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MHSAA Provides Steroid Educational Resources & Perspective Message To Member Schools

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Aug. 11 – Responding to the recent attention given to the topic of anabolic steroids in sports, the Michigan High School Athletic Association has sent its member schools a variety of educational resources on the topic in time for the upcoming school year.

But in sending the educational materials to its schools, the MHSAA is also sending a message to put this issue in perspective.

The materials include samples of posters and brochures, as well as a DVD with one message for coaches and student-athletes, and a second message for parents, produced by the National Federation of State High School Associations. Among those featured in the video is former Jackson Parkside High School standout Tony Dungy, now the head coach of the Indianapolis Colts of the National Football League.

The video messages are preceded by a greeting from MHSAA Executive Director John E. “Jack” Roberts, who urges viewers to take a larger view of where the use of steroids by high school students fits in the lists of threats to young people.

“Events on other levels of sports have led to the interscholastic athletic community to address the issue of steroids. In reality, steroids are far down the list of problems facing schools,” Roberts says. “However, this topic has generated media headlines, and therefore even if steroids are a minor health and safety issue to our students, we now have to deal with the public perception that we have an epidemic on our hands, and it would not be prudent to be uninvolved.

“However, let’s keep this in perspective. This is not the biggest problem in school sports, and it’s certainly not an epidemic. Nearly twice as many students used steroids in 1988 as they do today, and many users were non-athletes or athletes using for the first time after their high school playing days were over. We also need to remember that there are real, more threatening, near-epidemic health problems affecting our students that we must not lose sight of -- tobacco, alcohol, recreational drugs, obesity and sexually-transmitted diseases – all which have a bigger impact on the lives of our young people.

(more)

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“We’re pleased to help provide these resources to our schools, but we must keep this issue in perspective so that in becoming better informed, we do not contribute to the misconceptions regarding the scope of steroid use in schools,” Roberts continued. “As people consider this issue, we need to reflect on its root cause – an obsession to excel by any means. That root cause is the source of much of what threatens school sports. Let’s use the steroid issue as the impetus to attack the greater problem, which is that many people have forgotten – or never known – the pure purpose of school sports. It’s education. It’s to assist scholarship in high school, not athletic scholarships to college. It’s sportsmanship, not gamesmanship.

“Let’s not allow school sports to be evaluated by the standards of other sports. Our emphasis must not be on winning at any cost, but learning at every opportunity.”

The videos, as well as the posters and brochures sent to schools, can be viewed on the Coaches page of the MHSAA Web site – mhsaa.com – under the Health & Safety heading. The posters and brochures will soon be available for ordering through the NFHS. DVD’s are available through the MHSAA office.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,800 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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