They also make it very easy for the site manager to simply point when a student or parent strays from our good sportsmanship expectations.

Pregame Captain’s Message

About a year ago, we instituted a new practice of having the captains from BOTH teams read from a script prior to the introductions of the players. Each captain had his or her own microphone and own card with the script on it. The home captain would start, and take turns saying their “lines.”

When the warm-up period ends, and the teams assemble at their benches, after welcoming everyone, our announcer says, “Please direct your attention to the scorer’s table where the captains of our two teams have a message they would like to share with you.”

Many parents and fans have thanked us for reading the message. We have continued to do this before every game and the sportsmanship feedback – for athlete and fan – has been very positive.

“Everything you see in our gym is either coached, or it is allowed. Which one is it for you?” At Palmer Trinity School, we hope that everything you see in our gym is a result of our efforts of Expecting Great Sportsmanship!

Good evening and welcome to this evening’s game between the Palmer Trinity School FALCONS and the (Visiting Team). One of the goals of high school athletics is the learning of lifetime values. Sportsmanship is one such value that makes these games so enjoyable and such a valuable learning experience. Remember, whether you are on the court or in the stands, BE A GOOD SPORT!

When we first started this, there were some chuckles and even an isolated “boo” from a fan which typically disappeared when their neighbor nudged them or said something. Now these are very much a part of our home game culture.

The complete text of this article is available online at www.nfhs.org/hstoday.
VOICES OF THE NATION

What roles have your parents played in your high school sports experience?

Ariah Graham
Wakefield High School
Raleigh, North Carolina

Both of my parents were outstanding athletes. My mom and dad both ran track in high school, college and professionally. They won many titles between the two. My mom was a hurdler, sprinter and jumper and my dad ran the 400m and 800m. My dad was a silver medalist in the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul. My mom is the head coach of my high school track team and my dad is a professional track coach. My parents have been my coaches my whole life and they taught me all I that I know. When I was a baby I watched the fastest men and women in the world train before my eyes. I even remember as a child, going up to Marion Jones one day in practice and telling her that one day I was going to beat her. My parents raised me to be strong and independent. They taught me that anything is possible if I work hard at it. They don’t pressure me about running; they just let me run. I couldn’t ask for better parents and I love them so much. I know that with their knowledge, love and support, I can achieve my wildest dreams.

Jalen Lindsey
Christ Presbyterian Academy
Nashville, Tennessee

My parents, Sandra and Walter Lindsey, have played a huge role in my success and in my high school sports experience. The encouragement and love they supply me each day helps me to become the best I can be. However, the way they really help me become successful is through the sacrifices they make for me to play sports and to go to CPA, and how they take restless nights or sleepless nights to travel with me to play basketball while working their jobs at the same time. So, they have played a huge role in my high school sports experience. I really appreciate what they have done for me and always will.

Kalisha Goree
Columbia City High School
Columbia City, Indiana

“My parents have played a great role in my high school sports experience. I really appreciate the countless hours of working out and practicing with them at home. My parents are always encouraging me to do my best whether I’m in a competition or practice. They have never missed any of my games or meets, so it’s always a good feeling knowing I continually have my parents to support and cheer for me no matter the situation. I also like the fact that my parents not only encourage me, but they also encourage my teammates.”

T.J. Poole
Grand Forks Central High School
Grand Forks, North Dakota

“My parents have played a huge role. They have always been supportive. They travel all over the state to watch my teammates and me wrestle. My mom even bakes me some special oatmeal for after weigh-ins. Nothing motivates me more during a match than hearing my family scream and cheer for me. After I won the state finals, my parents and I embraced in an emotional hug that I will never forget.”