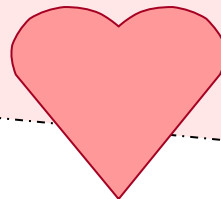




February 2003

*Rhode Island Interscholastic League
Bldg. #6 R. I. College Campus
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence, RI 02908-1991
Tel: (401) 272-9844 ♦ Fax: (401) 272-9838
www.riil.org ♦ info@riil.org*



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

We are very pleased with the success of the online scheduling and assignment program that has been fully implemented in all sports during the fall and winter sport seasons. All reports to the League continue to indicate that the system is user-friendly and very well received. This spring will complete the process of having all sports online. Last spring, the League piloted the program with fastpitch softball and baseball.

Therefore, there will be an orientation session for all spring sport directors and assignors on Thursday, February 27, 2003 at 3:30 pm at Barrington High School. This meeting is designed to provide all directors and assignors with the procedure for the online program – not only for scheduling and assigning, but more importantly, for the procedure for postponements/cancellations and rescheduling. The meeting is open to any Athletic Director who would like to attend to address any questions regarding this program.

I would like to emphasize, once again, that whenever you need to postpone/cancel a contest, you must still use the telephone. The following procedure must be followed:

- ✓ Call opposing school regarding the postponement and to schedule a make-up date/time.
- ✓ Call the officials to notify them of the postponement and to determine their eligibility for the reschedule date/time/
- ✓ Post all the appropriate information online.

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“Education is a social process ... Education is growth ... Education is not a preparation for life: Education is life itself.”

John Dewey

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BISHOP HENDRICKEN HIGH SCHOOL IN TOP 100

The national high school internet network, **iHigh.com**, has announced the **iHigh** Top 100 participating schools for the second quarter of 2002. The selections are based on website updates from October to December. Five main factors are considered: The number of stories posted, schedules entered, team rosters entered, students entered in the student database, and the amount of traffic on the site. Bishop Hendricken High School has received this honor for the 2nd quarter of Fall 2002.

One of the more exciting initiatives that **iHigh** has undertaken since its inception is the iHigh Broadcast Network (**iBN**), launched in September 2002. To date, 52 schools, radio stations, and booster clubs in 20 states have signed up to audio broadcast their school’s games and events to the world. The **iBN** has successfully broadcasted over 500 events.

If you are interested and would like more information on the **iBN** and ideas on how to promote it in your school, please contact **iHigh** representative and RIIL webmaster Craig Blanchard at 800-866-7510.

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SPORTSMANSHIP -- WE ALL HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY

By George Blasé

Assistant Executive Director

Missouri State High School Activities Association

When kids were asked in a national survey why they play sports, the overwhelming top reason was that they want to have fun. Winning, college scholarships, pleasing their parents, etc. were all a distant second or even further down the list. To promote the opportunity for kids to have fun, [RIIL] member schools’ administrators and boards of education must support the ideals of the [RIIL] Mission Statement and establish high expectations for each group involved in interscholastic athletics including the coaches, players, officials, cheerleaders, and spectators. Good sportsmanship and safety for all individuals involved must always be the highest priority at any athletic contest.

What is sportsmanship?

- 1) Sportsmanship is a demonstration of generosity and genuine concern for others. It is a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.
- 2) Sportsmanship is a blending of cheers for “your team” and applause for the “opponents,” observing the letter and spirit of the rules, and showing consideration for others.
- 3) Sportsmanship is the “golden rule” of athletics – treating others as you wish to be treated.
- 4) Sportsmanship is respect. Respect for others and yourself. Everyone associated with an athletic event – coaches, athletes, officials, cheerleaders, spectators, and school administration – play an important role in seeing that standards of sportsmanship are upheld before, during, and after a contest is played.

Each person in attendance must work to establish and demand that the following fundamentals of sportsmanship are present at each contest.

- 1) Show respect for the opponent at all times. The opponent should be treated as a guest, greeted cordially on arriving, given the best accommodations and accorded the tolerance, honesty and generosity which all humans deserve. Sportsmanship is the Golden Rule in action.
- 2) Show respect for the officials. The officials should be recognized as impartial arbitrators who are trained to do their job and who can be expected to do it to the best of their ability. Sportsmanship implies the willingness to accept and abide by the decisions of the officials.
- 3) Know, understand and appreciate the rules of the contest. A familiarity with the current rules of the game and the recognition of their necessity for a fair contest is essential. Good sportsmanship suggests the

importance of conforming to the spirit as well as the letter of the rules.

- 4) Maintain self-control at all times. A prerequisite of sportsmanship requires one to understand his own bias or prejudice and the ability to prevent the desire to win from overcoming rational behavior. A proper perspective must be maintained if the potential educational values of athletic competition are to be realized. Sportsmanship is concerned with the behavior of all involved in the game.
- 5) Recognize and appreciate skill in performance regardless of affiliation. Applause for a good performance of an opponent is a demonstration of generosity and good will. The ability to recognize quality in performance and the willingness to acknowledge it without regard to team membership is one of the most highly commendable gestures of sportsmanship.

Within the framework of these fundamentals are the responsibilities which each individual must bear:

- 1) **Coaches** – The coach bears the greatest burden of responsibility for sportsmanship. The influence of the coach upon the attitudes and behavior of the players, the student body, and the community is unequalled. In order for sportsmanship to become a reality, it is essential that the coach subscribe to the values of sportsmanship and teach its principles through word *and* action.
- 2) **Players** – The responsibility of the athletes for sportsmanship is second in importance only to the coach. Because athletes are admired and respected, they exert a great deal of influence over the actions and behavior of the spectators.
- 3) **Officials** – Competent officials are essential for a smoothly functioning and fair contest. They determine, to a great extent, the behavior of the spectators.
- 4) **Cheerleaders** – Since the cheerleaders are the chosen representatives of the student body, they have an unusual opportunity and a significant responsibility for promoting sportsmanship. Cheerleaders should be chosen who are respected by their fellow students. The most aggressive and vocal individual does not necessarily make the best cheerleader. By setting a good example, the cheerleaders can influence and help control the reactions of student spectators.
- 5) **Spectators** – Spectators and their tremendous enthusiasm for sports are indicative of their vital responsibility for sportsmanship. Their habits and reactions determine the quality of sportsmanship which reflects upon the reputation of the school that they are supporting.
- 6) **Administrators** – The administration must establish the importance of the fundamentals of sportsmanship in the minds of the entire school family and all those who associate with any of the activities of the school. The quality of sportsmanship displayed at athletic contests reflects the leadership provided by the school administration. *The administration must never allow an activity to supercede or interfere with the educational objectives of the school.*

Victory celebrations, pep rallies, and unscheduled bursts of mass enthusiasm should not be permitted to interfere with the school program. Administrators must be sure that all spectators (students *and* adults) have a definite understanding of the kinds of behavior that are acceptable and unacceptable at their school.

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TEEN [DOMESTIC] VIOLENCE

The RIIL offers the following in a continuing series regarding teen domestic violence:

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.

HOW TO TALK TO A VICTIM/ABUSER

What do you do if you suspect there's a problem?

Trust your instincts and offer to talk with the teen about what's going on in her/his 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 boy/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.

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 or her own plan for safety.

REMEMBER: *Ending the relationship will not guarantee an end to the violence.*

Adapted from: "Adults and Young People: A collaboration Toward Safety." Abused Women's Advocacy Project.

Next Month: Teens Talking to Teens – How to Help a Friend in an Abusive Relationship.

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*"To win the game is great,
To play the game is greater,
To love the game is greatest of all."
Thomas Eccleston, Jr.*

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2003 HIGH SCHOOL POLE VAULT INFORMATIONAL UPDATE

With the season about to begin it is important to know the status of the pole vault, and what NFHS and member state associations are doing to monitor the event.

Trends – In 1995, NFHS began weight verification for pole vault athletes. Coaches were required to sign off at each meet verifying that the weight of the athlete was at or below the manufacturer recommended weight rating for the pole being used. In December (2002), USA Track and Field voted to adopt the same procedure.

Trends – In 1982, NFHS passed a rule to allow a practice jump without the bar for anyone who has three consecutive

passes in the vertical jumps. USA Track and Field will entertained the same proposed rule change in December 2002.

Pole Vault Headgear – While the committee (ASTM Task Force on Head Gear) is working to establish an appropriate headgear standard for use in pole vaulting, the committee recommends that governing bodies, consumers and others desiring to use helmets immediately, use helmets that meet one of the following standards: ASTM 1492 or NOCSAE lacrosse helmet without faceguard or visor. (The helmet should be round and smooth and able to withstand multiple impacts.)

Helmets are viewed as a partial solution to reducing head injuries in pole vault. Education will help users understand the limitation of helmets rather than allow the users expectations of helmets to exceed their capability.

Length of Pole Vault Competition – Informal discussion was held concerning the length of pole vault competitions. There was concern about the amount of time to complete the pole vault event in relationship to the length of other field events during a track meet. In addition to reducing the amount of time per trial in the NFHS 2003 rule changes, it was pointed out that the efficiency of officials impacts the length of time for the pole vault event. Staff and the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee will evaluate the procedure used to administer the pole vault event.

General Status of the Event – Two states do not have pole vault; one state does not score pole vault but will have it as a non scoring event at track and field meets; one state is considering having the pole vault as a sport of its own by organizing pole vault competitions that do not impact track meets; four states require the use of helmets.

Vault Participation – Female vaulters seem to be increasing although the official number of female vaulters has not been verified.

Educational Opportunities – NIAAA's first electronic newsletter focused on pole vault. The letter provided information on pole vault rule changes, upcoming pole vault summits and a checklist for inspecting pole vault venues. Memos were sent to membership with ASTM helmet recommendations.



In addition, PowerPoint in Track and Field was introduced last year, with special emphasis given to pole vault. A PowerPoint will now be available annually.

Pole vault skills and safety certification was made available beginning last December (2002) online at www.Skyjumper.com. The site offers a curriculum including NFHS rules, risk minimization, energy equation in pole vaulting, basic skills and progression for beginning coaches and vaulters, and advanced objectives and techniques for experienced vaulters.

Information on www.polevaulteducation.com, a pole vault network and chat room, was distributed to member state associations during the summer meeting in June-July 2002. The Big Ten hosted a Pole Vault Satellite Conference on December 9, 2002. The conference was for head coaches and vaulters. Each Big Ten school is being required to conduct a clinic on pole vault this season. The curriculum is for high school and college vaulters and coaches.

For more information, contact the League office, 272-9844, or Bob Littlefield, Director of Boys and Girls Outdoor Track, 683-8183.



SUMMARY OF MEETING

The following is from January 27, 2003 meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics.

The January meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics was called to order at 1:45 pm.

Mr. Murano chaired the beginning of the proceedings, inasmuch as Mrs. Crowley had a prior commitment necessitating her tardiness.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director's Report from the December 16, 2002 meeting was approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's Report was approved. It was reported that three (3) member schools had not yet paid their respective 2002-2003 RIIL Dues and Fees, and that the administrators of those schools would be coming in later in this meeting for Show Cause Hearings.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Lynch referred to several letters, memoranda and publications that were placed in each member's folder or filed in the League office.

VOLLEYBALL

**Ms. Elaine Botelho
Mr. Donald Kavanagh**

The issue of changing the boys' volleyball season from fall to spring was tabled to the February meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics.

In other business, Ms. Botelho reported that the 2002-2003 girls' volleyball schedule has been sent to all schools and that the Coaches Interpretation Meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 5th at 6:30 pm in the League office.

ARTICLE 7, SECTION 7 – NON-SCHOOL COMPETITION

Mr. Kavanagh, Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee formed to review the proposed changes to this rule, reported that a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee was held on Thursday, January 23, 2003. Mr. Kavanagh stated that response to the

survey was low and that not enough input was obtained to consider the proposed changes.

Upon further discussion, it was agreed that a second survey be sent to all schools and that it include amended language to the proposal.

REVIEW OF TRANSFER RULE

Mr. Lynch addressed the Transfer Rule as it applies to student-athletes who transfer from a parochial/private school to a public school *with* a change of address. In accordance with the existing rule, said student-athlete would be subject to the Transfer Rule; i.e., ineligible for 50% of the (new) school's League season in any/all sports s/he participated in at the varsity level at his/her previous school. Although a student in this situation does change residence, s/he may continue to attend the parochial/private school inasmuch as there are no 'district' limitations.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics voted to table this matter for further review and discussion at the February meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics.

GYMNASTICS

Mr. Lynch reported that Warwick Veterans H.S. submitted a letter requesting permission to enter the RIIL gymnastics program as a team. They had previously declared individual participation. This request was granted.

Mr. Lynch also reported that Mt. Pleasant H.S. withdrew from the RIIL gymnastics program as a result of an insufficient number of students to support the program at the school. Mr. Lynch will send a letter to the Principal of Mt. Pleasant H.S. outlining the penalties for withdrawing from a sport.

WINTER SPORTS ISSUES

- **Hockey**

Daniel Sheehan, Director, reported that there is presently a problem with the ice at the Thayer Arena that may necessitate re-scheduling games to other rinks. The management of Thayer Arena will contact Mr. Sheehan to apprise him of the situation.

- **Basketball**

Gerald Foley, Director, reported that the season is progressing well. There is a possibility that the boys' basketball quarterfinal and semifinal games may be held at the Warwick Campus of the Community College of Rhode Island, rather than at the Lincoln Campus, which has been the practice in past years. CCRI has installed a new wooden floor at the Knight Campus (Warwick) and has offered the RIIL a choice of hosting the boys basketball quarterfinal and semifinal games at either the Flanagan (Lincoln) or Knight (Warwick) campuses.

- **Swimming**

Kenneth Reall, Director, reported that there is a conflict with pool time at Brown University which will necessitate a change in the schedule for the boys and girls championship trials and finals. The trials will not be held

on Saturday, February 15th at 3:00 pm instead of the originally scheduled 9:00 am starting time. The finals will be held on Sunday, February 16th at 12:00 noon instead of the previously scheduled 2:00 pm starting time.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics voted 8-2 to impose a \$100.00 fine against Coventry High School.

SPRING SPORTS ISSUES

- **Boys' Tennis**

Mr. Lynch reported on the following requests for movement in the present alignment: East Providence H.S. requested to move up to Class A from Class B – approved; Chariho H.S. requested to move down to Class B from Class A – approved. Ponaganset H.S. also requested to move down to Class B from Class A – denied. Chariho's request was approved based on their last season's (losing) record and because East Providence H.S. requested a move up, thereby creating a "flip-flop" in classes. Ponaganset H.S. will be advised that their request will be considered next year when the new four-year alignment is developed.

- **Baseball**

Mr. Lynch reported on a new NFHS helmet rule for high school baseball catchers. The new rule requires catchers to wear helmets with masks and ear flaps. Inasmuch as the RIIL baseball program follows American League Rules and not the NFHS rules, the new helmet rule will not be adopted at this time.

- **Softball**

Mr. Lynch reported on a request from Michael Traficante, Director of Athletics for Cranston East and Cranston West. Mr. Traficante was seeking approval to form a cooperative fastpitch softball team comprised of students from both Cranston East and Cranston West. Although each school presently supports its own slowpitch softball team, the schools may not have enough students to support individual teams in fastpitch softball. Mr. Traficante's proposal stated that the co-op team, if approved, would schedule non-league games versus RIIL junior varsity teams.

On a motion made and seconded, the Principals' Committee on Athletics voted 9-1 to deny the request.

The issue of cooperative teams for all sports was tabled for further review and discussion at the February meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics.

HEARING

Coventry High School – Foreign Exchange Student

Representing Coventry High School at this hearing were Charles Nelson, Principal; Clem Soscia, Director of Athletics; and George Egan, Director of Guidance and Head Hockey Coach.

This hearing was held to discuss the circumstances surrounding Coventry High School playing a Foreign Exchange Student on the school's varsity hockey team prior to receiving an eligibility ruling from the RIIL.

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 January meeting of the Principals' Committee on Athletics was adjourned at 4:45 pm

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***Let it snow ...
Let it snow ...
Let it snow!***