

MENTOR



The Michigan High School Athletic Association Newsletter for Coaches and Officials

Keeping Educational Athletics Educational

The following is an excerpt from the presentation by MHSAA Executive Director John E. (Jack) Roberts at the National Coaching Educators Conference, June 17, 2006

In every corner of Michigan, at almost every crossroads of this state, young people are participating in school sports and their parents, other relatives, friends and neighbors are gathering to watch. This 100-year-old tradition continues with record-high participation for the third straight year, even in a world of increasing distractions. High school sports not only survives, it often thrives; and it will continue to thrive if and only if it retains its focus – education – and preserves its soul – pure, amateur, local programming.

Many of you know from your coaching days that success in most sports that involve a ball requires keeping an eye on that ball. Good contact in baseball, softball, golf and tennis requires concentration on the ball. We teach receivers in football to look the ball all the way into their hands in order to make the catch. Volleyball players can neither set nor attack with consistent success unless they focus intently on the ball.

Success in school sports generally also requires that students keep their eye on another kind of ball – their school work – the academic ball. Screw up in class and you'll sit down during contests. That's how it usually is in school sports; and that's how it should always be in educational athletics.

Success in school sports also requires that athletic administrators be mindful of the academic needs that students have. Administrators must consider what we can do to assure that the interscholastic athletic program does not frustrate but actually helps facilitate education. That's the ball on which we administrators must always focus; and the question on which I wish to concentrate this morning in my comments to coaching educators is this: "How do we keep educational athletics educational?"

When we talk about "educational athletics," what do we mean? We mean, first of all, athletics sponsored by educational institutions – schools. Of course, education can occur in non-school sports; but my role in life is school sports, and my assigned focus for today is school sports; and by educational athletics in this context, we mean athletic programs that support the educational mission of schools. Programs that enhance the educational efforts of schools.

Programs that are a tool to help schools reach and motivate students to stay in school, like school and even do better in school than they otherwise might.

By educational athletics, we also



School Sports:
Excellence
Without Excess



mean athletic programs that might have some inherent value in and of themselves in addition to what they do to enhance the academic performance of students and the educational environment of schools. Some value of an educational nature that is not found as readily or at all in other parts of the school day. For example, you can learn very much in a weight training program about yourself and certain techniques, but you may not learn what it means to be made a second-team offensive guard rather than a first-team running back in order to help a team be successful. That's the kind of lesson – and there are many others – which is found in the interscholastic athletic program that isn't found as readily or sometimes at all in other parts of the school experience.

However, it is a legal fact in this state and most others across the nation that interscholastic athletics are not part of the school curriculum. They are neither required courses nor non-required courses; neither core courses nor non-core courses; neither integral nor essential parts of the curriculum; not curricular, not even co-curricular, but extracurricular – outside the curriculum.

This is important to understand because it means students have no right to participate – it's a privilege. And that's important because it means we can make and enforce reasonable standards as a condition for students' participation. And that's important because it's in the standards we have for participation that we give value to participation.

Generally, the higher the standards for participation, the greater the benefits of participation for students, their schools and our society. If we lower standards, we tend to lower the value of participation. If we raise standards, we tend to raise the value of participation for the participants, their schools and our communities.

To the extent that interscholastic athletics are educational in and of themselves and support the educational mission of schools, it is mostly the result of the standards established and maintained.

So the key is standards. The defining difference for educational athletics may be in standards. So what kind of standards do we mean?

We know that we do not have the resources of college programs, professional sports, the Olympics and others to match their standards in some respects, for example, officials training where

so much more can be done because those organizations have so much more money

and so many fewer officials to train.

But, in other areas not so dependent on

dollars, we must shine in school sports; we must have the very

best. — continued on page 2

Inside: Performance Planning

Excellence Without Excess

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highest standards.

So in educational athletics, we mean standards like standards of **eligibility**, such as rules of enrollment, maximum age, maximum semesters, academic performance, amateur status, and the like. We mean standards for **competition**, from contest playing rules to day, week and season limitations. We mean standards of **conduct**, including requirements for citizenship in at least our school settings, and requirements of sportsmanship at least at our events. And the person who may have more effect on standards in school sports than any other person is the **coach**.

We believe coaches are the critical link in the educational process of educational athletics. No one higher up or lower down the organizational chart wields more influence. Good coaches can redeem the bad decisions that their administrators make; bad coaches can ruin the best decisions administrators ever make.

In this state, we believe in coaching education that is voluntary, at least on a school district by school district basis. If I were the superintendent of a school district, I would require every coach to have some kind of continuing education every year. But I know from talking to superintendents across the state that they do not want anybody mandating to them what the education should be.

If coaching education were made mandatory for all coaches of MHSAA member schools, coaches education would get dumbed down. With the necessity of reaching all 25,000 or 30,000 coaches – with the diversity of their needs and the vastness of this state – we would be spread miles wide with a mere millimeter of depth.

Coaching education that keeps inter-scholastic athletics educational requires the hard work of designing and delivering – face to face and heart to heart – an interactive and inspiring curriculum. We want our coaches moved – emotionally changed – by coaches education. We want them inspired. We want them enthused. We want them to see young people differently when they finish one of our clinics. We want them to see themselves and their role as a coach differently.

A miles-wide, millimeter-deep program won't do it. Textbooks alone won't do it. The Internet alone won't do it. Standards alone won't do it. Certification alone won't do it. And sadly, where we are today with coaching education in Michigan, still won't do it. But we are not giving up. Heck, we've barely begun to fight.

Keeping educational athletics educational is a full-time fight for the hearts and minds of those involved, including our coaches – perhaps especially our coaches. It's countering the constant drumbeat of those who see school sports as the training ground for college and professional athletic careers. Who think about athletic scholarships to college more than academic scholarship in high school.

Who think national tournaments and televised high school athletic events do not add to the problem, do not add to the public missing the truth that local programs of the junior high/middle school, ninth grade, JV and varsity levels is really where the education of educational athletics takes place. In fact, that it's in the day-after-day practices more than the games of these local pro-

grams that the real, genuine, life-changing education takes place.

It's not found in national tournaments. It's not found in television. It's not found in a lot of the recent trends that trouble a lot of people.

In early 2005, the National Association of State Boards of Education issued a report titled Athletics in an Era of Reform which stated: "The problems that have plagued college athletics – such as unscrupulous agents, mercenary coaches, questionable recruiting practices, and extravagant benefits bestowed on players – are now becoming more frequent at the high school level . . ."

Late last winter, a *Sports Illustrated* feature article was critical of national tournaments and television in high school basketball. The article said it was time to rethink the direction in which high school basketball was heading.

In Michigan, we rethought the direction years ago. In Michigan – for years – we've had tough rules to prohibit national tournaments and television. And in Michigan – just last month – our Representative Council reaffirmed those policies.

Michigan schools will not be seduced and they will not succumb. We will keep the nation's one-of-a-kind out-of-state travel limits that not only restrict MHSAA member schools to a maximum of 600 highways miles round-trip, but also prohibit MHSAA member schools from participating anywhere that schools from non-contiguous states have traveled in excess of that limit. In other words, Michigan schools will not play in national-scope tournaments, whether they are near or far.

We will keep the nation's one-of-a-kind prohibition against live commercial television of regular-season games in which MHSAA member schools are involved.

And we will keep the nation's one-of-a-kind coaches education program, the only one that is designed and delivered by a state high school association, face to face with coaches, anywhere and any time they gather, with as much focus on perspective and philosophy as important topics such as pedagogy and physiology.

We will preach, teach, practice and promote proper perspective to administrators, coaches, students, their parents, politicians, promoters and the sports media. No one will doubt where we stand, or what we stand for.

If educational athletics loses its focus in this state, it will not be for a lack of effort or for a lack of fight from the MHSAA and its member schools. We will pursue excellence without the excesses that threaten educational athletics in America. Keeping educational athletics educational requires this focus and this fight.

And in the world of coaching education, it requires people of passion to design the programs and deliver them face to face anywhere they are requested, and who turn out coaches who don't say after completing one of our clinics, "Boy, was that heavy; I'm not sure I can cut it." But instead, turn out coaches who at the end of one of our clinics says, "Wow, was that inspiring; I can't wait to get back to the kids."

That's our goal in Michigan. And that's the key to keeping educational athletics educational: to turn on coaches, not only to the best possible practices of their sport, but also the purest philosophies of sports.



Are your athletes burned out before the season begins due to "voluntary" offseason workouts? The MHSAA's "Excellence Without Excess" campaign is aimed at developing well-rounded, well-rested – and thus more productive – student-athletes.



Henry Ford Center for Athletic Medicine, AT&T Join MHSAA Team

The MHSAA is pleased to announce the addition of two new corporate partners to its roster this Fall, as **AT&T** and **Henry Ford Health System Center for Athletic Medicine** in Detroit join the lineup.

Bolstering the MHSAA's mission for educational interscholastic athletics – Scholarship, Sportsmanship, Safety and Scope – the Association's newest partners will be key players in Safety and Scope.

AT&T's partnership with the MHSAA creates a new award which will honor four schools annually for their work in promoting the proper role of school sports. The Scope Award will honor one school in each enrollment class (A-B-C-D) with a \$2,500 cash award for doing the best job in promoting a sensible scope for educational athletics in their buildings and communities.

Details about the application process will be provided to schools soon. As part of that process, schools will be required to illustrate how the \$2,500 prize would be used to continue to promote the appropriate scope for school sports. The announcement of the winning schools and presentations will take place at selected MHSAA Final tournaments and in local venues later this school year.

AT&T will also sponsor the MHSAA's new Student Advisory Council, a 16-member group which will provide feedback on issues impacting educational athletics from a student's perspective, and also be involved in the operation of Association championship events and other programming.

Members of the Student Advisory Council will serve for two years, beginning as juniors. Eight new members will be selected annually to the SAC, with nominations made by MHSAA member schools. For the 2006-07 school year, the first eight students, all juniors, are already in place; and will be joined by eight new juniors next Summer.

"It is not often that a large corporation works with a private, non-profit association of schools like the MHSAA and looks to underwrite programming which promotes after-school activities as just that – something which is after the school day chronologically

and after the school's mission in importance," said MHSAA Executive Director John E. "Jack" Roberts. "AT&T came to us wanting to promote a sensible scope for school sports and promoting student leadership -- the right things that school sports stand for."

As the Association's exclusive health and safety partner, the **Center for Athletic Medicine** will regularly contribute articles for MHSAA publications on sports medicine topics, meet with staff and sports committees to keep them informed on current issues and policies and their impact on school sports, and work with allied groups like coaches and administrative associations and the Youth Sports Institute at Michigan State University.

The Center for Athletic Medicine will also play host to the Kids, Sports & Drugs Conference on Nov. 9, where approximately 350 people from member schools across the state will attend to become informed on a variety of topics, including the ATLAS and ATHENA programs the MHSAA is piloting this year with the support of *Sports Illustrated* the Oregon Health & Sciences University.

"There are always going to be injuries and health issues encountered by schools, coaches and student-athletes in day-to-day sports activities, any while education can't prevent some injuries from happening, a partnership like this with the Henry Ford Center for Athletic Medicine will help create a safer atmosphere for interscholastic athletics," said Roberts. "The Center for Athletic Medicine will be a valuable resource for our schools to turn to."

In addition to their availability in print, the articles from the Center for Athletic Medicine will be accessible online through the Health & Safety page of the MHSAA Web site.

The Center for Athletic Medicine is part of the Henry Ford Health System, one of the country's largest health care systems, integrates primary and specialty care with research and education.

The MHSAA also enjoys its generous support from long-time partner **Farm Bureau Insurance**, which underwrites the Scholar-Athlete program, and more recent sponsor **Meemic Insurance**, the Association's Sportsmanship sponsor and backer of the Good Sports Are Winners! Award.

From the Editor

It was a perfect evening for football at my alma mater in Mt. Pleasant, as Central Michigan University was set to take on Boston College when the following greeting soured the moment.

"It's time to give it up," was all he said, but I knew in an instant the topic he was referring to, and the direction the conversation was about to take.

Just a couple weeks prior, the MHSAA learned that a three-judge panel of the Sixth Circuit Court ruled against the explicit preferences of its membership, potentially affecting changes in Michigan's high school sports seasons. As the Sports Seasons case plods toward a decade in length now, it is naive to think that 100 percent of the state is in our corner as we file another appeal. Perhaps there is a growing number of people, even those once supporting the MHSAA, who say, "give it up."

Well, in the immortal words of the late John Belushi, "Was it over when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor?"

Okay, so history wasn't Bluto's strong suit, but he had that school spirit. We've got school spirit too, more than 700 strong, and the majority of you tell us to keep fighting. You've got our promise; we will continue to stand behind you. And contrary to some opinions, the Sports Seasons case has not consumed us 24/7, and it has not detracted from our mission. In fact, we have never been more proud of our efforts in providing the membership all of the necessary components to operate thriving interscholastic athletic programs.

Our coaches benefit from the most comprehensive, practical and affordable curriculum and training program this state has known, with the inception of CAP (Coaches Advancement Program).

Likewise, our officials are working harder than ever thanks to a growing list of local Approved Associations which provide training and education through regularly scheduled meetings and clinics.

Of course, neither group would have gyms and fields to call second homes if it weren't for the greatest asset any state has to offer – the students. Sometimes we get too caught up in our administrative duties, in our real jobs, and

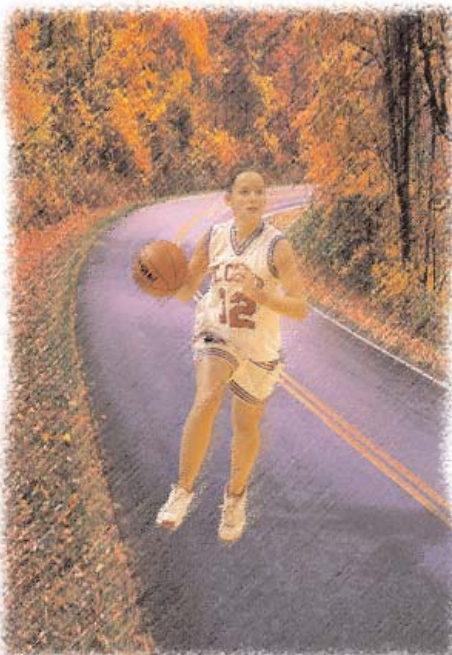
in ourselves to realize the very reason we exist. To that extent, the MHSAA has developed a Student Advisory Council; scheduled Captain's Clinics for students; allocated grants for local sportsmanship efforts, and continues to offer the most successful and longest running conference of its kind in the Women In Sports Leadership Conference.

If you have trouble getting a tangible grasp around the broad and far-reaching scope of those programs, then just think of the everyday tasks you perform now without ever leaving your desk or picking up a pencil or telephone. We're talking about online officials ratings, online officials registration, online school and officials directories, online games wanted, school maps and e-mail addresses available with the click of a mouse. And, most recently, the most comprehensive online football scoreboard for playoff point tabulation that one could imagine.

This has all taken place with the Sports Seasons case in the *background*. Moreover, it has all take place without adding staff. We have talented, driven, passionate personnel here, because we work for people who possess those same traits in our schools, from the largest cities to the most remote rural communities throughout the state.

We think the interscholastic athletics model in Michigan works just fine the way it is. We have a valuable product. Embrace it, promote it, and take pride in what you do, because what you do matters. If you need verification, consider the following: Our long-time friend Farm Bureau Insurance continues to champion Scholarship in our schools; Meemic Insurance has been on board to help promote Sportsmanship for several years. Two more heavy hitters joined the lineup beginning this fall, as Henry Ford Health Systems will sponsors Safety and Health programs statewide, and AT&T will enhance the Scope of our sports programs.

So as the weeks turn into months, and months blur into years in this case, we might have a momentary "Belushi moment" and forget who we're fighting against. But, we'll never forget who we're fighting for.



It's been a long road, but for now Girls Basketball remains a fall MHSAA sport.

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Michigan's Girls Rank 4th Nationally in Participation

Participation by girls in high school sports in Michigan hit an all-time high during the 2005-06 with 135,377, ranking fourth nationally, and participation rates in five boys sports moved up the charts in figures released by the National Federation of State High School Associations.

Michigan's girls participation was No. 4 nationally for the second straight year, trailing only the largest populated states of California, Texas and New York; and staying ahead of the more densely population states of Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. According to 2005 U.S. Census Bureau figures, Michigan continues to rank eighth in both females and males of ages 14 through 17.

Participation in five boys sports – basketball, bowling, golf, swimming and diving, and track and field – all moved up nationally in 2005-06. Michigan now ranks third for boys in basketball, bowling, and track and field; and fifth in golf and swimming and diving. Track and field moved up two notches from a year ago, while the other sports each rose one spot in the charts.

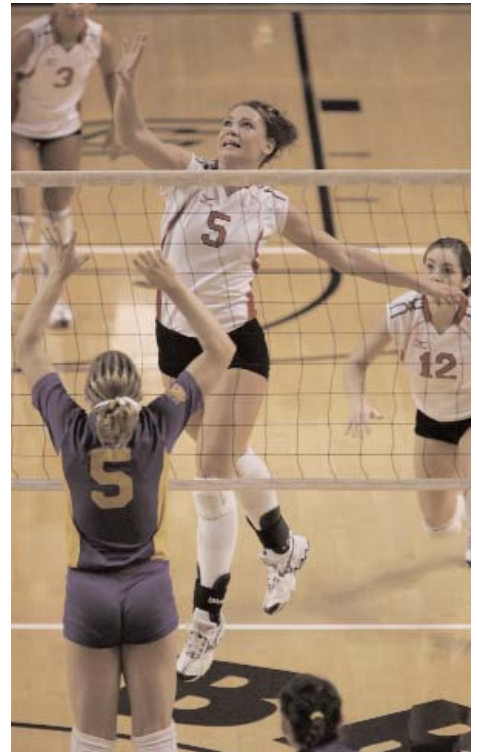
All other boys sports positions

remained unchanged from a year ago. Ice hockey and skiing still rank third; tennis is still fourth; cross country, football and wrestling are still fifth; lacrosse continues to hold onto sixth place; baseball is seventh; and soccer is in eighth place.

The most popular participation sport in Michigan for girls – volleyball – rose on the national list to third. Other sports rising on the charts were competitive cheer to fifth place, and gymnastics to tenth place. Holding the same spots as last year were bowling and tennis in third; cross country and golf in fifth; soccer in sixth; and softball in seventh. Slipping one spot from the 2004-05 survey results were skiing in third place; basketball in fourth place; and swimming and diving in fifth place.

Michigan's all-time overall participation mark of 321,250 was fifth in 2005-06, less than 2,000 behind Illinois, and down one place from a year ago. Boys participation in the NFHS survey for the past year ranked sixth with 185,873. Michigan's girl's participation has set records for four consecutive years.

National participation in prep sports last year was up to a record 7,159,904.



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MHSAA girls volleyball continued its ascent up the national charts in 2005-06, ranking third in participation, while competitive cheer moved up to fifth.

MHSAA SPORTS PARTICIPATION 2005-06

There were 756 of the MHSAA's 764 member high schools which participated in MHSAA Tournaments during 2005-06. Last year, participating schools offered the following MHSAA Tournament sports:

Boys Sports	No. of Schools (2005-06)	Girls Sports	No. of Schools (2005-06)
1. Basketball	.737/0	1. Basketball	.721/0
2. Baseball	.647/8	2. Volleyball	.706/2
3. Track & Field	.645/11	3. Track & Field	.641/11
4. Football	.621/26	4. Softball	.631/3
5. Cross Country	.599/6	5. Cross Country	.580/5
6. Golf	.564/6	6. Soccer	.410/9
7. Wrestling	.466/12	7. Tennis	.347/0
8. Soccer	.456/10	8. Golf	.317/3
9. Tennis	.355/1	9. Competitive Cheer	.241/2
10. Bowling	.237/3	10. Swimming & Diving	.236/40
11. Swimming & Diving	.223/43	11. Bowling	.235/3
12. Ice Hockey	.173/58	12. Skiing	.80/20
13. Skiing	.79/19	13. Gymnastics	.59/16
14. Lacrosse	.65/22	14. Lacrosse	.39/11

NOTE: The first number indicates all schools sponsoring the sport, including *primary* schools in cooperative programs. The second number is the number of additional schools participating in the sport through cooperative programs. (In many cases, girls play on teams listed under "Boys Sports.")

Source: School's actual sponsorship for MHSAA Tournaments (not the year-end participation survey).

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Coaching the Coaches

Gearing Up for the New Season: Performance Planning

The fall sports season is just around the corner! There is a great amount of excitement that coaches and athletes feel for the new season. Optimism runs high this time of year as every team starts 0-0. Yet, some teams (and athletes) already have a distinct advantage over their competitors. These teams have been preparing diligently, setting goals and developing a plan for success so that on the first day of practice the vision is clear and the practices are focused. They have committed to their summer workouts and are mentally focused on improving.

Ill-prepared teams also enter the season with high hopes of a successful year. Unfortunately, many are frustrated before the first game because they find the same old problems hanging around. To overcome these peak performance obstacles your athletes must learn from last season to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and then use this information to direct their energies by setting and revising goals to improve areas needing improvement and to maintain/further develop strengths. As the coach you create the foundation for a great season by doing performance planning with your athletes. Therefore, this article's purpose is to provide a series of questions athletes can ponder, and through their responses develop performance plans for success.



**INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF
YOUTH SPORTS**

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STEP 1: REVIEW YOUR GAME

A characteristic all great athletes have is the ability to learn from their performances. Following games, and at season's end, they reflect back on what went right, wrong, and what they might do differently. Your athletes need to do this by reflecting on the highs and lows of last season. Have them remember some of the most important games and how the team performed. Then,

they should think about their individual performance in those games. After reviewing the past season (watching video would be a good method), athletes complete the questions below.

1. What were some of the highs and lows from the past season?
2. What were you most proud of last season?
3. What were your personal mental and physical strengths during last season?
4. What were your personal mental and physical areas needing improvement during last season?
5. What 1 or 2 skills, tactics, or techniques can I improve to best help my team?

STEP 2: LOOK CLOSER AT AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT

The second step in performance planning has athletes examine parts of their game needing improvement. What will it take to make it to the next level or to vastly improve their weaker skills? Athletes should think about not only performance (e.g., completing 60% of pass attempts), but also technique (e.g., keeping my hands higher when throwing), and mental toughness (e.g., ignoring the yelling of spectators while calling the play in the huddle).

STEP 3: REVIEW LAST SEASON'S GOALS

Next, athletes should revisit last season's goals. If goals were not established or cannot be remembered then they should go to Step 4. For those who did create goals they will need to revise, add, and eliminate goals from last season's list. For example, if last season's goal was to have eight rebounds per game and then the athlete averaged three, she may set an intermediate goal of five to six rebounds per game the first month of competition. Once this goal is achieved she can attempt to reach the original goal of eight rebounds per game. Adapting and revising goals is essential in becoming a self-directed learner and in gaining confidence through your performance. For these reasons, and many others, athletes should continuously analyze their progress toward goals. Through this process athletes can be more systematic and focused about their improvement.



STEP 4: SET "SMART" GOALS FOR THE UPCOMING SEASON

In Step 4 have your team list three to five goals to improve weaker areas of their game, and to take advantage of their strengths (these goals should relate back to the responses in Steps 1-3). It is important that you teach your team to set goals by following effective goal-setting guidelines (SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and a Time-Oriented for accomplishment).

STEP 5: SET STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOALS

As you are aware, it is not enough to set goals and then not think about how you will achieve them. Ignoring "how" you are going to reach goals is competing and training without a plan. How is your quarterback going to complete to achieve his goal of completing 60 percent of his passes? How will your center achieve her goal of six rebounds per game? Thus, you want to assist your team in determining goal achievement strategies. In working with your athletes, a list of strategies should be created that the athlete will commit to every day such as arriving early and throwing to the receivers to improve accuracy and timing or strengthening the lower body in the weight room three times per week. This step is critical to helping your athletes achieve their goals.



John Johnson, Okemos

STEP 6: GOAL-FOCUSED ATHLETES AND COACH FOLLOW-UP

Upon reaching Step 6 your athletes have a performance plan that has been created with much thought and discussion with the coaches. Do not allow your athletes to fall into the trap of setting performance plans and then forgetting about them! The performance plan must direct how the team practices and competes. This requires that

the team commits to execute and be accountable for the performance plan. As a coach you should empower your athletes to reflect on their practices and performances, revisit their goals continually, and revise and set new goals as needed. This can be achieved by having athletes complete goal logs, having dedicated times where athletes work on their performance plan such as after practice, posting plans/goals, and having follow-up progress meetings throughout the season. In addition, coaches may want to keep a copy of athletes' plans on note cards so they can reinforce them during practice. Finally, your athletes should develop a performance plan schedule which lists on a calendar when they will execute their goal achievement strategies and checking them off when they have been completed successfully.

Developing a performance plan is essential to having a good season.

Not only should your team improve, they will have a greater sense of accomplishment because they are tracking their progress and gaining confidence from their successes. In addition, performance planning can keep them focused on the "process" of pursuing their goals rather than just winning and losing. Make the most of the upcoming season by preparing to be successful now! By having your team learn from last season and set goals to improve, you should see vast improvements in their game.

MHSAA Internet Broadcast Network Offers Weekly Perspective Program

The Michigan High School Athletic Association launched its second season of programming in August on its Internet Broadcast Network – mhsaanetwork.com – with its weekly series *MHSAA Perspective* and a sportsmanship message from the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan.

MHSAA Perspective is a weekly look at issues related to high school sports, which will run during the Fall and Winter sports seasons. The show is also picked up and aired weekly on a number of radio stations around the state which are members of the MHSAA Championship Radio Network.

Stations committed to airing MHSAA Perspective as of Aug. 21 are: Alma – WQBX-FM & WFYC-AM; Benton Harbor – WCNF-FM; Cadillac – WATT-AM; Caro – WKYO-AM & WIDL-FM; Cheboygan – WCBY-AM; Coldwater – WTVB-AM; East Lansing – WVFN-AM; Escanaba – WDBC-AM, WYKX-FM; WCHT-AM; Fenwick – WDLP-FM; Grand Rapids Area – MichiganPrepRadio.com; Grayling – WGRI-AM & WQON-FM; Greenville – WSCG-AM; Holland – WHTC-AM & WPNW-AM; Iron Mountain – WMIQ-AM/WZNL-FM; Iron River – WIKB AM & FM; Ironwood – WJMS-AM; Jackson – WKHM-AM & WIBM-AM; Manistique – WTIQ-AM; Midland – WMPX-AM; Mt. Pleasant – WCZY-FM & WMMI-AM; Muskegon – WLCS-FM; WVIB-FM; Sandusky – WMIC-AM & WTVG-FM; St. Ignace – WIDG-AM; St. Joseph – WHIT-AM & FM; WSJM-AM; and Tawas City – WKJC-FM. Most stations will run *MHSAA Perspective* as part of their regularly scheduled high school broadcasts. Check you local listings for the exact times in your area.

The MHSAA Internet Broadcast Network Web site is also hosting a video aimed at coach-official relationships, which was shown at some preseason rules meeting. The two-minute video features BCAM director Tom Hursey and longtime Saginaw High School coach Marshall Thomas. The message encourages coaches to work with officials as they develop, to help retain those individuals in the avocation. A version of the same message, aimed at spectators, will debut later this Fall, and be distributed to television stations and cable outlets.

Healthy Lifestyle Education Begins

In the last issue of Mentor, it was announced that the MHSAA was chosen in March as one of four state high school athletic/activities associations to receive a grant from Sports Illustrated and the Center for Health Promotion Research at the Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) to inform educators about the problem of young athletes, drugs and sports and implement the landmark ATLAS and ATHENA steroid and drug prevention/health promotion programs. Four MHSAA schools were selected to participate in the program, which launched at the MHSAA office during a workshop in August.

The scenarios are very real:

- Another high-profile sports entertainer is caught using performance-enhancing substances
- A high school baseball player in Texas pays the ultimate price for using the same
- A teenage girl makes a risky choice for her ride home from a party late one night, the potential outcomes all dangerous
- Another youngster buys into the media hype about the unrealistic physique they should achieve

We hear a lot of talk about steroids and other performance-enhancing substances in sports. While such use is bad in its own right – and cheating on top of that – steroids are just one of many unhealthy lifestyle choices our children have to guard against. Alcohol, tobacco and marijuana are still bigger threats to high school students. In fact, alcohol is the cause of more college academic failures and dropouts than any other drug; and ultimately, tobacco is the greatest health risk.

There are numerous ways to approach this problem, but none proven to be more comprehensive and more effective than the ATLAS and ATHENA programs which are interactive, student-led, relevant methods targeting drug use prevention and health promotion programs for high school athletes.

ATLAS (Athletes Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids), a multi-component program for male high school athletes first instituted in 1993, is scientifically shown to reduce risk factors and use of anabolic steroids, alcohol and other illicit drugs while promoting healthy nutrition and exercise behaviors. ATHENA (Athletes Targeting Healthy Exercise and Nutrition Alternatives), formed in 1997 to reach female high school athletes, promotes healthy nutrition and effective exercise training.

Developed at the Oregon Health & Science University, ATLAS and ATHENA enhance the educational experience and development of healthy lifestyle habits for student-athletes and the student population at-large. They succeed over adult lectures and testimonials, programs encouraging young people to just say “No,” scare tactics or a focus on a single harmful substance or behavior.

ATLAS and ATHENA are gender-specific programs which are relevant to their group. The programs are easy to implement at schools, interactive and student-led. They use recurrent contact to reinforce the message, resulting in reduced risk and increased protective factors.

“The program begins with training for coaches and athletic administrators, then the coaches integrate the program into existing team activities, facilitating the lesson but at the same time turning it into a student-led program,” said Dr. Lynn Goldberg, co-founder of the ATLAS and ATHENA programs. “All lessons provide focus to healthy lifestyle choices and being better athletes and teammates.”

Sports Illustrated

OHSU
OREGON HEALTH & SCIENCE UNIVERSITY
Where Healing, Teaching and Discovery Come Together



John Johnson, Okemos

Dr. Diane Elliott (center) one of the co-founders of the ATLAS and ATHENA programs, leads a workshop session at the MHSAA in August.

ATLAS and ATHENA were introduced to Michigan high schools this summer, when the MHSAA was one of four associations nationwide selected to participate in a pilot program generously funded by *Sports Illustrated*. The SI grant makes initial programming possible at four Michigan high schools – Ironwood, Macomb Lutheran North, Mt. Pleasant and Spring Lake. The value of the programming to each school is \$25,000.

Coaches and administrators from the four SI Schools met in the MHSAA offices in early August with Dr. Diane Elliott, Dr. Goldberg and other ATLAS and ATHENA trainers, in preparation for implementing the programs in their schools beginning this fall. The four schools will also be recognized at a statewide educational conference on steroids and health promotion at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit on Nov. 9. Registration information about the conference is available on the MHSAA Web site – mhsaa.com – by clicking “Health & Safety” from the left-hand nav bar.

School representatives at the November conference will get a closer look at the ATLAS and ATHENA programming, how they can become involved, and the process for applying for grant funding from local, regional, state and national organizations – all of which have a stake in the outcome for the educational process.

Gillette, Welton Earn 2006-07 Bush Award

Returning home to perform labors of love as teachers, coaches and administrator at their high school alma maters, **Janet Gillette** and **Wayne Welton** share the attributes which make them the recipients of the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Allen W. Bush Award for 2006.

Each has served as teacher, coach and administrator during their tenures, Gillette at Comstock Park High School for 23 years, and Welton at Chelsea High School for 28 years. The two will be recognized at ceremonies during the month of September at their respective schools.

Al Bush served as executive director of the MHSAA for 10 years. The award honors individuals for past and continuing service to prep athletics as a coach, administrator, official, trainer, doctor or member of the media. The award was developed to bring recognition to men and women who are giving and serving without a lot of attention. This is the 15th year of the award, with the selections being made by the MHSAA's Representative Council.

"So many in education return to their alma matter, making their mark in adulthood as leaders at their old schools and in their communities after high school days where they were leaders as students and student-athletes – and this year's Bush Award recipients are models for all to emulate," said John E. "Jack" Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. "Janet Gillette and Wayne Welton have made their high school days the best days of their lives as students and servant-leaders of students. We congratulate them on this award and wish them well in their further service to educational athletics."

Here are brief biographical sketches of the 2006 Bush Award recipients:

Janet Gillette – Since walking through the doors of Comstock Park High School as a student, Gillette has been involved in the school's athletic program as an athlete, coach or athletic administrator. She played four sports in high school, and returned to the school to begin coaching the girls tennis and softball teams while a junior in college. Following college, Gillette became a teacher at Comstock Park in addition to her coaching duties – which also included volleyball and middle school basketball during her tenure – and became the school's full-time athletic director in 1990.



Under Gillette's leadership, Comstock Park has served as the host to numerous MHSAA post-season tournaments, including 10 Lower Peninsula Track and Field Finals, and three Girls Competitive Cheer Finals. She has also been active with the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, serving as a presenter at numerous conferences and developing a coaches handbook.

She has been recognized as an inductee into the Comstock Park Athletic Hall of Fame; Regional Athletic Director of the Year by the MIAAA; Athletic Director of the Year by the Michigan Competitive Cheer Coaches Association and the West Michigan Basketball-Football Association, and the Comstock Park Employee of the Year in 2004.

In the community, Gillette has served as a coach in the Northwest Little League and has been active with the Alpine Baptist Church as an AWANA Director and a Sunday School

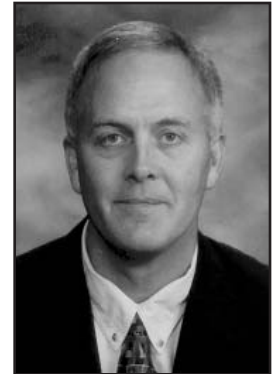
teacher. She earned an Associate's Degree from Grand Rapids Community College in 1976, where she also played basketball and softball, and a Bachelor's Degree in physical education from Grand Valley State University in 1978.

Wayne Welton – A three-sport performer at Chelsea High School, Welton was the quarterback of the school's 1971 football team which finished 9-0 and claimed a mythical Class B title. He also played basketball and baseball. Following college, Welton returned to Chelsea to begin a career in educational athletics which has spanned nearly 30 years as a teacher, coach and administrator.

As a baseball coach, Welton's teams have won more than 650 games, compiled a .750 winning percentage, claimed 15 conference titles and an MHSAA Class B crown in 1991. In his 18 years as the school's athletic director, he has been instrumental in the upgrading of Chelsea's athletic facilities to serve all students; authored one of the most comprehensive coaches handbooks in the state, and assembled a coaching staff composed of 95 percent faculty members – an astounding number.

Welton has been a leader in the area of sportsmanship initiatives, and has hosted Southeastern Conference Sportsmanship programs the past seven years. A true compliment to his leadership is that the school has received no negative officials reports concerning Chelsea coaches during the past three years.

A past president of the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association, he was inducted into that organization's Hall of Fame in 2005, named a Regional Coach of the Year on six occasions and statewide Coach of the Year in 1991. He is active in statewide and national athletic administrators associations, and in a variety of community activities. He earned his Bachelor's Degree from Central Michigan University in 1977, and his Master's Degree from Eastern Michigan University in 1983.



Marcy Weston Earns NASO Award

Central Michigan University Senior Associate Athletic Director Marcy Weston received the 2006 National Association of Sports Officials Mel Narol Medallion Award for her lifelong contributions to the betterment of the sports officiating profession.

Weston, a long-time mentor, trainer and interpreter at the high school level statewide, is the NCAA national coordinator of women's basketball officials. She was instrumental in developing the women's basketball officiating improvement program, as well as helping to write and maintain the rules of women's college basketball for years.



Coaches Education

The Importance of Coaches

As a coach, there were a few times when I may have asked myself, "Why am I doing this?" This question usually occurred after a tongue-lashing from a well-meaning but unhappy parent or after an adult's actions fell short of my expectations. However, as I reflect over the last years, it doesn't take much to remember that the real reason I coached was for the children.

As a daughter of a coach, as an athlete and as a coach, I understand the attraction to coaching. My best memories include helping students understand their academic responsibility; providing a listening ear when students needed someone to talk to; providing assistance and encouragement when someone needed a helping hand; and comforting a team who was heartbroken. Other memories include nurturing young ladies when no one else was available to nurture them; creating a culture of high expectations; and understanding and teaching the great importance of each individual's role on a team.

I loved teaching players the skills that would help them do well in contests and it was exciting to see the, "Ah-ha," when a child connected the hard work with success and how it then was translated into some of life's best lessons. Early in my career, I suppose I thought that I was there to teach Janelle, Tyra, Tracy, Mandi, Idella

and many more the X's and O's of basketball. It was much later, after these athletes gave back so much, when I learned that the lessons that were taught had nothing to do with basketball – but rather those valuable lessons of life.

Not long ago, when I had the opportunity to speak to a group of high school principals, I asked them who they believed were the

people who inspired them to become the individuals they are today. It was remarkable, and without hesitation, that almost all of them stated that it was their high school coach. Many of their answers came with memories and stories as they remembered the standards that their coaches set and the lessons they were taught through sports.

So coaches, as you embark on your new season, remind yourself daily of the huge duty that you have each and every day – the responsibility to teach and to coach. Enjoy your season remembering the impact that you can make on the life of a

youngster. The lessons and standards that you teach today may be the standards and lessons that a young person carries throughout their life.

– Kathy Vrugink Westdorp
MHSAA Assistant Director



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Coaches Advancement Program Curriculum

Visit the *Coaches Page* of mhsaa.com to select the *CAP* course nearest you and enroll today

- CAP 1 6 Hours**
2 hours: Coaches Make the Difference: MHSAA Philosophy & Regulations
2 hours: Effective Instruction: The Coach as Teacher
2 hours: Sports Medicine and First Aid
- CAP 2 6 Hours**
2 hours: Effective Communication: Characteristics of Coaches Who Are Great Communicators
2 hours: Legal Issues in School Sports: A Game Plan to Meet Legal Needs
2 hours: Psychology of Coaching
- CAP 3 6 Hours**
2 ½ hours: Additional Coaching Responsibilities: Becoming Aware of Your Resources
2 hours: Effectively Working with Parents
1 ½ hours: The Coach as a Performer: Managing Your Time & Energy Level

- CAP 4 6 Hours**
2 hours: Teaching Technical and Tactical Skills
2 ½ hours: Strength and Conditioning: Designing Your Program
1 ½ hours: Preparing for Success
- CAP 5 6 Hours**
2 hours: Healthy Living
2 hours: Controlling Emotions In Pressure Situations
2 hours: Resolving Conflicts in Athletics
- CAP 6 6 Hours**
6-hour Conference: Current Issues and Topics in Educational Athletics



2006-07 MICHIGAN MERIT EXAM DATES (held during the school day)

Tuesday, March 13 – ACT
 Wednesday, March 14 – WorkKeys® + Michigan Math
 March 14-21 – Michigan Science and Social Studies
 (not weekends)
 Tuesday, March 27 – ACT Makeup
 Wednesday, March 28 – WorkKeys® + Michigan Math Makeup
 March 28-April 5 – Michigan Science and Social Studies Makeup
 (not weekends)

The established dates (not the makeup dates) are simultaneous with some MHSAA tournaments:

Boys Basketball Regionals – March 13-17
 Girls Volleyball Quarterfinals – March 13
 Girls Volleyball Semifinals – March 15 & 16
 Boys Basketball Quarterfinals - March 20



2006-07 RULES MEETING SCHEDULE

The 2006-07 Rules Meeting schedule can be found on the Web at mhsaa.com. Start times are now 6 p.m. for single-sport meetings, 5 & 6:30 p.m. for two-sport meetings.

Always check mhsaa.com for exact times and locations.

MHSAA COACHES ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM VALUE ADDED BENEFITS

INSURANCE: The liability insurance coverage is in the amount of \$1 million per occurrence. This protection extends to coaches' performance of duties for the school team during the interscholastic season. The coverage is good for the year that the coach successfully completes the program and the following year.

NEWSLETTER: GamePlans is an electronic newsletter that is sent six times a year to coaches who have successfully completed six hours of the Coaches Advancement Program. The *GamePlans* newsletter contains pertinent articles that will assist coaches in their daily planning. GamePlans also publishes a record of all coaches who have been certified through the MHSAA Coaches Advancement Program.

STATE BOARD – CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS: State Board-Continuing Education Units (SB-CEUs) are available to coaches and can be used for the renewal of selected certificates issued by the Michigan Department of Education. Coaches who complete a six hour session are eligible to receive a .6 SB-CEU.

Coaches Advancement Program Certification

CAP Beginning Certification	= 12 hours
CAP Intermediate Certification	= 18 hours
CAP Advanced Certification	= 24 hours
CAP Masters Certification	= 30 hours
CAP Masters Elite Certification	= 36 hours

Certification occurs after the first 12 hours with subsequent increments of 6 hours for a total of 36 hours available. Additional units can be written and received after the first 36 hours have been completed.

2006-07 NATIONAL TESTING DATES

Please advise students of the 2006-07 test date schedule. Your students should be aware of athletic tournament dates and should attempt to schedule their respective test date away from tournament dates of the sport or sports in which they are interested and participate. Following are test dates for 2007 and dates where tournaments would create conflict.

ACT ASSESSMENT DATES

CONFLICTS

October 28, 2006	.... LP Cross Country Regionals; Boys Soccer Regionals; Football Pre-Districts
December 9, 2006	.....None
February 10, 2007	.....None
April 14, 2007	.....None
June 9, 2007	.....Boys and Girls Lacrosse Finals; Baseball Regionals; Girls Soccer Regionals; Softball Regionals

SAT TESTING DATES

CONFLICTS

October 14, 2006	.....LP Boys Golf Regionals
November 4, 2006	.....LP Cross Country Finals; Boys Soccer Finals; Football Districts
December 2, 2006	.....Girls Basketball Finals
January 27, 2007	.....None
March 10, 2007	LP Individual Wrestling Finals; Girls Competitive Cheer Finals; LP Boys Swimming & Diving Finals; Girls Gymnastics Finals; Ice Hockey Finals; Volleyball Regionals; Boys Basketball Districts
May 5, 2007	.....None
June 2, 2007LP Girls Golf Finals; LP Boys Tennis Finals; LP & UP Track & Field Finals; Boys and Girls Lacrosse Regionals; Baseball Districts; Softball Districts; Girls Soccer Districts

AP EXAM DATES

CONFLICTS

May 7-11, 14-18, 2007None
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(Advanced Placement Exams are administered over a five-day period for each subject)

Sportsmanship

Spring Good Sports Are Winners! Award Recipients Tabbed

The recipients of the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Good Sports Are Winners! Awards for the 2006 Spring sports season have been named, with each school to receive recognition from MEEMIC Insurance, the Association's corporate partner in sportsmanship efforts.

Escanaba in baseball; **Detroit Catholic Central** in boys lacrosse; **Troy Athens** in girls lacrosse; **Hudsonville Unity Christian** in girls soccer; and **Ida** and **Petersburg-Summerfield** in softball were selected by the tournament management at their respective Finals for displaying the most exemplary sportsmanship by their coaches, student-athletes and spectators. Each school receiving a Finals award will be presented a commemorative banner and crystal trophy at a venue of the school's choosing at a future date.

Escanaba was a Division 1 finalist in baseball, Detroit Catholic Central was a Division 1 finalist in boys lacrosse, Troy Athens was a Division 2 finalist in girls lacrosse, Hudsonville Unity Christian was the Division 3 champion in girls soccer, Ida was a Division 3 finalist in softball, and Petersburg-Summerfield was a Division 4 finalist in softball. For Escanaba, Detroit Catholic Central, Troy Athens and Petersburg-Summerfield, this is the first Finals level award for each school. Hudsonville Unity Christian previously won

the Finals award in girls soccer in 2004, and has been a recipient on two other occasions in softball. Ida won the award at the Softball Finals in 1994.

At the District, Regional and Quarterfinal levels of MHSAA tournaments, all schools which meet a set of sportsmanlike standards are recognized. Those schools will be presented framed certificates from MEEMIC Insurance.

In all, 473 teams in baseball, boys and girls lacrosse, girls soccer and softball are being recognized for their outstanding sportsmanship at Spring tournaments. Those teams will be recognized through the publication of their names in the MHSAA Bulletin, the MHSAA Finals program series, and on the MHSAA Web site. For the entire 2005-06 school year, 1,415 teams will be recognized in 13 activities for their sportsmanship efforts during MHSAA tournaments.

There are also standards built into the program which automatically disqualify a school from consideration for the award, which include: Ejections of athletes, coaches and spectators for unsportsmanlike actions; antics on the part of spectators designed more to attract attention to them-



selves than to support their team; the use of game-ending derogatory cheers, chants or songs; and any other unsportsmanlike behavior related to their team's tournament involvement at the event venue and beyond. Any team which is disqualified from consideration for the Good Sports Are

Winners! Award at the District and Regional level of a tournament becomes ineligible for the honor at higher levels of that same tournament.

"To be considered for the Good Sports Are Winners! Award is a prestigious honor," said Kalinowski. "It's truly a community award and one that grows in stature as the years pass. Participating in the MHSAA postseason tournament is a unique and memorable experience. When fans and participants make the educated choice and emphasize good sportsmanship, we enhance that experience for everyone involved."

Good Sports Are Winners! Award Evaluation/Report Forms for tournament managers can be found on the Recognition page of mhsaa.com. Please submit deserving teams at every tournament level.

2006-07 Good Sports Are Winners! Award Recipients

- Baseball** – Escanaba
- Boys Basketball** – Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart
- Girls Basketball** – Cheboygan
- Girls Competitive Cheer** – Richland Gull Lake
- Football** – Muskegon Oakridge
- Ice Hockey** – Saline
- Boys Lacrosse** – Detroit Catholic Central
- Girls Lacrosse** – Troy Athens
- Boys Soccer** – No Winner
- Girls Soccer** – Hudsonville Unity Christian
- Softball** – Ida & Petersburg-Summerfield
- Girls Volleyball** – Union City
- Team Wrestling** – Hesperia

*Complete lists of the Good Sports Are Winners!
Award recipients can be found on the
Recognition page of the MHSAA Web site*



20-20photo.com

Hudsonville Unity Christian captured the Division 3 Girls Soccer title last June, and also displayed exemplary sportsmanship and claimed the GSAW Award.

All in the Family

When the officials showed up for the River Rat Volleyball Tournament at Ann Arbor Huron High School last winter, it was more like a family reunion. For the first time ever, Rod Whitmore and his four daughters worked at the same site on the same date, a truly memorable day for the family.

"We occasionally work together, but never had all worked together before then," said Amy (Whitmore) Lintz, now a physical education teacher and coach at Flushing HS.



The family is pictured above, from left: Terri, Amy, Rod, Kimberly and Julie.

Rod – who also officiates basketball and softball – owns and operates an 800-acre farm with 1,000 dairy cattle in Ithaca with his brother and nephew. His other full-time job was helping to raise four athletic girls. It was an ironic twist of fate that thrust Rod into officiating, and thus paving a road for his girls to remain in athletics after their playing days.

"Amy and Julie both tore their ACLs in the same week when Amy was a senior and Julie was a junior at Ithaca the year after leading their team to a 20-2 season," he recalled. "I had coached their travel teams for years before that, and I felt devastated for them. I started reffing at that point to be around the game."

Amy (1996) was an honorable mention all-state basketball player, and now coaches the 7th-grade girls basketball and 8th-grade volleyball teams at Flushing. Julie (1997) was a three-year starter on Alma College's basketball team, and now teaches math and coaches the JV girls basketball team at Saline HS. Kim (2000) was an honorable mention all-stater who still holds the record for three-pointers at Ithaca. She has a teaching degree from Western Michigan and currently manages a restaurant in Kalamazoo. Terri (2003) was an honorable mention all-state volleyball player who will graduate from Alma with a business degree this winter. She coaches the 8th-grade girls basketball team in Ithaca with help from her Dad when he's available.

In addition to volleyball, Kim is also a registered softball umpire, while Terri also is registered in basketball and softball. In fact, it was Terri, the youngest daughter, who influenced Rod to start officiating volleyball a few years ago.



Officials for Kids Continues to Draw Support

Approved Officials Associations throughout Michigan continue to support the state's four Children's Miracle Network hospitals through "Officials for Kids," a fundraising effort founded by a group of Lansing area officials in 2004.

Among the latest contributions were donations from the South Central Officials Association and Capital Area Officials Association.

The SCOA presented a check at the 2006 MHSAA Baseball/Softball Finals in Battle Creek last June, accepted by the MHSAA on behalf of the Sparrow Foundation.

On Aug. 13, the Capital Area Officials Association held its 1st Annual Golf Outing at Centennial Acres in Sunfield and put proceeds of between \$800-\$900 toward Officials for Kids.

Other approved associations are passing the hat, as well. There are now three Officials for Kids online donation forms available through: the CAO, the West Michigan Officials Association, and the Metro Detroit Officials Association (on behalf of Zone 3). Upcoming Officials for Kids events for the 2006-07 school year include several planned Give-A-Game dates, publicity at season championship events, and the unveiling of the 2006 Give-A-Game Patch, which will be given to donors throughout the fall season.

Further information regarding Officials for Kids can be found on the Officials page at mhsaa.com.



MHSAA Communications Director John Johnson accepts a check from Carl Olson and Linda Hoover of the South Central Officials Association on behalf of the Sparrow Foundation. The presentation took place at the 2006 MHSAA Baseball/Softball Finals in Battle Creek.

Filkins Photo, Sault Ste. Marie

**CHECK YOUR RATINGS ONLINE AT
THE MHSAA.COM OFFICIALS PAGE**

What Matters Most

A few summer days each year are spent taking some time to travel and visit with members of the media across the state to talk in a more relaxed setting, away from the hustle and bustle of tournaments, which is where we most often see each other.

A visit to one town in Southwestern Michigan confirmed that the glitz and glamour portrayed about the television industry is more fiction than fact. Here, as elsewhere, we found a tiny, cluttered office which resembled a bomb shelter more than a Hollywood studio.

The conversation during our visit covered the wide variety and levels of sports this television station had in its back yard; and when the question came up about what was most enjoyable and what mattered most, the anchorman pointed to a poster with all kinds of handwriting on it over in the back corner of the room.

"That list," he said, "is what matters most."

The list was of area high schools grouped by conference; schools and communities which comprised the heart and soul of the station's sports coverage, and the attention of its anchorman. The most important thing to him was to be sure that during the course of a season, their cameras got into every community at least once, regardless of how the team was faring from a win-loss standpoint. Getting into each community to give all the kids on those teams some once-in-a-lifetime recognition from playing high school sports.

The anchorman talked about the calls he would receive from viewers about the station's coverage; how most of them were positive; and for those occasions when a caller had a gripe, how that complaint turned to an understanding of the large task the anchorman had and a mission to give everyone coverage.

The anchorman gets it.

Later, a visit to the local newspaper, where the individual responsible for prep athletic coverage for four decades announced his retirement earlier that very day, yielded a similar conversation.

A few students went on from that community to success at the collegiate levels and beyond in sports, but the greatest joy the writer took was trying to get the names of as many kids into the paper from as many communities as possible to recognize their achievements. Most important on his list of priorities was making sure their names were all spelled correctly; and treating them like he would want his own children treated.

That writer gets it.

The things that matter the most in high



Erin Johnson, Haslett HS

There's nothing like Friday nights in the fall, when football fields under the moonlight turn into town meetings throughout the state.

school sports are local. It's picking up the paper the morning after a game to view the write-ups or watching the highlights on the evening news. It's where so many kids from so many schools are recognized in a way they'll never be again.

It's local exposure and it's school athletics kept in perspective.

There's a trend developing of national coverage for high school sports that proponents claim is good for the games. Two cable networks are carrying a weekly schedule of national high school football games of the week and at least two reality TV series have emerged about high school football, dramatizing the games and trying to paint a picture that what is taking place is typical.

They're typical all right – typically overboard.

"Playing on national TV catapulted our program nationally and gave us instant recognition," a coach is quoted in *USA Today* as saying about his school's appearance.

Why does a high school football team – or any high school team – need national recognition? They're not supposed to be engaged in recruiting wars for players; they're not garnering large rights fees (if any at all) that we typically hear tossed around in television sports circles. So what's the purpose?

Reading between the lines – you find one network is airing a 30-minute pregame show about college recruiting; another has devoted halftimes to the same topic (but the band at least was shown for a few seconds leading into a commercial); and one of the packagers of these games is quoted in a sports business trade magazine as promot-

ing these games so that people can see potential college recruits.

So it's not about the *many*. Again, it's about the *elite* and the *few*. High school sports being exploited so that college sports fans can get their recruiting fix. It's the colleges exerting their influence on high school sports – to make the preps more like the colleges.

They don't get it. That's not what we're about. And when this exposure begins, it brings the wrong kinds of pressures on our programs, resulting in student-athletes being put on pedestals; full-time coaching positions paying more than teacher, principal or even superintendent salaries; and perspectives being knocked out of whack about what is supposed to be a part of the educational process – not our nightly entertainment.

In most communities in Michigan, our proverbial Friday night lights still burn pure. Most of our educators still get it. Even a lot of our coaches still get it (although more should). Our media which cover the preps on a day in and day out basis still get it. They resist the pressures to have our educational program conform to the standards of entertainment sports. They work hard to prevent these games from spinning out of control and becoming more important than they really are.

These programs are about every kid, every community. They're about education and excellence without excess. That's truly what matters most.

— John Johnson
MHSAA Communications Director

Officiating: It's People Business

The following is an excerpt from the presentation by MHSAA Executive Director John E. (Jack) Roberts at the 2nd Annual Football Clinic of the West Michigan Officials Association, July 21, 2006.

Perhaps no one in this room is without a computer at home. Some of you work at a computer all day, every day. Some of you may sell and/or service computers to make a living. For all of us, computers have changed our lives; and for some of you, computers are your livelihood.

Technology in all of its forms – phones, faxes, DVDs, palm pilots, PCs and more – provides the world of officiating some problems, but it also provides many opportunities to do things better, cheaper and faster. And the MHSAA is taking advantage of many of these opportunities.

No one would have imagined in August 1986, when I started as executive director, that in 2006 we would be registering officials online. We didn't know what online meant in 1986. No one would have imagined in 1986 that in 2006 schools would be rating officials online. No one would have imagined that we would be performing criminal history checks at all, much less online.

Soon it is likely that officials will submit schedules online and contest reports online. Someday officials may meet rules meeting obligations online, with online video training and online rules testing.

With all of this being said, however, the bottom line of officiating is not information technology, but human interaction. It's person-to-person contact. It's people skills: talking pleasantly, listening genuinely. It's patience, politeness, professionalism.



John Johnson, Okemos

Those of you who wish to advance – whether from junior high school to high school, junior varsity to varsity, high school to college, regular season to playoffs – you will do so, after basic knowledge of rules and proper execution of mechanics, based primarily on these people skills.

The best officials not only like sports, they like people. They're in officiating not only for the recreation, but for the human interaction; not merely for some money, but mostly for more meaning in their lives: through fellowship with a crew of officials, through friendships with area coaches and administrators, and through working with kids.

Because this is the inherent nature of most officials, I have not doubted that individual officials and their local associations would embrace Officials for Kids.

I believe the Legacy program, by which 11th-grade 16-year-olds may register and work with approved mentoring officials, benefits from this inherent nature of good officials to build relationships with officials and encourage them. In 2005-06, we had a record 102 Legacy officials.

The observers program that the West Michigan Officials Association will help us pilot this year is another example of the people-to-people process of sports officiating, the people-to-people process that is the essence of good officiating.

We have much to do; but we have in most places the right people to do it: association leadership with vision and energy, trainers who have knowledge and a passion to teach, assignors who put professionalism over politics.

Thank you for your commitment in giving the best that you have for 2006-07. Have your best year in officiating ever.

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Fall Sport Dates

Visit mhsaa.com for Pairings and Ticket Information

SPORT	First Practice Date	First Contest Date	Days or Contests	Opt-Out Due Date	Ratings Due Date	MHSAA TOURNAMENT DATES				
						Districts	Regionals	Quarters	Semis	Finals
Basketball - Girls	Aug 14	Aug 28	20C	Oct 11	Dec 1	Nov 13-18	Nov 20-22	Nov 28	Nov 30 Dec 1	Dec 2
Cross Country - LP	Aug 14	Aug 14	15D	Oct 11			Oct 27 or 28			Nov 4
Cross Country - UP	Aug 14	Aug 14	15D	Oct 6						Oct 21
Football	Aug 7	Aug 24	9C	N/A	Dec 1	Oct 27 or 28; Nov 3 or 4	Nov 10 or 11		Nov 18	Nov 24-25
Golf - LP Boys	Aug 10	Aug 14	16D	Sep 22		Oct 5, 6 or 7	Oct 12, 13 or 14			Oct 20-21
Soccer - Boys	Aug 14	Aug 21	18C	Sep 27	Dec 1	Oct 16-21	Oct 24-28		Nov 1	Nov 4
Swimming - LP Girls	Aug 14	Aug 26	17D	Nov 13			Dive: Nov 14			Nov 17-18
Tennis - LP Girls	Aug 14	Aug 14	16D	Sep 27			Oct 12 or 13			Oct 20-21
Tennis - UP Girls	Aug 14	Aug 14	16D	Sep 22						Oct 5

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