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## Dark Shadows

Are Community Youth Programs Overshadowing School Sports Values?

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# Cover Story: Moving School Sports Back to Limelight



**4** At its best, school sports provides both forum and foundation for students to embark on successful endeavors as they enter adulthood. Today’s challenge is to promote educational athletics amidst the proliferation of alternative sport opportunities.

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## The Vault – 18

### Net Zero

Goals were a premium in 2005, as all five MHSAA Girls Soccer Finals were decided by shutouts.



## MHSAA News – 25

### A Place to Call Home

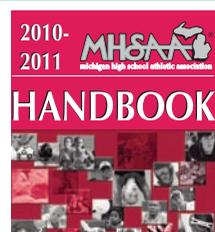
The Boys and Girls Basketball Semifinals and Finals will stay at Michigan State University’s Breslin Center at least through 2017.



## Regulations Review – 38

### We Don’t Do Everything

MHSAA Rules and Regulations cover a wide variety of circumstances. That said, there are matters that need to be handled locally as well.



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## We Gotta Get This Right



Last fall, a Thomas Friedman editorial first appeared in *The New York Times* under the title, “Got to Get This Right.” It was another of Friedman’s pleadings that President Obama return to his campaign themes and promises. Worried that much of the president’s first two years had been lost to compromise, Friedman returned to his frequent theme that our nation’s elected leader needed to articulate a national narrative.

Of course, the three-time Pulitzer Prize winning Friedman is gifted in placing complicated issues into compelling narrative (*From Beirut to Jerusalem; The World is Flat; Hot, Flat and Crowded*, and others); and he might be asking too much even of the President. But let’s think about his advice and our own work – which is complicated to be sure, but nothing like our President’s

“To Do” list.

Like our country, which is at a crossroads on many issues – health care, the environment, foreign military entanglements, a jobless economic recovery, Social Security’s solvency – the institution of educational athletics is at a crossroads of several critically important intersecting trends.

We focused on economic issues in the Spring 2010 *benchmarks*, on issues of technology last fall, and on the fragmentation of public education this past winter. This current issue focuses on non-school sports effects on interscholastic athletics.

One of the rockiest roads leading to this dangerous intersection is our state’s poor economy and its effect on schools. As a result of financial pressures, school sports are tending to look more and more like community sports programs:

- Participants more frequently must bear the cost not just for pricey equipment for golf, skiing, tennis and ice hockey, but also for uniforms and more basic equipment and supplies.
- Participants more frequently must transport themselves both to and from contests.
- Fundraisers are more commonplace, and more often being used not just for program extras but for the basics.
- Coaches more frequently are unpaid, non-school personnel.

The danger is that as school sports tend to be operated more and more like non-school sports, more and more people will wonder why schools are spending time and money duplicating community youth sports programs.

Unless school sports are different – and obviously so – they may be viewed as expendable. And when that occurs, schools will have lost a tool for reaching and motivating young people to stay in school, like school and do better in school, as well as a tool for communicating with and engaging the public in the school’s broader activities and needs.

If sports are to continue to have a future in schools, the current leadership of school sports has got to get this right, and get it right **now**. We must convey a compelling narrative about the current role of school sports and the consequences to schools and communities which operate without a broad, deep and **different** interscholastic athletic program.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John E. Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John E. “Jack” Roberts  
MHSAA Executive Director

### Where Did It Go?

Mainstays from the MHSAA *Bulletin* such as Representative Council and Executive Committee minutes are still accessible to our member schools and the general public at MHSAA.com from Schools/ Administrators. Sport-specific minutes, tournament information and brackets can all be found under the sport pages at MHSAA.com. Other MHSAA operational matters previously featured in the *Bulletin* will appear toward the back of each *benchmarks* issue in our “business” section.

# Jumping Through Hoops *Scheduling hurts girls basketball attendance*

The scheduling of girls basketball games around the state this winter was the subject of two MHSAA.com "From the Director Blogs," eliciting a number of responses. We invite you to check out the blog from our home page each Tuesday and Friday.

This whole thing is getting so out of control. It is hurting athletic department budgets the worst. I officiate three to four high school games a week and the gyms are nearly empty for girls games and barely half-full for a decent boys matchup.

We are punishing the masses and pandering to the few.

– Tim Mowry

.....

I have been really up in arms about this topic over the past few years. I recently retired from teaching, but even when I was at the school, I had trouble finding out when games were because of this type of scheduling.

Now that I'm not in the school every day, I have a real fight on my hands to keep up with the schedule so I can go to games. At a school board meeting two years ago the AD reported that gate receipts were down 45 percent. No wonder! No one knows when the games are!

– R.C. Stone

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However it is too late to complain about it as the decisions are made and we have to abide by them. I do not think someone should force Athletic Directors to schedule when the girls/boys play their games especially in the same day or night. That is going too far. Athletic budgets are shrinking as it is because we have so many games per week and the economy, don't add insult to injury please.

– Gary Meredith

***"All leagues need to look at these issues and determine solid and valid solutions based on what works for them and not make policy based on what won't get them sued."***

I have never understood why Saturday's have not been utilized more for basketball scheduling. Almost every other sport uses Saturday's on a regular basis. Because we schedule boys and girls on the same nights in our part of the state, providing experienced and qualified officials has been an on-going issue. All leagues need to look at these issues and determine solid and valid solutions based on what works for them and not make policy based on what won't get them sued.

– Kent Graves

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Hopefully school districts will look at their scheduling, research the data and reach a sensible solution to the problem of when to schedule a boys basketball game and when to schedule a girls basketball game. What should be looked at first is how scheduling affects the participants. Cost will always be an issue. Looking at different ways to schedule, and trying different ways to schedule should be tried.

–Tom Markowski

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*Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan Executive Director Tom Hursey also penned an article regarding the current scheduling and drew the following responses.*

I coached girls for 12 years and boys for 36, and the girls programs have to stop trying to tie in to the boys. It is not doing much for either gender and bringing both programs down. We play boys and girls triple-headers at opposite sites on Tuesdays and Fridays, and that is about the best we can hope for. We can't even consider boys and girls doubleheaders or opposite days with our gym situations. There is no time for practice or games for all six basketball teams, wrestling, cheer, pom, gymnastics, etc. No wonder all of the state is having problems with this.

– Robert Brodie  
Coach  
Salem

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It's embarrassing to watch people leave en masse when the boys game is over. They've got to see what an injustice this is for the girls programs and for the betterment of girls basketball as a whole.

Also, of the 10 Class B schools in our league, three schools have dropped their freshmen girls teams due to lack of numbers and some JV squads are extremely small.

– Marc Throop  
Director of Athletics  
Richland Gull Lake

***Shots on Goal*** offers readers a forum for feedback. Submit your opinions, share your experiences or offer suggestions to [benchmarks@mhsaa.com](mailto:benchmarks@mhsaa.com). Be sure to visit MHSAA.com for MHSAA Executive Director Jack Roberts' twice-weekly blogs. Comments are encouraged, and may also appear here in ***Shots on Goal***.

# Time to Lend a Hand



**As youth and community sports become increasingly prevalent, it's time for schools to reach out and instill values and perspectives before they are lost.**

**T**iming, as the age-old saying goes, is everything. It can provide great opportunity; it can yield challenging moments. In this case, it did both. This very article began as idle-time ponderings involving various roles in my professional and personal endeavors. Before I knew it, the MHSAA had given me this unique opportunity, and – trust me – it's been challenging.

The truth is, I was more confused than at any point of my life searching for the ultimate value of athletic participation last fall when I listened to Jack Roberts' address at one of the annual MHSAA Update Meetings. He reminded all of us that we should be delivering "the message of high school sports" at every opportunity. I found myself waiting for Jack to divulge the secret ingredient in that recipe, but it never came.

I left the meeting with more questions than answers, and they began to infiltrate my mind on the drive back. What is the purpose of high school sports? Why do we invest so much time? Why are we so passionate about our athletic teams? Why do I even need to ask these questions? It should be as obvious to all of us, shouldn't it?

I began to reflect on my youth sport experiences, from my first days of T-ball up to my high school career. Rarely did my thoughts actually center on the results of a contest, but more on the challenges and joys of athletics.

Shortly after returning to the office following that Update meeting, I contacted Jack to offer my views of the high school mission and seek feedback, reinforcement and advice. What I got was an invitation to lunch, and this forum to share my experiences in the dual realms of community-based athletics and interscholastic athletics.

Without recapping my every athletic endeavor between the T-ball glory years and now, suffice it to say my life was filled with enough good athletic memories that I'd make a career of it, landing at my current position as district athletic director for Walled Lake Community Schools. My career in education spans 23 years, including 13 years in athletic administration. I also have been a youth sports coach for six years, board member for a youth football organization and board member of a youth baseball organization.

This story aims to offer a bit of perspective through my experiences; how one athletic world has affected the other, and how we might attempt to pump some of the school sport values into community programs.

— Brian Swinehart  
District Athletic Director, Walled Lake Community Schools

**S**tumbling through the process of writing this article, I have found clarity in purpose and vision for my dual role in high school and youth sports. Putting into words the mission of high school sports is a struggle; but, when in the midst of it, it becomes perfectly clear.

Take a trip to a high school swim meet where the boys and girls scream and cheer on their teams with never a thought of negative chant, even though teammates and opponents crowd the deck shoulder-to-shoulder. Hang out at the finish line of a cross country meet where the athletes push themselves beyond what they thought their bodies could endure. As they walk through the chute, runners are using their hands to congratulate one another rather than to pound their own chests. Ever notice that every cheerleader looks exactly the same during competition? You will never see one cheerleader with a different color headband or ribbon. It's all about the team. Scholastic bowling teams from neighboring schools practice together at the same house every day; and then root for each other during competition. Take a stroll down the street for a tennis or golf match where athletes are forced by the culture of their sport to be honest on all rules.

Somehow, the best of school sports just *feels* good.

Youth sports have become a business in many communities, past the days of a volunteer coach who's involved only because he or she loves to work with kids. It is a multi-million dollar business, where adults make livings off children playing sports. High school-affiliated youth sports teams have also taken on a new role in communities.

Greg Michaels, athletic administrator for Lakeland High School has a 7-year-old son playing travel hockey. "I am amazed at how youth sports can define the culture of a community. I watch a game in our home arena I was amazed how well an opposing community can develop such strong traditions, points of pride that can shape their community support from age 7 through high school."

Yet, the primary emphasis in non-school youth sports more often is focused on individual development with little regard for the team and development of team concepts. Such myopic grassroots development is ripe for conflicting goals and objectives when those kids are turned over to the high school coaches and administrators.

"Many times, private teams are composed of kids and families from various communities and schools with only the sport and their desire to develop their child as a common bond," said Charles Froning, assistant principal and athletic director at Walled Lake Northern High School. "Conversely, in a school, kids and families and coaches share the school, its values, its educational offerings and its mascot as a commonality. School athletics have a much more natural platform to teach character and values such as integrity, honesty, hard work,

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and dedication to a larger group, a larger cause. The high school team takes a more developmental approach; this educational 'whole child' approach is what we must sell in order to maximize the educational experience for our athletes."

Chuck Gordon, retired football coach at Westland John Glenn High School echoed, "If I could get kids, coaches and parents to believe it was about the team I knew we could be successful. But when any one of these groups started to center on themselves, I knew we would have problems.

"I always felt that the highest compliment a player could earn in his high school career was that he or she was a great teammate," Gordon continued. "The worst thing that could happen was for an athlete to be all-state and not be respected by teammates."

### ALIGNING THE MESSAGE

*During the summer I was coaching my son's baseball team made up a 9 and 10-year-olds. We were one win away from making it to Championship Day. I huddled the parents and kids together before the game to tell them that no matter what, our season was a success because we had a lot of fun and learned a lot about baseball. Our season was not going to be measured by wins and losses, more specifically this one game. So, relax have fun and enjoy this moment. I went on to use a line I had heard from an old coach... "No matter what we do today, your parents will still love you."*

*The coach on the other side was giving his best Knute Rockne speech trying to pump up his team in preparation for the big game: "You have a chance to do something special. Something 12 other teams wish they could do. This why we have played the entire season."*

Arriving at my office following the October MHSAA Update Meeting, I began to search the internet to find my answers. I read research articles on the values of athletics. I scoured the MHSAA Website, reading Jack's articles and blogs to determine what message I should be sharing. I read so many articles, blogs and research papers that I

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reached the point of paralysis by analysis. I was too confused.

Much like the afternoon on the ball diamond last summer, it dawned on me that various groups are shouting a different message. Parents, officials, high school coaches, AAU coaches, travel coaches, premier coaches, athletes, administrators, school board members, youth sports member and any sport organization you can think of have a different message to deliver.

Outside influences are having a pronounced affect on families entering into our school athletic programs and we need to get everyone on the same page. In education, we talk about alignment. We need to have alignment of our curriculum (what is being taught), instruction (how it is being taught) and assessment (how learning is measured). If these three things are not aligned, learning is adversely impacted.

Applying that educational model to athletics, the key components are our students, parents, coaches and administration. These interest groups must all buy into what is being taught, how it is being taught, and how success is measured. If the groups are not all trying to build the same core values for our athletic teams, problems will take root.

With that idea in mind (school sports are, after all, educational athletics), I began the charge to get all of our groups on the same page and established the Walled Lake Athletic Advisory Council (WLAAC). The first task was to determine what the community valued in athletics and then develop a Walled Lake Athletic Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values. The goal is to provide a clear purpose, vision, and focus for the athletic programs in the Walled Lake Consolidated School District. Furthermore, it will help to ensure that parents, students, coaches, administrators, and the communities have a common understanding of our mission. It also serves as a framework to guide future decisions, aids in evaluating and supporting programs and provides a measure for success of sports programs beyond wins and losses.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

Most often, the first athletic experiences for future students take place outside the school structure. Building relationships with the messengers will help schools align the message.

My experiences in non-school youth sports reveal some alignment issues which may be prevalent in other areas of the state as well. What parents view as

the value of sports and why children begin to play sports in the first place are not aligned. Many parents view athletics as a way to measure their child against their friends' children. In most cases, the children see sports as a way to play and build friendships.

"We need to educate our parents regarding our expectations and goals within our athletic programs," said Greg Riley, assistant principal and athletic director at Walled Lake Central. "Varsity programs have different goals than freshman and middle school programs. Parents coming from a club where they have been told their child was on an elite 14-year-old team may be frustrated when the student doesn't make varsity, or our values do not line up with what they have experienced at the local club."

***"Parents coming from a club where they have been told their child was on an elite 14-year-old team may be frustrated when the student doesn't make varsity, or our values do not line up with what they have experienced at the local club."***

This January, we conducted a survey of all stakeholders to establish the core values in the Walled Lake district. With more than 1,000 responses, we were able to identify the core values for our athletic department. Core values are those worthwhile traits and qualities that reflect the highest priorities in our athletic programs,

and are now the driving force behind our athletic department. As the results were compared, it is interesting to note that our four groups all shared the same values ; values which, research shows, come from athletic participation: Teamwork, Self-Worth, Commitment, Responsibility, Hard Work, Sportsmanship, Character and Discipline.

We also took it a step further and defined our core values for the four stakeholder groups as follows:

**Coaches:** Committed & Motivated, Ethical & High Integrity, Knowledgeable, Mentors, Organized, Caring, Respectful and Professional.

**Students:** Good Student, Team Player, Role Models / Mentor, Dedicated, Honest, Goal Oriented, Competitive, Passionate and Good Leader.

**Parents:** Supportive, Positive example Let the coaches coach, Involved in program, Knows Appropriate Boundaries, Talk Constructively, Relax & Enjoy Season, Priority with team not child.

**Administrators:** Supportive, Values all sports, Informed, Good Communicators, Good Listener, Organized, Leader and Honest.

The WLAAC—composed of students, coaches, parents, administrators and community members – is now assigned to use these core values to develop a mission and vision for our district. These vital components will be employed to evaluate and hire coaches, measure success and communicate with parents.

The final step is the most critical: holding coaches, parents, athletes and administrators to these standards.

## REVERSING THE CURRENT

*The Walled Lake Northern bowling team had just lost a hard-fought match to Walled Lake Central, allowing Central to advance to the championship match. Instead of picking up their equipment and leaving, Northern team members stayed to support their crosstown rival. The parent of a Northern bowler emailed the following account:*

*“ALL Walled Lake parents remained riveted to their seats and cheered WLC on. WLC’s players were also top-notch in how they interacted with our boys while they continued to compete. Even though WLN was out of the competition, they high fived ‘our’ boys after every ball, right along with their own teammates. It was an amazing experience to behold! It was a healthy and spirited competition at its best and it was incredibly character-building for all of these young men. Having come from a private school setting, I am overwhelmed and impressed by Walled Lake’s Bowling Program.”*

The MHSAA lists four core values as the foundation of school-based athletics in Michigan: Sportsmanship, Scholarship, Safety and Scope. When examples such as the one above present themselves, we need to recognize and promote such occurrences; even more so than victories and championships.

## CURVE BALL

Life lessons learned through sports are invaluable. A recent study, however, questions what those lessons are. For example, almost half of the study sample believed it permissible for a coach to order pitchers to throw at opposing hitters.



The more we promote such commendable behavior, the more students know what to expect – and what is expected – when they enter our hallways, no matter what their athletic background is. Walled Lake is in the planning stages of developing district awards that reflect proper values; to honor, reward and praise those individuals and teams that demonstrate desired traits.

The key is making that first impression a good one, and carrying the torch from there. We have much work to do in our own buildings first, and then we can reach out to our communities.

A recent study by the Josephson Institute, Center for Youth Ethics, revealed that athletics could be teaching our children the wrong values. The study indicated that athletics is teaching our children how to cheat, cut corners and show poor

sportsmanship. In fact, 43 percent of boys felt it is ok to trash-talk or showboat during games; 48 percent of baseball players felt it was OK for a coach to order his pitcher to throw at an opposing batter in retaliation. The report says that “For most kids, sports promotes, rather than discourages, cheating.” Forty-three percent of boys thought it was okay for a coach to teach techniques that were against the rules that were hard for officials to detect. The rate was much lower in girls, only 22 percent, but still too high.

Athletes will find any way to justify their poor sportsmanship. They will tell themselves that they had to protect their team or they did not break the rules, they were just bending them; If you’re not cheating you’re not competing; it’s not a penalty if the ref doesn’t call it. And, they are learning it from those ahead of them and perpetuating the actions. As school administrators, it’s time to step in.

“As someone very close to scholastic athletics, I can say these core values are at times not only forgotten, but ignored. ‘Win-at-all-costs’ is not a substitute for doing things the right way,” states Robert Czech, an MHSAA registered official who has seen scholastic and community athletics for more than 40 years as a coach, official and player.

“Many parents and students are driven to non-scholastic activities because what we often do is not what we preach. Everyone involved in school sports – coaches, players, administrators and officials – must consistently practice our core values.”

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Rick Jones, principal at North Farmington High School adds, “Kids have not changed much in my 40-plus years of education. They want to be good. They want somebody to care about them. They want to belong. What has changed has been talk radio, ESPN and a era of self-promotion.

“We need to coach the arrogance out of sports. Even when we were undefeated, I never permitted my teams to show up an opponent. We were never going to put our fingers in the air saying, ‘We’re No. 1.’”

Long-time North Farmington High School basketball coach Tom Negoshian is even more direct: “Kids will do stupid things. It’s how the adults respond that is important.”

## THE GAMEPLAN

“Schools can’t teach the principles of team over individual until long after students have participated in Little League, travel and club seasons or AAI; the child must experience being a part of something bigger than themselves – something more valuable than their own success,” said Czech.

That being the case, school personnel need to reach out to community groups at a much earlier age than ever before to instill the desired values of athletics. Increasingly, school districts are striking up valuable partnerships – or at the very least, relationships – with community programs.

Waterford District Athletic Director Rick Dorn is one administrator who has begun the foray into community athletics. “We have started to run our own 6th-grade basketball program in Waterford. It’s been a positive experience to have our high school coaches working with the youth coaches.”

Additionally, he has summoned local high school and college baseball coaches to put together a clinic for coaches of all levels in the Waterford area.

Similar programs are being utilized in Northville and Huron Valley where high school coaches are becoming involved in various youth sports.

“We have a very strong programs in Huron Valley which tie the youth leagues into the high school program,” said Jeffrey Muck, CPRP, Director of Recreation and Community. “We run recreational leagues, travel teams, and clinics that are supported by four varsity coaches.”

In Walled Lake, baseball and football coaches are working with community

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*“We need to coach the arrogance out of sports. Even when we were undefeated, I never permitted my teams to show up an opponent. We were never going to put our fingers in the air saying, ‘We’re No. 1.’”*

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house and travel coaches and players. Instruction goes beyond fundamentals of the game, emphasizing the proper approach, how to carry themselves, how to communicate with an official, the important off being a good student and more.

Walled Lake is fortunate to have an extensive community education program with many athletic offerings, run by Jim Calhoun, CYSA Supervisor, Recreation and Enrichment. Calhoun is an enthusiastic proponent of aligning the philosophy and mission of educational athletics with youth sports programs,

“Many youth coaches look at stopwatches to evaluate. I look at participation and smiles to evaluate my programs,” said Calhoun. “It’s an experience that I want to make a positive one for children. Other travel programs are fish hatcheries. They throw out the small fish to get a bigger one. Our mission will not permit that. I started the Lacrosse program to help out high school programs. I now have 3rd, 4th and 5th-graders coming from everywhere. Parents have enjoyed our approach. Other programs filter out kids; we teach them about life.”

The more that community and educational ath-

letic administrators can share common goals, the greater chance the end result will benefit student-athletes. Jones seizes the opportunity to spread the word, and encourages others to do the same.

“People in my position have to articulate the values and message,” Jones said. “It’s important to tell the story...tell the story... tell the story about our values and what we are about in high school sports. The lights on the scoreboard will be off before we exit the field, but the stuff that matters – the memories and lessons you learn on the field – will last a lifetime.”

It’s up to schools to shape that curriculum and invite all to teach it.

## REWARD VS AWARD?

Glitzy trophies nearly half the size of participants can attract and motivate parents and their children. But aren’t the *rewards* of participation greater than *awards*?



## Parenting Tips . . . From the Fields and Courts

Coaches often lament the most difficult aspect of coaching is interacting with parents. There is nothing new about a parent's impression that their child is the next (fill in the appropriate superstar). What is becoming more prevalent is the growing knee-jerk decision to yank their kid off a team, switch schools or simply reject the whole interscholastic sports experience.

To alleviate some of these anxieties, it is important that school sports administrators educate parents at every opportunity as to our true mission in athletics. All coaches should have a preseason parents meeting with a set agenda; discuss the approach, philosophy and expectations to build a common understanding.

As I talk to parents when they ask me what they should do about their child's playing time, I tell them, "Love and support them." I usually get a blank stare in return. I ask if the amount of playing time a child gets changes how much they love their child. Of course the answer is, "No". If we get too caught up in all of the other aspects of athletics we will miss out on a tremendous opportunity to build a relationship with our children.

One of the hardest things for us to do as parents is to let go of our children. In athletics it's important to 'give up' parenting for those few hours and let them be coached. Dr. Dave Barry, assistant superintendent for Walled Lake Consolidated Schools remarked that, "The most important lesson that parents can teach their children is how to get along without them."

As parents we want desperately to make the world a better place for our children, but facing a little hardship helps build character. More importantly, they need to learn how to overcome setbacks they will face. Athletics is a great environment to learn how to deal with adversity.

We need to impress upon community programs that sports is simply one small facet of a student's life which can help foster success. Only for a minuscule percentage of the most gifted will sports ever supply a means for living.

"What coaches and parents need to realize is that this is not their season; it is the child's season," said Barry.

### No Knowledge Can Be Good Knowledge

Feel free to share this personal story:

My son wanted to try out for soccer, so we found an introductory program and he loved it. I thought this was great. Then it hit me. What he loved the most was that I knew nothing about soccer. It wasn't like baseball and basketball where I would tell him what I thought. On the ride home, we didn't talk a word about soccer. There was no conflicting demands confusing him; the coach telling him one thing, and me suggesting another. It was just the two of us: father and son.

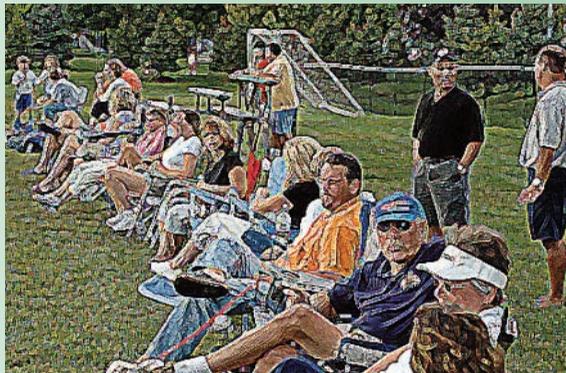
While working on the article, I read this to my son and asked if my assessment was accurate. He smiled, laughed and said, "Yeah, it's true."

It's true at the high school level too. In an effort to save money, some schools only provide one-way transportation. This means the athlete has to ride home with the parent rather than their teammates.

"I've had players tell me they wished there were buses for the ride home because they did not want to listen to their parents complain on the ride home," said North Farmington's Tom Negoshian.

### Get Social

The social media explosion has provided new avenues for reaching our parents, a great many of whom are tech-savvy. Employ Facebook, Twitter and other social media to share the values of high school sports. I have started a page on our district athletic website that provides tools and tips for parents of athlete. I was amazed and surprised when a parent quoted one of the articles from our site. This also enables school board members to stay informed while also keeping the mission of school sports in the forefront.

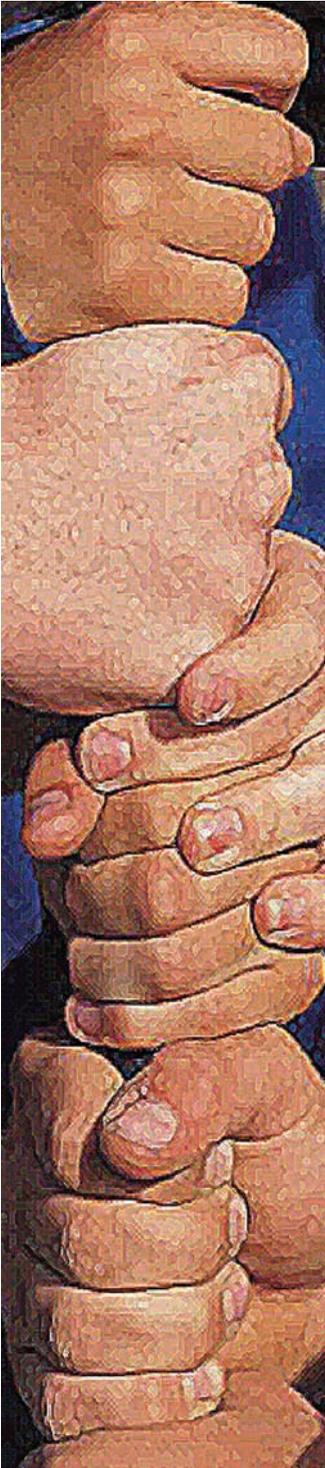


For some coaches, this lineup can be more intimidating than the one put out by the opposing team. Work with parents for a better understanding of common goals.

— Brian Swinehart

## From the Roots and Back: What Must Happen Now

*“We all lived in the neighborhood for a couple of more years – mostly through junior high school – and every summer was great. But none of them ever came close to that first one. When one guy would move away, we never replaced him on the team with anyone else. We just kept the game going like he was still there.” — character Scott Smalls, *The Sandlot**



It was a simple movie depicting simpler times, when sandlots across America served as our youth’s introduction to athletics. Like the boys in “*The Sandlot*,” most children played games of their own design before they enrolled in school; and ultimately, the origin of every sport is outside of schools.

The difference, however, is that the non-school youth sports experience is no longer almost exclusively developed and directed by kids themselves. Today it’s much more often driven by adults.

### How Sports Came to Schools, Origin to the 1960s

Before the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries, students began to formalize and identify teams outside of school, within schools during recess, in physical education classes, in intramural programs, and ultimately on an interscholastic basis. In time, school-sponsored interscholastic teams became the most organized, disciplined and regulated athletic experience available to middle level and high school aged youth in or out of school; and these also became the programs of highest profile and greatest prestige for this age group.

These programs survived two World Wars and the Great Depression, although in many places the scope and intensity of programs for girls were reduced in response to the conventional wisdom of female professional physical educators of the time that highly competitive athletics were inappropriate and unhealthy for girls.

In the late 1950s, the athletic program of most frequent contact and/or importance to most Americans was that sponsored and conducted by their local high school. These schools typically sponsored two sports each season, for boys only, without much competition for attention from college athletics or from professional baseball and fledgling professional leagues in other sports. Television was a novelty, and other entertainment distractions were few, far between and feeble in comparison to the attraction of sports rivalries between schools, which in those days were smaller and more frequently in a rural setting than schools today, yet more apt than today to be definitive of a larger community.

School sports was not just the only game in town, it was almost the only entertainment available in most villages and towns of the 1950s.

### How Sports Have Come to Schools Since the 1960s

As it was for most of America, the late 1960s and early 1970s were tumultuous times for interscholastic athletics.

While people did not immediately see their application, first the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and then Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments brought new complexities to school sports administration, and each brought a wave of litigation.

While most school sports teams were integrated to a level far greater than society in general, the 1964 legislation nevertheless created issues of due process and property rights for black and white students alike as school administrators struggled to maintain standards of eligibility and conduct.

While the greatest growth ever in girls high school athletics preceded the implementing regulations of Title IX, school administrators nevertheless found an empowered federal bureaucracy looking over their shoulders and investigating their decisions.

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Once upon a time, all that was needed to choose up sides were kids and a bat.

Demonstrations in the streets of America to focus public attention on discrimination at home and war in Southeast Asia diminished the relevance of sports among a growing “counter culture” at the same time schools were increasing opportunities for students at rates unprecedented in the history of school sports, before or since. Not only did schools resume programs for girls in traditional sports that had been discontinued a generation earlier, schools introduced a number of new sports which had operated for boys and now girls outside the school setting. While not as regulated as school sports, most of these community programs were far more established before their introduction to schools than anything that had occurred during the introduction of sports to schools during the previous 60 years. In fact, these community programs were so well organized that those involved did not turn over the programs to schools and wash their hands of things; they continued to run non-school programs in these sports outside the school setting, and they expected to be involved in school programs as well.

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***“While many high school coaches are involved with AAU programs and many schools allow their facilities to be used by AAU programs, just as many other coaches and schools consider the AAU an evil influence on school sports.”***

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Also occurring in the 1970s was a coordinated effort of the national organizations of the colleges (NCAA and NAIA), junior colleges (NJCAA) and high schools (NFSHSA) to remove the Amateur Athletic Union’s stranglehold on the United States Olympic Committee and all international competition in amateur athletics. This effort succeeded when the United States Congress passed the Amateur Sports Act of 1978 which prohibited any organization from being the US Olympic Committee designated “National Governing Body” in more than one sport.

The unintended consequence of this was that the AAU, stripped of authority for international competition in all but track and field, eventually retooled and refocused on younger athletes and domestic competition. This has led to a myriad of contemporary issues for those in school sports, as examined in the lead story of this issue of *benchmarks*. The AAU’s influence at the grassroots level has grown and has been the target of much criticism, especially in the sport of basketball where some of its state, regional and national tournaments are cited for corruption of amateur status and college recruiting violations. Agents and sporting goods interests mingle with AAU coaches in unsavory if not unscrupulous alliances. And the

emphasis on competition over teaching is blamed for the lack of sound fundamentals and team play by US teams in international tournaments.

And while many high school coaches are involved with AAU programs and many schools allow their facilities to be used by AAU programs, just as many other coaches and schools consider the AAU an evil influence on school sports. In some places administrators rent their gyms to the AAU and then criticize the AAU for its programs.

## **FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS**

As the shadows of community athletic options continue to cloud and crowd interscholastic sports, the need to investigate school-based efforts continues. For more than two decades, the MHSAA has been attacking two major influences of non-school youth sports programs which have tended to move school sports from its ideals: increase in nonfaculty coaches and decrease in sportsmanship.

- The 1987 precursor to the MHSAA’s Coaches Advancement Program (CAP) – the Program of Athletic Coaches Education (PACE) – was initially intended to provide schools with an educational program to fill the voids in philosophy and practical preparation of personnel who came to coaching interscholastic athletics by a non-traditional route.
- The MHSAA’s campaign to raise awareness of the need for higher standards of sportsmanship also began in 1987, and it has continued uninterrupted on three tracks:
  - o *Education* – to provide all constituents of school sports with a clear understanding of the expectations at sporting events sponsored and conducted by educational institutions. This has included ads, PSAs, DVDs, banners, brochures and comprehensive kits.
  - o *Encouragement* – to reward schools and communities for exemplary sportsmanship. The “Good Sports Are Winners” awards (at first sponsored by True Value Hardware and now by MEEMIC Insurance) have been a prominent part of MHSAA team sports tournaments for more than 20 years.
  - o *Enforcement* – to provide penalties that will stop unacceptable behaviors by players, coaches and spectators. Like many states, the MHSAA has adopted next-game and tournament disqualification rules for unsportsmanlike conduct, and the MHSAA’s anti-taunting rule has become the national model.

These efforts must continue, at least as much in the next two decades as the past two. But if the MHSAA is going to keep school sports positioned to help schools reach young people in a positive way during the next two decades, the strategies must be well outside the traditional box. Needed are the same core beliefs, but with some new approaches.

Some of the ideas which follow will be tested by the MHSAA’s ongoing survey and study of attitudes

– continued next page

toward high school athletics, and they may be modified or replaced by what continues to be learned. Whatever their final form takes, these ideas will be essential to advancing the MHSAA's efforts to increase the relevance of school sports to youth and the usefulness of school sports to schools in their mission to educate young people.

### Appealing to Youth We've Never Had

Almost 80 percent of youth who have ever been involved in organized sports are no longer involved as they enter high school. This startling statistic of sports attrition should propel us to greater involvement by schools in youth sports programs. The youth sports culture has increasingly infiltrated and influenced school sports for the past 50 years; school sports must devise and implement strategies to infiltrate and influence youth sports programs in the years ahead, through initiatives such as increasing school sports opportunities and increasing non-school sports collaboration.

### Increasing School Sports Opportunities

Investigating new participation opportunities that appeal to our youthful constituents is not new to the MHSAA and has led to the addition of three girls and two boys programs since 1994: girls competitive cheer, boys and girls bowling and boys and girls lacrosse.

In the early 1990s, the MHSAA convened groups to consider additional MHSAA tournaments with emphasis on girls and the winter season. Bowling, indoor track & field and competitive cheer received most attention. Schools showed the most support for competitive cheer and in 1994, the first MHSAA Girls Competitive Cheer Tournament drew as many schools as girls gymnastics and skiing combined. In 2009-10 it was Michigan's seventh most popular girls high school sport.

From 1998 into the early 2000s, annual student interest and participation surveys revealed a common thread of returns favoring two growing sports.

As a result, the first MHSAA Bowling Tournaments for boys and girls was conducted in the 2004-05 school year, and Boys and Girls Lacrosse Tournaments commenced in 2005-06. Bowling in 2009-10 ranked as the 13th most popular sport for high school boys in Michigan and the 11th most popular sport for girls.

We must continue to assess the sports interests of youth and assess how their interests intersect with schools' interests to use the structures of in-

terscholastic sports to help prepare youth for positive participation in our democratic systems and positive contributions to our diverse communities. Such exploration can lead to significant discoveries.

In **competitive cheer** we have learned that schools can turn athletic activities with some dangers and excesses into regulated athletic programs that are safe and sensible and completely compatible with and fully integrated into the competitive yet educational interscholastic athletic programs of schools. There will be requests to do this also with dance and pompon programs.

In **bowling** we have learned that schools can turn popular social sports with traditions and settings that seem inappropriate for educational athletics into acceptably sponsored school sports that not only engaged hundreds of first-time high school sports participants but also have demonstrated the best sportsmanship on the high school scene. There will be requests to do this also with equestrian.

In **lacrosse** we have learned that well-established programs that have been loosely affiliated with schools can exchange the freedom of non-school status for the prestige of becoming a school-sponsored program and promote further acceptance and growth in the sport. There will be requests to do this also in field hockey and water polo.

We must explore the possibility that so-called "extreme" sports to which youth have gravitated to avoid the structure of organized team

sports can nevertheless fit within the structures of interscholastic athletics and promote the educational objectives schools have for sponsorship of more traditional sports. There will be requests to do this with snowboarding, skateboarding and motocross.

The director of the Iowa High School Girls Athletic Union has reported that his association soon will be adding several new sports to its championship program, and they all may be unlike anything it has sponsored previously. The Illinois High School Association is now conducting a bass fishing tournament.

Powerlifting, girls ice hockey, boys volleyball, flag football and six- or eight-person or lightweight and heavyweight divisions of tackle football should be discussed; and the survey of junior high/middle school students' sports interests which has been administered three times before should be admin-



### BOWLING 'EM OVER

The MHSAA added bowling as a tournament sport beginning in 2004-05 based on student interest and participation surveys. Not only is the sport paying dividends in numbers, but in exemplary behavior as a model of sportsmanship during competitions.

istered regularly to help stay abreast of the attitudes of the next approaching group of prospective high school students.

If we believe school sports can do good things for most students, we need to be inviting to more students and be more innovative in our thinking to assure new offerings appeal to more youth, without undermining the policies and procedures that give educational value to athletic participation.

Certainly, school districts will be concerned about the cost of additional programs, just as the MHSAA must be cognizant of costs for new programs that lack potential to produce net revenue over expenses. However, the most businesslike school districts may view these programs as shrewd investments, for they are the features which attract and hold students, and the state aid for those students. One new student, attracted to a district because of an extracurricular offering, comes with more state aid than any one of these offerings might cost the district.

Finally, if we truly believe school sports can do good things for most students, we need to urge schools to be more creative in keeping students and be less inclined to cut them from teams. We must convey more convincingly to coaches and their administrators that they can indeed keep, coach and give playing time to larger squads. Why would we not want to engage every student who would rather work and sweat than cruise and loiter after school? Moreover, every kid we cut creates a future critic of our programs; and we can afford no more of those.

### **Increasing Non-School Youth Sports Collaboration**

During a recent 20-month span, the MHSAA reached out to the leadership of youth sports organizations in Michigan to explore collaborative efforts to improve coaching, officiating, sportsmanship and the health and safety of participants.

Among the findings:

- With the exception of ice hockey, youth sports organizations are spotty at best in providing coaches education, and the MHSAA Coaches Advancement Program has much to offer many of those organizations and, in doing so, can enhance the philosophy and preparation of many youth program coaches, many of whom are or will become school coaches.
- With the exception of soccer, youth organizations are less developed and demanding in officials training than the MHSAA, and there may

be opportunities to partner with these organizations and promote registration of more high school officials as we do so.

- The largest of the organizations in terms of number of sports and participants, the Amateur Athletic Union, is the least active and regulated in terms of requirements and training for coaches and officials. Essentially, the AAU has no training; it only conducts competitive events. It is largely because of its vast scope and accountability vacuum that, while the AAU is far from the only non-school youth sports program troubling school sports, its name and acronym have become synonymous with the phenomenon, like the names of Xerox and Kleenex have become the name for their respective product lines.

It has been anticipated that the exchanging of ideas and the combining of resources will improve all of the cooperating organizations, tending to make all of youth sports more safe and sane, thus delaying and reducing the youth sports dropout rate. It is anticipated that the more frequently and formally these collaborative efforts occur, the more successful the efforts will be, resulting in better experiences for youth and their longer involvement in organized youth sports.

However, it is also recognized that this is a long

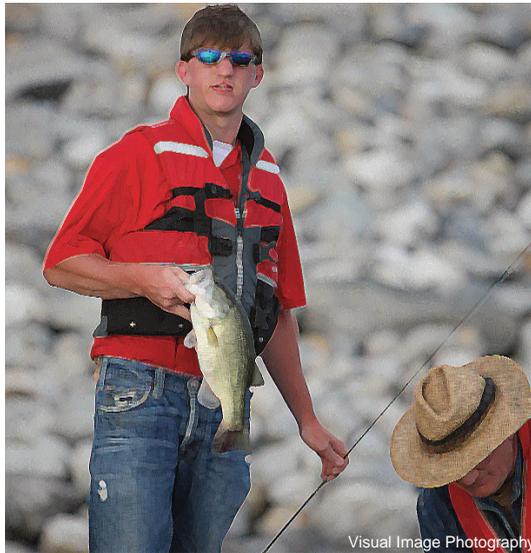
and difficult procedure, without certainty of much success. In fact, almost all of the collaborative effort has been initiated by the MHSAA; reciprocating efforts by the non-school groups have been very limited.

Late last fall, the Ohio High School Athletic Association made a tentative offer to help the state's youth sports leagues obtain some of the structure, support and service that the state's high school sports enjoy; and this bears watching.

### **Appealing to Youth We've Lost**

There is much commentary that, increasingly, the high school athletic program is becoming irrelevant to the more accomplished high school age athletes. It is widely reported that college basketball coaches find AAU programs more efficient for evaluating talent and recruiting players, and that elite travel teams are the better way to be seen by college recruiters in ice hockey, soccer and volleyball.

The highly skilled and motivated high school age athlete plays his/her high school season to be



### **GET HOOKED**

When the Illinois High School Association tested the waters for new school sports students cast a preference for bass fishing, which became a tournament event in 2008-09.

seen by classmates, but participates in non-school programs to be seen by recruiters. Even football is affected, as recruiters are said to frequent commercial “skills camps” and shadow seven-on-seven summer passing leagues as a more efficient recruiting process than watching film and attending high school games on Friday nights.

Recognizing that philosophically well-intentioned rules have put high schools at a practical disadvantage vis-à-vis the unregulated non-school club sports in the effort to attract and hold athletes in their programs, the MHSAA Representative Council approved two *MHSAA Handbook* regulations which took effect Aug. 1, 2008.

- The first allows high school coaches once each year to make a sport-specific presentation to junior high/middle school students of their school system.
- The second allows high school athletes to assist on a supervised, unpaid basis in the coaching of a junior high/middle school team of their school system.

Both rules modifications intend to point junior high/middle school students to the people and programs of their school.

In addition, an MHSAA task force met twice during 2007-08 to prepare ideas for discussion statewide during 2008-09 to modify the application of rules restricting schools’ support and coaches’ involvement of students in out-of-season sports activities without losing the essence of educational athletics as a program that encourages students to pursue multiple sports interests after their academic activities and in addition to other activities that encourage a well-rounded individual.

The discussions have continued during the following school years, and modest rule changes continue to be made – such as allowing school coaches to work with four of that school’s students at a time out-of-season during the school year (previously three) in an instructional setting.

To return the interscholastic athletic program to a more central role in the athletic experience of



### REACHING OUT YIELDS REACHING HIGHER

Collaborative initiatives with traditional non-school events such as basketball camps have yielded the Reaching Higher Events, organized and facilitated by school coaches and administrators. The program aims to prepare students *and* parents for the next levels academically *and* athletically.

more gifted student-athletes, we must further pursue bolder initiatives, such as the Reaching Higher events, while keeping a keen eye on out-of-season regulations.

### Reaching Higher Events

The MHSAA and the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan presented the Reaching Higher Basketball Showcases in 2009, and will stage the events for a third year in July. Discussions continue to advance this model to other sports in an effort to restore school sports in general and the MHSAA in particular as the central and essential experience for gifted high school athletes. It may also encourage NCAA policies that return recruiting to the more regulated, healthier high school setting.

### Summer Programs vs. Summer Regulation

Michigan has a tradition of some of the nation’s most lenient out-of-season coaching rules, especially in the summer; and yet, the few rules we have are sometimes blamed for driving students to non-school programs.

Nevertheless, there is some validity to the criticism that non-school programs seem to fill every void in the interscholastic calendar. The day after high school seasons end, many non-school programs begin. The day a school coach can no longer work with more than three or four students out of season, a non-school coach begins to do so.

The challenge is to balance the negative effects of an “arms war” in high school sports against driving students toward non-school programs, the balance of too few vs. too many rules out of season.

The out-of-the-box compromise for this dilemma is to not regulate the off season as much as to conduct school-sponsored off-season programs in a healthier way than they normally occur. For example, moving schools back into control of such activities as summer basketball leagues, seven-on-seven passing leagues in football, seven-on-seven soccer leagues, or co-ed team golf and tennis leagues.

## Future of Athletics in Midland Schools a ‘Serious’ Issue

**W**ith school districts all around the state hurting financially, Kurt leuter has a strong message for those who believe it will be business as usual for athletics in coming years in the Midland Public Schools system.

It's time to “wake up.”

According to leuter, honorary co-chair of the MPS athletics action committee, the school district and the community must act quickly to avoid additional cuts to an MPS athletics program that has already been cut significantly.

“It's pretty serious, and I don't think the average person in the community realizes how serious it is,” leuter said Thursday of the financial state of the athletics program, which currently draws \$560,000 per year out of the MPS general fund. “Schools are going to be forced to cut all of their non-mandated programs. People that don't think this is going to happen, need to wake up.”

The athletics action committee, formed in September and charged by Superintendent Carl Ellinger with finding alternate ways to sustain the MPS athletics program in the face of severe budget constraints, consisted of 15 members — including two school board members, Rick Ohle and Ken Mault — and met six times before giving its recommendations on Monday.

The four recommendations were:

- Contract with a third-party advertising and marketing firm to plan and implement a district-wide campaign to secure significant and consistent advertising revenue;
- Develop a community-wide Fund Development Plan for support of athletics;
- Sell naming rights to MPS athletic sites and/or events;
- Establish partnerships with community youth athletic groups and organizations to fund and administer middle school athletic programs.

“The goal would be to make athletics self-sufficient,” said leuter, who spoke to the school board about the recommendations at Monday's meeting.

In regard to the first recommendation, leuter said the athletics committee listened to a presentation by Alternative Revenue Development, a recently-formed advertising and marketing company based in Troy, whose stated purpose is “to develop non-traditional, significant and sustainable revenue

streams for school districts across Michigan, via the creation of commercially sponsored networks.”

“They have relationships with big companies like McDonald's, Coca-Cola, etc.,” leuter said of Alternative Revenue Development. “They have all the connections that we wouldn't have locally.”

Committee co-chair Gary Verlinde, the MPS Director of Human Resources, emphasized that advertising would be aimed at parents and not at students.

In regard to the second recommendation, leuter said the committee envisions a broad district fundraising campaign for athletics, similar in nature to that of the United Way, as opposed to numerous smaller fundraisers.

“Businesses and community members are hit up for all sorts of different fundraising campaigns,” noted leuter, president of leuter Insurance. “One concerted effort will be easier on the community and easier on the businesses.”

The committee recommends establishing a network of MPS alumni around the world in order to broaden the fundraising drive.

The ultimate goal is to establish an endowment fund of several million dollars, leuter said, that would generate significant interest each year to subsidize the athletics program.

In regard to selling naming rights to athletic sites, such as Midland Stadium, the committee recommends the use of long-term contracts with revenue front-loaded to the first year or two, enabling the district to begin building the aforementioned endowment fund.

The committee's final recommendation, to establish community partnerships to fund and administer middle school sports, would likely involve the Midland Community Center, which already administers an elementary school basketball program.

“One of the ideas (of the committee) was to have the Midland Community Center run the middle school (athletic) program,” leuter said. “They would be able to get more participants while saving MPS money. The games would still be played at (the middle schools).”

For his part, Ellinger said the school board will likely take a couple of months to decide what course of action it should take in response to the

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*“It's pretty serious, and I don't think the average person in the community realizes how serious it is. Schools are going to be forced to cut all of their non-mandated programs. People that don't think this is going to happen, need to wake up.”*

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committee's recommendations. But he said it's just a matter of time before businesses will start sponsoring MPS athletics in some way.

"I think that's a foregone conclusion," Ellinger said.

Verlinde said the bottom line is that to avoid having more cuts made to athletics, more revenue needs to be generated, and it needs to be done consistently.

"The revenue needs to be sustainable from year to year, not just a one-year shot," Verlinde said, adding that the committee did a lot of research.

"We looked at a whole variety of ideas, talked to other districts around the state, and reached some consensus," he said.

leuter is very hopeful that the committee's recommendations will be well received by the school board and the community.

"The board members I've talked to are receptive about this," leuter said. "They don't want their hands tied. They're tired of 'cut, cut, cut' (when it comes to athletics).

"Midland's a very generous community, so I think this will go over well," he added.

The fundraising ideas generated by the athletics committee are not unique in the state of Michigan, according to John Johnson, longtime communications director of the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

"All you have to do is take a look around, and you're starting to see schools turning to higher levels of sponsorship activities than ever before," Johnson said. "What used to be limited to souvenir program or poster schedules, has now turned to signage in gymnasiums; schools are getting into the sponsorship business because the money from the general fund is getting cut."

— Dan Chalk  
*Midland Daily News*

*Reprinted with permission*

## Schools Bucking Pay-to-Play Trend *(Excerpted from The Saginaw News)*

As more schools dig deep into their students' pockets, Chesaning decided to go in the opposite direction. For the past three school years, Chesaning has not charged its student-athletes a fee to participate on its sports teams. Two years ago, Chesaning went one step further. Its students, from kindergarten through 12th grade, do not have to pay to watch their classmates compete.

Chesaning's stance goes against a growing trend across the state of Michigan and in Saginaw County, where more school districts have begun charging students to participate in school athletics.

"Times are tough and it puts an undue burden on the parents if we do pay-to-play," Chesaning Superintendent Don Barnes said. "The amount of revenue raised isn't that much money. It sure isn't going to balance any budget.

"When we had pay-to-play, it generated \$25,000. That sounds like a lot of money, but it isn't that much in terms of the entire school budget. You already have families paying property taxes, then they have some kids participating. All of a sudden they're paying extra fees on top of their taxes."

The addition of fees is becoming more popular in the state. In the last survey conducted by the Michigan High School Athletic Association, 47 percent of its member schools charged participation fees during the 2009-10 school year. It was more than double the amount that charged fees since the MHSAA's first survey in the 2003-04 school year reported 23 percent of the schools charging fees.

Other area schools are also resisting the temptation to institute a pay-to-play policy. The City of Saginaw Public Schools – Saginaw High, Arthur Hill and Saginaw Arts & Sciences – do not charge. Nor do the school systems at Buena Vista, Carrollton, Chesaning or Reese. St. Charles asks for a \$5 donation per athlete per sport to offset equipment expenses.

"Philosophically, we just can't charge students," Carrollton Superintendent Craig Douglas said. "We've talked about it. It would be very much a disservice to our community and our students. I'm not faulting other schools who do it, but we just feel it's wrong.

"From an economic standpoint, it's an economic burden that is disproportionate. Fundamentally, if we're going to offer an extracurricular activity for our students, it is our responsibility to offer it for free."

Barnes hopes Chesaning's example is one other schools can follow.

"When we stopped charging students to attend events, our revenue actually went up," Barnes said. "More families are coming and our concession revenues are going up. I look at it as a win-win situation. More classmates get to watch their friends participate, more families can afford to come and we increase revenue for concessions, which goes to our sports boosters which ultimately comes back around to our sports programs.

— Hugh Bernrueter  
*The Saginaw News*

## Time for Value Shift in Youth BB, Says iHoops CEO




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Many a young athlete can have development thwarted during the summer where crowds are sparse and unqualified instruction is abundant.

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**W**hen the MHSAA Girls and Boys Basketball seasons concluded with the crowning of four champions each on consecutive weekends in March, the trophy presentations simply marked the halfway point for some hoopsters.

Instead of hitting the tracks, grabbing the lacrosse sticks, tennis rackets or loosening up their arms, many will simply stay indoors as the AAU season tips off. Some will still be on the courts throughout the summer months as well.

Last summer, in an August issue of *SportsBusiness Journal*, iHoops CEO Len Elmore examined the state of youth basketball in an opinion piece entitled, "Time is now for value shift in youth basketball."

Elmore is a former high school and college basketball All-American who had a 10-year career in the ABA/NBA. Now an attorney and college basketball television analyst, he heads iHoops, the official youth basketball initiative of the NCAA and NBA.

Some of the concerns voiced in the article are echoed by those heard from our schools:

*"Today's youth basketball environment features destructive elements that contribute to the downward spiral of development. Grassroots tournaments too frequently operate in ways that conflict with some aspect of the health, safety and welfare of the kids participating. There are far too many coaches who are unqualified by high school or even grassroots standards. The dominoes continue to fall when the unqualified must teach and mentor younger and developing players and coaches. Players, parents and coaches lack the understanding or*

*willfully ignore the educational achievement opportunities presented by participation in youth basketball. Higher education develops future leadership, but the current system doesn't reinforce enough the fact that participation in sports can increase student athletes' potential as players and as future leaders."*

Elmore goes on to warn that the earlier poor habits and unqualified training can be addressed, the better.

*"These is no time to waste in effecting this value shift. By the time a young athlete reaches high school, he or she may already have been led astray by corrupt figures burrowed in the youth basketball environment."*

As alluded to throughout the preceding pages in this *benchmarks*, our youth's first athletic encounters typically take place outside the school setting. Those experiences can leave lasting impressions, for better or worse.

*Where they play, those who they encounter in that environment and what they are taught will define who our children become and how they conduct themselves. In a healthy, safe and nurturing grassroots basketball environment that is unified, standardized, full of positive messages and devoid of exploitation, our kids will be better basketball players and, most importantly, better people.*

For more on iHoops and their programs, visit [iHoops.com](http://iHoops.com).

# Net ZerO!

## Goals were at a premium during the 2005 Girls Soccer Finals, where all four champs won by shutout

June 18, 2005, will go down in MHSAA Girls Soccer championship history as Shutout Saturday with all four championship matches ending in zero for the first time.

At Troy Athens, Novi blanked league nemesis Brighton, 3-0, in Division 1 and Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett squeaked past Kalamazoo Hackett, 1-0, in Division 4. At Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central, the host Rangers earned a 3-0 whitewash over Rochester Hills Stoney Creek in Division 2 and potent Hudsonville Unity Christian pummeled Detroit Country Day, 6-0, in Division 3. All four schools won their first MHSAA Girls Soccer championship.

Seven of the first 15 MHSAA championship matches ended in a shutout since the tournament's inception in 1983, but since expanding to multiple divisions in 1987, there has never been a Saturday where the runners-up failed to tally at least one goal in both games at the same site.

Twenty-seven of the 57 champions (2002 co-champs in Division 4) have posted shutouts en route to celebrating avictory.

Strangely enough, the 2004 contests came within 3:04 of becoming the first Shutout Saturday, but a Grand Blanc goal ruined Northville's bid to close out the day with four championship shutouts.

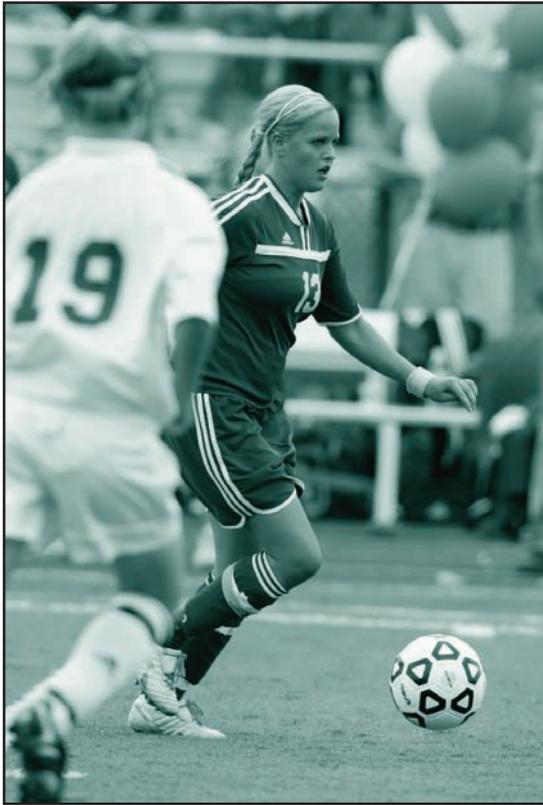
If you're a fan of a **Division 3** school, then pay attention. Since divisions were introduced in 1998, every single Division 3 championship match to 2005 ended in a shutout. That's eight straight!

The fate continued as Unity Christian rang up six goals to avenge its 2-0 loss in 2004 to Country Day (19-4-2). Six goals equaled the fourth-highest total scored by one team in 23 years. Country Day had allowed only two combined goals in four previous visits to the Finals where Coach Bob Bukari



### NO ADMITTANCE

Novi's Kim Herbst (top) and University Liggett's Allison Jones were two of four goalies to earn shutouts during the 2005 MHSAA Girls Soccer Finals.



sports a 3-2 championship record.

Scoring goals was no surprise for unbeaten Christian as the “Cruise-aders” rolled over all 27 opponents and scored an astonishing 195 goals while posting 22 shutouts during an incredible season.

Scoring four goals in the last 17 minutes of the first half blew the lid off a tight game and enabled Unity to run rampant unlike the title match one year previous. Mindi Harkema and Mindy Capisciolto each scored twice to lead the assault against an injury-riddled Country Day, as Unity held a 28-12 advantage in shots.

Laura Heyboer, a freshman who scored 40 goals during the year, had her playmaker shoes on and set up Harkema’s first-half goal at 23:14. Abby Prins (unassisted) scored at 29:13, and 44 seconds later the Crusaders led 3-0 on Capisciolto’s first goal, set up by Nicole Billin. Capisciolto added her second goal just before the half ended, and Unity was well on its way to the title.

Unity added two more unassisted goals in the second half, by Allison Haverkamp at 52:58 and Harkema’s final strike at 55:53.

Freshman Jill Flietstra earned the clean sheet with eight saves for Unity, the 22nd shutout of a remarkable campaign. Unity surrendered only seven goals all season and Flietstra had only one goal scored against her.

Colleen Dougherty registered 15 saves for the Yellowjackets.

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## GIVING AND RECEIVING

Lauren Hinton assisted on the first goal and scored the last one in helping Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central to a 3-0 win over Rochester Hills Stoney Creek in Division 3.

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In **Division 1**, Novi also finished unbeaten at 24-0-1 with only a 4-4 deadlock against rival Northville pre-empting a perfect season. The Wildcats finished the season with 23 straight wins including a knockout of Northville, the 2004 MHSAA champ, in Districts by a 4-1 score.

On the artificial surface at Athens, junior Katie Walker scored a goal in each half to led the Wildcats past Brighton (17-5-1) for the third time of the season. Brighton made its third championship appearance in four years and fifth in school history, but the Bulldogs’ 2005 finish mimicked the previous four trips.

Novi held a 1-0 lead at the half after Walker headed in a Pia Janssens cross at 24:55. The hard-working midfielder sealed the victory with an unassisted goal, but not until just 45 ticks remained on the scoreboard. Sarah Schmitt stole the ball from a Brighton defender and tallied an unassisted goal 9:52 after the intermission to put Novi up 2-0.

Kensington Valley Conference champion Novi outshot Brighton, 12-6. Kim Herbst made four saves en route to her 19th shutout and Brighton’s Ashley Temby also made four stops. Novi allowed only 10 goals during the season, and Northville scored five of those goals.

Novi coach Brian O’Leary also won a boys title—and, yes—against league rival Brighton in 1998. Ironically, that was a 4-0 shutout posted by Kim Herbst’s brother Rusty.

In **Division 4**, longtime Liggett coach Dave Backhurst earned his first MHSAA championship with the girls. He has earned four titles with the boys, in 1982, 1983, 1996, and 1999.

Jessica Leonard made Backhurst a winner when she was credited with an unassisted goal with 2:51 to play in regulation time. Laura Nicholl served the ball into the box where Leonard corralled it, deked a defender and blasted a shot from 10 yards out. Hackett keeper Caitlin Brown made one of her nine saves, but the ball bounced off a defender and into a vacated goal.

“It was a great ball in,” Leonard said. “Then it was a scramble between all the defenders. It came off my foot, and the goalie was pulled out and then another defender came through and knocked it in. It was perfect timing.”

– continued next page



### OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT

Mindy Capisciolto (2) scored two first-half goals in helping Hudsonville Unity Christian to a 4-0 lead at the intermission en route to a 6-0 win over Detroit Country Day in the 2005 Division 3 Final.

Hackett outshot Liggett, 15-13, but could not beat Knights keeper Allison Jones, who recorded 11 saves. The clean sheet was the sixth in seven tournament games for Liggett and the 13th of the season.

The Irish looked uncomfortable on the artificial surface, but carried most of the play in the opening half.

“We took their punches early and counter-attacked,” said Backhurst. “I was really ecstatic at the half when it was 0-0 because I knew we had taken their best shot and survived.”

Liggett finished 17-6 and Hackett, which KO’d two-time defending champion Kalamazoo Christian in Districts, fell to 19-3-1.

In **Division 2**, Forest Hills Central became the second champion to win at “home” in the Finals when the Rangers blanked Stoney Creek, 3-0. Plymouth Canton won the Division 1 crown on its home field in 2001 against Troy.

With the victory, Rangers coach Clark Udell became the first coach to win both a boys and girls title in the same school year. The boys won the Di-

vision 2 title by also beating Stoney Creek, 3-2, in the Fall (2004). Livonia Stevenson (1982-83 and 1996-97), Country Day (1990-91 and 1999-2000), and Madison Heights Bishop Foley (1997-98) accomplished the same feat, but with different coaches.

The Rangers closed with 15 consecutive wins and – just like the boys season – had lost once during the regular season against Portage Northern.

Central (22-1) had lost its previous championship visit against Birmingham Marian in 2003 via an overtime shutout, so the Rangers knew the first goal was very important.

In a game that featured wide open offenses with Central holding a 28-23 edge in shots, the Rangers struck twice in less than a minute midway through the first half to stun Oakland Activities Association Division 2 champion Stoney Creek.

Central’s Kacie Klynstra scored off a Lauren Hinton cross at 20:26 and then freshman Clare Stachel scored an unassisted tally at 21:01 to put the Cougars in a big 2-0 halftime hole.

The OK Conference Red Metro champs sealed the win at 53:02 with Hinton scoring the goal off a feed from Klynstra.

Ashley Massey made 10 saves for Stoney Creek (20-4-1) and Kristen Haight made nine saves to earn the Central’s 15th shutout. Both teams had yielded only one goal in the six previous tournament games.

Udell, O’Leary, and Backhurst joined Tim Storch (Troy Athens), Don Smith (Plymouth Canton), and Ken Johnson (Plymouth Salem) as the only coaches to have earned MHSAA soccer championships with the boys and girls teams.

— John K. Schroder

*Schroder is a freelance writer covering soccer for The Detroit News since 1989*

## SAC Members Discuss Leadership Traits

The 2010-11 MHSAA Student Advisory Council recently had a chance to discuss leadership traits with Executive Director Jack Roberts.

In his March 4 *From the Director* blog on MHSAA.com, Roberts shared the experience as follows:

A few weeks ago I asked the MHSAA Student Advisory Council to help me prepare for a presentation at a leadership program for students of a league in southeast Michigan. I asked the SAC members what qualities they looked for in a team leader. They listed 13. In alphabetical order, they were:

- Being a good citizen.
- Being compassionate.
- Being competitive.
- Being confident
- Being encouraging/motivating.
- Being hard-working.
- Being honest/trustworthy.
- Being humble/modest.
- Being a good listener.
- Being a mediator.
- Being a skilled athlete.
- Being a quick thinker.
- Being vocal/loud.

Then I asked the SAC members to vote on the relative importance of the 13. Each member was allowed two votes, and each could split his/her vote, or put both votes on a single trait.



**2010-11 Student Advisory Council members are Front Row (L to R):** Benjamin Olson, Troy; Jay Miller, Ionia; Dustan Craig, Buchanan; Tyler Wilson, Rudyard; Kevin Beazley, Detroit Catholic Central; Travis Clous, Benzie Central; Bailey Truesdell, Grand Blanc. **Second Row:** Alexa Bean, Livonia Clarenceville; Amanda Smith, Bellevue; Chloe Weaver, Climax-Scotts; Elizabeth Gupton, Lapeer West; Alissa Jones, Muskegon Catholic; Maria Buczkowski, Detroit Country Day; Lena Madison, New Buffalo; Emily Wee, Frankenmuth. **Not Pictured:** Charles Hengesbach, Pewamo-Westphalia.

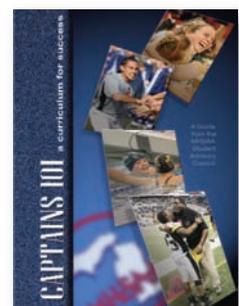
- Do you know how many votes being vocal or loud received? Zero.
- Being a skilled athlete? Only a few votes.

What got the most votes, by a wide margin, were being competitive and being hard-working. It is being a hard-working competitor that leads people. That could be, but isn't necessarily, the best athlete. The more essential qualities of a team leader are not physical – not being the biggest, fastest or best athlete. The essential qualities are more intangible; and they are attainable for all athletes, regardless of their size or athletic ability. It's leading by example.



### WALKING THE WALK

During the last general session of MHSAA Sportsmanship Summits during the fall of 2010, schools completed a short exercise listing 5 Simple Tips For Great Sportsmanship. Students were told to assume they were going to hand this list out to everyone who walked into their gyms on Friday nights. Fruitport took matters one step further, creating a banner and placing it above the gym doors for all spectators to see as they entered contests this winter.



Captains 101, published by MHSAA SAC members, is on sale at the MHSAA office for \$3. The book is a perfect supplement to any coach's team-building strategies.

## Scholar-Athlete Class of 2011 Honored



The Michigan High School Athletic Association/Farm Bureau Insurance Scholar-Athlete Award has been recognizing the top student-athletes for 22 years. Applicants for the Scholar-Athlete Award must meet the following criteria: A minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale; and must have previously won a varsity letter. Applicants also show involvement in other school and community activities; submit two letters of recommendation and a 500-word essay on the importance of sportsmanship in educational athletics.

Recipients of the 2010-11 Scholar-Athlete Award receive a \$1,000 college scholarship to be used at the college, university, or trade school of their choice during the 2011-12 school year. This year, 1,901 applicants from 448 schools were received for the 32 scholarships. Class A students were guaranteed 12 winners, Class B eight winners, Class C six winners and Class D four winners. Two at-large winners were also selected.

All scholarship recipients were honored in ceremonies at halftime of the Class C Boys Basketball Final at the Breslin Student Events Center in East Lansing on March 26.



32 student-athletes from around the state are honored during the MHSAA Boys Basketball Finals each year for academic excellence.

### 2011 Scholar-Athlete Award Winners

Lindsay Marie Anderson, Byron Center, Class A  
 Kenneth John Baker, Holland, Class A  
 Taylor Marie Birman, Plymouth, Class A  
 Kelsie Lyn Blamer, Mio, Class D  
 Collin A. Breit, Muskegon W. Mich. Christian, Class C  
 Kelsey K. Carney, Jackson Northwest, Class B  
 Sam Davis, Pottersville, Class C  
 Michael Thomas Elliott, TC St. Francis, Class C  
 Chelsey Ewald, Unionville-Sebewaing, Class C  
 Laura Glass, Portage Northern, Class A  
 Brandon Gregg, Edwardsburg, Class B  
 Matthew Hing, Ann Arbor Pioneer, Class A  
 Courtney Jenkins, Pinckney, Class A  
 Emerald Joiner, Saginaw Arthur Hill, Class A  
 Nicholas Landgraf, Berkley, Class A  
 Heather Lantis, Hillsdale Academy, Class D

Breanne Lesnar, Freeland, Class B  
 Eric Anthony Lisznyai, Hillsdale Academy, Class D  
 Justin Zachary Nance, Detroit U-D Jesuit, Class A  
 Nick Olesak, Gladstone, Class B  
 Gabriel B. Raymer, Caro, Class B  
 Patrick D. Roberts, Chelsea, Class B  
 Caroline Shinkle, BH Cranbrook-Kingswood, Class B  
 Leigh Slater, St. Clair Shores South Lake, Class B  
 Garrett Slavik, Fulton, Class D  
 Jennifer Sliva, Battle Creek Lakeview, Class A  
 Megan Marie Smith, Birmingham Seaholm, Class A  
 Alexandra Spaulding, Watervliet, Class C  
 Joseph Walbridge, Richland Gull Lake, Class B  
 Jenna Whipple, Pottersville, Class C  
 Erik Winnega, Harrison Twp. L'Anse Creuse, Class A  
 Zachary Zott, Lake Orion, Class A



Anderson



Baker



Birman



Blamer



Breit



Carney



Davis



Elliott



Ewald



Glass



Gregg



Hing



Jenkins



Joiner



Landgraf



Lantis



Lesnar



Lisznyai



Nance



Olesak



Raymer



Roberts



Shinkle



Slater



Slavik



Sliva



Smith



Spaulding



Walbridge



Whipple



Winnega



Zott

Visit the Students page of [MHSAA.com](http://MHSAA.com) for a Scholar-Athlete History, and for 2011-12 Application Information

## Where Are They Now?

### Scholar-Athlete Alumni Program in the Works

Since its inception during the 1989-90 school year, the MHSAA Scholar-Athlete Award has recognized 544 of our state's top student-athletes. As this award approaches its 25-year anniversary, we've often wondered about our former winners: "Where are they now?" Over the last three months we've been able to find almost half of these folks, and each of these winners has given us their stories since graduating from high school. Below are updated bios for two of our Scholar-Athlete Award alumni. The MHSAA plans to recognize many more former winners in this manner during the 25th Anniversary year.

For more information about the program, contact Andy Frushour at the MHSAA: [afrushour@mhsaa.com](mailto:afrushour@mhsaa.com).

**Phillip Wills**  
**Traverse City St.**  
**Francis (1989-90)**



**1990 Scholar-Athlete Bio:** Seven-time letterwinner in football, basketball and baseball. Class D second team All-State in baseball, and MHSAA Class D Baseball champions in 1990. Rotary Youth International Exchange Student to Auckland, New Zealand as a junior. Member of the Student Council, National Honor Society and forensics and academic brain strain teams. Active as elementary school tutor and with Presidential Student Leadership Forum.

**Since High School:** Graduated from the University of Michigan in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial & Operations Engineering. Completed Master of Science in Industrial & Operations Engineering (Emphasis in Ergonomics and Occupational Safety) in 1995 with a NASA Michigan Space Grant Consortium Graduate Student Research Assistant fellowship. Has over 15 years of Air Force and Army acquisition and program management experience, four of which were active duty as a systems acquisition officer in the United States Air Force. Currently a Senior Associate at Booz Allen Hamilton and has supported major Air Force and Army acquisition programs for the past 11 years. Resides in Troy with his wife and two sons.



**Stacie Vietzke**  
**Schaibly**  
**Bath (1995-96)**



**1990 Scholar-Athlete Bio:** Four-time letterwinner in softball, three in basketball, two in track and one in volleyball. Captain and first team all-league in both sports. Class C All-State in softball. Also participated in cheer-leading three years. Three-year member of Student Council (treasurer as a senior), two years in NHS, and class officer. Participated in drama club, concert band and yearbook.

**Since High School:** Graduated from Alma College with a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Elementary Education with minors in Math, Science, and Early Childhood. Played softball at Alma, selected as All-MIAA Second Team in 1998 and 2000 and Honorable Mention in 1999, and was named the Harburn Scholar-Athlete award winner for highest team GPA on team in 1999. Her teams won four league championships and finishing third in the nation in 1999 and 2000. Previously coached JV girls basketball and varsity softball, and is currently teaching math and science at Haslett Middle School. Lives in Bath with her husband and two daughters.



## A Place to Call Home

### Boys & Girls Basketball Finals to Remain at Breslin Through 2017

The Michigan High School Athletic Association's Basketball Finals will remain at the Jack Breslin Student Events Center on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing until at least 2017, after a six-year extension of an existing contract was recently agreed to by both parties.

The 14,759-seat Breslin Student Events Center has hosted the Semifinals and Finals of the boys tournament since 1994, and also hosted the Semifinals of the tournament from 1990 to 1993. The Breslin Center also hosted the girls Semifinals and Finals in 2004, 2005 and 2006. In 2008, MHSAA and MSU signed a two-year agreement for the 2010 and 2011 Semifinals and Finals for both events.

"The central location of the Breslin Center makes it the ideal spot for our Basketball Finals," said John E. "Jack" Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. "Michigan State University and the Greater Lansing Sports Authority have made this venue financially and logistically attractive for us to continue playing our games and conducting the March Magic Hoopfest, and the entire mid-Michigan community has started to embrace this event again like it did for so many years when the games were played at Jenison Field House."

"When you think of some of the greatest moments in the Michigan high school basketball tournament, they took place on this campus, and it is that history that we want to continue to be a part of," said Mark Hollis, director of intercollegiate athletics at MSU. "Many of us grew up watching the games in Jenison Field House when it was the toughest ticket in the state to obtain, and we're pleased to be providing today's student-athletes with the great experience of being on this campus and playing in one of the nation's premiere basketball arenas. It's great for our University and community to host teams and fans from across our State for this terrific event"

The continuation of the games at the Breslin Center also means the likely extension of an agreement with the Greater Lansing Sports Authority to conduct a fan festival at Jenison Field House – the March Magic Hoopfest.

"We've been delighted to be a part conducting the MHSAA Basketball Finals, and we will be excited to continue the interactive basketball playground that is the March Magic Hoopfest for the next six years," said Mike Price, director of the Greater Lansing Sports Authority. "These games



are not only significant in terms of showcasing the campus and the community, but they also provide a significant economic impact." Price added that conservative estimates place a \$3 million economic impact on the region for the two weekends.

Other boys Finals venues over the years include: Pre-MHSAA Finals tournaments from 1917 to 1924 on the University of Michigan campus, using Waterman Gymnasium and Yost Field House, with Yost also hosting classes of the first MHSAA tournaments in 1925 and 1926; College Gymnasium at Michigan State from 1919 to 1926; Detroit Central and Detroit Northwestern High Schools in 1927; Olympia Stadium in Detroit was the first building to host the Finals in all four classes from 1928-30; Demonstration Hall on the MSU campus hosted from 1931-33; the Civic Auditorium in Grand Rapids and the original IMA Auditorium in Flint alternated as the site from 1934-39; Jenison Field House first hosted from 1940-42, with no statewide tournament in 1943, and then the Boys Vocational School Field House in Lansing (now the Don Johnson Field House) was the site in 1944 because of military operations taking place on the MSU campus; Jenison Field House had its long streak from 1945 to 1970, and last hosting in 1972 and 1974; Crisler Arena in Ann Arbor hosted in 1971, 1973 and from 1975-89; and The Palace of Auburn Hills was the Finals site from 1990-93.

Girls Finals have taken place over the years at high school sites in Grand Blanc, Grand Rapids, Owosso, Alma and East Kentwood from 1973-76; Jenison Field House from 1977 to 1980; Calihan Hall on the University of Detroit-Mercy campus in 1981-82; Read Fieldhouse on the Western Michigan University campus in Kalamazoo from 1982-85; College Fieldhouse at Grand Valley State University in Allendale from 1986-89; Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek from 1990-96; Central Michigan University's Rose Arena in Mt. Pleasant from 1997-2003; and the Convocation Center at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti from 2007-09.

## Pugh, Tibaldi Receive WISL Award

Two individuals who have combined for nearly 80 years of service to the educational athletics community – Ellen Pugh of West Branch and Patti Tibaldi of Traverse City – have been named the recipients of the 2011 Women In Sports Leadership Award by the Representative Council of the MHSAA.

Each year the Representative Council considers the achievements of women coaches, officials and athletic administrators affiliated with the MHSAA who show exemplary leadership capabilities and positive contributions to athletics. The award was presented at halftime of the Class A championship game at the MHSAA Girls Basketball Finals at the Breslin Student Events Center in East Lansing on March 19.

Pugh retired recently from the Ogemaw Heights High School, where she served as a teacher, coach and for the last 15 years of her career as athletic director. As a swimming coach, she was honored by the Michigan Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association as a regional Coach of the Year; as well as the Independent Swimming Conference Coach of the Year. As an athletic administrator, the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association honored her with an annual Regional award.



Pugh

She has also been active with the MHSAA, the MIAAA and the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association on various committees; in numerous community programs as a volunteer with the Kiwanis, American Red Cross, Girl Scouts and the United Methodist Church. She has also organized a youth swimming club program locally.

An Athens High School graduate, Pugh earned her bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University and did her post-graduate studies at Central Michigan University.

"Ellen Pugh has modeled the traits of a leader in many ways," said John E. "Jack" Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. "While she did not have available to her athletic participation opportunities while in high school, she helped organize and grow those efforts for girls and boys in her career in education. We could always count on her to go above and beyond the call of duty in a way that only true servant-leaders can. She is a wonderful choice for the Women In Sports Leadership Award."

Tibaldi has been both a high school and college coach and administrator in her 38-year career. Starting with teaching and coaching stints at Comstock Park and Grand Rapids West Catholic; followed by 18 years at Aquinas College in Grand

Rapids as a coach and athletic administrator; and she is now a coach, teacher and athletic director at Traverse City West High School. At the high school level, she was been honored as a Coach of the Year while at West Catholic in directing the girls basketball team to the MHSAA Class B title in 1979, and by the National Federation of State High School Associations as a state Coach of the Year at Traverse City West in 2004.



Tibaldi

She has served on several MHSAA's committees; has been a past president of the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan and served on its executive board; and is a member of the MIAAA. In the community, she has worked with local Boys and Girls Clubs and co-authored a successful million dollar grant effort to help battle obesity in the greater Traverse City Community.

An Aquinas College graduate with a degree in English and physical education, Tibaldi was inducted into her alma matter's Athletic Hall of Fame as a coach in 1999.

"Patti Tibaldi was a pioneer on the basketball court as the game for females was redeveloping at the high school and collegiate levels," said Roberts. "Her leadership as a teacher and administrator is exemplary as well. Her contributions make us proud to present her with the Women In Sports Leadership award."

- 1990 – Carol Seavoy, L'Anse
- 1991 – Diane Laffey, Harper Woods
- 1992 – Patricia Ashby, Scotts
- 1993 – Jo Lake, Grosse Pointe
- 1994 – Brenda Gatlin, Detroit
- 1995 – Jane Bennett, Ann Arbor
- 1996 – Cheryl Amos-Helmicki, Huntington Woods
- 1997 – Delores L. Elswick, Detroit
- 1998 – Karen S. Leinaar, Delton
- 1999 – Kathy McGee, Flint
- 2000 – Pat Richardson, Grass Lake
- 2001 – Suzanne Martin, East Lansing
- 2002 – Susan Barthold, Kentwood
- 2003 – Nancy Clark, Flint
- 2004 – Kathy Vrugink Westdorp, Grand Rapids
- 2005 – Barbara Redding, Capac
- 2006 – Melanie Miller, Lansing
- 2007 – Jan Sander, Warren Woods
- 2008 – Jane Bos, Grand Rapids
- 2009 – Gail Ganakas, Flint; Deb VanKuiken, Holly
- 2010 – Gina Mazzolini, East Lansing

## Eric Federico Names 2011 Forsythe Winner

**E**ric C. Federico, who recently retired after 39 years of service to educational athletics as a coach, teacher and administrator, is the 2011 recipient of the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Charles E. Forsythe Award.

The annual award is in its 34th year of existence and is named after former MHSAA Executive Director Charles E. Forsythe, the Association's first full time and longest-serving chief executive. Forsythe Award recipients are selected each year by the MHSAA Representative Council, based on an individual's outstanding contribution to the interscholastic athletics community. Federico received his honor at halftime of the MHSAA Class B Boys Basketball Championship game at the Breslin Student Events Center in East Lansing on Saturday (March 26).

"Eric Federico has served wonderfully as a leader of young people, first as a teacher-coach, and for most of his career as an administrator," said MHSAA Executive Director John E. "Jack" Roberts. "In a lifetime of dedicated service, he has been a person who has given so much of himself to see that kids have the privilege of playing school sports. We're proud to honor Eric with the Forsythe Award."

His career in 1970 started as a physical educational instructor and a football and baseball coach at Trenton High School, and he then moved up to become the Director of Athletics and the Department Head of Physical Education for Trenton Public Schools, a role he served in from 1978 to 1996.

Federico then moved to the nearby Gibraltar School District, where he started as an assistant



Eric Federico

principal and athletic administrator at Carlson High School, and would eventually ascend to the superintendent's position in the district, where he served for five years from 2004 until his retirement.

He was active on the statewide and national sports scene, serving for 23 years on the MHSAA's governing body, the Representative Council; as president of the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association; and on the National Federation of State High School Association's Ice Hockey Rules Committee.

Honors previously afforded to Federico include a regional Principal of the Year award from the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals; Athletic Director of the Year from the MIAAA; a National Federation Citation Award; the Eddie Jeremiah Award on two occasions for dedication and service to ice hockey in Michigan; and he was inducted into the Trenton Sports Hall of Fame in 1989.

A 1970 graduate of the University of Michigan with a bachelor's degree in Physical Education, Federico also received master's degrees in Secondary Athletic Administration and Educational Leadership/Secondary Administration from Eastern Michigan University.

## MHSAA Staff Members Earn Various Honors

Four MHSAA staff members received well deserved honors recently.

- Assistant Director **Nate Hampton** has been notified he will receive one of eight National Federation Citations at the NFHS Annual Meeting in Philadelphia this summer.
- Assistant Director **Mark Uyl** received the Art Jevert-Bruck Jacob Distinguished Service Award from the Association of Track Officials of Michigan on Feb. 5.
- Assistant Director **Gina Mazzolini** received the Michigan High School Tennis Coaches Association's Distinguished Service Award at its Hall of Fame Banquet Feb. 4.
- Communications Director **John Johnson** received a "Best of the Best" award from the Detroit Broadcasters Association at halftime of the Division 1 Football Final on Nov. 27 at Ford Field.



Nate Hampton



Mark Uyl



Gina Mazzolini



John Johnson

## Earning Their Stripes

I wanted to see just how thankless the most thankless job in sports can be.

And a minute and a half into a college basketball game between Lake Superior State and Saginaw Valley State, I found my answer.

James Vanderveer, by day the director of guest services at Treetops Resort and generally one of the friendliest guys around, calls a couple of quick hand-check fouls on SVSU.

On our trip here, Vanderveer told me to expect some dialogue between he and both teams' coaches, and SVSU's Frankie Smith immediately gets into Vanderveer's ear. Vanderveer calmly listens to the fiery coach, before offering a controlled, yet stern explanation of his call.

It's in moments like these where officials like Vanderveer are in their element. At once, they are traffic cops, peacekeepers and teachers. It's a tough job, but one that Vanderveer and veteran

Today, we're going to embark upon the closest trip on Vanderveer's Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference circuit. We'll make the quick hour and 45 minute jaunt up I-75, past the snow belt, across the Mackinac Straits and through the wilderness of the eastern Upper Peninsula to the border town of Sault Ste. Marie.

This is child's play for Vanderveer. He regularly makes trips to Michigan Tech, Northern Michigan and Grand Valley State. Also officiating games in the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association and the Wolverine-Hoosier conferences, most weekends he's heading downstate.

Just a couple of weeks ago, he had a weekday night game in Houghton. After a five hour trip there and a five hour trip back, he arrived at his Gaylord home at 4 a.m. He was to work four hours later, with a smile on his face.

"You have to be able to work on little sleep," Vanderveer admits.



Jeremy Speer, Gaylord Herald Times

Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference official James Vanderveer makes a foul call during a game between Lake Superior State and Saginaw Valley State.

partners Randy Hutton and Mark Larson truly seem to enjoy.

They are the judge and jury of the sports world — officials whose job places them as much on center stage of a sporting event as the coaches and players. Yet while the later two groups find themselves in the bright lights, the officials prefer to stay in the background, carefully calling a game so the public's attention remains on the players and not on themselves.

Their story intrigued me to accompany them on this day to the Upper Peninsula, to see firsthand what motivates a person to spend hours on the road several days a week from one end of the state to another. Following is an account of what I learned:

### 10 A.M. GAYLORD

It's amazing how Vanderveer, a man of boundless energy, fits it all in. He's got a busy and challenging job and is a family man with a wife and four young children.

For Vanderveer, this is a luxury of a Saturday morning. But for Hutton and Larson, both of whom live in the Flint area, it's a long day. They're on the road before 7 and have been traveling for three hours before the four of us leave the Bob Evans parking lot at 10.

But when I ask one of them where their favorite place to officiate a game is, they give me a shocking answer: "Michigan Tech."

Clearly, traveling doesn't affect these guys like it does most of us.

### 11 A.M. SOMEWHERE ON I-75

Sometime along the way, officials got vilified. They've been booed, jeered and accused of everything in the book. They've been called "four eyes," "zebras" and much worse.

But very quickly I realize something — these are great guys.

We talk about everything under the sun — how they got started, how well they're compensated and what it's like to be part of the officiating brotherhood. I am given a crash course in officiating and

hear story upon story about situations they or their colleagues have been in. The talk of what they would have done in each of these situations makes the drive seem short.

Just like how I can spend gobs of time breaking down last Sunday's Lions game, these guys can spend an hour dissecting a unique play at last week's Ferris State game. They can rattle off the names of their favorite refs like I can recite my favorite childhood sports heroes.

I ask Vanderveer what it's like to watch a game on television.

"I truly watch the officials," he admits. "I'll focus on something like play in the post and I won't even watch the ball. I put myself in their shoes."

Larson interjects.

"In all the time I've ever watched games on my couch, I've never made a bad call."

Isn't that a statement most of us can agree with?

## NOON, SAULT STE. MARIE

It's now time to get serious. We are brought into a room just off the LSSU gym and are treated like pseudo royalty. Rico, a student host, brings us in water and says he'll be here for us if we need anything.

We don't because Vanderveer and his partners have come well-prepared. Each brings a suitcase and they change into their uniform, which by the way, involves much more than a striped shirt and some black pants. Larson shaves, while Vanderveer polishes his shoes. It's clear that looking good is an integral part of this fraternity.

Hutton, who has spent 35 years officiating college games, breaks out a binder which goes over new and standard rules and lists points of emphasis. It's so thorough that his packet is used by associations across the state. The three talk about what they're going to look for, as well as how they're going to position themselves and help one another during the game. This is my favorite part of the day. I've played in, coached, written about and broadcasted countless basketball games. Never did I learn more about the sport than in those 20 minutes.

"Make your first call a good one and take care of business," are the last words Hutton says.

We walk out to the floor, where both teams are beginning their warm ups. The officials joke around with some of the coaches and players. Officiating around 40 college games every year, Vanderveer gets to know the teams he sees very well.

He's been working the GLIAC circuit for six years and college games in general for 11 years. He got his start as a high school student at Hillman

High, he enrolled in Michigan's Legacy program, which allows students to officiate sub-varsity competitions, as long as they're accompanied by a mentor. He officiated throughout his college years and did his first collegiate game at Kirtland Community College at age 20. Now 31, Vanderveer aspires to some day be a Division I official.

But for now, he's doing well for himself officiating in a good Division II basketball conference. Each GLIAC official is assigned to different games by the league supervisor. The crews switch on a game-by-game basis, but the brotherhood between the officials doesn't change. These guys are a tight-knit bunch, most officials have spent the night at Vanderveer's house and he has spent the night at most of their's.

Just before the game is to start, we head back to the officials' room and the three lock hands and bow their heads. Larson leads them in a prayer.

## 1 P.M., SAULT STE. MARIE

It's game time. In a physical first half, Vanderveer's whistle is blowing frequently. Aside from some barking from both coaches, things seem to be going pretty well. At halftime, we convene again in the room, where they spend the 15 minutes discussing calls and formulating a plan of action for the second half.

Just a few minutes into the second half, Smith resumes his riding of Vanderveer and he's seen enough. He reports to the scorer's table that he's giving him a warning. Smith takes a seat on the bench and is rarely heard from the rest of the game. The second half turns out to be less physical than the first. The host Lakers build up a 20-point lead before the visitors come fighting back. In the end the home team wins and the officials walk off the floor, another good day at the office in the books.

During one game last season, Hutton wore a pedometer to see just how far he ran. Turns out that in a normal college game, they'll put in between three and four miles, many of which are spent sprinting to catch up with the action.

They laugh and joke, get dressed and wind up back in Vanderveer's car. They'll make it back to Gaylord by 5, just enough time for Vanderveer to pack up his family and head off to a family Christmas party in Hillman.

Never slowing down. Always moving. Thus is the life of an official.

— *Jeremy Speer*  
Sports Editor  
*Gaylord Herald Times*

## Rules of the Games

Sharpen you skills with the following rules questions for Baseball, Softball, Soccer, Boys Lacrosse and Girls Lacrosse officials. Answers and rule references appear at the bottom of the next page.

### Baseball

- R1, score is 1-1, bottom of seventh. Batter has two bunt attempts that go foul. The bunt sign is still on. R1 breaks for second on the pitch but the batter's bunt attempt is a foul pop-up to the right of the plate that is caught by the catcher. The catcher then throws to first base to easily double up R1 who cannot get back.
  - This is a double play.
  - Allow R1 to return to first without penalty.
  - This is not a double play as the ball becomes dead when it is bunted foul on a third strike.
  - This is a delayed dead ball.
- R3, one out. R3 is attempting to score on a passed ball. B4 is still standing in the batter's box, even though there is time for him to move out of the pitcher's way. As the play develops, B4 unintentionally hinders the catcher's throw to the pitcher who is covering the plate.
  - R3 is out and B4 remains at the plate.
  - B4 is out and R3 scores.
  - B4 has a right to remain stationary in the batter's box after the pitch has been caught.
- R1, R2, R3, one out. B4 doubles. R2 misses third base. After touching home plate, R2 realizes his mistake and starts back to third base after both R3 and R1 have touched home. R2 makes it safely back to third.
  - R2 is called out before R1 crosses the plate and no runs score.
  - R2 is called out on proper appeal and two runs score.
  - R2 is called out after playing action has ended and no runs score.
  - R2 is called out after playing action has ended and two runs score.

### Softball

- The pitching distance for grades 9-12 in all games is 43 feet beginning in 2011 with the pitching distance measured from the front edge of the pitcher's plate to the back tip of home plate.
- Lineup cards submitted by the coach only need starters listed and changes can be made to the lineup card at anytime without penalty.
- A runner who has been declared out or has scored can only be guilty of interference if the interference is ruled to be intentional.

- Any gray, white or optic colored marking that gives the appearance of a ball, on the outside or inside of the glove is not permitted.
- Knee and ankle braces unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production are permitted and need not be padded or covered.



### Soccer

*Rule Legal or Illegal on the following:*

- Player A is injured while on the field and play is stopped while A is attended to on the field. Both Teams substitute 3 players directly from the bench before play resumes. R
- Player A is cautioned or ejected. Both Teams substitute 3 players directly from the bench before play resumes.
- Overtime procedures required for MHSAA tournament play and optional by league or conference adoption during the regular season are now two 10-minute overtime periods to full completion (no golden goal) and then a penalty kick shootout. During regular-season play, any lesser combination of these times or options is allowed.



## Girls Lacrosse

- The wording for the Draw has been clarified and includes (check all that apply):
  - Opponents each stand with one foot toeing the center line.
  - Crosses (shaft and head combined) are held below hip level.
  - Crosses (shaft and head combined) are held in the air, above hip level.
  - The entire length of both crosses must be contained within the vertical plane of the center line.
  - When setting up the draw, the umpire should be aware of possible height differentials.
- Illegal use of the crosse includes (check all that apply):
  - Directly poking or waving the crosse near an opponent's face.
  - Making a sweeping check from behind that contacts the opponent's body.
  - Cross Checking.
  - Lowering the head of the crosse below the shoulder and initiating crosse to body contact.
- A crosse may be checked in a direction toward the body as long as:
  - The check/tackle is controlled and the crosse or ball does not go into the sphere.
  - The check/tackle goes directly to the sphere.
  - The crosse is used to hit or cause the opponent's crosse to hit the body.
- The goalkeeper may return to her goal circle if (check all that apply):
  - She has moved outside and made an interception or any legal play on a slow whistle thus causing the end to the scoring play.
  - She has moved outside the goal circle and gained possession of the ball on an out-of-bounds slow whistle, thus ending the scoring play.
  - She has moved outside the goal circle on a slow whistle and is fouled by the attack ending the scoring play.
  - She is in the arc when the whistle blows and has not fouled and the arc is to be cleared.
  - She is in the penalty lane when the whistle blows and has not fouled and the penalty lane is to be cleared.

## Boys Lacrosse

- Mark all personal fouls that result in a one- to three-minute non-releasable penalty.
  - Blocking of an opponent with the head or initiating contact with the head against an opponent
  - Initiating contact directly to an opponent's head or initiating contact to an opponent's body that then follows through to the head
  - Inadvertent contact with a crosse to an opponent's head
  - Use threatening, profane or obscene language or gestures at any time during a game
  - Enter into an argument with an official, or any other act considered unsportsmanlike by the official
- Mark all that are considered technical fouls and result in either a 30 second suspension of a player from the game or awarding of the ball to the fouled team.
  - Tripping (intentionally obstructing) an opponent with any part of his body or crosse
  - Intentionally kicking an opponent's crosse
  - Touching the ball while in play (except for goal keeper)
  - Failure to have a properly marked field ready for play
  - Adding several players to the roster after the game has begun
- B1 is standing motionless near the midfield. A1, in possession, runs full speed toward B1, lowers his shoulder, and knocks B1 to the ground. This is:
  - A legal play
  - Warding; possession goes to Team B
  - Unnecessary roughness; A1 serves a 1- to 3-minute penalty
  - An ejection foul: A1 is ejected and the in-home serves a 3:00 non-releasable penalty
- Team A takes a shot that crosses the end line directly behind Team B's goal, and Team A is awarded possession. During the ensuing dead ball, B1 commits a personal foul. The restart will take place:
  - Just inside the end line where the ball went out
  - At least 20 yards laterally from the goal
  - Just across midfield
  - With a face-off in the alley

**Baseball Answers:** 1-a (5-1-1 d, 7-4-1); 2-a (7-3-5 d, 8-4-2 l); 3-b ( 8-2-6)

**Softball Answers:** 1-T (1-1-2b); 2-F (3-1-3); 3-F (8-6-18); 4-T (1-4); 5-T (3-2-13); 6-T (3-6-6)

**Soccer Answers:** 1-Legal (3-3-1-c); 2-Illegal (3-3-2-b); 3-Legal (MHSAA Adoption)

3-d. (3-3-2-b[3]); 4- T (5-1-3-A); 5- T (3-1-3)

**Girls Lacrosse Answers:** 1-a, c, d, e (5-2); 2-a, b, c, d (6-1); 3-a (6-1); 4-a, b, c, d, e (7-24)

**Boys Lacrosse Answers:** 1-a, b, d, e (5-3-4); 2-b, c, e (6-5-); 3-c (5.8 situation f); 4-a (7.3 and 7.3 situation c)

## Keep Comments to Yourself; In Person and Online

*As a reminder of one of officiating's Golden Rules, consider the following news from Kentucky:*

The Kentucky High School Athletic Association recently announced penalties resulting from comments made by a basketball official on a social network.

According to a release from the KHSAA, the official made comments on Facebook in February regarding the ejection of a coach during a girls basketball game. The Facebook posts were removed later, but the KHSAA ruled that Gentry violated the officials' guidebook and professional standards.

The KHSAA issued the following penalties:

- The official was suspended for three games.
- The official must make a written apology to the coach.
- The official must make public presentations to the coaches' and officials' associations in his area on the subject of negative media relations and inappropriate use of social networking.

"Social media continues to present new challenges in maintaining sportsmanship, ethics and integrity," KHSAA Commissioner Julian Tackett said in a release. "Our contest officials were reminded with rule books and licensing material this year that it was inappropriate to use social media in relation to situations during contests, and we expect uniform application of that standard."

Earlier in the season, a coach was penalized by the KHSAA for critical posts of a referee on Twitter.



### Officials for Kids Continues Tradition of Giving

In March of 2011, the MHSAA once again distributed donations to the four Michigan Children's Miracle Network

Hospitals on behalf of Officials for Kids. Each year, officials across the state donate money to Officials for Kids via their annual registration. Several Approved Officials Associations hold annual events (golf outings, silent auctions, community enrichment programs) which generate contributions, as well. The MHSAA then allocates those funds to the appropriate CMN facility, and routes contributions to hospital leadership to provide new programs, established services, and medical equipment to kids in need.

Officials donations through the 2010 calendar year garnered the following amounts for our four beneficiaries:

Beaumont Hospital (Royal Oak)	\$900
Helen DeVos Children's Hospital (Grand Rapids)	\$1800
Sparrow Hospital (Lansing)	\$1900
Hurley Medical Center (Flint)	\$200

The MHSAA is proud to accept donations from registering officials, and will continue to promote Officials for Kids to its membership. For more information, please visit the Officials for Kids page of [MHSAA.com](http://MHSAA.com), or contact Andi Osters: [aosters@mhsaa.com](mailto:aosters@mhsaa.com).



### Don't Miss the 32nd Annual Officials Banquet

The Annual MHSAA Officials Awards and Alumni Banquet will take place Saturday, April 30, at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, East Lansing beginning at 7 p.m. with a pre-event reception one hour prior to the banquet. The cost of the banquet is \$20 per person and the order deadline is April 13, 2011. Ticket orders will be filled on a first-come basis; however, priority will be given to those officials receiving awards. Officials, friends and relatives are also encouraged to attend. Tickets will not be sold at the door. One needn't be an honoree to attend; please contact the MHSAA if you wish to attend.

## Important Football Helmet Notice for Fall 2011



### Effective September 1, 2011 NAERA members will not recondition or recertify any football helmet 10 years of age or older.

National Athletic Equipment Reconditioners Association (NAERA) recently announced the new 10-year policy adopted in its winter meeting. This policy will become effective at the start of the reconditioning season September 1, 2011, for the 2012 football season. The 10 years shall be determined by the manufacturer's date as required by NOCSAE document 001.

For example, at the end of this upcoming 2011 football season, any helmet dated 2002 or older will not be reconditioned/recertified.

NAERA is an association of 21 athletic equipment reconditioners and four helmet manufacturers whose mission is to increase awareness and acceptance of high quality athletic equipment reconditioning / recertification. Particular emphasis is directed towards reducing the risk of injury for athletic event participants. Members are licensed by NOCSAE to recertify football, lacrosse, softball/baseball helmets, and face guards. NAERA members reconditioned/recertified over 1.7 million helmets last year.

For more information and a list of NAERA members please see our website at [www.naera.net](http://www.naera.net) or contact Ed Fisher, Executive Director of NAERA at (509) 842-8516.

### Coaches and Administrators Urged to Take Free Online Concussion Course

There is a valuable risk management and safety asset right at your fingertips at [MHSAA.com](http://MHSAA.com) and [NHFS.org](http://NHFS.org).

The free online "Concussion in Sports" course is a must for all involved in school athletics.



Sports-related concussion in high school sports can be serious or even life-threatening situations if not managed correctly. The NFHS and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have teamed up to provide information and resources to help educate coaches, officials, parents and students on the importance of proper concussion recognition and management in high school sports.

In this course you will understand the impact sports-related concussion can have on your players, how to recognize a suspected concussion, the proper protocols to manage a suspected concussion, and steps to help your player return to play safely after experiencing a concussion.

## Bat Restrictions in Effect for 2011 Season

For the 2011 baseball season, National Federation playing rules are as follows regarding baseball bats for scholastic play:

1. Any non-wood BESR-certified bat will be legal for the 2011 season EXCEPT FOR THOSE BANNED AND ILLEGAL BESR-COMPOSITE BATS. This list of banned bats is posted on the Baseball page at MHSAA.com.
2. Any solid (one-piece) wood baseball bat will continue to be legal in 2011 and beyond. 3) Any aluminum or composite BBCOR-certified baseball bats will be legal in 2011 and beyond.

### Notes & Reminders:

- If a BESR-certified bat is legal for 2011, this will be the LAST SEASON it may be used.
- It is critical that all umpires and coaches have the list of banned bats present at all games.
- As of January 1, 2012, the only legal non-wood bats will be BBCOR-certified baseball bats.
- If players, coaches, schools or parents are looking to buy bats now for future use beyond the 2011 season, you should purchase a BBCOR-certified bat.

If you have any questions, please see the listings at [baseballbatlist@nfhs.org](mailto:baseballbatlist@nfhs.org).

Before stepping into the box for the 2011 season, coaches and players should consult the list of legal bats at NFHS.org.



## Softball Pitchers Step Back This Spring

Effective with the 2010-11 school year, the pitching distance for high school varsity softball pitchers will increase from 40 feet to 43 feet.

The new pitching distance was a revision made by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Softball Rules Committee at its annual meeting last June in Indianapolis. The rules changes subsequently were approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Although the new pitching distance is mandatory beginning with the 2010-11 school year, NFHS-member state high school associations had the option of adopting the 43-foot distance last year.

After at least 10 years of debate by committee members, the NFHS has extended the fast-pitch



Softball pitching plates must be moved back to 43 feet for the 2011 season. In addition to player safety, the move is intended to get the fielders more involved.

pitching distance to 43 feet. The change to Rule 1-1-2b was made after two member state associations experimented with 43 feet – Florida for four years and Oregon for one year. Coaches surveyed within these states were overwhelmingly supportive of the change.

Creating a better balance between the offense and the defense was the major rationale for the rule change. Experimentation results from both states indicated more batted balls were hit into play.

“Our main thrust is getting the defense more involved,” said Mary Struckhoff, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Softball Rules Committee. “When more balls are hit into play, the defense is more involved in the game, thus enhancing skill development.”

## Bringing Balance to Workouts

A verbal poll of any group of coaches will reveal that lateral ankle sprains are the most common injury in sports. The sage advice of R.I.C.E. (rest, ice, compression, elevation) is excellent for immediate emergency care. Formal physical therapy or rehabilitation by a certified athletic trainer will get them ready to play. Now the athlete is back with the team. Protecting these athletes from a second sprain is a challenging and sometimes frustrating experience. Everyone is ready with anecdotal advice. Let's check the review of research literature. Conclusions show that adding balance exercises could decrease the incidence of re-injury (3,5). There are several balance exercises that can easily and inexpensively be added to any practice schedule.

Lateral ankle sprains cause a loss of proprioception (1,2, 3, 5) which is the ability of the body to

provide feedback to the brain of where the ankle is at any moment in time. It is the warning system that the ankle is turning too far over and needs corrective measures immediately. When this skill is not specifically addressed, the athlete is more susceptible to another lateral ankle sprain. Balance exercises will help the athlete restore this proprioception. The fun part is that these activities can benefit the whole team with the flexibility to be made sport specific.

First, be sure to tape or brace your athletes after fresh ankle injuries before allowing participation in practices and games. The ankle ligament can take six months to one year to fully heal. Any exercise, including balance activities, will not accelerate this process. The exercises are important though, in strengthening muscles to protect the joint while the ligaments are healing.



**Figure 1:**  
*Dyna-disc single-leg balance*



**Figure 2:**  
*Half of 6-inch diameter dense foam roll single-leg balance*



**Figure 3:**  
*Balance pod single-leg balance while tossing basketball to partner*

The first and most basic balance activity is to have the athlete stand on one leg to maintain balance without support of holding on to anything. The athlete needs to build up to three minutes on each side. Next, have the athlete close their eyes. Look out! This is when they usually fall over. Eyes closed increases the difficulty of the activity. An elite athlete should strive to maintain balance posture for one minute on each leg with eyes closed.

Now, let's make the program fun. There are a variety of inexpensive items for the athlete to stand on to increase the difficulty of the balance exercise. Having your athletes stand on softer materials or wobble board creates an unstable surface, thus, challenging proprioception. See illustrations, Figure 1: dyna-disc, Figure 2: ½ cut foam roll, and Figure 3: balance pod. Wobble boards can be con-

structed from rectangular board attached to round dowel lengthwise or a round board attached to half of a croquet ball. Add in ball pass, bump, or throw with a partner to develop proprioception while improving sport specific skills. Football players, I would not recommend having your athlete withstand a tackling from another team mate during the balance activities. Using resistive tubing is a safer option to challenge your balance. Pulling on the resistive band disrupts the athletes balance challenging and improving proprioception. Putting balance into your program can add fun while protecting athletes who have are recovering from an ankle sprain.

— Marge Taylor PT, ATC, JSCC  
Clinical Director  
Assessment Rehabilitation Management

# Brackets: A Rite of March

## Pilot Online Brackets Launch During 2011 MHSAA Basketball Tournaments

*Getting I.T. offers helpful hints and instructions pertaining to information technology as it relates to the MHSAA and school sports in general.*

Nothing tells the tale of an athletic tournament from start to finish – including roadblocks and obstacles in-between – quite like the bracket. That universal, modular ledger of competition poured over by sports enthusiasts as meticulously as any CPA might review year-end fiscal reports.

Just in time for the MHSAA basketball tournaments in March, MHSAA.com rolled out a new interactive bracket system so fans could track their favorite teams from the first round of Districts to the championship games at the Breslin Center. With the click of a mouse, visitors were able to travel back-and-forth from District-to-District, Regional-to-Regional, and back again, all while viewing team records and schedules, and previewing the coming rounds of the tournaments.

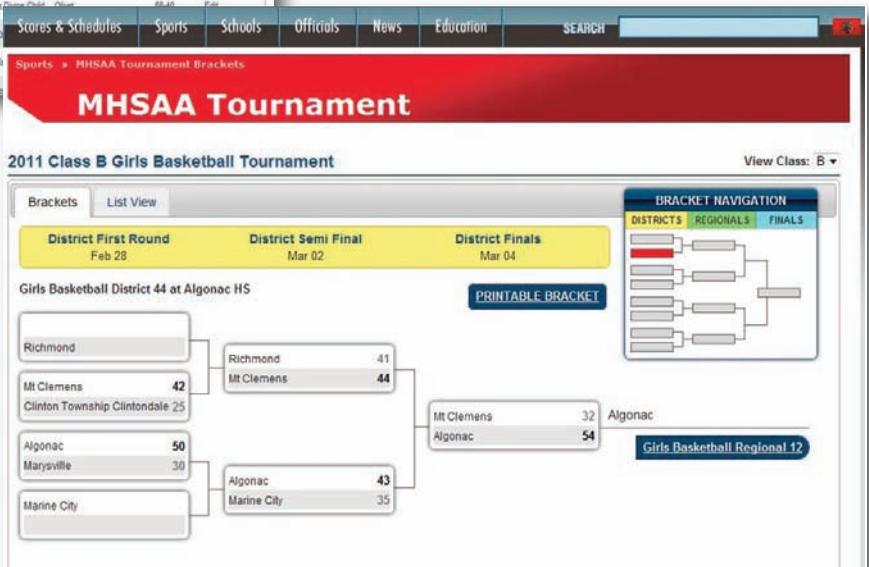
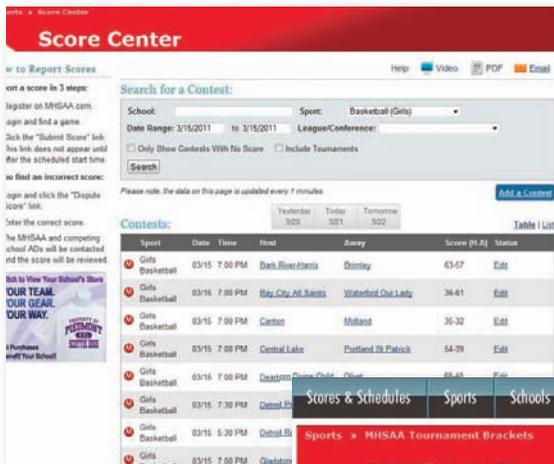
The brackets are part of the increasingly robust MHSAA Score Center (click “Scores & Schedules”

in the navigation bar on any MHSAA.com web page). All tournament games were listed in the Score Center, and when winners/scores were entered by the crowd, the bracket updated and the next round of games were automatically added to the Score Center calendar. Eventually, tournament hosts will also be able to post their District matchups directly to the website minutes after conducting the official draw.

In the future, fans will be able to add school-specific teams as a “favorite” and can opt to receive updates on their team via email or text message. And we’ll also have way to view all tournament games by school and by conference.

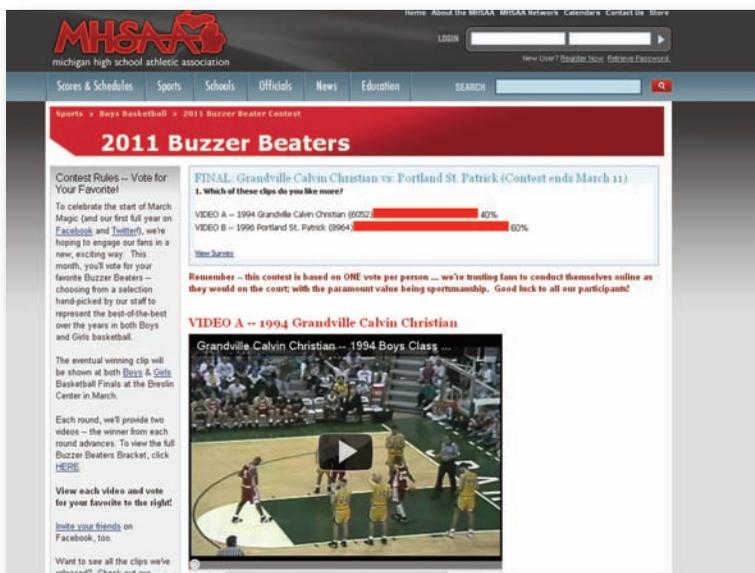
Our March brackets were a huge hit with fans and administrators, and we like to think the product is unlike any other offered by state associations across the nation. We look forward to posting them again this spring, so be on the lookout MHSAA postseason brackets in Baseball, Softball, Girls Soccer and Boys & Girls Lacrosse. And don’t forget to login to MHSAA.com – perhaps using your mobile device – to report scores throughout the regular season.

*– Andy Frushour  
MHSAA Marketing and Special Programs Director*



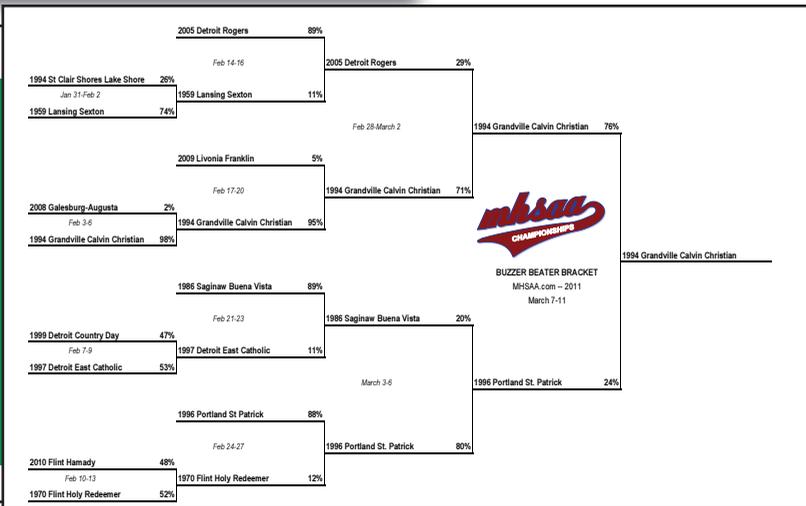
All registered MHSAA.com users can login to the site and enter scores via “Score Center.” Once entered, tournament scores are then populated on the interactive bracket pages, where enthusiasts can follow their team’s paths, game schedules and regular-season results.

# Buzzer Beaters Tough to Beat



In the spirit of March and bracket hysteria, the MHSAA introduced its on-line Buzzer Beater Contest this winter, and the results are in. Success!

The Buzzer Beater Contest drew more than 11,000 viewers on the MHSAA YouTube channel, as voters selected their favorite clip of 12 game-ending highlights pitted against one another.



To commemorate our one-year anniversary on Facebook and Twitter, the MHSAA decided to engage fans in an entirely new way, while giving a “tip of the cap” to some great times of old. The 2011 MHSAA Buzzer Beaters Contest was launched on Jan. 31, pitting 12 end-of-game tournament clips from Boys and Girls Basketball in a round-by-round tournament. MHSAA staff selected the twelve participating clips by reviewing tape from basketball tournaments dating as far back as 1959- (Lansing Sexton). Buzzer beaters evoke the emotion, spirit and pure excitement of high school athletics – and tournament game-enders provide an even bigger thrill.

Each round, two clips were voted on by the public. The clip with the majority of votes at the conclusion of the round advanced. The first few rounds didn’t garner much attention – but once folks realized that the eventual winning clip would be shown at both the 2011 Girls & Boys Basketball Finals, numbers started to grow significantly. The 12 clips presented to fans garnered more than 11,200 views on the MHSAA YouTube channel. The final round, which placed the 1994 Grandville Calvin Christian gamewinner against the 1996 Portland St. Patrick clip, was a real vote-magnet. After witnessing the fervor with which fans voted for our two finalists, we decided to show each clip at the Girls and Boys Basketball Finals at the Breslin Center on March 19 and March 26.

– Andi Osters  
MHSAA Program and Development Assistant

## What the MHSAA Doesn't Do

**C**alls and letters often received from conscientious and concerned citizens of our state sometimes attempt to assign responsibility to the MHSAA for matters over which the MHSAA has little or no authority, because they confuse the MHSAA's role with those of the major professional sports leagues or local school districts.

Criticism softens when people understand better how much more vast the interscholastic athletic program is in Michigan than any professional sports league nationwide. On any given Friday, for example, the National Basketball League might have 14 games, while there will be more than 1,400 basketball games at the subvarsity and varsity levels throughout Michigan. The NBA has a large staff to review a small number of games, while the MHSAA has a small staff which can't possibly be held responsible for reviewing the conduct of players, coaches, management, spectators and officials in all these games.

Moreover, basketball is just one of the sports involving MHSAA schools. Unlike the NBA, the MHSAA serves 28 sports. There are more than 140,000 contests involving MHSAA member schools each year in these sports.

Obviously, if there is a problem at a local contest site, in all but the most unusual situations, it will have to be addressed and corrected at the local level. On occasion, a league might get involved.

Rarely should the statewide organization be involved.

When citizens call or write the MHSAA office about the quality of facilities, the competency of officials, or the conduct of players, coaches or spectators – and we have heard nothing about these matters from game management, contest officials or the administration of participating schools – the citizens will be referred to their local school administrators. They serve as the funnels and filters for their constituents' concerns.

Usually, school administrators will determine the concerns do not need to be addressed to the MHSAA but should be settled internally or between the two schools which scheduled and played the event. This is consistent with each school's Resolution of Membership in the MHSAA which states the local school district voluntarily joins and accepts the responsibility for enforcing rules and standards of conduct for their own people.

If the concern is for officiating, schools have at least three not mutually exclusive courses of action. One is their rating of each official which will contribute to the official's three-year average which affects MHSAA tournament assignments. Second,

the school(s) may determine no longer to hire an official for regular-season contests. And third, the schools may outline their criticisms of an official in a letter to the MHSAA which will be shared with the official in the interest of improving his/her future performance.

Officials are requested (and required under some circumstances) to submit written reports to participating schools and the MHSAA office when they have concerns about facilities or conduct.

The MHSAA registers officials, conducts rules meetings for them, helps to train local assignors and the trainers of local officials associations and gives special privileges to associations with substantial training programs. But, officials are independent contractors, ultimately responsible for their own training and their own schedules. Most officials are proud and competitive and want to improve and to become so good that they will be highly respected and hired for the big games and MHSAA tournaments. The vast majority of officials takes responsibility for their actions, studies the rules and practices their mechanics every bit as conscientiously as the students who play and the faculty who coach.

MHSAA staff cannot review videotapes from schools or individuals. Again, there are dozens of cameras at most of the thousands of events played each week, and it is humanly impossible to observe and analyze tape of plays or entire contests which upset people. This is not the Big Ten or is NBA with their limited teams and small pools of officials – this high school sports with 100,000 plus contests and more than 13,000 officials.

Finally, the *MHSAA Handbook*, which is adopted by all MHSAA member schools, does not allow the MHSAA office to entertain protests of contests, even when the protest is based on judgment decisions of officials or misinterpretation or misapplication of playing rules. The sheer volume of contests requires that concerns be addressed on the spot at the local level. The contest official's call is final. This is what MHSAA membership requires, and this is what the MHSAA membership must communicate to its public.

This is not the Big Ten, NBA, NFL, NHL or Major League Baseball, where a small number of contests, participants and officials can be thoroughly scrutinized from a central office every week. This is high school sports – a massive program that can only be run at the local level, and is only successful when expectations are communicated and enforced locally.

**The Only Official Interpretations are Those Received in Writing**

## Annual Contract

In Michigan, schools make the rules for themselves. The rules cover hundreds of policies and procedures for administration of the local programs.

In addition, schools have the option to adopt rules of qualification into the postseason tournaments conducted by the MHSAA. MHSAA rules – prepared by the elected representatives of member schools (Representative Council) – are not to govern regular season competition, but to determine the qualifying standards for MHSAA sponsored and conducted postseason tournaments.

An ancillary but still important benefit is that by adopting these tournament qualifying rules, schools gain a greater degree of standardization – a more level playing field – for their regular season competition.

For MHSAA member schools, these and other agreements are published in the MHSAA Handbook; and each year the local governing boards of member schools sign a Membership Resolution, a contract really, that they will enforce those rules locally, while the MHSAA agrees that the rules will not be changed during that year.

The expectations of member schools include:

- Educating student-athletes, staff and other involved personnel about MHSAA rules and procedures.
- Monitoring compliance year-around.
- Investigating possible violations and reporting findings.
- Administering penalties.

Schools do so to keep the program fair. They do so to keep the program healthy for the people involved. They do so to keep the program consistent with the mission of the sponsors: namely, education of students by schools.

Rules do not exist for their own sake, but to address known problems, to attempt to solve those problems, in order to strive to provide the elusive product of a state high school association's work: competitive equity.

The Foreword to the *Handbook* of the Michigan High School Athletic Association has for many years included these two paragraphs:

*“The MHSAA’s primary purpose in promulgation of rules for eligibility minimums and competition maximums is to establish conditions by which students and schools may qualify for MHSAA postseason tournaments - in other words, to promote a level playing field for MHSAA-sponsored tournaments.*

*“Because entry into the MHSAA’s tournaments requires season-long, sometimes school-year long and even year-round adherence to basic rules, member schools reap an important byproduct: they have some standardized rules for their regular season competition – in other words, a more level playing field for the rest of their interscholastic experience.”*

The *MHSAA Handbook* has for many years stated the four "Purposes of the Michigan High School Athletic Association, Inc." Included is this:

*“3. Promote uniformity, predictability and competitive equity in the application of eligibility rules for athletic contests.”*

Similarly, promotion of competitive equity is in the stated or implied purpose for or value of the sponsoring organizations of school sports nationwide.

The 2011-12 MHSAA Membership Resolution will be sent in May to all school superintendents to be included on the agenda for board of education action prior to Aug. 1. Coverage under the MHSAA-purchased catastrophic accident medical insurance policy and access to MHSAA due process is unavailable to a school for the 2011-12 school year until its Membership Resolution is received.



### Schedule Membership Resolution for Board of Education Meetings

When the Representative Council meets each May, the rules are finalized for the coming school year, and meeting minutes are mailed to each member school. Every member school Board of Education or governing body of a nonpublic school wishing to join the MHSAA for the coming school year must vote to do so and adopt the rules as its own. The MHSAA Membership Resolution must be signed by the Board of Education and returned to the MHSAA. When membership lapses insurance coverage, among other matters, is jeopardized.

Administrators: Please be sure to schedule the MHSAA Membership Resolution for your upcoming Board of Education Meeting – Membership Resolution Forms will be mailed to the Superintendent and Athletic Director the week of May 9, 2011.

## MHSAA Representative Council

**William Chilman IV\*\***

Superintendent  
Beal City Public Schools  
Class C-D — Northern Lower Peninsula

**James Derocher\*\*, President**

Superintendent  
Negaunee Public Schools  
Class C-D — Upper Peninsula

**Ken Dietz\***

Athletic Director  
Watervliet High School  
Class C-D — Southwestern Michigan

**Scott Grimes\*\*, Vice President**

Principal  
Grand Haven High School  
Statewide At-Large

**Kyle Guerrant (ex-officio)**

Director , Coordinated School Health & Safety Programs Unit,  
Michigan Dept. of Education, Lansing  
Designee

**Kris Isom\* Athletic Director**

Adrian Madison High School  
Class C-D — Southeastern Michigan

**Carmen Kennedy\*\***

Assistant Principal / Athletic Director  
Grosse Pointe North High School  
Appointee

**Karen Leinaar\***

Athletic Director  
Bear Lake High School  
Statewide At-Large

**Jason Mellema\***

Principal/Athletic Director  
Ravenna Middle School  
Junior High/Middle Schools

**Vic Michaels\*\*, Secretary-Treasurer**

Director of Physical Education & Athletics Archdiocese of Detroit  
Private and Parochial Schools

**Steve Newkirk\*\***

Principal  
Clare Middle School  
Junior High/Middle Schools

**Peter C. Ryan\*\***

Athletic Director  
Saginaw Township Community Schools  
Class A-B — Northern Lower Peninsula

**Fred Smith\*\***

Athletic Director  
Buchanan High School  
Class A-B — Southwestern Michigan

**Paula Steele\***

Principal  
East Lansing High School  
Appointee

**Arnetta Thompson\***

Assistant Principal  
Grand Rapids Riverside Middle School  
Appointee

**John Thompson\*\***

Athletic Director  
Brighton High School  
Class A-B — Southeastern Michigan

**Al Unger\***

Athletic Director  
Kingsford High School  
Class A-B — Upper Peninsula

**Alvin Ward\*\***

Administrator of Athletics  
Detroit Public Schools

**Mark Woodson\*\***

Director of Student Development and Athletics  
Romulus High School  
Appointee

\*Term Expires December 2011

\*\*Term Expires December 2012

## ANALYSIS OF MHSAA MEMBERSHIP

January 1, 2011

**761 Total High Schools**

651 (86%) Total Public Schools

- 48 (6%) Charter (Public School Academies)
- 603 (79%) Traditional Schools

110 (14%) Total Nonpublic Schools

- 100 (13%) Religious
- 10 (1%) Secular Non-Public

**774 Total Junior High/Middle Schools**

699 (90%) Total Public Schools

- 23 (3%) Charter (Public School Academies)
- 676 (87%) Traditional Schools

75 (10%) Total Nonpublic Schools

- 72 (9%) Religious
- 7 (0.9%) Secular

# Happy New Year! Prep for 2011-12 School Year

**First-year high school Athletic Directors** (defined as one who has not been an MHSAA AD for one of the past five school years) are required to attend an MHSAA Athletic Director Orientation Program at the MHSAA Office in East Lansing (8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.). Three dates are available to meet this requirement: Aug. 4 or 16, 2011, or for late hires a Sept. 20 program is scheduled. Please spread the word to those who may fill these very big shoes. Critical to the transition from one school year to another is accurate contact information. This is a high priority for athletic directors (new and returning) who must provide emails and names of all coaches to begin the school year.

The **School Year Start-Up** period began in 2010 and should be on administrators' lists every summer (July through early August). Each school AD must verify existing school and coach information and double-check the MHSAA sports you will sponsor for the coming year. The information the AD submits then allows the MHSAA to give credit for completing Rules Meetings and submitting Officials Ratings. Please be alerted to this annual mid to late summer tradition. ADs are reminded that adding or dropping a varsity sport must still be done on school letterhead, signed by an administrator and faxed or mailed to the MHSAA well in advance for tournament assignment purposes.

So school administrators may **coordinate calendars and avoid conflicts**, we remind Athletic Director that they should attend an AD In-Service and an Update Meeting each year. Generally AD In-Service programs begin at 8:30 a.m., followed by the Update Meetings at noon. Principals, superintendents and school board members are encouraged to join their ADs at the noon Update meeting and luncheon, which ends by 2 p.m. Registration for Orientation Programs and AD In-Service / Update Meetings will be on MHSAA.com later this year.

The MHSAA Office **Summer Hours** are 7 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Thursday from June 20-July 28. Normal Monday-Friday hours resume Aug. 1 (8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; close Fridays at 4 p.m.).

<b>Important Administrative Dates</b>	
May 1-2	Representative Council Meeting
May 6	Upper Peninsula AD In-Service (Gladstone)
June 6	Three-Four Player Rules ends; Summer Rules begin
July 4-8	MHSAA Office Closed
July 11	School Year Start-Up on MHSAA.com
Aug. 1	MHSAA Membership Resolution due
Aug. 4 or 16	New AD Orientation at MHSAA
Aug. 22	Look for Online Rules Meetings (exact launch TBD)
Sept. 20	New AD Orientation at MHSAA (late hires)
Oct. 5	Kalamazoo Update & AD In-Service
Oct. 10	Comstock Park Update & In-Service
Oct. 12	Frankenmuth Update & In-Service
Oct. 17	Gaylord Update & AD In-Service
Oct. 19	Lansing Update & AD In-Service
Oct. 26	Warren Update & Detroit Public Charter School AD In-Service
Oct. 28	Marquette Update Meeting

Following is a guide to the information previously **Bulletins** which are now solely on MHSAA.com. Most information has moved to the "Administrators" page under "Schools."

- **Representative Council, Executive Committee and UP Athletic Committee Minutes:** "Administrators"
- **Sport Committee Minutes:** on corresponding "Sport" page
- **Officials Committees:** "Officials"
- **All other Committees:** "Administrators"
- **Cooperative Program Listings:** "Administrators"
- **Opt-Ups and Classification:** "Administrators"
- **Regulations Violations:** under "Administrators"
- **MHSAA Committee Members:** "Administrators"
- **Non-Faculty Coaches:** "Coaches" & "Administrators" pages

## Efficiency is Effective...

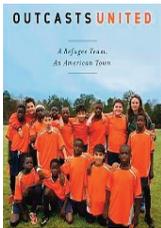
The MHSAA is always willing to assist with issues concerning Association regulations. Please remember, however, the most efficient method of communication with the MHSAA on eligibility questions is through the athletic director or principal. Athletic directors should gather all information necessary 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.

# Tale of Courage on the Pitch and Hope in Our Land

Blend youth soccer, global politics, horrific human suffering and heroic courage; and the result is the national bestseller *Outcasts United* (Random House, 2009).

Southern born and New York educated, author Warren St. John provides more than a sports book; he captures and easily conveys some of the contradictions of our modern but still very cruel world.

- We get a sense of the large part the U.S. has played in



creating the situations which have led to political and religious wars resulting in millions of refugees worldwide; but nevertheless, how America remains the hope

for so many displaced persons of the world.

- We get a sense of both the biases and big-heartedness of America's small southern towns.
- We are confronted with both the worst and best of human character.

Ultimately, both the soccer program and the north Georgia town in which it resides discover that, in spite of a world of differences, by promoting what we have in common, great obstacles can be overcome and mutual benefits realized.

The subtitle – *An American Town, a Refugee Team, and One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference* – says enough of the plot of this true story.

Read any good books lately? News articles? We'd love to know. Submit recommendations to [benchmarks@mhsaa.com](mailto:benchmarks@mhsaa.com).

For more information, visit [FugeesFamily.org](http://FugeesFamily.org) or [OutcastsUnited.com](http://OutcastsUnited.com). The author's website is [WarrenSt.John.com](http://WarrenSt.John.com).

## Setting Your Anchors

In 2003, Harvard Business School Press published a book whose dust jacket asked: "Will your organization still be here in ten years?" The book is *Revival of the Fittest* by Donald N. Sull; and we've returned to it often these past seven years.

Mr. Sull suggests that one key survival technique is to choose the right "anchor," by which he means "the overarching theme that prioritizes a manager's transforming commitments," by which he means "managerial actions that break from the status quo." He writes: "To choose an anchor, a manager must deeply understand the company's history, competitive context, and alternatives." Sull's research suggests that changing an organization's values is difficult and "generally a mistake."

The author offers three Cs to "give their transformational commitments traction." They are: be credible, be clear and be courageous. As for clarity, Sull hits a homerun with these words:

"Have you repeated your commitment often enough? Constant repetition has the obvious benefits of forcing you to distill your commitment down to its quintessence and to reinforce the message. Managers often err when they state their commitment once or twice, maybe send out a memo or two, and then assume that the rest of the organization will act on it . . . Mentioning a commitment a few times is the organizational equivalent of a teenager mumbling. You may know what you said, but no one else will. Here are a few simple tests to evaluate

whether you are repeating your anchor consistently enough.

"ARE YOU SICK OF REPEATING IT? If not, then you must say it more often. Even if you can no longer stand your message, you must keep repeating it, so as not to miss that new employee or the person just back from maternity leave.



***“. . . one key survival technique is to choose the right “anchor; the overarching theme that prioritizes a manager’s transforming commitment . . .”***

"DO YOUR MANAGERS ROLL THEIR EYES WHEN YOU REPEAT YOUR MESSAGE? Eye-rolling is a good sign – it shows that they already recognize your theme.

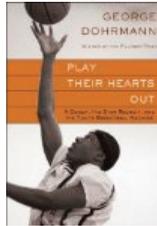
"WOULD ANYONE IN YOUR COMPANY PASS A POP QUIZ? After a month or so, ask your direct reports to write your commitment on a single stick-on note. How many could do so? How many of their direct reports could pass the quiz as well? What if you administered the same test to equity analysts, key customers, partners, and your board members?"

## Heartache on the Hardwood

Lies, deceit, high-stakes manipulation and heartbreak are dominant themes of bestseller *Play Their Hearts Out*. It's the kind of powerful stuff that makes for great fiction; and therein lies the ultimate twist. This is not a tale of espionage from James Patterson, nor does it reside in that section of the local Barnes and Noble.

Rather, it is a sobering real-life account of grassroots youth basketball by Pulitzer Prize winning sportswriter George Dohrmann, in which the main antagonist is a self-absorbed tyrant in tennis shoes; the victims are kids who will never know the joy of a simple "pick-up game," and – at the book's end – readers are still looking for a hero. It is a sports book which could be cross-referenced under true crime.

Dohrmann's first-hand exposure and access to AAU basketball coach Joe Keller and his meal-ticket/basketball prodigy Demetrius Walker during an eight-year period is a riveting read that will raise eyebrows and sink the soul.

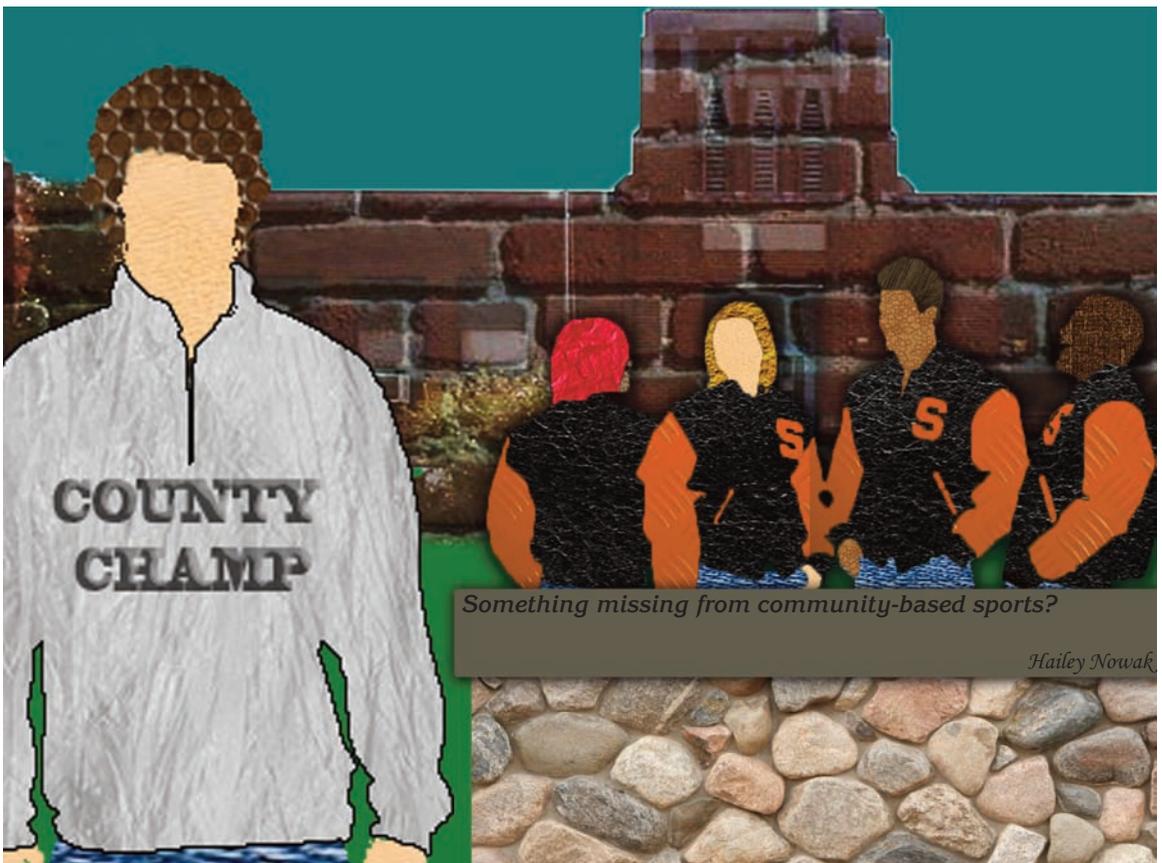


The premise of the book is nothing new to those even remotely associated with competitive youth sports, the rumors surrounding those involved and tales of betrayal. But by focusing on a select few, Dohrmann successfully humanizes the faceless masses and adds details to the broad strokes which smear the adolescent basketball factories in cities and suburbs across the country.

For even when that rare character surfaces with the pure desire to offer his time and expertise to kids for the sake of coaching, he is quickly ostracized in this seedy world.

Says Dohrmann of one such individual: "Harris assured that he would never be an AAU pawn broker. To the shoe companies, to the agents, to the college recruiters, he was useless, a fool motivated by – get this – the joy he got from teaching the game to children."

It's a solid bet the vast majority of kids traveling to their next AAU tournament in the months to come have never heard of "Coach Joe" or "D." Ironically, they might by playing for that coach, and could become that player.



## A Matter of Respect

*The following was emailed to the MHSAA during the past basketball season. It is an excellent reminder of proper decorum during the National Anthem at school sports events.*

My name is Renee Milliman, the proud mom of a varsity player at Whitmore Lake High School. Over the past few years watching my daughter play, we've noticed the National Anthem is never played before the JV games or MS games. However, they do for the varsity games, and this year my daughter is glad that they do it, as she is on the varsity.

We have noticed teams swinging their hands or standing sloppy-looking; but as a parent I have got to commend the Whitmore Lake High School varsity basketball girls. They don't do that; they stand at attention, hands over their hearts, actually being respectful American citizens.

I've attached a photo from our last game of the season. We should all be proud to be an American, especially in this day and age.



## Basketball Experience Aims to Reach Higher in 2011

Now in its third year, BCAM and the MHSAA have united to bring the perfect venue for underclass basketball players to “showcase” their talents and maybe reach a higher level after high school.



The Reaching Higher Experience is the “Advanced Placement Course” in high school basketball. This **NCAA-approved** event will provide each student-athlete an understanding of what it takes to succeed academically, athletically and socially at the college level.

Player invitations for the 2011 events have now been sent to schools.

The Girls event is slated for July 23, 2011, and the Boys event takes place July 31, both at South Lyon High School.

Visit [MHSAA.com](http://MHSAA.com) and [BCAM.org](http://BCAM.org) for updated information.

## Closing Shot



photo courtesy of Vicksburg HS

The Vicksburg gym was packed for the Schoolcraft vs. Fennville Boys Basketball Regional game on March 14, as the sellout crowd saw Fennville's emotional tournament run come to an end. The Blackhawks played the tournament with heavy hearts in memory of teammate Wes Leonard, who died moments after hitting the game-winning shot in the last game of the regular season on March 3.

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