

## Sports Done Right on agenda for schools

Scarborough is a step closer to becoming a *Sports Done Right* community. The Scarborough *Sports Done Right* Leadership Team hosted a forum to discuss its action plan to improve athletic programs at the middle school and high school levels.

According to its Web site, *Sports Done Right* is a program operated in conjunction with the University of Maine Center for Sport and Coaching (MCSC) that sets standards for how a “healthy” sports program should be run for state school districts. Scarborough *Sports Done Right* Leadership Team Chairman John Cole said the team has worked for more than a year to identify the strengths of Scarborough athletics, as well as areas of the program that can improve.

The team currently has 14 members, including parents, booster club members, school board members, coaches, administrators, the athletic director and student representatives. Cole said the team has an action plan of future goals for Scarborough athletics that will be sent to the state *Sports Done Right* office, located at the MCSC. He said representatives of *Sports Done Right* will visit the town for a final meeting and evaluation to accredit Scarborough as a *Sports Done Right* community. “Essentially, when a school is accredited and certified, it’s to recognize that we’re following some standards that have been set at a state level,” Cole said. Cole said the day-to-day benefit of being a *Sports Done Right* community would be having a set of standards for the behaviors of parents and kids in sports.

*Sports Done Right* consultant, Jim Stephenson, said the program was created by the MCSC in 2005 by a panel of athletic directors, coaches and school administrators to address a set of principles of what parents should expect from athletic programs and coaches. He said among the *Sports Done Right* Panel were former Olympic gold-medal marathon runner Joan Benoit Samuelson and Dr. Robert McAfee, the former president of the American Medical Association.

Cole said the leadership team sent a survey to athletes, parents and coaches about what athletic programs do well and what needs to be improved upon. Results from the survey showed Scarborough schools received good marks for its current athletic philosophy and policies governing athletic programs, sportsmanship, athletic facilities, range of athletic offerings, cooperation between town and community service and school athletic programs, support by parents and the community, coaching staff and nutrition program.

Areas to improve on include eliminating the school district’s \$25 per sport season activity fee, have coaches better articulate athletic experiences with real life experiences, educate parents to have realistic expectations for their child in regard to performance in sports and improve communication between coaches and parents. “Scarborough does a lot of good things, but we have things to work on,” Cole said. Cole said Scarborough would be re-evaluated every three years for accreditation and there is no fee for being a *Sports Done Right* community.

Scarborough athletic director, Gary Groves, said he is concerned with the level of parent involvement in sports fund raising, as well as the activity fee, as he said some families may find it difficult to pay the fee every sports season. School board member and leadership team member Colleen Staszko said she would like to see the activity fee eliminated, as the money goes toward the overall school budget and not to fund sports. “This is a flagship program, *Sports Done Right* understands sports and kids. I think Scarborough should be proud,” Staszko said.

By Dave Dyer,  
Scarborough Leader

## Snowe introduces bill to strengthen Title IX

WASHINGTON - Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, said she aims to draw more girls to high school sports by making schools report the gender breakdown of their athletic programs and making that information available online. In legislation proposed recently, high schools would collect information on the gender and ethnicity of participants in school-sponsored athletic programs, including the number of practices, games and playoff appearances each team makes. Information on each school would be posted on the Department of Education's Web site. "While we've made tremendous progress in ensuring gender equity, students and parents can't see whether the law is being followed because they don't have key information about scholarships, opportunities or athletics budgets," Snowe said in a statement. "This bill would help us take those last couple steps and ensure that girls are getting the same chance to play sports as their male peers." The bill, also sponsored by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., would enact the same requirements for high schools that are already mandated for colleges and universities under Title IX, which requires that federal funds be distributed equally between male and female teams. College athletic programs risk lawsuits from the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights if they do not comply with Title IX, said Katie Herbine, associate athletic director for compliance at the University of Maine. Stricter reporting requirements could force high schools to "open their eyes" to the fact that they are not complying with the law's provision on gender parity, she said. - *By Drew FitzGerald, Bangor Daily News, March 3, 2009*

## Board of Ed approves stricter policy

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) officials approved a new policy meant to crackdown on unsportsmanlike conduct and aggressive behavior on the part of coaches that could ban them from coaching in the district, even for swearing at players. Under the policy coaches, employees and others in the district could be barred from public school activities if they engage in public displays of temper, said Monique Bond, a CPS spokesperson. The policy comes as administrators last year found that several coaches and security officials had violated state law and district policy against corporal punishment and paddled student-athletes in several high schools. "This new policy...is going to open up a Pandora's box - screaming in sports is as common as umbrellas are to rain," said Tyrone Slaughter, who led Young to the Class 4A boys basketball championship. "No one has the right to physically abuse someone. I'm not yelling to degrade a player, but rather to motivate him. I would say that 99 percent of the players in the Public League are accustomed to loud, boisterous coaches. It is intrinsically sealed into the game." Administrators want to crack down on employees who use profanity or abusive language, or disrespect game officials, Bond said. The policy change clarifies wording in the district's current rules that bars coaches and others from public displays of temper, Bond said. Under the changes, such behavior is more clearly defined to include abusive or taunting language and physical acts, she added. Coaches and others who violate the district's rules could be banned from coaching in the district. Peter Fosco, athletic director and head football coach at Schurz High School, said he was not concerned by the policy changes. He believes constructive criticism of athletes by coaches will be allowed under the rules. "It's OK to motivate your kids...Sometimes you do raise the volume of your voice," Fosco said. "But when you start breaking down the student's self-esteem, that's not a proper way to be coaching." - *By Carlos Sadovi and Bob Sakamoto, Chicago Tribune, March 25, 2009*

## Baseball parent charged with battery

The parent of a youth baseball player was arrested at Westside Middle School after allegedly striking one of his son's coaches in the face three times, according to an incident report. Jerry Leonard Morris, 36, was charged by the sheriff's office with battery and disorderly conduct during the incident at a practice session for the Dixie boys 13-14 year-old league. Morris "charged the baseball mound" because he was mad at assistant coach James McTaggart for moving Morris' son to the outfield instead of the pitching mound, head coach Jared Webb states in the report. "Mr. Morris hit (McTaggart) in the mouth," Webb said, explaining that he tried to pull Morris off McTaggart and told him to leave. McTaggart told Webb that Morris struck him three times in the mouth. McTaggart also said Morris used vulgar language toward him "and at least 19 children under the age of 14 were present." Morris claimed he and McTaggart "got into a verbal argument and I hit him, but he hit me as well," the report states. Morris was taken to the Whitfield County Jail and was released later on a \$1,500 bond. George Page, director of the Whitfield County Parks and Recreation Department, called the incident "regrettable" and said coaches and players sign a "code of conduct" forbidding fighting when they register their children. "We will look into the incident after the court has taken action and after the school board has looked at it," he said, noting it took place on school property. "Of course, we do not condone any type of behavior like this, and hopefully we won't have another incident. My heart goes out to those 20 kids who had to witness the incident." - *By Mark Millican, Dalton Daily Citizen, March 25, 2009*

## Budget approval could mean eliminating sports activity fees

As a way to ease the financial burden of parents paying for their children to play sports, area schools are eliminating or not introducing sports activity fees, also known as the “pay to play” method. As part of the newly proposed Scarborough school budget, \$50,000 of expected revenue from high school sports activity fees would be eliminated for the upcoming school year. Superintendent David Doyle said it will still be up to the school board policy committee to determine whether or not to eliminate the activity fee between now and September. Scarborough High School athletic director Gary Groves said the activity fee is \$25 per student per sports season. There are three sports seasons during each school year, resulting in a \$75 activity fee cap per year, per student. For a family with multiple students at the high school, Groves said there is a \$125 family fee per year. Groves said waivers are available for families who have financial hardship. Groves said there have been “a couple” of financial waivers for students this year, but said the fee may affect other students who wish to try out for sports. “Certainly you don’t know,” Groves said. “A student here may be struggling [financially] and instead of them coming forward, they just wouldn’t try out or participate, that’s the downside of a fee.” Doyle said the fee was established in 1995, as a way to increase revenue in light of expanding population and to help subsidize funding for athletic programs. Doyle said the fee goes into the district’s general fund, which means it doesn’t go directly to sports funding. The elimination of the activity fee was first brought up by the *Sports Done Right* Leadership Team. - *By Dave Dyer, Scarborough Leader, March 26, 2009*

## From Hadlock to hoop camps, sports pressed by economy

Marie Cross of South Portland is like many Mainers, taking a careful look at her finances during these precarious economic times. Her son Sam, 13, usually spends two weeks every summer at a basketball camp. “We’re taking a long hard look at that,” Cross said. “Instead of two weeks, we may do one, or we may just take a low-key family vacation. We have to be careful.” The Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram has spoken with dozens of sources - business owners, fans, athletic directors, parents and casual athletes - about the impact that the economy’s had on their budgets. College athletic directors, faced with deep budget cuts, are trying to stave off cutting sports teams. Portland’s professional sports teams must find ways to maintain corporate sponsors and ticket sales. People are struggling to decide whether they can continue to afford gym memberships and other leisure activities. High school athletic programs are increasingly relying on booster groups to provide financial assistance. The news is not all gloom and doom. Sports play an integral role in the lives of Mainers, many of whom are reluctant to let go of their avocation. - *Maine Sunday Telegram, March 29, 2009*

## Budget cuts causing headaches for college ADs

Athletic director Al Bean will put his coaches behind the wheel of vans at the University of Southern Maine (USM), if it means saving money on charter buses. He will deal with a hiring freeze and cut corners where he can. But as the economy worsens, Bean is bracing for what comes next. Endowments at Maine’s public and private schools are shedding money at a record pace, alumni donations have dropped, and the state budget is putting the squeeze on the University of Maine to make up an \$8.6 million revenue gap for the next fiscal year - about \$500,000 of which is to come from cuts in the athletic department. No colleges in Maine have had to cut athletic programs - yet. But with the economic future so uncertain, drastic measures are a fear in the mind of every athletic director. Just last month, the University of Vermont announced it will be cutting its baseball and softball programs after this spring to save \$1.1 million, sending a shudder east to Maine. Over the last two weeks at the University of Maine, athletic director Blake James has met with every coach, trainer and staff member who handles a budget to discuss areas for reductions. By the end of April, James needs to slash about a half million dollars - \$181,000 from losses in endowment money, \$253,000 from losses in the general fund and another \$70,000 from projected revenue shortfalls for next season. Maine, which supports 17 varsity teams, has not cut a program from its athletic budget since men’s golf was eliminated in 2001. James said it is premature to predict if program cuts will be necessary. “It’s too early for me to tell,” James said. “We have a sizable cut we have to find. I will do everything I can to avoid eliminating positions or programs. But, unfortunately, it’s a reality of the current environment we’re in. Those are all things we’re having to look at.” The University of Maine system is dealing with \$26.8 million in endowment declines over 2008. And endowment losses at the flagship school in Orono fell \$53.5 million. At USM, Bean is awaiting news about what his budget will be for the 2009-10 school year. USM is dealing with a \$4.3 million cut, institution wide. Craig Hutchinson, USM’s vice president for the student and university life, said he will have figures within the next month of how much of a cut each division will have to shoulder. - *By Jenn Menendez, Maine Sunday Telegram, March 29, 2009*

# Congratulations Cape Elizabeth

The Maine Center for Sport and Coaching (MCSC) would like to congratulate the Cape Elizabeth boys' basketball team for winning the

## **2009 Western Boys' Class B Basketball Good Sportsmanship Award.**

The Good Sportsmanship Award is awarded by the Maine Principals' Association. Cape Elizabeth is an active member of the *Sports Done Right* program. Congratulations and thank you for modeling appropriate and respectful behavior!

## City-run day camps fill up fast

Municipal day camps are enjoying a surge of interest this year as cost-conscious parents choose less expensive alternatives to overnight camps or traditional day care. In Saco, more than 100 people signed up their children for day camp on the first day of registration. Last year, only 12 people did. "It's been unbelievable," said Parks and Recreation Director Joe Hirsch. "We're expanding the program and taking in more money." Local recreation departments are expanding offerings and hitting record-breaking figures on enrollment in both camps and sports activities. These programs offer local children a taste of traditional summer camp while being cost-effective and convenient for working parents. The demand has been good news for city and town governments. During a recent budget discussion, the Saco parks and recreation budget was one of the few to show an increase in revenue. It was up \$118,000, due in large part to the increase in day camp attendance. Hirsch thinks some of the demand is from parents who work longer hours or take on second jobs and need all-day care for their children. In some cases, municipal day camps also are less expensive than day care, or at least provide more outdoor activities. About 350 children are expected to attend Saco's 10-week day camp, which costs \$695 per child for residents and \$895 for nonresidents. And it's not just children's camps that are popular, directors say. Adult activity leagues and adult classes teaching everything from kayaking to dance are also maxing out, probably for similar reasons: Adults are putting big vacation plans on hold and looking to sign up for regular activity locally, and the low-cost programs are also a positive experience for people who are out of work. - *By Noel K. Gallagher, Portland Press Herald, March 31, 2009*

## Middle schools look at athletics

The sports season could look different next school year for middle-school athletes in the Augusta area. Two of the eight school districts in the Capital Area League are considering switching from interscholastic to intramural athletics programs, changes that would remove them from league competition. As a result, athletic directors say, the remaining six districts would play shorter seasons, compete against the same teams more frequently or look outside the league for competitors. "We could do other creative things," Winthrop athletic director Michael Jack said. "Why not play St. Mike's or Gardiner three times (instead of the current two)? Or why not set up a round-robin tournament?" As they look to trim their budgets, the Augusta and Maranacook-area school system boards are considering proposals to end interscholastic athletics at the middle school level and develop intramural programs instead. District officials say they can save money by eliminating transportation costs, reducing coaches' salaries and avoiding hiring referees. Al MacGregor, Maranacook's student-services director, has estimated an intramural program could shave at least \$60,000 off the middle school budget. In Augusta, the savings would be \$20,000, according to superintendent Cornelia Brown. Jeff Ramich, athletic director at Lisbon High School and president of the Capital Area League, said schools might look for competition more frequently outside their home leagues to keep interscholastic competition alive and affordable. "I'm not sure we really need a conference or a league," he said. "It might come down to that. If it's not next year or the year after, it's going to be soon. You might see that very thing, just schools calling other schools and saying, 'hey, let's play.'" Athletic directors in the region say the savings from transitioning to middle school intramural sports wouldn't necessarily make the change worth it. "The middle school budgets are quite small to begin with," said Douglas Frame, athletic director for Waterville's public schools. "For the percentage of the school budget that it actually costs, you get quite a bang for your buck. Our philosophy is that, if you're not going to have kids competing against other schools, there's a huge component missing there. To us, it's not just about an athletic event. It's about all the other intangibles." Those include sportsmanship and learning how to appropriately deal with authority, Frame said. - *By Matthew Stone, Kennebec Journal, March 31, 2009*

For more information about the *Sports Done Right* initiative visit  
[www.sportsdoneright.org](http://www.sportsdoneright.org) or call 1-866-767-8540

