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Basketball Factories Miss Mission of High School Game

BY ROBERT B. GARDNER, NFHS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AND RICK WULKOW, NFHS PRESIDENT

With January’s bitterly cold temperatures and blowing snow now enveloping parts of the nation, things are heating up plenty inside our nation’s high school gymnasiums.

For more than 100 years a tradition as American as apple pie, high school basketball has been an integral part of our nation’s secondary schools and their respective communities. At this juncture of the year, teams are beginning to build momentum to carry them to their respective state championships in March. Those are the shared dreams of every basketball-playing boy and girl in America. In essence, that’s really what it’s all about – the sanctity and purity of the high school game and striving to win the state title.

But, there’s another element rearing its ugly head across the country, and, in the process, making a mockery of this great game. Rather than traditional high school teams composed of athletes from the local community, an unfortunate variation on that theme seems to exist for the sole purpose of creating powerhouse teams.

Academics have taken a backseat to excellence on the basketball court at many of these institutions, as they are not bound by the rules and regulations observed by member schools. As a result, the star 7-foot center might be failing in the classroom, but shining on the court with no penalty for his academic deficiencies.

Further, it’s not unusual for these teams to be composed of players not only from around the nation, but from around the world as well. For example, dotting the roster of a particular team from Florida was just one native Floridian, along with players from California, Africa, New Zealand and Iceland. A successful team from Nevada boasted players from Arizona, California, Oregon, Canada, Croatia, Nigeria, Denmark and Australia.

Aside from having a roster that seems to have leapt from the pages of an international vacation guide, it’s not surprising to learn that not only do these players possess prodigious height, but also playing skills and acumen way beyond their years. History has shown that many of these players have difficulty qualifying academically for the next level of play and maintaining eligibility. Further, the propensity for these players to transfer to other schools seems to be higher. As such, it appears that part of the basketball factories’ charge is to hone the players’ skills just enough to take them to those subsequent levels of competition.

All of this invariably leads to a number of concerning and even disturbing questions.

For example, where does education figure into the equation? What happened to the time-honored notion of representing your hometown and high school by wearing your uniform and school colors with great pride? What happened to playing your longtime conference rival? What happened to competing for that elusive state title? And, what happened to the “high school experience”?

In the instances of these basketball factories, those “antiquated notions” seem to have gone by the wayside. They are irrelevant and don’t matter.

But, they do matter in the NFHS’ state association-member high schools.

During the 2010-11 school year, some 984,777 combined boys and girls laced up their basketball shoes at about 18,000 high schools and represented them with tremendous pride. They were equally focused in the classroom, where they pursued the required academic credits.

Those players also embraced the positive values of teamwork, leadership and working together toward common goals. Participation in high school basketball – the “right kind” of high school basketball – taught them those values.

As the custodians of high school basketball in an education-based setting, it is incumbent upon us to do everything we can to ensure that this great and pure game continues to flourish.

To that end, encourage your students and your children to participate and then support them as fans at their contests. Let’s all work together to keep alive this hallowed institution known as high school basketball.
Sky High

Players from Albuquerque (New Mexico) La Cueva High School and Albuquerque (New Mexico) Highland High School battle for the tip at the 2009 New Mexico Activities Association Class 5A Basketball Championship.

Photograph provided by Kim Jew Photography, New Mexico.
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.

COVER STORY

Public vs. Private Schools – Leveling the Playing Field: State associations are considering various methods to address percentage of championships won by non-public schools.

–Shane Monaghan
ACTIVITY PROGRAMS
Athletics, Fine Arts Hurt by Educational Reforms:
Available resources should be used for activity programs.
–Mark Lucas

PUBLICATIONS
New NFHS Online Publication Geared to High School Coaches: NFHS
Coaching Today has professional-development and sport-specific articles.

FACILITIES
Creative Funding Brings New Life to Aquatic Center:
Kirkland, Washington, school salvages pool through energy-savings approach.
–Tanya Lamb

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The Cost
CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

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

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.


Facts: The plaintiff, a rising-senior female high school basketball player, was denied an eligibility exception by the FHSAA to its maximum-age-limit rule. After her appeal was denied by the FHSAA, she and her parents filed a lawsuit claiming a deprivation of a property right (athletics participation) without adequate procedural and substantive due process of law as guaranteed by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Issue: Is participation in scholastic athletics a property right protected by the U.S. Constitution?

Ruling: Although the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments provide that procedural due process requires that a citizen be provided with adequate hearings before property is seized and substantive due process requires that a citizen be treated fairly and equitably when property is seized, a long line of court case precedents have established the legal standard that sports participation is a privilege, not a property right. Therefore, the court ruled against the student-athlete and dismissed the suit.

Standard of Practice: Although education is considered to be a property right and suspension/discipline related to curricular activities requires full due process, schools have greater latitude regarding suspension/discipline of students in extracurricular activities, including athletics, because of the consistent “privilege-not-a-right” analysis by courts.
Top High School Performances

Alabama teammates rank second in Record Book

A pair of senior teammates on the Montgomery (Alabama) Trinity Presbyterian School football team capped their illustrious careers by ranking second in their respective record categories in the National Federation of State High School Associations’ National High School Sports Record Book.

Wide receiver Mark White finished with 313 career receptions, which places him second on that list. The 5-foot-8, 155-pound White trails only Christopher Fuller of Nitro (West Virginia) High School, who had 329 receptions from 2002 to 2005.

Meanwhile, placekicker Andy Pappanastos made 48 career field goals, which ties him for second on that list. Jimmy Stevens of Oklahoma City (Oklahoma) Heritage Hall booted 50 field goals from 2003 to 2006 to claim the national record in that particular category.

Parker leads team to title; ranks second in national assists category

Alyssa Parker, a senior midfielder who helped lead her Glenelg (Maryland) High School field hockey team to its second consecutive Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association Class 2A state title with some slick on-field play, also earned some individual national accolades along the way.

Late in the first half of Glenelg’s state championship matchup with Poolesville (Maryland) High School on November 12, Parker dribbled through five defenders and scored an unassisted goal to give the 18-1 Gladiators a two-goal lead. Glenelg went on to secure both a 3-0 win and the state title, while Parker finished the game with a goal and an assist.

Parker concluded her career with 114 goals and 108 assists, the latter of which ranks second all time in the National Federation of State High School Associations’ National High School Sports Record Book. The national record of 117 assists was set by Chantae Miller of Buffalo (New York) Williamsville North High School from 2004 to 2007.

The Bolles School sets boys swimming relay record

The date 11-11-11 proved to be lucky for the Jacksonville (Florida) The Bolles School’s boys 400-yard freestyle relay team as it set the national record that day.

At the 2011 Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) Class 1A Swimming & Diving Finals held November 11 at the Central Florida YMCA Aquatic Center in Orlando, the foursome of George Frank, Preston Jenkins, Ryan Murphy and Teo D’Alessandro swam to a time of 3:00.67 to set the national standard. All are seniors except for Ryan, who is a junior.

According to the National Federation of State High School Associations’ National High School Sports Record Book, the record formerly was held by Hershey (Pennsylvania) High School, which swam to a time of 3:00.71 on March 19.

In the process, the Bolles boys team won the FHSAA Class 1A state title for the 24th consecutive year, which is the nation’s longest currently active boys swimming state title streak. In addition, The Bolles girls won their 21st state title in a row.
For the Record

**BOYS BASKETBALL**

Highest Free-throw Percentage, Career

- **93.6** Seth Colclasure (Decatur Bellmont, IN, 1999-2002)
- **93.3** Brad Redford (Frankenmuth, MI, 2005-08)
- **92.1** Stephen Drabyn Jr. (La Porte, IN, 1997-2000)
- **92.0** Kyle Cox (Mt. Summit Blue River Valley, IN, 1999-2002)
- **90.8** Matt Clark (Fort Collins Poudre, CO, 1997-2000)


Unusual Nicknames

**Cleveland Storm**

Before Cleveland High School in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, opened in 2009 and was still in the planning phases, Principal Scott Affentranger led a campaign for the new school’s mascot to be unique. After the community offered several names, the school board chose the Storm as the new mascot. The new name is used throughout the school from its homecoming (Stormcoming), student newspaper (Eye of the Storm) and spirit store (Storm Cellar), to nicknames of its stadium (Lightning Rod Stadium), fans (Storm Chasers) and main hallway (Thunder Alley).
It All Started Here

Larry Hagman

By Dr. Darrell G. Floyd

Best known for playing J.R. Ewing in the 1980s primetime television soap opera Dallas and Major Tony Nelson in the 1960s sitcom I Dream of Jeannie, Larry Hagman has enjoyed the pinnacle of success in acting, directing and producing.

Hagman was born in Fort Worth, Texas, on September 21, 1931 and spent much of his youth in Weatherford, Texas. His mother, Mary Martin, later became a successful Broadway actress and his lawyer father, Benjamin Jack Hagman, was a district attorney. After his parents divorced in 1936, he lived with his grandmother in both Texas and California. His famous mother became a contract player with Paramount Pictures in 1938 and occasionally brought him to her movie sets.

Hagman attended the strict Black-Foxe Military Institute (now closed), and when his mother moved to New York City to continue her Broadway career, he again lived with his grandmother in California. But when his grandmother died, he rejoined his mother in New York.

In 1946, Hagman moved back to Weatherford, where he worked as a ranch hand. While attending Weatherford High School, he was drawn to drama classes. It was there that he reputedly fell in love with the stage and, in particular, with the warm reception he got for his comedic roles. He developed a reputation as a talented performer, and between school terms he would take minor roles in local stage productions. He graduated from high school in 1949, and his mother suggested that he then try acting as a profession.

Hagman began his acting career in Dallas, working as a production assistant and acting in small roles in Margo Jones’ Theatre in 1950 during a break from his one year at Bard College. He appeared in The Taming of the Shrew in New York City, and in 1951, he appeared in the London production of South Pacific with his mother, and stayed in the show for nearly a year.

After leaving the Air Force in 1956, Hagman returned to New York City and appeared in two Off-Broadway plays. Despite his success, his career was overshadowed by his mother’s fame. Nevertheless, Hagman’s Broadway debut occurred in 1958 in Comes a Day, and he appeared in four other Broadway plays shortly thereafter.

During this time, Hagman also appeared in numerous television programs. He joined the cast of The Edge of Night soap opera in 1961 and in 1964, Hagman made his film debut in Ensign Pulver, which also featured a young unknown actor named Jack Nicholson. That same year, he also appeared in the film Fail-Safe opposite Henry Fonda.

In 1965, Hagman hit the jackpot by landing a leading role as Barbara Eden’s “master” in NBC’s I Dream of Jeannie. The series became a hit and launched Hagman into stardom. After the series ended in 1970, Hagman acted in a number of television films and theatrical movies with little success. Then came the second huge break in his acting career, the starring role in the primetime series Dallas. Seen in more than 90 countries, the show was a worldwide success and Hagman became one of the most recognizable network stars.

From his Weatherford, Texas roots, Hagman’s acting success yielded nominations for two Emmy Awards for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series. He was also nominated for four Golden Globe Awards and seven Soap Opera Digest Awards.

Dr. Darrell G. Floyd is superintendent of schools in Stephenville (Texas) ISD and is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee. He may be reached at darrell.floyd@sville.us.
**NFHS – Here for You**

Did You Know that the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) serves as a National Resource Center for information on high school athletic and performing arts activities?

Among the resources available from the NFHS is “The Case for High School Activities.” This collection of surveys and reports on the values of high school activity programs is available on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org. Select “About Us” on the home page and then select “The Case for High School Activities.”

If you are in need of information to share the values of these programs with your school board or leaders in the community, this PDF document will be an invaluable resource.

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**Around the Nation**

**Question:** Are private schools members of the NFHS-member association in your state?

![Map of the United States with states colored orange and a few marked with stars indicating yes or no.](image)

46 YES

5 NO

Through certain provisions, a private school could become a member.
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got milk?
A number of state high school governing bodies have been confronted with this issue and have employed various strategies – everything from surveys, to special committees, to multiplier rules and separate championships. But is there a need for concern about inequity between public and non-public schools, or is it much ado about nothing?

“This is an ongoing problem in [Rhode Island],” said Tom Mezbanotte, executive director of the Rhode Island Interscholastic League. “We have a number of both private and parochial schools that play many sports in many different classifications.”

Kerwin Urhahn, executive director of the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA), said, “For certain sports, the non-public schools do win at a higher percentage than the number of non-public schools we have participating in that sport, [with] soccer, volleyball, tennis and golf [having] the highest percentage of non-public schools in the final four.”

Since 2009, eight of the 51 state associations have adopted a multiplier formula, which calls for private schools to multiply the number of their enrolled students by a designated multiplier. This, in turn, reclassifies smaller, private schools to compete against larger, public schools in sporting events. Although seemingly unfair, the underlying issue in the “public vs. non-public” debate has been the dominance of non-public schools in sports championships.

“Generally speaking in Indiana, in our team sports, while private schools make up about 14 percent of our membership, they are winning approximately 40 percent of the team state championships,” said Bobby Cox, executive director of the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA).

The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) also is experiencing dominance by non-public schools in certain sports. Currently, state championships are being claimed by non-public schools at a rate of 70 percent in wrestling, 63 percent in volleyball, 50 percent in girls soccer and baseball, 47 percent in football and 45 percent in boys soccer.
“Sixteen percent of our state-sponsored schools are non-public,” said Dan Ross, OHSAA commissioner. “When 16 percent is winning 70 percent [of state titles] in any sport, there’s a problem.”

Another daunting issue in this debate is that of recruitment of student-athletes by non-public schools. “Our state association works very closely with schools on these issues,” Mezzanotte said. “All of our private and parochial schools conduct preseason meetings with all coaches, parents and athletes to explain and discuss our recruiting rules. In most cases, private and parochial coaches found in violation of our recruiting rules will be terminated. However, regardless of our efforts and the efforts of our private and parochial schools, the public has the perception that athletes are ‘recruited’ and are given scholarships.”

In Wisconsin, all schools have realigned under the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA). For a number of years, all private schools had their own governing association. “The vast majority of concerns we receive about private schools ‘winning too much’ come from the general public – not from our member schools,” said Dave Anderson, executive director of the WIAA. “In fact, our members have gone on record indicating they do not wish to see one segment of our membership treated differently than [all other members].”

In most cases, state associations facing this “problem” have rules in place to halt such activity before it ever begins. “Transferring primarily for athletic reasons and undue influence is covered by rule in the IHSAA bylaws,” Cox said. “On occasion, the association has been able to secure credible testimony pertaining to acts of undue influence being used to persuade a student to change schools.”

However, according to the MSHSAA, there are more than just recruiting problems on the horizon. “In Missouri, there are three separate concerns I hear from schools,” Urhahn said. “It depends upon where the school is located. The schools in St. Louis have concerns about recruiting and parents getting together when their children are young to pick a school to attend. The Kansas City schools are concerned about the students coming from out of state to compete against Missouri kids. Finally, the out-state schools are concerned about kids who live in their community attending a non-public school in a neighboring community and having to compete against a student they view as their kid.”

To combat these problems, many state associations have formed committees to help alleviate the pressure of the “public vs. non-public” debate. “The IHSSAA has, over several years, maintained a public/private competition committee,” Cox said. “Occasionally, a coaches association in our state or a member school principal will submit a proposal to amend our bylaws regarding this topic. My current sense is that future proposals will find their way to the IHSAA staff, a committee and ultimately to our Board of Directors for consideration at its annual meeting.”

The IHSSAA is not alone. “We have formed a public/non-public committee that meets in the fall and spring each year,” said Lance Taylor, executive director of the Arkansas Activities Association. “It is made up of 10 public school administrators and 10 non-public school administrators. They communicate together and come up with solutions to any problems. The committee has worked very well for our state and has developed good solutions to the problems we have been facing.”

In January of 2010, in response to concerns about non-public schools dominating at the state-tournament level, the OHSAA created the Competitive Balance Committee. “We have a committee, made up of both non-public and public schools from across the state, that has worked very hard and continues to work very hard in trying to weigh the options; hear the feedback from coaches, schools and the community; and create systems that can [make the issue] better,” Ross said.

Last May, the committee produced a proposal to change how schools are assigned to divisions, but the proposal was voted down by a margin of 332-303. “We had a referendum voted on for the classifications between non-public and public schools, [but] it did not pass,” Ross said. “What the referendum was meant to do is put different weight on various factors of classifications – socioeconomics, boundaries and tradition – to equalize divisions.

Recently, there have been discussions by some OHSAA member schools to file a petition to have separate tournaments for public and non-public schools. However, a petition would need to be signed by 75 principals, including a minimum of five principals within each of the six OHSAA athletic districts, and would need to be voted upon before being approved. In both 1978 and 1993, a vote to separate public and non-public schools failed overwhelmingly.

Texas and Georgia have recently made changes to their stances on the “public vs. non-public” issue. The Texas Senate voted to allow private schools to join the University Interscholastic League in all sports except for football and basketball, and the Georgia High School Association expanded from five divisions to six beginning with the 2012-13 school year. The change came in light of Georgia’s Class A championships being dominated by non-public schools, which have won 26 of the 28 state championships (outside of football, wrestling and boys track) since the start of the 2008 school year. “The mere fact that private schools may admit certain students and deny other students into their institutions creates an advantage for the private school that the public school does not enjoy,” Cox
said. “In Indiana, approximately 70 percent of private school students participate in extracurricular activities while approximately 30 percent of public school students choose to participate. That imbalance in and of itself creates a disparity.”

This year, a record seven of the 10 schools that played in the Indiana State Finals over Thanksgiving weekend were non-public schools. While some state associations are just beginning to become proactive in the debate on fairness, others have been “fighting the fight” for many years.

“[Twelve years ago] the MSHSAA-member schools voted in a multiplier to be applied to non-public schools to try to level the playing field,” Urhahn said. “Five years ago, another petition was submitted to establish separate championships, but that failed. Because of that petition, the MSHSAA Board of Directors established an ad hoc committee to look at the issues. From that committee came recommendations to address the public/non-public issue. One item that is still in place is the formation of a standing committee to address public/non-public issues. The committee feels the need for additional and open communication is a necessity.”

Along with the MSHSAA, the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) implemented a multiplier about 13 years ago, while also deciding to divide its championships into two divisions. The divisions are split on “need-based financial aid.”

“If you ask some of the public school people, they are still not satisfied by the split,” TSSAA Executive Director Bernard Childress said. “Since the multiplier has come into effect, many smaller schools have been placed in a higher classification. There are complaints from private schools that the multiplier is too high, and that they are not able to compete with the enrollment. However, the Board is planning to take a look at the multiplier, and whether or not it is too high. Some schools are in two classes higher than they would be, and the Board wants it to be less than one class. Other than that, the Board is satisfied with the way we do [things] now.”

Cox believes that change is imminent.

“I believe in the next 5-10 years, we may see some sort of ‘competition clause’ that would place premiums on winning certain levels of IHSAA tournaments and that factor being applied to the classification of the school in a particular team sport,” Cox said.

Ross said the OHSAA has kept public and non-public schools together, “as most schools believe that staying together will keep [the OHSAA] strong,” but concurs with Cox that there will be changes.

“There probably needs to be some modification in how students come into private schools and public schools,” he said. “Do I believe that there will be some modifications? Yes, this is a journey that we will be on and be on it for awhile. We just want to make it fair for everybody.”

So what does the future hold for the “public vs. non-public” debate? There may be as many problems as solutions.

“There is no simple solution or crystal ball available to predict the future of this issue,” Mezzanotte said. “The economy has an effect on not only private and parochial schools, but on our public schools and their ability to provide an adequate athletic program. Can our private and parochial schools maintain the quality of education that is being sought by our public schools, and vice versa?”

Urhahn agrees.

“It is my belief that the difference between public and non-public schools many times is not simply how the school is identified, but the parental involvement and socioeconomic support of the students attending each institution,” Urhahn said. “If we look at all schools – public and non-public – that have success in all sports, it is my belief the opportunities presented to the students because of location (metropolitan area) and financial resources available have a significant impact on athletic success. There is nothing that schools can do to change those opportunities for all students in the state.

“That being said, I do not believe that if you do not have opportunity or resources, a school cannot be successful. We are educational-based athletics, and hard work, discipline, commitment to team and skill can overcome any perceived advantage of socioeconomic resource. Also, we must get beyond the fact that just because you do not win a championship, does not mean the year was a failure. We must remember that sports teach life lessons, and there is always an opportunity for us to learn for those lessons.”

“As long as the majority feel like the championships are being won by a small amount of schools, it will be an issue that will continue to be discussed,” Childress said. “Every state has the problem. I’ve been with the TSSAA for 18 years, and [the debate] hasn’t gone away. We always discuss the issue, and it continues to be discussed. I don’t think that anyone has come up with a national answer for this. You just have to do what is best, and what works for your state. The question is, ‘how do we level the playing field?’ Until we come to that conclusion, [the debate] will always be there.”

“It will be an issue that is always present,” Urhahn said. “There will never be a time that people will not be passionate about their local high school team, and their desire to win a high school championship.”

Shane Monaghan is an intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications and Events Departments. Monaghan is a graduate of Ball State (Indiana) University, where he specialized in sports administration.
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Fine arts teachers, especially at the secondary level, are in the unique situation of recruiting students for their classes. If the class is performance-based, the success and maturity level of the ensemble depends on maintaining the same students in a program for three or four consecutive years. Maintaining that continuity is compounded by increased graduation requirements, advanced placement and college-credit courses offered at the high school level.

How can arts teachers work with schools to improve the scheduling process for the students involved in fine arts programs? The following ideas have proven successful in solving scheduling problems for students.

**Proactive Communication with Administrators, Guidance Counselors**

One of the most effective tools for avoiding scheduling conflicts for students participating in the fine arts is proactive communication with school administrators and guidance counselors. It is necessary to know who determines the class schedule and the timeline in which it is created.

Fine arts teachers should check with the administrator/guidance counselor to see if changes in the current master schedule are anticipated. If changes are expected, review the draft of the master schedule to see if conflicts can be avoided before the final decision is made. This is especially important in smaller schools, where scheduling is least flexible due to fewer teachers. It is also important to understand graduation requirements and know the entrance requirements for colleges and universities.

Teachers also should avoid the creation of an adversarial relationship with the administrators and counselors. A collegial relationship creates better outcomes for everyone involved.

Teachers need to be able to speak intelligently about the impact that schedule changes will have on their program. What percentage of current students will be affected by a proposed change? Can the same result be achieved another way? What is best for the students? If facts are known ahead of time, a more effective case can be made.

Fine arts teachers assisting the guidance counselor/administrator in the creation of class schedules can prove very effective. In one school, the music department volunteered to create the fine arts schedule for the students, given the parameters of the class requirements and staffing concerns of other subject areas. It is a very illuminating process to attempt to create a schedule that satisfies everyone’s need. To be successful with administrators, it is much easier to approach them with a solution to a problem.

**Proactive Communication with Your Students**

Students need to know that the teacher is available for scheduling assistance. Students often feel the need to fulfill class requirements as quickly as possible. The reality is that they oftentimes have two to three years to meet requirements. Creating sample schedules for students shows them that it is possible to stay in fine arts classes and enroll in the required classes for graduation. Make sure to know the high school course prerequisites. Knowledge is power.

If the schedule is already set, be flexible with your students. If students taking classes at local colleges causes them to be late for class once or twice a week, it is still better to have the student in
class 90 percent of the time than not at all. This would have to be cleared with school administration and school attendance personnel.

Understand that winning is not possible all the time. If a student has to drop an arts class for a semester due to a class conflict, keep the lines of communication open with that student. Continued personal contact with the student will let them know that they are not just an “interchangeable” part in the machine of the fine arts program. The student who knows the teacher cares is more likely to return to the class the next semester.

Cultivate Positive Staff Relationships

Cultivate effective working relationships with fellow staff members. It is easy for fine arts teachers to become so involved with their own programs that communication with fellow staff members is lost. If an understanding is shown of their curriculum and class sequence, they will often assist arts students with scheduling conflicts. Being seen as a partner rather than a competitor in furthering the education of the students oftentimes leads to a compromise in settling scheduling conflicts.

Remember to “Preach to the Choir”

Oftentimes, an incorrect assumption is made that the students in fine arts programs understand the educational benefits and concepts that fine arts teach. The more informed the students are about what is being taught, the more likely they will want to stay in the class. This information can easily be imbedded in instructional practice and increases the educational validity of what is done every day.

Remember to “Preach to Those Not in the Choir”

The more school administrators and guidance counselors understand the educational content of fine arts programs, the better the possibility for students to enroll in fine arts classes. A 10-minute presentation at a monthly school board meeting can pay big dividends in the future. Educational information about what is being taught posted on the school or fine arts department Web site is also very helpful.

Concert programs are also a great way to promote programs and inform the public about the educational components of the subject area. One fine arts teacher said you should schedule “informances” – not “performances.” It is important that parents know the skills being taught every day, and how the fine arts, as a sequential and curricular program, strengthen the overall educational components of the total school curriculum.

Leon Kuehner is director of bands at Hampton-Dumont High School in Iowa. He has been president of the Iowa Bandmasters Association and state chair of the American School Band Directors Association and the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Northern Iowa.
Infrastructure, Immigration
Final Choices for 2012-13 National Debate Topic

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) recently tabulated debate ballots from 31 states, the National Catholic Forensic League, National Debate Coaches Association and the National Forensic League. The returned ballots narrowed the five proposed topics to two for placement on the final ballot to select the 2012-13 national high school debate topic. The five topic areas were ranked 1-5 with the two topic areas receiving the lowest totals – Infrastructure and Immigration—placed on the final ballot. On January 10, 2012, the NFHS will announce the preferred topic area and resolution.

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

Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Mexico
New York
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
South Dakota
Texas
Virginia
Washington
Wisconsin
Wyoming

86 Infrastructure 86 Immigration
103 Higher Education 115 Entitlement Reform
117 Civil Rights

The following chart summarizes the balloting on the topic areas and their respective resolutions.
It has been said of many different athletes in all sports that they “carried their team” with a great performance. It is a phrase used to highlight the showing of determination, toughness and winning instinct by an individual leading his or her team to victory. However, what is said about an athlete who takes that saying literally, and does so for the opponent?

Josh Ripley, a junior on the cross country team at Andover (Minnesota) High School, insists he did “nothing special.” While running in the Applejack Invite in August, Ripley heard a scream during the first mile of a two-mile race. The scream came from Lakeville (Minnesota) South High School freshman runner Mark Paulauskas, who was badly injured.

“I just knew I needed to help him,” Ripley said. “I think a lot of other runners would have too, had they realized the situation. But they were really focused on their race. I just couldn’t leave him there.”

Paulauskas had been accidently “spiked” in the Achilles’ heel by another runner’s shoe during the race.

“After I got cut, I just kind of fell,” Paulauskas said. “It was around a 90-degree corner, and I was just trying to get out of the way of all the other runners. I huddled against a fence, yelling, ‘Can I get a transport over here?’”

That is when Ripley made a snap decision.

“I am waiting for all my kids to go running by, and there is no Josh, no Josh,” Andover cross country coach Scott Clark said. “I was wondering, ‘What was going on? Why was he so far back?’

Ripley, standing 6-foot-5 and weighing 185 pounds, had picked up the 5-foot-5, 100-pound Paulauskas and began running with him in his arms.

“The wasn’t an act of heroism. It was an act of kindness that I knew I needed to accomplish.”

Then I see Josh – he’s got the kid in his arms, like you would carry a youngster.”

Ripley, standing 6-foot-5 and weighing 185 pounds, had picked up the 5-foot-5, 100-pound Paulauskas and began running with him in his arms.

“He just picked me up and ran with me,” Paulauskas said. “I think it’s amazing. He stopped his race just to help me. He said, ‘It’s going to be OK. I’m going to get you to your coaches.’”
Ripley carried Paulauskas a quarter mile, where he handed him off to one of the coaches from Lakeville and continued to run the race.

"I didn’t feel fatigued or tired,” Ripley said. “But I definitely felt like I was running on adrenaline.”

Ripley resumed the race in last place after dropping off Paulauskas, but he managed to pass 50 other runners to finish 211th out of 261 runners on the day. Meanwhile, Paulauskas was rushed to the hospital. The injury he had sustained while running required 20 stitches, and a walking boot to keep the wounded area stable and reduce the possibility of it re-opening.

Although Ripley did not win the race, he was greeted at the finish line as if he had. Paulauskas’ coach and teammates met Ripley, and thanked him for what he had done.

“I really feel I just did the right thing,” Ripley said. “Any of my teammates would have done the same thing.”

In September, Ripley was honored by the Anoka-Hennepin School Board for his incredible act of sportsmanship. Ripley shared his story with the school board, every detail down to the quick prayer that he said with Paulauskas before returning to the race. He was awarded a medal by the school board for his actions. Board Chair Tom Heidemann also shared that the school board was receiving e-mails from across the country congratulating him for what he had done.

“It’s great to see kids recognized for going over the top and doing something you wouldn’t expect,” Clark said. “He’s a very good kid, always courteous, very compassionate. He is one of those kids who will hear exactly what you are saying, and act on it.”

Clark was also recognized by the school board for the lessons he’s taught athletes like Ripley.

In the aftermath of the showing of sportsmanship, the victim of the “spiking,” Paulauskas, is “incredibly grateful for what [Ripley] did,” he said.

To this day, Ripley will say that what is said about an athlete’s sportsmanship – at least in his case – should not be “hero.”

“It wasn’t an act of heroism. It was an act of kindness that I knew I needed to accomplish.”

Shane Monaghan is an intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications and Events Departments. Monaghan is a graduate of Ball State (Indiana) University, where he specialized in sports administration.
Athletics, Fine Arts Hurt by Educational Reforms

BY MARK LUCAS

Indiana, like many states, is dealing with educational reforms, including loss of funding during the past six years. Unfortunately, most of the legislative changes that have been adopted are not driven by studies or data that would lead people to believe the changes would have a positive impact on student achievement. However, the reformers have mandated that student achievement be increased or schools and teachers will be labeled as failures. More than $600 million in education funding has been cut in the past two years.

In addition, as part of the educational reform, legislators have drained more public school dollars by increasing the number of charter schools, and approved vouchers under the guise of a "scholarship program."

Athletics and Fine Arts

The cuts in education funding have caused many schools to eliminate or reduce the number of athletic teams and opportunities for their students at all grade levels. While athletic participation is certainly not a right, it is an important part of our educational system. Studies have shown for many years the benefits of high school athletic participation.

A study was performed by H.W. Marsh and S. Kleitman, which took place over six years and had more than 12,000 participants. The study concluded that school athletic participation benefited 20 of the 21 schooling outcomes that were studied, including academic grades, homework, educational aspirations, self-esteem, number of university applications and the highest educational level attained. The study’s final conclusion was that even when schools were facing financial problems and budget cuts, they strongly recommended that athletic programs be retained. What effect do the current budget cuts have on our students who now have limited opportunities?

In data presented by the National Education Longitudinal Study, it was determined that participants in any extracurricular activity in high school had significantly fewer unexcused absences or skipped classes; three times as many participants had a grade-point average higher than 3.0; 50 percent more achieved the highest quartile on math and reading assessments; and 20 percent more were expected to earn a bachelor’s degree or higher. There is no question about the value of extracurricular activities for our students. Any lessening of the opportunity will only work against the goal of increasing student achievement.

A number of our school corporations have been forced to eliminate or reduce the fine arts programs because of budget cuts at the state level. These are extremely valuable programs that should never be cut because they are part of the school’s curriculum.

The Arts Education Partnership published research that compared eighth-graders who were highly involved in the arts with those who had little or no involvement, and found consistently better outcomes for the highly involved students – better grades, less likelihood of dropping out by grade 10 and more positive attitudes about school. The study also showed that the benefits of high levels of arts participation can make more of a difference for economically disadvantaged students as well.

Again, what harm are we doing to our students when we do not provide fine arts education as a part of the core academic subjects offered at all levels? Even our Congress and former President George W. Bush saw the importance of Arts education in the “No Child Left Behind Act.”

The term “core academic subjects” means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography according to the “No Child Left Behind Act.” Should our leaders be given an “F” for not following this Federal Act to ensure fine arts education for all students? Should funding always be available?

After studying U.S. Department of Education data of more than 25,000 secondary school students, researchers found that students who report consistent high levels of involvement in instrumental music over the middle and high school years show significantly higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12. This observation holds true regardless of a student’s socioeconomic status, in differences in those who are involved with instrumental music ver-
sus those who are not is more significant over time.²

A research team exploring the link between music intelligence reported that music training is far superior to computer instruction in dramatically enhancing children’s abstract reasoning skills – the skills necessary for learning math and science.⁴

There continues to be a direct correlation between music and art education that aids not only student achievement but the actual skills that students learn and need for future education.

With the wealth of supporting data, why aren’t our political leaders reforming the system so that under no circumstance would art and music education be cut? In fact, these programs should be a part of the core curriculum for all students at all grades, which would mean providing the funding to maintain the programs at all times, and not forcing school corporations to cut art and music education because the state doesn’t provide the funding for them.

For some reason, legislators are making an effort to halt as much school construction as possible. If the school construction was being funded through the state budget, there would be a need to control these dollars. However, school construction has been funded by property taxes in the individual school districts; therefore, the state budget is not affected whatsoever by school construction.

Conclusion

Educational reform continues to harm our students due to lost opportunities. If we continue to cut programs, summer school and extracurriculars, do we not fail to maximize our students’ performance?

What message are we sending to our students that they have to pay to participate in an extracurricular activity? How many of our students who do not have the ability to pay are missing out on those opportunities, and at what cost in terms of student achievement? We know through multiple studies that the participation in extracurricular activities, as well as fine arts education, improves the overall performance of our students. Educational reform ignores this data.

What can be done to reverse these trends? Parents, educators, support personnel, school board members and anyone concerned must question their legislators, and determine their position on the educational reforms that have been put into place.

As an example, there are more than 60,000 teachers in the state of Indiana and thousands more in support personnel. This is a tremendous voting block that, if unified, could make a significant difference. Our resources must be used for increasing educational and extracurricular activities for our students, and not allow the continued drain of resources from public schools through vouchers, ineffective charter schools and budget cuts. This same game plan could be employed in every state in the country.

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Mark Lucas is a member of the school board for the Merrillville (Indiana) Community School Corporation.

BY LEE GREEN, J.D.

• Liability for sports injuries • Concussion management protocols • Hazing • Sexual harassment • Failure to report • Freedom of speech and student postings on social media Web sites • Freedom of religion • Freedom of the press • Title IX • Retaliation • Employment law

The Legal Issues

Throughout 2011, lawsuits were filed, court cases were decided and legislation was enacted dealing with the legal issues that impact school sports. And from each new legal pronouncement emerged valuable lessons to be learned and standards of practice to be implemented by school administrators and athletics personnel striving to fulfill their legal duties to student-athletes.

Liability for Sports Injuries

In March, in Karalyos v. Lake Forest Community High School District, a federal district court ruled that the Illinois Tort Immunity Act did not shield the school district and its athletics personnel from liability for neck and spinal cord injuries suffered by a 13-year-old participating in a swimming program at Lake Forest High School. The court concluded that the plaintiff's injuries resulted from a lack of supervision rising to the level of willful and wanton conduct and that instructions given by a coach for the girl to dive into a shallow part of the pool demonstrated “an utter indifference to or conscious disregard for the safety of others.” The decision illustrates the ongoing trend towards erosion of statutory immunity as a defense for school personnel in sports injury cases.

In September, a lawsuit was filed in state court in Idaho against a school and its cross country coaches for injuries sustained by a student-athlete during practice. The suit, Richardson v. Lake Pend Orielle School District, claims that the runner had previously sustained a minor calf injury and was provided by his coaches with a bike and helmet so that he could ride alongside the team during a training run. The bike's brakes were faulty and while on a downhill part of the course laid out for the training exercise, the brakes failed and the student-athlete was injured when he collided at full speed with a car in an intersection and sustained a traumatic brain injury. The suit alleges a violation of the duties to provide safe equipment and a safe environment and illustrates the need for regular inspections of equipment and careful consideration of the safety aspects of any sports environment, including the selection of routes for off-campus training runs.

Concussions

In October, a lawsuit was filed against North Medford (Oregon) High School for a traumatic brain injury suffered by a high school football player when he was allegedly sent back into a crosstown rivalry game after sustaining two blows to the head on two separate first-half plays and then informing his coaches that he thought he had a concussion. After allegedly being told by his coaches to “just try and stick it out,” he was sent back into the game where he suffered a third blow to the head and collapsed, was transported to a hospital, and placed into a medically induced coma. The suit, Pinder v. Medford School District 549C, claims that the injured player's premature return to action before being evaluated and cleared by an appropriate medical professional resulted in permanent brain damage.

In April, a similar suit was filed by a football player at Natrona Heights (Pennsylvania) Highlands High School who, despite allegedly suffering two concussions in two previous games, continued to be played by his coaches and then sustained a third traumatic brain...
injury resulting in permanent loss of cognitive function. The suit, *Alt v. Highlands School District*, names the school’s football coach and athletic trainer as co-defendants and asserts that they failed to provide concussion education for student-athletes and that they repeatedly returned the injured player to action without clearance by qualified medical personnel.

In January, legislation was re-introduced in the U.S. Congress that, if enacted, would require school districts to adopt concussion management protocols and institute concussion education programs for student-athletes, parents and school athletics personnel. The bill, H.R. 469, the *Protecting Student-Athletes from Concussions Act of 2011*, is presently being considered by the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education and its progress through the Congress may be tracked at www.thomas.gov.

As of the end of November, 35 states and the District of Columbia had enacted concussion laws and legislation was pending in 11 other states. The three commonalities among all of the statutes enacted to date are that 1) student-athletes suspected of having sustained a concussion during a sports contest must immediately be removed from play; 2) they cannot be returned to action that same day; and 3) they can be returned to action only after being cleared by a licensed medical professional.

Most of the statutes also mandate the implementation of concussion education programs for coaches, student-athletes and parents. The significance of the enactment of so many state concussion laws containing similar requirements is that, when examined together, they reflect the establishment of a new nationwide legal standard for reasonable care in the treatment of sports concussions.

Even in those states where legislation has not yet been introduced or finalized, the modern standard of practice is that school districts should develop concussion policies mandating education programs and requiring immediate removal from play and appropriate medical clearance before return to action. For a complete listing of the current status of concussion legislation in all 50 states and links to the full-text of your state’s concussion law, visit www.nflhealthandsafety.com.

For information about *Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know*, the free online course offered by the NFHS and designed as a tool to educate coaches, trainers, officials, student-athletes, and parents regarding traumatic brain injuries, visit www.nfhslearn.com.

**Hazing**

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

In March, a U.S. District Court in Tennessee issued its decision in *Mathis v. Wayne County Board of Education*, a case in which two basketball players were the victims of ongoing hazing of a sexual nature by older team members. The court concluded that the harassment generally occurred in the team’s unsupervised locker room after practice and consisted of three primary hazing rituals: 1) sexual battery — sodomy with pencils and markers; 2) “lights out” — an activity where unclothed older players would turn off the locker room lights, surround naked underclassmen, begin “humping and gyrating on them,” and engage in inappropriate physical contact with them; and 3) “blindfolded situps” — a hazing activity allegedly suggested to the upperclassmen by their coach in which underclassmen were blindfolded and forced to perform situps into the naked rear ends of other players squatting over them.

Despite complaints by the underclassmen and their parents to school officials, a limited investigation was conducted and minimal punishment was imposed on the perpetrators. The federal court refused to grant summary judgment to the district and its personnel, ruling that schools, administrators, and coaches may be held liable for hazing and peer sexual harassment when a school official in a position to take remedial action has knowledge that harassment is occurring and exhibits deliberate indifference to remedying the situation. The case will go forward and a trial will be held to determine whether the two criteria of “knowledge” and “deliberate indifference” were present in the situation.

In March, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued a clarification of its position regarding student-against-student hazing, bullying and harassment as previously set forth in an October 2010 “Dear Colleague Letter” (DCL). The 2011 pronouncement reiterated that the OCR’s interpretation of the U.S. Supreme Court’s legal standards governing school liability is that schools and school personnel will be strictly liable for hazing, harassment and bullying if school officials knew or should have known that it was occurring and exhibited deliberate indifference to ending the abuse. The full-text of both the 2011 Clarification and the 2010 DCL may be found in the OCR’s online Reading Room at www2.ed.gov.

**Sexual Harassment**

In October, a civil suit – *Stephens v. Des Moines Independent Com-
munity School District — was filed by a former Des Moines (Iowa) Scavo High School student-athlete against the district and school personnel for their inaction in protecting her from sexual abuse by a teacher. The alleged harassment began with highly explicit digital communications from the teacher to the student, continued with inappropriate physical contact in a locked classroom, and escalated into a sexual relationship resulting in the student becoming pregnant. The teacher pleaded guilty to criminal charges for violating Iowa law prohibiting teacher-student sexual relationships, received a prison sentence and was required to register as a sex offender.

The civil lawsuit asserts that district and school personnel had knowledge that the harassment was occurring and demonstrated deliberate indifference in intervening to protect the student. Allegedly, at least two Scavo High School officials were aware of the relationship between the teacher and student and failed to report the situation so that an investigation could be initiated.

In November, a civil lawsuit — Doe v. USA Swimming and Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township — was filed in state court in Indiana alleging failure to intervene to protect an underage female swimmer from sexual abuse by her coach. The suit asserts that USA Swimming and school personnel were informed of the coach’s behavior, yet the abuse was neither investigated nor reported to law enforcement as required by Indiana law.

After the victim’s mother discovered and reported the abuse, a criminal investigation resulted in the coach pleading guilty to sexual misconduct with a minor and receiving an eight-year prison sentence. The criminal investigation revealed several text messages in which the coach admitted to various school personnel that he was engaged in a sexual relationship with the victim, including one return text from a school official stating “good catch now put her back in the lake and chalk it up as an experience, smile about it occasionally, and upgrade to college.”

During 2010, five similar lawsuits were filed against USA Swimming alleging sexual offenses against young swimmers in swim clubs across the country, resulting in the development by USA Swimming of anti-sexual-harassment mandates for its clubs and coaches titled Policies & Guidelines for Athlete Protection. The full-text of the policy, which might serve as a model for school districts wishing to implement protections for student-athletes, is available at www.usaswimming.org.

**Failure to Report**

As has so tragically been illustrated by the alleged sexual abuse cover-up at Penn State University, an ongoing legal issue related to hazing, sexual harassment, bullying and cyberbullying is the failure by school officials to report harassment to law enforcement or social services agencies as required by applicable state laws.

In September, Jenkins (Kentucky) Independent Schools, its district superintendent, and a high school football coach were charged with failure to report child abuse as mandated by Kentucky law. The charges arose from the alleged failure to disclose a football hazing incident involving several minors who were players on the high school team.

Also in September, the LaPorte (Indiana) Community School Corporation, its high school athletic director and the high school’s head volleyball coach were charged with failing to report sexual misconduct by an assistant volleyball coach who engaged in a sexual relationship with one of the squad’s players. In July, the coach was convicted of sexual misconduct with a minor. The September criminal charges stemmed from the alleged failure of school officials, once they became aware of the inappropriate relationship, to immediately report the situation to law enforcement authorities as mandated by Indiana law.

Such cases illustrate the importance for schools officials of educating athletics personnel regarding applicable state reporting requirements and ensuring that the designated authorities are immediately contacted when any instance of covered conduct is discovered.

**Freedom of Speech and Social Media**

During 2011, five U.S. Court of Appeals rulings were issued in cases addressing the extent of school legal authority over off-campus postings by students on social media Web sites, with two of the cases decided in favor of students and three in favor of schools.

In April, in Doninger v. Niehoff, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of administrators at Burlington (Connecticut) Lewis S. Mills High School who disciplined a student for profane postings about school officials on a blog that the court concluded satisfied the “substantial disruption” standard established by the U.S. Supreme Court in its landmark 1969 student-free-speech decision, Tinker v. Des Moines School District. In late October, the Supreme Court denied a petition for certiorari from Doninger and refused to hear her appeal of the case.

In June, in J.S. v. Blue Mountain School District, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals held that the district violated the free speech rights of a Blue Mountain (Pennsylvania) Middle School student who cre-
ated a fake MySpace profile of her school principal that incorporated profanity and falsely characterized him as a sex addict and pedophile, concluding that the student’s actions did not cause a substantial disruption at school.

Also in June, the Third Circuit announced its decision in Layshock v. Hermitage School District, ruling that the district violated the free speech rights of a Hickory (Pennsylvania) High School student who created a parody MySpace profile of his principal containing numerous vulgarities and sexual innuendos because the student’s off-campus behavior did not create a substantial disruption on-campus.

Both districts have petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to review its case, but as of the end of November, the Supreme Court had not yet decided whether to grant one or both of the appeals.

In July, in Kowalski v. Berkeley County Schools, the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the district did not violate the free speech rights of a Musselman (West Virginia) High School cheerleader disciplined for creating a MySpace discussion group page designed as a vehicle to cyberbully another student at her school, concluding that bullying, cyberbullying and other forms of harassment satisfy the Tinker substantial disruption standard. The student has petitioned the Supreme Court to review the case, but as of the end of November, the Court had not yet announced whether it will hear her appeal.

In August, in D.J.M. v. Hannibal Public School District, the U.S. Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals held that the district did not violate the free speech rights of a Hannibal (Missouri) High School student disciplined for using social media to communicate threats to use a gun against his classmates, concluding that a “true threat” — “a statement that a reasonable recipient would have interpreted as a serious expression of intent to cause harm or injury to another” — does not constitute protected free speech.

In August, in T.V. & M.K. v. Smith-Green Community Schools, a U.S. District Court ruled that the district violated the free speech rights of two Churubusco (Indiana) High School volleyball players disciplined for off-campus postings of profanely captioned photos on social media sites depicting themselves at a summer slumber party in various states of undress while engaged in sexually suggestive poses with phallus-shaped lollipops, concluding that the behavior did not create a substantial disruption at school.

Freedom of Religion

Issues continue to arise in school sports programs regarding the two clauses in the First Amendment dealing with religion – the establishment clause which prohibits government entities, including public schools, from engaging in actions that constitute sponsorship of religion or give preference to one religion over another and the free-exercise clause which prohibits government entities from interfering in the practice of religious beliefs.

In October, a dispute arose regarding prayer at high school football games in the Lauderdale (Alabama) County School District. A complaint asserting violation of the First Amendment’s establishment clause was filed related to pregame prayers over the public address system at Killen (Alabama) Brooks High School.

The controlling legal standard for such cases is the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2000 ruling in Santa Fe ISD v. Doe that school-sponsored prayer at sports events violates the Constitution’s prohibition on government sponsorship of religious practices. It is important to note, however, that the Court also stated in the Santa Fe ISD case that the establishment clause does not limit any person’s “free exercise” rights to pray at any time in a school setting, including at athletics contests, so long as the prayer is not a school-organized, school-sponsored activity. Therefore, spontaneously occurring decisions to pray made by individual players or groups of players before, during or after a sports event is constitutionally permissible.

Freedom of the Press

In August, in Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association v. Gannett Company, Inc., the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that licensing contracts for exclusive rights to air live coverage of high school sports events do not violate the First Amendment freedom of the press rights of media thereby foreclosed from broadcasting competing live coverage of those contests. The case involved the WIAA’s exclusive arrangement with a video production company to stream live coverage online of state football playoff games and assertions by Gannett, which broadcast online competing coverage of those games without permission, that quasi-governmental entities such as state associations and school districts should not be permitted to own and monetize sports events. In ruling for the WIAA, the appellate court emphasized that allowing exclusive broadcast deals does not interfere with other media’s First Amendment right to cover and report on high school sports contests.

Title IX

Since the late fall of 2010, 210 school districts encompassing more than 525 high schools have been named in Title IX complaints filed with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
claiming that the targeted districts and schools are failing to provide girls with sports participation opportunities equivalent to those provided for boys. These mass filings reflect a change from the historical pattern of most Title IX complaints being filed by female student-athletes, their parents, or coaches of girls teams and an emerging trend of complaints being filed simultaneously against large numbers of institutions by advocacy groups.

In November of 2010, the National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) filed complaints against 12 school districts across the country composed of a total of more than 200 high schools. During the first three months of 2011, complaints were filed against 60 districts in Washington State consisting of more than 125 high schools, filings for which the OCR declined to identify the complainants but which have been widely reported as having been filed by a Title IX advocacy group. In April, complaints were filed with the OCR against 60 districts in Oregon composed of more than 100 high schools, also by unidentified complainants. In June, complaints were filed against 78 districts in Idaho encompassing more than 100 high schools, likewise by unidentified complainants.

In May, the OCR closed its Title IX investigation of individual districts and schools in Washington and announced its intention to instead conduct a consolidated evaluation of the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction – the agency that, pursuant to state law – annually collects and analyzes gender equity self-audit data from every high school in Washington. In November, the OCR dismissed the Title IX complaints against 77 of the 78 districts named in the Idaho filings, deciding to pursue a compliance audit of only the Meridian School District and its five high schools.

In January, discovery began in a federal lawsuit – Richards v. Oldham County Board of Education – filed in late 2010 alleging that use of a recently constructed sports fieldhouse at Goshen (Kentucky) North Oldham High School was being restricted to male student-athletes in violation of Title IX. The suit claims that the $1 million facility “was constructed and designed strictly for the use of boys and boys athletics … contains a locker room for football, shower and restroom facilities for boys only, offices for coaches of boys sports only, a film and meeting room for the use of boys and boys sports only, a training room for the use of boys sports only, a laundry room used for boys sports only, and even a separate locker room for use by visiting boys teams only.” The fieldhouse contains no facilities for girls sports and does not even contain a girls bathroom. The case illustrates the importance of incorporating Title IX considerations into the planning process for the construction and operation of high school sports facilities.

In January, legislation was re-introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives that, if enacted, would mandate annual reporting of Title IX self-audit data by high schools to the U.S. Department of Education. The bill, H.R. 458 – The High School Accountability Act of 2011 – is presently being considered by the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education and its progress may be tracked online at www.thomas.gov.

**Retaliation**

An ongoing Title IX problem across the country is retaliation by educational institutions against athletics personnel who bring to the attention of a district gender inequities in sports programs. Since the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2005 decision in Jackson v. Birmingham Board of Education, the ruling which clarified that Title IX prohibits retaliation, an explosion of litigation has occurred on the issue.

In a lawsuit filed in July 2011 – Okie v. Sandusky School District – a former high school athletic director asserts that he was fired solely because he complained to district administrators about Title IX inequities at Sandusky (Michigan) High School. In June, a complaint was filed with and litigation was threatened against the Lafayette County School District by a highly successful high school softball coach who was allegedly dismissed after voicing concerns about the treatment of her softball team at Oxford (Mississippi) Lafayette High School as compared to the school’s baseball team.

In October, a settlement was reached in Ruth v. Martin County School Board, a retaliation lawsuit alleging that the principal and athletic director at Jensen Beach (Florida) High School fired the girls lacrosse coach for complaining about Title IX problems at the school. The coach was represented in the suit by a public-interest law firm renowned for winning multi-million dollar verdicts in retaliation cases, but the only remedy requested by the coach was reinstatement to her coaching position and correction of the school’s Title IX inequities.

**Employment Law**

In April, in Jesup Community School District v. Wall, the Iowa Court of Appeals ruled that the district wrongfully terminated the Jesup High School head varsity football coach’s contract without just cause. The district claimed that the coach was fired for “ineffective leadership” and “failure to maintain student interest and participation,” but based on the evidence and testimony at trial, the court concluded that the coach had been dismissed primarily because of dissatisfaction with his win-loss record. The court emphasized that the firing violated the education-focused mission of the JCSD’s athletics program as stated in the district’s written handbook titled “Philosophy of Jesup Community School Activities 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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H igh school coaches now have access to a new online publication – NFHS Coaching Today – produced by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

While many state coaches associations publish newsletters and other material geared specifically to their particular state, NFHS Coaching Today is the only national publication targeted exclusively for high school coaches. With a mixture of professional-development and sport-specific articles, the new online publication has something for everyone – from the first-year coach to the 30-year veteran.

And best of all, the publication is online and free to anyone who can access the Internet. The Web-based publication can be accessed through the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org or the NFHS Coach Education site at www.nfhslearn.com.

The NFHS launched the new online publication in February 2011 after publishing the NFHS Coaches’ Quarterly for 15 years. The “CQ” was mailed to all members of the NFHS Coaches Association as a member benefit.

“While it’s hard for some individuals to not have a hard-copy publication in-hand, we felt like it was time to take advantage of the Internet and make this publication available to as many high school coaches as possible,” said Bruce Howard, NFHS director of publications and communications and editor of NFHS Coaching Today. “With the publication online, we are able to make frequent updates and have a ‘living’ Web site devoted exclusively to high school coaches.”

Features and department articles are updated on a monthly basis, while other information such as coaching tips, current news, polls and sport-specific articles may be changed on a more frequent basis.

One of the new aspects of NFHS Coaching Today from the “CQ” is the addition of sport-specific articles. Because of space limitations in the 32-page magazine, and with a desire to devote that space to professional-development articles, sport-specific articles were not published in the magazine.

“While our main focus will continue to be articles that address professional aspects of high school coaching, we intend to publish as many sport-specific articles as possible since space is no longer an issue,” Howard said. “We recognize that coaches are interested in tactical ‘X’s and O’s’ articles, so we intend to offer that option for viewers to our site.”

In a little less than a year since the debut of NFHS Coaching Today online, a total of 24 feature articles have been published on the site. Some of the topics covered this year include Motivating Athletes, Creating the Right Relationship Between Coach and Athlete, Ways To Be an Effective Assistant Coach, Conducting Exit Interviews with Senior Athletes and Guidelines for Meeting with a Disgruntled Parent.

Some of the regular department columns on the NFHS Coaching Today site include Sports Medicine, Reflections, Ideas That Work, Helpful Hints, Did You Know, Health and Safety, Coaching Education and Book Reviews.

Editorial content for NFHS Coaching Today is governed by the NFHS Coaches Publications Committee, which is composed of eight section representatives and a chairman. Jeff Arbogast, cross country and track coach at Bingham High School in South Jordan, Utah, currently serves as chair of the committee.

Individuals interested in submitting an article for possible publication on the NFHS Coaching Today site should select “Writers’ Guidelines” at the top of the home page. The suggested length of articles, and suggestions for constructing articles, are included in that information.

After visiting the site, viewers are encouraged to select “Contact Us” on the home page and complete the “Feedback” page. Any questions about the publication should be directed to Howard at bhoward@nfhs.org.
Jim Parsons is best known for playing Sheldon Cooper on the CBS sitcom “The Big Bang Theory.” He has received several awards for his performances, including the Television Critics Association award for the highest individual achievements in comedy, the National Association of Broadcasters Television Chairman’s Award for a significant breakthrough in a specific art discipline, two consecutive Emmy Awards for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series and the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor in a Television Series Musical or Comedy.

Parsons was born and raised in Houston, Texas. He attended Klein Oak High School in Spring, a northern suburb of Houston. He received his degree from the University of Houston in 2001 and moved to New York at that time. Parsons currently lives in Los Angeles. His hobbies include playing the piano and watching sports, especially tennis, baseball and basketball.

**Q.** What motivated you first to get involved in high school theatre and, second, to make it a career?

**Parsons:** I was interested in acting and in theatre before I actually got to high school. I had participated both in school plays and in speech tournaments in elementary school and in junior high. When I graduated, I did not actually think I would be an actor as a career choice. However, I spent my first year at the University of Houston as the roommate of Greg Stanley, and watching him major in theatre made me realize how much I missed it and that I really had to get back into it.

**Q.** Your high school theatre experience obviously impacted your career, but what about other young people who are not going into theatre?

**Parsons:** I would say that working in the theatre is always a good thing for a young person (or anyone, really) as it demands collaboration on all levels, on stage and off, which allows you to develop effective communication skills. Theatre also asks you to think very quickly and creatively, at times, as something is always not going the “way it should be,” whether that be a costume, a light cue or a scene in a play.

**Q.** What traits did your high school directors exhibit that made them good teachers?

**Parsons:** The teachers I worked with all had different traits that helped me grow as an actor and as a person. Rick Garcia was one of the most creative people I’ve ever met, still to this day, and it seemed he could make anything work. Margaret Lockart (née Valenta) had an incredible eye for a student’s/actor’s abilities and where they could best be used; she cast me in the comedy “Noises Off” and it was truly an eye-opening experience for me as an actor, as it offered me a character I could really bring to life on stage.
And Brownie High was the kind of full-of-vigor human that playwrights write into their plays – a “character” in every sense of the word – who talked to me as if I was an adult as she offered up her own life stories as examples to learn by.

Q. You have been blessed with incredible success, awards and the opportunity to create an iconic character in Sheldon. What advice would you like to give a 17-year-old who aspires to work professionally?

Parsons: I tell anyone who asks that the most important thing you can do if you want to be an actor is to constantly find opportunities to act. I was very fortunate that, when I was at the University of Houston, there were many avenues open to me to “ply my wares,” as it were; the director’s class always needed guinea pigs for scenes it was directing. Edward Albee’s writing class always produced four plays in the spring that I auditioned for and, in addition to the main-stage shows at school, I also worked with a local theatre company – The Catastrophic Theater – on at least 15 productions in four years.

Q. If you had any advice for the people who influence our curriculum and appropriate the funding for our schools, what would that be?

Parsons: My advice, perhaps obviously, would be to continue to “fund the arts,” in all the various ways that implies. My mother, a first-grade teacher, continues to mount a play with her students every year, but I worry that that is a rarity. I think that, whether it leads to a career or not, any time spent studying the arts, be that music, painting, theatre – whatever – opens up new ways of thinking and communicating that are unique to artistic disciplines.

Luis Munoz is the theatre director of the Texas University Interscholastic League in Austin, Texas. Greg Stanley is a theatre teacher at Magnolia (Texas) High School.
A natatorium – or aquatic center as it is more commonly known – is a source of recreation and fun for any school, and Juanita High School in Kirkland, Washington, is no exception. At Juanita High School, which is in the Lake Washington School District (LWSD), the aquatic center has been a resource for high school students since it was built with the school in 1971.

At the aquatic center, people can participate in many activities such as competitive swim team, diving and lap swimming in an indoor facility that can be used year-round. The public has enjoyed use of the pool as well for open swim, lifeguard training, aquatic swim clubs and swimming lessons for children. In addition, the pool serves as a training center for the U.S. Masters swim program.

In 2009, however, the tides turned on this beloved pool as major cuts in funding forced district officials to look at the possibility of closing the aquatic center for good. Even with the aquatic center’s revenues, the operating costs of the pool were approximately $150,000 a year, and budgets were tighter than ever as the state of Washington called for $610 million in cuts to public education funding.

“Juanita Aquatic Center was a vital part of the community, impacting so many lives in a positive way, and we were determined to find a way to keep it open,” said Forrest Miller, LWSD director of support services.

LWSD’s effort to fund the pool was just a small part of the overall energy savings effort for the district. The comprehensive plan for the LWSD included new lighting, HVAC, solar power, piping and other infrastructure improvements that were badly needed at many of the aging elementary, middle, junior high and high schools in the district.

An outside contractor, Wave Aquatic Centers, assumed management of the pool, buying more time for the project plan and enabling the pool to remain open.
The other major obstacle facing the aquatic center was obsolescent infrastructure, which was driving up electricity costs and creating an unhealthy environment. With continually rising costs in power, the LWSD, like many districts in the country, had previously wanted to update its infrastructure but was limited by funding.

The occupancy lighting sensors, present in all rooms in the aquatic center, were no longer operating accurately. Natural gas boilers from the 1970s – the original heating system for the pool – were antiquated and lagging. The dehumidifier controlling the indoor climate was also operating ineffectively and put the entire aquatic center at risk for mold and mildew problems, which would cost thousands of dollars in damages.

LWSD sought a creative, alternative method to fund the improvements to the aquatic center. After research was conducted, LWSD decided on an Energy Savings Performance Contacting (ESPC) approach. The ESPC approach opened up funding sources like strategic grants to obtain a portion of the nearly $100 million OSPI (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction) that had been allocated to the state of Washington schools by the federal government. The district’s efforts proved to be a success.

Along with incentives from Puget Sound Power, a state grant from the Washington Department of Commerce and the OSPI dollars, the aquatic center finally had funding it needed to remain open, and even allowed for much-needed retrofitting to be done to the aquatic center’s infrastructure in addition to many other schools and district buildings.

The complete scope of LWSD’s energy savings project included five grant rounds and five construction phases. Each of the phases included elementary, junior high and high schools that were in need of renovations. The fifth phase also included an administration building.

To execute the ESPC approach, LWSD selected Apollo Solutions Group, an Energy Savings Company (ESCO) located in Portland, Oregon, to handle the project that made the schools, district buildings and the renovated aquatic center into improved facilities for students, staff and the community.

Director Alex Banks was glad to be part of the effort, “We were pleased to provide a project that impacted so many individuals in a positive way, creating greener, healthier and more comfortable environments in which to learn and have fun.”

Cascade Power, an energy consultant in Seattle, was also part of the team and instrumental in the project’s funding.

The first phase of the Juanita Aquatic Center retrofit project involved the installation of two new natural gas boilers. The new boilers, utilizing the latest heating technologies, provided more efficient heating of pool water and allowed for energy incentives from Puget Sound Power.

Second, new occupancy lighting sensors in the pool, offices and dressing rooms and were installed to reduce energy costs. Halogen lights from the 1980s were replaced with fluorescent bulbs, adding to the energy savings. Occupancy sensors reduced electricity costs, and they enabled the lights to remain on only during the aquatic center’s use.

Third, a new dehumidifier was installed in the aquatic center. The installation of this piece of equipment was particularly important as a dehumidifier helps control mold and mildew in a humid aquatic environment. In addition, the warm dehumidified air was reused to help heat the pool water and the air inside the facility – not simply discarded as it is commonly done at other pools. Additional improvements included hot water piping.

The high school students and community are now benefitting from the salvaging of this popular pool and enjoying a healthier, more comfortable environment as well. The favorable outcome of Juanita Aquatic Center, and the other schools positively affected by renovations, is proof that when thorough research is done, funding for energy savings measures in schools is often available.

Tanya Lamb is the marketing and grants manager for an energy services company located in Portland, Oregon. Lamb graduated from the University of Oregon in 2000, and has worked in marketing for the A/E/C industry for more than 10 years.
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The Illinois High School Association (IHSA) and the Chicago Bears have teamed up to create a multi-faceted concussion awareness campaign entitled “Get Defensive Against Concussions.”

Twelve student-athletes chosen from a variety of IHSA-member schools met with Chicago Bears linebacker Brian Urlacher and defensive tackle Anthony Adams at Halas Hall in Lake Forest, Illinois, to tape a pair of 30-second public-service announcements that will be used during IHSA television and Internet broadcasts. The student-athletes also took part in radio spots and a photo shoot for posters and state final program ads.

“It was important to us that the students in the campaign reflected the diversity of our nearly 800 member schools,” said Matt Troha, IHSA assistant executive director. “Being able to partner with an iconic organization like the Chicago Bears and star players like Brian Urlacher and Anthony Adams is huge in terms of the awareness it creates and the credibility it provides, especially in the eyes of students.”

The campaign coincides with the summer signing of House Bill 200, or the “Protecting Our Student-Athletes Act,” by Illinois Governor Pat Quinn. The bill is based on the Zackery Lystedt Law (named after a Washington teen who suffered a brain injury in 2006 after his return to a football game), which requires student-athletes at any elementary, middle, junior high or high school in the state showing concussion symptoms to receive medical clearance from a licensed health-care professional before resuming play.

Additionally, the law ensures that student-athletes, their parents and their coaches are able to recognize the signs of a concussion by requiring all school boards in the state to partner with the IHSA to develop clear guidelines and materials to educate about the dangers of concussions. Quinn signed the bill into law during a ceremony in July at Soldier Field in Chicago.

“The Chicago Bears were already active in concussion awareness and education, as they hosted the signing of a state concussion law this summer at Soldier Field,” Troha said. “The Bears and the IHSA were also involved in a Concussion Symposium at Northwestern University that preceded the signing. Those events created a great deal of awareness and it was during that time that we began to talk with the Bears about this partnership and how we could build on all the positive momentum that was being created.”

In addition to the 21 state championship sports currently sanctioned by the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA), three more will soon be added to the mix. Archery, bass fishing and cheer/spirit have been approved by the KHSAA’s 278 member schools to begin next school year (2012-13).

“We’re not going to be afraid of trying something new around here,” KHSAA Commissioner Julian Tackett said. “I hope [nobody’s] thinking that this is just going to be more of the same. No way. We’re going to try some new things; it’s going to take people outside their comfort zone. But that’s OK, because we’re going to do what the kids need.”

Every three years, the KHSAA surveys its 278 members to see if additional sport offerings are desired. The survey was done in the spring and early summer and 226 schools submitted responses. After the survey had been sent out, but before the results had been compiled, the KHSAA Board of Control voted at its regular April meeting to revise the threshold for the participation level of schools required for the KHSAA to sponsor a sports championship from 20 percent to 10 percent.

“By lowering the number of schools required to sponsor a championship sport, we think it might actually encourage more schools to offer a sport and grow that sport at a faster pace than it otherwise might do,” Tackett said at the time. “Any time we can pick up a new group of student-athletes who can compete at the sport they love while giving them structure and a reason to excel in the classroom with their academic progress monitored, there is really no downside to it.”
Lessons From the Bench

BY ERIC JAKUBOWSKI

There was one minute left in the fourth quarter of the state quarterfinal basketball game. We were down by two points to Milton, and were in an unfamiliar situation because we were ranked as the No. 1 team. Everyone in the crowd was standing, but I’m not sure if that’s because they were excited or if it was impossible for all of them to sit down. The looks on their faces showed anxiety coupled with fright that we might lose. However, I knew that this possibility was not going to happen. We ended up winning the game on a last-second layup, and I was one of the happiest people in the gym. I saw this whole scene from the best seat in the house – the bench.

This wasn’t the first time that I didn’t play in a game that basketball season. For some kids, not playing would be an awful situation, since most people want to be the star – but not me. That season was the most important learning experience I’ve ever had. It taught resiliency, and I formed close friendships that I’m sure will last for a very long time.

My coach has said to me that even though I’m not the star player, I’m the team leader. In practice, my work ethic rubs off on my teammates and encourages them to also strive toward their best. Many people who go to the games have said that they love to watch me when a time-out is called. I jump right off the bench and am the first to high-five all my teammates. Sometimes my coach even asks me for what plays I think should be called because he knows that my head is in the game, even though I’m not on the floor. This shows that he respects me, and I’m more than just a player to him. This is my contribution to the team’s success.

Another lesson that I learned from the bench was the importance of encouragement. My mom often calls me the team cheerleader because of the passion I bring to the game. When I see that my teammates may be disappointed, I make an effort to bring smiles to their faces. This scenario will happen in life. I’ve learned that things don’t always go the way that I want, but I have to persevere and continue to work hard.

My coach’s two young grandsons go to every game and sit right beside me. At first during the year, they would ask why I didn’t play as much as some of the others. Finally one game, I said to them that it doesn’t matter to me about my playing time. All that matters is that I know my role, and I’m on the team with all my friends. They went home that night and told their mom what I said, and a couple of days later she came up to me and thanked me for teaching her kids such an important lesson. From that point on, I was their new favorite player.

My leadership skills follow me off the basketball court and into the other arenas of my life. In the classroom, I ask insightful questions that will also be a benefit to the other students. My teachers have asked me numerous times to work with other classmates because they know my willingness to help. This is the same principle of a team. I work with other people so we can all have success in school. Life isn’t about individuals; it’s about community.

In my small Vermont town, I have tried to become an integral part of my local community. In addition to various community service events, I have been an altar server for more than eight years in my parish. This is another important experience that makes me a well-rounded individual. The importance of faith, coupled with my family’s values, make me who I am.

I hope that I view the rest of my life through the same perspective that I did during the quarterfinal game. The values that I learned will be with me for the rest of my life. I’m sure that I’ll never forget any of the experiences I had while I was at my seat on the bench.

Eric Jakubowski graduated as salutatorian of the Class of 2011 from Fair Haven (Vermont) Union High School. He played varsity baseball and basketball, serving as captain of both teams during his senior year. He wrote this essay during his college application process. He is now enrolled as a freshman in the honors program at Clemson University in South Carolina.
SPORTSMANSHIP IN ACTION

Editor’s Note: This column highlights sportsmanship programs at the local and state levels throughout the country.

Wyoming High School Activities Association
Casper, Wyoming

In 2008, the WHSAA Student Advisory Council developed a sportsmanship initiative using materials from the NFHS National Student Leadership Conference. The Council prepared packets for four District Summits and invited Wyoming high schools to "Join the R.I.D.E." Banners hang in each gym with the program tenets – Respect, Integrity, Dedication and Encouragement, as well as what is required to achieve these goals. T-shirts, hats and announcements continually remind people across the state to "Join the RIDE." After three years of District Summits, the first State Sportsmanship Summit was held November 21 in Casper.

Iowa High School Athletic Association
Boone, Iowa

The Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) has a variety of ways of promoting sportsmanship. Sportsmanship announcements, posters and advertisements, as well as tips for sportsmanlike public-address announcing, are sent to member schools and used at IHSAA state tournaments. In addition, the IHSAA annually features a former outstanding Iowa high school athlete on its Sportsmanship-Citizenship poster program. The four-color poster is sent each fall to all elementary and secondary schools as well as the media. The IHSAA also has partnered with the Iowa Girls’ High School Athletic Union, the Iowa High School Music Association and the Iowa High School Speech Association in a series of “Conduct Counts” posters. The posters address acceptable and non-acceptable conduct by fans at educational activities and are displayed at events. Sportsmanship winners in each of the four classes are selected at the state basketball tournament, with the winners receiving a trophy and a $1,000 grant to be used in the school’s student government program.

Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association
Reno, Nevada

The Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA), like many other state high school associations, developed a Citizenship Through Sports (CTS) manual several years ago. This 28-page document includes everything from player-coach-official-administrator guidelines to public-address announcements to a self-assessment worksheet. The five-page self-assessment – a checklist, of sorts, on how and/or what schools did over the course of the year to help foster/promote a positive environment at their events – is worth points equal to those gained in NIAA athletic and academic championship competitions toward the association’s Award of Excellence in Academics, Athletics and Citizenship program. This award program, which also has provisions to deduct points for athlete and coach ejections, honors the top overall athletic department at the end of the year (with a special school banquet, trophy and banner presentation). Hence, the CTS is a major component of the NIAA’s overall mission.

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**VOICES OF THE NATION**

**Q** What has been the highlight of your high school athletic career?

**Brianne Knight**
Adamsville Junior/Senior High School
Adamsville, Tennessee

The highlight of my athletic career has been threefold. One memorable experience was our game against the Chester County Eagles. Either they were strategically stalling or enjoying watching me at the free-throw line. During this game, I was fouled 22 times, of which I succeeded at making only eight of the freebies. We won by six. What a headline for their news story! Equally important, being on an organized team allowed me to develop my leadership skills on and off the court. Finally, the pinnacle of my varsity year was being honored as one of the Jackson Sun's West Tennessee team members.

**Cooper Trahern**
Canon City High School
Canon City, Colorado

Reveling in the crowd that is cheering for the Tigers and having my name in the starting lineup is an amazing experience. The intense cheers of the crowd definitely give me an adrenaline rush, but the real highlights of my athletic career are the life lessons I’ve learned. Sports wove leadership and teamwork into my character. I’m very competitive, but regardless of the outcome of a game, I know I win at the game of life by learning the skills that will make me a team player in my family, in my community and in my career.

**Jaemin Powell**
Mid-Prairie High School
Wellman, Iowa

In my high school career, I have had multiple successes in many different sports, but my favorite success would have to be the state championship that I won at the state track meet. We got first place in the distance medley. We weren’t expected to do very well, but we ended up winning it on the last lap. I started this race and ran the first 200 meters. This was a great race and I will always remember it.

**Abby Springer**
Southport High School
Indianapolis, Indiana

I have had a lot of memorable experiences throughout my high school athletic career, but if I had to pick one highlight, I would think back to a few weeks ago in Carmel, Indiana. I attended an all-district banquet; although the banquet wasn’t the highlight, what came out of it was. I had been recognized for my accomplishments, and awarded as the first-ever all-state soccer player at Southport High School. This award summed up all the goals that were scored, all the team victories and my whole high school soccer career in general, and put it into one award. The plaque will serve as a reminder of all the memories and highlights I obtained throughout my career playing soccer in high school.