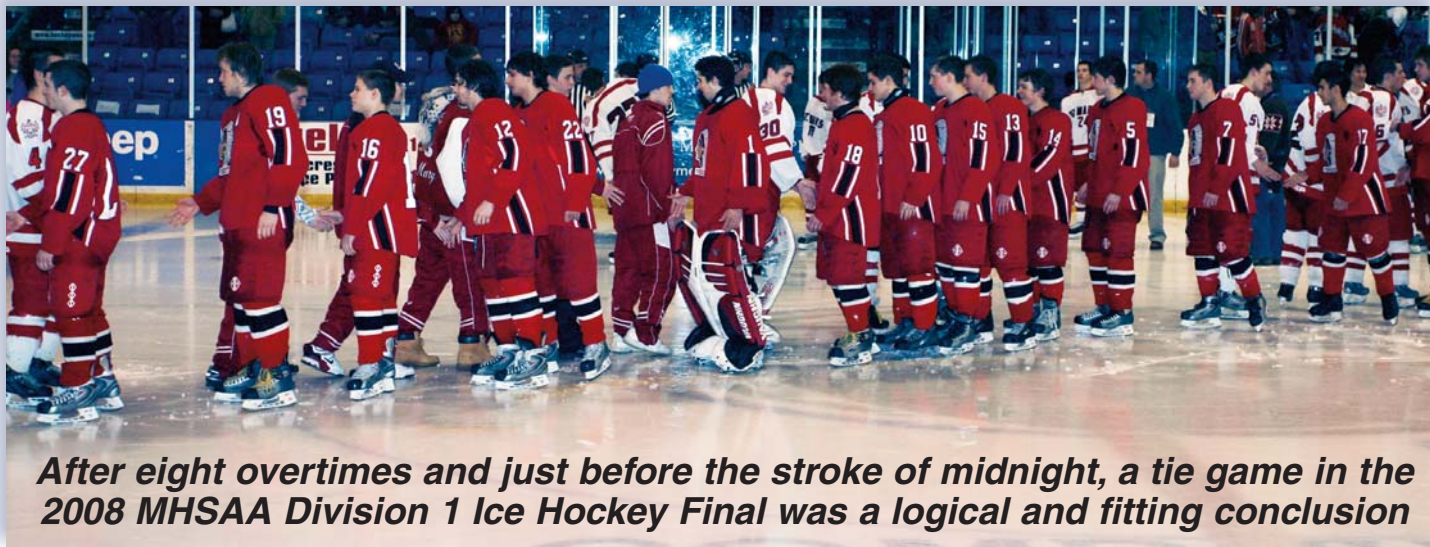


M E N T O R



The Michigan High School Athletic Association Newsletter for Coaches and Officials

FIT TO BE TIED



After eight overtimes and just before the stroke of midnight, a tie game in the 2008 MHSAA Division 1 Ice Hockey Final was a logical and fitting conclusion

Visual Image Photography

You've heard the old adage about going to see a fight and a hockey game breaking out, right? Well, last Saturday thousands of folks turned out for Michigan's Division I high school hockey championship game, but what they witnessed was an eight-overtime marathon on ice.

The result of the record-setting 109 minutes of play was a 1-1 tie and a pair of co-champions. Marquette and St. Mary's shared the championship after their epic eight-overtime affair.

Absorb that for a moment, and you're almost sure to think it a waste of time and energy. Sharing a championship trophy is nonsense, right? As Vince Lombardi would say, winning is the only thing that matters. Or as my favorite coach used to say, "A tie is like kissing your sister; nobody gets much satisfaction." So when I first saw the headline about an 8-OT tie, I believed the officials surely could have done something, anything, to avoid a moot finish to a state title game.

Marquette Senior High School coach Joe Papin had a similar reaction upon hearing the authorities' decision. "We were like, 'What? C'mon, we've got to play for a winner,'" Papin told me by phone from Michigan. "But then you think about the big picture, and the fact that these kids had already played about three hockey games in one outing, and plus, it was almost midnight. At that point, you realize that this is what was best. You have to use common sense."

Common sense would normally tell you that a tie in sports is useless. That's why Marquette-Orchard Lake St. Mary's marked the only tie in the history of Michigan's hockey finals. But, considering it was the longest high school hockey game in U.S. history in

terms of minutes played, a tie does make sense. There are exceptions to many rules, and this game was nothing if not exceptional.

Chris Lau, a reporter for the *Detroit Free Press*, likened the latter periods of the epic on ice to a pee-wee league skirmish. "Guys were so exhausted that they were falling over without even being touched. And they were almost unable to get up. ... Yet they were still skating as hard as they possibly could, and diving after pucks, and making hits, and still going back to block shots. It was really something to see."

Papin's Redmen journeyed 450 miles from Marquette for a shot at the title. Their bus left home on a Tuesday, and after quarterfinal and semifinal wins along the way, they laced up their skates for the championship game in Plymouth on Saturday -- their fifth day on the road. Imagine facing the two-time defending state champions after a trip like that. Then imagine going eight overtimes with them.

"As the night went on, we were loading our guys up with water and trying to get them any kind of food we could because they had already gone through all the apples, bananas and oranges," Papin said. "My wife went and got a case of Nutter Butters from the concession stand, which had already closed but reopened.

"But by the eighth overtime, it was definitely a health issue. It was about the safety of the kids."

Common sense told Papin, St. Mary's coach Brian Klanow and the Michigan High School Athletic Association that at that point it was about the safety of the kids. Common sense tells every sane human being that, at that point, the safety of the kids trumps all. So what scares me is a comment posted by an alleged adult at the bottom of Lau's game recap on the *Free Press* Website.

Inside: Making a Difference; The Impact of Coaches

“Sportsnut76” wrote: “After playing hockey growing up, and still playing as an adult, I would be DISGUSTED if I played my heart out and then someone told me the game was ending in a tie. WHY EVEN PLAY???. Sports are about winning and losing. NO MATTER HOW LONG THAT TAKES! As usual, a decision made by some adult to be politically correct and make everyone feel good about each other. Pretty soon we won’t even need to keep score. Just tell everyone they played hard and they are all champions. What a sham the MHSAA is.”



Visual Image Photography

“It was pure joy in the arena. Everybody was standing up and cheering for both teams. When I talked to players afterwards, there were some mixed feelings about the tie, but every single player I spoke with – without fail – added at the end of their comment that they were glad it ended the way it did. That was without me asking them if they were happy – that came from all of the coaches and players of their own volition. It was what was

In reality, the MHSAA called the game for several reasons. Not only was the game going into its ninth overtime, it was also almost midnight by that point. In Michigan, high school hockey cannot be played on Sundays, so the game would have been suspended at midnight anyway. If the game had been completed later, the two teams would have spent another day on the road, missing another day of school, just so they could resume a game (which may well have ended with one more shift) on Monday.

Probably not worth it, right?

“More overtimes or a shootout when kids could barely skate and goaltenders could hardly stand up just would have cheapened the win,” Papin said. “Plus, those weren’t even options on the table.”

The decision was what was best for everyone. Best for the two squads, who had played their hearts out. Best for the two goaltenders, who had combined for 91 saves through regulation and eight sudden-death periods. It was even best for the many spectators who had been at the rink for more than five hours.

Lau recalled the standing ovation from the thousands still in attendance when the co-champion decision was announced through the PA system.

best for everybody. It made sense.”

Too bad sense eludes so many otherwise-sane Americans who have been brainwashed by the win-at-all-costs crusade. At the end of the day, whether we’re talking about recruiting battles, high school championships or Little League games, the only thing that seems to matter to many people is the W. Sure, that’s the way it should be in professional sports. But, lest we forget, everything else is markedly different.

That’s why this was an extraordinary hockey game. That’s why, tie score and all, those 109 minutes weren’t a waste of time. That’s why the officials who made the decision should be commended. Someone finally got it right. They made a decision based solely on the best interest of the kids.

Not to say high school athletes should always be treated like kids, but Papin did attest that, back in their hotel that night after eight overtimes and one tie score, his co-champions slept like babies.

No word on whether “Sportsnut76” is still tossing and turning over the tie.

— Mary Buckheit for ESPN.com (Reprinted with permission)

HASLETT’S GENT IS MIDWEST AD OF THE YEAR

The National Association for Sport & Physical Education recently honored the 2008 District Athletic Directors of the Year who were recognized for their excellence in athletic administration at the national convention in Fort Worth. Among the recipients was Haslett’s **Jamie Gent**, who earned Midwest District Athletic Director of the Year honors.

Each district winner was recognized for their significant contributions to their school, community and the student-athletes that they work with. Their service and dedication to their programs was evident and NASPE was pleased to highlight their successful careers and each should be congratulated for their outstanding service.

Gent also was recently presented with the MHSAA Forsythe Award, recognizing outstanding contribution to the interscholastic athletics community in Michigan. Gent has served Haslett Public Schools for 41 years, including 18 as athletic director. His career of service to educational athletics has been spent entirely at Haslett, where he started as a middle school teacher in three subjects and high school coach in three sports in 1967. He served in various teaching, coaching and administrative capacities in the district before beginning his second stint as the school district’s athletic director in 1991, and has served in that role exclusively since 2004. In his coaching career, he was the head coach at the school in track and field, boys basketball, and football at different times. He has also served as a registered official for over 15 years in basketball, baseball and softball.

Most recently, he was an instrumental leader in the development of the Capital Area Activities Conference, a 22-school athletic conference in the Lansing area.



Nonfaculty Does Not Mean Unqualified

The article regarding teaching leadership to student-athletes ("Teaching Leadership to Student-Athletes") in the 2008 winter edition of *Mentor* noted that many student-athletes are not being taught leadership as part of their sports experience. As a registered basketball official doing 30-plus games for many years, I concur with your conclusion. MHSAA guidelines strongly encourage schools to utilize teachers as coaches and the schools seem to be doing this. The thought that came to my mind is that for whatever reason maybe the teachers are not the best role models in all cases to provide leadership to the students. There are many successful individuals in communities who could provide leadership skills as a coach, but may not be given an opportunity to do so because teachers are given priority. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Richard Weller
Basketball Official
St. Johns

I was reading the winter 2008 *Mentor* and took note of the article, "Planning for School Sports in Contemporary Society." In the "Executive Summary," it is said non-school youth sports programs have contributed to an increase in nonfaculty coaches and then goes on to list some other terrible things, such as a decrease in sportsmanship. I agree with most of it; what I don't agree with is making it sound like a nonfaculty coach is a bad thing. I graduated from my high school and turned right around and came back the next year to start my coaching career in 2001 because I had a great coach and wanted to give back. No, I do not teach for my school, but that doesn't mean I don't try to uphold their standards and my own standards, which include working hard, good sportsmanship and teamwork.

Also, just because they are a faculty coach, does not mean they make for a good coach; someone who teaches not only their sport but mentors them in life as well. I've been very blessed with good

coaches from my younger days, both faculty and nonfaculty. While I'm not perfect (and nobody is), I'd like to think my presence at my school is not a "black cloud" over them. I drive 40 minutes to my school to coach because I like coaching – not just for a paycheck. My hope is that you will rethink what is said in the future.

Jeremy Fabris
Boys & Girls Cross Country Coach
Lutheran HS Westland



Please submit contributions, views and opinions to: mentor@mhsaa.com. The MHSAA welcomes viewpoints from member school personnel and contest officials.

HEALTH & SAFETY: TOMMY JOHN SURGERY



CENTER FOR ATHLETIC MEDICINE

You may not have seen L.A. Dodgers Tommy John pitch in the 1970s, but most people recognize his name. Not so much for his accomplishments in baseball, but more so for being the first professional athlete to successfully undergo a revolutionary surgery by Dr. Frank Jobe known to physicians at ulnar collateral ligament reconstruction, or "Tommy John" surgery to you and I. This is a surgical procedure where the ligament on the medial side (inside) of the elbow is replaced with a tendon from another part of the body. Recovery time from this surgery ranges from 6 months for position players to 1 year for pitchers, and includes intensive physical therapy. Full recovery to pre-injury function is usually 18-24 months, and success rate is now around 85 percent.

The ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) is the main ligament on the inside of the elbow that holds the lower part of the arm (radius and ulna) to the upper part (humerus) and prevents them from moving abnormally from side to side. It can become stretched, frayed, or torn through the stress of the throwing motion. This injury is usually not painful and is often misdiagnosed. This injury will rob a pitcher of both velocity and control, as the arm can shift during throwing. It has been referred to as "Dead Arm". If a thrower continues to participate before the injury is treated a full rupture may occur. When the ligament ruptures, the joint of the elbow becomes unstable and may require surgery.

While an athlete's style of throwing or the type of pitches they throw can contribute to injuries to the UCL, the greatest determinant actually seems to be the volume of throwing in total. And since injury, and eventually surgery, is becoming more and more common in children ages 10-18, age-based recommendations for pitch limits in young athletes have been developed. Little League baseball moved to adopt pitch count rules voluntarily at first in

2004, then mandatory in 2007. The National Youth Sports Organization then refined the pitching rules for the 2008 season.

- Ages 7-8 are limited to a maximum of 50 pitches/day
- Ages 9-10 are limited to 75 pitches/day
- Ages 11-12 are limited to 85 pitches/day
- Ages 13-16 are limited to 95 pitches/day

In addition to pitch count limitations, pitchers ages 16 and younger will be required to comply with mandatory rest requirements:

- If a player throws 61 pitches in a day, they can't pitch again for 3 calendar days with a minimum of 1 game off
- If a player throws 41-60 pitches in a day, they can't pitch again for 2 calendar days with a minimum of 1 game off
- If a player throws 21-40 pitches in a day, they must observe one calendar day of rest

Some of the other contributing factors for the increased injury rates seen in young throwers include increased season length, participation in travel teams, playing on more than one team at a time, and throwing more breaking pitches at a younger age. But the volume of throwing still appears to be the major factor in these injuries. By monitoring these factors and adhering to the guidelines for pitch count and rest, the number of injuries to the UCL, as well as surgeries in young throwers, will decrease. And "Tommy John" will be known more for his success on the field, rather than for the surgery named for him.

For more information on this article or for priority appointments for sports injuries please contact Henry Ford Center for Athletic Medicine at (313) 972-4216.

Stay Rooted in High School Rooting

As thoughts turn to graduation at this time each year, students no doubt have run the gamut of emotions as they ponder the future and reflect on the past. In many cases, they recall the last three to four years spent in our schools as the most enjoyable period of their young lives.

The focal point of such fond memories, of course, is time spent with friends; and many of those times involve spirited crowd participation at sporting events. While the passage of time cannot be halted and graduation is the natural course in academic progress, it is the hope here that the majority our graduating seniors *not graduate* from the spirit and sportsmanship displayed in the prep rooting sections. That is, please do not become part of the often deplorable student masses we see each weekend at major college men's basketball and football games.

Sure, throughout the state there have been, and will be, instances of poor sportsmanship and occasional inappropriate chants resonating from our gyms. But, by and large, as high school student rooting sections have begun to emulate those of college big brother, our athletic administrators have interceded and done a fabulous job instilling the spirit of rooting for the home team and addressing proper behavior. Many such spirit groups have appointed student leaders who take ownership and responsibility for the masses of their peers. Numerous schools assign faculty chaperones to the student sections to ensure a positive experience for fans, officials and opposing teams. On most nights, the students are the most enthusiastic group, and also the best behaved.

Between leaving high school and attending events on a college campus something changes. Opposing players and teams become targets for verbal attacks and chants. Their families are subject to the same abusive barbs at visiting arenas. In the worst cases, students – young people just like those in the stands – have very personal, sensitive, private issues made public through the ridicule of insensitive masses.

Recently, Tennessee men's basketball player Chris Lofton disclosed that he had played his senior season while battling cancer. He hadn't said anything to most teammates and even his family while he received radiation treatment and battled the disease and SEC opponents concurrently. His reasons for silence were many, but without a doubt the saddest reason was this: he and his coach, Bruce Pearl, didn't want him to deal with the grief he would take from opposing crowds around the conference.

You want to say, "No, that wouldn't happen." But, you can't even finish the thought before you realize that, yes it would.

It's graduation time. Maybe our seniors will become the class that begins to bring college rooting sections up to the high school level.



Traveling Too Far For Rules Meetings? Help Is Here!



Traveling to far to MHSAA rules meetings each year? Is there not a rules meeting in your vicinity? Let us bring the meetings to you.

Online rules meetings will begin in some sports beginning in August 2008. Limited on-site meetings will continue, but the MHSAA is excited to offer options for coaches and officials to limit travel and alleviate time constraints.

We encourage officials and coaches to take the online rules meetings early in the allowed period to avoid creating heavy online traffic at critical deadlines.

Online rules meetings will not be accessible on Friday nights beginning Aug. 28 due to large volumes of football score reporting. The cutoff on Fridays is 3 p.m. Online rules meetings will be available for the following:

- **Fall 2008 – Soccer: Friday, Aug. 1 to Friday, Sept. 13 (3 p.m.)**
- **Fall 2008 – Volleyball: Friday, Aug. 1 to Friday, Sept. 20 (3 p.m.)**
- **Winter 2008-09 – Basketball, Hockey, Wrestling: Dates TBA**
- **Spring 2009 – All Sports: Dates TBA**

An online pilot program was conducted this spring using track and field rules meetings. The project was a resounding success. Consider the following:

As of April 25, 1,154 people completed the online track rules meeting. **The average round trip NOT driven was 82.8 miles for a total of 95,551 miles.** That equates to **\$13,058 in gas** at \$3.69 per gallon and 27mpg. The distance is equal to **3.8 trips around the equator**, which is 24,901 miles.

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Memories of Dad a Comfort at Gyms and Fields

I walked up to officiate a high school softball game the other day and the coach came up to me and gave me a big hug.

She said she was sorry to hear that my father, Jack Spencer, had passed away. I had to fight back some tears.

Maybe it was too soon to go there or to any athletic arena. After all, it won't be easy getting over the loss of my father, who officiated high school sports for nearly four decades. He died April 8 at 75 years old.

And I know he meant a lot to others as well.

"He was a great guy and always a teacher," said Jeff Bisel, Bay City All Saint athletic director and fellow official who ran some of the rules meetings with Jack. "And he was serious.

"I remember him telling rookies on football crews: 'There will be no inadvertent whistles today. You can put your whistles away and let the people who know call the game.'"

Everywhere I go, in town and out, I know I will be reminded on my dad's influence. He officiated high school baseball, basketball, volleyball and football.

Even covering a lacrosse match at Bay City Central's Engel Stadium brought back memories. Dad officiated dozens of football games there – some with playoff implications. I worked a football scrimmage with him there too in 1979. It was the only time I was officially on his "crew."

My dad, one of the eight charter members of the Bay Metro Officials Association in 1980, had his dream come true Nov. 30, 1991, when he was asked to officiate his first and only MHSAA Football Finals in the Pontiac Silverdome. He also worked the MHSAA Semifinals the following season.

Dad once told me that he'd never get to

work the big game. That it was too political and the best refs don't always get a Finals call. I'm glad he was wrong.

Fellow officials who worked with my dad for years say he was top-notch and one never had to worry about a basketball game "getting away" when he was the other whistle toter.

Others lamented that their wives never had to worry about getting home on time, because they were riding with Jack.

Although dad's real job was with Dow Chemical for more than 40 years, he was also athletic administrator at Visitation High School. As athletic director in 1964, he signed Wayne Fontes to his first coaching job.

He was also athletic director when West Catholic Central opened in 1966.

Dad kept a book on some of the highlights of his officiating career. He wrote numerous articles in *The Times* about officiating, and he also spent a lot of time in classrooms. He went to career and hobby days at local schools to recruit new referees and then taught several community education classes on officiating at Delta College in the 1970s.

One of the guys in his first class was Phil Boes and Junior, my oldest brother, John Jr.

"Jack was a very dedicated teacher and brought a professionalism to officiating that very few men knew," Boes says. "He



Jack Spencer

always stressed 'Be in the correct position, even if you make a horrible call.'"

He must have been one heckuva recruiter. One season, he got my mom to join the officiating ranks in girls volleyball.

I don't remember how or why dad got into officiating, but I'm sure he got a lot of practice officiating with eight children at the Murphy Street home.

Like my brothers, John and Tom, I followed in my father's footsteps – loving sports, coaching Little League baseball and other youth sports,

and then getting into officiating.

I officiated my first girls basketball game with my dad in the fall of 1975 at OwenGage. All I can remember is the final score of the varsity game was 6-4 and there were more jump balls than we had fingers.

Since I've been with *The Times* for nearly three decades – and have been an official myself for more than a decade – a lot of coaches and athletic directors in the Thumb and northern Michigan often asked how dad was doing.

If some still haven't gotten the word, I'll tell them the next time I see them that he's in heaven.

It's that special place for officials for all the heck they had to put up with on earth.

— Mike Spencer

Bay City Times Sports Columnist

HONE YOUR GAME BY ATTENDING A SUMMER CAMP

Capital Area Basketball Officials Camp – June 13-14

Location: Michigan State University, East Lansing

Contact: Mike Smith – mike@glra.net

Michigan Collegiate Basketball Officiating Camps

– June 13-14; June 20-21

Location: Central Michigan University

Contact: John Kirk – kirkgliac@aol.com

Mike Smith Basketball Officials Camp – June 20-22

Location: Oakland University

Contact: Mike Smith – bbcommiss@hotmail.com

Tri-City Basketball Officials Camp – June 20-22

Location: Saginaw Valley State University

Contact: Jim Eastman – jeastman2002@yahoo.com

Kalamazoo Officials Association Football Clinic – July 19

Location: Western Michigan University

Contact: Kevin Sullivan – refsully@aol.com

Ferris State Volleyball Training Camp – July 25-27

Location: Ferris State University, Big Rapids

Contacts: Jeanne Skinner – Skinnj101@aol.com
Jill Baker Cooley – jlbaker@wmisd.org

Mid-Michigan HS Football Officials Clinic – July 26

Location: Genesee Intermediate School District

Contact: Phil Long – phillong@excite.com

Michigan HS Football Officiating Clinic – Aug. 9 (MDOA/CAOA/MHSAA)

Location: DeWitt High School

Contact: Bob Williams – robert.williams@uofjesuit.org

WMOA Football Officials Clinic – Aug. 22-23

Location: Grand Rapids Area

Website: <http://www.wmoa.net/>

Northern Michigan HS Football Officiating Camp – Aug. 23

Location: Grayling High School

Contact: Tom Rau – trau48@comcast.net

Making a Difference

These are certainly tough times to be involved in education and school sponsored sports. The state economy is struggling, and because of it school districts are continually asked to do more with less. To top it off the start of spring sports season has been hampered by a longer than anticipated winter, and most of us are getting busier and busier as the end of the school year is fast approaching. It is at this time of year that many coaches, administrators and officials feel burned out and sometimes unappreciated, so I want to take a moment to remind you of the important influence you have on the youth of Michigan.

One of the ISYS alumni, Dr. Thelma Horn, who now teaches at Miami University in Ohio, recently conveyed the following story which I found not only inspirational, but an important reminder of the effect that all of you can have on youth. Before Thelma came to MSU, she was a successful high school English teacher and volleyball coach here in Michigan. She was a good coach who really cared about her athletes; a major reason why she has spent the last 25 years studying how coaching behaviors influence young people. In 2001 she received the following letter from one of her former players—a player she had not heard from for almost 30 years!

"I am writing you because I just wanted to tell you how important you were in my life. At one time (after I was out of high school), you said that you first were not going to pick me to play sports, but decided to take a chance. That chance was instrumental in making a huge change in my life. I know I was a big goof off (and quite frankly that has not changed much!!), however you took the time to care, and gave me an opportunity to use my energy in more appropriate ways.

"This past Saturday, I graduated with my second Masters Degree. I have often thought about you and I remember very much when my outlook on life changed. Maybe the goofing around continued, but my motivation changed and so did my attitude. I just wanted to tell you THANK YOU VERY MUCH!"



Needless to say, Thelma Horn never realized the powerful effect her day-to-day actions had on this woman. However, the athlete did, and the changes brought about by her high school sport experience lived on for three decades.

What is most interesting about this story is that it is not an isolated case. In one of our studies of outstanding high school football coaches, for instance, another powerful example of the influence of a high school coach emerged. The coach of a varsity football team was asked to talk to a troubled middle school student who was having behavioral problems at school. Because of the boy's love for football the middle school teachers thought the coach might be able to reach this young man. The coach came to learn that the boy was homeless and had very little supervision. He listened to the young man, gave him some much needed encouragement, and told him that he would hold a spot on the varsity squad when he came of age. This encouragement came at a critical time for the young man and, while it did not end his problems, it gave him enough hope to stay in school. He ended up playing for the coach (although he never started) and later went on to be a highly successful realtor. When we interviewed the young man about his high school football experience, he credited getting through high



INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF
YOUTH SPORTS

Daniel Gould, Ph.D.
Professor and Director
Institute for the Study of Youth Sports
Michigan State University

school and much of his post-high school success to his coach and the lessons he learned from him. In fact, he said the coach may be the greatest man he ever knew. This is quite a compliment from an athlete who never started for this coach's team!

These are just two examples of coaches who made a difference in the lives of their athletes. What is so interesting about these examples is that coaches may not know the influence that they have on their athletes until many years later or may never even know. Relative to this issue, it is good to remember what the great football coach Amos Alonzo Stagg said in response to the question "How successful was your season?" Coach Stagg replied that he could not answer that question as he would need to wait 30 years to find out how successful the season was. He had been implying that the kind of people his players turned into many years later was the real measure of success and not the won-loss record.

During this hectic time of the school year you would do well to remember these stories. You have a powerful influence on young people and that influence may come in subtle ways. The young people don't have to be starters. You may not even know that you are influencing them. So take the time to listen and care even when you're tired and feeling burned out. You never know who you will be influencing. Finally, remember to take pride in and draw motivation from the fact that you are making a difference in the lives of Michigan's young people.

Out-of-Season Reminders

As summer approaches, be sure to schedule activities in accordance with MHSAA guidelines regarding Summer Dead Period and Preseason Down Time

Coaches, schools and others should be alerted to recent changes to out-of-season and summer coaching controls which took effect in June 2007. **The Summer Dead Period and Preseason Down Time may impact school and non-school programs that involve students in grades 7-12 if member school coaches and athletic facilities are involved. Coaches and schools should plan and communicate so activities, students, coaches and school facilities are all in full compliance.**

The Representative Council clarified that the purpose of the new limitations would not be served if non-school groups or individuals were permitted to occupy the time and space left open because school people and places were operating within the limitations. Coaches and others should consult the local school athletic director and review the 2007-08 *MHSAA Handbook*, Regulation II, Section 11. A summary of these limitations follows:



SUMMER DEAD PERIOD

In 2007, nearly 95 percent of MHSAA member schools selected a dead period of at least seven days that included the July 4 holiday. Each school selects their dead period each school year. It must occur between the last day of school or participation by any team in MHSAA tournaments and Aug. 1. During the dead period, which must be the same for all sports, all school athletic facilities and school coaches have zero contact with students in the school district from grades 7-12. The dead period is a **no school sports time**: no open gyms, practices, conditioning programs, weight training; no sport related functions or fundraisers, camps or clinics at school facilities or sponsored elsewhere by the school; no coaches or students in grades 7-12 may have planned

contact other than casual, normal community, non-sports contact. While there may be sports activities during this time, they must not involve the school coach, the school or school facilities for seven full consecutive calendar days.

The only exception to this period is that school coaches would be allowed to continue coaching without interruption previously scheduled non-school, summer organized baseball and softball practices or competition, such as American Legion Baseball or Junior Olympic Softball when students from the district are present.

PRESEASON DOWN TIME

In all seasons there is a preseason period when no open gyms, camps, clinics or competitions with groups that resemble school teams (intersquad or intrasquad) shall occur at the school or be sponsored elsewhere by the school with any school district personnel present. The preseason down time distinguishes the preseason activity from the actual start of tryouts or practices. For all fall sports (previous restrictions were only to football, girls basketball and soccer), the down time runs from Aug. 1 until the first day of practice. For winter sports, the down time runs for 14 calendar days prior to the start of practice. For spring sports, the down time runs from March 1 to the start of practice on the second Monday after March 1.

Only non-sport specific conditioning/weight training or individual skill development work with no more than three players is permitted during this time. (See Interpretation 216 that does not allow for rotations from conditioning to three player work). This is a period of time **before the season begins** and none of this activity, even though permitted, is to be mandatory either directly or indirectly, nor may it be any part of team selection.

The similarity between in-season practices and preseason conditioning in track & field, cross country and swimming & diving necessitated a new interpretation so as to see a legitimate starting date for practices in these sports. "Regardless of what they are called or where they are held, coach-conducted running or swimming sessions which involve the structure of distances **AND** timing and/or teach sport specific technique shall not be provided even on a voluntary basis during the down time prior to cross country, track & field or swimming & diving seasons if they are conducted by the school coaches of those sports."

For further detail, refer to Regulation II, Section 11 of the MHSAA Handbook.



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College of Education, Michigan State University,
East Lansing, MI 48824
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