

Game Officials' Spring Newsletter

NINTH ANNUAL SPORTSMANSHIP SUMMIT

MIAA Deputy Director Bill Gaine compares sportsmanship to a performing art that requires rehearsal every day. Athletes must practice to bite back a retort, rein in a teammate, or genuinely extend their hands after a loss and say 'Nice game.'

"Sportsmanship is about leadership and working at it," he told the audience at the Ninth Annual Sportsmanship Summit. "That's why we have to keep coming together – to work at it, and bring it right to the table as the most important agenda item in interscholastic sports."

Held Nov. 22, 2002 at the Wyndham Hotel in Westboro, the Sportsmanship Summit drew more than 400 athletic directors, principals, teachers, coaches and student-athletes. Peter Roby, director of the Northeastern University Center for the Study of Sport in Society, served as the opening keynote speaker. He said that controlling emotions and setting an example for other players takes bravery.

"We at Sport in Society believe that sport is the great common denominator," he said. "It can break down barriers and teach valuable lessons about life. You are here doing that today because you have the courage to lead."

Students attended the session, "Role of the High School Captain," led by Dan Switchenko, exercise physiologist, former college basketball coach and professor at Eastern Connecticut State University. George Selleck, a well-known author, referee and athlete, presented a workshop for adults entitled "Raising a Good Sport in an In-Your-Face World."

"Sport in our culture today has become a destination – being #1 in the world, winning the Super Bowl, getting a college scholarship – and not a journey . . . learning to love the sport, learning to connect with people of different backgrounds, life experiences, roots and values, learning about yourself and the skills to get better and improve," said George Selleck.

He advises educating parents on their role – to follow and let their children lead. However, teaching respect, self confidence, integrity and cooperation takes

effort. Coaches must set a good example and have the tools to deliver a strong message. "The challenge we face in sportsmanship is that preaching only works to those who already believe," he said.

During the award segment, winners of the MIAA Sportsmanship Essay Contest received plaques and read their essays to the audience. Winners were: **Matthew Baron** of Monson High School, first place, **Dorothy Sebastian** of Falmouth High School, second place, and **Molly Gallagher** of Reading Memorial High School, third place. Selected essays were compiled into an anthology published by the MIAA.

John Coughlin, former chairman of the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee, presented the district athletic sportsmanship awards. He was also honored for his years of service on the Sportsmanship Committee.

WBZ-TV Sports Announcer Steve Burton hosted a panel discussion of the Massachusetts Alliance for the Promotion of Sportsmanship, an initiative aimed at changing the sports culture in the state. The MIAA partnered with Attorney General Tom Reilly's office on the MAPS initiative in 2000. MAPS members include professional teams, college programs, law enforcement, media and businesses. Goals are public policy development, positive media messages, education and community outreach. Panel members were Joseph Cummings, general manager of the Boston Breakers, Michelle Booth of the attorney general's office, Sean Donahue of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, George Selleck, Peter Roby and Bill Gaine. Scott Blanchard, president of the National Federation of State High School Associations and executive director of the Vermont Principals' Association, concluded the program with his keynote address. He said that parents and adults who cross the line from showing encouragement to demonstrating unsportsmanlike behavior are the biggest hurdle to overcome.

"I'm going to challenge you to make a difference in your world of interscholastic athletics," he said. "I'm going to challenge you to start something that's extraordinarily difficult. I don't have the answer to this challenge, but I believe you have the abilities to find this answer."



The following web sites may be of use to you. Check them out - Bookmark your favorites.

www.getpsychedsports.org

www.sportinsociety.org

www.nfhs.org

www.naso.org

www.massbua.com

www.mstca.org

www.lacrosse.org

www.miaawellness.net

www.miaa.net – click on Sports in left hand column – then click on your specific sport.

HAPPY SURFING!



Progress through Technology

The MIAA has made a major commitment to technology and the advantages it provides in terms of quality communication. "Paperless communication" has become the norm in the relationship between the Association and its member schools.

A seasonal newsletter for high school coaches is emailed to member school principals and athletic directors for their coaches, while at the same time it is posted on the MIAA website.

Enrolled game officials provide us with opportunities for communication that cannot occur with our high school coaches. As we have no coach's database for coaches, we certainly do for enrolled contest officials. What we currently lack however is the email addresses of almost 90% of the 6000 contest officials enrolled with MIAA. We have been told that most officials have email addresses. As soon as we are able to obtain the majority of those, we will take advantage of the opportunity that provides.

We will be more effective and helpful to contest officials when we are able to communicate with you instantly. Currently we either organize a mailing, or simply "pass" on the opportunity to communicate because the need for timeliness discounts the value of postal communication.

Email addresses must be precise, but are often transcribed incorrectly. The most efficient way to share an email address is through email. The MIAA encourages you to email nhuntley@miaa.net so that we may update and expand our database. We just added a new feature – go to our website: www.miaa.net – in left hand column click on Game Officials. There now is an email communications form that takes only a minute to fill out and send.

We presently are looking into the possibility of an athletic scheduling system, which would provide, when postponement was necessary an email advisory to all involved (e.g., participating schools, contest officials, bus company).

Technology is the way of the future and we are committed to utilizing technology to improve the way we work together. Please help us by assuring that we have your up to date email information. THANK YOU.

JUST A REMINDER

All game officials must be enrolled before the first competition of the spring season in order to be eligible to officiate MIAA spring tournament contests.

LIGHTNING SAFETY

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Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect interscholastic athletics. Within the United States, the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) estimates that 100 fatalities and 400-500 injuries requiring medical treatment occur from lightning strikes every year. While the probability of being struck by lightning is extremely low, the odds are significantly greater when a storm is in the area and the proper safety precautions are not followed.

Prevention and education are the keys to lightning safety. Education begins with background information on lightning. The references associated with this guideline are an appropriate resource. Prevention should begin long before any interscholastic athletic event or practice. The following steps are recommended by the NSSL to mitigate the lightning hazard:

1. Designate a chain of command as to who monitors threatening weather and who makes the decision to remove teams or individuals from an athletic site or event. An emergency plan should include planned instructions for participants as well as spectators.
2. Obtain a weather report each day before a practice or event. Be aware of potential thunderstorms that may form during scheduled interscholastic athletic events or practices.
3. Be aware of National Weather Service-issued (NWS) thunderstorm watches and warnings as well as the signs of thunderstorms developing nearby. A watch means conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a warning means that severe weather has been reported in an area and for everyone to take proper precautions.
4. Know where the closest safe structure or location is to the field or playing area, and know how long it takes to get to that safe structure or location.
Safe structure or location is defined as:
 - Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e. a building with plumbing and/or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using shower facilities for safe shelter and do not use the showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm.
 - In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (not a convertible or golf cart) and rolled-up windows can provide a measure of safety. A vehicle is certainly better than remaining outdoors. It is not the rubber tires that make a vehicle a safe shelter, but the hard metal roof which dissipates the lightning strike around the vehicle. **DO NOT TOUCH THE SIDES OF THE VEHICLE!**
5. Be aware of how close lightning is occurring. The flash-to-bang method is the easiest and most convenient way to estimate how far away lightning is occurring. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment, and its distance from the observer.

To use the flash-to-bang method, count the seconds from the time the lightning is sighted to when the clap of thunder is heard. Divide this number by five to obtain how far away (in miles) the lightning is occurring. For example, if an individual counts 15 seconds between seeing the flash and hearing the bang, 15 divided by five equals three; therefore, the lightning flash is approximately 3 miles away.

Lightning awareness should be increased with the first flash of lightning or the first clap of thunder, no matter how far away. This activity must be treated as a wake-up call to interscholastic athletic personnel. The most important aspect to monitor is how far away the lightning is occurring, and how fast the storm is approaching, relative to the distance of a safe shelter.

Specific lightning-safety guidelines have been developed for the NCAA with the assistance of the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL).

- As a minimum, NSSL staff strongly recommend that by the time the monitor obtains a flash-to-bang count of 30 seconds, all individuals should have left the athletic site and reached a safe structure or location. Athletic events may need to be terminated.
- The existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can, and does strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike.
- If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of the feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. Minimize contact with the ground, because lightning current often enters a victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike. **MINIMIZE YOUR BODY'S SURFACE AREA, AND MINIMIZE CONTACT WITH THE GROUND! DO NOT LIE FLAT!** If unable to reach safe shelter, stay away from the tallest trees or objects (such as light poles or flag poles), metal objects (such as fences or bleachers), individual trees, standing pools or water, and open fields. Avoid being the highest object in a field. Do not take shelter under a single, tall tree.
- A person who feels his or her hair stand on end, or skin tingle, should immediately crouch, as described above.
- Avoid using the telephone, except in emergency situations. People have been struck by lightning while using a land-line telephone. A cellular phone or portable remote phone is a safe alternative to land-line phones, if the person and the antenna are located within a safe structure or location, and if all other precautions are followed.
- When considering resumption of an athletic activity, NSSL staff recommends that everyone should ideally wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder before returning to the field or activity.
- People who have been struck by lightning do not carry an electrical charge. Therefore, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is safe for the responder. If possible, an injured person should be moved to a safer location before starting CPR. Lightning-strike victims who show signs of cardiac or respiratory arrest need emergency help quickly. Prompt, aggressive CPR has

been highly effective for the survival of victims of lightning strikes.



Note: Commercial weather warning services with sophisticated cloud-to-ground lightning detection devices are available. They may offer a cost effective, efficient method of making accurate, timely decisions on location and movement of lightning storms. Such devices are helpful in making decisions regarding stoppage of play, practice, evacuation, and return to activity.

Only Way to Win

The following individuals and teams received Only Way to Win awards for outstanding sportsmanship during the fall semester. Through the program, coaches, athletic directors, game officials and school administrators can notify the MIAA about acts of sportsmanship. Recipients were:

December

Varsity Field Hockey Team, Scituate High School; Coach Greg Rota, Westborough High School; Varsity Field Hockey Team, Nipmuc Regional High School; Girls' Varsity Volleyball Team, North Quincy High School; Danielle Joyce, Minnechaug Regional High School.

November

Bryan Callaghan, Canton High School; Tom Batcheller, Grafton High School; Varsity Football Team and Staff, Somerville High School; Coach Don Freda, Nashoba Regional High School; Thiago Viana, Plymouth North High School; Girls' Varsity Soccer Team, Waltham High School; Coach Renee Besso and Girls' Soccer Team, Wareham Middle School; Girls' Varsity Soccer Team, Medway High School; Girls' Varsity Soccer Team, Holliston High School; Tamara Sobek-Rosnick, Frontier Regional High School; Selese Gelinas, Norfolk County Agricultural High School.

District Awards

The MIAA recognized eight schools during an awards ceremony at the 2002 Sportsmanship Summit. Each year, the district athletic committees honor the schools that best reflect the ideals of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity.

The annual district award winners were:

- District A – Wayland High School
- District B – Reading Memorial High School
- District C – Hopkinton High School
- District D – Old Colony Voc/Tec (Rochester)
- District E - Shepherd Hill Regional (Dudley)
- District F – Westfield Voc/Tech High School
- District G – Mount Greylock Regional (Williamstown)
- District H – Notre Dame Academy (Hingham)

SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS

The MIAA Tournament Management Committee has approved an Annual Sportsmanship Award to be presented to one school in every sport at the MIAA State Championship.

We would like to encourage you to nominate a boys or a girls varsity team for consideration by that MIAA Sport Committee for recognition at the MIAA State Championship Contest. Nominated teams do not have to be tournament teams but should exemplify the tenets of good sportsmanship to the highest degree.

Please look on the MIAA website: www.miaa.net – click on the “Tournament Formats” link and scroll down to the “**Team Sportsmanship Award Nomination Forms**” then click on the specific sport form.

Please be sure to submit the completed form by the due date.

BOARD CORNER

Merrimack Valley Umpires Association



Visit our website

www.mvua.org

The IAABO Board #44 for basketball at its last meeting announced that the recipient of the Robert's Sportsmanship for boy's was North Middlesex High School; second place: Saint Bernard's High School and third place Bromfield School. The recipients of the Quirk Sportsmanship for girl's was West Boylston High School; second place: St. Bernard's and third place North Middlesex High School. Awards will be presented at the annual banquet on March 22, 2003 at the Monoosnock C.C.

The North Central Mass Baseball Umpires Association is holding a clinic for new umpires every Thursday beginning February 26 and continues every Thursday through April 3rd, when they will give the certification test. All clinics are at Montachusett RVT High School in Fitchburg. The cost of the clinic is \$25.00 Those that pass are expected to join the NCMBUA and pay dues of \$35.00 additional. Contact Charles Kornick via email at:
cjkornik@yahoo.com

MIAA GAME OFFICIALS COMMITTEE MEETING

- Monday, March 24, 2003
at the MIAA office in
Franklin, MA.
- Buffet at 5:30 PM
Meeting at 6:00 PM

This meeting is open to all enrolled game officials. Please register by March 17th if you are planning on attending by contacting Nancy at the MIAA office at 508-541-9817 or via email at nhuntley@miaa.net.



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