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**FROM THE DESK OF...
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

It is hard to believe that the Fall season is quickly coming to an end. With that in mind, I would like to emphasize two points:

First - please stress with your coaches, players and fans the importance of displaying good sportsmanship as they participate in the playoffs and championships. The contests become much more competitive at the playoff level with more at stake for the student-athletes and coaches. Therefore, it is imperative they be reminded that it is because of their success that they have advanced to the playoff round(s). They should look at this success as a positive accomplishment, even though they may not win the championship title.

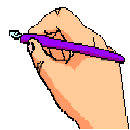
The great Knute Rockne said it best in the following prayer:

“Dear Lord:

In the battle that goes on in life,
I ask for a field that is fair;
A chance that is equal with all in strife -
the courage to do and to dare;
If I should win, let it be by the code -
My faith and my honor held high;
If I should lose, let me stand by the road -
And cheer as the winners ride by.”

Secondly, as we begin preparations for the fast-approaching Winter sport season, we would like to remind you to be sure that your Home Confirmations are entered on line and that eligibility lists for each sport are submitted **at least one week prior to the first contest, including the Injury Fund contest.**

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Guest Editorial

BE VIGILANT Proclaim the Value of Activities for the Sake of Our Children - Our Future

*by David V. Stead
Executive Director
Minnesota State High School League*

[A number of you may recall last Spring's Bulletin article regarding the values of participating in high school activities. This fall levy referendums are being decided in a number of districts across Minnesota. The state legislature may face a \$3 billion shortfall in January, and academic endeavors and educational activities are being challenged at every turn. Some of what follows was included in the Spring 2002 message, but I think it's important to continue that theme and to refocus on the values

inherent in educational athletic and fine arts activities.]

Like each of you, my view on life is shaped and colored by my personal experiences. My view of what school is for and what is important in education is shaped by my high school history, my professional training and experience, and my role as a parent. Because of that, I believe the successful development of young people hinges on having the opportunity for academic and activity success - curricular and co-curricular success.

Notice, I didn't say “extra” curricular. Whoever coined the expression “extra” curricular did a great disservice. The activities of speech, drama, debate, vocal and performance music, and athletics are not “extra” to a person's development - they are integral in forming a happy, productive and successful member of our society. Involvement in high school activities builds a better human being, a more well-rounded human being, and one who is better able to face the future.

Do academics come first? yes. I have yet to hear a high school principal say that s/he is building a school the football team would be proud of. But is involvement in activities important? Absolutely! School activities are essential to a human being's development. I know some of the middle schools and high schools would certainly attest to a ‘lack of involvement’ as a detriment to that development.

Perhaps the word “success” needs to be defined - whole books have been written on the subject. I'd like to suggest that a person's success is not linked to their GPA, what college they graduated from, their profession, how much money they make, or how many awards they have won. We're embarrassingly aware of professional athletes, musicians, actors and actresses who are “successful,” but who are also flunking life.

I'd like to suggest that people are a success if they: 1) have learned self-respect; b) respect others in their families, communities, and the larger world; and c) have assumed a role or place in our community where they contribute and share with others by giving something back.

Let me share some distressing information regarding the state of today's youth. These facts won't bother you unless you are a mother, father, grandparent, child of somebody, or someone who cares.

America's youth are in jeopardy in our changing world. No matter how good the school or how good the home, our kids face a barrage from the external environment. Today's youth deal with ethnic diversity, gender equity, economic uncertainty, new government regulations, intervention of the courts, and a society that refuses to accept the word “NO”.

Statistics have shown that the average young person spends 21 hours a week watching television, 28 hours a week with “their” music, and seven minutes each day in meaningful conversation with their parents. That's an average. More than ever,

students of all grade levels interact with a blip on the computer screen and a television remote.

Today children become alcoholics at a younger age than ever before, marijuana use is up dramatically, cocaine use has tripled in the last five years, and venereal disease is epidemic. Guns and knives are standard equipment among teenagers in some parts of our country where it is not uncommon to be shot or stabbed for one's jacket or shoes. We have "disassociated youth" who care little about life - their own or others. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among teenagers and occurs nearly every 90 minutes right here in America. The national dropout rate continues to be appalling.

The Gallup poll tells us that 10 years ago kids wondered if their families would break up. Today kids wonder *WHEN* parents will break up. Our adolescents join gangs, and their behavior is anti-social.

There is no better time in history than now to recognize and assert the value of high school activities in developing and, in some cases, saving our young people. What, then, are the benefits of participation in high school activities? Although there are literally hundreds, I'd like to address them in four concepts.

First of all, high school activities support the academic mission of our schools. They are not a diversion, but rather an extension of a good educational program. Students who participate in activity programs tend to have higher grade-point averages, better attendance records, lower dropout rates, and cause fewer discipline problems. Many studies have been done to support these conclusions.

Thomas Jefferson said, "The moral sense or conscience must be as much a part of each individual as the leg or arm. One must have character. Everyone must understand how the simplest of actions adds or subtracts to our nation's moral and cultural strength." The 'teachable moments' in high school activities that transfer experience to real life encourage the development of character which is part of our academic mission and included in Minnesota's graduation standards.

A second benefit of participation in activities is that they are inherently educational for all. Activities are logically linked to the objectives of the overall educational program. Their primary purpose is to meet the school-related interests and needs of students that are provided for to a sufficient degree by the curricular program.

This includes offering opportunities for student government and publications such as a school newspaper and yearbook; performance opportunities for instrumental and vocal music, debate, speech and theater; clubs and organizations for languages, literary interests, photography; and intramural and interscholastic sports.

Plus, activities are inherently educational because the learning in activities is developed under the guidance of trained teachers/coaches/advisors who help young people develop these life skills.

If you ever doubt the value of activities for young people or need to be inspired, attend a state tournament for an adapted sport. Watch a group of young people who are developmentally challenged participate for the pure joy of participation! Talk about building self-esteem and knowing the thrill of doing something to the best of one's ability! You'll never see so many hugs and smiles and proud parents regardless of a win or loss. The competition is secondary. Participating and doing is what it's all about. You'll wonder how we ever lived in a world where these young people were not permitted to play.

A third benefit of participation in activities is the opportunity for the student to develop interpersonal, physical and psychological skills.

In today's world of television and computers, experiences that allow students to interact and to understand other people's feelings occur primarily in activities where they are able to compete and perform with other human beings instead of with something that is beeping back at them.

Louis Alley said it best in his article *Athletics in*

There is no better time in history than now to recognize and assert the value of high school activities in developing and, in some cases, saving our young people.

Education: "A youngster cannot actually learn to be honest unless he practices honesty. He cannot learn to lead unless he has the chance to lead others. He can't learn his part in a cooperative enterprise unless he's placed in a situation in which cooperation is

possible. He can't learn to respect the rights of others and to be tolerant of their shortcomings or differences from himself unless he practices tolerance and respect for others."

There are also obvious physical benefits to participation in activities. In this sedentary world of ours where increasing numbers of children are overweight and couch potatoes are getting duller by the year, activities from marching band to dance team rehearsal to sports practice instill concepts of wellness and fitness and conditioning. Students learn that activity is a safety valve for the release of energy. Students understand that being in good shape facilitates living and working better. They embrace life-long love for activity that enhances their adult lives.

The list of the virtues of participation is almost endless. The terms discipline, motivation, courage, responsibility, ethics, poise, courtesy, humility, persistence, perseverance, devotion, dedication and commitment to excellence all support the positive experiences of high school activities.

The last benefit of high school activities I want to share with you is that participation fosters success in later life. In fact, participation is often a predictor of later success - in college, a career and becoming a contributing member of society.

The results of a survey of individuals at the executive vice president level or above in 75 Fortune 500 companies indicated that 95% of those corporate executives participated in sports during high school. A study completed by the Educational Testing Service tracked college freshmen. The study concluded that participation in activities is a much better indicator of college performance than other yardsticks such as a pre-admission interview or educational level of a student's parents. Most college admissions policies from Harvard to community colleges now reflect this importance.

Those of you who coach, who teach, who administer and who support activities are living examples of what you've just read. You've lived the dream. You are the recipients of the benefits of participation in high school activities. The ability to positively affect the future lies in your hands.

In one of her television specials, Barbara Walters interviewed Harrison Ford and asked if he would play the role of Indiana Jones again. He said, "Yes, in a New York minute."

She asked if he recalled the trendy catch phrase from Star Wars more than 20 years ago, "The Force be with you." He said yes, but added "Force yourself."

As the trilogy is replayed and replayed and replayed, "The Force," she said, "is popular once again." His response: "Force is within you. Force yourself!"

Langston Hughes, a poet laureate, and Dr. Ivan Fitzwater, a professor of education at Trinity University, didn't know one another, but their messages are so similar. Hughes wrote, "Hold fast to your dreams, for if dreams die, they are like a broken-winged bird who cannot fly." Fitzwater, in the final verse of his poem *I Am A Teacher*, wrote, "We must be vigilant every day lest we lose one fragile opportunity to improve tomorrow."

Help kids dream. Support their active involvement. Be vigilant!

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How Did We Survive?

Looking back, it's hard to believe that we have lived as long as we have.

- ◆ As children we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags.
- ◆ Riding in the back of a pickup truck on a warm day was always a special treat.
- ◆ Our baby cribs were painted with brightly colored lead based paint - and we often chewed on the crib, ingesting the paint.

- ◆ We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors, or cabinets, and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets.
- ◆ We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle.
- ◆ We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then rode down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem - all by ourselves!
- ◆ We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on. No one was able to reach us all day.
- ◆ We played dodgeball and sometimes the ball would really hurt.
- ◆ We ate cupcakes, bread and butter, and drank sugar soda, but we were never overweight because we were *always* outside playing.
- ◆ Little League had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment.
- ◆ Some students weren't as smart as others so they failed a grade and were held back to repeat the same grade. Tests were never adjusted!

That generation produced some of the greatest risk takers and problem solvers. We had freedom, failure, success - and responsibility.

And we learned how to deal with it all!

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THE MAIN REASON THEY PLAY

*by Ronnie Carter, Executive Director
Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association*

By now, everyone has probably seen some part of this year's Pro Football Hall of Fame induction ceremony, which dealt with the induction of Jim Kelly. Regardless of whether you are a Jim Kelly fan, Buffalo Bills fan, pro football fan, etc., the things he said touched you. The story of his five-year-old son and his reference to him not only in the induction ceremony, but also throughout his life, is tremendous. It is a great story that truly moves us all.

There was one additional thing that happened in one of the interviews with Jim Kelly that also jumped off the screen. They were asking him about highlights with references to playing in four straight Super Bowls, playing in seven straight championship games against seven different opponents, etc. He then responded that one of his great thrills was playing for Marv Levy. It was at that point that he gave the real insight. His reference was to the fact that Marv Levy allowed him to call his own plays during the games and his greatest thrill was that "he just had fun playing."

Those are two great insights that should hit all of us as administrators, coaches, parents, and student-athletes as we begin another great year of participation in education.

I would not begin to think that we would start to see a new day of high school quarterbacks calling their own plays, but sometimes I wonder where our games are really going. We play the games in an era where coaches call all the plays in football, all the pitches in baseball and softball, all the defenses and sets in basketball, and even have to tell our wrestlers what position to choose at the start of the second and third periods. We then, many times, bemoan the lack of leaders in our athletes. We have to see the correlation. Maybe, as adults, we are not going to share these duties with the students who play the game for a lot of good reasons, but we must look for the ways to help develop leadership skills.

The second part has to do with why students play the game. What is it they enjoy the most about playing the different high school sports that we sponsor at our schools during the year? You can look at every study that has been done in every state at every level and see a lot of different options that were given to the students concerning what they enjoy most about the game. Why do they play? Among the answers on the surveys I have seen are things like winning, getting an athletic scholarship, winning a championship, learning the skills, etc. Regardless of whether they are males or females, rural or metropolitan, etc., the answer that is always at the top of every study done with people who play the game is the line Jim Kelly gave -- *because it's fun!*

It doesn't mean that the other things are not important or that they don't have a major place in what we do, but as we go about this business of educational athletics, may we never forget what the students say about why they play.

May we also remember that being able to be involved in educational athletics at the secondary level is truly a blessing to all of us involved in the game, no matter what the sport. We are truly different. Athletics exist at our level to be a part of the total educational program of our schools.

To learn to be a leader, to have fun, and to be involved in educational athletics -- that's a pretty good combination.

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SURVEY DOCUMENTS DECADE OF MORAL DETERIORATION

Kids today are more likely to cheat, steal and lie than kids ten years ago.

According to a new report by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, cheating, stealing and lying by high school students have continued their alarming, decade-long upward spiral. A survey of 12,000 high school students showed that students admitting they cheated on an exam at least once in the past year jumped from 61% in 1992 to 74% in 2002; the number who stole something from a store within the past 12 months rose from 31% to 38%, while the percentage who say they lied to their teachers and parents also increased substantially.

The report, released as part of National CHARACTER COUNTS! Week (October 20-26), also reveals significant deterioration over the past two years: cheating rose from 71% in 2000 to 74% in 2002, theft increased from 35% to 38%, and those who said they would be willing to lie to get a good job jumped from 28% to 39%.

The 2002 report also found that students who attend private religious schools were less likely to shoplift (35% vs 39%) but more likely to cheat on exams (78% vs 72%) and lie to teachers (86% vs 81%). In addition, students participating in varsity sports cheated on exams at a higher rate than students who did not (78% vs 73%).

Michael Josephson, President of the Josephson Institute of Ethics, said: "The evidence is that willingness to cheat has become the norm and that parents, teachers, coaches and even religious educators have not been able to stem the tide. The scary thing is that so many kids are entering the workforce to become corporate executives, politicians, airplane mechanics and nuclear inspectors with the dispositions and skills of cheaters and thieves.

To provide greater insight into the factors that may impact the ethics of young people, the Institute's 2002 survey sought information about attitudes and affiliations that add new dimensions to the data. Participation in varsity sports, student leadership, attendance at private religious schools and possession of strong religious beliefs. A summary of the data follows, but here are some highlights:

GENDER. The most significant differentiating factor among high school students is gender. Though girls cheat and lie as much as boys in general, they are significantly less likely to engage in theft or other dishonest practices and they have more positive attitudes toward ethics.

SPORTS. Participation in varsity sports does not appear to build or undermine character. In most cases it was not a differentiating factor with one significant exception: *varsity athletes were more likely to cheat on exams.*

RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS. Those who attend private religious schools do not behave or think much differently from others. In most cases, it was not a differentiating factor. They did steal less, but they cheated and lied more to teachers and parents.

RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS. Students who said that their religion was essential or very important to them, (regardless of the kind of school they attended) also generally performed at the national average, though they shoplifted at a slightly lower rate, were less likely to lie to get a job and tended to have more positive attitudes about the importance of ethics.

COLLEGE AND HONORS CLASSES. Generally, those who intended to go to college and attended honors or advanced placement classes said they cheated, stole and lied less than others.

THE SURVEYS UNDERLYING REPORT CARD 2002: The Ethics of American Youth were administered by schools throughout the country in 2002. This report

addresses honesty and integrity and is the first based on the data. An additional report focusing on violence, drug use, and other issues will be released in the future.

SUMMARY SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

1. CHEATING

- In decade from 1992-2002, the number of high school students who admit that they cheated on an exam in the past year increased significantly from 61% to 74%. In 2000, 70% admitted to cheating.
- Students participating in varsity sports were more likely to cheat than non-participants (78% vs 73%).
- Students attending religious schools were more likely to cheat than students at other schools (78% vs 72%).
- Gender, student leadership, and personal religious convictions had no material impact.
- The number of students who admit they cheated two or more times in the past year has increased only slightly from 1992-2002 (1992-46%; 2000-44%; 2002-48%)

2. THEFT

- a) *Shoplifting.* In the ten years from 1992-2002, the number of high school students who admit that they stole something from a store in the past 12 months increased significantly from 33% to 38%. In 2000, 35% admitted to theft from a store. Males were more likely to steal than females (41% vs 35%). More than one-third of students in leadership positions stole from a store, but they stole at a substantially lower rate than non-leaders (34% vs 39%). Also, 30% of the honor students said they stole -- the lowest percentage of any group -- compared to 40% of non-honor students. Participation in varsity sports had no material impact. Students attending religious schools were less likely to steal from a store (35% vs 39%) as were students with personal religious convictions (34% vs 38%). The number of students who admit they stole from a store two or more times in the past year has not changed from 1992-2002 (1992-29%; 2000-19%; 2002-19%).
- b) *Stealing from parents.* The number of students who admit stealing from a parent or relative increased from 24% in 1992 to 28% in 2002; 25% of students with personal religious convictions said they stole from parents, the same percentage as for honor students.

3. LYING

- a) *Lying to parents.* Though one would expect a high percentage of young people to admit lying to their parents in the past year, the

increase from 1992 to 2002 is substantial (83% vs 93%).

In 2002, females were slightly more likely to lie to a parent than males (94% vs 92%).

Students attending religious schools were more likely to lie to a parent (95% vs 91%) but students with personal religious convictions lied at the same rate as the national average.

The percentage of students who admit lying to their parents two or more times increased from 70% in 1992 to 81% in 2002.

- b) *Lying to teachers.* This kind of falsehood is also common among adolescents but again the percentage who admit doing so in the previous 12 months increased significantly from 1992 to 2002 (69% vs 83%).

Gender, participating in varsity sports, student leadership, and personal religious convictions had no material impact.

Students attending religious schools were more likely to lie to a teacher (86% vs 81%).

The percentage of students who admit lying to their teachers two or more times increased from 53% in 1992 to 63% in 2002.

- c) *Lying to save money.* The percentage of students who say they "sometimes lie to save money" increased substantially from 36% in 2000 to 46% in 2002.

Males were considerably more willing to lie than females (51% vs 43%).

Participating in varsity sports or student leadership, attendance in private religious schools and personal religious convictions had no material impact.

This question was not asked in the 1992 survey.

- d) *Lying to get a job.* In 2002, the percentage who say they would be willing to "lie to get a good job" more than quadrupled (9% to 37%), compared to 28% in 2000.

Males were considerably more willing to lie than females (42% vs 34%).

Participating in varsity sports (37%) or student leadership (36%) and attendance at private religious schools (38%) had no material impact.

Those who had personal religious convictions were significantly lower at 32%.

This questions was not asked in the 1992 survey.

4. IDEAS AND SELF-IMAGE CONCERNING ETHICS

- a) In just the past two years, the cynicism of young people has increased substantially. In 2000, 34% of high school students said "A person has to lie or cheat sometimes in order to succeed." In 2002, the number agreeing jumped 9% to 43%.

Males were considerably more cynical than females (50% vs 38%).

Students who attended private religious schools did not differ from the overall

national average (43%) though students who said religion was very important to them were slightly less cynical (93%)
Students involved in varsity sports did not differ from the overall national average.
This question was not asked in the 1992 survey.

- b) Despite the high proportion of students who admitted cheating, stealing and lying in the past year, the generation appears to possess high self esteem when it comes to ethics: 76% said, "When it comes to doing what is right, I am better than most people I know." Varsity athletes and student leaders and honors students had an even higher self-image as 80-81% said they were better than their peers.
- c) In addition, though many engaged in untrustworthy behavior, the students indicated that trust was very important: 95% agreed, "It's important to me that people trust me."
- d) And the vast majority of high school students (79%) agreed, "It's not worth it to lie or cheat because it hurts your character." Males were considerably less likely to agree with this statement than females (74% vs 82%).
Student leaders were slightly more likely to believe that lying and cheating "is not worth it" (82% vs 79%).
Attendance at religious school did not have a significant impact (80% agreed that lying and cheating is not worth it) but students with personal religious convictions were significantly more likely to agree that lying and cheating is not worth it (84%).
This question was not asked in the 1992 survey.

5. EFFORTS AT CHARACTER EDUCATION

About three-quarters (74%) of all students said that school tries hard to help students develop good character.
That number was significantly larger among students attending private religious schools (83%).
60% of all students and 71% of religious school students said their teachers consistently set a good ethical example.

6. TEACHING AND MODELING BY PARENTS

- a) The misconduct of young people is not the result of mixed messages from parents, at least according to their children, as 84% of all students agreed with the statement, "My parents want me to do the ethically right thing, no matter what the cost."
b) Similarly, 93% disagreed with the statement, "My parents would rather I cheat than get bad grades."

Following a benchmark survey in 1992, the Josephson Institute has conducted a national survey of the ethics of American youth every two years. The Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan, non-profit organization based in Marina del Rey, CA. One of the major projects of the Institute is THE CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, a partnership of more than 500 educational and youth-serving organizations committed to improving the ethical quality of America's young people through character education. Congress and 36 states have declared the third week in October National CHARACTER COUNTS! Week.

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DATING VIOLENCE: IT IS YOUR BUSINESS

In the League's ongoing efforts to work together with the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence to promote awareness of teen dating violence, we offer the following as an installment in a continuing series of articles addressing the very important issue of teen dating violence. If you have any questions or would like more information on this subject, we encourage you to contact the Coalition at (401) 467-9940 - or - 1-800-494-8100 - or - any one of its member agencies in your area.

HOW TO TALK TO A VICTIM/ABUSER:

What do you do if you suspect there is a problem?

Trust your instincts and offer to talk with the teen about what's going on in his/her relationship. Let the teenager know your concerns and that s/he can come to you with problems. Tell her/him that you will listen and try to help.

Don't be judgmental, and don't state your concerns by criticizing the abusive boyfriend or girlfriend. That will only put the teenager in a position to have to defend that person.

Try to understand that abusive relationships are very intense, and that the teenager may feel afraid, confused and alone. S/he will have strong feelings for the other person, including love.

Support in a Crisis

Empower young people to help themselves. It is likely that they have already been working hard to help themselves - acknowledge that, praise that, and then let them know that even though they are good at helping themselves, they do not have to do this alone.

- ◆ Emphasize safety; do not apply pressure to end the relationship.
- ◆ Be a really good listener.
- ◆ Ask, "What are your ideas and solutions?"
- ◆ Ask, "What can I do to help you? How can I help you feel safe?"
- ◆ Be honest if you cannot do what they ask.

- ◆ Help create an opportunity for them to help themselves.
- ◆ See them as their own best resource.
- ◆ Never tell them what to do.
- ◆ Recognize the fear is real. They may be in real danger.
- ◆ Don't be a mediator.
- ◆ Confront offenders, only when it does not endanger the safety of the victim.
- ◆ When you don't know something, admit it.
- ◆ Realize that this is their crisis, their process, and their decisions.
- ◆ Understand all people make changes when they are ready to make them.
- ◆ Make the appropriate referrals together.
- ◆ Be honest about your actions, if you are mandated to do something they do not want you to do, explain the mandate and let them know your actions.
- ◆ Seek support for yourself; get ideas from the local domestic violence agency.
- ◆ Be concerned about your own safety. Know that helping someone in an abusive relationship might also put you at risk.
- ◆ Help them identify the support systems they already have.
- ◆ Look into legal options.
- ◆ Offer to call the local hotline with them.
- ◆ Offer to help find a safe place to stay.
- ◆ Give information to read.

EMPHASIZE SAFETY

Breaking up is the most dangerous time for a victim; the greatest amount of violence occurs after an attempt to break up. It is important that extensive safety planning be done with domestic violence advocates, schools, parents, teachers, and friends. Help the young person create his/her own plan for safety.

Remember ... Ending the relationship will not guarantee an end to the violence.

NEXT MONTH: How to approach a suspected teen victim

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ARE HELMETS APPROPRIATE FOR POLE VAULTING?

by Angie Massani

With 17 high school pole-vaulting fatalities in the past 19 years, a common discussion on the subject poses many questions about the event and new requirements.

In an effort to minimize the risk of injury in the pole vault, measurement and performance methods have been adopted by the National Federation of State High School Associations [NFHS], as well as athletic directors and professionals across America.

One of the most controversial topics at the moment is the wearing of helmets during the event to prevent, or lessen, injury to the athlete. According to Frank Kovaleski, assistant director of the NFHS and former liaison to the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee, ***a problem with mandating helmets is that no manufacturer makes helmets specifically for pole vaulting.***

While a few states already mandate helmets, some professionals have their own opinions on the utilization and benefits of a helmet.

In May 2002, the headgear and helmet subcommittee of the American Society of Testing and Measurement (ASTM) formed a pole vault helmet task force to develop a standard for pole-vaulting helmets. Peter McGinnis, co-chair of the ASTM task force and biomechanist for the pole vault event for the USA Track and Field, said this group is not designing the actual helmet, but coming up with a standard that manufacturers need to meet in order to get an ASTM sticker.

“The standard being developed will not produce a helmet capable of preventing head injuries to a vaulter falling from a typical vaulting height - although a helmet may reduce severity of an injury,” McGinnis said. “The proposed standard will protect the vaulter from certain accidents like stumbling and falling out of the pit, slipping off the pole at take off or breaking a pole during a vault.”

While the ASTM task force will meet again in November to further develop this standard, McGinnis recommends from his own personal experiences that any helmet used by athletes meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standard for bicycle helmets. McGinnis also notes that the helmet be shaped similarly to skate-boarding helmets, with less aerodynamics, such as BMX or freestyle types.

“Some states don't tell you what helmet to wear and the legislation is passed, but they need to clarify the specifications of what to use,” McGinnis said. “Many of the vaulters who use helmets today use skate helmets that do not meet any industry- or government-established standards. These helmets are not as effective as CPSC, ASTM or Snell-certified helmets.”

NFHS track and field rules permit athletes to wear helmets if they choose, but there is no requirement, Kovaleski said.

“You can't mandate something that isn't there and the question is, if they come up with one, will the manufacturer step up to the plate and produce it,” Kovaleski said.

Jan Johnson, the owner of SkyJumpers Vertical Sports Club and 1972 Olympic bronze medalist for pole vaulting, said more investigation needs to be done on the utilization of helmets.

“It's not a good time to mandate helmets because they don't know what they're talking about,” Johnson said. “We used helmets at SkyJumpers for two years, and I didn't like what I saw. I was very unimpressed with performance and what people brought in to use.”

Mike Blackburn, athletic director at Northwestern High School in Kokomo, Indiana, said his school does not use helmets for pole vaulting, but is discussing it for this upcoming spring.

"It makes sense that a helmet would be beneficial," Blackburn said. "It's common sense that if a head makes contact with a hard surface, a helmet will help. We want an expedient solution."

While discussion on requiring helmets continues, the NFHS has implemented a change for the 2002-03 track and field season in an effort to minimize the risk of injury. Effective for the 2002-03 track and field seasons, measurements for the landing pad have been changed to 20 feet, 2 inches by 19 feet, 8 inches. Kovaleski says the main issue is to keep athletes landing on the pad and to minimize potential risk.

Emphasis on pole vault safety has been ongoing for many years. Prior to the 1995 season, the rules committee made the following change: "hard or unyielding surfaces, such as but not limited to concrete, metal, wood or asphalt around the landing pad, or between the planting box and the landing pad, shall be padded or cushioned with a minimum of two inches of dense foam or other suitable material. It is also recommended that any excess material such as asphalt or concrete that extends out from beneath the landing pad be removed."

Other rules changes in the pole vault implemented in 2002-03 to minimize risk include a requirement that front pads with a vertical cutout cannot be more than three inches from the top of the back of the planting box. A space of 14 inches was formerly permitted. Also dealing with the planting box, a minimum of two inches of foam padding, or box collar, must be used to pad any hard and unyielding surfaces, including those between the planting box and all pads. The planting box must be located midway between the standards, and the front edge of the box cannot extend above the grade of the runway surface.

Another preventive measure for athletes is the coaching box, recommended by the National Pole Vault Safety Committee, which is painted on the pad and serves as a guide to help coaches and athletes make good decisions and adjustments to their performance.

Kovaleski said that NFHS rules should be enforced in the 2002-03 seasons. Officials will be aware of this situation, and if the area is unacceptable, the event will not be held. He also feels that perfecting technique can minimize risk and improve performance, instead of requiring helmets at this time.

"We don't have anything to require helmets; the equipment is not available, and I don't know if the equipment would prevent injury," Kovaleski said.

"Secondly, I don't think helmets can replace good padding. Large pads keep athletes on the pad, as well as proper coaching and equipment, such as not using poles below your body weight. All of this can minimize the possibility of an injury."

Another factor in the helmet discussion is the concern of liability with the manufacturer. Kovaleski pointed out that some manufacturers might not want to take a chance with liability if a helmet standard is adopted by ASTM, specifically for pole vaulting.

Johnson also notes that since changes in the pad measurements and elimination of accident areas, injuries related to the landing system will occur less frequently.

"If you study the catastrophic injuries, it's always a problem with padding around the box," Johnson said. "We're coming out with a soft box that will catch the pole like it is supposed to, or the athlete goes out the back or out the sides."

Blackburn feels that helmets may offer protection, but there are still inherent dangers.

"Any helmet would be something you adapt, but using equipment not for its original purpose opens you up to liability," Blackburn said.

Another option that some professionals such as McGinnis currently use is the waiver offered on Johnson's SkyJumpers Web site. The waiver notes that the use of helmets is under investigation and some may offer an extra safety measure, but areas still remain for potential injury despite the new requirements. It specifies that it is

only a recommendation and the helmet should never be a substitute for safe equipment or sound technique.

McGinnis agrees and feels the waiver explains the advantages and the athlete may choose to wear it or not.

A firm decision on whether or not a helmet is the answer has not been made. Some still feel that other amendments can be made before jumping into anything that does not have a specific industry standard.

"If the rules are enforced, such as the coaching box, monitoring vaulters, using a larger pad, removing hard and unyielding surface around the pad, we can reduce the risk that has previously occurred," Kovaleski said. "If a helmet is specifically produced for the pole vault event, it may be better to keep it optional until we have time to study the effectiveness of the helmet."

Massani is a fall intern at the NFHS and a senior at Butler (Indiana) University

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"...I don't think helmets can replace good padding. Large pads keep athletes on the pad, as well as proper coaching and equipment ... All of this can minimize the possibility of an injury."

- Frank Kovaleski
NFHS



SUMMARY OF MEETING

The following is a summary of the October 21, 2002 meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics.

The October meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics was called to order at 1:40 pm.

Mr. Emmett [Bob] Cooney, Assistant Principal, Cranston High School East, was introduced as a member of the Principals' Committee on Athletics and the new Co-Director of Boys' Basketball. Mr. Cooney was appointed to this position at the September meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director's Report was approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's Report was approved.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Lynch referred to memoranda and publications that were placed in members' folders or filed in the League office.

CROSS COUNTRY

Mr. Charles Sweeney

Mr. Lynch reported on a letter from Cranston High School West in which they were appealing a decision by the Rhode Island Interscholastic League to impose a forfeiture on the Cranston High School East's cross country team. This was the result of the scheduled meet being cancelled by the Cranston East Head Coach. Cancellation was made without notification to the school's athletic director and in violation of RIIL policy which states that coaches may not cancel scheduled events.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics unanimously voted to deny the appeal, thereby upholding the forfeit.

HOCKEY

Mr. Daniel Sheehan

Mr. Lynch submitted the 2001-2002 Hockey Financial Report for the Committee's review and consideration.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics unanimously approved the 2001-2002 Hockey Financial Report.

In other business, Mr. Lynch submitted a proposed increase of \$10.00 in the fee paid to all medical personnel who work at RIIL hockey games. The proposal would increase the fee from \$50.00 to \$60.00 per night.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics unanimously approved the proposed increase in [hockey] medical personnel fees.

Mr. Lynch also reported that there will be Injury Fund games for the newly-formed RIIL girls' hockey league. The girls' Injury Fund Games will be incorporated into the boys [Injury Fund] schedule and will be played in a round robin format.

Mr. Sheehan reported that yet another rink has taken back available ice time. The lack of ice time has caused Mr. Sheehan to revise the schedule, necessitating several triple-headers. He will provide the schedule to the League office for distribution as soon as it has been completed.

GYMNASTICS

Mr. Richard Stapleton

Mr. Lynch reported on a proposal submitted by the (R. I.) Gymnastics Coaches Association in which they recommended a change in the State Championship format. Rather than conducting one (1) State Team Championship, they are proposing that two (2) State Team Championships be held – one for Class A which will be the State Championship and one for Class B which will be the Class B Champion. Both events would be held on the same day and would not result in an excessive increase in expenses to the League.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics unanimously approved the proposal.

BASKETBALL

Mr. Gerald Foley

Mr. Bob Cooney

Ms. Cindy Neal

Ms. Colleen Gribbin

Mr. Lynch reported on the status of Injury Fund games for boys and girls basketball. Presently, the R. I. Basketball Officials Association [board #84] is proposing that they be paid for working Injury Fund Games and, in turn, will submit a 'lump sum' donation to the Rhode Island Interscholastic Injury Fund. However, representatives from the Injury Fund state that they are not in agreement with this proposal and that, if the officials are paid, the Injury Fund will not provide coverage for the officials and possibly would not allow injury fund games.

A meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 23, 2002 with representatives from the officials' associations, athletic directors' association, and the Injury Fund. Mr. Lynch and Mr. Magarian will attend on behalf of the RIIL. However, the RIIL is acting only as mediator in this issue and is not directly involved in negotiations.

In the event that Injury Fund games are not played, there will be a direct effect on the number of games

allowed for the season. The present game cap is twenty-four (24), plus the Injury Fund game(s). It has long been the policy that injury fund games do not count toward the total cap. Insofar as several schools have committed to non-league and tournament games [for both boys and girls basketball], a proposal was submitted to increase the game cap to twenty-five (25) for the 2002-2003 school year only.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics voted 10-1, with 1 abstention, to approve an increase in the [basketball] game cap to 25 *for the 2002-2003 school year only*.

Mr. Lynch also reported that the Ryan Center at U.R.I. has denied the League's request to waive a \$2.00 surcharge on each ticket if the RIIL high school basketball championships were to be held at the Ryan Center. Mr. Lynch stated that holding the event at the Ryan Center would be cost-prohibitive to the League and that it would incur approximately an \$8,000 loss to the League. He also stated that he has received several telephone calls from representatives of the Dunkin' Donuts Center, where the event has been held in past years. They remain very interested in once again hosting the basketball championships and are eager to discuss the details with Mr. Lynch. Mr. Lynch will meet with representatives from the Dunkin' Donuts Center on Tuesday, October 22, 2002 to discuss this issue.

In other business, Mr. Lynch submitted a proposal from the R. I. Basketball Coaches' Association in which they recommended a change in the number/length of time outs per game. The present RIIL rule states that there shall be four (4) 60-second time-outs and two (2) 20-second time-outs per game. The coaches are proposing that the four (4) 60-second time-outs remain the same and that the two (2) 20-second time-outs be changed to two (2) 30-second time-outs.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics voted 11-1 to approved the proposal.

Mr. Lynch addressed a request from a member school regarding eligibility for a wheelchair-bound student to play RIIL [boys] basketball. Mr. Lynch reported that he has contacted the National Federation of High Schools. The NFHS has offered to poll other state associations to ascertain if they have any rules/policies addressing this issue. He has also discussed the issue with James McAleer, legal counsel for the RIIL. Mr. Lynch will report the findings to the Principals' Committee on Athletics at the November meeting.

FASTPITCH SOFTBALL Mrs. Betty Marquis

Mrs. Marquis submitted a proposed adjustment to the fastpitch softball alignment. Three (3) schools have entered the fastpitch softball league - Burrillville,

Smithfield, and Warwick Veterans High Schools - which necessitated the adjustment. Mrs. Marquis emphasized that the proposal is a temporary alignment only and will not have an effect on the existing playoff format. She is seeking the Committee's approval to send a survey to all participating schools for their input. The findings of the survey will be discussed and reviewed at the next meeting of the Fastpitch Softball Committee on November 6, 2002.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics unanimously approved the survey to be sent to all schools participating in fastpitch softball.

TENNIS

**Mrs. Denise Boulé
Ms. Candace Caluori**

Ms. Caluori, Director of Boys' Tennis, reported that she has received correspondence from several member schools requesting a move in the present boys' tennis alignment. She stated that the requests will be discussed and reviewed at the next meeting of the Tennis Committee. She will submit the proposed alignment to the Principals' Committee on Athletics at a later date, together with the boys' tennis schedule.

OTHER SPORTS/ISSUES

♦ **Boys' Volleyball**

Discussion regarding the proposed change of seasons was tabled to the November meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics. It was noted that the change of seasons for boys *and* girls volleyball may not be necessary if the proposed changes in the Non-School Competition rule (Article 7, Section 7) pass.

♦ **Field Hockey**

Ms. Jean Angell, Director of Field Hockey, reported that recent inclement weather has created havoc with the existing schedule and that playoff dates may have to be rescheduled. She also reported that the times for the semifinals at Bryant College have been changed to 9:00 am, 10:30 am, 12:30 pm, and 2:00 pm. This change is a later starting time from the original 8:30 am start and will allow for a "catch-up" break should the games run longer. If it becomes necessary to hold the playoffs at North Kingstown High School, Ms. Angell noted that the starting times could be even later, insofar as North Kingstown High School has a lighted facility.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENT FORM

At the September 16th meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics, discussion ensued regarding eligibility for foreign exchange students and the RIIL Foreign Exchange Student Data Form the students are required to complete and submit. The Committee believed that the existing form did not request detailed information that would allow the RIIL and/or

Committee to make an informed decision. They believed that foreign exchange students should be held to the same [high] standards/eligibility requirements as those to which students enrolled in member schools are expected to adhere to. Subsequently, the Committee asked the League staff to review the existing Foreign Exchange Student Data Form and revise it to include more thorough information.

At this meeting, Mr. Lynch submitted a revised Foreign Exchange Student Data form. The new form consists of three (3) parts; Part I to be completed if the foreign exchange program is authorized by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET); Part II for students who are in the United States independently, and not under the jurisdiction of an authorized program; and Part III for the Principals' approval and signature. Upon review, the Committee recommended several adjustments and corrections to the revised form.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics unanimously approved the new Foreign Exchange Student Data Form, to include the recommended adjustments and changes.

ARTICLE 7, SECTION 7 NON-SCHOOL COMPETITION

Mr. Lynch reported on the responses to a survey that was sent to all member schools regarding Article 7, Section 7 - the Non-School Competition Rule of the RIIL Rules and Regulations. The survey outlined a proposed change to the rule that would allow students to participate in outside organized programs in the same sport/season as that in which the student participates at the varsity level for his/her school. Of the 56 member schools, the RIIL received only twenty-six (26) responses. Of those, 18 approved the proposed change and 8 disapproved.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding: a) the lack of responses (less than 50% of membership); and, b) the ramifications of changing the rule.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee voted 8-4, with 1 abstention, to form an Ad Hoc Committee to develop a more comprehensive survey that will more clearly address the proposed rule as it applies to competition vs practice. The following members volunteered to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee: Ms. Caluori; Messrs Kavanagh and Stapleton; and Mr. Spemullo, President, R.I. Association of Secondary Principals and Liaison, Committee on Junior High Athletics

HEARINGS

3:55 pm Madison Burgess - Middletown High School - 8-Semester Rule

Background: This is an appeal of a decision by the Waiver Hearing Committee on August 13, 2002, to deny a

request for a waiver of the 8-Semester Rule.

Present for this hearing were Stephen Ponte, Principal; Robin Andrade, student's mother; and Madison Burgess, student-athlete.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics voted 9-4 to grant eligibility for the remainder of the 2002-2003 football season and for the 2002-2003 basketball season.

4:30 pm Kyle Lister - Lincoln High School Transfer Rule

Background: This is an appeal of a decision by the Waiver Hearing Committee on August 14, 2002, which denied a request for a waiver of the Transfer Rule.

Present for this hearing were Lee Blais, student's stepfather and attorney; Debbie Lister, student's mother; Kyle Lister, student-athlete; and James McAleer, legal counsel for the R. I. Interscholastic League.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics voted 12-1 to deny the request.

The Committee then adopted the following Closing Motion: THAT ANY AND ALL MOTIONS, AMENDMENTS AND ACTIONS BY THE COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS AND THE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS TO THIS DATE BE REAFFIRMED AND RATIFIED.

The October meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics was adjourned at 5:45 pm.

* * * * *



**Happy
Thanksgiving**

Mission Statement

***The Mission of the Rhode Island Interscholastic League
is to provide educational opportunities
for students through interscholastic athletics
and to provide governance and leadership
for its member schools
in the implementation of athletic programs.***

National Affiliation

The Rhode Island Interscholastic League is a member of the National Federation of State High School Associations, which consists of the state high school associations of all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Guam, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and all provinces of Canada are affiliate members.

The objectives of the National Federation of State High School Associations are to:

- serve, protect, and enhance the interstate activity interests of the high schools belonging to the state associations;
- assist in those activities of the state associations which can best be operated on a nationwide scale;
- sponsor meetings, publications, and activities which will permit each state association to profit by the experience of all other member associations;
- coordinate the work so duplication will be minimized;
- formulate, copyright, and publish rules of play or event conduct pertaining to interscholastic activities;
- preserve interscholastic athletic records, and the tradition and heritage of interscholastic sports;
- provide programs, services, material and assistance to state associations, high schools and individual professionals involved in the conduct and administration of interscholastic activities;
- study in general all phases of interscholastic activities and serve as a national resource for information pertaining thereto;
- identify needs and problems related to interscholastic activities and where practical provide solutions thereto; and
- promote the educational values of interscholastic activities to the nation's public.



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