“I Wish I Had This When I Started Coaching.”

Bill Utsey, Director of Athletics, 25-Year Coach, Greenville County Schools, SC

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Injury Study Top Priority

BY ROBERT F. KANABY, NFHS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AND JIM TENOPIR, NFHS PRESIDENT

Too often, injuries are an unfortunate and sometimes unavoidable result of participating in high school sports. But by studying these injuries more closely, is it possible to lower the injury rate? We believe it can be.

That is why the NFHS Board of Directors and the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) have made the establishment of a national high school sports injury surveillance system one of their top priorities this school year. This system will provide injury data and information that will better enable the NFHS rules committees and the SMAC to identify and assess potential risk factors, and to resultantly determine proper equipment and playing rules for the betterment of all students who participate in high school sports.

Participation in high school sports has grown rapidly from approximately four million participants in 1971-72 to nearly 7½ million in 2007-08. It has always been our intent to conscientiously act in the best interests of this ever-growing number of student-athletes. Since its inception, the NFHS and its rules committees have kept the well-being of America’s student-athletes at the forefront of any rules-change discussion by annually reviewing these playing rules. In fact, during the past 12 years, we’ve directly addressed risk minimization with 310 rules changes. Through the work of the SMAC and our collaboration with the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research and the National Collegiate Athletic Association, we have constantly striven to minimize risk of injury in all high school sports.

So, how do we continue to strive to reach our goal of reducing that risk? The NFHS is adding another dimension to its play by working with Dawn Comstock, Ph.D., assistant professor at The Ohio State University and an epidemiologist and principal investigator in the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. Dr. Comstock developed an innovative injury surveillance system to capture important injury data to protect student-athletes from sports injuries. Titled the “National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study,” it is currently the only nationally representative study of U.S. high school sports-related injuries. Certified athletic trainers from 100 nationally representative U.S. high schools use an Internet-based data collection tool, RIO™ (Reporting Information Online), to prospectively report athletic exposure and injury data for athletes participating in NFHS sports. We are able to analyze data collected during the past three years in nine different NFHS sports. This year, with additional financial support from the NFHS, RIO™ will add six more NFHS sports to its study. Teaming with this surveillance group, the NFHS has reached its goal of establishing a national-level injury surveillance system.

By monitoring patterns of injury and identifying sport-specific risk and protective factors, the rate of high school sports-related injuries can be reduced through targeted, evidence-based interventions. In the 2007-08 report for example, in 25,460 volleyball matches, 37 percent of injuries occurred to the outside hitter position. This information will enable the NFHS to assess these numbers and to better devise ways to address them.

This injury surveillance study was compiled from 100 high schools in four sample geographic areas: Northeast, Midwest, South and West. We rely on this sound information and the fact that it was gathered by high schools that have a National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA)-affiliated certified athletic trainer (ATC). That professionalism reinforced our faith and confidence that this study would contribute to our efforts to reduce the risk and frequency of injury.

NFHS rules committees annually monitor injury trends very closely when considering potential rules revisions. The rules committees also examine the survey data over a protracted period of time. For example, during the 2005-06 softball season, the total number of injuries was 63,313. In 2006-07, that number decreased by 8,902. Then, the number jumped back up to 63,316 this past season. Using that historical data, the SMAC and the NFHS Softball Rules Committee are then able to hypothesize potential causes for the fluctuations and from that attempt to develop means of decreasing the number of injuries in the future for that particular sport. This new injury surveillance system allows us to fine-tune this process even further.

While RIO™ does not currently cover spirit, boys gymnastics, cross country and water polo, these NFHS sports will be considered for future inclusion into the system.

In any physical activity, there will always be a certain level of risk of injury; with that thought in mind the NFHS always strives to minimize risk as much as possible and to utilize all of the available resources — including the Injury Surveillance System — in the interest of those young men and women who choose to compete in high school sports. This program will assist us in keeping education-based sports uniquely different from non-school-based programs.
Competitive Edge
Reed Lehto of Cook County High School in Grand Marais, Minnesota, competes in the individual portion of the 2005 Minnesota State High School League Skiing Championships.

Photograph provided by 20/20 Photographic, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan
FEATURES

14
SPORTS TECHNOLOGY
Instant Replay in High School Sports: Is it Necessary? Three controversial endings in basketball renew debate. –Matt Vachlon

18
COMMUNICATION
The Real Solution to the Parent Problem in High School Athletics: First step in process is establishing parameters – determine what is acceptable and what isn’t. –Dr. David Hoch, CMAA

22
LEGAL ISSUES
Liability Issues Related to Transportation of Student-athletes: Courts say schools have duty to provide safe round-trip transportation to events. –Lee Green

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DEPARTMENTS

1 NFHS Report
Injury Study Top Priority

6 Quick Hits
Useful facts and information

10 Top High School Performances

13 Above and Beyond
Coach’s Spirit Resonates in Team

16 In Their Own Words
Former Sprinter Kaiser-Brown Received Support of Community

20 Sports Medicine
Task Force Develops Injury-reduction Strategies

24 Did You Know?
• How High School Today is Developed
• Membership Available in Five NFHS Professional Groups

27 Coach Education

28 In the News
The National Federation of State High School Associations serves its members, related professional organizations and students by providing leadership for the administration of education-based interscholastic activities, which support academic achievement, good citizenship and equitable opportunities.

We believe:

- The NFHS is the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs.
- Interscholastic activity programs enrich each student’s educational experience.
- Participation in education-based activity programs promotes student academic achievement.
- Student participation in interscholastic activity programs is a privilege.
- Interscholastic participation develops good citizenship and healthy lifestyles.
- Interscholastic activity programs foster involvement of a diverse population.
- Interscholastic activity programs promote positive school/community relations.
- The NFHS is the pre-eminent authority on competition rules for interscholastic activity programs.
- National competition rules promote fair play and minimize risks for student participants.
- Cooperation among state associations advances their individual and collective well-being.
- Properly trained administrators/coaches/directors promote the educational mission of the interscholastic experience.
- Properly trained officials/judges enhance interscholastic competition.

NFHS MISSION STATEMENT

Around the Nation

Question: Does your state association offer the NFHS Coach Education Program?

41 YES

10 NO

Question: Does your state association offer the NFHS Coach Education Program?
High School Record-holders in 2008 Summer Olympics

BY MATT VACHLON

Not only did several of America’s finest athletes represent their country in exemplary fashion at the recent 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, they first made their marks as national record-holders in the NFHS’ National High School Sports Record Book. For example, at St. Joseph Notre Dame High School in Alameda, California, Jason Kidd set the national record in boys basketball for career steals (719) and single-season steals (245). He was the captain of the U.S. Olympic men’s basketball team in Beijing, where the team won a gold medal.

Lisa Leslie had the record for one half and the second-highest single-game point total of all-time for girls basketball at Inglewood (California) Morningside High School when she scored 101 points in the first half of a game in 1990. Leslie was the team captain of the U.S. Olympic women’s basketball team and scored 14 points in the gold medal-clinching game.

Allyson Felix of Los Angeles (California) Baptist High School holds the fastest and third-fastest times nationally in girls track and field for the 200-meter dash and the ninth-fastest time in the 100-meter dash. At Olympic competition in Beijing, Felix won a gold medal in the 4x400-meter relay and a silver medal in the 200-meter dash.

Monique Henderson holds the top two national times in girls track and field for the 400-meter dash, setting the record of :50.74 in 2000 while competing for San Diego (California) Samuel F.B. Morse High School. At the Beijing Olympics, Henderson ran the third leg of the women’s 4x400-meter relay, which won a gold medal.

Amy Acuff is the high school national record-holder for the high jump with a jump of 6-foot-3 in 1992 at Corpus Christi (Texas) Calallen High School and she is tied for third and sixth on that list as well. At the Olympics, she finished ninth in the qualifying round.

At Red Oak (Texas) High School, Michelle Carter set the national record for the shot put with a throw of 50-10¾, and also holds the record for the third-longest distance thrown. At the Olympics in Beijing, she finished 15th overall.

Dathan Ritzenhein of Rockford (Michigan) High School holds the second- and third-fastest national high school times in the boys 3,200-meter run and in 2000, he was the first to break the national record in the event that has stood 14 years. At the Summer Olympics in Beijing, Ritzenhein placed ninth in the marathon.

Kara Lynn Joyce of Ann Arbor (Michigan) Pioneer High School is the national record-holder in high school girls swimming and diving in two events: the 50-yard freestyle with a time of :22.04, and the 100-yard freestyle, with a time of :48.59. In Beijing, Joyce won a silver medal in the 4x100-meter freestyle relay and another silver as the alternate for the 4x100-meter medley relay.

Matt Vachlon is a fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in journalism (news editorial) and minoring in sociology and Spanish.
“Dumb jock” is a phrase many of us have heard and maybe even used a few times. Even if said in jest, the not-so-hidden assumption behind the phrase is that intelligence and athletic ability are mutually exclusive. Now more than ever, with academic rigor in our nation’s high school classrooms an increasing focus, this assumption couldn’t be further from the truth.

Mid-Prairie is a rural, public Iowa school district with approximately 360 high school students in grades nine through 12 and 200 middle school students in grades seven and eight. Mid-Prairie offers a typical array of extracurricular activities including opportunities in 14 varsity sports as sanctioned by our state athletic associations. Student-athletes are encouraged to participate in as many activities as possible. We believe that even though academics are a high priority, student activities, including athletics, can be a great benefit to the student.

Extracurricular and cocurricular activities represent an exceptional opportunity for the student to develop a spirit of healthy competition, understand the value of sportsmanship, create constructive relationships with peers and adults, increase physical fitness, and appreciate lifetime leisure activities. They also allow the student an opportunity to practice leadership, goal-setting, communication, citizenship and organizational skills. Being flexible, patient, a good team member, and a person of character and integrity are all positive outcomes that can be gained from activity participation.

Mid-Prairie’s mission and purpose is to prepare today’s students for tomorrow’s world in a caring learning environment. A committee consisting of parents, school personnel, school board and other community members created this mission and corresponding belief statements through an extended series of meetings. Because of the significance placed on this task and the energy required, the entire school community takes seriously the district’s mission and purpose.

If the primary focus of the activities program is the values and skills derived by students rather than the final score, the relationship between the activities and academic programs becomes more congruent and allows a school district to better fulfill its mission. At Mid-Prairie, we are confident that all of our programs contribute to our mission.

But what measures do we use to justify this confidence?

Each year, the activities director is required to present a report to the school board. The report contains the usual information concerning our teams’ successes during athletic competitions. However, it goes much further by including the following data:

- **Student Academic Performance in Relation to Their Participation in Activities** – Each high school student’s GPA is compared to the number of activities he/she participates in. Mid-Prairie data from the past three years indicates a positive correlation between a student’s GPA and the number of activities they join. The more activities a student is doing, the higher is the GPA.

- **Team Academic Awards** – Our state athletic associations recognize teams whose athletes average a 3.25 GPA. Last year, 12 Mid-Prairie varsity teams met this standard.

- **Sportsmanship Ratings** – The Iowa High School Athletic Association compiles sportsmanship ratings from game officials on coaches, athletes and spectators in various high school sports. Last year, based on a 1-5 scale with 1 being best, Mid-Prairie’s average score for athletes was 1.12.

- **Percent of Student Body Involved in Activities** – Historical statistics are kept on the percent of the student body involved in activities. Last year, 80 percent of all Mid-Prairie High
School students participated in at least one activity, and 58 percent participated in more than one activity. Middle school rates, grades 7-8, mirror high school rates with 80 percent of last year’s middle school students participating in at least one activity.

- **School Attendance** – The absenteeism of Mid-Prairie students participating in activities is compared to students who do not participate in any activities. Last year, high school students participating in at least one activity missed an average of 2.7 days for the year while students in no activities missed an average of 10.5 days.

- **Advanced Placement Tests** – Mid-Prairie values the opportunities afforded to students through Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Currently, we teach six of our own AP courses with many other classes available to our students through an online resource. The University of Iowa Belin-Blank Center annually ranks Iowa high schools based on the number of AP tests taken in a year compared to the number of graduating seniors. For the past two years, Mid-Prairie has been in the top 10 of approximately 400 Iowa high schools and we expect to make the top 10 again this year. Last year, 84 percent of the Mid-Prairie students taking AP tests were participating in at least one activity.

Additionally, special honors received by Mid-Prairie indicate quality academic and athletic programs. Each year, *The Des Moines Register* ranks high schools according to their achievements in post-season tournament play. Mid-Prairie is a Class 2A school with 127 other Iowa high schools. For the past four years, Mid-Prairie has ranked in the top 10 in its class every year.

In 2007, the *US News and World Report* ranked more than 18,000 of the nation’s public high schools by analyzing academic and enrollment data. Mid-Prairie was recognized as being in the top 10 percent of Iowa public high schools.

When I was attending the University of Iowa as an educational administration student, one of my professors advocated that many people were guided by the wrong conjunction as they lived life. Dr. Foley believed that the conjunction “and” was more valuable than “or.” At Mid-Prairie, like countless other school districts across the nation, we continue to prove that it is possible to excel at both academics **AND** athletics. One does not have to sacrifice for the other. When approached with the same set of core values and beliefs, academics and activities programs are critical means for accomplishing a school district’s mission and purpose.

Mark Schneider is in his eighth year as superintendent of the Mid-Prairie School District in Wellman, Iowa. Prior to his current duties, he was principal at Mid-Prairie for six years and an elementary teacher for seven years.
Success on the football field is nothing new to McKeesport (Pennsylvania) Area High School, but the events that unfolded September 12 marked uncharted waters for the two-time Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association Class AAAA state champions. McKeesport scored seven touchdowns in the first quarter, totaling 48 points en route to a 67-7 victory in a Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League Foothills Conference game against Connellsville (Pennsylvania) Area High School. According to the 2008 National High School Sports Record Book, the 48 points is the eighth highest in the country for one quarter. A missed extra point by McKeesport after the seventh touchdown prevented it from moving into a tie for fifth all time with 49 points.

“This is my 28th year at McKeesport and 37th overall coaching and I told my coaches I’ve never seen anything like it,” McKeesport head coach George Smith said. “We’ve rolled up a lot of points on people before, but nothing of that magnitude.

“It all happened so fast – it was one play or two plays each time.”

The Tigers ran the opening kickoff back for a touchdown to begin the game. Their option-attack took over from there, amassing six rushing touchdowns, none of which were shorter than 37 yards. According to Smith, they never threw a pass.

“It was special,” Smith said. “We’ve had a lot of success around here so I don’t think people realize how remarkable it really was. To me, it will always be important, especially because I’ll be retiring sometime soon.”

Despite the special night, Smith was not above showing good sportsmanship. With McKeesport leading 55-0 at the half, he opted to pull his first-team players, despite the fact that the offense had run only 14 plays.

“At halftime, I originally told both the first-string offense and defense that they would each get one more series,” Smith said.

“But the defense intercepted the first pass of the second half and I decided that we could not run up the score anymore.”

Age does not equal talent

By Jenna Widmann

On the night of September 5, stadium lights shined down on Aaron Green, a 15-year-old running back who rushed for nine touchdowns and powered the San Antonio (Texas) Madison High School football team to a 69-56 win over Kerrville (Texas) Tivy High School.

Qualifying for the National High School Sports Record Book as only a sophomore, Green tied two other players for fifth place with nine rushing touchdowns in a single game.

Green’s yardage totaled 428 by the end of the game. He took four trips to the end zone in the first half and rushed across the line five times during the second half. As of week seven in the Texas 5A football season, Green has totaled 1,145 yards on 125 carries.

The 5-foot-11, 180-pound running back is the youngest of four brothers to attend and play football at Madison. His cousin, Gary Green, also got his start at Madison and currently plays for the University of Kansas.

Last year, the Madison football team finished the season as the University Interscholastic League Region IV Division II champions. This year, Green has helped it to a No. 22 ranking on the top 25 ranking as of week seven according to 5Atexasfootball.com.
One game, two records

The August 29 football game for New Braunfels (Texas) High School was a history-maker against the Seguin (Texas) High School Matadors as its defense recorded nine interceptions.

It joined three other teams in the National High School Sports Record Book with nine interceptions in a single game to tie for ninth all time. In addition, linebacker Tom Wort intercepted two passes and returned them for touchdowns in the second quarter, tying five others for the national record for most interceptions returned for touchdowns in a quarter. Wort, who is one of the Austin American-Statesman’s top 55 college football recruits from Texas, will be playing for the University of Oklahoma next year.

Wort’s interceptions weren’t just a case of being in the right place at the right time. For the New Braunfels team, film work preparation signaled when a screen would be thrown. Wort said he got the tip from watching film and noticing that on third-and-long plays, the opposing quarterback would often throw a screen pass. He recognized this on his first interception that produced a 35-yard return. Three minutes later, he scored again with a 26-yard return.

Coach Chuck Caniford credited his team’s dedication in practice and watching film for helping the team and its all-state linebacker secure two spots in the NFHS Record Book.

All of this happened while beating the Matadors at their home stadium, 51-6. The game just happened to be the Unicorns’ biggest win ever against the Matadors during their 94-game history.

Last year, New Braunfels went 13-1 and 7-0 in its district, but a move up to the larger Class 5A this year has proved challenging for the Unicorns. However, it was a challenge Wort and his teammates were up for against Seguin. This year, they moved up to Class 5A football, but with five returning defensive players, that strength of the team will help them in this stronger division.

Jenna Widmann is a fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University majoring in journalism (news editorial) and French.
When you play as a team, you win every time. Watch as eight of the nation’s top high school teams sweat it out at the third annual T-Mobile Invitational – a tournament that stresses the importance of team unity, commitment and community. Sponsored by the National Federation of State High School Associations. www.t-mobileinvitational.com

December 29th and 30th
Diane Dennis did not lose hope when her field hockey team’s newly finished field was vandalized.

Instead, Dennis, coach of the Portsmouth (Virginia) Churchland High School girls field hockey team, put her own hard work, money and time into fixing it up. Her team members saw the astounding effort their coach put in and raised $3,000 to install a fence around the field to help protect it from further damage.

Dennis’ example of determination and selflessness is one reason why the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) selected her as the 2008 Section 2 winner of the “National High School Spirit of Sport Award.”

“I was very surprised to hear I received the award,” Dennis said. “I know what I’ve done is small compared to what I’ve seen other people and coaches do.”

The NFHS created this award to recognize individuals who exemplify the ideals of the positive spirit of sport that represent the core mission of education-based athletics.

Dennis was one of eight section winners of the award because of her inspiration of the Churchland student-athletes to give back to others.

This became evident after she led her team to raise $1,200 for victims of Hurricane Katrina when at the same time, that money could have paid for needed uniforms.

“Originally, half of the money was going to uniforms and half to Katrina victims, but the team ended up giving all the money to Katrina victims after a player suggested we do so,” she said. “I was so proud of them.”

Dennis also inspired her team to sponsor a walk-a-thon to help raise money for breast cancer, but when another nearby high school walked for the same cause, the field hockey team donated its money to the other school so that a larger donation could be made.

She said the team also raised money for a nearby town when a tornado ripped through it.

“We are trying to do something every year. This year, we are doing another walk-a-thon to raise money for diabetes,” Dennis said.

Dennis and her field hockey team were the first-ever recipients of Churchland High School’s Sportsmanship Award, implemented by Principal Dr. Susan Bechtol, because of their leadership and community service.

As a field hockey player in high school and college, Dennis had always wanted to coach a girls team. After suggesting 11 years ago that the high school add a girls team, she was hired into that position.

Dennis said that while this year’s team is rebuilding, the girls have good attitudes and great spirits, seemingly just like their coach.

On the field, Dennis expects the girls to fulfill their commitment to the team so if they miss a practice or conditioning, she said they have to make it up.

But, academics come first in her program and she said she wants students involved in school.

“We want student-athletes – not what the old-school term describes as ‘dumb jocks,’” she said.
Instant Replay in High School Sports: Is it Necessary?

BY MATT VACHLON

Three separate controversial endings to boys and girls high school state playoff basketball games around the country this past season have heightened debate about whether the use of instant replay should be used for high school sporting events.

In South Carolina, Summerville beat Spartanburg, 50-48, to capture the 2008 South Carolina High School League (SCHSL) boys Class 4A state championship after a 75-foot desperation shot by Spartanburg, which sailed through the net after time expired, was waved off when the officials ruled it was not released in time.

The 2008 Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) Division 1 girls basketball state championship was won by Cincinnati Mount Notre Dame over West Chester Lakota West, 69-67, following a last-second lay-up. Controversy arose as to whether or not the shot left the shooter’s hand before time expired.

Finally, the result of a boys Class B semifinal game was disputed in Michigan, when Flint Powers Catholic defeated Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern, 66-65. After referees huddled together, it was determined that a buzzer-beater made by Forest Hills Northern was a two-point field goal, causing Northern to come up one point short. The two coaches disagreed as to whether the call was correct.

Replays of each game were shown on television broadcasts, the Internet and public sentiment was strong that the availability of instant replay would have offered the possibility for each call to be overturned. For now though, instant replay will not be used to review specific situations during state tournaments as the NFHS Basketball Rules Committee ultimately voted against all proposals at its meeting in April.

The committee had a number of concerns that factored in its decision. Among them were:

- Within a state, not all classes play in a facility that has monitor review available – thus setting up inequities within a state.
- It’s difficult to identify a “game-determining” event. Replay should only be restricted to last-second shots that question whether the ball is out of the hand of the shooter or include questions regarding if a shot was a two-point or three-point field goal.
- What do officials do when a violation is observed on the replay prior to a last-second shot that is missed or any other judgment calls?
- Review doesn’t necessarily give you a conclusive decision – the angles may not be best to determine.
- It puts the game officials in a difficult position to officiate games one way throughout the season and then be expected to use equipment in a culminating game that they haven’t used all season.
- The lead-up games to state tournaments are just as important in the quest to crown a champion as the final games.
- Once the Pandora’s Box of using instant replay is opened, there’s no going back.
- The National Collegiate Athletic Association replay rule has challenges – it’s not always adjudicated properly – and there have been times where there were equipment challenges and malfunctions.
- Interscholastic athletics is an educational environment with amateur participants, and the use of instant replay is not consistent with the mission/philosophy of amateur sports.
- Review prolongs the game and has no time limit. In fact, it may be inconclusive.
- Mistakes are part of the game and need to be dealt with and turned into an educational opportunity.

Many outside the committee supported its stance. While some, such as SCHSL Commissioner Jerome Singleton, said they would support a decision to implement an instant replay system, they acknowledged that several issues had to be worked through first.

Singleton said that the most-important question was whether or not the system would be used for judgment or rules applications. He also was skeptical as to whether it would solve every problem.

“When I looked at the play that happened in our state championship game, I couldn’t come to a conclusion,” Singleton said. “We were able to slow it down to 30 frames per second, and in about the 11th frame, the ball was in the shooter’s hand with the light off. But
in the 12th frame, it was out of his hand with the light on. So you still don’t have conclusive evidence as to whether he got the shot off in time.”

Singleton added that he wasn’t sure if it would be possible to slow a replay down by that much during a game and said more research needed to be done in terms of equipment requirements. He also was uncomfortable with the circumstances surrounding its use.

“We’re an association of many sports, which is different than the pros,” Singleton said. “We have to ask ourselves, ‘What specific answer we’re looking for – getting selective sports right, or all sports?’”

Henry Zaborniak, assistant commissioner of the Ohio High School Athletic Association, said that the rules would have to be reworked just to implement them on a limited basis in basketball.

“The NFHS rules state that the period ends in basketball when the horn sounds, and LED lights, when present, are simply an aid,” Zaborniak said. “When reviewing our state title game, replay determined that the ball was in the player’s hand for approximately 0.3 seconds after the light went on, but there was no sound to determine whether the lights matched when the horn went off.

“Since instant replay is visual, not auditory, the rules would need to be rewritten for what determines when the period ends.”

Zaborniak also said that since “approximately 99.9 percent” of Ohio’s high school courts don’t have LED lights, officials would be officiating with the horn for most of the season and then switching to using the LED lights during the playoffs.

Still many make the argument that it’s important to crown the proper champion. And replay has been successful at other levels. The National Football League and professional tennis have successfully implemented replay systems that allow participants to challenge calls they believe to be incorrect. In each case, a limited amount of challenges are allowed.

Instant replay use in the National Basketball Association is up to the discretion of the referees and only for limited situations involving shot selection, end-of-game situations, flagrant fouls and altercations.

The National Hockey League (NHL) and just this past season, Major League Baseball (MLB), utilize an instant replay system in which video is collected at a central location at or near the league office. The league determines its use in the NHL, while discretion of use is granted to the crew chief of the umpiring crew in MLB.

Instant replay has made its way to the college level as well, although only in football and basketball. In football, a replay official reviews every play of every game and determines if it is necessary to stop play, while each head coach additionally gets one challenge as well. In basketball, issues involving shot selection, end-of-game situations, flagrant fouls, timing issues and who should shoot free throws can be reviewed.

It has also been successfully used by the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL).

In 2005, the MSHSL had a controversial goal called back in a boys ice hockey tournament semifinal game that MSHSL Associate Director Kevin Merkle said may have affected who won. Two weeks later, the championship game of the boys basketball state championship was decided when a player made the game-winning shot while lying on the three-point line.

As a result, the MSHSL now employs two replay judges to use instant replay when necessary to review goals in ice hockey during the quarterfinals, semifinals and championship round of the state tournament. For basketball, replay is available to referees for the semifinals and finals of the state tournament to review whether a shot was released in time, whether it was a two-point or three-point field goal and whether the clock malfunctioned when there is “less than one minute and a point differential of six points or less” in the final period. Checking to see whether a shot was released in time can also be done at the end of the first half.

Merkle said that it has helped that the later rounds of the tournaments for basketball and ice hockey are played in professional arenas. He said that costs are able to be kept down because the games are already televised and the arenas are already equipped with the necessary equipment.

“We had the view that if we had the technology we’d like to get it right,” Merkle said. “There was concern that we could be headed down a road about asking where this might end, but so far no one else has requested it.”

Merkle said that although replay has not had to be used often, it has been successful when used. Last year in basketball and ice hockey, two close calls were made by officials and the crowd calmed down after replay confirmed their calls were correct.

As instant replay continues to be successfully employed at the higher levels of sporting events, the issue is not going to go away. The NFHS acknowledges this fact.

“This will be something on the radar for years to come,” said Mary Struckhoff, NFHS assistant director and Basketball Rules Committee liaison. “Technology is only going to keep improving.”

Matt Vachlon is a fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University, majoring in journalism (news editorial) and minoring in sociology and Spanish.
Editor’s Note: This interview with Natasha Kaiser-Brown, former Olympic sprinter, was conducted by Jenna Widmann, fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. Kaiser-Brown was inducted into the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame on July 7, 2008 in Washington, D.C.

Natasha Kaiser-Brown lost only one race in four years and claimed nine state championships during her days at Roosevelt High School in Des Moines, Iowa. After graduating in 1985 with school and state records that stand today, she attended the University of Missouri where she won the 400 meters at the 1994 NCAA championships, setting a collegiate record. Kaiser-Brown was a member of the 1992 and 1996 U.S. Summer Olympic teams and helped bring in a silver medal running the opening leg on the women’s 4x400-meter relay team at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. Today, Kaiser-Brown is in her eighth year as coach of the men’s and women’s track teams at Drake (Iowa) University.

Q: What was your experience during high school like?  
Kaiser-Brown: High school was awkward for me. I was terribly shy and not confident at all. Running track seemed to fit my personality well. You don’t have to talk to anyone when you train or when you compete.

Q: Growing up, who was your hero in the running realm?  
Kaiser-Brown: I really did not know much about the history of track other than Jesse Owens and Wilma Rudolph. It wasn’t until I started attending the Drake Relays with my family that I truly developed an appreciation for the sport. One year, I saw this massive sprinter named Herschel Walker. Just his sheer size and strength made him amazing to watch. Herschel took up the entire lane. I could not tell you if he won or lost; I just liked to watch him sprint.

Q: You set state and Des Moines (Iowa) Roosevelt High School’s records in the 100 meters (.11.5), 200 meters (.24.1) and 400 meters (.54.09) and now, these records remain untouched in the top five all-time event performances. How does that make you feel?  
Kaiser-Brown: It is a mix of emotions. On the one hand, I am pretty thrilled that the records still stand. It is like I have left a small mark in track and field in Iowa. Now that they have been around a while, it would be OK to see them broken and I think I know the young lady that could do it.

Q: You were a nine-time Iowa state high school champion. How did you get to be that fast?  
Kaiser-Brown: Just for the record, seven of those medals came from individual events but I had some help from my teammates for the two that came from relays. I’m pretty sure God and my parents did all the groundwork for my ability. God blessed me with two of the best parents in the world. I inherited my dad’s calf muscles and my mom’s determination. I also spent a lot of time in my youth walking, biking, skateboarding and swimming with my three older brothers. Track was the sport that virtually everyone in my family (including aunts and uncles) participated in. So, it came pretty natural for me.

Q: What is the most important aspect of becoming a successful athlete?  
Kaiser-Brown: It is hard to narrow down all of the things that go into what makes a person successful, but I would give a lot of credit to the people who surround that person. No one can honestly say that they got to where they are by doing everything on his or her own. That’s impossible. Somewhere along the way, someone takes a chance and lends words of encouragement, offers some help or simply allows you to be on a team that provides you the opportunity to develop. In my situation, it seemed that from the time I entered school, my teachers, the few friends that I had, my parents, the community … everyone was working so hard to help me in life. It was almost as if I had no choice. I was going to be good in something and they were going to see to it.
Q: Who has been part of your support system?
Kaiser-Brown: My family has been great. I had perfect parents that knew how to keep me humble while training and preparing to do my best. My three crazy brothers were my balance in life. We would talk about anything but track: movies, friends, music and school. But then there was just the Des Moines community of coaches, teachers, neighbors and shop owners who all played a role in positioning me where I am today.

Q: You’ve represented the United States on 17 national teams. What does it feel like to represent your country?
Kaiser-Brown: Talk about awesome! It’s as if you are an ambassador for the nation. There is some pressure to make sure that your actions on and off the track do not offend the country where you are competing, but you also want to win and represent the United States well. Each team that I served on was fun and exciting. In the 1993 World Championships, they raised two U.S. flags for my teammate Jearl Miles-Clark and myself for our first- and second-place finishes in the women’s 400 meters. You cannot imagine the sense of pride we had while listening to the National Anthem. Our country was on top!

Q: You are the head coach of both the men’s and women’s track teams at Drake University. How much of a difference is there in coaching both genders?
Kaiser-Brown: The longer I coach, the less difference I actually see. I think it really depends on the athlete and their past experiences with the sport that makes the big difference. I have had men cry and women throw things when they perform poorly, which is opposite of what you would expect.

Q: During your time at Drake, the track team has set 15 school records. What coaching methods do you use to help contribute to that success?
Kaiser-Brown: I wish I could say that I have this special thing I do, but in reality, the success lies in recruiting talented individuals and not getting them hurt. Coaches will talk about all the great workouts they have created and what they do differently with their athletes but in the end, if you have a good athlete and take the time to know what makes them tick, then you will be successful.

Q: What do you think about the influx of performance-enhancing drugs in track and field?
Kaiser-Brown: Unfortunately, the use of drugs in ALL sports has been around for a long time. The testing agencies are now developing new and improved ways to detect the illegal substances. I am proud of the stance that our sport has taken against offenders and truly hope that other sports will follow suit. Why anyone would use enhancing agents is beyond me. I could not fathom looking back on my career knowing that I cheated.

Q: Do you believe your experiences as a high school athlete helped prepare you for a coaching career? In what ways?
Kaiser-Brown: Definitely! All my peers tend to coach the way they were coached in high school and college. They create a blend of coaching philosophies from those experiences. I liked the way I was coached and use several of the same workouts in my training today. I also appreciated the faith and trust my high school had in me and I try to respect my athletes the same way.

Q: You were inducted into the National High School Hall of Fame in July. What was going through your head when you heard you would be inducted?
Kaiser-Brown: I got the call at work and I really thought they were going to say, “Your information looked good but, it does not meet the criteria we were looking for. Try again next year.” I had checked out the Web site while gathering my information to see who had been inducted and when I saw the names like Herschel Walker and Chandra Cheeseborough, I figured I was a long shot. That induction meant a lot to me. In fact, I am wearing a shirt from Washington D.C. right now that my husband bought for me to commemorate the occasion. My husband and father came with me and it was the first time since my wedding that I was able to share something so special with my two favorite guys. My dad passed away August 28, so the award and that night have even greater significance for me. ☼
The Real Solution to the Parent Problem in High School Athletics

BY DR. DAVID HOCH, CMAA

While the vast majority of parents are good people and supportive of our athletic programs, there are a few who may be misguided and extremely problematic. There isn’t an athletic administrator in the United States who doesn’t have disaster stories about the incidents and negative encounters that they’ve had with parents. It is universal and, without a doubt, the No. 1 problem in high school athletics.

Theories abound about why problems associated with parents are as great as any time in history. Perhaps, it is due to increased scrutiny and public accountability of our educational systems or a general move away from civility. Legislation such as “No Child Left Behind,” being advocates for their children or the misguided quest of an athletic scholarship may provide the impetus for some.

It normally isn’t difficult to identify problematic parents, although they often manifest varying behaviors. Some may be unrealistic and bring with them a sense of entitlement. Their son or daughter has to make the team, play the majority of minutes and start every game. Usually the love of child overrules all sense of logic and reason.

For others, rules, policies and procedures are great until they directly affect their child. If there is a perceived problem meeting or following these established standards, mom or dad then demands their repeal or having these guidelines rewritten to suit the family’s individual needs. No thought is ever given as to how or why these documents were created and that they exist for all participants.

Commonly, obnoxious and bullying parents may bypass the athletic director and take their complaints directly to the top – the principal, superintendent or school board. Of course, by taking this approach, they fully expect that every demand will be immediately granted regardless of the merit of their argument.

Also, when things don’t go to a parent’s liking with a team – translated as not winning enough – it is usually in their opinion the fault of the coach. Armed with incomplete facts and faulty reasoning, misguided parents often demand that a coaching change has to be made immediately. Never are aspects such as the overall talent level, difficulty of the schedule, injuries and any number of other factors fairly considered.

Whatever the reasons may be, we have to work with problematic parents and develop a process and protocols for dealing with them. The first step is to establish parameters, if you haven’t already. Determine what is acceptable and what isn’t in an education-based athletic program. Spell out all of the responsibilities and procedures for athletes and coaches, and establish expectations for parents and fans. Put all of this vital information into mission statements and policies.

Once you have a philosophy and policies in place, the next step is to educate and communicate with your parents at every opportunity. Effective efforts include, but are not restricted to the following:

- **Preseason parents’ meetings.** These are proactive evenings during which the athletic administrator and coaches inform the parents about everything involved with the athletic program and their teams. A wide variety of settings and methods, including PowerPoint presentations, can and should be used. The ultimate goal is to eliminate misinformation, set standards, answer all questions and avoid as many potential problems as possible.

- **Handbooks, flyers and other printed materials.** These documents provide more depth and details than can usually be presented during preseason parents’ meetings. Another benefit of written material is that it can be given to any parent who missed the meeting and should be used as a resource and reference material.

- **Newsletters and Web sites.** These two modes of communication have the advantage of being able to update information, make corrections and get it out to many families in a timely fashion.
• **Booster clubs.** While these organizations exist to support the athletic or activity programs at a school, they also can partially serve to communicate and educate its members. Often, a booster club will have its own e-mail distribution lists, newsletters and possibly Web sites. These communicative possibilities provide additional outlets to list the athletic department’s mission, policies and expectations.

• **One-on-one meetings.** If a problem has occurred or if there are some unanswered questions, a meeting with the coach or athletic director and the problematic parent can be a very effective technique for dealing with serious concerns. If the coach schedules one of these sessions, it is often wise to have a third party – athletic director or principal – to also sit in to verify what was discussed and to ensure proper decorum.

In addition to the educational and communication efforts with parents, one should not forget to also involve the coaches. Pre-season staff meetings, policy manuals, guidelines and frequent memos are vital to ensure that coaches are providing the same information and philosophical base to your parents. Involving coaches helps to prevent communication gaps which can and should eliminate many potential problems.

Once your procedures and expectations are communicated, you need to enforce them and this has to be done in a consistent and fair manner. Dealing with a wayward parent always needs to be handled in a polite and professional manner, but one also cannot avoid any situation which may be awkward or confrontational. As educators, we have to have standards for deportment and they need to extend to parents who should serve as a positive example for students and other adults.

The real key, therefore, is that athletic directors need support from their principals and superintendents. Without this backing, all of the educational and enforcement efforts are of little or no value, because the problems will continue and perhaps increase. It doesn’t take long for misguided parents to realize that their complaints can bring about a favorable decision by passing over the athletic administrator and going directly to a supervisor who may not want to ruffle any feathers.

It is also important that administrators don’t simply placate, pacify and appease misguided parents. Once problematic parents realize that they can influence decisions and side-step policies and procedures, they seize control of the athletic program. It is, therefore, also important to reiterate to parents that they need to follow the chain of command – first contact the coach, athletic director, principal and superintendent in that order with any concern.

In order to gain administrative support, athletic administrators need to supply not only well-crafted policies and procedures but also sound rationale for their existence. To accomplish this objective, background information and what is being done in similar high school settings around the country needs to also be provided. After all, the last thing that a school district administrator wants is more complaints and controversy.

To achieve a supportive system when dealing with problematic parents, supervisors – principals and superintendents – need to be constantly kept abreast of problems and developments, and then publicly support their athletic administrators. When loopholes are discovered in your policies and procedures, look to make the corrections prior to the next season after getting input and guidance from the affected coaches and athletic administrators. By taking these steps, you will have everyone working in harmony for the benefit of your student-athletes.

If it takes a village to raise a child as the expression goes, it certainly takes the entire educational team – coaches, athletic administrators, principals, superintendents and school boards – to effectively deal with the parent problem. It is not a one-shot-and-done process; it has to be an ongoing, ever-evolving effort, and no one said that it would be easy.

### Selected References


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Dr. David Hoch is the athletic director at Loch Raven High School in Towson, Maryland (Baltimore County). He assumed this position in 2003 after nine years as director of athletics at Eastern Technological High School in Baltimore County. He has 24 years experience coaching basketball, including 14 years on the collegiate level. Hoch, who has a doctorate in sports management from Temple University, is past president of the Maryland State Athletic Directors Association, and he formerly was president of the Maryland State Coaches Association. He has had more than 250 articles published in professional magazines and journals, as well as two textbook chapters. Hoch is a member of the NFHS High School Today Publications Committee.
Editor’s Note: Some of the information for this article was supplied by the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA).

According to the NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, more than seven million high school students participate in interscholastic athletics every year, and many of these student-athletes will face some type of injury.

In 2001, a study published in the Journal of Pediatrics revealed that 715,000 sport and recreation-related injuries occur in school settings. A national sport injury surveillance study conducted by Dawn Comstock of Ohio State University has noted 2.9 million interscholastic athletic injuries among nine different sports in the past two years.

As a way of confronting sports-related injuries, a task force was established in 2004 to develop strategies to reduce the number and severity of these injuries. Organized by the NATA (National Athletic Trainers’ Association), the task force was composed of representatives of 16 professional organizations dedicated to enhancing the safety of secondary school athletic activities as well as providing quality athletic health care for these athletes.

The Appropriate Medical Care for the Secondary School Aged Athlete summary statement released in June 2008 is an interassociation effort outlining 11 strategies for the prevention and treatment of injury and illness as they relate to athletic participation by secondary school-aged individuals. Proper athletic injury care goes far beyond the idea of emergency care at an athletic event.

A health-care team needs to be established by schools to ensure that appropriate medical care is available to all participants in athletic programs. Once established, this program can help reduce the number of injuries as well as preventing minor problems from becoming major time-loss injuries. The summary statement develops 11 strategies for the prevention and immediate treatment of athletic injuries and illness.

### SUMMARY STATEMENT STRATEGIES

1. **Develop and implement a comprehensive athletic health-care administrative system**  
   Organizations sponsoring athletic programs for secondary school-aged individuals should establish a comprehensive athletic health-care team (AHCT) that ensures appropriate medical care is provided for all participants. The AHCT should coordinate the various aspects of the athletes’ health in a coherent, effective and professional manner.

2. **Determine the individual’s readiness to participate**  
   A preparticipation physical examination (PPE) is used to identify individuals who may be at risk for the development of injuries related to their activity and those who may be at risk for sudden death due to an underlying medical problem.

3. **Promote safe and appropriate practice, competition and treatment facilities**  
   Provide a safe environment for all athletes, including keeping the premises in safe repair, inspecting the premises for obvious and hidden hazards, removing the hazards if possible or warning of their presence.

4. **Advise on the selection, fit, function and maintenance of athletic equipment**  
   Provide access to appropriate equipment that is properly fit in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations and maintained by qualified personnel.

5. **Develop and implement a comprehensive emergency action plan**  
   An emergency action plan (EAP) is essential to ensure that all incidents are responded to in an appropriate manner and that the roles of the AHCT members are well-defined and communicated in advance.
6. Establish protocols regarding environmental conditions
It is crucial that organizations responsible for athletic events develop policies and protocols to address the safety of play in hazardous environmental conditions.

7. Provide for on-site recognition, evaluation and immediate treatment of injury and illness, with appropriate referrals
Having a qualified individual on site and ready to care for the ill or injured person is critical to the safety of the participants and for decision-making regarding when an athlete can safely return to play.

8. Facilitate rehabilitation and reconditioning
The process of rehabilitation and reconditioning is fundamental for the safe return of injured athletes to their previous level of competition as quickly as possible and prevention of further injuries.

9. Provide for psychosocial consultation and referral
The AHCT should be able to identify potential psychosocial pathologies (e.g., disordered eating) frequently associated with secondary school-aged athletes and refer them for appropriate diagnosis and management.

10. Provide scientifically sound nutritional counseling and education
It is essential that valid and understandable information regarding nutrition be provided to secondary school-aged athletes, parents and coaches. Even more essential is the ability to refer athletes to appropriate medical personnel for treatment when necessary.

11. Develop injury and illness prevention strategies
A public health framework can be used to develop effective interventions to reduce the affliction of injuries and illnesses to these young persons.

   By developing an athletic health-care team approach, high schools can take the lead in reducing the number and severity of athletic-related injuries and illnesses. Proper health care for athletics has outgrown the notion of just having emergency care at an interscholastic contest. Appropriate medical care must include all the strategies mentioned above.

   In addition to the NATA and the National Federation of State High School Associations, the task force is composed of 15 other groups, including such organizations as the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, Emergency Medical Services, National Association of School Nurses, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Safety Council and the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. For more information, visit www.nata.org.

Brian Robinson, MS, ATC, LAT, is the athletic trainer at Glenbrook South High School in Glenview, Illinois. Robinson is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee.
Liability Issues Related to Transportation of Student-athletes

BY LEE GREEN

The Issue

In an era when shrinking school budgets must be reconciled against rapidly climbing costs for the purchase of school vehicles, dramatic increases in contract rates for the use of common carriers and soaring fuel costs, one of the greatest challenges facing school athletics programs is how to fulfill the legal duty to provide safe transportation for student-athletes.

The duty to provide safe transportation arises from the “in loco parentis” role imposed by courts on schools – the legal precept that in certain contexts, schools stand in the place of parents and must exercise a standard of care to protect young persons equivalent to that which would be exercised by their parents. With regard to student-athletes, courts have generally required that schools provide safe round-trip transport from the school to all off-campus practices, competitions and other sports-related activities.

Although courts nationwide have consistently ruled that schools have an affirmative duty to provide round-trip transport to sports events for student-athletes and to exercise reasonable care in that transport, precise standards regarding the legal definition of “reasonable care in transport” have not emerged from the case law. The standard of care imposed in a particular situation depends on the mode of transport being employed, the identity and characteristics of the driver, the age and other characteristics of the passengers, and any other relevant circumstances.

What has emerged from the case law is not a clear-cut set of legally acceptable modes for transporting student-athletes, but rather a general hierarchy of judicially preferred methods ranging from those that courts tend to look upon with favor to those marginally acceptable to courts to those that courts tend to look upon with extreme disfavor. Before examining that hierarchy, it is instructive to consider the facts and outcome in a judicial decision that is typical of the safe transportation court cases.

Case Law

In Clement v. Griffin, a 1994 decision of the Court of Appeals of Louisiana dealing with the liability of a school to student-athletes injured in an automobile accident, liability rulings were issued with regard to the type of vehicle being used, the maintenance of the vehicle, the characteristics of the driver, the training of the driver, and the operation of the vehicle by the driver at the time of the accident.

The accident occurred as a 15-passenger van carrying the Delgado Community College baseball team was traveling along an interstate highway en route to an away game. The van was carrying 13 passengers and was being driven by a student coach who did not hold the legally required chauffeur’s license. When a tire blew out, the van careened into the highway’s grassy median and rolled over three times. Several of the passengers were ejected from the vehicle and all suffered serious injuries. The ensuing negligence suit named as defendants the driver Griffin, the school and the State of Louisiana.

In its decision, the Court of Appeals ruled that schools have several duties with regard to providing safe transportation for student-athletes: (1) to choose a proper vehicle, (2) to properly maintain the vehicle, (3) to select a qualified driver, (4) to properly train the driver and (5) to ensure that the driver properly operates the vehicle during transport.

Although Clement v. Griffin was decided several years before the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued rollover warnings for users of 15-passenger vans and more than a decade before the enactment in 2005 by Congress of new safety standards for such vans and limitations on their use by schools, the Louisiana Court of Appeals nevertheless acknowledged the already existing reputation of 15-passenger vans for above-average risk of rollover accidents. Much of the court’s opinion focused on the role of proper tire pressure in preventing 15-passenger van blowouts and rollercoasters and the court concluded that the evidence overwhelmingly indicated that the tires had been dramatically underinflated (45 p.s.i. instead of the recom-
teams at a school, it is incumbent upon school administrators to develop procedures for inspecting such vehicles and ensuring that the drivers are properly licensed for the number of passengers to be transported. The school should also investigate the purchase of a rider to the insurance policy on the vehicle – basic policies typically do not cover injuries to passengers such as student-athletes being transported on behalf of a school.

**Vehicles Owned By and Driven By Student-Athletes or Their Parents:** Courts tend to look with extreme disfavor upon this mode of transport and generally will assign liability to the school and its athletics personnel for allowing such transport to or from school sports events. It is impossible in this limited space to provide a full exploration of the many combinations and permutations related to this method of transport – in sum, the recommended course of action by which schools may fulfill their in loco parentis role is to provide round-trip transportation to all athletics practices, competitions and other activities and insist that all student-athletes use only the school-provided method of transport.

**Hierarchy of Transportation Modes**

*Independent Contract Carriers:* Courts tend to find that where schools employ outside common carriers to transport student-athletes, transference of risk has occurred and the school will be held liable for an accident only where the independent carrier was using visibly dangerous vehicles or its drivers were acting in a visibly dangerous manner.

*Properly Maintained School Vehicles Driven By Properly Licensed Personnel:* Courts tend to look with favor upon this option and will generally find that schools have satisfied their duty of reasonable care when this mode of transport is employed. An exception would be where the school uses 15-passenger vans in violation of Public Law 109-59 enacted by Congress in 2005. The statute prohibits schools from using such vans in the transport of K-12 students unless the vans comply with standards prescribed for school buses. Information on the exact requirements of the law may be found on the NHTSA Web site (www.nhtsa.dot.gov).

Another exception would be where factors are present that indicate it might be unsafe for even a properly licensed driver to operate the vehicle. For example, sometimes a coach will work a long day teaching at the school, then drive a team to a competition, coach that competition, and then drive the team back to the school late at night, resulting in a total number of hours worked that day far in excess of the maximum that would be legally permitted for an over-the-road truck driver.

A final exception would be the use of student drivers. Even where student drivers are properly licensed (unlikely in most jurisdictions because of minimum age requirements for a chauffeur’s license), courts look with extreme disfavor on the use of student drivers to transport teams.

*Vehicles Owned and Driven By Athletics Personnel:* Courts tend to look with disfavor upon the use of vehicles owned by athletics personnel to transport student-athletes and will generally rule that it is a lack of reasonable care by schools to employ this method because of the difficulty in monitoring the type of vehicle being used and its condition. If this mode is the only possible means of transport for certain

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How High School Today is Developed

BY JOHN GILLIS

As co-editor of “High School Today,” I am very pleased that you are reading this particular issue of the magazine.

With its recently greatly expanded circulation that now includes superintendents, principals, athletic directors and school board presidents in all high schools throughout the United States, its articles and messages are being regularly disseminated to a vast and all-encompassing national audience.

Its previous reading audience of state association administrators, coaches, officials, media representatives and fine arts administrators still receive the publication, thereby enabling it to reach virtually everyone connected in some way, shape or form with our nation’s high schools.

As a reader, you might have wondered how this publication is put together, how its article topics are identified, how a reader might submit such an article idea, and other things along those lines.

Perhaps a bit of an historical perspective might give you further insight.

In 2007, the NFHS decided to replace its longstanding organizational publication “The NFHS News” with “High School Today.” That change included a shift in its editorial content to reflect some of its new reading audiences. It also resulted in a change from an organizational news magazine to more of a professional development-type publication for educational professionals who are involved in some manner with our nation’s high schools.

As a means of overseeing and administering its editorial content, the NFHS formed the “High School Today Publications Committee.” A complete listing of those committee members is listed on page 4 of every issue.

As you will note on that listing, that committee is composed of individuals whose professions match those of the target reading audiences. The logic behind that decision was who would better know and understand the issues impacting a superintendent in a high school anywhere in America, for example, than an active high school superintendent?

With that thought in mind, the NFHS actively sought out highly qualified individuals from around the nation who fit those occupational profiles. It also sought individuals with strong skills in journalism, writing, editing and English. Perhaps most importantly, it sought individuals who could network with their peers within their respective professions and actively solicit articles to be written by those individuals.

As you peruse this or any other issue of “High School Today,” you will note that its articles are written by a variety of authors from around the nation.

In some instances, the High School Today Publications Committee members write the articles themselves. In other instances, they could be written by someone the committee members asked to write them.

The High School Today Publications Committee meets twice a year in Indianapolis – in February and August. During those meetings, the committee members review and critique the issues published since the previous meeting, and through that process seek to grow the publication from an editorial standpoint.

The committee members also spend considerable time identifying key topics and issues that affect high schools in contemporary society, and through that process, attempt to identify article ideas.

If you, as a reader, have an article idea, please feel free contact either “High School Today” co-editor Bruce Howard or me at bhoward@nfhs.org and jgillis@nfhs.org, respectively. Perhaps you would like to take that a step further and write the article yourself.

We would greatly welcome your input in either instance. As a reader who likely is involved with high schools in one of the aforementioned capacities, this publication represents you and your profession. As such, your contributions and feedback are very valuable to the process.

DID YOU KNOW?

John Gillis is an assistant director of the National Federation of State High School Associations and co-editor of High School Today.
Membership Available in Five NFHS Professional Groups

BY BRUCE HOWARD

High school coaches, officials, speech and music directors, and spirit group coordinators all can benefit from a variety of professional services and programs offered by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

The NFHS Officials Association is open to high school contest officials and has approximately 130,000 members. Members receive resource materials and other information, $1 million liability insurance, the NFHS Officials’ Quarterly publication, a national awards program, opportunity for service on NFHS rules committees and availability of NFHS case books and rules books online.

The NFHS Coaches Association, with a membership of about 25,000 high school coaches nationwide, offers $1 million liability insurance, the NFHS Coaches’ Quarterly publication, a national awards program, opportunity for service on NFHS rules committees and availability of NFHS case books and rules books online, as well as resources and other information.

The NFHS Music Association aims to identify and meet the common needs of music educators who participate in, or sponsor, high school activities, which are an educational extension of the school music curriculum. Members receive The NFHS Music Association Journal, as well as liability insurance, while acting in the capacity of school music director or music contest/festival adjudicator.

The NFHS Speech, Debate & Theatre Association provides in-service training, shares information on coaching skills, assists state coordinators with development of programs, and provides high school directors with opportunities for professional development. Members receive access to NFHS speech and debate publications and liability insurance, while acting in the capacity of a school speech, debate or theatre director.

The NFHS Spirit Association is open to coaches/advisors of junior high and senior high school cheerleader, pom and drill team groups. The association promotes safety consciousness for spirit groups, standardizes guidelines for spirit groups, provides information on coaching techniques, shares information and ideas to enhance spirit programs and recognizes, supports and promotes spirit groups. Members receive the NFHS Coaches’ Quarterly publication, $1 million liability insurance and opportunities for awards.

To obtain more information or join any of these NFHS professional organizations, visit the Web site at www.nfhs.org.

Bruce Howard is director of publications and communications of the National Federation of State High School Associations and co-editor of High School Today.
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association

7,750 members include:
- High school athletic directors
- City athletic directors
- District athletic directors
- County athletic directors
- Middle school athletic directors
- Athletic coordinators
- Executive directors of state athletic administrator associations
- Retired athletic directors
- College student memberships

Benefits to Members:
- Interscholastic Athletic Administration magazine
- Leadership Training Program of 30 course curriculum
- Student Scholarship/Essay Program
- Opportunity to attendance annual national conference
- Three levels of professional certification
- Liability insurance
- Professional Outreach Program
- NIAAA Hall of Fame
- Life insurance
- Special rate for From the Gym to the Jury
  Risk Management newsletter
- Opportunities to serve national committees
- Selection of helpful media products and published materials
- Collegiate credit & degree programs in athletic administration that utilize NIAAA LTP
- Application for the Sport Turf Field Renovation project
- Awards & recognition program
- Endowment Program
- Approved Fundraiser Guide
- National Emergency Network
- On-line logo shop
- Discount on Long Term Health Care
- On-line Buyer’s Guide

Go to www.niaaa.org for further information on membership, services, programs, partnerships and professional development opportunities.
In January 2007, the National Federation of State High School Associations launched its Coach Education program with the unveiling of its signature “Fundamentals of Coaching” course. With a unique student-centered curriculum emphasizing the role of the teacher/coach in promoting learning and the educational mission of interscholastic athletics, “Fundamentals of Coaching” was purposefully designed with and for interscholastic teacher/coaches and covers the eight domains of coaching competencies identified in the revised National Standards for Sport Coaches (National Association for Sports and Physical Education, 2006).

The course’s Student First, Athlete Second philosophy and research-based content is delivered in a way that assists all coaches in creating the optimal learning environment to ensure the development of the whole student.

To date, 41 member state associations have adopted “Fundamentals of Coaching” as fulfilling completely, or in some way, their state coach education requirement. The course has been greeted with widespread enthusiasm and excitement with more than 40,000 coaches signing up for the course since its launch. This is a good start, but it is just that – a start.

Although it is estimated that one million adults coach in our nation’s schools, it is reported that only 16 percent have received any formal coach education. This is an important issue for all stakeholders invested in our nation’s youth as research has shown that participating in sports does not automatically result in positive or negative outcomes.

Sports are not in and of themselves educational; however, if they are organized and played in certain ways, they do support educational goals. The educational value of athletics is largely dependent on how the activity is structured, and in general that means what the coach chooses to teach and model. When structured appropriately, athletics offers a vehicle to teach students skills that contribute to the overall development of each participant.

In the recently published National Coaching Report (NASPE, 2008), it was noted that the need and practicality of coaching education has been debated for more than a half-century in the United States. However, the research clearly shows that the quality of a young person’s athletic experience is to a large extent determined by the quality of coaching and/or leadership in the sport program. Participating in organized sport is associated with higher grade-point averages, lower high school dropout rates and higher educational expectations (e.g., Fredericks & Eccles, 2006).

The launch of Fundamentals of Coaching represents the first step in the development of the NFHS Coach Certification program that is expected to begin late 2009. The NFHS envisions that a number of courses and learning modules will need to be developed and activated to support this initiative. The organization is committed to providing professional development opportunities for teacher/coaches that will both protect and promote the place of educational athletics in our nation’s schools. The NFHS is no doubt on the right track and has set an aggressive timeline in terms of product development to achieve its goals. For the sake of our nation’s youth, we can only hope that we are moving fast enough.

Although there is no research to support this position, some school administrators may be reluctant to require coaches to complete coaching education, fearful that additional demands and expense may dissuade individuals from getting and remaining involved. National organizations such as the National Association of State Boards of Education and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) have recognized, however, the importance of coach education and have strongly endorsed its need and, in the case of NASSP, the NFHS Coach Education Program. These groups, along with the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, support the growing body of research that illustrates the importance of the coach in determining the experience of all students involved in interscholastic athletics.

Coach education is not a luxury or something a school, school district or state can choose to ignore, but a necessity – particularly if we are to fulfill the educational mission of interscholastic athletics and contribute to the education of the whole child. The NFHS Coach Education Program may not be the panacea to all issues facing interscholastic athletics in this country, but it does represent a hugely important initiative that when complete will transform the face of educational programming for teacher/coaches in this country.
New Research Available in ‘The Case for High School Activities’

BY JENNA WIDMANN

Ninety years worth of discussion on the benefits of interscholastic activities continues today.

And it remains a very positive story as the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) recently updated its “The Case for High School Activities” to show how athletics and activities help produce better citizens.

“They help build stronger, more honorable, diversified students who gain integrity from co-curricular interscholastic activities,” said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS director of educational services.

“The Case for High School Activities,” which is a “living” document, is now on the NFHS Web site. According to “The Case,” sports and fine arts activities “instill a sense of pride in community, teach lifelong lessons of teamwork and self-discipline and facilitate the physical and emotional development of our nation’s youth.”

The updated document uses recent factual findings that support what it believes is true.

Hopkins said that the NFHS found research that shows anyone who throws on a jersey, joins a debate team or helps paint a backdrop set will benefit from participation.

“The studies are not conducted by us, but are from all over the country and by some of our state associations,” he said.

According to Hopkins, these benefits don’t come from “extra”-curricular activities, but rather from “co”-curricular activities. The term “co-curricular” was derived from the notion that those activities co-exist and go hand-in-hand with the classroom curriculum, rather than the notion that they are something separate or above and beyond it. There are lessons learned on the fields and courts that can’t be taught in Spanish class or any other classroom setting, for example.

“Co-curricular activities help with giving an overall perspective,” he said. “They help to create people who can accept defeat and take all things in stride.”

During Hopkins’ exploration for new research, he found that there are certain harmful tendencies that involved students are more likely to avoid.

The United States Department of Education found that students who spend no time in interscholastic activities are 49 percent more likely to use drugs and 37 percent more likely to become teen parents than those who spend one to four hours per week in afterschool groups.

In a national telephone survey of teens in 2001, more than half said they wouldn’t watch as much TV or play video games if they had other things to do after school.

A Boston University study published in Adolescence in 2001 reported that among the 1,115 Massachusetts high school students questioned, athletes were less likely to use cocaine and psychedelics and less likely to smoke cigarettes.

Besides health benefits, students who involved themselves in activities receive better grades and are attributed to being civically active.

In 2001, Gary Overton, a doctoral candidate in the East Carolina University School of Education, in collaboration with the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, found that the grade-point average of athletes was 2.98 while non-athletes averaged 2.17. Also, 41.8 percent of non-athletes received discipline referrals in comparison to 33.3 percent of athletes. Finally, this study discovered that dropout rates differed dramatically. Athletes were at a mean rate of 0.6 percent, while non-athletes had a dropout rate of 10.32 percent.

A research project published in 2006 by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE), said
that 18- to 25-year-olds who participated in sport activities during high school were more likely than non-participants to be engaged in volunteering, registering to vote, voting in the 2000 election, feeling comfortable speaking in a public setting, and watching news more closely than non-participants.

With this information, Hopkins said this is the sort of documentation that one must use to help defend spending money on co-curricular activities.

He said that less than three percent of an overall school budget is all that is needed to fund the cost of high school activity programs, but some cities are nowhere near allocating that much.

For example, Chicago’s Public Schools had an overall budget of $4.6 billion dollars in 2007, giving the activity programs $36.2 million which comes out to be one-seventh of 1 percent (.00789). The 2008 Seattle Public School system budgeted one-ninth of one percent (.00942) for activities.

For more information on “The Case for High School Activities,” go to the NFHS Web site or use the following link: http://www.nfhs.org/web/2008/09/the_case_for_high_school_activit.aspx.

Struckhoff pointed out that a project like this is rather unyielding, as it will never truly be completely finished. The plan is to create a library or collection of video offerings that will complement all aspects of the rules book and mechanics of all NFHS sports.

“Think of it – the possibilities are endless when you consider all the situations and educational snippets you can create or capture on video. But the NFHS is committed to these efforts and providing officials the tools they need to improve their skills and competency levels. This means better-officiated contests for all of our participants – a ‘win-win’ in my book,” Struckhoff said.

Some of the initial work was completed by eight Midwestern states. The NFHS and those eight states have joined forces and pooled their resources to move the project along and offer it to more states. Some of the initial offerings available to officials when the site goes live will have come from the efforts of the original eight states.

Another critical step along the way has been to identify content experts in the various sports for which the NFHS writes rules. These content experts will work with the respective NFHS rules editors and committees to develop the video and other educational materials that will ultimately reside on the online site.

Mark Koski, NFHS assistant director and rules editor for soccer, said that he will be breaking down the 18 main rules of soccer and will be providing video clips of major points of emphasis in order to help officials at varying levels of experience. He said that he is currently gathering information and is in the process of breaking down each rule to detail it with pictures, clips and various interactive programs.

“It is always best to see footage,” Koski said. “As a former coach and athlete, I’ve found that there is nothing like learning from actually seeing it happen.”

Users will be able to log on to the NFHS Web site (www.nfhs.org) and be easily directed to the officials’ education link.

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Nominations sought for Spirit of Sport Award

BY JOHN GILLIS

As a means of recognizing deserving individuals, the NFHS developed its “National High School Spirit of Sport Award,” which was conferred to one national winner and to eight section winners in 2008.

At this time, the National High School Spirit of Sport Award Selection Committee is actively seeking nominations for the 2009 award.

The first such recipient of this prestigious award was autistic boys basketball player Jason McElwain of New York, who was recognized at the 2006 National Conference of High School Directors of Athletics.

In 2008, the NFHS crafted this into a structured program with a nomination form, a formalized nomination process and a selection committee. The recipients of the 2008 national award were Megan Bomgaars, a cheerleader with Down syndrome from Evergreen (Colorado) High School, and her cheerleading coach, Tammy Dufford. Both were recognized July 6 at the 2008 NFHS Summer Meeting Luncheon in the Grand Hyatt Hotel Independence Ballroom in Washington, D.C.

Information regarding all of the award recipients was included in the Summer Meeting program and in the September 2008 issue of “High School Today.” In addition, a major press release regarding all the recipients was disseminated to a national media mailing list, while localized press releases were sent to local media outlets for the section winners.

A video regarding coach Dufford and Bomgaars was shown at the luncheon, where the rest of the Evergreen High School cheerleading squad conducted cheers with Bomgaars.

The National High School Spirit of Sport Award was created by the NFHS to recognize those individuals who exemplify the ideals of the positive spirit of sport that represents the core mission of education-based athletics. The award may be given in recognition of a specific act or for an activity of longer duration.

Among the qualifying criteria, the recipient must be an individual from a high school that is a member of an NFHS-member athletic or activity association. The recipient could be a coach, athletic administrator, administrator, athletic trainer, student-athlete or any others associated with the school or the school’s athletic program.

In the instance of a student, that student must be in good academic standing within his or her respective high school. Among the qualifying criteria that are used are the student’s grade-point average, the activities in which he or she is involved and community involvement.

Following its recent meeting, the National High School Spirit of Sport Selection Committee sent a broadcast e-mail to the member state association executive directors exhorting them to submit nominations.

Nominations may originate from high schools or from state high school associations. However, in the instance of a nomination coming from a high school, it must be funneled through the member state high school association for its approval.

As such, if a high school wishes to submit a nomination, it must forward it to the high school association within its particular state. A listing of all of the state high school associations is featured on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

Additional support materials are welcome, but not required. A color photograph of all nominees is requested. Every nominee, whether they are selected or not selected as a section or national award recipient, will receive a certificate co-signed by NFHS Executive Director Bob Kanaby and the chairperson of the National High School Spirit of Sport Selection Committee. In that manner, everyone receives some sort of tangible recognition for simply being nominated. Information regarding the award program will be posted on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

The deadline for all nominations is February 1, 2009.

If you have any questions regarding the National High School Spirit of Sport Award, contact program administrator John Gillis at 317-822-5723 or jgillis@nfhs.org.

John Gillis is an assistant director of the National Federation of State High School Associations and co-editor of High School Today.

Nation’s athletic directors to meet in San Diego

BY MATT VACHLON

This year’s 39th National Conference of High School Directors of Athletics, cosponsored by the NFHS and National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA), will be held December 12-16 at the San Diego Convention Center and Marriott Hotel & Marina in San Diego, California.

It will be the fourth time that San Diego has hosted the event and the first time since 2002. Last year’s conference drew 1,992 registrants, and that total is expected to rise to 2,200 at this year’s conference, which would be an all-time high for participants.

The conference will offer 29 leadership training courses spread over four different sessions from December 13 to 15, some of which are required for those seeking to earn the Registered Athletic Administrator, Certified Athletic Administrator or Certified Master
Athletic Administrator designation. For the first time, an NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course will be offered during each session.

A total of 35 workshops, divided among five sessions, will be offered December 14-16. Neither the training sessions nor the workshops are mandatory for participants.

The conference will be highlighted by two featured speakers. Dan Clark, CEO of a multimillion-dollar corporation, an internationally recognized speaker, songwriter/recording artist and New York Times best-selling author, will speak at the First General Session Sunday, December 14. Rocky Bleier, a highly decorated Vietnam War veteran and a member of four Pittsburgh Steelers Super Bowl championship teams, will speak at the Second General Session Tuesday, December 16.

The Conference Luncheon Monday, December 15, will feature the NIAAA recognizing eight athletic directors with Distinguished Service Awards, as well as the Award of Merit, Award of Excellence and the Frank Kovaleski Professional Development Award. At the Conference Banquet Tuesday evening, December 16, the NFHS will honor eight athletic directors with NFHS Citations.

“The key to the conference is bonding and working with one another between athletic administrators of different states,” NFHS Assistant Director Mark Koski said. “We want them to take the opportunity to share ideas, grasp new concepts and make things better for the kids.”

All other conference information can be found on the NFHS or NIAAA Web sites at www.nfhs.org or www.niaaa.org.

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NCAA INFORMATION

Student-athletes register with NCAA Eligibility Center

BY JENNA WIDMANN

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) reminds high school student-athletes that in order to practice and play as a freshman at an NCAA Division I or Division II college/university, they must satisfy the NCAA’s requirements.

Student-athletes must have eligibility for practice and competition in the freshman year certified by the NCAA, and they may register with the NCAA Eligibility Center online at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. The best time for a student-athlete to register with the Eligibility Center is at the beginning of his or her junior year of high school.

The NCAA Eligibility Center has been established for a review of core courses, high school transcripts and amateurism for all prospective Division I and Division II student-athletes. The registration fee, which was increased $10 to $70 effective September 1, 2008, may be waived only if the student-athlete has received a fee waiver for the ACT or SAT.

The official high school transcript must be mailed from the high school in a sealed envelope. ACT or SAT scores must be submitted to the Eligibility Center from the respective testing agency. After graduation, the Eligibility Center will review the final transcript and make a final certification decision.

Glenn Terry Jr., assistant director of client relations for the NCAA Eligibility Center, said that the decision to increase prices was made this summer by the Eligibility Center and NCAA management.

“We haven’t raised the price in four years,” he said. “We are just keeping up with the costs of doing business and the economy.”

Terry said that the 10 extra dollars from each student goes toward providing the best service for the athletes during the certification process.

For more information on the NCAA Eligibility Center, visit the Web site at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

Jenna Widmann is a fall semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. She is a senior at Butler (Indiana) University majoring in journalism (news editorial) and French.
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