

Sports Done Right

Sports Done Right is a 2003 initiative that provides a common framework to middle school, high school and community sports and has been unanimously endorsed by both the Five Town Community School District and Maine School Administrative District 28 school boards.

In the fall of 2006, Camden Hills athletic director, Bill Hughes, put together a committee comprising past and present coaches, school board members, parents, and administration from both Camden Hills and Camden-Rockport Middle School, student-athletes and directors of community organizations (Penobscot Bay YCMA, Camden Recreation, etc.). A facilitator from the Maine Center for Sport and Coaching (MCSC) also joined us. The committee met monthly over the course of a year to go over each aspect of the *Sports Done Right* philosophy and how our school districts were already meeting those principles and/or what we needed to do to bring our school in line with them.

Over the past year and a half, new policies and procedures are helping to shape our already successful athletic program. Some examples of how our programs demonstrate the principles of *Sports Done Right* are:

- On a monthly basis, the captains of all the high school varsity teams meet for “Captains Council.” This gives these student-athletes a chance to talk about issues important to the students as well as their teams. In the past, the council has been a strong voice in helping create policies that reflect not only what’s best for students, but what makes sense.
- All coaches meet with the athletic director before the beginning of each season and throughout the season to make sure expectations and communications are shared.
- All parents and athletes must attend a meeting before the start of each sports season where they will listen to administration and coaches explain their expectations. Facilitating better communication between coaches, parents and athletes is key to *Sports Done Right*.
- Every year, all student-athletes, parents and coaches must sign the *Sports Done Right* compact, which outlines the school’s expectations. This way we are literally all on the same page.
- At the middle school level, one booster club has been created to meet the needs of all the athletic programs. This way, there is less pressure on individual sports and smaller teams to constantly fund raise.
- In the 2006/07 school year, boys eighth-grade basketball had an additional team added due to the number of students who wanted to play. Students were divided up by skill so that we would have two teams with similar skill levels, not an A team and a B team.
- This current school year 99 Middle School students wanted to play soccer in the fall. To allow all students to play, an additional coed competitive team was added. These impressive numbers meant that approximately one-third of the eligible student population played soccer last fall at the Middle School.
- Last spring, numbers were also high for seventh- and eighth-grade baseball. The school responded by creating a third team (developmental) that scrimmaged other schools.

- At the high school level, opportunity to play means something different only at the varsity level. Out of 25 varsity sports programs comprising of 44 teams, only three varsity teams - soccer, basketball and baseball - have had to cut players in the past. With freshman and junior varsity teams, the school has been able to accommodate approximately 450 student-athletes in the program. Those who choose not to play at the junior varsity/varsity level can participate in the intramural program that runs during and after school. There are over 10 diverse programs to choose from and many students take advantage of these offerings.

- A true example of *Sports Done Right* has been happening at our school for some time. Camden Hills/Camden-Rockport High School has had a swim team for many years. Some years the team is smaller than others, but they have always had a competitive spirit. Unbeknownst to many, the team has more than just students from the five towns. Students from Medomak, Rockland and in the past Georges Valley high schools are also "on the team." These athletes, from our closest rival schools, train, travel and compete alongside athletes from Camden Hills. Even though these athletes' times do not count toward the team score, they still compete as one. In any given relay you can see a mix of schools on one of the teams. It doesn't count for points, but it does count for much more.

While it is the school's responsibility to educate our students in math, language arts, history, science, music, art, foreign language, etc., athletics is also an integral part of our educational program. The proven benefits include: an increase in academic achievement; an increased commitment to school and school values; dropout prevention; more consistent attendance; heightened aspirations for continuing education beyond high school; and providing a "safety net" for marginal students.

Sports also provide the incentive for developing and maintaining healthy bodies and active minds. Sports promote habits of exercise and good nutrition that can last a lifetime. Participation in sports builds self-confidence and a sense of personal responsibility for making healthy lifestyle choices. Being part of a team also creates a feeling of belonging and offers a supportive network that contributes to emotional well-being.

Sports Done Right is a framework we can use to make sure that our students are having a great athletic experience as well as a great academic experience in our districts. It will take the school administration, coaches, staff and student-athletes together with our community to make this a reality. Accreditation is only the first step. We need to focus on implementing policies and procedures that will enhance the experiences of our students. The skills to be successful on or off the court/field do not happen when you reach school. These practices need to be used in all of our community schools and in all of our community sporting organizations.

- By *Tori Manzi*, a member of the *Five Town CSD/MSAD 28 Sports Done Right Committee*, *Village Soup*, February 4, 2008

Schools on right course after brawl

Tuesday night's scene at Folsom Gymnasium in Fairfield, Maine was a bit surreal by Lawrence High School boys basketball standards. The tiny gym was half full of spectators at best, and the home team had a more youthful appearance than normal - not surprising since it was largely an assortment of swing players and full-time junior varsity performers. Such was the aftermath of the Bulldogs' previous game last Friday against Lewiston, which was halted at the end of the third quarter by an on-court altercation that involved players, coaches, school staff and security and a few fans. While the event, be it a brawl, altercation or skirmish, surely was unfortunate, the reaction by officials of both schools in addressing the incident offers hope that all is being done to ensure it is a rarity in Maine interscholastic athletics annals. Lawrence athletic director Bill MacManus, Lewiston athletic director Jason Fuller, and Maine basketball commissioner Peter Webb met shortly after the game ended, then spent the weekend sorting out the situation, which resulted in both schools suspending players and coaches. "We've talked with our kids," said MacManus. "We talked with our varsity team and said you have to understand what the guidelines are. There are times when you just can't do things even though you're doing them for what you think are legitimate reasons." The incident likely will serve at least one additional purpose, to refocus statewide attention on crowd-control issues at high school events. Because while we here in Maine can hope to remain above such frays, virtually all game settings are just an angry moment away. - By *Ernie Clark*, *Bangor Daily News*, February 1, 2008

Father charged in hockey game incident

The father of Gloucester High School's star hockey player faces charges after he allegedly "cuffed" a Newburyport middle-schooler during Saturday's game against Newburyport. The father had been thrown out of Graf Rink by a referee moments before he struck the boy, police said. According to police, David Fanning, 48, has been summonsed to court on charges of assault and battery and disorderly conduct. "He cuffed (the youth) upside the head with an open hand," Lt. Mark Murray said. Reached yesterday, Fanning said he wasn't aware of the charges, but he did not want to comment on the incident. The incident stemmed from a penalty call during the game on Fanning's son, Jeremy, a senior forward who is the Gloucester High team's leading scorer. In a physical game marred by 13 penalties, frustrations spilled over in the second period when Newburyport erased a 2-0 Gloucester lead with its third straight goal. Minutes later, Jeremy Fanning was called for an interference penalty. Jeremy Fanning was sent to the penalty box and then given a game misconduct and automatic ejection from the game after he threw his stick on the ice. He could also be heard yelling at the referee. David Fanning then made a comment to an official and was ejected himself, Murray said. When the two were leaving the rink, David Fanning reportedly struck a boy who was holding the door, Murray said, and got into a shouting match with another adult in the lobby. - *By Dan Atkinson, Gloucester Daily Times, February 6, 2008*

3-Sport athletes can gain football advantage

Luke Nawrocki wasn't sure how to feel when he gave up basketball. "I started asking myself, 'What am I doing now?' What am I going to do with all this free time?" The Chaminade senior had been a three-sport athlete most of his life, playing football, basketball and lacrosse, but a torn ACL in his right knee his sophomore year forced him to make a tough choice. Recruiting time was just around the corner and since his chances at a collegiate basketball career weren't "that great," he chose to narrow his focus. Though he began playing lacrosse a year before football, Nawrocki calls football his "first love." And as far as he is concerned, playing basketball and lacrosse has enhanced his football skills. "You're still working on your footwork, conditioning, you're learning mental skills of the game and teamwork," said Nawrocki. "It really plays a vital role in football." Many football recruiters believe watching prospects in other environments can tell a lot about their athletic ability, personality and work ethic. "One of the first things we ask is, 'Do they play a different sport?'" said Mike Antonoplos, football development coordinator at the University of Pittsburgh. "If they're a good football player and you see them dunking from the free-throw line or see an offensive lineman running up and down the court quickly, you can tell he's a good athlete." "We aren't sitting there saying, 'This kid needs to give up all his sports and just do football.' We love when a kid plays two sports," said Mike Siravo, Boston College's recruiting coordinator. "I want to hear we have a 6-4 QB who's also the captain of the baseball and basketball teams. An offensive lineman who plays basketball, that's a dream come true." - *By Kimberley A. Martin, Newsday, February 7, 2008*

DHS gets 2nd Title IX complaint

Darien High School has never built a facility specifically for girls' sports, according to a recent complaint filed with the Office of Civil Rights. Sports facilities specifically for boys and for both boys and girls have been built, but none specifically for girls, the complaint says. For the second time in less than two years, the Office of Civil Rights received a complaint that Darien High School is in violation of Title IX. The Office of Civil Rights visited the high school last Wednesday and Thursday in response to the complaint and interviewed school administrators, members of the athletics department faculty, students and parents. Back in October 2006, the Office of Civil Rights found the school district was not in compliance with Title IX, which governs equity between girls and boys in school athletics. The complaint, like part of the latest complaint, originated with unfairness to the girls' swim team. However, the non-compliance discovered in 2006 was unrelated to the original complaint. The report stated there was no evidence that the girls' swim team was not equal to the boys' team. Instead, the Office of Civil Rights found that the girls were under represented in the athletics department of 2004-05. Since that finding, the district has added some girls' teams and was required to submit a report to the Office of Civil Rights each year. The new complaint was filed with the Office of Civil Rights in the fall. The complaint again raises the issue of inequity in practice times and facilities for the girls' swim team. The complaint expands to cite victims of sex discrimination as all of the girls' varsity athletes in the district as well as specifying the girls' softball team. The softball team's complaint stems from the new artificial turf baseball field. The Office of Civil Rights representatives indicated their report to the high school would come out between the end of February and middle of March. - *By Susan Shultz, The Darien Times, February 8, 2008*

Bill would encourage sportsmanship on and off the field

BOSTON - The stories have become all too familiar - youth athletes, and sometimes their parents and coaches, turning a school playing field into the set of a Jerry Springer episode. Now a bill set to be heard by Massachusetts lawmakers on Monday seeks to reduce the number and intensity of school sports scuffles by drafting new curriculum to teach sportsmanship. Lawmakers and supporters hope the new pilot program could help young athletes learn how to conduct themselves both on and off the field. The bill would create lessons to help children develop "the mental skills associated with self-control in an effort to reduce violence, drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, bullying and other destructive choices." The teaching materials would be offered free of charge to youth and school sports leagues and teams. One of the backers of the bill is Grayson Kimball, a sports psychologist and education director of the Newton-based nonprofit group GetPsychedSports.org, which advocates for using organized youth sport to teach children self-control. Kimball said the playing field, because it involves physical contact and competition, is a prime location to help kids learn how to restrain violent impulses. The legislation asks the Department of Mental Health to form a committee of sports, medical and educational professionals to come up with the curriculum. The state would create a pilot program in schools to see what changes, if any, there are in the behavior of the athletes. Supporters hope fewer conflicts on the field reduces the number of incidences involving parents. - *By Associated Press, Boston Herald, February 10, 2008*

Female referee removed from officiating boy's game

Kansas activities officials are investigating a religious school's refusal to let a female referee call a boy's high school basketball game. The Kansas State High School Activities Association said referees reported that Michelle Campbell was preparing to officiate at St. Mary's Academy near Topeka on Feb. 2 when a school official insisted that Campbell could not call the game. The reason given, according to the referees: Campbell, as a woman, could not be put in a position of authority over boys because of the academy's beliefs. Campbell then walked off the court along with Darin Putthoff, the referee who was to work the game with her. "I said, 'If Michelle has to leave, then I'm leaving with her,'" Putthoff said. "I was disappointed that it happened to Michelle. I've never heard of anything like that." The Activities Association said it is considering whether to take action against the private religious school. St. Mary's Academy is owned by the Society of St. Pius X, which follows older Roman Catholic laws. The society's world leader, the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, was excommunicated by Pope John Paul II in the late 1980s. Gary Musselman, the association's executive director, said the organization will not make a decision until it confirms whether St. Mary's Academy has a policy of not allowing female referees to work boys basketball games. If that is indeed the school's written policy, Musselman said, the association could decide to remove St. Mary's Academy from the list of approved schools and take away its ability to compete against the association's more than 300 member schools. - *By Associated Press, FOXNews.com, February 13, 2008*

Aggressive behavior at game leads to arrest of basketball coach

CLACKAMAS, Ore. - A disturbance that erupted on the basketball court at Estacada High School Saturday led to the arrest of a coach for Criminal Trespassing of a Sporting Event. Clackamas County Sheriff's deputies in Estacada were called to the school at noon after a report of a disturbance on the court. Detective Jim Strovink, Spokesman for the agency, says the problems involved adults who apparently did not appreciate the way an officiating 17-year-old referee had been calling the 6th grade girls basketball game between Estacada and Molalla. Strovink says the deputy who arrived on the scene, Brian Pearson, recounted the story as it was related to him by the victim and witness accounts of what led to the disturbance. "During this basketball game played between the Estacada and Molalla 6th grade girls' teams, the Molalla head coach received two technical fouls and was ejected from the game." Pearson says the coach, 34-year-old Jeffery Scott Larsen, failed to leave the game floor and remained in a corner of the building while continuing to verbally harass the referee of the game. The referee is identified as 17-year-old Houston Webb. "Detailed information received at the scene reveals Coach Jeffery Scott Larsen received his first technical foul during the first-half of the game, while he became excessively argumentative when objecting to a foul called on one of his players." The second technical foul was instituted at the beginning of the 2nd half, Pearson said, with a resulting ejection from the game. He said that is "when Coach Larsen became increasingly angry at the officiating and hastily slammed his clipboard down on a 6th grade girls hand, who was positioned at a courtside table acting as the designated scorekeeper." He says that antagonism was carried onto the floor at the end of the game when both the Estacada and Molalla fans swarmed the floor verbally facing-off against each other. "At the conclusion of the game, witnesses report Coach Larsen advanced rapidly onto the basketball court while grabbing the arm of referee Houston Webb, and menacingly cocked his arm back with a clenched fist." Pearson said. Principal/Coach Kevin Olds told Detective Strovink shortly after the incident, "There were an estimated 75 parents and children in attendance who witnessed this event. Many of the girls were frightened...crying...and fleeing the building with their parents." - *Salem-News.com, February 17, 2008*

A big-time injury striking little players' knees

Although there are no complete or official numbers, orthopedists at leading medical centers estimate that several thousand children and young adolescents are getting ACL tears each year, with the number being diagnosed soaring recently. Some centers that used to see only a few such cases a year are now seeing several each week. It is not an overuse injury from playing one sport too intensively, like shoulder injuries in young pitchers. Instead, doctors say, the injury occurs simply from twisting the knee, and diagnoses are on the rise partly because it can now be easily detected and partly because the very nature of youth sports has changed. In the old days, said Dr. Theodore J. Ganley, director of sports medicine at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and a spokesman for the American Academy of Orthopedic Medicine, a child would develop a "trick knee" that made sports difficult, but the real reason was not understood. And most doctors, thinking children did not get ACL tears, did not suspect the real reason. Now that almost every child with a hurt knee gets a magnetic resonance imaging, doctors are finding the ligament tears on a regular basis. The other reason for the reported surge in ACL tears, doctors speculate, is that the best athletes are more or less constantly at risk. They play year-round and on multiple teams with frequent games, in which the risk of injury is higher than in practice because of the intensity of play. Every orthopedist is familiar with ACL tears, but in adults. After a tear, any sport, like soccer or basketball, that can twist the knee is dangerous. But the standard ACL repair operation, with its drilling into the growth plate, may cause permanent damage to the still-growing bones of young children. After drilling, the surgeons replace the torn ligament with a tendon taken from elsewhere in the body, like the hamstring, or from a cadaver. But if the drilling damages a child's growth plate, the leg bone will not develop normally. Some surgeons are developing new technically demanding methods to repair ACL tears in children, drilling holes to create little tunnels in bone that is already finished growing and threading tendons around the growth plate. But the tendons are not anchored where they would normally be and the long-term effects of the operation are not known. - *By Gina Kolata, The New York Times, February 18, 2008*

Putting civility and sportsmanship back in the game

The National Collegiate Athletic Association decided to make changes this season to ensure bench decorum. It required officials to rotate away from the scorer's table to the other side of the floor immediately after making a call to limit discussions with coaches. The officials were also told to enforce the coaching box, to limit the movement of overzealous assistant coaches and to assess technical fouls on coaches who use profanity. Unruly fans have created a stir at least three times in the past month, most recently last Saturday, when students at Alabama-Birmingham threw debris on Memphis players after the No. 1 Tigers' controversial victory. On Jan. 24, Oregon fans harassed the UCLA star freshman Kevin Love, an Oregon native, during the Bruins' 80-75 victory. Two weeks later, Illinois fans greeted Eric Gordon, a freshman guard at Indiana, with chants of "Liar! Liar!" and booed him throughout the Illini's double-overtime loss because he had reneged on his commitment to attend Illinois. Tom O'Connor, the athletic director at George Mason and chairman of the NCAA men's basketball committee, said that he regarded sportsmanship as a core value in intercollegiate sports and that apologies were not the solution. "When there are situations that come up that may be borderline sportsmanship, there needs to be apologies," O'Connor said. "But you need decisive actions that prevent it from happening again. When emotions are high, you can't overshadow basic standards of conduct." - *By Ray Glier, The New York Times, February 22, 2008*

Glenbard high schools seek to eliminate freshman cuts

Cutting kids from high school sports teams is as popular as a 3-foot pothole and seemingly unavoidable. Athletes, of course, hate cuts the most, but coaches and athletic directors aren't far behind, if only because they have to answer to angry parents. This discomfort may start to shrink greatly when it comes to freshmen in Glenbard Township High School District 87. Its board of education on Feb. 11 unanimously passed a five-year athletic budget plan that includes a freshman no-cut policy as well as funds to help make it work. The philosophy behind the move, which takes effect this spring, is simple. Participation in athletics helps freshmen acclimate more smoothly to high school, especially in class, so why not make it available to more of them? "We're looking at trying to put kids in a position to succeed in high school," said Rod Molek, District 87's assistant superintendent for human resources. "We know a good start for freshmen is a key to their success academically and socially, so we wanted to give a particular emphasis in providing more opportunities for them." Obstacles may include lack of gyms and practice fields and lack of funds for the additional coaches, bus trips and official fees that a no-cut system may produce. While this new policy will reduce freshman cuts, it likely won't eliminate them. Funding and facilities only go so far, especially if more kids than before try out because of the no-cut program. This could be particularly true in a popular sport such as basketball, where a freshman C team might be needed to get every hoops hopeful into a uniform. - *By Barry Temkin, Chicago Tribune, February 22, 2008*

The changing world of youth sports leagues

In ever increasing numbers, young athletes are joining private pay-to-play teams, sometimes called “select” or “traveling” teams. Select sports is exactly as it sounds: Kids must try out for teams and the best players are “selected” to be members. Once selected, the child is required to pay a fee for the privilege of being on the team. Select coaches get paid, sometimes rather handsomely. There are reports from the Austin area that have some of these coaches receive salaries as high as \$70,000 per year. Expenses can swell to triple that amount, particularly if the team goes to frequent out-of-town or out-of-state tournaments. In Dallas, it has been reported that some parents spend as much as \$25,000 per year on soccer. In addition to the financial cost, select sports also requires an investment of another sort - time. Playing on a select team is a year-round proposition. Soccer and basketball are usually an 11-month commitment. Baseball and softball have fall and summer seasons in addition to the traditional high school season played in the spring. Select volleyball seasons last at least six months. On top of that, most teams practice three or four times a week. Not surprisingly, select sports has its fair share of proponents and critics. Paul Hayes is the head coach of the men’s soccer team at Schreiner University. In addition to coaching at both the high school and collegiate level, he has also headed several select programs. Hayes believes the select system has decided advantages. “The big advantage to playing select is the year round, professional instruction these players receive,” Hayes said. “You just don’t get that in a city league.” Robert Malina, director of the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports at Michigan State University, says most parents would be better off putting the money they spend on travel teams into a savings account. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, fewer than 1 percent of the kids participating in organized sports today will qualify for any sort of college athletic scholarship. - *By Paul White, The Daily Times, Kerrville TX, February 25, 2008*

For more information about the *Sports Done Right* initiative visit
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