Schools have a legal responsibility to train sport coaches!

“If training coaches prevents one lawsuit it will more than pay for the cost of the training.”

– Lee Green, J.D., Professor of Business and Economics, Baker University, Kansas
As we close the book on the first four months of 2013 and look ahead to May, people in many areas around the country are wondering when it will warm up and when it will stop raining. Some states, in fact, still had snow-covered fields in late April and had not been able to hold a single outdoor practice for spring sports.

Rest assured, however, the rain will stop and the heat will come; and by the time the heat intensifies in July and August, school leaders – administrators, coaches, athletic directors and athletic trainers – must have effective prevention plans in place to ensure that student-athletes are fully protected from heat-related illnesses and injuries.

With many schools on a year-round calendar, practice sessions for fall sports have been pushed back to late July in some cases. It is dreadfully hot and humid in many parts of the country at this time, and the results have not been good in recent years.

The National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research reported that 41 high school football players have died from exertional heatstroke (EHS) since 1995. In addition, there have been countless “near-misses” with emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

Yes, we’ve had some extremely hot summers in recent years, but the aforementioned numbers are troubling. While there are more than a million young people who play high school football each year, NONE of these individuals should die from exertional heatstroke. In fact, EHS is the leading cause of preventable death in high school athletics.

The NFHS, through its Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and Coach Education Program, offers many educational tools to assist schools in developing a proper heat acclimatization and heat illness prevention program. In addition, many state associations have developed guidelines for dealing with heat issues and safety challenges.

The SMAC has developed a “Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention Position Statement” which is available in PDF format on the NFHS Web site (www.nfhs.org). This document contains seven fundamentals of a Heat Acclimatization Program. In addition, the SMAC’s “Position Statement and Recommendations for Hydration to Minimize the Risk for Dehydration and Heat Illness” is also on the site.

Most recently, the NFHS has created a free online course entitled “A Guide to Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention.” This course, which is available at www.nfhslearn.com, also reviews the seven fundamentals of a Heat Acclimatization Program. In addition, a more in-depth seven-page section on heat-related illness is contained in the fourth edition of the NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook, which can be ordered online at www.nfhs.com.

Among the fundamentals of a Heat Acclimatization Program are 1) a slow progression in activity level – duration and intensity; 2) adjusting workouts as heat and humidity increase, including close monitoring and a prompt response to developing problems; and 3) proper hydration.

While coaches only have a prescribed number of practices before that first contest in all fall sports, the rush to have the team in prime shape for the first game cannot come at the expense of the players’ health. The varying physical conditions of players must be considered, and special attention should be directed to higher-risk students.

If it still exists anywhere in this country – and hopefully it does not – the old-school mentality of “run ’em till they drop” must be eliminated from high school sports. In extreme heat and humidity, this philosophy will not have a good ending.

In those cases of extreme heat and humidity, practice sessions MUST be adjusted. And, be aware that less-than-extreme conditions pose a risk as well. Heroes are those who adjust their plan accordingly to effectively and sufficiently reduce the risk of exertional heat illness, not those who “tough it out” no matter the elements.

Some states have definitive criteria for when practices should be altered or canceled. The following link to the NOAA’s heat index chart is an excellent resource for determining when the heat index reaches the danger zone: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/heat/index.shtml.

While there is an abundant amount of educational material available, deaths from EHS will not be eliminated unless school leaders make this a No. 1 priority. We strongly encourage you to require every coach in your school to take the free online course – A Guide to Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention – at www.nfhslearn.com. It could be the best investment of time they will spend this year.
Home Run

Goreville (Illinois) High School’s Taylor Odom jogs toward home after belting a home run in the 2012 Illinois High School Association Class 1A Softball State Championship game, which Goreville won 6-0 over Payson-Seymour. Teammate Shelby Miller is standing over home plate displaying that the homer is Odom’s 24th of the season, a new IHSA single-season record.

Photograph provided by Bob Weidemeyer, Visual Image Photography (www.VIPIS.com).
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We hope you enjoy this publication and welcome your feedback. Please take a few moments to complete the Review Form on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org/hstoday. You may contact Bruce Howard, editor of High School Today, at bhoward@nfhs.org.

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Cover image provided by Pam Wagner, Colorado High School Activities Association.
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HST ONLINE
You can access previous issues online at www.nfhs.org/hstoday. You also can complete the review form online. We would appreciate your feedback on this and previous issues.
Legal Brief

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

Biediger v. Quinnipiac University
U.S. District Court Connecticut 2013

Facts: In March 2013, a federal court issued a ruling in response to a motion filed by Quinnipiac University (Connecticut) arguing that its competitive cheer squad and women’s rugby team now meet the criteria for a sport under Title IX and that members of the squads should be counted towards compliance with Title IX’s substantial proportionality test.

Issue: Does Quinnipiac’s competitive cheer squad, now competing as an “acro” squad under the governance of the National Collegiate Acrobatics and Tumbling Association (NCATA), and the school’s women’s rugby team, satisfy Title IX’s criteria for a sport?

Ruling: The federal court held that, despite some upgrades to its competitive cheer program, the activity does not yet qualify under Title IX as a sport. Although a championship playoff system and more uniform rules of competition are now in place, two national governing bodies (NCATA and USA Cheer) claim control over the sport and competitive cheer has not yet been recognized by the NCAA as an emerging sport. The court also ruled that Quinnipiac’s women’s rugby team failed to meet the criteria for a sport because it played mostly club-level competition.

Standard of Practice: In August 2012, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld a 2010 U.S. District Court ruling that Quinnipiac’s competitive cheer team failed to satisfy the legal standards for determining when an activity will be considered to be a sport under Title IX, including whether competition was the primary objective of Quinnipiac’s squad; whether the team operated under the umbrella of a governing organization; whether consistent rules and scoring systems were used for all competitions; whether the squad competed against appropriate levels of competition; and whether the team was structured and operated similar to all other varsity sports at the university. For school districts wishing to evaluate whether a given activity constitutes a sport under Title IX, the full-text of the OCR’s 2008 policy guidance setting forth the required criteria for a sport is available at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters.

NFHS – Here for You

Did You Know that the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) has an online education program for interscholastic officials? The online course, “Interscholastic Officiating,” is available for free to individual members of the NFHS Officials Association, as well as officials in state associations that are 100-percent or Tier 2 NFHS Officials Association states.

Non-member individual officials may take the course for a fee of $20, and a discounted bulk rate of $10 is available to non-100-percent states and officiating groups when 50 or more licenses are purchased.

The course, which is available at www.nfhsofficials.com, is designed exclusively for officials at the high school level and introduces new officials or individuals interested in becoming an official to the world of interscholastic officiating. The course, which takes about 30 to 45 minutes to complete, covers topics such as the basics of becoming and staying an official, the science of officiating a contest, the art of officiating a contest and putting it all together.
It All Started Here

Roger Ebert

BY MATT TROHA

“No good film is too long and no bad movie is short enough.”

It was pieces of cinematic wisdom like this statement that helped propel Roger Ebert to stardom as a world-renowned movie critic and writer for the Chicago Sun Times.

Ebert passed away on April 4, 2013, following a lengthy battle with thyroid cancer.

The only child of a bookkeeper and an electrician, he was born and raised in Urbana, Illinois, the home of the University of Illinois. He attended Urbana High School from 1957 to 1960, and the future senior class president immediately took the initiative of immersing himself in activities that would help launch his journalism career.

At the age of 15, he began covering high school sports for the local newspaper, the Champaign News-Gazette. As a senior, he served as the editor-in-chief of his high school newspaper, The Echo. Ebert’s story on a football game between Decatur Eisenhower High School and Urbana High School in 1959 earned him a first-place award in a contest held by the Illinois Associated Press. Almost 30 years later, he would say in his four-star review of the high school hoops classic, Hoosiers, that “I covered mostly high school sports, and if I were a sportswriter again, I’d want to cover them again.”

In addition, Ebert was the 1958 Illinois High School Association (IHSA) State Speech Champion in Radio Speaking, an event that requires participants to gather and perform a live radio newscast. Ebert was still in high school when he began attending the University of Illinois as an early enrollee student in 1960, and would go on to earn his bachelor’s degree in journalism in 1964. He continued to work at the News-Gazette during college and also served as a reporter for the University’s student newspaper, the Daily Illini, a publication he would oversee as editor during his senior year on campus.

Ebert was hired by the Chicago Sun-Times as a general reporter in 1966, the start of a six-decade career with the paper that would continue until his passing. He was promoted to movie critic a year later and made an immediate impression, receiving praise from other top critics around the country and seeing several of his reviews published in national publications. His greatest accolade may have come in 1975, when he became the first film critic to win a Pulitzer Prize for Criticism.

Ebert’s greatest contribution to pop culture came in 1978, when he teamed with Chicago Tribune film critic, Gene Siskel, on a nationally syndicated television show featuring the duo reviewing films. The show would run under various formats and names for more than 30 years (Richard Roeper eventually replaced Siskel after his death in 1999), but the trademarked phrase “two thumbs up” continues to transcend today.

Ebert was first diagnosed with cancer in 2002 and four years later the disease would leave him permanently disfigured, as he lost part of his lower jaw and, with it, the ability to speak and eat. Despite the setback, Ebert continued to be a fixture in the industry and as a critic, making his first public appearance after the surgery in Champaign at his film festival, Ebertfest, where he told the Sun-Times “We spend too much time hiding illness.”

Ebert’s distinguished career featured a multitude of awards and honors, including being named an honorary life member of the Directors Guild of America, election to the Chicago Journalism Hall of Fame, an honorary doctorate from the University of Colorado, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, 15 published books and numerous television and movies cameos, including an Oprah special and multiple appearances on Sesame Street.

Two days before his death, Ebert wrote on his Web site that due to his health problems, he would be taking a “leave of presence” – a fitting description for an individual whose presence across numerous mediums touched so many people around the world.

He closed that entry by saying, “So on this day of reflection I say again, thank you for going on this journey with me. I’ll see you at the movies.”

Matt Troha is assistant executive director of the Illinois High School Association and a member of the High School Today Publications Committee.
High School Today | May
Shawe Memorial Hilltoppers

Madison, Indiana is a historic city in the southeastern part of the state that borders the Ohio River. In 1952, the city opened its second high school when three local Catholic parishes decided to open a private school known as Madison Central High School, which called its mascot the Tigers. Without an actual school, the church decided to use donated land, which was located on Madison’s hilltop, as the future site of its high school. At the time, the land on Madison’s hilltop was used almost exclusively as farmland and nothing else. When the new building was officially opened for classes in the fall of 1954, the school’s name was changed to Fr. Michael Edgar Shawe Memorial High School. Due to the location of the new building on Madison’s hilltop and the school’s name change, it seemed only appropriate to change the school’s mascot as well. Therefore, when the school year began in 1954, **Shawe Memorial High School** was the home of the Hilltoppers.

Unusual Nicknames

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

Around the Nation

**Question:** Does your state association sponsor a state championship in baseball?

![State Map]

**46 YES**

**5 NO**
### The Cost

**BASS FISHING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Bass Fishing Boat</td>
<td>$10,000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Life Jacket</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Rod</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) Reel</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E) Line</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F) Tackle box</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G) Bait and Lures</td>
<td>$3 each</td>
</tr>
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*Most teams use the boat of a coach, parent or local fishing club.

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

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**The SAT/ACT Project**

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*Chipper Jones--Atlanta Braves*
Eight city blocks and a slight turn off Kinzie Street marks the straightforward path that separates the headquarters of the *Chicago Sun Times* and *Chicago Tribune* in the heart of Chicago’s Loop. However, the different paths the publications have taken in their coverage of high school sports serves as a microcosm of a prep media landscape that has shifted significantly in the past decade at some of the nation’s largest newspapers.

The trials and tribulations of the newspaper industry have played out on the front page during that timeframe. The Pew Research Center reports that the revenue from advertising in print newspapers has dropped by more than 50 percent in the past decade, from $44 million in 2003 to $20 million in 2011. While Web-based advertising sales have increased significantly in that time, the pace has been nowhere near what is needed to offset a difference of more than $20 million.

As a result, more than 100 newspapers permanently shut their doors in 2009 alone, while the 10,000-plus newspapers still churning out copy, according to the Library of Congress, try to find innovative ways to cope with the financial impact. The result has been that newsroom staffs, the size of the newspaper and the content within them have shrunk considerably for most — if not all — of the country’s top newspapers.

Within the sports pages, there has been a trickle-down effect — if not an all-out flood — of change to high school sports coverage at many of the nation’s largest newspapers.

Michael O’Brien, *Chicago Sun Times* prep sports editor, is straightforward in his assessment: “In a market like Chicago and at a paper our size, in comparison with the (Chicago) Bears, (Chicago) Bulls or (Chicago) Blackhawks, high school sports are always going to be seen as a niche market. If newspapers aren’t making money, it is not a good thing for high school sports coverage.”

One thing O’Brien and others agree on is that almost unequivocally, there appears to be a reverse correlation between circulation size and high school sports coverage, essentially meaning the smaller the paper, the greater the coverage for preps.

“The great appeal of smaller newspapers is the ability to cater to the community, especially in high school sports,” said Paul Skrbina, *Chicago Tribune* high school sports editor. “As someone who has worked at newspapers of varying sizes, high school sports are such a community event and the newspapers in those areas reflect that. That is something I don’t think will ever go away.”

Pro and college sports will always take top billing at publications like the *Arizona Republic*, the *Dallas Morning News* and the *New York Times*, but preps have continued to be part of their fabric nonetheless. While local coverage has come to be expected for high school sports, being featured in the state’s largest paper tends to bring with it a sense of statewide validation and respect. The prep staffs at publications like these will need to continue to adapt to remain viable; and in the shadow of the Sears Tower, Chicago’s two iconic newspapers are forging two very different paths in their high school coverage.

The *Sun Times* launched a new prep sports Web site in 2012 entitled Season Pass (seasonpass.suntimes.com) aimed at becoming a one-stop shop for high school sports fans around the state. The Web site integrates not only the various game and feature stories from the nearly 40 *Sun Times* publications throughout the Chicagoland area, but also features live scoreboards and streaming of select contests, while also tracking players stats.

“People are so connected now via their smartphones that it is changing the way we cover high school sports,” O’Brien said. “Whether through a Web site like ours or on Twitter, fans are following games in real-time now, so it changes what we do. We try to provide more content in-game and have switched to more of a game recap instead of a traditional game story.”
Using a different strategy for prep sports coverage, the Chicago Tribune spent the winter covering a high school team with the same resources usually reserved for the city’s pro teams. Skrbina’s staff assigned a beat writer to cover three-time defending Illinois High School Association (IHSA) boys basketball state champion Simeon Career Academy in Chicago. The beat writer was with the team nearly every day, while a second reporter was often on hand at games as well, equating to coverage almost every day of the week.

“The opportunity with Simeon was unique, given the recent success, history, national schedule and several high-profile Division I players,” Skrbina said. “It was a chance to provide access that is rarely seen at the high school level. Honestly, we got a mixed response on it, but I felt like we did it the right way. We didn’t hide anything; it was their season with its warts and all.”

The Tribune’s strategy will change significantly this spring, when the paper will not cover any spring sport contests prior to the state tournament for the first time, instead focusing on feature stories and other content.

“There are so many schools in our coverage area that this change will give us the opportunity to appeal to a broader audience,” Skrbina said.

While the Tribune’s coverage of Simeon this year may have been unprecedented in its approach, long-time Cleveland Plain Dealer prep sports writer Tim Rogers had a similar experience about 10 years ago. Rogers, who has more than 30 years’ experience covering high school sports, crisscrossed the country with Akron’s St. Vincent-St. Mary High School in the early 2000s when an upstart named LeBron James was packing high school gyms throughout the United States.

Rogers believes that it is no coincidence that James’ rise also coincided with another important change in high school sports coverage that continues to be even more relevant today.

“Recruiting is big news now,” Rogers said. “Part of it is the growth in college athletics and the natural carryover in interest by those fans to the high schools and recruiting. I don’t always agree with it, after all, these are teenagers making verbal commitments and many of them will end up changing their minds, but people really want to know.”

However, no change has been bigger than the advent of technology on prep sports coverage, with more and more content being moved online and less appearing in print.

“It used to be that I wrote a story, sent it to the editor and they published it in the paper,” Rogers said. “Now we write the story, get it on the Web as soon as possible, back-edit it after it is online, tweet it out, post it on Facebook and then maybe it appears in the paper.”

Web technology led to a significant consolidation at the largest newspaper in Alabama this past October; but in this case, the consolidation actually meant more and not less coverage for high school sports in the state.

The Alabama Media Group, which consists of the state’s three largest newspapers (Birmingham News, Huntsville Times, Mobile Press-Register), announced in October it was cutting down its printing of the newspapers from seven to three days a week. Branding itself a “digital first company,” content from all three papers is now merged together on www.AL.com to provide a statewide perspective.

That ambition created a new role for AL.com’s Managing Preps Producer Josh Bean, who had covered high school sports for the Birmingham News prior to October.

“Previously, we were three newspapers that were under the same company umbrella, but we didn’t really work together,” Bean said. “Now we are one team that happens to be spread out across the state. Between the three papers we covered about 200 of the 450 high schools in the state, but now we consider the entire state – all 450 schools – to be in our coverage area. We will go anywhere to report a compelling story.”

Like O’Brien and Skrbina, Bean believes that engaging a wider audience and focusing more on in-game content will be keys in continuing to make high school sports relevant at some of America’s largest publications.

“As Web sites have become more relevant, sports fans became conditioned to get news on pro and college sports immediately, and that immediacy has filtered down to high school sports,” Bean said. “We want readers to come to our Web site and find new content in the morning, after lunch, after work and before they go to bed. If we don’t, they will go somewhere else to find it.”

Matt Troha is assistant executive director of the Illinois High School Association and a member of the High School Today Publications Committee.
The Baseball Rule: Liability to Spectators for Foul Ball Injuries

BY LEE GREEN, J.D.

The Baseball Rule

In a February 2013 decision with implications for school athletics programs, the Idaho Supreme Court refused to recognize and apply the “Baseball Rule” – a long-standing legal doctrine that the operators of baseball facilities have a limited duty to protect fans from the risk of being hit by a foul ball and that spectators assume that risk because it is an inherent danger associated with attending a ballgame. The ruling is similar to one issued by the New Mexico Supreme Court in a 2010 case and the two decisions provide some valuable lessons to be learned for athletics administrators and coaches regarding the operation of school baseball and softball facilities and the duty to provide a safe environment not only for student-athletes, but also for third parties such as spectators.

Rountree v. Boise Baseball

On August 13, 2008, Bud Rountree, a season-ticket holder for 20 years, took his wife and two grandchildren to a Boise Hawks (a Northwest League “Single A Short Season” affiliate of the Chicago Cubs) game at Memorial Stadium in Garden City, Idaho. The team’s stadium has extensive screening to protect spectators from errant foul balls, with 30-feet high vertical mesh netting behind home plate and along most of the first-base and third-base lines. Much of the area behind home plate and along both baselines is also protected from above by horizontal netting.

As a season-ticket holder, Rountree’s tickets were in the “Viper” section behind the third-base dugout and his seats were protected by vertical and horizontal screening. During the fourth inning of the game, Rountree and his family went to the “Hawk’s Nest,” a dining area located farther down the third-base line and also protected by both vertical and horizontal netting. After eating, they went to the “Executive Club,” an unprotected area located near the foul pole along the third-base line and designed as a gathering place for season-ticket holders and sponsors to mingle and socialize during games. Standing with his back to the field while conversing with a group of people, Rountree heard the roar of the crowd, turned his head back to the game, and was struck in his left eye socket by a line drive foul ball. After several surgeries, Rountree lost the eye.

Nowhere in Memorial Stadium or in the Executive Club were warning signs posted regarding the dangers of foul balls, nor were public-address announcements made instructing fans to exercise vigilance while in unscreened areas of the ballpark. However, the back of all tickets, including Rountree’s, stated that:

“THE HOLDER ASSUMES ALL RISK AND DANGERS INCIDENTAL TO THE GAME OF BASEBALL INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY (BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY) THE DANGER OF BEING INJURED BY THROWN OR BATTED BALLS.”

The exculpatory language was printed in a four-point font. Rountree asserted that despite being a long-time season-ticket holder, he had never noticed the warning on the back of the ticket nor would he have been able to read it because of the small print size even if he had taken note of the paragraph of text on the reverse side of the ticket.

In 2010, Rountree sued Boise Baseball arguing that the operators of the facility had been negligent in their failure to screen the Executive Club or to provide warnings to those who congregate in the area. He argued that it was foreseeable to the ballpark operators that in a multi-purpose use area such as the Executive Club, the attention of fans might be diverted from the action on the field, making it more likely that someone might be injured by a thrown or batted ball flying into the stands. A lower court refused to apply the Baseball Rule and denied Boise Baseball’s motion for summary judgment. The team appealed.

The Idaho Supreme Court concluded that the Baseball Rule was no longer a viable legal doctrine, that spectators do not automatically assume the risk of being injured by a foul ball, that the exculpatory language on the back of the ticket did not create a contractual waiver of liability insulating the team from responsibility for foul ball injuries, and that liability for such injuries should be evaluated using comparative negligence principles under which fault is apportioned by percentages between the injured plaintiff...
and the defendant facility operator based on the level of care exercised by each party.

While the court acknowledged that it would be within the power of the Idaho legislature to adopt the Baseball Rule – a statutory codification that has occurred in Arizona, Colorado, New Jersey and Illinois – the court ruled that in Idaho “baseball stadium operators will be held to the same standards applicable to all businesses – that being a general duty to exercise ordinary care to prevent unreasonable, foreseeable risks of harm.”

A similar ruling was issued by the New Mexico Supreme Court in its 2010 decision in Edward C. v. Albuquerque Isotopes (a Pacific League Triple-A affiliate of the Los Angeles Dodgers), a case in which a child suffered a fractured skull when hit by a ball during batting practice while seated in a picnic area located just beyond the left-field fence of the ballpark. The state supreme court reversed a lower court ruling in favor of the facility operator and held that application of the Baseball Rule was inconsistent with New Mexico’s comparative negligence system, that fans do not automatically assume the risk of batted ball injuries, and that liability should be determined by apportioning fault by percentages between the injured plaintiff and defendant ballpark operator based on the degree of care exercised by each.

Recommendations

Although the rulings in the Boise Hawks and Albuquerque Isotopes cases have precedential value only in Idaho and New Mexico, most states now employ some version of comparative negligence to apportion liability in personal injury cases, thus making it likely that other state courts may in the future decline to recognize the Baseball Rule and automatic assumption of risk of injuries. Therefore, it may become more important for ballpark operators at all levels – professional baseball, college baseball, youth baseball and high school baseball – to implement strategies designed to evidence that reasonable care has been exercised to provide a safe environment for spectators and to protect those fans from the risk of injuries resulting from thrown or batted balls entering the stands or other areas where fans may congregate. The following are suggestions for preventative measures in high school ballparks:

- Increase the reach of protective screening to whatever extent is financially feasible, especially in the area behind home plate and along the baselines where foul ball and thrown ball dangers are the greatest.
- At ball fields where spectators bring their own seating (lawn chairs or blankets for ground seating), limit seating to areas behind backstops or screening or to areas out of the “line of fire” of batted or thrown balls.
- Provide signage warning spectators to exercise vigilance against being hit by batted or thrown balls by focusing on the field of play both during pregame warm-ups and the game itself. The warnings should also instruct parents to safeguard the welfare of young children accompanying them to the game.
- Place warning signage at entrance gates into the ballpark.
- Place warning signage on or adjacent to bleachers not protected by screening.
- Place warning signage on or adjacent to scoreboards or in other locations visible to the entire crowd.
- Where public-address systems are in use, make frequent P.A. announcements before and during games warning spectators about the risks of batted or thrown balls entering the stands.
- Where game programs or roster sheets are distributed to fans, include a warning in an easy-to-read font size in a visible location on the publication.
- Employ additional measures – screening or warning signs – in areas within the foreseeable reach of batted or thrown balls and where the attention of spectators is likely to be diverted from the field of play such as concession stands, restrooms, water fountains, picnic areas and other multipurpose use areas where fans might congregate.
- Keep in mind that such preventive measures should be taken both in baseball facilities and softball facilities.

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

BY JASON HADDIX

Trying to understand each state high school association’s school classification process can be as challenging as listening to a 5-year-old explain basketball’s 1-3-1 zone defense. Aligning schools into different classes has been a common state association practice for many years. Typically, this process is done by separating schools based on enrollment numbers that are reported to the state’s department of education. In many cases, the classification process was implemented to provide a competitive balance among schools and to give each school the opportunity to build successful, winning programs. In theory, a single-class system would provide larger schools with high enrollment numbers an advantage over their smaller counterparts.

As the population of a geographical area changes, so does school enrollment. For this reason, state associations periodically reclassify schools. Some associations, like the Illinois High School Association (IHSA), perform this task annually, while others, such as the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA), conduct their processes every two years.

The IHSAA recently completed its reclassification process for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years, which resulted in the addition of another class level for football. Executive Director Bobby Cox said the board of directors voted to split the previous 64-team Class 5A in half to form Class 6A as part of that process.

“In [Class] 5A football, you have the same handful of schools getting to the state championship every single year,” Cox said. “In football, more than any other sport, it’s a numbers game. When you have schools with 4,800 students and 2,250 boys, you should be able to find 22 of them who can play football.”

The IHSAA’s expansion of its football class system serves as an example that the classification of schools by enrollment may not be the total answer to the unlevel playing field issue in interscholastic athletics.

A new concept implemented by the IHSA to address competitive balance is the tournament success factor. The current reclassification period will be the first time that the formula will go into practical use since the IHSA first implemented it two years ago.

Cox said he first thought about the success factor idea four years ago, when he heard complaints about who was winning the state tournaments.

“The schools that continue to win are the ones we need to be dealing with,” Cox said. “Why would we say because a school has a strong football program, but maybe they struggle in soccer, that we are going to move every sport up into a different classification? The real issue is who is successful and why?”

The tournament success factor places a point value on winning the various championships in the state tournament – sectional (1), regional (2), semi-state (3) and state (4). Teams are awarded the point value of the highest level achieved.

Cox said that time will tell if this new strategy will level the playing field as it was intended to do. He added that it does not single out a particular type of school (public, private, charter, etc.) as it applies across the board, and the move up in class is not necessarily permanent.

“If a school moves up in classification in a particular sport, it participates in that class for two years,” he said. “If it does not experience success at a commensurate rate and if its enrollment allows it to go back, in the next reclassification and realignment period, it will go back in that sport.”

Cox said he has fielded calls from executive directors of other state associations about the use of the success factor. He said, the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association is the only other state association with a similar program.

In some states, the disproportionate number of championships won by non-public schools has become an issue of concern and has been addressed through the reclassification process. Some state associations have implemented a system that adds to the final enrollment totals of such schools resulting in a bump into a higher...
classification. Six of the 51 state associations utilize a multiplier formula to boost the enrollment numbers of private or non-boundried school systems.

The Illinois High School Association (IHSA) implemented a multiplier system seven years ago and uses the factor of 1.65. When the IHSA conducts its yearly reclassification, the enrollment total of the non-boundried schools is multiplied by 1.65.

“Several years ago, we did a lot of research on the types of schools that were achieving success way beyond their counterparts,” said IHSA Executive Director Marty Hickman. “That number was derived to move a group of schools in an enrollment range from one class to another.”

One concern with a blanket multiplier system is what to do with schools that have not reached a higher level of athletic success.

“If (a school) has not achieved a certain level of success in a particular sport, the multiplier is waived,” Hickman said. “Many of our schools, even though they are private or non-boundary, are not subject to the multiplier because they have not achieved the success limits we have placed on the multiplier.”

In contrast to the multiplier in Illinois, Minnesota uses a formula that reduces enrollment numbers by multiplying the number of students who receive free or reduced lunches by 40 percent, then subtracting that from the number of total students enrolled in grades 9-12. This process is completed on even-numbered years with the numbers coming from the state’s department of education.

David Stead, executive director of the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL), said the formula applies to all schools, public or private, that report the number of students who receive the free or reduced lunches.

“The theory is that the public schools that take every student, and are not selective like some of the private schools, have kids who take the free or reduced lunches and choose not to participate (in athletics) because they can’t afford to do that,” Stead said.

He added that the MSHSL decided on this formula as the alternative to a multiplier system (for private schools) because the league views every member equally. A committee that was composed of representatives from both public and private schools felt this was the best option for the classification process.

The Arkansas Activities Association (AAA) had used a multiplier until it abandoned the system in 2008. Lance Taylor, executive director of the AAA, said the non-public school administrations were not pleased with the multiplier number and decided a change was needed. Now, if a non-public school has an enrollment of 80 or more students in grades 9-11, on a three-year average, that school moves up one classification.

Tennessee takes the public versus private school debate in a slightly different direction. Instead of applying a rule to establish a competitive balance between the two, the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) has separated its school classification into two divisions.

Bernard Childress, TSSAA executive director, said there are about 75 independent schools with about 50 of them being in Division II. Schools are placed in this division if they provide need-based financial assistance to varsity athletes. The remaining Tennessee independent schools are in Division I, along with all public schools.

The TSSAA, like nearly all of the other associations, has multiple classes for team sports. One association that has employed a single-class system in a major team sport is Kentucky.

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“The end goal is the same – to provide the member schools and student-athletes an enjoyable experience while affording them the opportunity to achieve success in the sport or activity of choice.”

Contrary to the theory that the classification of schools provides a level playing field, the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) bucks the system by having a single-class tournament for basketball. Its format has the potential of setting up a David vs. Goliath match-up, similar to the one in Hoosiers, a movie based on the 1953-54 state championship run of small-school Milan (Indiana) High School boys basketball team when it defeated a much larger Muncie (Indiana) Central High School for the state title.

Delaware and Washington D.C. are the only other associations that have a single-class state basketball tournament, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations 2013 General Basketball Survey. But, the number of schools with basketball in those associations – 50 and 15 respectively, pales in comparison to the 271 in Kentucky.

Although the process by which each state association attempts to level the playing field differs as much as the spelling of the states’ names, the end goal is the same – to provide the member schools and student-athletes an enjoyable experience while affording them the opportunity to achieve success in the sport or activity of choice.

Jason Haddix is a 2013 spring intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a senior at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis studying journalism and medical imaging.
On December 14, 2012, the town of Newtown, Connecticut, faced tragedy when 26 innocent victims were killed inside Sandy Hook Elementary School. Since the shooting, many people have responded by raising funds for the victims' families. One group that joined in that effort was the Spokane Valley (Washington) University High School speech and debate team.

Led by team captains Audra Bradstreet and Sydney Kaster, the University High School speech and debate team organized the Sandy Hook 5K Run/Walk, with all proceeds benefitting the victims of the Sandy Hook tragedy.

"There was an opportunity, (head coach David) Smith approached us, and we went with it," said Kaster, a four-year member of the speech and debate team.

Although no members of the speech and debate team had experience with running or creating and operating a charity race, the team jumped at the chance. In addition, the speech and debate team's season was well underway at the time, meaning that the team member weekends were typically busy. However, the team captains decided to push forward with the idea and reached out to local business owners and clubs to seek their support for the charity event.

With the help of the local community, the two captains and their teammates organized the event, and chose January 13 as the date of the race. Going into the event, the students were expecting close to 60 participants. However, on the day of the race, the speech and debate team members were surprised as nearly 90 people came out in below-freezing weather to run and walk in the race. The first service project orchestrated by the team was deemed a success, as it was able to raise more than $1,400 for the Sandy Hook Support Fund.

"Even though the victims were (from) across the country, we were still helping them because we still cared (and) that was pretty cool for me," Kaster said.

Bradstreet echoed her co-captain's comments by saying, "The most important thing for us is just because it's a couple of months out that people don't forget that they're still in pain."

With the success of the service project, the two captains have decided to keep public service as an integral part of the speech and debate team.

“We find that doing service projects and helping others is one of the things that we want to instill in the younger members of our team,” Bradstreet said.

Next year, the team plans on orchestrating a public service project that will be designed to address oral cancer and benefit its victims.
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Wisconsin Honors Music Project – Students Time to Shine

BY KEVIN THAYS

Breathtaking. Enlightening. Emotionally uplifting. The time is now. It’s an experience they will remember the rest of their lives and it all builds up to this … a concert they’ve achieved from inspiration, dreams, camaraderie and a ton of hard work. The energized crowd waits in anticipation as these young stars step onto the stage and claim it as their own. They’ve earned it, and it’s their time to shine in the nationally acclaimed Wisconsin State Honors Music Project.

History Repeats Itself

Since 1967, thousands of young musicians have earned their place in this premier program developed by the Wisconsin School Music Association (WSMA) – a non-profit statewide organization that exists to help youth achieve excellence through music. Through a fine-tuned process involving the organization, music teachers, section coaches, nationally known conductors and teamwork of fellow students and the support of their parents, the Wisconsin State Honors Music Project helps raise young musicians to a new level of accomplishment. The ultimate reward is memories and skills that last a lifetime. Each year, the process repeats itself, opening doors for middle school and high school students throughout the state.

It Begins With an Audition

At the onset of a new school year, a poster infiltrates music classrooms throughout Wisconsin and teachers encourage students to take that leap of faith and try out for the State Honors Music Project. For many of these young musicians, just taking that step is a major accomplishment. It’s not only an audition, but also a chance to develop themselves by gaining confidence, giving it their best shot and getting back much-needed feedback to learn and grow.

In the fall, more than 1,600 students in grades 9-12 step into the spotlight as they take part in the rigorous audition process for approximately 430 positions in the High School State Honors Orchestra, Band, Choirs (Treble and Mixed) and Jazz Ensemble. Nearly 1,300 auditions take place for an estimated 320 spots in the Middle Level State Honors Band, Choir and Orchestra ensembles, which are comprised of budding musicians in grades 6-8.

In the same adrenalyzed way that students anticipate taking the stage in the big fall honors concert, they watch the mailbox for a special letter commending them on their efforts and notifying them whether they’ve been selected for a position or even listed as an alternate. Making it in is like getting that first touchdown as a football player. It’s exhilarating! For the rest, they are encouraged to work hard, continue their growth and try again.

The Journey is the Reward

Getting selected is significant and marks the beginning of what lies ahead. It’s the first major milestone on a path to self-discovery and teamwork development that will take place in the months to come. Just like sports, music has its coaches and they play an important role in preparing these talented individuals to perform at
their highest potential. WSMA leads the effort through carefully orchestrated steps involving key individuals and partnerships throughout the state.

First on the road for the high school students is an intensive four-day summer camp at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay in June. The WSMA High School Honors Summer Camp is a unique and essential component to the High School Honors Project experience as it is the first opportunity the selected students have to see their music, meet the conductor and rehearse as a newly formed ensemble. The Orchestra, Treble Choir and Jazz Ensemble gather on a block of four consecutive days with a separate camp lasting the same duration for the Band and Mixed Choir.

On any given year, the combination of the groups may vary for each camp, but the result is the same... as one camp ends with students having grown by leaps and bounds over several days, the next one begins bringing the remaining ensembles together with them coming out of their shells and stretching their musical boundaries. Each step of the way, there is the reward of new friendships, some pitfalls offset by achievements and what some would consider long days that also include smiles and laughter in a real-life bonding experience. While they come as individuals, they leave as teammates, often collaborating on their continued journey of preparation before reuniting again in the fall prior to their concerts.

The Middle Level State Honors ensembles meet up for the first time in October, just days ahead of their concert in a sort of mini-camp rehearsal period, where they meet their conductors and each other, gather with section coaches and delve into the music that will brighten the eyes and warm the ears of proud parents, grandparents, music teachers and general audience members just days later.

**Concert of a Lifetime**

At the height of the Wisconsin State Honors Music Project for all involved are the fall concerts, promoted with the annual Wisconsin State Music Conference, and performed in Madison venues such as the Madison Marriott West (Middle Level State Honors), Frank Lloyd Wright designed Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center and the majestically beautiful Overture Center for the Arts (High School State Honors) – all signifying that these students have made it to the state level, often with the State Capitol in their sights. This is their time to take what they’ve learned and share it with all those privileged to be in the audience for their captivating performance. As they step out and see those proud people who have made their way to the concerts, they realize they've made it in their own way. As the conductor raises the baton and their first piece of literature comes to life as a result of their hard work and perseverance, emotions are touched and memories are made. While it's their time to shine, it's everyone's moment to be proud.

**The Ripple Effect**

The Wisconsin State Honors Music Project continues its mission as these fine young musicians take their knowledge and skills back home and help others develop and reach new levels they may have never thought possible. They become leaders and inspire their peers to do great things. While many of them may not choose music as a career, their memories and skills will be with them for life.

Learn more about the Wisconsin State Honors Music Project and other WSMA programs by visiting [www.wsmamusic.org](http://www.wsmamusic.org).

Kevin Thays is director of communications for the Wisconsin School Music Association.
Two Kentucky high schools from opposite ends of the state – separated by nearly 300 miles and until recently strangers to each other – are the 2013 recipients of the NFHS’ National High School Spirit of Sport Award.

Those two high schools – Magoffin County High School in Salyersville at the foothills of the Appalachians in the eastern part of the state and Logan County High School in Russellville out west – had not traditionally been opponents or rivals in sports, nor do they have much in common. However, they were brought together in a manner that changed both schools and communities forever.

On Friday, March 2, 2012, a series of deadly tornadoes ripped through the Salyersville area, killing 41 and causing major devastation. Although nobody in Salyersville was killed, the townspeople emerged the next day with their community in shambles.

That Friday was the night before the scheduled Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) 15th Region girls basketball game between Magoffin County High School and Paintsville High School. The game was moved to Monday night and, before a very small contingent of Magoffin County fans, the Lady Hornets defeated Paintsville, 49-40. Following the game, then-Magoffin County girls basketball coach Steve Miller captured the unwavering resiliency of the basketball team and the entire community of Salyersville when he coined the inspirational phrase “One team. One goal. One promise. We Are Magoffin.”

“In the two or three days after the tornado, I drew upon some things from my coaching experience and the ‘We Are Marshall’ movie to come up with that,” Miller said. “The rallying cry is ‘You may knock us down, but we will come back, as We Are Magoffin.’”

Two days later at the KHSAA Sweet 16® state tournament at Diddle Arena in Bowling Green, Magoffin County was pitted against much-larger Ashland Blazer High School. Prior to the game, the two teams gathered at center court for a moment of silence.

After trailing in the second half, Magoffin County came back to win, 63-59.

As Logan County girls basketball coach Scot MacAllister watched the game from the stands, he became both inspired by the undersized but feisty Magoffin County players as they upset Ashland Blazer, and moved by the stark realities that they dealt with both inside and outside the confines of the gymnasium.

“I’m watching the game and seeing those kids out there battling and playing hard. But when they go home, some had no homes to go to,” MacAllister recalled. “I looked in the crowd and there’s nobody there from Magoffin to support them. Your heart just goes out to them.”

As a result, MacAllister decided to offer his facility to the Magoffin County players as a “home away from home” in which they could practice, seek refuge or just get away. When the Lady Hornets arrived at Logan County, they were amazed to be greeted by 300 students who had organized a pep rally and a pizza party for them. MacAllister’s daughter, Shannon – who was a basketball player for Logan County – played a key role in that event.

“I was a teacher’s aide and I grabbed another teacher’s aide and we made at least six signs for Magoffin,” Shannon said. “One of
them was a big poster that said ‘We Believe.’ We ate with them, talked with them and did the ‘We Believe’ cheer before they went to the tournament.”

“When we walked in there, it was basically like being a rock star,” Miller said. “They rolled out the red carpet for us – it was neat. It gave you goose bumps and it was just amazing.”

Giving up their time and at their own expense, the Logan County students donned Magoffin County school colors and drove 30 miles from Russellville to Diddle Arena, where they filled one of the end zones. Throughout the game, the Logan County group enthusiastically supported Magoffin County with voracious cheers and chants that they had practiced both at school and en route to the game. The emotion in the arena was electric. Although Magoffin County lost that game to Lincoln County, Logan County’s selfless support and involvement became the big story of the tournament.

Nine months later, the Magoffin County administration and students decided that they wanted to repay the Logan County group’s kindnesses by making a surprise visit to their first home game. On December 1, 2012, two busloads of Magoffin County students made the long five-hour drive from Salyersville to Russellville.

“The trip was Principal Tony Skaggs’s idea,” said Magoffin County girls basketball coach Scott Castle. “I knew coach MacAllister from coaching the Kentucky Blast AAU team with him in the summer, on which my daughter, Jamie, and his daughter, Shannon, were teammates. He was completely unaware that we were coming to their season-opening game.”

As the Magoffin County contingent poured into the gym that night, it became very apparent the impact that had on MacAllister, who was moved to tears by what he saw.

“I have to walk through a classroom that doesn’t have any windows to get to the gym, so I didn’t know what was going on out there,” MacAllister said. “I walk out there and I see all those Magoffin kids walking across the floor. When you do the right thing like we did in March, you really don’t expect anything in return. I think it’s really cool to create friends and then people go out of their way to reciprocate. That’s what high school sports are all about.”

**About the Award**

In addition to the selection of Magoffin County High School and Logan County High School as the national award recipients, the NFHS National High School Spirit of Sport Award Selection Committee chose eight individuals for section awards. Following are the 2013 National High School Spirit of Sport section winners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Winner</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>Kendra Cimaglia, cheerleader, Johnston (Rhode Island) High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>Russellville (Kentucky) Logan County High School and Salyersville (Kentucky) Magoffin County High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>David Goldstein, student-athlete, Miami (Florida) Ransom Everglades High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
<td>Todd Hollis, teacher/coach, Elmwood (Illinois) High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section 5</td>
<td>Justin Volkman, student-athlete, Chapman (Kansas) High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section 6</td>
<td>Charlotte Brown, student-athlete, Emory (Texas) Rains High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 7</td>
<td>Carson Jones, student-athlete, Queen Creek (Arizona) High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 8</td>
<td>Kory Puderbaugh, student-athlete, Boise (Idaho) Centennial High School</td>
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The “National High School Spirit of Sport Award” was created by the NFHS to recognize those individuals who exemplify the ideals of the spirit of sport that represent the core mission of education-based athletics.

Nominations for this award were generated through NFHS member state associations and reviewed by the NFHS National High School Spirit of Sport Award Selection Committee composed of state association staff members. While the national winner will be recognized June 24 at the NFHS Summer Meeting in Denver, Colorado, the section winners will be recognized within their respective states and will receive awards before the end of the current school year.

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John Gillis is the associate director of publications and communications of the National Federation of State High School Associations, and administrator of the National High School Spirit of Sport Award program.
When a car accident put Logan York in a wheelchair for the rest of his life, he knew he would have major obstacles to overcome. And the odds of the Franklin (Indiana) Community High School junior ever playing high school sports again weren’t good. However, York planned on beating those odds by participating on his high school track and field team despite being confined to a wheelchair.

Before the accident paralyzed him from below the chest down, York had been a multi-sport athlete at Franklin Community, participating on the football and wrestling teams. “It opened my eyes (to not be able to play sports),” said York, a former defensive lineman for the Grizzly Cubs football team. “It’s frustrating not being able to do the sports that I want to.”

Last year, York began aspiring to compete in the shot put for the Grizzly Cubs track team. He was already working out his upper body multiple times a week, and when the idea to join the team was shared with his peers and school officials, York received the encouragement and backing that he needed to proceed with the idea.

This encouragement gave York the courage to pursue his dream of once again becoming a part of a team and continuing his career as a high school athlete. Being confined to a wheelchair, it took York a while, but eventually he found his own, unique way to throw the shot. “I put it next to my face, but not against my face because then I lose (my) balance,” said York when discussing his throwing motion. “I usually face forward, not slanted, and throw it (the shot) at an angle with my body. (During the motion) my body’s at an angle, but my chair’s facing forward.”

After refining his throwing motion, York worked with school officials and the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) to get the necessary accommodations for him to participate in official IHSAA events. Franklin Community’s Athletic Director Kip Staggs said that the school was close to having a decision on York’s eligibility before he suffered a physical setback that ended his hopes of throwing during the 2012 track season.

Due to the setback, York said he had extra motivation and incentive to prepare for this spring’s track and field season. In early March, York officially made the decision to try out for the team. Upon the news, Staggs said that the school reopened discussions with the IHSAA.

According to the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR), schools are required to provide students with disabilities equal opportunities to participate in extracurricular athletics activities, including varsity, club and intramural sports. Equal opportunity means that schools must conduct an individualized assessment of a student with a disability to determine reasonable accommodations that might be provided to allow the fullest possible extent of participating in school athletic activities. A reasonable accommodation is one that does not give the person with a disability a competitive advantage over competitors without disabilities, and does not present a safety risk to the person with a disability or to other competitors.

York said that Franklin Community submitted all of the paperwork that is needed for the approval of his accommodations. Staggs said that while the process has been a growing experience, York has received tremendous support from many, including his peers. “Regardless if he (York) competes in an actual meet, if it’s healthy for Logan and healthy for our athletes, then it’s good for everyone involved,” Staggs said.

Franklin’s efforts were rewarded on April 23 when the IHSAA granted York permission to participate in Franklin’s meet at Greensburg (Indiana) High School. While throwing, York had to keep his wheelchair in a stationary position. At press time, the school was awaiting word from the IHSAA on York’s participation in additional meets.

Taylor Wilkerson is a 2013 spring publications intern and a junior at Franklin (Indiana) College.
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One of the 37 courses within the curriculum of the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association’s (NIAAA) Leadership Training Institute is Leadership Training Class (LTC) 799 – “Standards of Excellence in Interscholastic Athletic Programs.” The class serves as the foundation on which three professional development opportunities and programs are developed.

“Standards of Excellence in Interscholastic Athletic Programs” was developed to provide best practices based upon 10 standard areas for not only athletic administrators, but also superintendents, principals and school boards. LTC 799 serves as a guide for long-range planning, program improvement and professional growth for athletic administrators, personnel and school-based athletics. The overall goal is to provide evidence that a school or district is conducting its athletic program in a manner that is educationally sound and compatible with accepted standards.

The “Ten Standards of Excellence” for interscholastic athletic programs were developed based on NIAAA-conducted research, and were validated by a panel of trained and experienced high school athletic administrators. In addition, the standards were approved by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) as an arm of the American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAPHERD).

Following are the “Ten Standards of Excellence” and a brief description of each:

- **Standard One** – Philosophy and Policies as Measures of Educational Compatibility. This promotes the philosophy of interscholastic sport as an education-based provision, an extension of the regular classroom.

- **Standard Two** – Measures of Educational Compatibility. This standard addresses education-based athletics as a method of developing good citizens, and the expectation of coaches to be trained as coaches as well as they are trained for their classroom role.

- **Standard Three** – Mentoring to Enhance Leadership among Coaches and Student-Athletes. This standard deals with mentoring as a way to enhance the professional effectiveness of coaches and the leadership potential of student-athletes.

- **Standard Four** – Program Safety and Risk Management. Standard No. 4 deals with managing risk and liability through ongoing commitment to proactive planning and management. Risk management is designed to minimize foreseeable hazards and address potential areas of negligence.

- **Standard Five** – Program Access and Equity. No. 5 discusses access to, and equity of, the athletic program. This area is vital to equal opportunities and accommodations for student-athletes.

- **Standard Six** – Budget and Supplemental Fundraising. This standard discusses financial aspects of the athletic program – planning, budgeting, raising supplemental funds and managing those monies.

- **Standard Seven** – Personal and Program Assessment. Standard No. 7 includes having an effective model for assessment of personnel, as well as for the program itself.

- **Standard Eight** – Technology. This standard looks at the effective use and policies associated with computer technology, software and technology used in communication efforts.

- **Standard Nine** – Sports Medicine. Standard No. 9 relates to providing a sound overall sports medicine program that exists to enhance the health and safety of athletes.
The final standard allows for those innovative areas of leadership that the athletic administrator, school and/or district have created and implemented.

“Standards of Excellence in Interscholastic Athletic Programs” challenges the athletic administrator to review current practices, policies and services; promotes individuals to grow toward higher levels of leadership and programs to reach toward extended professional standards, encouraging strategies to change and improve where needed.

Site Visit Assessment Option

For the past four years, the NIAAA has offered a program that provides assessment of school or school district athletic programs based upon the 10 criteria established in LTC 799. The process includes a team visitation for the purpose of comprehensive athletic program assessment. The assessment is based on an on-site evaluation, exit oral report and a comprehensive written report shared with school district administrative leadership.

The program was officially instituted by the NIAAA Board of Directors in July 2010, after an initial invitation to perform such an assessment in Georgia. This first effort took place in June 2009 in the DeKalb County School District athletic program, a community that was home to six geographic areas including a large and diverse population.

The program was officially instituted by the NIAAA Board of Directors in July 2010, after an initial invitation to perform such an assessment in Georgia. This first effort took place in June 2009 in the DeKalb County School District athletic program, a community that was home to six geographic areas including a large and diverse population.

On January 9, 2013, an athletic program and facilities assessment team converged on Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School in Rumson, New Jersey. The school is located on a peninsula along the Atlantic Ocean, and south across Raritan Bay from New York City. Nearly 80 percent of the student population of approximately 1,000 has participated in the high school interscholastic athletic program that provides 12 boys sports and 12 girls sports.

Typically, an assessment team will consist of between two to five members. All team members will hold either the certification of Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA) or Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA). Each member must have taken LTC 799, LTC 707 (“Assessment of Interscholastic Athletic Programs and Personnel”) and LTC 504 (“Legal Issues I – Risk Management), from which much of the assessment criteria are formed. Consideration to participate on an assessment team is provided to both current and retired NIAAA members with comprehensive knowledge and extensive experience as a high school athletic administrator.

After an initial request from a school, the NIAAA staff will communicate with the school district personnel regarding the scope of the review, in turn determining the number of team members required, coordinating the calendar and hosting needs. Arrangements are made regarding financial considerations for budgeting by the school district, visitation dates and local logistical arrangements.

Once the assessment group and leader are established, the organization of the team is handed off to the chairman to determine the appropriate role of each team member. The NIAAA has developed assessment program tools including checklists, evaluations, questions and templates for team members to work with focus groups, facilities, policy and sharing of reports in both oral and written forms.

Comparison of existing district policies, procedures and methods to the 10 assessment components are accomplished. An abbreviated verbal outline can be shared at the time of team departure, and a formal written assessment is provided within four weeks following the assessment completion.

If the school or district desires, focus groups can be conducted that might include administrators, coaches, students-athletes and parents – meetings that the district would select and organize in cooperation with the team chairman. Using session guides from LTC 799, an open-ended 60-minute discussion on current issues, feelings and concerns can be held.

Facilities inspection visits are conducted and identified by the school district for indoor and/or outdoor venues. Criteria for assessment of facilities are drawn from the safety checklists included in LTC 504 – Legal Issues I. Other factors considered will be Title IX equity comparisons and ADA requirements.

Methods include utilization of the LTC 799 program assessment instrument to provide raw scores, and narrative regarding the strengths and needs of the school or district program(s). There is no qualitative assessment, and the athletic program is neither addressed as good nor poor. Rather, existing strengths are shared, and the prioritized recommendations for directing the program in the immediate and long-term future are provided.

A school or district with interest in a site visit assessment should contact the NIAAA at 317-587-1450.

Dr. Mike Blackburn, CMAA, is associate executive director of the NIAAA, located in Indianapolis, Indiana. He has been with the NIAAA since 2005 and was an interscholastic athletic administrator in Indiana for many years prior to joining the NIAAA. He can be reached at mblackburn@niaaa.org.
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Microsoft Word Has Variety of Uses

BY STEFFEN PARKER

While most people in education use Microsoft Word for word processing in letter writing and text document creation, the program has other wide-ranging capabilities that many are not aware of or use. Digging through an extensive manual to find the one command that you need can be frustrating and time-consuming. Following are some tips for some of the under-used features of this popular software:

Make a statement
Besides the standard Bold and Italics choices for bringing attention to specific words or phrases, you can bring notice to specific information by using different color text (select your color of choice from the black underlined A pull-down menu button), different types of underlining (click and hold on the space to the right of the underline button in the Bold, Italics, Underline menu), highlighting like the ubiquitous yellow highlighter (select your color from the highlighted ABC pull-down menu button) or a special style (selected from the button in the Styles area of the header).

Have your own style – Save it so you can use it more often
If you use several different font types and styles in your documents and find yourself changing those parameters quite often, use the Style Toolbox to save your different styles so that you can simply click on them as needed while you are typing your document. Select Toolbox, Style from the View menu and click on the New Style button to set up your styles and give them appropriate names. Then have that toolbox visible while you type. BONUS: The toolbox window can also show you the built-in Thesaurus, Dictionary and Bilingual Dictionary by clicking on the Books icon.

Get more out of each page
The margins for new documents are normally very generous (and waste paper). If you change the margins each time you start a new document to the settings you want, you can set those as the default for all new documents so you won’t have to change them each time. From the Margins button, click on Custom Margins at the bottom of that pull-down menu. Set your margins and then click on Default, and when asked to set those margins for new documents, click on YES.

Clearly identify your multi-page documents
To make sure that your reader knows what document they are viewing, what page they are on and other important information, use the Footer function. Click on the Footer button to select a style and then customize it to include the document title (which will change if you change the saved name of the file), the date, the page and other information. You can have that appear on every page or just odd or even ones.

Border the statement that means the most
To set an essential section of your document apart from the rest, you can put a border around it. The selections under the Draw Borders area allow you to put a border under, over, right, left or around a word, phrase or paragraph and be able to control the thickness and style of the border. You can even insert a bordered area within your document (Draw command) and enter text just in that area.

Keep track of changes in documents being jointly edited
When several people are working on a single document, each making changes, edits, corrections, additions and deletions, to keep track of each of those versions usually means saving multiple draft copies. By using the Tracking function, you can see what changes were made and by whom, undo or accept them as needed, view the document in its original form or final form, and view a listing of the changes as they occurred. Simply turn on Tracking from that menu and select the view you wish to use.

Steffen Parker has worked with computers since the mid-1970s and has been a Macintosh user since its introduction in 1984. Owner-operator of Music Festival Software Solutions, he develops online registration and information Web sites for music festivals, state organizations and professional societies. Serving as an IT support person for the Vermont Principals’ Association and the Data Coach for Addison Rutland Supervisory Union, Parker supports computer use for adults working in education, administration, finance and publications, including the NFHS High School Today Publications Committee serving as the performing arts representative.
The Pre-participation Evaluation – First Step to Competing in Sports

BY ANGIE PELLANT, M.D.

There are about 7.7 million participants in high school sports, and one of the first steps to competing in their sport of choice is the pre-participation evaluation (PPE). The PPE is the standard of care for all athletes before their sport season begins.

The primary goal of the PPE is to maximize the safe participation by athletes in their sports activities rather than exclude them from participating. Other benefits of PPEs may include:

- Detection of potentially life-threatening or disabling medical or musculoskeletal conditions
- Early diagnosis of medical or musculoskeletal conditions that may predispose athletes to injury or illness
- Meet state and federal mandates

PPEs also help to determine general health, serve as an entry point into the health-care system and provide an opportunity to discuss health issues not related to sports.

In general, the PPE should take place four to six weeks before the season starts. This time period allows for further evaluation and rehabilitation that may be required before the athlete engages in a sport. Recommendations for the frequency of the PPE vary, but in general a comprehensive PPE should occur bi-annually in secondary schools. Updates on medical history and vital signs should be performed annually.

The most common methods of conducting the PPE include individual examinations or assessments by a coordinated medical team via station-based exams. Individual exams provide more privacy but are usually more costly and time-consuming. The station-based approach is time-efficient, sports-oriented and less expensive than an individual examination. However, this approach may not provide continuity of care.

Regardless of the method used to perform the exam, the most important component is the athlete’s medical history. Personal and family history, in conjunction with review of systems, can detect approximately 80 percent of conditions that restrict athletic participation or require further evaluation.

Each individual organization may have specific requirements regarding documentation of a PPE. In general, documentation should include a thorough review of systems, past medical and family histories as well as allergies and current medications. Administrators, coaches and athletic directors should encourage their athletes to complete their medical history with their caregiver prior to having the PPE performed.

Evaluators should review medical concerns included in the athlete’s history such as previous restrictions on sports participation, current and chronic medical conditions, and surgical history. Prescription and non-prescription medications as well as supplements and allergies should also be reviewed. A detailed cardiovascular history including pertinent family history, current or past musculoskeletal injuries and previous rehabilitation treatments should be noted. Finally, previous head injuries or concussions, history of heat-related illness, dermatologic conditions and menstrual history should be considered within the PPE.

After the athlete’s medical history has been reviewed, he or she will receive a physical exam conducted by either a primary physician or by passing through physical exam “stations.” The physician performing the examination should be familiar with the PPE protocol.

Physical examinations should focus on the cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems. Vital signs, including height, weight and blood pressure, should be obtained on every athlete. Head, eyes, ears, nose and throat exams (HEENT) are an important component of the physical exam and should focus on visual acuity and pupil size. Cardiovascular examination should concentrate on detection and classification of murmurs or arrhythmias.
The pulmonary exam should reveal clear breath sounds while the abdominal evaluation should emphasize the four quadrants of the abdomen and identification of masses or enlargement of the liver or spleen. Genitalia examination of males is used to identify masses or hernias while there is no requirement for genitalia exam on female athletes. Observation of skin lesions or rashes is the goal of skin evaluation.

The type and degree of the musculoskeletal (MS) exam is a subject of debate. Medical history is 92-percent sensitive in detecting significant MS injuries. A general screening exam that focuses on joint range of motion, gross muscle strength, muscle asymmetry and ligamentous instability is usually adequate to detect a MS problem in healthy athletes. Those athletes with past injuries may require a more detailed exam focused on the injured joint. Issues or injuries that require further evaluation or rehabilitation should be noted and appropriate treatments recommended.

Studies have shown that between 3.1 and 13.9 percent of athletes receiving a PPE require further evaluation before clearance to participate in a sport is recommended.

Clearance for an athlete to participate in sports activities can be characterized as:

1. Cleared without restriction.
2. Cleared with recommendations for further evaluation or treatment.
3. Not cleared, will be reconsidered after completion of further testing or rehab.
4. Not cleared for certain types of sports or all sports.

Over the years, multiple groups have looked at utilizing various laboratory studies such as cardiac ultrasound, exercise stress testing and screening EKGs with the PPE. Routinely screening athletes for anemia or sickle cell trait/disease is not part of the standard PPE, although individual organizations may require these tests. Routine EKGs and cardiac echocardiograms have been utilized by some organizations in an effort to detect and decrease sudden cardiac death in athletes. These tests are not a cost-effective way to reduce morbidity and mortality in athletes and are not recommended for inclusion in the PPE.

Additional testing should be performed only on athletes with undesirable symptoms, history or exam findings warranting evaluation. Review of immunizations is also not part of the standard PPE but may be part of the history section on some screening forms.

The PPE is the most effective screening tool presently available to maximize safe participation in sports and other physical activities. The PPE is not intended to be a comprehensive medical evaluation; it is mainly beneficial to identify injuries or illnesses that need further treatment or that may restrict the athlete’s participation in sports. Particular attention should be paid to the medical history of the athlete, followed by a sports-oriented physical exam. Clearance for participation in athletics should be approved only after reviewing the history and results relative to the activity in which the athlete will participate. Appropriate documentation should be completed and retained at the end of the exam.

References:

Dr. Angie Pellant is a family and sports medicine physician in Boise, Idaho. She sees high school, collegiate and semi-professional athletes as well as her general practice patients. Pellant is a member of the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.
those in the educational community know about the mountains of research that document the reasons and purposes for including a strong arts-based component in a well-balanced school curriculum to provide a well-rounded education for all students.

This research speaks to the many qualities that are enhanced by participation in fine arts courses: confidence, teamwork, independent thought, creativity, self-discipline, improvement in standard testing and heightened intellectual abilities. And the research is documented with the percentages, numbers, statistics and trends to show any skeptic that arts make a difference in the success of students – both academically and in their future lives as educators, doctors, lawyers, employees and citizens.

Some skeptics, however, are not persuaded by the statistics. They are not swayed by percentages of improvement, the number of arts major who become doctors or trends that indicate that art courses lead to better college grades. For those individuals, a different approach is needed – one that carries with it strong statements from respected sources, each conveying the same message as the statistics, but in their own words:

**John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States, on art in America:**

“I am certain that after the dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we too, will be remembered not for victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit.”

“This country cannot afford to be materially rich and spiritually poor.”

“I look forward to an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statecraft. I look forward to an America which will steadily raise the standards of artistic accomplishment and which will steadily enlarge cultural opportunities for all of our citizens. And I look forward to an America which commands respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization as well.”

**Albert Einstein, nuclear scientist, on how he came to develop his theory of relativity:**

“It occurred to me by intuition, and music was the driving force behind that intuition. My discovery was the result of musical perception.”

“Logic will take you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.”

**Martin Luther King Jr., civil rights leader, on who is changing the world:**

“Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better.”
Steve Jobs, co-founder and CEO of Apple, Inc., on how the iPad was developed:

“It is in Apple’s DNA that technology alone is not enough—it is technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the results that make our heart sing.”

“The future belongs to young people with an education and the imagination to create.”

Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States, on the future of America:

Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn’t really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That’s because they were able to connect experiences they’ve had and synthesize new things. And the reason they were able to do that was that they’ve had more experiences or they have thought more about their experiences than other people. Unfortunately, that’s too rare a commodity. A lot of people in our industry haven’t had very diverse experiences. So they don’t have lots of dots to connect, and they end up with very linear solution without a broad perspective on the problem. The broader one’s understanding of the human experience, the better design we will have.”

Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft:

“…”

Maria Schriver, journalist, on the value of art in our society:

“…”

Barbara Jordan, former Congresswoman from Texas, on the power of the arts:

“The arts are not a frill. The arts are a response to our individuality and our nature, and help to shape our identity. What is there that can transcend deep difference and stubborn divisions? The arts. They have a wonderful universality. Art has the potential to unify. It can speak in many languages without a translator. The arts do not discriminate. The arts can lift us up.”

Alec Baldwin, actor, on cutting art programs out of public education:

“How can we turn our back on an endeavor which increases our children’s cultural intelligence, heightens individual sensitivity and deepens our collective sense of humanity? I suggest to you that we cannot.”

While research does provide the data-driven facts to support advocating for the arts in your school, that discussion is a very human one simply because of who we are, what we are and how we, as humans, got to this point. And as humans, we feel more than think, relate more than react, develop more than discover, and create more than make. The arts provide each with the experience to do that for a lifetime.

William Bennett, former U.S. Secretary of Education, on the need for a balanced curriculum:

“…”

Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States, as quoted by Franklin Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy, each while defending the use of public funds for the support of the arts during difficult times:

“…”

Steffen Parker, a ninth-generation Vermonter, has been an instrumental music educator for 31 years, with degrees in performance, education and conducting. Parker organizes several music events in his state and region, and is in his 17th year as the Vermont All State Music Festival Director. He started a computer company, Music Festival Software Solutions, to help other states move their data processing online and provides that type of service to several groups, including the Vermont Principals’ Association and the Vermont Superintendents’ Association. Parker is a member of the High School Today Publications Committee.
In many interscholastic sports, the winner is determined when the clock ticks down to zero and the score is tallied. However, when acts of good sportsmanship are demonstrated during the spirit of competition, everyone is a winner.

“Sportsmanship comes above winning and losing for us,” said Todd Outman, Wellsboro (Pennsylvania) High School boys basketball coach. “Our philosophy is we try to teach the kids the right way. There is always going to be adversity, and there is always going to be good times. We try to teach the kids how to conduct themselves and how to handle both situations.”

The final horn echoed through Mansfield University’s Decker Gymnasium as the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) District 4 championship game came to an end with Loyalsock Township High School taking down Wellsboro, 57-37. Although a Hornets’ loss was recorded in the scorebook, both programs earned a win for sportsmanship.

Outman’s Hornets experienced both good and bad that Saturday in early March, and they responded in a way that made their coach proud.

“It was an awesome situation for Wellsboro to be in,” Outman said. “It is gratifying as a coach to know you have members of your team who are that classy. That is one thing at Wellsboro that we try to run – a class organization.”

The team showed just how classy it was as Loyalsock was up 55-37 with about 30 seconds remaining in the game when Lancers’ coach Ron Insinger called a time-out. He did so not to prolong the inevitable, but to get some players in the game who didn’t get much court time during the season. One of the players who checked-in was Dan Temons. The senior, who has autism, was a four-year member of Loyalsock’s junior varsity team and he was recently promoted to the varsity team for senior night and the PIAA playoffs, a move which earned him a varsity letter.

“The team took it upon themselves to make sure Dan had an opportunity to score,” Insinger said. “They know that is important to Danny. He is the inspiration to the team and makes everyone upbeat throughout the season.”

Wellboro’s coaching staff noticed that Temons was entering the game, and instead of drawing up a play to stop the Lancers from scoring, Outman took this opportunity to not just talk about sportsmanship, but to ask the team to display it.

“We called the players over (to the bench) during the time-out,” he said. “It was stated to the players to allow this young man to get...
a shot. I think it was worded that we wanted him to score.”

The Hornets listened.

On the first play after the time-out, Temons received the inbounds pass and took a shot from near the three-point line, which was off target. Wellsboro junior Kyler Widows, who was defending Temons, told him to run to the basket for the rebound, which he did and got off his second field-goal attempt. Dawson Prough got the rebound for Wellsboro after Temons’ second failed scoring attempt with just a few ticks left on the clock.

“I didn’t think I needed to dribble it out because it would have been pointless,” Prough said. “I saw (Temons) standing right next to the basket so why not try again.”

Prough, the seventh or eighth player off the Hornets’ bench, allowed sportsmanship to trump his desire to score or make a play, as he fed Temons, with hopes that the old saying, “third time’s a charm,” would ring true.

The freshman guard said he got the ball to Temons because it was the right thing to do, especially after seeing his reaction after the first two missed scoring tries. It was an act that did not go unnoticed.

“I have been head coach at Loyalsock for 39 years,” said Insinger, who is Pennsylvania’s winningest basketball coach. “That may be the most class act in my 39 years of coaching. Dawson didn’t think a second about what to do; he just passed it to Danny. For a ninth-grader on the varsity team to be thinking under those terms is unbelievable.”

As the buzzer sounded, the ball dropped through the basket and Temons got his points.

“I don’t think there was a dry eye in the entire facility,” Insinger said. “Teams on both sides had tears of joy. It was more about that than winning the gold medal.”

Insinger said Temons’ face lit up when Prough got him the ball for one last shot and when the ball went in, he raised his arms like he had just conquered the world.

Prough said the reaction was something that needed to be seen to appreciate the true feelings.

“It is hard to describe – I wish I could show you,” he said. “His mouth was open with the biggest smile on his face. At that point you really saw how much that meant to him. He was excited and jumping up and down. His reaction was great.”

Although Prough’s pass will go in the books as a turnover, in real life it was an assist that will not be forgotten.

Jason Haddix is a 2013 spring intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a senior at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis studying journalism and medical imaging.
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In a time when many schools do not academically rank their students, Sparks (Nevada) Edward C. Reed High School still holds on to this time-honored tradition. Moreover, its list demonstrates a correlation between athletic participation and academic success as 14 of the 2012-13 senior class’s top-20 students are involved in interscholastic sports, including nine who play multiple sports.

Ron Coombs, Reed’s athletic director, said it is common to have a high number of the Raiders student-athletes on the list, but this year was the greatest ever for the school.

“It is very satisfying,” Coombs said. “It is something we promote in the athletic department. I know our coaches promote it.”

The ties between academic and athletic success at Reed have been recognized on a state level. During the past four years, the baseball and softball teams have each earned a Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association academic team championship.

“What we talk about with our kids is that there are a lot more academic scholarships out there than there are athletic scholarships,” Coombs said. “They have a better chance going to the next level academically than athletically.”

One student who has taken that message to heart is Cody Forman, who currently is ranked No. 2 on Reed’s academic list. He is a two-sport student-athlete – track and cross county – and wants to study medicine after graduation.

Forman said the staff at Reed has been very helpful with assisting in the balancing act that students face with athletics and academics. That, he said, is the most difficult part of being a student-athlete.

“The coaches here at Reed are all very supportive of the student-athletes,” Forman said. “They know that first you are a student, second you are an athlete. There is always some time allotted for study hall or just to catch up stuff that you missed.”

Leia Ballesteros, a four-year varsity swimmer, said being an athlete has helped immensely in her academic life. She said there are many things that transfer back-and-forth from the classroom to the pool, especially being able to focus on the task at hand.

“In swimming, you have to constantly think about technique,” Ballesteros said. “That also applies to schooling because you need to think about the little things and remember all the details in order to succeed.”
Forman agreed that being involved in athletics can help in the classroom and his competitive nature pushes him to excel while he is running or working a mathematical equation.

“I am very mentally strong and cross country helps with that because of it being a long race and you have to push yourself through it,” Forman said. “That transfers over into the academic side because I like to push myself as if it is a competition.”

Their success has not come without the help of those who care about them. In fact, Ballesteros said having a strong support system away from the school was a key to her success, adding that having friends and family to lean on for support and encouragement was a tremendous benefit to her.

Ballesteros said that the faculty at Reed has an understanding that most of the student-athletes have a desire to succeed athletically and academically. She added that the staff works well with the students to help balance the workload of schoolwork and the time commitment for practice and competition.

Part of Coombs’ duties as athletic director is fielding calls from recruiters who are looking to lure some of Reed’s best student-athletes to their particular school. He said he tells the young people with whom he interacts that he is rarely asked about the on-field performances.

“We tell our kids, if you can play, they will notice you,” Coombs said. “They are going to want to get deeper into what kind of a person you are and how you are in the classroom, because it is an investment for them.”

Once her time at Reed is complete, Ballesteros, who is eighth on the academic list, plans on attending the University of Nevada-Reno for a year before applying to the U.S. Naval Academy with the aspiration of being a pilot.

Forman said he hopes to pursue a career in medicine after graduation. He has currently been accepted to two schools, but has yet to make a decision where he wants to attend. One thing is certain; he has enjoyed his time at Reed and has no regrets with the path he has taken to get where he is today.

“I would not take anything back if I had to do it all over again,” Forman said. “I would choose the same things I have already done because they have put me in position to succeed later in life.”

Coombs noted that Forman and Ballesteros are examples that through hard work and dedication, young people can balance a successful school life, athletic life and social life.

Jason Haddix is a 2013 spring intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department. He is a senior at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis studying journalism and medical imaging.

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**THE INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Kevin Minch is a Professor of Communication, Director of the Truman Institute and Dean of the Joseph Baldwin Academy at Truman State University. He was Truman’s Director of forensics for 10 years. During his tenure, students captured multiple national titles in debate and speech events. He currently serves as the NFHS College Advisor and Speech, Debate, and Theatre Consultant.

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New York Association Encourages Participation in Community Service

“You Can Help Change The World” is the theme that the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) has been using for three years to inspire students in high schools throughout the state to become a part of the Community Service Challenge. The “Challenge” is a contest that helps teams throughout New York to become active members in their communities and to reach out to those in need.

Sixteen teams entered the 2011-12 Community Service Challenge, and many people statewide are benefiting from the generosity of these high school students and their coaches.

Community service allows students the opportunity to have their voices heard, and to learn the importance of teamwork and responsibility. It gives students a chance to become leaders and strengthens their social and academic skills. Not only does it help them learn new traits about themselves, it helps them feel a sense of accomplishment, and develop self-esteem and self-confidence that encourages them to become more involved in their communities even when the “Challenge” is completed.

Another benefit from participating is the opportunity to learn about potential careers. This process also helps create valuable, long-lasting bonds between schools and their communities.

The Community Service Challenge has five key components. The first is “Investigation” where an advisor and students investigate the community problems and needs that should be addressed. The second is “Planning and Preparation,” which allows the advisor, students and community members to plan the learning and service activities.

The third component is “Action.” This is the “heart” of the project where engaging in a meaningful service experience helps students develop important knowledge, skills and attitudes that benefit the community. “Reflection” is the fourth component to the project. This allows students who have completed activities to understand the service-learning experience, as well as to think about its meaning in connection to themselves and their society.

The last important part of the project is “Demonstration/Celebration.” This is the final experience when students, community participants and others publicly share what they have learned and then celebrate the achievements of the service project.

Two teams have received awards thus far. In 2011, the Adirondack Central School Softball Team was the first team to receive the award. The Section 3 team engaged in three community service initiatives, including a fundraiser for a family who lost their father, a bottle/can drive to raise money for a quadriplegic father of a teacher at the school, and the Boonville Youth Athletic Association Clean Up.

Last year’s recipient was the Ossining High School Wrestling Team. This group of talented individuals executed the planning and running of the fifth annual Veteran’s Wrestling Match, which honored and supported veterans. They also planned an event that supported veterans at a local hospital. Student-athletes who participated in the community service activities are able to take away a great sense of pride and accomplishment that can have an impact throughout their lives.

The Community Service Challenge encourages broad and diverse forms of community service such as visiting nursing homes, cleaning up local parks, raising money, volunteering at events such as Special Olympics and more.

The NYSPHSAA Community Service Challenge benefits everyone: parents, students, teachers, community members and all other surrounding people. It brings groups of people together and helps promote well-rounded individuals. The only cost to this challenge is time, but the rewards are limitless.

Robert Stulmaker is assistant director of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association, and Courtney Tedeschi is a spring intern at the NYSPHSAA and a senior at Berne-Knox-Westerlo High School in New York.
**VOICES OF THE NATION**

**Q** How have high school activity programs positively impacted your college application process?

**Deonne Harris**  
Newton High School  
Newton, Iowa

Participating in high school athletics has taught me so much about life. One of the most valuable lessons is the experience of collaborating with friends, teammates and coaches. Participating in athletics has afforded me the opportunity to build character and responsibility. Playing sports is a lot of work, but it keeps me busy and connected to school. I enjoy sports mostly because I have made many friends and I have learned to work with others to achieve a common goal. Athletics for me has been my job during my high school career. Getting up early, commitment and being on time are all valuable skills which will help me in my collegiate career. Athletics has really changed my life; it has kept me out of trouble and has opened doors for me for my future.

**Kaylie Rhoads**  
Newton High School  
Newton, Iowa

High school athletics shaped me into who I am today. I play basketball and soccer. Through these I have become more confident and developed leadership skills. Preparing for college can be overwhelming, but after learning through sports how to persevere, be courageous and stay determined, it has been so much easier. Through the losses and tough times of sports I learned that life doesn’t always go the way I planned – sports taught me how to overcome obstacles in life. I am so thankful for sports because they have developed my character and prepared me for my life after high school.

**Jake Hally**  
Southport High School  
Indianapolis, Indiana

My coaches and my teammates have helped shape me into the athlete, student and person I am today. I committed to the college where I felt most comfortable being around other athletes. Crossing the finish line in a race is one of the many “finish lines” I’ll come across in life. As a runner, you should always be prepared for your next race. So now as a senior, athletics has prepared me for the next stage of my life – college.

**Steenalisa Tilcock**  
Freedom High School  
Oakley, California

Listing the activities I have participated in throughout high school on my college applications has allowed me to convey vast amounts of information about my personality and work ethic. Each activity reveals much more than what is on the surface. My participation in cross country, for example, not only expresses that I like to run, but also that I am a hard worker, a team player and a persevering individual. All of the activities I added to my application were valuable weapons in the battle for college admission, as they helped persuade colleges that I possess the skills necessary to succeed.