



# media information



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## MHSAA Launches Coaches Advancement Program

**EAST LANSING, Mich. – Sept. 1 –** Recognizing that the primary delivery system of school sports is the coach, the Michigan High School Athletic Association is retooling its approach to ongoing efforts to educate coaches, and encouraging member schools to enroll their coaches in the organization's Coaches Advancement Program.

The MHSAA has long been involved in coaches education programming, and has been nationally recognized for those efforts – but the redesign of the program is aimed at reaching more coaches in a more user-friendly manner.

Since its inception in the late 1980s addressing a need to provide primarily non-faculty coaches with lessons beyond the X's and O's of their sport, the old Program of Athletic Coaches Education reached between 600 and 1,000 individuals annually. It is estimated that there are over 30,000 people coaching in high school and junior high/middle school sports in Michigan; and the turnover in the coaching ranks grows each year.

“We require that our teachers be involved in continuing education, it's only natural that we expect the same of our teacher-coaches,” said John E. “Jack” Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. “We must recognize that the delivery system of almost all that is good in school sports, and a lot of what can be bad, is the coach. We cannot possibly spend too much time or money on coaches education.”

Roberts is making the Association's emphasis on education for coaches, athletic administrators and game officials rank behind its primary tasks of assisting schools with their day-to-day administrative tasks, conducting postseason tournaments and annually registering over 12,000 officials. The push to have coaches become better educated comes with one goal in mind.

“We must get America to judge school sports by different criteria than sports on all other levels and by all other sponsors,” Roberts says. “If competitive athletics are to have – and deserve to have – a place in schools, and if school sports is to have a place in society, we must pursue this idea with more focus and passion and achieved with fewer exceptions and excuses.

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## **2-2-2 – Coaches Advancement Program**

“Educational athletics must be judged by participation numbers more than won-loss percentages; by academic scholarship in school, not athletic scholarships to college; by sportsmanship rather than gamesmanship; by life lessons like hard work and teamwork, discipline and dedication, leadership and citizenship.

“The best way to advance this idea is for every school district and coaches association to provide voluntarily to every coach, every year, the kind of training necessary to instill those values so they may be passed on to student-athletes and others,” Roberts continued. “The real value of our Coaches Advancement Program is that it will tend to produce life coaches, and life coaches tend to redefine the meaning of success in school sports.”

The Coaches Advancement Program will have six levels of training, each level taking about six hours of classroom time to complete. The first level of the program emphasizes the philosophy of school sports and its rules and regulations, the role of the coach as a teacher, and sports medicine and first aid skills. Other levels of the program get into more communication and instruction skills, legal responsibilities, coaching psychology, working with parents, strength and conditioning, administrative responsibilities, conflict resolution, advanced motivational techniques and current issues in educational athletics.

After completing 12 hours in the Coaching Advancement Program, an individual receives a certification level that progresses with each additional 6 hours of education. Roberts said the way the program is being taught is more likely to maintain an individual’s interest.

“In our old system, we tried to teach so much, so fast, and in a manner which people taking the courses walked out of there tired and intimidated – not just about the class, but about coaching! We overwhelmed them,” Roberts said. “The restructuring of the coaches education program is more interactive than lecture driven. We discuss the philosophies of school sports and the rules. Our participants walk out of these sessions energized.”

The MHSAA has continued its relationship with the Youth Sports Institute at Michigan State University in restructuring the Coaches Advancement Program. “The Youth Sports Institute and its staff continues to be a valuable resource in the development of the curriculum, the delivery of the curriculum and the follow-up which is necessary.”

The follow-up treatment a CAP participant receives after completing a level of the program is substantial. Participants receive liability insurance in the amount of \$1 million per occurrence of their coaching duties for their school team during the interscholastic season for the school year in which the coach

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completes a level of CAP and for the following year. An electronic newsletter is provided six times a year to those who complete six hours of training, providing pertinent articles to assist them in their daily coaching duties. Coaches who also complete a six-hour session of CAP can also receive Continuing Education Credits to be used to renew selected certificates from the Michigan Department of Education. Some school districts are offering entire coaching staffs the opportunity to participate in a day-long CAP program for professional development purposes.

Roberts says that the level of education that a coach can achieve through CAP will better benefit student-athletes.

“A government mandate that coaches be certified in sports safety training is nice in theory, but is not nearly enough training for coaches and would interfere with schools’ efforts to recruit and properly train coaches. Conventions by coaches associations that focus only on the X’s and O’s are fine in theory but miss the point that what gets coaches fired in high school sports is rarely the technical and tactical, but far more often is the intangible, like motivating young people and dealing with their parents.

“This idea requires a big effort,” Roberts said. “The MHSAA is making this effort through the redesign of its coaches education program to better meet the needs of coaches and especially the needs of the student-athletes they mentor.”

More information about the Coaches Advancement Program, including a schedule and registration form, can be found on the home page of the MHSAA Web site ([mhsaa.com](http://mhsaa.com)) by clicking on Coaches.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,500 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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**MEDIA ADVISORY – To learn more about the Coaches Advancement Program and the role of coaches in educational athletics, members of the media are invited to take part in a CAP session at no charge. Contact John Johnson at the MHSAA if you are interested.**

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