

Kennebunk AD to call it a career

The week of February 16th is vacation week for most school administrators in the state of Maine. Not so for Martin Ryan. Like the past 29 years, the long-time athletic director was busy most of the week, going from tournament to tournament and game to game to make sure everything was going smoothly for his Kennebunk High School teams.

Unfortunately for the Rams, those days are now numbered. Ryan turned in his resignation last month, and at the end of the school year the one time National Athletic Director of the Year will end his illustrious career that encompassed 22 years at Wells High School and the past seven at Kennebunk. In all, Ryan has spent 40 years in education.

“I felt that 40 years is a nice number,” said Ryan when reached on his cell phone Monday morning while en route to Bowdoin College for a swim meet, the start to a day that also featured a hockey game later that night. “It’s a very lengthy career. I’d like to do some other things in my life.”

Ryan has certainly done plenty for Kennebunk during his stint here. Some of his proudest accomplishments have been with the school’s facilities since becoming the athletic director in 2001. The field bleachers, which were transported from a school in Woburn, Mass., were completed at the football field in 2007, making the capacity of the stadium about 4,000 people. Ryan also had a hand in the resurfacing of the track and the fencing around the football stadium.

He also had a lot to do with reshaping some of the policy regarding athletics at the school. The policy code was re-written and academic eligibility was changed during Ryan’s tenure. Most importantly, Kennebunk gained the endorsement of the Maine Center for Sport and Coaching’s *Sports Done Right* program. It is one of only eight school districts in the state to do so.

“He’s been a great addition to the school,” said Kennebunk football coach Joe Rafferty, who also coached against Ryan when Ryan was a football coach at Wells. “He’s brought a lot of experience and a lot of stability to the school’s programs.”

Ryan spent the first 22 years of his athletic administration career at Wells, where he also coached football and baseball. He has been heavily involved with the Rams’ programs since his arrival. He won the 2005 National Athletic Director of the Year award from the National Interscholastic Administrators Association and said he is the only athletic director from New England to receive the honor.

During his tenure, Kennebunk won the Southern Maine Activities Association Sportsmanship Award four consecutive years, from 2004 to 2007, and he also helped guide several teams to titles at different levels. Ryan, 61, has been director of the Maine Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association since 1994.

“Marty’s always been one who epitomizes professionalism at a high level,” said Gorham athletic director Gerry Durgin, a longtime friend of Ryan. “He’s always been a frontrunner for advocating student activities in our state.”

Ryan has made it a point to bring Kennebunk High School sports to the community in more ways than one. Not only did he make the athletic experience more enjoyable with all the work he has done to the facilities, but the *Sports Done Right* program involves more than just the Rams.

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“I’m pleased because it shows we have recreation department, community and school board support for the program,” Ryan said. The vacancy has recently been advertised, but not filled. Ryan admits it will be a little weird next fall when it’s time for the teams to start tryouts and he won’t be heading down to the fields. Instead, he’s going to resist the urge of getting involved by fly fishing in Montana and playing golf. Still, it will be hard for him to stay away. He will probably still “help out” when needed, because “just dropping something you’ve become accustomed to over 29 years isn’t easy.” And he knows he will miss the athletes and a part of his job that made it all worth while. “I’m most proud of seeing the development of our kids,” Ryan said. “That’s probably the most rewarding part of the position.” - *By Mark Quirk, Portsmouth Herald News, February 19, 2009*

Congratulations

The MCSC staff and Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to thank Marty Ryan for all that he has done for Maine student-athletes and the profession of athletic administration. Marty was a member of the Sports Done Right Select Panel, the committee responsible for the program’s development. Marty has also served on the MCSC Board of Directors since 2004. Marty has served as a strong advocate and leader in the state of Maine, and we are honored to work so closely with him through the years. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Sports Done Right. Congratulations! We wish you the very best as you begin a new journey.

The MCSC Board of Directors, MCSC Staff

Supreme Court: Cheerleading is a contact sport

On Jan. 27, the Wisconsin Supreme Court held that cheerleading is not only a sport, but a “contact sport,” within the meaning of the state’s recreational immunity statute. As a result, a high school cheerleader who was allegedly negligent while performing a stunt and the school district are immune from liability for injuries sustained by a fellow cheerleader who was injured as a result of the negligence. James S. Naugler, of Moen Sheehan Meyer Ltd. in La Crosse, who represented the defendant, hailed the ruling. “This will allow children to participate in cheerleading without fear of being sued for simple negligence,” Naugler said. “The fact is, cheerleading is a highly dangerous sport, involving tossing bodies in the air over a hard surface, not just pompoms.” In 2004, Brittany Noffke fell while practicing a cheerleading stunt without any floor mats. She sued a fellow cheerleader, Kevin Bakke, for not properly spotting her. She also sued the school district, alleging that the coach was negligent by failing to provide a second spotter, and failing to require the use of mats. The circuit court granted judgment to Bakke and the school district, based on recreational immunity, and governmental immunity grounds, respectfully. The Court of Appeals affirmed as to the school district, but reversed as to Bakke, holding that cheerleading is not a contact sport. The Wisconsin Supreme Court granted review, and reversed in part, in an opinion by Justice Annette Kingsland Ziegler, holding that cheerleading is a contact sport. - *Legal News, Wisconsin Law Journal, February 2, 2009*

College basketball recruiting enters halls of middle school

The NCAA Legislative Council has lowered the grade-level age of “recruitable” boys’ basketball prospects from ninth to seventh grade. The intent of the new rule, put into place last week, is to prevent overzealous college coaches from overstepping bounds and getting a leg up in the recruiting process as they solicit middle school students. By implementing the rule and getting younger players on the NCAA radar, the organization can now monitor and regulate college coaches’ contacts and visits with seventh- and eighth-graders, as they do with high school students. It had become a concern because of the increasing exposure young players are getting through AAU youth tournaments and elite summer camps, which college coaches attend. “For the good of the sport of men’s basketball, this was something that needed to be implemented,” said Joseph F. D’Antonio, associate commissioner of the Big East Conference and chair of the Division I Legislative Council. “The fact that we’ve gotten to this point is really just a sign of the times. It’s scary.” The rule is strongly backed by the National Association of Basketball Coaches, which is constantly trying to ensure recruiting doesn’t fall into hands of youth coaches and that junior phenom camps don’t become feeding frenzies. “The recruiting wars are so competitive that you are going to have schools start evaluating seventh-graders now because they’re afraid other schools are doing it,” said University of Miami coach Frank Haith. “You won’t see me ever doing that. I just don’t believe I could tell if an eighth-grader will be ready to play in the ACC four years from now.” - *By Michelle Kaufman, Miami Herald, February 3, 2009*

A dying breed: Three-sport high school athletes

It's been said - more than once - that Janelle Chow could use a third sleeve on her letterman's jacket. "I need somewhere to put them," said Chow, a senior who is well on her way to earning 12 letters in her four years at Mercer Island High. "I really need a bigger coat." Chow is not alone, but she is part of a dying breed - a three-sport athlete in these days of specialization, select teams and athletic tunnel vision. At Lake Stevens High, for example, the Gil McKinnie Award is given to any student who letters in three sports in one year. The school had an enrollment of 1,778 during the 2007-08 school year, but only six athletes earned the award. Jon Humphries decided to go the well-rounded route at Seattle Prep after specializing in baseball and basketball for several years. Panthers baseball coach and athletic director Ed Paulter remembers Humphries, now a senior, as a big freshman with a good bat. He has lettered every season as an outfielder and developed into a solid starting pitcher, going 5-3 as a junior and earning second-team All-Metro League honors. He's a three-year letterman in basketball. Because of his size, speed and soft hands, Humphries decided to give football a shot in 2008 at the expense of free time over the summer. While he trained for football, he also played summer select basketball and attended baseball camps. The work paid off; he was an All-Metro wide receiver and kick returner and Seattle Prep's jack of all trades. "I could have specialized," Humphries said. "But I think my high school experience is fuller and I have more friends because of it. Each team dynamic is very different, but that's part of the draw for me." "It's a reality that not all kids that specialize will go D-I or get a scholarship of any type," Paulter said. "Those kids are really missing out. I'm willing to bet that down the road some of those kids are going to wish they participated in more high school sports." - *By Michael Mclaughlin, Seattle Post Intelligencer, February 7, 2009*

Should parents worry about sports injuries?

Derek Ruth has spent the last 6 months relearning 13 years of lessons. The Malcolm junior high student's life was forever changed after he sustained a traumatic brain injury during a September football game. Derek's mother, Jen, remembers that game well. "He came to the sidelines, knew the score of the game," said Ruth. "He was coherent; he knew a lot." Moments later, Derek collapsed. Derek has since had to relearn basic motor skills. He continues therapy to regain use and control of his body. "We don't know all of the reasons some individuals have what we call catastrophic major traumatic outcomes," said Dr. Lori Terryberry-Spohr, the Brain Injury Program Manager at the Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln. Terryberry-Spohr said injuries to the extent of Derek's are rare. Less severe head injuries such as concussions, she said, are not. Dr. Terryberry-Spohr cited research that suggests one out of every four high school athletes will experience a concussion during their high school career. Most of those victims, she said, will recover without complications as long as those people are not reinjured during their recovery. "We do believe," said Terryberry-Spohr, "if we can more accurately identify individuals that have had milder brain injuries or concussions on the field, then we can prevent more serious and catastrophic injuries." Terryberry-Spohr also noted the benefits of children and teenagers participating in sports. "The benefits of physical activity are tremendous, we know that," she said. "Beneficial to cardiovascular systems and overall health. But we have to be able to do it safely." Terryberry-Spohr encourages parents, coaches and trainers to keep watch for signs of a possible concussion. Warning signs include disorientation, balance difficulties, possible headache, dizziness and nausea. The Centers for Disease Control offer tool kits for athletes and adults. Each tool kit contains print-off cards listing the warning signs of concussion. - *The Omaha Channel, MSNBC, February 17, 2009*

NIAAA Leadership Training Courses Online

The Maine Center for Sport and Coaching and the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) have joined forces to offer professional development opportunities online for athletic administrators. The NIAAA Leadership Training Program provides resource tools to assist in developing and maintaining a quality sports program. By offering several of the NIAAA Leadership Training courses online, the NIAAA and the MCSC hope to broaden availability. NIAAA Leadership Training courses being offered online by the MCSC include:

- LTC 501 Athletic Administration: Philosophy, Leadership Organization and Professional Programs**
- LTC 502 Athletic Administration: Principles, Strategies and Methods**
- LTC 504 Athletic Administration: Legal Issues I (Risk Management)**

For more information or to register, visit www.sportsdoneright.org

Maranacook opponents organize against sports cuts

READFIELD, Me - A proposal to shift Maranacook Community Middle School's athletic programs from interscholastic to intramural is creating a stir in the four Maranacook communities. As the district's middle and high schools look to plug a projected \$538,000 budget hole, one option is to end the middle school's interscholastic athletic program and replace it with a less expensive intramural program. When the school board's Finance Committee holds a meeting Monday to discuss the proposal, athletic program supporters plan to turn out to oppose it. "It sounds on the surface like a good idea, but people who have researched (intramural programs) have clearly shown it's not," said Rick Morand, of Manchester, who organized a meeting of 30 people earlier this week to organize opposition to the change. Maranacook Community Middle School will likely cut \$215,000 from its 2009-10 academic year budget, said Lew Collins, Maranacook's assistant superintendent. The shift from interscholastic to intramural sports would shave \$69,000 from the middle school's expenditures, Collins said. The savings would come from reducing coach salaries, cutting down on transportation and reduced administrative costs. Maranacook is projecting a drop in state funds, and officials are budgeting under the assumption they will not raise property taxes. The federal government's \$787 billion economic stimulus package could affect the budget situation, but specifics are not yet available. During the 2007-08 academic year, 143 students participated in fall middle school sports, 82 took part in winter sports and 101 signed up for spring athletics. - *By Matthew Stone, Kennebec Journal, February 20, 2009*

High school sports feel squeeze from budget shortages

At least three school jurisdictions in the Washington area are considering eliminating certain sports or reducing the number of athletic contests for the upcoming school year, and others are rethinking how they transport athletes to competitions as they adjust to a shortage of state funding. Some school systems might ask athletes to pay to compete in sports or increase pay-to-play fees that already exist. Interviews with school administrators throughout the area showed that athletic departments in most jurisdictions are feeling the budget squeeze. "It's tough all across the country," said Les Cummings, supervisor for Loudoun County public schools. "Being a part of a school system and part of an instructional program, we all sort of have to bite the bullet and all pitch in and do our part. As much as we hate to lose anything, or not be where we were in the past, we need to do what we have to do the next couple of years until the economy gets better." Fairfax County will likely eliminate gymnastics and also is considering cutting indoor track. Frederick County, which has three schools with pools, has discussed eliminating swimming. Loudoun County is mulling doing away with some sub-varsity sports. In Montgomery County, the budget calls for \$452,156 less in stipends for extracurricular activities, including sports, but county athletics supervisor Duke Beattie said he does not foresee any major changes in how school sports programs operate. Transportation costs are often the most worrisome high school sports expenditure, because they are the most unpredictable because of the price of gas. The three Arlington County high schools have doubled up on transportation, sending freshman and junior varsity teams on the same bus to events, which means that each team has to sit through an extra game. Charles County is an anomaly. It is adding a sport this spring and also recently tacked on the expense of having a certified athletic trainer at a cost of \$30,000 per school. "I've been told personally that we will not cut sports," said Jan Johnson, athletics specialist for Charles County schools. "The bottom line is the superintendent [James E. Richmond] is in full support of all our athletic programs. He has made it clear he will not cut athletic programs and that he sees it as an integral part of a student's education." - *By Preston Williams, The Washington Post, February 20, 2009*

Winter is a true wonderland for athletes with disabilities

Sled hockey is one of many winter sports becoming more popular among athletes with physical challenges, such as spinal cord injuries, limb amputations, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis. In recent years, snow sport equipment makers have adapted equipment, and ski resorts have expanded opportunities for those with disabilities. Health experts say the trend has multiple benefits, both mental and physical. "The trend is nothing short of revolutionary," says Kirk Bauer, executive director of Disabled Sports USA, a national non-profit that offers sports rehabilitation programs to anyone with a permanent disability. It boasts 100 chapters in 38 states. For someone in a wheelchair or with prosthetics, winters or snow is not a friend, says Jenny Walsh, sports and recreation program coordinator at the Courage Center in Minneapolis, which runs five adaptive snow sports programs. But skiing changes that. "It brings freedom and dignity," she says. Adaptive winter programs offer sports even for the most severely injured athletes. Susan Harkema, an associate professor of neurological surgery at the University of Louisville, says giving disabled people the chance to be athletic is crucial. "Recent evidence is telling us if they are provided with activation of neuromuscular system, it helps," she says. - *By Mary Brophy Marcus, USA Today, February 22, 2009*

For more information about the *Sports Done Right* initiative visit
www.sportsdoneright.org or call 1-866-767-8540

