

MENTOR

The Michigan High School Athletic Association Newsletter for Coaches and Officials

"Imagination & Energy..."

NOW MORE THAN EVER

MHSAA Executive Director John E. "Jack" Roberts' Edited
Address to the Media and Membership on April 2, 2007

This morning I had the opportunity to speak about leadership to nearly 400 Macomb Area Conference student-athletes who are, or who hope to be, captains of teams at their respective high schools. This afternoon, I want to speak to you, and *through* you to the MHSAA constituents across the state, about a new challenge of leadership that has been given to Michigan's schools.

In the sports seasons litigation, the US Supreme Court has denied the petition to review the Opinion and Order of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. The effect of the Supreme Court's refusal to give further review to this case is that the MHSAA will be conducting several tournaments according to a different schedule in 2007-08 than has been in place by the decisions of local boards of education for many decades.

- The Girls Volleyball Tournament will move from March to November;
- The Girls Basketball Tournament will move from December to March;
- The Lower Peninsula Boys Tennis and Lower Peninsula Girls Golf Tournaments will move from spring to fall;
- The Lower Peninsula Girls Tennis and Lower Peninsula Boys Golf Tournaments will move from fall to spring;
- A separate Upper Peninsula Soccer Tournament will be offered for girls in the fall and boys in the spring.

These changes are outlined in the Contingency Plan that has been on the



MHSAA Web site for more than two years. Spared from MHSAA tournament schedule changes are boys and girls swimming & diving, Lower Peninsula boys and girls soccer, Upper Peninsula boys and girls tennis and Upper Peninsula boys and girls golf.

Those involved in the directly affected sports have provided many examples of the negative effects of these changes, but none of this persuaded the District Court whose unusual findings of fact could not be seriously challenged under our system of jurisprudence.

- The court-ordered change means thousands – many thousands – of boys and girls who had been planning on playing a certain combination of sports in high school will find that combination impossible. My heart aches most for those ninth, tenth and eleventh graders who are caught in

the transition and harmed most by the change.

- It means that no longer will college volleyball coaches and players be available to coach and officiate schools' girls volleyball teams. What great role models they were for our young women.
- It means many coaches who have chosen to coach both boys and girls basketball will have to choose one or the other. My gratitude goes out to these truly dedicated people who have given so much for so long to help so many student-athletes.
- It means our schools will battle colleges for volleyball officials in the fall.
- It means girls high school basketball will join boys high school basketball in the fight with men's and women's college basketball for game officials in the winter.

– Continued on page 15

Inside: Threats to Educational Athletics

Coaches Advancement Program

Attend this Spring!

If you are a coach who has never attended a Coaches Advancement Program course, consider yourself at a competitive disadvantage.

Instituted in 2005 by the MHSAA and the Michigan State University Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, the program takes coaching beyond the games to address matters such as communication, philosophy, instruction and nutrition to assist in your everyday duties as a coach.

The MHSAA and ISYS look forward to helping coaches provide their student-athletes with the best that interscholastic athletics has to offer.

As of April, 775 coaches had attended the 38 courses offered. We urge you to push this figure higher in the coming months.

Consult the MHSAA Web site at mhsaa.com and click on "Coaches" for an updated schedule of CAP courses near you this winter and spring. Simply fill out the enrollment form and return to the MHSAA to secure your spot in the program.

MHSAA Coaches Advancement Program Value Added Benefits

INSURANCE: Liability insurance coverage 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 OUTLINE

CAP 1	6 Hours
2 hours:	Coaches Make the Difference: MHSAA Philosophy and 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 Responsibilities of Coaches
2 hours:	Psychology of Coaching
CAP 3	6 Hours
2.5 hours:	Additional Coaching Responsibilities: Becoming Aware of your Many Resources
2 hours:	Effectively Working with Parents
1.5 hours:	The Coach as Performer: Managing Your Time and Energy Level
CAP 4	6 Hours
2 hours:	Teaching Technical and Tactical Skills
2.5 hours:	Strength and Conditioning: Designing Your Program
1.5 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 hours:	Current Issues & Topics in Educational Athletics

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

NOTE: A coach who has completed Level 1 of the former "PACE" program may advance to Level 2 in CAP. A coach who has completed Level 1 and 2 from the PACE program may advance to Level 3 in CAP.

For the most updated CAP Schedule consult mhsaa.com
Click on "Coaches" from the left-hand nav bar



IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

Too often as officials we are subject to games and venues which are subjects of discussion among fellow officials when conversation turns to bad games, bad crowds and bad administrators, leading us to wonder why we do what we do. I would like to share with you, a contest which affirms that the bad games are the exception and not the rule. This season we were scheduled to officiate a boys varsity game between Dearborn Divine Child, and Pontiac Notre Dame Prep. The day before the game, my partners and I received a phone call from the host school, Dearborn Divine Child, informing us the game time was 7:30 p.m. and it was also parents' night, and we might be starting our game late, but they would do everything to keep it as close to starting time as possible. Upon arriving at the facility we were greeted warmly at the door, and were informed we would be starting at approximately 8 p.m. The AD, Tony DeMare, greeted us with a handshake, and a smile, and kept us updated as to when we needed to take the floor. I would like to commend Mr. DeMare and the entire staff for their kindness and care above and beyond any expectations. This is a great example of how all schools should treat their officials. It is the little extra that brings out the best in all of us.

On behalf of myself and my partners Greg Kozub, and Robert Allen II, we would like to thank the entire Divine Child staff for a job well done.

— David Robitaille
United Federation of Officials

BACK TO THE FUTURE

I was pleased to see that in a recent article in the MHSAA *Bulletin*, Executive Director Jack Roberts is looking to the past to help provide us with answers for the future. Jack has always been the strongest advocate of what is positive about high school athletics here in Michigan and across the nation. I believe we all can agree that our state leads the way when it comes to keeping sports and life in balance. Our aim has always been true and in-line with the best practices of the past.

Being a former history teacher, I feel we can all look to the past for some direction for the future. Just as the administrators of the Depression era dealt with inel-

igible athletes, professionals in high school sports, crowd misbehaviors and unruly fans, we – the Michigan high school athletic administrators of today – must deal with our own set of challenges from win-at-all-costs to national championships; from coast-to-coast competitions to over-indulgent parents. In so doing, we must not let these challenges overshadow the positives that are high school sports.

When an opportunity presents itself, do the right thing. Stand up for your program, stand up for yourself and stand up for those that have preceded us. Whether at a freshmen basketball game or a state championship contest; seize the teachable moment and make sure you do not let one get past you.

History does teach us that high school athletics, in any decade, is something to be nurtured and developed but we must be vigilant in seeing that the lessons we are teaching are the correct ones. As we look back on high school sports in Michigan, it is interesting to see the groundwork that our predecessors have cultivated for us.

The introduction to the *MHSAA Yearbook* in 1930 stated: *"While we commonly look upon athletics as predominantly physical, we are coming to realize as never before that their greatest and most lasting values are spiritual. Greater perfection in playing the game is always to be sought after, but all of this is the stalk which nourishes the real flower of the real process – fine sportsmanship. Where this is not true athletic activities do not justify themselves. They cannot be neutral in building manhood and womanhood; they must inevitably contribute either good or evil in the building of character."*

What the MHSAA has been emphasizing for 20 years now was true back in 1930. We, as athletic administrators in the state of Michigan, must re-dedicate ourselves, our coaches and our communities to doing it the right way. Let's all nourish that flower of "fine sportsmanship" in all of our programs.

— Dave Price, CMAA
Director of Athletics
Wyoming Rogers High School

"R" IS FOR RIVALS ... AND RESPECT

It goes without saying that the athletic rivalry between our two schools is very competitive, regardless of the sport, and I'm sure you'll agree, one that results in great pride when one defeats the other. As you are probably aware, the hockey rivalry between our two schools hasn't always been one based in mutual respect and sportsmanship.

The reason I would like to pay a compliment to your team is because of the tremendous level of class, sportsmanship and mutual respect your team showed to our team after our recent game in the Regionals. While the Devils were understandably disappointed, most – if not all – went out of their way after the game to wish us well.

This was happening not only as the teams were preparing to leave the Allen Park arena, but when we got back home as well. I don't know all of the kids' names, but young men such as Louis Morin and Robert Zubke represented your school and community in a very commendable fashion. I was told that Rob stepped on to our bus to wish our team good luck, an act our kids were very impressed with. Once arriving back at Trenton, Rob and a couple other players approached me, as well as our team as we unloaded the bus and again, congratulated us and wished us well.

I sincerely hope that by now that you can appreciate how impressed I was with the Grosse Ile kids, and I commented to the Riverview kids that I hope that they would have acted the same way had the result been different.

The example the young men of the GI hockey team set that night in not winning the game will be my favorite memory of that night. That example starts at the top, and I give Coach Skip Howey and his staff all of the credit for this. While I know for a fact he would love nothing more than to beat us every single time we play, he is also a sportsman, a gentleman, and has a great respect for the game. His players reflect those traits.

— Brian Betke
Riverview Assistant Hockey Coach
in a letter to Grosse Ile
Athletic Director Jim Okler

Please submit your views and opinions to: mentor@mhsaa.com.
The MHSAA welcomes viewpoints from member school personnel and contest officials.
We thank you for your readership.

From the Editor

It's dinner time, but you're not eating. It's Saturday and your friends are golfing as a threesome. It's January, 20-below, and the only other vehicle on the road is the salt truck as you head to the school. There are so many other things you could be doing.

Instead, you're being educated on benefits of revamping your offense around somebody's 5-2 outside hitter/daughter who was, after all, the best player on her middle school team. *Town population – 72, not including livestock.*

Your integrity is being challenged from someone with a perfect view of the plate from the first baseline, urging you to call them both ways. *Top of the first, leadoff hitter, 2-2 count.*

You're turning on the lights in a natatorium at 5:30 a.m. because that's the only time available for the JV swim team. *There is more steam from your breath than from the pool water.*

Not one of you – in your few quiet moments – haven't wondered to yourself, "Why?"

Here's why.

If you didn't, 304,568 high school sports participants across the state in 2005-06 would have had to fill their idle hours some other way. If recent trends hold, that number figures to be higher by the end of this school year.

That's a lot of impressionable minds with a lot of time. One can only speculate what they'd do without you, but we know what they're doing with you, even if they don't realize it.

They are discovering the benefits of physical activity, exercise and proper diet to maximize performance. Just as important, they might be exposed to the perils of eating disorders and substance abuse.

Many are introduced to authority for the first time, held to rules and regulations. Moreover, they come to realize what society would be without it.

Some work hard and become the best in the state; others work harder just to make the team. They find out their letter jackets are the same.

They consider the gym a home away from home, and embrace the team as a second family. For some, it might be the closest thing to a home and family they've known.

They are meeting kids from bigger homes, smaller homes, different incomes, different religions and different races. Better, they become *dependent* upon them. Best, they *welcome* one another in each other's homes.

Know what they're not doing with their free time?

They're not straining the belt of this country's growing waistline of obesity in youth. They're not running *from* authority, but running *to* it. They're not developing prejudices and opinions from a glut of contrived reality shows. And, their form of competition is not relegated to video games, which have morphed from *Astroids* and *Ms. Pacman* to a cesspool of graphic, violent "games" glorifying war and street crime.

Before taking too much credit, however, realize the distinct advantage you have over other influences in the lives of these students: they *want* to be with you. School curriculums call for a balance in their classwork. Not everyone likes math; not everyone likes English. Certain chores need to be done at home. It's not a lot of fun mowing the yard or washing the dishes. However, they *choose* to be with you. They *choose* to run, to cheer, to play baseball or volleyball. Coaches get a captive audience with which to share knowledge at a most impressionable age.

And officials, there aren't too many other sectors in today's dwindling job market where one can always find work. You, too, are in demand because of these students. True, you are giving time to them, but have you ever thought of it in reverse? That the students are giving their time to *you*?

It's a nice job, this coaching and officiating business. Thank you all for doing it so nicely.



It takes strength
to lift this.



It takes a
strong person
to lift this.

Help Recruit
School Coaches
and Officials.

MENTOR is published three times per year by the Michigan High School Athletic Association, Inc., 1661 Ramblewood Drive, East Lansing, MI 48823 (Phone 517-332-5046). Edited by Rob Kaminski. **MENTOR** welcomes contributions of articles, information or photos which focus on coaching and officiating in Michigan. Send them to mentor@mhsaa.com, or the above address.

Allergies and Asthma in the Athlete



Happily, we're entering spring, expecting warmer weather, sunnier skies and getting outdoors. The indoor gyms start to empty as more athletes and fitness enthusiasts take their activities into the fresh air. Exercising outdoors is great for most, but it can be problematic for athletes who have seasonal allergies or asthma. At the very least, allergies and asthma can limit the athlete's performance. At its worst, it can be life-threatening.

ALLERGIES

Allergy symptoms can be mild and include nasal stuffiness, clear runny nose, sneezing, cough, tearing, eye redness, itchiness of the roof of the mouth. These symptoms occur after exposure to specific allergens. In the spring, the most common allergens are tree and grass pollen. Exposure to the allergens causes a reaction in the body which releases a chemical called histamine. The histamine is what causes the symptoms noted above. Symptoms can occur immediately after exposure or up to several hours after exposure.



There are several types of medications used for seasonal allergies: anti-histamine tablets (sedating and non-sedating), and nasal sprays. Benadryl, Zyrtec, Contac are common antihistamines. These minimize the body's reactions to the released histamines. They can be used prior to the expected exposure or afterward. These medications are effective and have been used for a number of years, but can cause sedating side effects (drowsiness). If athletes are using these medications, they should use them cautiously because of the sedating effects, especially if the athlete is trying them for the first time. The non-sedating antihistamines include Claritin, Alavert, and Allegra. These are dosed either once or twice daily and offer moderate-to-good relief of symptoms with minimal-to-no sedation.

Nasal sprays have shown to be very helpful with allergy symptoms and are preferred by many clinicians. There are two types of nasal sprays: corticosteroid nasal sprays (Flonase, Rhinocort, Nasacort), and mast-cell stabilizers (Nasacrom). The nasal sprays are most effective if used daily and if started prior to the allergy season. It takes 3-10 days of regular use to achieve maximum benefit. So, initially, a combination therapy of a nasal spray and an antihistamine tablet are commonly recommended. As the effect of the nasal spray takes hold, the use of the antihistamine is weaned.

Athletes who have allergies should be monitored for proper hydration (sufficient fluid intake). Increased body fluid loss occurs, and some of the medications may alter fluid losses and natural body cooling mechanisms.

These seasonal allergy symptoms are more of a nuisance to the athletes, and rarely cause severe problems. In contrast, ath-

letes who have allergies to more sinister objects (i.e. bees, wasps, certain foods) can have life-threatening anaphylactic reactions. Anaphylactic symptoms can include lip swelling, sensations the throat closing, and inability to breathe. They can also include severe eye swelling, hives and earlobe swelling. This is a medical emergency. Immediate medical attention is warranted. If available, low-flow oxygen is helpful. EpiPens are also used in this instance. An EpiPen is an auto-injector that administers epinephrine and epinephrine is the definitive emergency treatment for severe allergic reactions. If athletes have a history of such reactions or a history of severe allergic reactions to items, it is imperative that they are prepared. Athletes should alert their coach or trainer to their allergies and be sure they are prepared for this type of emergency.

ASTHMA

Approximately 17 million adults and 5 million children in the United States have asthma. Asthma is a pulmonary disorder characterized by chronic inflammation of the airways leading to bronchial hyper-reactivity. Episodic symptoms of airflow obstruction: cough, wheeze, chest tightness, or shortness of breath are hallmarks for asthma. Sometimes the athlete presents with "wind- edness" greater than expected or greater than teammates. Symptoms can be very subtle. Formal pulmonary testing is available to assess severity of asthma and to diagnose subtle cases of asthma.

There are several possible triggers for asthma. These triggers include allergens (pollen, mold, ozone), exercise and cold air. The athlete may have occasional asthma symptoms that occur only while they're ill with a cold or bronchitis. Athletes who have asthma should either practice indoors on bad weather days or use a mask. Athletes who have exercise-induced asthma may benefit from a longer warm-up, longer cool-down, and aggressive hydration.

Athletes who have asthma absolutely should be monitoring their lung capacity regularly. This is done with peak flow meters usually given by their physicians. Decreases in lung capacity can be subtle. Peak flow meters help to identify when the athlete's capacity is waning. Changes in their medication regime can be made to allow them to breathe easier.

Medications commonly used in asthmatic athletes are inhaled B2-agonists (albuterol, Ventolin, Proventil, Serevent), inhaled corticosteroids (Pulmicort, Azmacort), combination inhalers (Advair), and anti-leukotrienes (Singulair, Accolate). The only inhaler that is helpful in the acute setting is the short-acting B2-agonists: i.e. albuterol, Ventolin, Proventil. The others types are not "rescue inhalers."

Ongoing discussions with their clinician are imperative. "Rescue inhalers" are too often overused. If the athlete requires them more than twice a week, it's time to consider a different regime. We used to worry about kids becoming addicted to the inhalers. However, keeping asthma under excellent control is necessary to limit permanent changes that can develop in the lungs. Over a lifetime, asthma flare-ups take its toll on the lungs' architecture and their ability to function properly.

Certainly, asthma can be life-threatening. If you have an athlete who is in respiratory distress, get them immediate medical attention.

— Nancy White, M.D., Henry Ford Center for Athletic Medicine

For further information on this article or for priority appointments for sports injuries please contact Henry Ford Center for Athletic Medicine at 313-972-4216.

Threats to Educational Athletics

For the last two years, our staff at the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports (ISYS) has been conducting numerous focus group interviews with many of the key stakeholders in Michigan high school sports. With the help of the MHSAA we interviewed student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, parents of athletes and principals. Our purpose in conducting these interviews was to identify critical issues and challenges encountered in school sports programs. Believing in the many benefits of educational athletics (many of which are being verified in current youth development research) we wanted to identify concerns. For example, some have argued that youth sports are becoming more professionalized with a greater emphasis on winning, scholarships, sports specialization, and declining sportsmanship. We wanted to see if this was the case. If so, we can work with the MHSAA to meet these challenges and ensure that scholastic sports benefits outweigh any costs.



INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF
YOUTH SPORTS

Daniel Gould, Ph.D.
Professor and Director
Institute for the Study of Youth Sports
Michigan State University

letes for out-of-school teams; the attitude that it is more acceptable to specialize held by younger coaches; pressure to keep up with athletes who specialize; and a lack of understanding of the value of cross-training. In terms of ramifications of specialization, the following were cited: problems getting enough athletes to form teams in all sports, athletes missing practices because of simultaneous sport commitments, and having athletes recruited out of other sports to focus on one.

Inappropriate attitudes and expectations. Many of the thoughts comprising this category focused on attitudes deemed inappropriate, but according to the respondents were those that characterize many young scholastic athletes today. These themes included such things as a lack of appreciation for the opportunity to participate, selfishness and a sense of entitlement, and the notion that one's rival competitor is an enemy.

Unhealthy parental involvement. One of the most frequently discussed topics was parental issues. A wide range of sub-themes made up this overall category; some focused on inappropriate involvement (trying to coach their child when untrained as a coach) and failing to understand one's role as a sport parent, while others focused on unrealistic expectations placed on athletes and an emphasis placed on earning college athletic scholarships (even in cases when the child did not have the requisite talent).

Overemphasized outcome and focus on winning. This category included sentiments that **parents and coaches overemphasize winning.** In addition, a shift towards an extrinsic motivation orientation was noted, with sub-themes centered around an increased focus on extrinsic rewards such as focusing on college scholarships or notoriety that can come from athletic success and the effects extrinsic rewards can have on an educational athletics focus.

Financial problems. All five participant groups mentioned financial issues as being a concern for high school sports. These themes all centered around high school sport funding issues and the problems inadequate funding can cause. The

Voices from the Field

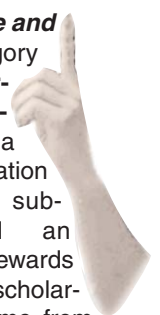
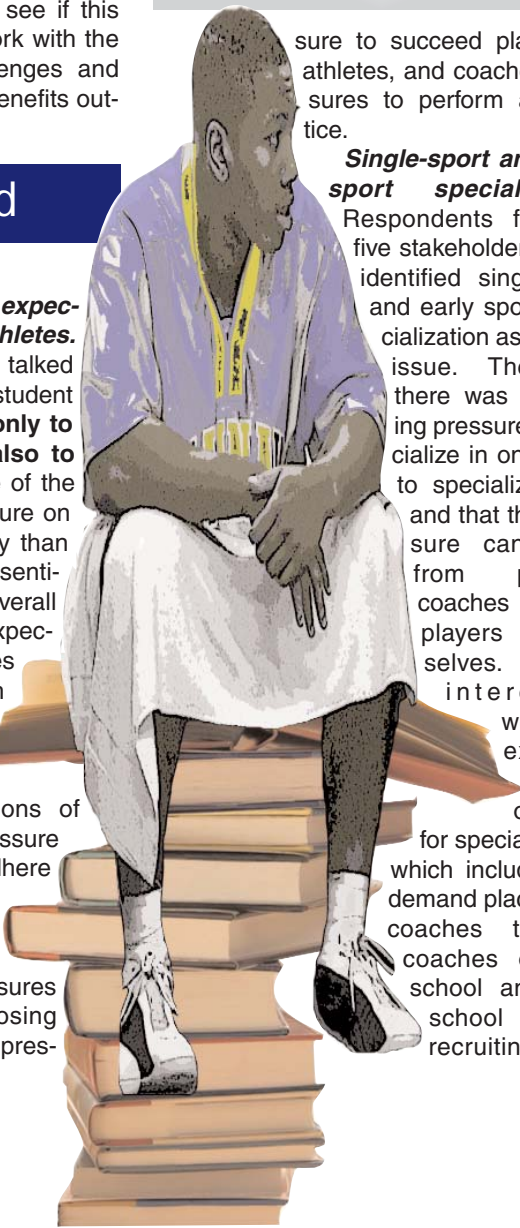
WHAT WE FOUND

Increased pressure and expectations placed on student athletes. Those interviewed frequently talked about the pressure placed on student athletes today; **pressure not only to perform well and win, but also to produce academically.** Some of the respondents felt that the pressure on students is much greater today than in previous generations. Other sentiments identified within this overall category included academic expectations comprised of such issues as pressure to maintain a high GPA and score well on achievement tests, parental pressure placed on athletes, parents' unrealistic expectations of their child's athletic talent, pressure caused by athletes having to adhere to higher standards of conduct, people looking to penalize athletes more often than general students, the impact of pressures placed on athletes (e.g., 'losing one's passion for the sport'), pres-

sure to succeed placed on athletes, and coaches pressures to perform at practice.

Single-sport and early sport specialization.

Respondents from all five stakeholder groups identified single-sport and early sports specialization as a major issue. They felt there was increasing pressure to specialize in one sport, to specialize early and that this pressure can come from parents, coaches and the players themselves. Most interesting were the explanations offered for specialization, which included: the demand placed on coaches to win; coaches of both school and non-school sports recruiting ath-



sub-themes included: a lack of funds for programs; need for fundraising; problems caused by inadequate funding; issues surrounding **pay-for-play programs**; and increased financial burden for parents of high school athletes. It was also interesting that several groups mentioned the need for fundraising and how this necessity reduces the time a coach has to work with his or her players and spend with one's family.

Substance abuse.

Four of the five participant groups mentioned substance abuse as an issue facing high school athletes today. Many of the sub-themes reported alcohol, recreational drug and tobacco use as issues that face young athletes. Potential causes of substance abuse identified by some of the focus groups included parental tolerance of alcohol use and peer pressure to drink.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

So, what do these findings mean? It has been suggested that sport for children and youth is becoming more professionalized, characterized by a focus on competitive outcomes and winning, with less emphasis on educational and developmental gains that come from the experience. In addition, the professionalized model focuses on intense training, single and early sport specialization, and year-round training. Results from our study lend support to these observations. While still

strongly believing in the value of scholastic sports, respondents from the various stakeholder groups clearly indicated their concerns about an overemphasis on results and outcomes, increased pressure and expectations placed on young athletes, single and early sports specialization, parental issues characterized by over involvement and poor sportsmanship, and inappropriate attitudes on the part of participants, all factors that work against the educational athletics model.

The biggest implication coming from these findings is that we need to do everything possible to combat the professionalization of high school sports. While

some change can be carried out by the MHSAA's policies and the programs this organization develops (e.g., sportsmanship efforts, Coaching Advancement Program), the changes of greatest impact

will have to come from the local school level. A good place to start is to emphasize parent and coaches education by discussing the issues identified in this article to help form relevant and meaningful policies and programs. Many of the effects that spawn from a professionalized focus in youth sport subtly creep into programs. Therefore, to maintain a personal and program-wide educational perspective it is important to have your program philosophy well-thought out and repeatedly emphasized (versus merely having it written down somewhere, but seldom reading or conveying your perspective to program stakeholders; or waiting for a problem to occur before reacting). At the ISYS we will also do our part. We are currently developing a high school sport parent education program, have a study on sports specialization in progress and are assisting the MHSAA in developing the curriculum for their Captain's Leadership Training Conferences.

Finally, many forces are leading to the professionalization of youth sports (e.g., **high school national team rankings**, the success of athletes who started at early ages like Tiger Woods and the Williams sisters, greater availability of year-round sport opportunities and private coaching). However, just because our society emphasizes a professionalized focus, adopting this approach is not necessarily in the best interest of young people. As Jack Roberts often says, it is imperative that we all work to keep educational athletics educational.



Pressures to balance athletics and academics; the No. 1 syndrome; pay-for-play, and national championships and related travel all threaten to take the air out of school sports, according to study groups.

Scope of School Sports

Inaugural SCOPE Award Presented to Four

To help promote the proper perspective for educational athletics, the Michigan High School Athletic Association has teamed with AT&T to create an awards program which acknowledges the efforts to schools to maintain student-centered, educationally focused sports programs.

Four schools were selected for the 2006-07 school year to receive the SCOPE Award, and were presented \$2,500 checks from AT&T to be used in the continued promotion of an educational attitude for their programs in ceremonies at halftime of the MHSAA Class D Boys Basketball Final on March 24.

Alpena, Richland Gull Lake, Grandville Calvin Christian and Caseville were selected as the inaugural recipients of the SCOPE Award in their respective classes (A-B-C-D). All schools entering the program were required to submit an essay describing how they would use the \$2,500 to further the promotion of a proper perspective for school sports; a series of essays from an athletic administrator, student, school faculty member and community member about how the school's perspective on educational athletics affects the school and community; and any materials the school has used to promote its perspective on athletics.

"The biggest challenge school sports faces in maintaining its different niche from all other levels of athletics by all other sponsors is maintaining a sane scope – realizing that these programs are here to educate students," said John E. "Jack" Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. "Schools which promote the proper perspective will find success in all respects – including between the lines. We're proud of the schools which have been selected to receive this year's SCOPE Award."

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

Operating globally under the AT&T brand, AT&T companies are recognized as the leading worldwide providers of IP-based communications services to business and as leading U.S. providers of high speed DSL Internet, local and long distance voice, and directory publishing and advertising services. Additional information about AT&T Inc., and AT&T products and services is available at www.att.com.



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Your world. Delivered.

2007 SCOPE Award Recipients



Visual Image Photography

Alpena



Visual Image Photography

Caseville



Visual Image Photography

Grandville Calvin Christian



Visual Image Photography

Richland Gull Lake



Dan Ferguson

Captains Clinics Draw More Than 1,000

More than 1,000 student-athletes from 90 schools participated in day-long Captains Clinics held this year with the Kensington Valley Conference, Catholic High School League, Jack Pine Conference, Southwestern Athletic Conference, Cascade Conference, and Macomb Area Conference (pictured above).

Facilitators from Michigan State University's Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, and athletic directors from member schools presented a variety of topics pertinent to both current team captains and aspiring leaders.

Plans are in place to expand the Captains Clinic Series in 2007-2008. MHSAA staff contacts for these events are Andi Osters and Andy Frushour.

What Should Our Programs Look Like and Who Can Make That Happen?

Think for a moment about what you would like the sports program of your school to look like, feel like and represent. What words come to mind?

When these questions have been asked, in study after study and in all kinds of settings, there have been some common responses. See if they resonate with you. Here are the most popularly used words when people describe what they want their interscholastic athletic program to look and feel like.

One word is “**safe**.” Moms most frequently use this word. They don't want their child harmed playing sports. They want it safe.

Another words is “**competitive**.” That's what dads cite most frequently. They want their kid to be competitive, and they want their kid's teams to be competitive as well.

From school administrators, two words are cited with almost the exact same frequency. The words are “**sportsmanlike**” and “**educational**.” School administrators want the program to teach students, and they want those lessons to be the ones they can't learn or can't learn as readily in the academic classroom. Like teamwork and sacrifice. Like leadership, and most of all, sportsmanship – playing by the rules, respecting opponents and officials.

And students, what do they say? The number one reason they play, the number one result they want, is “**fun**.” They participate to have fun, to be with friends. And note this: while they recognize that winning is more fun than losing, kids always put fun before winning. They would rather play on a losing team than sit and watch on a winning team.

But there is another word that must be mentioned. It's not the most popularly cited word for any one constituent group, but it is the most popularly cited word for all of these groups combined. That word, that concept, is “**fair**.”

The students want a fair chance to make the team and to play in the contests. Parents want this for their children as well. And students, parents and administrators alike – and coaches – want a fair chance to win, a fair chance at success. They want a level playing field; what we call competitive equity or balance.

So what words do we have? **Safe, competitive, sportsmanlike and educational, fun and fair.** How would that feel?

That's what most people want their interscholastic athletic program to look and feel like; that's what they want the program to represent.

From three decades of work in athletic administration, and two of those decades here in Michigan; from reading the research from such sources as the Institute for the

There is no silver bullet, no single solution to deliver these six features to an interscholastic athletic program; but I will step out on a limb and suggest the one variable with the best chance to do the most good in bringing these features to an interscholastic athletic program, no matter how large or small and regardless of its location.

I believe that the single most important link in the educational process of school sports is the coach. I believe that just as the teacher is most important to the learning process in the academic classroom, so is the coach the most important ingredient in the interscholastic athletic program.

I believe great teachers educate, great teachers inspire learning, regardless of the bells and whistles. If you put a great teacher in a barren, broken-down setting, great learning still occurs. Likewise for athletic coaches. Athletic coaches can redeem the bad decisions that are sometimes made, but bad coaches can ruin the best decisions that school boards, administrators and parents ever make.

I believe we need to invest in coaches: first, last and always. There is no higher priority, and there is no greater potential for achieving that six-word vision for our interscholastic athletic programs.

We need to have higher expectations at hiring that candidates will aspire to that six-word vision. Sometimes the pool of candidates is shallow. For them, and for all

Just as the teacher is most important to the learning process in the academic classroom, so is the coach the most important ingredient in the interscholastic athletic program.



Study of Youth Sports at Michigan State University which has assessed the attitudes of athletes, parents, coaches and administrators; from student surveys in Iowa and Minnesota; from listening, to adults and especially to students; this is what I have heard and learned. And it appears to be what we all want.

Championships would be nice, but they are a limited commodity available to few, no matter how hard we try. But these six characteristics are even better than championships, and they are not in limited supply; they are available to all who will work for them.

coaches really, we need to provide training: initially and ongoing.

Why would we not do this? Classroom teachers are required to have continuing education. Why not also coaches? Why not especially coaches? They work with large numbers of boys and girls, in settings of high emotion, sometimes with risk of injury, in front of crowds. Their pupils take their exams in public; we'd better help them teach those pupils well.

— John E. “Jack” Roberts
MHSAA Executive Director



Student Spotlight

2006-07 Scholar-Athletes Honored

In ceremonies at halftime of the 2007 MHSAA Boys Basketball Tournament Class C Final on March 24 at the Breslin Center in East Lansing, 32 students were honored as the 2006-07 recipients of the Association's Scholar-Athlete Award, sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance. Following the game, the group enjoyed a reception with their families, friends and MHSAA staff in recognition of their achievement. All 32 honorees were in attendance for this year's ceremony.

In its 18th year of sponsoring the award, Farm Bureau Insurance gives a \$1,000 college scholarship to these 32 individuals, to be used at the college, university or trade school of their choice during the 2007-08 school year. Each of the 2,206 applicants for the award are presented with a certificate, and each of the 120 finalists received a commemorative medallion.

2007 BY THE NUMBERS: 1,253 of the 2,206 applicants (56.8%) were females. There were 902 Class A applicants from 150 Class A schools, 695 Class B applicants from 146 Class B schools, 447 Class C applicants from 127 Class C schools, and 162 Class D applicants from 70 Class D schools. The 120 finalists averaged 2.89 sports played, and 78 of the finalists participated in at least three sports.

Applications for the 2008 Scholar-Athlete Award will be available on the MHSAA Web site in the fall.



Jim Hastings Photography - Haslett

2006-07 Scholar-Athletes – Front Row (L to R): Allison Assaly, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Eastern; Hilary Beauchamp, Iron Mountain; Kerry Brennan, Dearborn; Alessa Cekauskas, Birmingham Seaholm; James Ciennik, Waterford Mott; Andrew Cuthbert, Dowagiac; Alexander Davenport, Grosse Pointe North; Adam DeWolf, Marshall. **Second Row:** Emily Feldhake, Cedarville; Aaron Fletcher, Walkerville; Riley Ford, Harbor Springs; Ben Halbower, Holton; Michael Harden, St. Johns; Alexandria Henry, Alma; Allyson Karaba, North Muskegon; Jeffrey Koelzer, Grand Rapids Northview. **Third Row:** Jessica Konal, Berkley; Tyler McCoy, Tawas Area; Spencer McFarland, Mackinaw City; Seth Meyer, Okemos; Nicole Naidoo, Brighton; Daniel Olsen, St. Ignace; Katelyn Preisel, Imlay City; Chelsey Quinlan, Plymouth. **Fourth Row:** Chelsea Read, Grand Ledge; Alexander Ralston, Fenton; Shane Sinda, Capac; Shazia Singh, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern; Brenda Sisung, Fowler; Ashley Theobald, Kingsford; Jason Thompson, Ludington; Kayla Thompson, Marlette.

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STRETCH Your Team's Performance

Q: When is the best time to stretch?

A: It is best to stretch before and after practices and games. Stretching before activity allows the muscles and tissues to become pliable and increase range of motion giving the athlete the ability to perform at a higher level. Before competition it is important to stretch a half hour to an hour before game time. This allows for proper warm-up prior to other pregame activities. After activities athletes should perform a lighter stretch as compared to pre-activity to decrease soreness and tightness.

Q: How long should it take for a team to stretch?

A: Your team should take at least 10-15 minutes to stretch which gives enough time to target all the areas involved with the competition. Some stretches may take longer than others depending on their size or the use of them during activity. For example if you have track athletes you may concentrate more on the lower half of the body compared to the upper half.

Q: Is it better to warm up before or after stretching?

A: To get the maximum benefit from stretching the muscle needs to be warmed up close to competition level. Therefore, athletes should perform sub-maximal sustained activity for 5-10 minutes allowing for increased blood flow to the working muscles. An example for lacrosse would be to perform a jog while tossing the ball back and forth.

Q: Which is better – static or dynamic stretching?

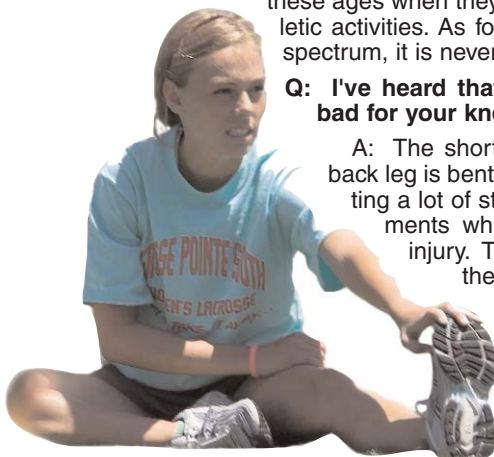
A: To better answer that question you need to address what you are trying to accomplish. Static stretching by definition is a holding stretch for 20 to 30 seconds at a time and performed from 3-5 reps each. Static stretching should be used to increase range of motion (flexibility). This may be beneficial for athletes who are just starting a season or who may be hitting a growth spurt. In comparison, dynamic stretching is stretching while moving (not bouncing) in directions of athletic movement. These stretches should be done about 10 reps on both sides and held for 2-3 seconds each. Dynamic stretching is more of a functional warm-up, preparing the muscles prior to activity (i.e. not isolating joints to address range of motion deficits).

Q: At what age is it best to start stretch?

A: There is no specific age at which it is best to start stretching; however, there are ages at which it would be more beneficial to work of flexibility. Males and females should concentrate on increasing range of motion at times of increased growth especially during puberty. This is important timing because it is at these ages when they usually increase their athletic activities. As for the other end of the age spectrum, it is never too late to start.

Q: I've heard that the hurdlers' stretch is bad for your knee is that true?

A: The short answer is yes. When the back leg is bent behind the athlete it is putting a lot of stress on the knee joint ligaments which could cause pain and injury. The better way to perform the stretch is to put the bent knee so that the foot is flat against the stretch leg (left). This gives the same hamstring stretch without the irritation to the knee joint.



ScoreCSA.com

— John Brady ATC, NASM-PES
Henry Ford Center for Athletic Medicine



Questions?

The most efficient method of communication with the MHSAA on eligibility questions is through the athletic director or principal. Athletic directors should gather all information necessary on a question and then call or write the MHSAA. Coaches or parents calling the MHSAA on eligibility matters can create confusion and delay. ADs or principals are encouraged to contact the MHSAA office directly. Please follow this efficient path of communication.

Cranbrook's Johnson Elected to National Federation Hall

Jim Johnson, prolific hockey player at Cranbrook HS in Bloomfield Hills from 1971-74, has been elected to the National Federation of State High School Associations Hall of Fame.

Johnson, currently athletic director at Troy High School, scored 249 goals during his four-year (1971-74) ice hockey career at Cranbrook High School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and his national record for career goals has stood the test of time for 33 years. Amazingly, many of his goals were scored on Cranbrook's outdoor ice rink. Johnson was an all-state selection four times and a two-time high school all-American. He then played four years at Michigan State University.

Johnson will be inducted into the Hall on July 4 at the Desert Springs Marriott Hotel in Palm Desert, Calif.

Treetops Appreciation Weekend for Coaches and Officials

July 6-8, 2007



\$55 – Tom Fazio “Premier” • Rick Smith “Signature” • Trent Jones “Masterpiece”

\$40 – Rick Smith “Tradition” • Rick Smith “Threetops”

Treetops will donate \$3 to Officials for Kids Foundation for every round of golf played!

Please call James Vanderveer (989-731-8614) to set up all tee times. This is not restricted to only coaches and officials so bring a friend along with you (each tee time must have a least one coach or official of any sport).

Sportsmanship

Winter Good Sports Are Winners! Award Recipients Tabbed

Nearly 400 teams representing over 300 schools have been recognized for displaying outstanding sportsmanship during selected MHSAA Winter postseason tournament competitions through the Good Sports Are Winners! Program. All will receive awards ranging from framed certificates to commemorative banners and crystal trophies from MEEMIC Insurance, the Association's corporate partner in sportsmanship efforts.

The program is conducted in team sports, with schools being evaluated by tournament management at all sites. This winter, a total of 375 teams were selected from 303 different schools in tournaments conducted in

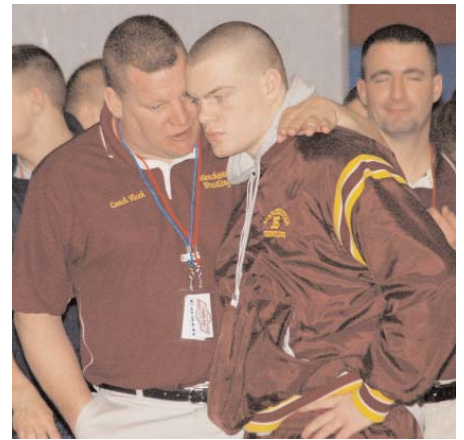
Girls Competitive Cheer, Team Wrestling, Girls Volleyball, Boys Ice Hockey and Boys Basketball. At the District, Regional, Quarterfinal and Semifinal levels of MHSAA tournaments, all schools which meet a set of high sportsmanlike standards may be recognized. Those schools will be

presented framed certificates from MEEMIC Insurance. Those teams are also listed in the *MHSAA Bulletin*, the MHSAA Finals program series, and on the MHSAA Web site. During the course of the school year, nearly 1,000 teams will be recognized in 15 activities for their sportsmanship efforts during MHSAA tournaments.

At the Finals in those tournaments, schools judged to have met those standards are presented a crystal trophy and commemorative banner. The winter Finals winners are: **Utica Ford** and **Munising** in Girls Competitive Cheer; **Manchester** in Team Wrestling; **Battle Creek St. Philip** in Girls Volleyball; **Grosse Pointe South** and **East Kentwood** in Boys Ice Hockey, and **Stevensville Lakeshore** in Boys Basketball.

Presentation dates at each winning school will be announced at a future date.

Utica Ford, Munising, Manchester and Battle Creek St. Philip earned the Finals award for the first time in school history. East Kentwood



Visual Image Photography

(Ice Hockey 1990), Grosse Pointe South (Baseball 2001) and Stevensville Lakeshore (Boys Soccer 1990) each are receiving the honor for a second time.



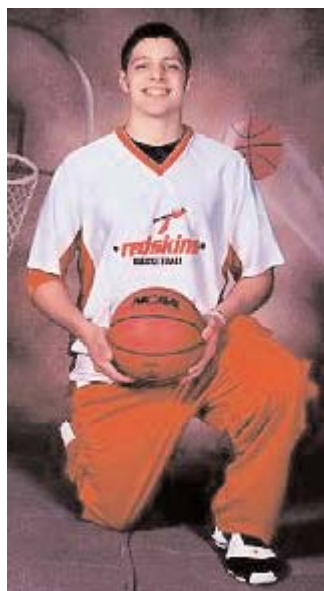
Visual Image Photography

Manchester (above) and Battle Creek St. Philip were two of the Good Sports Are Winners! Award recipients for the MHSAA Finals this winter. The award encompasses sportsmanship efforts of athletes, coaches, fans and administration.

Grace Through Pain

On Friday, Jan. 5, the Clinton High School basketball team played Dundee in an Lenawee County Athletic Association contest at Dundee. Clinton lost the ball game, but one player won the hearts of fans, something that isn't really news in Clinton. The CHS junior has previously received the Good Sport Award in another sport and is known for always doing the right thing. Spencer Krauss academic all-state as a sophomore and winner of the Class C MHSAA championship in the discus, is a hard-working student-athlete (currently a 4.0 GPA). Krauss was injured in the middle of the third quarter vs. Dundee, falling to the floor with an opponent after tripping on the ball. After receiving treatment from the trainer, Krauss used crutches to hobble back into the gym to watch the final minutes of the game. Following the game, he took to the gym floor, crutches and all, to shake hands with the Dundee coaches and high-five all of their players. According to his coach, he wasn't about to let a little thing like a sprained ankle deter him from doing the right thing.

— *The Clinton Local*



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

Evaluation/Report Forms for Tournament Managers may also be found on the Good Sports Are Winners! Award page, as well as the Administration page under Tournament and Event Management.



Quick Whistles

Online Registration in Progress

Through June 1, the MHSAA is conducting an exclusive online registration period for all officials. After June 1, applications will be accepted online, by mail, and on a walk-up basis in the MHSAA Office for the upcoming school year. The MHSAA Office also has a lobby kiosk available for online registrations.

Online registrants receive a \$5 discount off processing fees, regardless of when they submit their application. Online registration can be accessed by clicking **Officials** on the home page of the MHSAA Web site. More information about officials registration may be obtained by contacting the MHSAA at 517.332.5046 or register@mhsaa.com.

Uyl Chosen for Pan Am Games

Mark Uyl, MHSAA assistant director, has been selected to umpire baseball competition at the 2007 Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The baseball portion of the Games will begin on July 14 with pool play between the eight competing nations, and culminates with the gold medal game on July 19. Uyl was nominated by USA Baseball and the Amateur Baseball Umpires Association (ABUA). This is Uyl's first international assignment.

"It is a tremendous honor and privilege to be selected to umpire the 2007 Pan American Games," Uyl said. "It is a thrill to be representing the ABUA in this tournament, and I look forward to this opportunity of a lifetime."

Uyl has umpired baseball at the collegiate level for the past 11 seasons, and currently works league games in the Big Ten, Big East and Mid-American conferences.

Setting Up Camp

Basketball officials looking to hone their games can do so at one or more of the following summer camps:

Michigan Collegiate Basketball Officiating Camp
June 15-17 & June 22-24
Central Michigan University
Contact: John Kirk - kirkgliac@aol.com

Capital Area Basketball Officials Camp
June 15-16
Michigan State University
Contact: Mike Conlin - mrconlin@hotmail.com

Mike Smith's Basketball Officiating Camp
June 22-24
Oakland University
Contact: Mike Smith - msmith627@hotmail.com

Tri-City Basketball Officials Camp
July 27-29
Saginaw Valley State University
Contact: Jim Eastman - jeastman2002@yahoo.com

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MyReferee is the largest source of online officiating information and educational resources available on the planet and it's just a click away.

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Commentary

Recruiting & Retaining Officials: 3 Big Ideas

Learning why people leave officiating is important to learning how to retain people in officiating.

In Michigan, we have been making a study of what causes officials to quit, and we're trying to act on that information. We studied the National Federation of State High School Associations' survey in August of 2001, as well as the special conference report entitled "How to Get and Keep Officials" from the 2001 convention of the National Association of Sports Officials. And in 2004, we conducted our own survey of "lost officials" over the previous five years, 1998-99 through 2002-03. Here are some of the findings.

The National Federation survey cited job/career demands as the No. 1 reason people leave officiating. Poor sportsmanship by participants was No. 2; poor sportsmanship by spectators was No. 3; time away from family was No. 4; and low game fees was right behind.

The National Federation survey also revealed that the closer one is to his or her first registration, the more likely that person is to quit, and the more likely that person is to cite poor sportsmanship as the cause for quitting.

Our 2004 survey in Michigan returned two times the responses as the 2001 National Federation survey, but had very similar findings. The No. 1 cause for officials to leave MHSAA registration? Career change or job demands. The No. 2 cause was lack of sportsmanship by fans; the No. 3 cause was lack of sportsmanship by coaches. The No. 4 cause was low game compensation, and the No. 5 cause was time spent away from family. In our survey, lack of sportsmanship by players was well down the list of causes.

We learned from more than 800 responses to this survey of the nearly 8,000 officials who did not renew their registrations with the MHSAA in 1998-99 and the four following years, that most were in their second to fifth year of registration. After that, retention was much higher: if an official lasted five years, he or she was just as likely to last 20.

The results of our survey were not identical to the results of the National Federation survey, but so similar that we must take notice, and must take action.

While there are some factors we can do little about (for example, career changes), there are other factors that we can do a lot about, if we will, and if we have the will. Here are the three "big ideas" for increasing officiating ranks.

The first big idea is that **training matters**. If we can get officials started better, they are more likely to have a good experi-

ence and stay than have a bad experience and leave officiating.

What would be the components of this training? Two key features, primarily: (1) training for initial, early success; and (2) mentoring for help through tough times.

Rather than merely registering officials and sending them out to fail, we would equip them better at registration and increase the likelihood of their success. And we would establish mentoring programs – through local officials associations – to help them through tough times. Training and mentoring for officials for years one through five. That must be our focus.

There is a delicate balance. If we ask too much or charge too much, we will discourage officials. However, if we ask too little, we will devalue officiating.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association asked for much more from its officials, a lengthy training program for all new registrants, and they've actually had more officials, not fewer, register.

The only churches growing in the United States are the more evangelical; and there are two features that are relevant here: (1) the requirements for membership in these growing churches are greater than for other churches; and (2) the members are active in inviting new recruits.

This tells us that reasonable requirements can serve as a magnet to attract officials and a glue to hold officials; and one-on-one recruiting is best. There is no suitable substitute.

In Michigan, where registration has been at record-high levels for several years, we do not feel that we yet require enough, and we are soon to require more – if not of all officials, at least of all MHSAA tournament officials, including online video training and rules testing. We think we can ask for more and not end up with fewer troops.

Another delicate balance involved with training is this: for years we've stressed the local officials association as the delivery system, and we've devoted our resources to training not the individual official but the leaders, assignors and trainers of local officials associations.

However, if we go online, directly to officials, do we undermine the local officials association and the train-the-trainer concept? Do we weaken the local officials association and that training program? And do we blur the legal line of officials as independent contractors?

These are important policy issues for organizations like this to address. We know more training is needed; we want it to be better and more consistent; and that would occur if we were more centralized in our training. However, would that really be best

for officials and their local associations? Would that really be best for high school sports in Michigan?

But none of these unresolved questions should undermine the first of the three big ideas, that training matters, in fact it matters a lot, especially in the first through fifth years of a person's officiating.

The second big idea is this: **scheduling matters**. We can't expect a lot of people to be available for 3 p.m. games on weekdays. Contests must be scheduled later, after officials' regular jobs are over. And we can't expect a lot of people to be available for 12-hour weekend invitationals. Competitions must be shorter, leaving officials time for family.

As schools and organizations build schedules, they must think about being official-friendly, as well as student-, coach- and spectator-friendly. Scheduling matters. It matters a lot, to a lot of our officials. Friendly scheduling (job-friendly and family-friendly) encourages new officials to start officiating and encourages veteran officials to stay with officiating.

Remember, conflicts with work and family are both among the top five reasons why we lose officials. The officials themselves have told us so.

The third big idea is this: **sportsmanship matters**. Even if we did nothing to improve training and even if we did nothing to improve scheduling, we could make huge progress in recruiting and retaining officials if we improve sportsmanship, if we improve officials' "working conditions."

Both the National Federation survey in 2001 and the MHSAA survey in 2004 cited sportsmanship issues as a force driving people out of officiating.

The No. 1 thing I can do in my job to help officials and officiating has nothing to do with officials and officiating directly. It has everything to do with the conduct of all the others at contests, including players, coaches and especially spectators.

Every effort to improve sportsmanship is an effort to improve officiating and helps us with recruitment and retention of officials. Every ad, brochure, DVD, PSA, PA announcement, Sportsmanship Summit, mini-grant and award has the potential to help us recruit and retain officials.

Nothing matters any more than this third big idea: sportsmanship. The MHSAA membership must be more vigilant in the enforcement of sportsmanship standards and more vigorous in their educational efforts.

— John E. "Jack" Roberts
MHSAA Executive Director

– Continued from page 1

- It means facilities won't be used as wisely and media attention to high school basketball will be spread more thinly.

It means that school districts must immediately get to the tasks of voiding contracts for some coaches and recruiting new coaches from a shallow pool of candidates; voiding contracts for officials and seeking replacements from an already inadequate supply; rescheduling contests and practices, and then reschedule the use by other school and community groups around the new realities. It is unfortunate at any time, much less at a time of severe financial stress for our state and its schools, that Michigan's most efficient, fair and proactive model for utilizing community resources must be changed.

Many people have observed that the MHSAA has maintained the strong support of the schools throughout this case; and it's true that at every step, there has been almost unanimous support. In fact, briefs have been filed multiple times in these proceedings by the state school boards and athletic directors associations.

However, it is more accurate to observe that the MHSAA has been supporting the schools than to say the schools have been supporting the MHSAA. Schools made the sports seasons decisions, not the MHSAA. Schools set the seasons for their local regular season play; and when enough schools sponsored the sport, then the MHSAA sponsored a tournament in that sport; and placed the tournament logically at the conclusion of the season that had already been used for regular season competition sponsored by local schools.

In this case, the MHSAA has been defending schools' decisions, not MHSAA mandates. Every portion of our constituency has favored the current seasons: athletes, their parents, coaches, administrators, school boards, officials and the sports media.

Many times I have met with athletes, especially female athletes, and I have said to them: "If you tell me you believe the seasons should be switched, then to the limits of my authority, I will advocate for that change." The students did not ask; and therefore, I did not advocate what they did not want.

If **ever** our constituents had said we

should not defend the current seasons because they are not beneficial to boys and girls, then the MHSAA would not have defended those seasons. Because our constituents believe their seasons structure is much better than what the District Court has ordered, the MHSAA gave its best effort to defend those seasons; and we did so without any expenditure of time or money by schools, and without any distraction from MHSAA services to those schools.

Ultimately, our efforts to preserve schools' seasons have been unsuccessful. We have to apologize to schools, not for making the efforts, but for not making **successful** efforts. We are disappointed with the results; but we could not have lived with ourselves if we were also disappointed with the effort.

It is extremely important now that our schools remember who we are in Michigan. We are the schools which decided to maximize high school sports participation; and we are the schools which, more than in any other state, have accomplished that mission. We are eighth in the nation in high school age population but fourth in the nation in girls high school athletic participation, including third in the nation in girls high school volleyball and tennis participation. In every sport at issue in this case, our national rank in girls sports participation is sixth or better, not eighth or worse.

In a nearly bankrupt state, with many nearly bankrupt school districts, and declining enrollment in rural towns and urban centers, in spite of this, Michigan schools have amazed everybody and continued to maximize participation.

So the challenge now – and it's a huge one – is to do in Michigan what no other state has done: to avoid decreasing participation in the wake of seasons changes. Some states saw double-digit percentage drops in girls and boys basketball participation and girls volleyball participation following the change of seasons. We must do better.

Michigan schools must continue to avoid easy choices, including plans convenient for adults. We must continue to seek out and implement creative plans that will maximize participation for students.

The goal that has guided this association of schools like no other in America has been maximizing participation. It must be our continuing passion.

The job just got harder. But blaming

and whining will not help. Imagination and energy are what we need, now more than ever, to turn this disappointing day into a brighter tomorrow than we believe is possible right now for our kids and coaches.

Michigan schools, and especially their young women, may have lost their special seasons. That's bad. But it will be worse if schools lose sight of their special mission that gave rise to those seasons decisions: maximizing participation.

We will keep working, and we believe our colleagues in Michigan schools will do the same, to continue to realize that goal.

There are two lessons of high school sports that are relevant here: guts and grace. In school sports you must have the guts – the courage and persistence – to play the full contest. When the going gets tough, coaches ask their athletes to make a "gut check." A good high school athlete doesn't quit before the contest is completed. And we did not quit either.

A second lesson of high school sports is that you must accept the final outcome with grace. Sometimes you win when you deserve to lose, and sometimes you lose when you deserve to win. But in either case, accepting the result gracefully is what we expect of our athletes; and it is what we expect of ourselves now.

I know you have questions now, and the answers require candor, and that will not always sound positive. But it is my desire that we approach our future with optimism, with the hope and even the expectation that Michigan will continue to represent the best of what school sports has to offer in America: pure, wholesome, local, amateur, educational athletics, the family brand of sports in a world where sports is too often out of perspective and out of control. No state has been in hotter pursuit of the highest ideals of school sports than this great and wonderful state in which I serve, and that will continue.

My personal passion for this is not diminished; and if you had been with me as I addressed the team captains today or had the opportunity I did for private conversation a week ago with this year's MHSAA scholar-athletes, I think you would share my optimistic view of our future. These kids, who give their very best, deserve our very best attitudes and efforts, now more than ever.

MENTOR PLANNER

Spring 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
Baseball	Mar 12	Mar 12	56 G+D	May 9	May 25	May 29, Jun 1 or 2	Jun 9	Jun 12	Jun 15	Jun 16
Golf - LP Girls	Mar 12	Mar 15	16D	May 9			May 17 or 18 or 19 or 21			Jun 1-2
Golf - UP Boys & Girls	Mar 12	Mar 12	16D	May 18						Jun 1
Lacrosse - Boys & Girls	Mar 12	Mar 23	18C	May 2	May 25		May 17 - Jun 2		Jun 6	Jun 9
Soccer - Girls	Mar 12	Mar 19	18C	May 9	May 25	May 29 - Jun 2	Jun 5-9		Jun 13	Jun 16
Softball	Mar 12	Mar 12	56 G+D	May 9	May 25	May 29, Jun 1 or 2	Jun 9	Jun 12	Jun 15	Jun 16
Tennis - LP Boys	Mar 12	Mar 12	16D	May 9			May 17 or 18			Jun 1-2
Tennis - UP Boys	Mar 12	Mar 12	16D	May 18						May 31
Track & Field	Mar 12	Mar 12	18D	May 14-15			May 18-19			Jun 2

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