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To: Girls Gymnastics Regional Tournament Managers

From: John R. Johnson, Communications Director

Re: 2012 Tournament Public Address Scripts

Enclosed are the public address announcement scripts to be read by your announcer for the MHSAA tournament event at your site.

If you are hosting, please remember, this is a tournament event – not a home event – and you should plan to have your announcer conduct him or herself accordingly.

In the interest of good sportsmanship, please follow the script when introducing the participating teams. Your announcer **shall be a neutral party** when introducing teams, and should not show any favoritism to either team, **even if one of the participants is the host school;** or perform in such a manner that is designed to evoke a response from the crowd (i.e. -- “Are You Ready!” or “Let’s Rumble!” etc.).

Please find enclosed a copy of an article from the MHSAA publication MENTOR, which describes the desirable attributes and behavior for public address announcers.

**NOTE - When saying the MHSAA acronym, say each letter – M – H – S – A – A.
Do not say M-H-S-Double A or try to say MHSAA as a word.**

Public Address Announcer Copy – Regional Girls Gymnastics

Good _____ . The Michigan High School Athletic
(Morning, Afternoon, Evening)

Association welcomes you to _____ for today's
(Name of school/facility)

Regional competition in the 2012 Girls Gymnastics Tournament.

Sportsmanship – citizenship – ethics – integrity – respect. That's what school sports are all about. It's more about virtue and decency rather than victory or defeat.

Ladies and gentlemen, at this time we ask that you stand. The privilege of this game was made possible by those who have fought – and continue to fight for – the freedoms we enjoy. Let us honor and respect their efforts and our country by gentlemen removing their caps, and everyone standing at attention, placing their hands over their hearts, as we proudly sing our National Anthem.

(Then begin introductions and instructions)

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(To be read during breaks in the action-Scripts with instructions are MUST READS)

Scholar-Athlete Award (1x before competition, 1x during competition)

The competition is finished for over 2 thousand of the state's top student-athletes, who were vying for 32 one thousand dollar college scholarships through the M-H-S-A-A's Scholar-Athlete Award, sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance. Check out the M-H-S-A-A Website for a complete list of finalists and scholarship recipients. Applications for students graduating during the 2012-13 school year will be available exclusively on the MHSAA Website in the fall.

Second Half @ MHSAA.COM (1x before competition, 1x during competition)

Every team at every school has a story to tell, and now you can find those stories behind the scores online at the M-H-S-A-A's Second Half – a new website featuring original content from around the state, plus links to scores, rankings and much, much more. Make Second Half your starting point for high school sports information every day by clicking on the Second Half link on the home page of M-H-S-A-A – Dot – Com.

Attend The Finals (1x before competition, 1x during competition)

The finals of the 2012 MHSAA Girls Gymnastics Tournament will be take place at Grand Rapids Kenowa Hills High School, March 9 and 10. This is your opportunity to see some of the best gymnastics action in the state! Make plans now to attend this year's championships at Rockford High School.

Farmers Insurance (1x before competition, 1x during competition)

Farmers Insurance is a proud sponsor of the Michigan High School Athletic Association. Call 800-Farmers or visit Farmers-dot-com to find a local agent. We are Insurance. We are Farmers.

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MHSAA Network

The M-H-S-A-A Network features several games every week on Comcast Channel 900 and on the M-H-S-A-A Dot T-V Website. Check out M-H-S-A-A Game Night every Wednesday at 7 p.m. on Comcast. If you'd like to see M-H-S-A-A Network programming on your local cable system, visit the M-H-S-A-A Website for more information.

Meijer (1x before competition, 1x during competition)

Meijer is a proud sponsor of the Michigan High School Athletic Association, where we've just lowered prices on thousands of items throughout the store. So shop Meijer, and be confident that you are getting some of the lowest prices around. Meijer. Higher standards. Lower prices.

Country Fresh (1x before competition, 1x during competition)

Country Fresh low-fat chocolate milk is the Official Beverage of the Michigan High School Athletic Association. Country Fresh dairy and ice cream products are the finest in both quality and taste. Made in Michigan from Michigan's trusted dairy farms.

Student Advisory Council

The M-H-S-A-A Student Advisory Council helps serve school sports as a voice of the student-athlete. Applications are now being taken for students from the Class of 2014 to serve for two years on the Student Advisory Council. For more information about the M-H-S-A-A Student Advisory Council, and to view the Student-Athlete Belief Statement, visit the Student Leadership page of the M-H-S-A-A Website.

Spectator Videotaping/Photography Restrictions (1x before competition)

A reminder to spectators who are videotaping or taking photographs at today's game: All spectator videotaping and photography for personal, non commercial use; and must be done with the understanding that the video or still images shall not be duplicated, sold, or distributed through any medium such as television or the internet. The use of flash photography, tripods and electrical cords are prohibited. Your cooperation is appreciated.

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Watch MHSAA Finals on FOX Sports Detroit

Watch the M-H-S-A-A Championships all year long on Fox Sports Detroit and the Fox Sports Detroit Dot Com and M-H-S-A-A Dot T-V websites. Highlights of the Girls Gymnastics Finals will be shown in April as part of the Winter Super Show on Fox Sports Detroit. Visit the M-H-S-A-A – Dot – T-V website for a schedule.

T-Shirts on sale (Check with site manager before making this announcement)

A great way to relive the excitement of today's meet is by purchasing a souvenir t-shirt. They're sure to become collector's items and they're on sale now. Be a part of the games by buying an M-H-S-A-A souvenir shirt.

Concussion Resources At MHSAA.COM

How many times in sports have we heard the phrase – “you just got your bell rung, you’ll be OK, get back into the game”? Guess what? If you got your bell rung, you’re probably not OK, you’ve probably sustained a concussion, and going back in the game just might put your life in jeopardy. Safety comes first in high school sports, and everyone should learn the signs and symptoms of concussions. Visit the M-H-S-A-A Website to learn more.

Closing Statement

The Michigan High School Athletic Association and _____
(Name of host site)

have enjoyed having you at today's competition, and we look forward to having you as our guest at future events. Please drive carefully on your way home.

Good _____.
(Day, Afternoon, Evening, Night)

Heard, But Not Seen – The Public Address Announcer

At many athletic contests, there are a number of behind-the-scenes elements which contribute to the atmosphere for the event. One of these elements is a person infrequently seen, but always heard -- the public address announcer.

Sometimes, the job at our local schools is given last-minute attention, in terms of selecting the person for the job or preparing that person for the responsibility. Other schools have, like in coaching, a veteran in that position who provides stability and professionalism.

Selecting your announcer is as important as selecting someone to keep statistics, tape ankles, run the clock, etc. The person you select should have some public speaking experience, knowledge of the game to be announced, the ability to follow instructions and the wisdom to know when to speak, and more importantly, when not to speak and how to speak.

It doesn't matter if you're announcing a game at a field or a gymnasium where you have 170 people, or an arena with 17,000 fans looking on. This unseen voice is important.

One thing I personally find distasteful at high school athletic events is the announcer who literally tries to entertain from behind the microphone. No knock on those who do public address work for professional athletic teams, where entertainment is the goal, but remember that this is an educational event that is taking place in a classroom. Spectators will work themselves up on their own. They don't need a public address announcer to do it for them.

With that tone set, here are some tidbits I have found useful in selecting public address announcers and some guidelines for them to follow when working games:

On Selecting Announcers

- **Voice quality** - Select a person with voice qualities that projects at a pitch where all can understand what is being said. This is generally someone with a low-pitched voice. A person with a high-pitched voice is often harder to understand. The latter person may be well intentioned and mechanically sound, but if you don't have the pipes, you don't have the pipes -- regardless of gender (*I've heard many, many more male than female announcers at the college and high school level with this problem*).

- **Game knowledge** - A good public address announcer should know the game to be announced. This includes knowing official's signals, and the appropriate times to be on the microphone (*i.e., being silent once a free throw shooter in basketball has the ball and is ready to shoot*).

- **Emotionally neutral** - Yes, you want a person who can be enthusiastic, but you do not want a "homer." Your public address announcer should handle all calls with equal vigor and delivery, even if the opponent just made the game-winning score.

- **Follows directions** - The best public address announcers work from scripts. You need someone who can deliver the announcements you want, when you want them.

Working The Game

- **Be familiar with the teams** - Most public address announcers develop spotting charts to use while announcing. These charts provide the basic information in a larger type format than a game program generally does.

Also, get a rundown on proper pronunciations before the game starts. Either arrive at the game 30 to 45 minutes early so you can talk with the coach or administrator from the visiting school to get pronunciations right, or call the visiting school a day or two before the game to review difficult names. There's nothing more embarrassing for a youngster, parents and friends, for an announcer to butcher a name or be inconsistent in announcing it during a contest.

- **Consider a spotter** - This is needed primarily in football. A spotter is one who assists the public address announcer in identifying the key operatives on each play.

- **Develop a script** - Rather than doing everything off the top of your head each time, scripts can be developed for player introductions, welcomes, sportsmanship messages, announcements about upcoming events at the school, messages thanking people for attending the game, etc. (*Scripts are also available from the MHSAA for certain announcements.*) Writing a script and rehearsing it several times before working the game will make each announcement sound smooth and professional.

It is important to note that announcements welcoming the visiting team to the event and promoting good sportsmanship are vital at high school athletic events. They set the proper tone for the game.

- **Keep the focus on the game** - As stated above, the public address announcer should be enthusiastic, but emotionally neutral. When you talk too much, you draw attention away from the purpose of the event.

- **Don't be a homer** - Maintain the same delivery pitch for announcements involving the visiting team as well as your own. A "homer" literally creates at times an advantage for one team by unnerving the other, and sometimes disturbs the home team as well. Don't cheerlead on the public address system, and never make editorial comments about officiating.

- **Make basic comments on plays** - In football, wait until the ball is blown dead before describing the play, noting the ball carriers, tacklers, gain or loss on the play, the upcoming down and distance and the spot of the ball. In basketball, make the call on who made the basket, possibly the assist; who the foul was on, the shooter and how many shots are awarded. Stay away from mentioning the score or the time (*that's why the scoreboard is in the arena*), except at the end of periods. Above all, try to restrict your remarks to the time immediately following plays.

- **Pace yourself** - Remember that the announcements you are making are coming out of a speaker system usually positioned at one end of the facility, which sometimes have some distance to travel or have some ceilings and walls to reverberate off before reaching the ears of the spectators. Note that I didn't say the spectator hears the announcement. If you are talking too fast, you may create a garbled message than no one can understand. In some activities, the public address announcer is in a booth and cannot get the proper perspective on how things sound outside. A good idea is to put a person in the stands and read through some scripts before the game so you can receive some feedback as to how you sound in the seating area.

- **Don't try to talk above the crowd** - If the crowd is too loud, your announcement will get lost, no matter how hard you try. Wait for the crowd to settle down before making the announcement.

In short, the good public address announcer is an individual who sets the proper atmosphere for the event by doing advance preparation for the game, having the proper voice qualities, knowing the game, knowing when to speak and maintaining a professional approach to the game at all times. The unseen, but heard, voice is an important part of the administration and the enjoyment of interscholastic athletic events.

--John Johnson, MHSAA Communications Director

Learn More About Public Address Announcing

This article was written with assistance of various public address announcers, including Don Essig, the long-time University of Oregon public address announcer who authored the original version of the book, *The Voice Above The Crowd*.

The latest edition of *The Voice Above The Crowd* and an accompanying instructional CD are available to serve as a guide for announcing amateur athletic contests and events. It includes specific sections for many sports, as well as hints to assist announcers in their pre-game preparations and their in-game work.

For more information about *The Voice Above The Crowd*, contact:

Brad Rumble & Associates
4424 NW Wildwood Drive
Gladstone, MO 64116
816.305.6293
Lex2250@aol.com

The book and CD is available at a cost of \$18.95, plus \$5.95 for shipping and handling