



Sports Done Right

A CALL TO ACTION ON BEHALF OF MAINE'S STUDENT-ATHLETES



The University of Maine Sport & Coaching Initiative

“Parents need to accept that kids are going to have fun in school sports and maybe, if they are lucky, play in college.”

Maine Student-Athlete



“When I play sports I seem more motivated to do homework.”

Maine Student-Athlete



Dedication

A Dedication by the Select Panel

To the Student-Athletes of Maine: Past, Present and Future

The mystique of Maine is famous around the world. Our physical environment boasts bold gems of natural beauty; few places have such a mosaic of rivers, mountains, islands and the sea. Indeed, Maine is a special place to live, work and play.

Maine's physical beauty is matched though—perhaps exceeded—by another extraordinary treasure: our children. Our greatest assets, the young people of Maine, are a talented lot. They hail from small villages, small towns and small cities. They study and compete in schools, on athletic fields, in arenas and in gymnasiums—in communities like Lewiston and Bangor, even on islands like Vinalhaven and Islesboro.

These young people of Maine are a special cast: invariably hard-working, of strong character and will, they participate in sports in large numbers from their early years through high school. Nationally, our youth do well, reflecting strong academic performance and a determination to do better. While high school completion has been a hallmark for Maine, many more of our student-athletes now have their hearts and minds focused on a college education. Their dreams are growing; their potential is limitless.

Throughout the state these student-athletes come to play important roles in their communities. Budding citizens seeking a strong foundation of learning, they compete seriously as athletes, representing their communities on sports teams that carry much importance and pride as they travel the highways and back roads of Maine.

As student-athletes, they represent their communities at home and away, serving as hosts to visiting youth and fans, and as emissaries in their travels to other places. These student-athletes collect themselves as teams, complete with mascots, nicknames, school colors, songs, and of course, long-standing traditions and rivalries. Their sports experiences are intended to complement, to support and to add to the learning they are experiencing in their academic programs. The promise of participation in sports helps to shape these young people—contributing to what they know and the character of who they are—fulfilling the vision of our state to graduate *smart students who are good people.*

Special Thanks To Maine's Present Student-Athletes

The validity of this report is based, in significant measure, on the frank and perceptive observations of today's student-athletes of Maine. They were significant participants at the Maine Sports Summit, held at the University of Maine, and they offered insightful and substantive comments at meetings of the Select Panel.

These honest young voices ensured that in writing this report we would know the realities of sports today: how much our student-athletes love the games and how much they are troubled by the problems that occur. These student-participants have helped to make the sports experience an even better one for their successors.

As members of the Select Panel, charged with examining and defining healthy interscholastic sports, our best thinking and recommendations are intended to help shape the best possible environment for learning for our student-athletes. Throughout more than a year of deliberations we have been committed to seeking and honoring the voice of student-athletes. Whether in small group discussions among middle school and high school students or at the extraordinary Maine Sports Summit held at the University of Maine and attended by delegations of student-athletes from every corner of the state, what we heard was the same: Our student-athletes are astute participants and observers of sport. They are articulate in describing what is—the good, the bad and the ugly—and they are capable of identifying and charting a new course for sports, one built on the best that athletics offer now, while committing to needed corrections and improvements.

So, we offer thanks and a salute to the past, present and future student-athletes of Maine. We hope that our work and recommendations prove worthy of implementation in schools and communities across Maine and America. Our service to the Common Good is set squarely on our greatest natural treasure: the youth of Maine.

“To promote sportsmanship and foster the development of good character, school sports programs must be conducted in a manner that enhances the academic, emotional, social, physical and ethical development of student-athletes and teaches them positive life skills that will help them become personally successful and socially responsible.”

**The Arizona Sports Summit Accord,
May 25, 1999**

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Introduction

Sports Done Right:

A Call to Action on Behalf of Maine's Student-Athletes

If a visitor “from away”—a distant place, a distant planet—came to America to observe this gathering of people, their homes, churches, places of business that we call community, it wouldn't take long, nor a keen eye, to observe young people engaged in organized games and sport. Indeed, such a visitor would be struck by the many sporting events and the throngs of adults in attendance at these games.



A closer examination would reveal that sports occur everywhere in this vast America—in urban neighborhoods, sprawling suburbs and in the rural villages. Yes, that visitor would report that these people love their sports. Our culture proudly basks in the sunlight of freedom and liberty, free enterprise and rugged individualism. But, alas, it is our love—*yes, our obsession*—with sports that is a grand hallmark of American life.

Sports are everywhere: youth programs, collegiate teams and professional leagues. And they are a major program in our schools. In fact, it is a rarity in America today to find public and private schools serving middle and high school age students that do not offer an interscholastic sports program. The identity of a community is often tied intrinsically to the local high school and to the mascot chosen to symbolically represent the community and school teams.

In school settings across America and here in Maine, these sports teams take a position of prominence in the daily goings-on of the school, in the lives of our student-athletes and in the eyes of our public—parents and fans.

From Helena, Montana to Columbia, South Carolina, to Montpelier, Vermont, school sports are big. Make no mistake: interscholastic sports programs are high profile in Maine and enjoy huge support from Bingham to Portland and from Caribou to Calais. In some of Maine's smallest communities the school teams are front and center, representing a strong sense of pride and tradition and often compensating for a struggling economy and an ever-elusive prosperity.

Yes, sports are *big* in Maine.

As our public schools respond to calls for improvement and greater accountability for student achievement, it is timely for all of us to examine sports in the school setting.

Whether referred to as extracurricular or co-curricular, thousands and thousands of Maine middle school and high school students are participating in sports: competing in our gymnasiums, in our arenas and on our athletic fields. There is tremendous support for school sports programs and an abiding desire by educators and citizens to make involvement in sports a truly enjoyable, developmentally sound experience for our student-athletes.

It is our love—yes, our obsession—with sports that is a grand hallmark of American life.

Talk to scores of Mainers about their experience in school, and many former student-athletes will report that much of what shaped them happened through sports. Many report that the academic side of school may not have been so remarkable or fulfilling. However, the opportunity to compete interscholastically, to represent school and community, is embossed on the personal portraits of many of us. We remember the championship teams, the great hard-fought contests against perennial rivals. And we remember our teammates and our great coaches as well as we remember that very special, talented teacher who made a difference in our lives.

Much is written about the benefits of participating in sports. In many select private schools across the nation, sports are held in such high esteem that they are an integral part of the curriculum; there's no reference to extracurricular or co-curricular. Every student plays sports. The learning and benefits derived from participation in sports are viewed as essential to the aims of education. In this era of reform and accountability, commentators are searching for ways to improve schooling for our young people. Clearly, there are important lessons to glean from athletics.

The highly regarded ethnographer Herb Childress wrote a national piece on learning and secondary education. Entitled "Seventeen Reasons Why Football is Better than High School," the author chronicles the practices and structures that are exemplified in sports. He makes the point that we should be examining our academic and instructional programs, asking why students lack motivation and drive and refer to school as boring, yet invest extraordinary effort in performing to the highest levels on the athletic field, in the theater, in music and in club activities.

Having acknowledged the prominence of sports in our nation and our state, we need to acknowledge a concern with how we conduct school sports. Can we serve our student-athletes better? Is there a way to describe healthy school sports? Is there an urgency to make some corrections?

The answer to all of these questions is a resounding YES!

Our interscholastic sports programs do need careful examination. Like the call for a higher academic literacy for all of our students, there is a clear need to make a series of mid-course corrections in our efforts to offer student-athletes healthy learning experiences through sports.



Let's face it. Our everyday news has been punctuated with stories of the transgressions and wrongdoings of corporate and political leaders. But even these common stories are being overshadowed by alarming reports from the field of sports, often citing professional and collegiate athletes and coaches who have made poor, self-centered and unethical decisions while displaying misguided behaviors that receive extraordinary public attention.

Today's aggressive media roll out these sad stories in all their color and specifics.

Whether on the playing field or in their personal lives, these sports figures are setting a troubling tone and style for our youth.

Even in Maine—in our idyllic collection of small cities, towns and villages with the smallest schools this side of the Mississippi—we find ourselves struggling with balance and appropriateness in conducting school sports programs in ways that complement academics and provide healthy opportunities for youth.

Stories and unfortunate events occur here, as elsewhere: about fans harassing officials, coaches and even our young student-athletes; about coaches' thoughtless handling of their young charges; about bands of parents pressing for the removal of coaches who are short on the winning side; about athletes abusing drugs and alcohol; and about the too-frequent spectacle of out-of-control parents and fans screaming at each other, embarrassing their children and setting poor examples.

These problems are real even in Maine. In too many Maine school districts, the local school board and superintendent find themselves embroiled in a sports-related controversy each year, requiring tremendous amounts of time to resolve and taking a high toll on relationships and the public trust. While there is much good to be reported about sports in Maine, there is also a significant need for correction. Students are leaving sports programs early. The turnover rates for coaches and athletic directors are alarming. The reports of lost enjoyment and mounting pressures are cause for serious concern.

What can be done? How do we ensure that Maine's student-athletes can access healthy interscholastic programs? How can our school districts address our sports programs so that all that is good about athletics is maximized while negative aspects are addressed? Presented here for thoughtful consideration are measures designed to prevent the erosion of the positive values that interscholastic sports can offer to our youth.

A major part of the answer lies in the recommendations that follow, highlighted by Core Principles and Core Practices that describe healthy sports programs and point out ways to retain what is good while resisting troubling trends. The product of the best thinking of a Select Panel of knowledgeable, committed citizens, these recommendations have been shaped after hearing first-hand from hundreds of student-athletes, educators, parents, school board members, officials, coaches and the public. Examination of the literature and research into best practices has guided this work as well.

In many select private schools across the nation, sports are held in such high esteem that they are an integral part of the curriculum; there's no reference to extracurricular or co-curricular.

It is our hope that all Maine communities “sign on” to these Core Principles and Core Practices, demonstrating an intention to be considered as “compact” schools and communities. As such, they pledge at all levels—from the student-athlete to the coach, from the school and the school district to the entire community—to provide exceptional opportunities for young people to experience the very best of interscholastic athletics in a setting where sports are “done right.”

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Core Principles, Core Practices and Out-of-Bounds



"It's almost like a town's mentality is tied into how the sports teams do. We're only in high school, not professional athletes. This is a learning experience for us and we're doing it because we enjoy it."

Trevor Paul,
Falmouth High School,
student-athlete



Philosophy, Values and Sportsmanship

Core Principle

Athletic participation must be healthful, positive and safe for everyone involved, conducted in an environment that teaches values and ethics, strengthens the community, promotes competition without conflict and enriches the lives of the athletes.

At their best, school sports provide an opportunity to teach good sportsmanship and other values. As a public activity with clear rules, immediate accountability and a real outcome, *Sports Done Right* creates an environment in which to instill core values such as discipline, respect, responsibility, fairness, trustworthiness and good citizenship. Positive competition and a spirit of excellence are defining values promoted through sports. Given their entrenched popularity and capacity for shaping character, effectively implemented sports programs are a positive social force in Maine's culture.

Core Practices

- A values-based philosophy, established as policy by the school board, is embedded in the athletic program and is communicated to all stakeholders. Communities encompass core values as the foundation for athletic programs. These philosophies and policies are implemented in visible and consistent ways.
- Schools' codes of conduct are articulated for coaches, players, parents and spectators. Student-athletes are involved in implementing these codes and their enforcement is impartial, consistent and educational.
- Players and other stakeholders exhibit good sportsmanship and show respect for everyone associated with the program, including teammates, coaches, support staff, opponents and officials. Everyone values the contributions of each member of the team.
- Players learn the value of competition without conflict and how to handle success with grace and failure with dignity. The spirit of improvement and excellence replaces a "win at all costs" mentality.

QUICK TAKE

*Sports programs can recognize values beyond athletic prowess. Team dinners and their recognition for outstanding athletics are a fond tradition that one high school converted to a celebration of higher values. It held a single end-of-season banquet for all teams, parents and fans. Instead of awards for high scorers and most valuable players, the school saluted outstanding athletes and their academic achievements – the scholar-athletes. New leadership awards recognized accomplishments on and off the field, and team community service work received recognition. The spring extravaganza became a celebration of interscholastic sports as an incubator of great young citizens whose character had been shaped, in part, by the opportunity to be a team player. This all-sports banquet is an event worthy of a program of **Sports Done Right**. It sets a tone consistent with the concept of sports as an arena for learning.*



Out-of-Bounds

- Coaching approaches and strategies that are incompatible with the philosophy of the school
- Those who act disrespectfully toward opponents or officials
- Players and coaches who do not honor the spirit and intent as well as the letter of the rules
- Parents focused only on their children's or their own personal needs and who fail to consider the team and the other players on it
- Those who fail to respect individual differences and diversity
- Continued imposition on youth and interscholastic sports of a professional/collegiate model that is focused on determining a single winner in each sport while diminishing the concepts of competition without conflict and of sports played for the joy of the game

72% of both males and females say they would rather play on a team with a losing record than sit on the bench for a winning team.

Josephson Institute of Ethics, Sportsmanship Survey 2004
www.charactercounts.org



QUOTES

“I feel compelled each year to pass along the importance of sportsmanship, teamwork, unselfishness, commitment, dedication, hard work, cooperation and appreciation, which are far more beneficial to the athlete than all of my best-designed plays.”

Roger Reed,
Basketball Coach and Teacher,
Bangor High School

“Unfortunately, we measure the value of a coach by wins and losses, not by being a mentor, teacher and leader.”

Jack Cosgrove,
Head Coach, Football,
University of Maine

“Character evolves from the culmination of life experiences and exposures. Athletic participation provides access to some of the most challenging and rewarding experiences to prepare for future success. It helps build the personal foundation from which individuals can elevate mind, body and soul.”

Dean Smith,
Systems Engineer,
Former UMaine Basketball Player,
1990 NCAA Walter Byers Postgraduate
Fellowship
(top male student-athlete in the country)

“Shouting derisive remarks to players, coaches and officials is demeaning, detracting and distracting to all aspects of play. This is a very difficult problem for student-athletes. No matter how loud the crowd, players say they hear these embarrassing, conflicting remarks from spectators. Let's find a way to tame this out-of-control behavior.”

Parent of student-athlete

Sports and Learning

Core Principle

Learning and personal growth form the foundation for interscholastic and intramural sports.

The intrinsic qualities of sports create a strong learning dynamic that complements the academic program. On the playing field, student-athletes learn skills, strategies, relationships, leadership and responsibility. They also learn the importance of planning, of setting goals – for one’s self and for the team. They learn to make plans for achieving those goals. Young people who play sports make a voluntary—and often passionate—commitment to their activity, enhancing their learning opportunities. Sports provide a performance-based, real-life experience, not an abstract concept. Sports also provide students with an opportunity to shine in a different setting, and to increase their engagement with school. Authentic events improve the learning potential and offer opportunities for the personal growth of the individual athlete.

Core Practices

- A quality sports program is learning-based with a philosophy that puts the needs of the student-athlete first. Providing such learning-based programs is the responsibility of school boards, administrators, coaches, teachers and parents.
- Sports are conducted as preparation for life rather than for the limited opportunities for college scholarships or professional careers.
- Coaches are educators, first and foremost. They must have excellent qualifications and training.
- Athletics are co-curricular activities and integral to the total education program.
- Learning in sports is closely linked to learning in the classroom. Sports-learning is tied to standards such as the Guiding Principles of the *Maine Learning Results* which state that each student, by the time of graduation, should be “a creative and practical problem solver, a responsible, involved citizen [and] a collaborative and quality worker.”

QUICK TAKE

Quality sports programs recognize the importance of the “student” aspect of the student-athlete. At one large high school this is accomplished, in part, by special recognition, in each academic quarter, for the sports team with the highest grade point average. Members of that team receive a certificate to put in their student portfolios and there is acknowledgment over the public announcement system as well as during a flag-raising ceremony. The name of the team is posted on a plaque in the athletic office.

Team captains are not necessarily leaders. Sports teams pick captains based on various values: out of friendship, as a sign of respect or as a recognition of athletic talent. But these attributes don’t translate automatically into leadership skills. The way that one small college sought to enhance those skills can easily be adapted for high school teams.

The captains of all the teams come together for three days of training. The training covers communication skills, clarification of a captain’s role, the importance of being a model of good sportsmanship and good citizenship and the setting of goals. Former student-athletes become part of the cadre of instructors. The program makes the point that being a captain is both an honor and a responsibility; such a Captains’ Academy helps captains to become more effective as team leaders and to develop lifelong leadership skills.

Out-of-Bounds

- 👉 Programs that fail to balance academic learning opportunities with athletic learning opportunities
- 👉 Programs that highlight the elite athlete and fail to provide a broad range of sports opportunities at all levels
- 👉 Parents, coaches and others who view sports as a showcase for star players rather than as a learning opportunity for all team members
- 👉 Turf disagreements between coaches and teachers that fail to consider the best interest of the student
- 👉 Programs that emphasize winning rather than the development of the student-athlete

Results from a U.S. Department of Education Center for Educational Statistics study of 18,500 students found that those who participated in athletics generally had higher grade point averages than those who did not. Similarly, a 1996 study concluded that student-athletes had fewer discipline problems, were less likely to drop out, were better prepared for post-secondary education and had a higher sense of self-worth than non-athletes.

Athletics & Achievement, Report of the Commission on High School Athletics in an Era of Reform, National Association of State Boards of Education, 2004



QUOTES

“Student-athletes learn how to handle adversities and successes of life through sport.”

Norm Gagne,
Hockey Coach,
Gorham High School

“Over the past 10 years, we have lost sight of what is really important and what it means to be part of a team. Winning is valuable, but you learn so many more lessons by losing. A healthy team atmosphere is more important than anything.”

Amy Bernatchez,
Head Coach, Field Hockey,
Colby College,
Veteran Maine High School Coach

“I am a huge believer in the value of athletics as a teaching experience. Sports are a real-life experience with an outcome.”

John Wolfgram,
Teacher, South Portland High School,
Assistant Football Coach,
Bowdoin College

STATS

92% of student-athletes believe participating in sports helps them to be a better person.

97% of student-athletes say the main reason they play sports is because it is fun and exciting.

“The Athletes Speak Survey 2002-2004,” a survey of pilot projects conducted by the National Center for Student Aspirations involving Maine and Massachusetts student-athletes.



QUICK TAKE

Reaching out to parents can score points for the coach. The high school field hockey coach decided to hold a pre-season meeting of her staff with the parents of her student-athletes. The agenda included guidelines on how the program operated, and familiarized the parents with the way in which the coach viewed her charge and her challenge. Parents were able to ask questions about any aspect of the program and got a real opportunity to know and understand the coach who would play a big part in their daughters' lives. The meeting contributed to a better rapport and gave parents clearer expectations and a heightened level of comfort with the program and the coach.



Parents and Community

Core Principle

Parents and community are actively involved in creating and supporting an environment that fosters positive athletic experiences for student-athletes.

Regardless of the size of the stadium, the magnitude of the game or the volume of the cheers, it is the attitudes displayed by their communities, their parents and their student peers that constitute the real arenas in which young people play.

Parents and other community members attend, direct and help sponsor sports activities for young children and for adolescents through high school. This involvement of adults in school sports enhances the experience for young people when the engagement is positive and when it reflects an understanding of the developmental levels of children and youth. Also critical to a well-run program is respect exhibited by adults for coaches, for officials and for student-athletes. The sports programs that thrive are characterized by strong mutual support offered in a positive spirit by parents, coaches and the greater community.

Core Practices

Parents

- Parents give consistent encouragement and support to their children regardless of the degree of success, the level of skill or time on the field.
- Parents stress the importance of respect for coaches through discussions with their children, and highlight the critical nature of contributing to the team and its success.
- Parents attend school meetings at the outset of sports seasons to meet coaches and school officials and learn first-hand about the expectations for participation in interscholastic athletics.
- Parents serve as role models, see the “big picture” and support all programs and athletes.
- Parents agree to abide by the school compact and rules guiding the conduct of sports, modeling the principles for their student-athletes.
- Parents ensure a balance in student-athletes' lives, encouraging participation in multiple sports and activities with academics placed first and foremost.
- Parents leave coaching to coaches and do not criticize coaching strategies or team performance. They avoid putting pressure on their children about playing time and performance.

Community

- The school board, after sponsoring community-wide conversations, officially adopts a compact embodying the Core Principles and Core Practices for interscholastic middle level and high school sports in Maine.
- Recreation directors and other municipal officials are informed about and support the principles established for the interscholastic sports program.
- Spectators, including the student body, show good sportsmanship by saluting fine performances, demonstrating respect for all coaches, officials and players, and by refraining from antagonistic behavior intended to interfere with the athletes' performance.
- Citizens, who realize that the value of sports goes well beyond winning, support a school budget that minimizes dependence on outside fundraising and recognizes the value of sports and other co-curricular activities as important aspects of learning.

Out-of-Bounds

Parents

- Pressure on student-athletes to perform at unrealistic levels
- Displays of disrespect toward coaches, officials and opposing teams
- Encouraging early specialization, leading to year-round participation in a single sport
- Attitudes that stress the playing time or position played by their child over the success of the team
- Over-involvement that includes sideline coaching, interventions and conversations with their child during contests or practices

Community

- Out-of-control spectators who berate and taunt officials, coaches and the opposing team through their actions, words and signs
- Inadequate support for school budgets that leads to increased dependence on Booster Club fund-raising for essentials and/or the institution of "pay-to-play" policies
- Emphasis on select, travel teams that compete for limited local financial resources and preclude student-athletes from participating in more than one sport

QUOTES

"The problem comes with the amount of pressure for perfection placed on coaches."

Jim DiFrederico,
Basketball Coach,
Nokomis High School

"Parents represent the best and darkest sides of sports."

Richard Card,
Senior Consultant,
Spurwink Institute

"Vague policies and inconsistent enforcement have been two of the main sources of controversy involving student-athletes. At a time when parental pressure on school boards and administrators often weakens authority within the athletics department, coaches and athletic directors say clearly defined policies are more necessary than ever."

The Union Leader,
Manchester, N.H.
March 9, 2004

QUICK TAKE

Sometimes, a bad move on the field can have a good outcome.

A reserve player entered the game as a runner at first base. Unsure of the number of outs, he hesitated before heading for second on the infield grounder and was an easy out. Some of the regular players taunted him for his indecision. The coach talked with the regulars. He said the errant player should have time to think about what happened and all should remember that this is a team. The next day, the team talked about the difficulty of keeping your head in the game when you're not playing. They acknowledged that the reserve felt even worse than they did about his poor base running and his failure to capitalize on an opportunity to shine and to earn more playing time. This "coachable moment" provided an opportunity to heighten the sensitivity of the regulars to the plight of a reserve player.

Motivation can play a big part in the game. *Sally was a senior and tended to warm the bench for a major portion of each varsity basketball game. This game was different and Sally played significant minutes and played well. The team was proud of her. Asked why he took a chance with her, the coach offered this explanation: Sally's father, a member of the military who was home on leave from Iraq, had never seen his daughter play. By his next visit, the season would be over. Sally's game time made her father proud and Sally expressed her gratitude for the opportunity the coach had given her. The coach knew that he had done the right thing for one of his players and her family and it had not harmed the team.*









The Quality of Coaching

Core Principle

The coach is the key to making the student-athlete experience appropriate, positive and educational.

The most important factor in a successful, educationally sound athletic program is a well-qualified coach. The autocratic coaching model of the past will no longer suffice. Today's coach must have multiple skills—in organization, communication, motivation and especially in teaching. The coach must understand the holistic needs of young people and know how to balance the needs of individual student-athletes with the promotion of continuous improvement, competitive spirit and the pursuit of excellence. The 21st century coaching environment is complex and stressful. Coaches assume more roles and deal with more issues than ever before. Young people are participating in sports in record numbers and the role of the coach has never been more important.

Core Practices

-  The coach promotes the connection between sports and academic learning, sports and character development, and sports and life-long learning.
-  Given their experience in working with young people and the special demands of coaching, teachers are encouraged to become coaches.
-  The coach offers motivation and positive communication and assists student-athletes to make good decisions.
-  The coach is a role model at all times, recognizing his/her profound influence on student-athletes.
-  A coach maintains the flexibility required to work successfully with a diverse group of students. Each coach supports the complex needs of maturing adolescents, assisting student-athletes to develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.
-  A coach is sensitive to the fact that different approaches will be needed for different individuals according to their needs and backgrounds, including their age, gender, size and culture.
-  A coach must master the fundamentals of the game and continue to learn, using professional development and mentor relationships. The learning goes beyond techniques and strategies to include the teaching of ethics and sportsmanship and effective communication with parents and the public.
-  Coaches recognize the need for balance in the lives of student-athletes, a balance that respects the needs of the family.

Out-of-Bounds

- ☞ Coaches who fail to understand that first and foremost they are teachers
- ☞ Autocratic coaches who communicate through intimidation
- ☞ Coaches with a “win at all costs” philosophy
- ☞ Coaches who promote the highly-skilled, elite athlete at the expense of others, or exhibit other examples of unfairness
- ☞ Coaches who promote specialization by their athletes
- ☞ Coaches who lack self-control and display poor sportsmanship
- ☞ Excessive expectations on the part of coaches who put pressure on student-athletes to perform at unrealistic levels



“Great coaching
is great teaching.”

Tim Whitehead,
Head Coach,
Men’s Ice Hockey,
University of Maine



QUOTES

“The profession of coaching is at a critical stage. It needs direction, and this work will provide a common place to start.”

Julia E. Treadwell, CAA,
Director of Athletics, Activities and
Wellness at Maine Central Institute and
Maine Interscholastic Athletic
Administrators Association Executive
Board Member

“There is no denying the complexity of coaching. It is very difficult ... to move away from the paradigm of autocracy that has long held sway. Work is needed to foster a relationship of mutual respect and honest communication [in] the coach-player alliance.”

Parent of student-athlete

“Ethical problems in coaching that are now a center story in college and professional sports also exist at the secondary level, perhaps even begin there.”

Gary Thorne,
ESPN and ABC Sportscaster

“Training coaches more like we train teachers could have a huge impact.”

Scott Atherley,
Head Coach,
Women’s Soccer,
University of Maine

Opportunity to Play

Core Principle

Each student who meets the eligibility standards has the opportunity to participate and learn through sports.

Opportunities and participation in sports have expanded greatly during the past two decades. More students are participating in more sports. Socio-economic status must never be a barrier to participation. Pay-to-play practices, though understandably tempting for income-strapped schools, remain an inappropriate answer to the need for greater resources. The lessons of sports must not be denied to any student whose grades and behavior merit the privilege of participation. Athletics—and other co-curricular activities—are an important component of education. Effective interscholastic sports programs provide students with athletic and personal skills while building positive lifetime values.

Core Practices

- School policies promote and fund athletics at interscholastic and intramural levels as part of the education program.
- Schools, in cooperation with their communities, support alternative programs for students who are cut from or do not choose to try out for interscholastic teams. These programs emphasize increased opportunities for participation. Examples include: JV, intramurals with a no-cut policy, and recreation teams, as well as such non-traditional activities as outdoor education, martial arts, skateboarding and biking.
- In setting eligibility standards, school officials seek a balance between the motivation and inherent value offered by sports participation and the primacy of academic achievement.

“Michael Jordan’s experience of being cut from his high school basketball team is, perhaps, the best known example of a “late blooming” talent. By only focusing on those deemed to have the skills early, many students are denied the opportunity to gain confidence, exposure and skills by playing a variety of sports.”

Athletics & Achievement,
Report of the Commission on High School Athletics in an Era of Reform,
National Association of State Boards of Education, 2004

QUICK TAKE

Cooperation among local officials can open up more sports opportunities. *After a coastal Maine high school announced the names of students who had made the basketball team, many young people had no place to play. The situation came to the notice of the municipal recreation department and the department approached the high school about a joint effort to create an intramural program.*

The school agreed to promote the program and engage the students while the recreation department took responsibility for organizing the league, running games and finding coaches. The outcome: Rewarding opportunities for nearly 100 students, who would otherwise have been benched for the season, to enjoy team play and competition.



Out-of-Bounds

- ✋ Pay-to-play practices that constitute an economic or social barrier for children in poverty, despite well-intentioned scholarship programs
- ✋ Cutting when there are no other opportunities for team play in the community
- ✋ Putting pressure on students to participate in costly out-of-school sports programs or camps



QUOTES

“It is important to keep young people engaged in as many sports as possible.”

Joan Benoit Samuelson,
Nordic Coach,
Freeport Middle School;
Olympic Gold-Medalist

“Money gives advantages to high schools in the wealthiest neighborhoods because they have better facilities and bigger budgets but also for less obvious reasons. Perhaps the biggest one is this: As high school athletes become more specialized and increasingly play one sport year round, wealthier parents are more able to afford summer camps and travel teams.”

USA Today,
June 17, 2004



Health and Fitness

Core Principle

Participation in sports builds self-confidence while teaching good health and fitness habits to last a lifetime.

Done appropriately, athletics provide the instruction, incentive, and setting for developing and maintaining sound, active minds and bodies.

Participation in sports can build a sense of personal responsibility for making healthy lifestyle choices and can help to combat the deteriorating fitness of Maine youth, a deterioration that, in adulthood, contributes to increased levels of chronic disease and premature death and disability. Being part of a team also creates a sense of belonging and offers a supportive network that contributes to emotional well-being and positive interactions in society.

Core Practices

- ☞ The physical and emotional health and safety of students are the primary considerations of all athletic programs.
- ☞ Coaches and other educators work together to heighten their awareness of students' personal, academic, social and emotional pressures. They also help students manage time, and balance their activities and responsibilities.
- ☞ Appropriate training and conditioning are required for all student-athletes and are modeled by coaches.
- ☞ Sports programs have defined seasons that are enforced by coaches and athletic administrators. Limits on practice time take into account the age and physical and emotional capacities of students. These limits are monitored.
- ☞ Student-athletes make a commitment in writing to abstain from the use of illegal substances and the abuse of all substances, in accordance with policies established and enforced by the school and supported by the community.
- ☞ Each sports program includes a focus on lifetime health and fitness and promotes habits of exercise and good nutrition.

Some of the problems we now have in high school sports mirror the problems they have at the professional and college level. Winning is becoming the most important thing.

Patrik Jonsson, "High School Athletics Under A Microscope," The Christian Science Monitor April 1, 2003

QUOTES

"If I had one wish to guarantee the future good health and well-being of our country, I would hope to instill in our youth the value of commitment to one's self, one's family and one's team. That commitment to a healthy mental and physical lifestyle is enhanced by participation in athletics at any level. The lifetime legacy of such early decisions makes not only the individual, but all those whose lives are touched by sports, enjoy healthier, more productive lives."

Robert McAfee, MD,
Retired Surgeon;
former President of the American
Medical Association

"Those who participate in a variety of sports and specialize only after reaching the age of puberty tend to be more consistent performers, have fewer injuries, and play longer than those who specialize early."

American Academy of Pediatrics
As cited in *U.S. News & World Report*,
June 7, 2004



Out-of-Bounds

- 👉 Inappropriate, premature focus on a single sport
- 👉 Unrealistic expectations and pressure from parents and coaches that emphasize physical performance over personal health, and set unrealistic expectations
- 👉 Excessive training and conditioning
- 👉 Use of performance-enhancing drugs
- 👉 Students who work to get in shape for sports while damaging their health with tobacco, alcohol and drugs
- 👉 Programs and personnel that fail to ensure proper care and treatment of injuries, and students and staff who fail to report all injuries

67% of males and 52% of females indicate significant to very high amounts of pressure/ stress as a result of participating in sports.

Maine Sports Summit, March 9, 2004



95.8% of student-athletes say participating in sports gets them in shape.

"The Athletes Speak Survey 2002-2004," a survey of pilot projects conducted by the National Center for Student Aspirations involving Maine and Massachusetts student-athletes.

QUOTES

"As a sports medicine physician, I have seen the many benefits of sport, as well as the damage that unrealistic expectations, improper play and poor coaching can wreak ...on young bodies and minds."

Dr. Gary Parker,
Sports Medicine Physician

"With few exceptions, parents can be invaluable allies if they really know that a coach's first priority is the health, safety and development of their child."

Robert Cobb, Dean,
College of Education and Human
Development,
University of Maine;
Co-Director, Sport and Coaching
Education Initiative

"One sport is one-dimensional; athletic creativity comes from learning a variety of sports."

Terry Kix,
Head Coach,
Women's Field Hockey,
University of Maine

Leadership, Policy and Organization

Core Principle

High-quality athletic programs are built upon a foundation of strong leadership, clear policy, adequate resources and effective organization.

Athletic program quality and effectiveness are contingent upon strong leadership, adequate resources and effective policy and decision-making procedures that combine to create a robust organizational structure.

- Leadership at the district, school and team levels assures that the values, beliefs, expectations and goals of the athletic program are developed and maintained. Structures and procedures are clearly written and easily available, enabling all players, coaches, parents and community members to understand how the program is organized.
- Adequate resources include the financial and human resources required to provide: every boy and girl with an opportunity to earn a place on a team, and every coach and athletic administrator with the training and equipment to deliver a safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate experience for each student-athlete.
- Policy and decision-making structures create expectations and procedures to direct the athletic program, assuring compatibility with the philosophy and goals of the school. To provide continuous improvement, oversight includes periodic evaluation of the sports program and of the adequacy of its support.

Core Practices

- Athletic administrators, coaches, parents and players work together to establish specific standards of behavior, consistent with a school's code of conduct, for all who are involved in sports programs.
- In setting participation rules, consideration is given to the need for families to have time together.
- Athletic program guidebooks describing the policies, procedures, program opportunities and expectations for participant and spectator behavior are distributed to players and their parents and made widely available throughout the community
- The policies that guide the sports program are the responsibility of the school board and the superintendent and should be developed with input from all concerned with the sports program.
- Day-to-day oversight of the sports program is the responsibility of the athletic administrator who reports to the principal. Coaches are responsible for the oversight, coordination and supervision of their individual teams.

QUICK TAKE

When sports fundraisers compete for the community dollar, some teams may lose. Multiple booster clubs can offer great support for their respective teams, but overlapping fund-raising campaigns can be tough on the community supporters and pose problems for school administrators obligated to approach sports funding in an equal-handed manner. One five-town school district found an answer when a businessman who was also an athlete, a parent of athletes, a sports fan and a previous head of two booster groups, recognized that the numerous fund-raising drives were becoming unsupportable.

The businessman contacted the athletic administrator to urge the development of a single, all-sports booster club. The timing was just right. All the stakeholders worked together to present a proposal, adopted by the school board, calling for a single booster organization and banning clubs for individual teams. The plan was successful. Funding has not been lost, more volunteers are helping out and community respect has been achieved.



- 👉 School authorities ensure that middle school and high school coaches, whether paid or volunteer, are competent and eligible to coach in accordance with any standards that may be set by the Maine Principals' Association or another sports oversight group.
- 👉 School units cooperate with a reexamination, by the State Board and Department of Education, of the adequacy of the funding provided to sports and co-curricular programs under the Essential Programs and Services formula.
- 👉 The allocation of all funds for sports, including those provided by booster organizations, will be equitable and based on the priority needs as determined by the school administration.

Out-of-Bounds

- 👉 Inequitable distribution of human and fiscal resources that results in the support of more opportunities for one sport over another or one gender over another
- 👉 Unrealistic expectations for athletic administrators leading to superficial program oversight, excessive turnover and an inability to do the job well



QUOTES

*“Participation of schools is integral to the success of **Sports Done Right** and the beliefs and practices that are embedded. Its potential to be a national model for quality sports programs that complement academic standards and overall school objectives rests with voluntary compliance, not prescription. We want this model to be developed so well that people will want to run their programs this way.”*

J. Duke Albanese,
Co-Director, Sport and Coaching
Education Initiative, University of Maine;
Senior Policy Advisor,
Great Maine Schools Project,
Senator George J. Mitchell
Scholarship Research Institute,
former Commissioner of Education

“Participation in sports offers valuable real-time feedback of real-life lessons: how to share responsibility, develop strategies, attain goals and learn to enjoy the company of friends with mutual interests.”

Parent of student-athlete

Middle-Level Sports: Matching the Program to the Needs of the Young Adolescent

QUICK TAKE

Academic failure is not seen as an option in this middle school sports program. One southern coastal school believes success in academics and sports are closely linked and successful athletes should have assistance in reaching academic success. Student-athletes who fail to meet academic requirements are placed in a probationary environment for two weeks. They receive specific instruction and support from teachers after hours, until their academic performance improves. These students continue to practice with their teams but do not play in games. This “failure is no option” approach supports the concept that all students can be successful in both athletics and academics.



The question of what constitutes the best educational environment to meet the complex and changing growth and development needs of young adolescents continues to generate conversations and debates, guidelines and policy at the local, state and national levels. Perspectives regarding sports programs, espoused philosophies and day-to-day practice also vary. Just as the structures and practices that define schooling at the middle level are different from those used at other levels, appropriate sports programs for middle school students should differ from the programs for high school students.

Some advocate for “little high schools” where programs focus on the “feeder system” dimension, championships and serious competitions. Others argue for a focus on skill development and enjoyment, nurturing the notion of the whole child.

Approximately 240 Maine schools educate students aged 10–15 in a varied configuration of grades such as K–5, K–8, 6–8 and 7–8. The opportunity to participate and have fun in a variety of sports is based on the middle level philosophy that honors the needs and interests of young adolescents. Yet in many middle schools, students begin dropping out of sports in large numbers never to participate again.

During these critical years, young adolescents are experiencing one of life’s greatest periods of physical, emotional, social and intellectual growth. An important challenge and role for middle schools is to help students incorporate these dramatic changes into the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to succeed in high school and later in life.

A major hallmark of middle schools is their focus on being developmentally responsive: they recognize and incorporate the unique characteristics of young adolescents into curriculum, instruction and co-curricular activities. Middle school students need an educational environment—including sports—that emphasizes:

- exploration rather than specialization
- strengthening of fundamental skills in a variety of activities
- teamwork and sportsmanship
- meaningful relationships
- health and safety
- resiliency, responsibility and accountability
- continuing opportunities to play

Transition is also an important component of middle-level athletics.

Many of the students entering middle school will have had experience on recreation or youth sports teams, and their expectations—as well as the views of their parents—might be different from those of students entering organized sports for the first time. Likewise, students leaving the middle-level must be prepared for the more competitive atmosphere of high school athletics. Middle school sports should be a transitioning—not a sifting process—for high school athletics.

Through the work of state and national organizations and educators, today's society knows a great deal more about middle-level education and about young adolescents and how they learn.

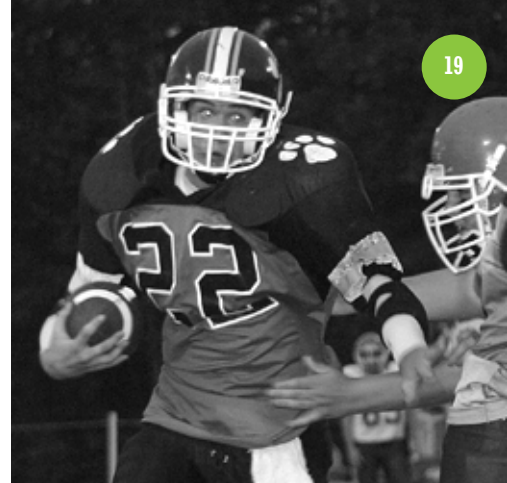
Through the work of the Maine Principals' Association (MPA), Maine middle schools for the first time have guidelines to direct problem solving, decision-making and policy in the often controversial area of appropriate sports and other co-curricular activities for young adolescents. The MPA Committee on Middle Level Athletics, with assistance from the statewide Middle Level Task Force, developed guidelines, which were approved by principals statewide in November 2003.

In its Philosophy of Middle Level Activities, the MPA states: “An understanding of the physical, social and emotional complexities and of the great variation among students at the middle level is of vital importance in developing a philosophy for activities at this level. The emphasis should be on creating a worthwhile and enjoyable experience for students, while broadening their education in areas such as sportsmanship, leadership, citizenship and participation in life-long activities.”

In the Select Panel's work with students, middle level youngsters emphasized the school/sports connection. For instance, they are motivated to go to school and to get their schoolwork done so they can play sports; they enjoy the social aspects and friendships sports offer; and a coach is highly influential in their lives as a role model and accessible mentor. On the other hand, they feel parental, coach and peer pressure to perform well as an athlete and to balance conflicting school-sports demands, and

they recognize that financial resources and lack of transportation are barriers to participation for many kids. They need and enjoy their parents' positive support of all players, coaches and officials, but they are dismayed by parents who have negative attitudes, emphasize winning over fun and constantly pressure them to be better.

Change—in their bodies and emotions—is a daily constant for middle school students. They are worried about “fitting in”



QUOTES

“Our job, as well as teaching the game, is to turn these kids onto sports, not turn them away. We want them to have a positive experience so they will return in another year and grow from the experience. Lessons learned from being on a team are important life lessons in the athletic arena as well as in the business sector.”

Youth sports coach and educator

The Maine Center for Sport and Coaching Middle Level Athletics Task Force identified four major areas as issues to address: the lack of qualified coaches; the need for professional training of coaches; the need for coaches to be perceived as educators; and the stress and pressure on students stemming from the push toward early specialization.

Presented to Select Panel,
Spring, 2004

“Inadequate preparation for coaching; undue expectations and pressures from parents and communities on students and coaches; poor sportsmanship and incivility; peer pressure involving unhealthy practices. These concerns are now... [moving] down into middle school and youth sports. We need to support kids and communities in a positive way.”

Richard Durost,
Executive Director,
Maine Principals' Association



STATS

Only 20% of middle level coaches are required to complete a coaching education program similar to that required of high school coaches.

53% of male and female students in Maine's middle level schools participate in interscholastic sports.

*Maine Center for Sport and Coaching:
Middle Level Athletics Survey, 2002*

themselves, but also are sympathetic and understanding toward peers who are struggling with situations they have no control over. They want sports to be an enjoyable in-school experience. They are saddened when a friend or potential friend is cut from a team, although they understand that it might be necessary. Their concern—which should be heeded by adults in their lives—is that the cutting process be as private, encouraging and painless as possible, and that those students have available other opportunities to participate in sports.

Maine schools serving middle-level students should conduct sports according to the following cornerstone practices and embedded beliefs:

- ✎ Middle school students are in the midst of one of life's most important developmental stages, and sports programs should be shaped and conducted in a manner consistent with our knowledge of early adolescence.
- ✎ Sports programs at the middle level should emphasize skill development, the enjoyment that comes with participation, and being part of a team while acquiring broad experience across several sports and co-curricular activities.
- ✎ Middle school programs should be guided by school board, league and state guidelines that are sensitive to the broad needs of students and family, prudently limiting the number of contests within a season's schedule, while avoiding post-season play that extends beyond basic league championships.



- Maine should move to implement a structure for statewide coordination of middle school sports. This coordination could be based on the present oversight given to athletics and activities at the high school level, modified as appropriate for the middle level. The logical entity to review and implement such a structure would be the Maine Principals' Association that presently provides oversight at the high school level. The adoption of any such structure for statewide coordination of middle-level sports and activities would require service fees to be paid to the coordinating organization to cover its costs of staffing and monitoring.
- Maine middle schools should work to ensure a wide array of sports and co-curricular offerings for students. Complementing the sports program should be in intramural program, sponsored by the school or in affiliation with the local recreation department, and open to all students.
- Whenever possible, middle school sports teams should adhere to policy guidelines that exclude cutting and maximize participation. Young student-athletes should see playing time during all athletic contests, either through liberal substitution or through the sponsorship of multiple levels of teams.
- Individuals seeking to coach in Maine middle schools must meet such coaches' eligibility standards as may be established by the MPA. Such expansion to include the middle-level coaching staff will necessitate reasonable fees to cover administration of the eligibility provision by the MPA.
- The Maine Center for Sport and Coaching, in support of the extension of coaching requirements to those working at the middle level, as well as to those in municipal and other youth programs, should develop appropriate curriculum enhancements to its present course offerings, recognizing the special needs of coaches who work with young adolescents.
- Because Maine students do not perform well on many health and fitness indicators, school officials should recognize that access to and participation in sports for middle-level students offer critical opportunities to provide daily movement, conditioning and habits of general health and fitness for pre-high school students.

Offering Maine middle-level youth an expansive sports and co-curricular slate of activities at the middle level is important as a complement and extension to learning standards based on Maine's Learning Results; as an avenue for developing strong leadership, citizenship and character; and particularly as an essential for physical fitness activities.

QUICK TAKE

A coach's off-the-field life experiences can bring something to the game beyond his team-building talent. In the days of the cold war, a nervous, sweating, quaking 8th grader was practicing with the freshman football team and bemoaning the dreaded double-sessions. One day at practice his coach remarked: "Two years ago I was patrolling the Czechoslovakian border; now I'm teaching kids to do jumping jacks." For the 8th grader, that comment changed his perspective instantaneously; double sessions looked a bit more like a privilege. When the first freshman game was played, his nerves had subsided, his confidence had grown and the 8th grader was a starting left tackle. At the end of the 4 and 4 season he was a proud player, giving credit for the change in his view of life and his sense of self to the relentless optimism of a coach who "drove us all to do our best." For that 8th grader, it was a season of growth and awakening.

Today that 8th grader is a successful Maine dentist, Dr. Nathan Goff of Portland.

His former coach is General John W. (Bill) Libby, Adjutant General of the Maine Air & Army National Guard and Commissioner of the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management

Out-of-School Sports

STATS

Post High School Athletics

-  **59% of high school football and basketball players believe they will receive a college scholarship.**
-  **1-2% of high school athletes will receive a Division I athletic scholarship.**
-  **12,999 out of 13,000 high school athletes will never be professional athletes.**

Mike Blackburn,
Interscholastic Athletic Administration,
"The Purpose of High School Athletics is
Not for the Development of Professional
Athletes,"
Volume #31, Number 1, Fall 2004

Out-of-school sports typically include community recreation programs, youth programs such as those involving the AAU, and such elite or select programs as those focused on developing Olympic athletes. Some youth programs include extensive travel to league play throughout New England and beyond. Out-of-school programs can be available to students of all age groups from t-ball leagues to American Legion Baseball, from peewee soccer to Soccer Maine, from mite hockey to junior hockey.

However, community recreation programs—that usually have low or no fees—are not always available, particularly in all sports to all students. Youth, elite, select and travel teams usually require payment for participation. Teams that travel widely limit the number of players by using tryout and cutting procedures. Thus, as a result of issues of availability, economics or ability, many students who would like to play on out-of-school teams are unable to do so.

Though out-of-school programs are not always aligned with the Core Principles espoused in this report, the players usually appreciate the status they receive from being on special teams and are motivated to perform. There are concerns, in some cases, that too much time on the road, too many practices and games in elongated seasons are contrary to the well-being of the students and contrary to the core principles and practices supported in this document.

Some students simultaneously participate in both school and out-of-school programs. The danger is in daily and weekly schedules that are out of balance for student-athletes. It must be remembered—by all—that students' primary responsibility is to learn and participate fully in a variety of activities that help shape them academically and socially as well as athletically. Participation requirements that have students spending excessive time tied to one activity can be detrimental. Schools should help the parents of student-athletes understand the real and potentially harmful effects of over-participation. Students benefit most from taking part in activities that lead to well-rounded development.

School policy should address expectations and the setting of priorities when school and non-school activities conflict. Student-athletes can learn important lessons when required to set their own time priorities.



As our communities seek to provide all students with opportunities to learn, to have fun, to be healthy, to acquire new skills and to develop character, what becomes most important is a coordinated effort among all programs devoted to youth.

- 👉 Parents play the key role in assuring that their children have balanced, healthy and appropriate schedules.
- 👉 Program leaders can do their part by communicating regularly with one another and by coordinating seasons and activities to benefit student-athletes.
- 👉 Communities should regularly review their recreational programs for opportunities to both broaden healthy participation and prevent the growth of a “class” system in sports.

The Core Principles, Core Practices and Out-of-Bounds sections of this report articulate how to conduct healthy interscholastic sports programs for youth. Out-of-school sports programs are encouraged to “sign on” to these principles as they guide sports opportunities for Maine youth.

They are stronger and more skilled, but year-round commitment to a single sport and far-flung travel for more and better competition are isolating our best young athletes from their communities and changing the all-around athletic experience that has been at the heart of American sports for generations

Alexander Wolff, “Special Report: The High School Athlete,” Sports Illustrated (Nov. 13, 2002)

QUOTES

“I am concerned about over-emphasis and specialization in sport at a young age. It is not all positive. Opportunities are never-ending, and young student-athletes are becoming burnt out and tired of sports. They still need to play and be kids and not have their free times so structured.”

Youth sports coach and educator

“No one asked me, but here’s my two bits: I still have unbelievably fond memories of Little League in the pre-soccer era. There was no such thing as a travel team. Everyone played on the same teams. None of us ever turned pro or won a college scholarship, and my guess is not too many of the little stars in Scarsdale will either. Scarsdale’s not the only place caught up in this idiotic arms race, but it could do us all a favor if it served as a model for dialing it back.”

Peter Applebome,
The New York Times,
Oct. 10, 2004

Making the Core Principles Stick: Using Compacts to Improve School Sports

QUOTES

The purpose of high school athletics is to enhance the whole school experience for all students. Academic achievement must always be considered the priority. The privilege of participating in athletics should be recognized as contributing to a student's civic, physical and social development.

Athletics & Achievement, Report of the Commission on High School Athletics in an Era of Reform, National Association of State Boards of Education, 2004

Implementation Recommendations from the Institute for Global Ethics

True community participation is critical to the success of *Sports Done Right*. We will ensure quality interscholastic sports experiences if all stakeholders are actively engaged in upholding the Core Principles and Core Practices of this initiative over the long term. To achieve this:

- Our school boards and superintendents must champion the Core Principles and Core Practices of *Sports Done Right*, taking the lead as stewards of this initiative.
- Such stewards must receive training to launch and facilitate community conversations about *Sports Done Right*.
- They must empower all stakeholders to uphold the Core Principles and Core Practices, encouraging approaches to document and celebrate these efforts.
- These Core Principles and Core Practices must form the common ground for all community interactions around interscholastic sports.

To support the work of *Sports Done Right*, The Institute for Global Ethics of Camden, Maine, researched models for successful systemic change. Staff involved in following several national and international initiatives confirmed the essential elements that will sustain *Sports Done Right*:

Leadership: Campus Compact is an initiative that exemplifies the importance of leadership support in sustaining a large-scale change. To participate, a letter of intent must come from the top—the college president. Initiated in 1985, this organization encourages campuses to commit to community service as a dimension of higher education. Top leadership participation may explain its tremendous momentum. With an original goal of one hundred participating college presidents, membership now stands at 950 and counting.



Training: The Arizona Accord promotes healthy sports experiences in public high schools. Now in its third year, it provides state high schools with training related to the initiative, resulting in a 47% decrease in ejections from sporting events during 2003-04.

Community Participation: The New England Association of Schools and Colleges is well known for its accrediting process. Its success stems from high expectations and a highly participatory structure. This opportunity to achieve high and widely-recognized standards motivates participants in the NEASC process, as it will for *Sports Done Right*.

Common Ground: Global Compact, a United Nations initiative, promotes global corporate responsibility based on a clear set of principles. The Talloires Declaration commits universities worldwide to principles related to ecology and human rights.

These initiatives differ from the constituents and scope of *Sports Done Right*, but they share the essential goal of accomplishing positive purpose through shared ethical principles.

To determine a process for involving all community stakeholders in conversations about *Sports Done Right*, the Institute for Global Ethics talked to athletic directors, school administrators, coaches and students in four very different Maine communities. Some common messages emerged:

- 👉 Sportsmanship and a sense of healthy and fair conduct is eroding in Maine's interscholastic sports. The adults interviewed detected a rapid change for the worse and are deeply interested in addressing these issues before it's too late.
- 👉 While in some contexts very specific groups were pointed to as the problem, the overwhelming agreement is that everyone should be part of the solution.
- 👉 Since each community has a different makeup and different issues, solutions will (and should) be different, too.
- 👉 A successful compact process will take strong support from leadership and participation from many different stakeholders. Both are forthcoming.

Community input and research about the essential ingredients for sustaining *Sports Done Right*, point to the following steps for participation:

1. Maine school superintendents and school boards will receive invitations to participate in the *Sports Done Right* initiative.
2. Superintendents take the initial responsibility for guiding the local conversation. They appoint additional stewards such as principals and athletic directors. These individuals will lead the process.
3. Stewards receive training from the Maine Center for Sport and Coaching and the Institute for Global Ethics on "Making the Core Principles Stick."



QUOTES

*"The Institute for Global Ethics is honored to participate in this landmark initiative for Maine's student-athletes. As a model for the rest of the nation, **Sports Done Right** lifts athletics to where it should be and to where I believe our youngsters truly want it to be—at the level of noble, moral enterprise. Clearly, great sports experiences can develop the great values of responsibility, commitment, unselfishness, teamwork, leadership and fairness. But sports done wrong? That's perhaps the worst thing a school can offer, creating a dark and tangled wasteland of selfishness, exclusivity, cheating, conceit and winning at all costs. The genius of this report is that, like all good stewardship, it begins by identifying what it wants to save. Then it candidly points out what we need to reject. Finally, it tells us what to do."*

Rushworth M. Kidder, Ph.D.
President,
Institute for Global Ethics

STATS

40.5% of student-athletes say participating in sports is the main reason they go to school.

"The Athletes Speak Survey 2002-2004," a survey of pilot projects conducted by the National Center for Student Aspirations involving Maine and Massachusetts student-athletes.



4. Stewards organize participants, recruit and carry out a community conversation about *Sports Done Right*. This discussion is documented with a School-Community Compact. Key participants in this discussion sign individual compacts that underscore their commitment and describe their roles in upholding the Core Principles and Core Practices of *Sports Done Right*.
5. The *Sports Done Right* compact is signed by the school board chair, superintendent, principal and athletic administrators after final adoption by the school board.
6. The school community receives special recognition from the Maine Center for Sport and Coaching.

Roles in the Sports Done Right School Community Compact Process: Everyone has a job to do, and everyone experiences the joys of success through the *Sports Done Right* school-community compact process. The following table describes some key constituents in this process and their roles in making it successful:

Parents and Student-Athletes:

- Exhibit good sportsmanship and show respect
- Support the value of competition without conflict
- Commit to upholding substance abuse policies and to a focus on lifetime health and fitness
- Respect coaches and attend relevant school meetings
- Place academics first and foremost

Coaches:

- Are role models at all times
- Promote character development and life-long learning
- Help student-athletes learn to make good decisions
- Use a variety of approaches for maturing adolescents
- Teach ethics, sportsmanship and learn to communicate

School Boards and Administration:

- Consistently strive to provide quality athletic programs
- Expect student-athletes to conduct themselves respectfully and compassionately
- Expect coaches to provide enriching sports experiences for each student-athlete
- Expect parents and community members to contribute to a positive experience for everyone

Bold Changes on the Horizon

- Schools will make periodic assessments of their achievement of these Core Principles and Core Practices. An individual not connected with the school will be included in the assessment process.
- Schools will set as a goal the practice sometimes found in private schools in which all students participate in extra-curricular activities. In support of this goal, schools will offer a wider range of non-traditional sports such as skateboarding, mountain biking and outdoor recreation.
- Compensation for coaches and others involved in sports programs will be tied to their level of training and/or certification.
- The eligibility of outside organizations to use a school facility will depend, in part, on the organization's expressed agreement to abide by these principles and practices.
- Maine school leaders will encourage the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to include these Core Principles and Core Practices as an aspect of school accreditation.
- The *Sports Done Right* initiative will play a role in any statewide health initiative (e.g. Dirigo Health) and in other health initiatives with a goal of improving the fitness of Maine youth.
- A key aspect of Maine's health initiative is the development of "specific strategies to reduce the amount of chronic illnesses..." A well-designed and effectively-implemented school sports program will be a significant strategic step in the drive to improve the health of Maine citizens.
- A Community Athletic Council (CAC) will be created in many Maine cities and towns. It will bring together the diverse organizations that sponsor local sports programs. A CAC and its member organizations will endorse the Core Principles and Core Practices embodied here, bringing community-wide support to standards that will impact both school and out-of-school athletics, ensuring that such programs are operated in a manner commensurate with the learning, health and development of the participants. CAC agendas will cover such concerns as length of seasons, travel and scheduling parameters, as well as appropriate weight training and workouts for young people at various stages of development.



QUOTES

“Using data from nationally affiliated basketball leagues, researchers estimated that the total number of fourth-grade boys playing organized basketball was about 475,000. At the same time, only 87,000 teens were playing basketball as seniors in high school. Of the 87,000, 1,560 will win Division I college scholarships, 1,350 will get Division II scholarships, and 1,400 more will play at Division III schools. Of those 4,310, about 30 will make it to the National Basketball Association. In soccer, the odds are even longer because so many colleges recruit foreign players.”

Dan Doyle,
for forthcoming book,
The Encyclopedia of Sports Parenting,
cited in *Fixing Kids' Sports*,
U.S. News & World Report,
June 7, 2004

The Odds on Becoming a Pro

NCAA Chart

Student-Athletes	Men's Basketball	Women's Basketball	Football	Baseball	Men's Ice Hockey	Men's Soccer
High School Student-Athletes	549,500	456,900	983,600	455,300	29,900	321,400
High School Senior Student-Athletes	157,000	130,500	281,000	130,100	8,500	91,800
NCAA Student-Athletes	15,700	14,400	56,500	25,700	3,700	18,200
NCAA Freshman Roster Positions	4,500	4,100	16,200	7,300	1,100	5,200
NCAA Senior Student-Athletes	3,500	3,200	12,600	5,700	800	4,100
NCAA Student-Athletes Drafted	44	32	250	600	33	76
Percent High School to NCAA	2.9	3.1	5.8	5.6	12.9	5.7
Percent NCAA to Professional	1.3	1	2	10.5	4.1	1.9
Percent High School to Professional	0.03	0.02	0.09	0.5	0.4	0.08

Red Flags for Parents

- 👉 A parent who is continuing to live his own personal athletic dream through his child has not released his child to the game.
- 👉 If a parent tends to share in the credit when the child has done well in sport or has been victorious, he is too involved.
- 👉 On one hand, it is only natural for a parent to attempt to steer his child through the rough spots in life in order to enhance the child's enjoyment of the athletic experience. But, athletics offer an excellent opportunity to allow kids to learn to solve their own problems.
- 👉 If a parent is trying to continue to coach his child when the child probably knows more about the game than the parent does, he has not released the youth athlete.
- 👉 A parent should realize that he is taking everything too seriously and has not released the child to the activity when:
 - He is nervous before his child's game.
 - He has a difficult time bouncing back after his child's team suffers a defeat.
 - He makes mental notes during a game so he can give his child advice at the conclusion of the game.
 - He becomes verbally critical of an official.

Appendices



Maine Center for Sport and Coaching

Sports Compact for the School Community

Honoring the Core Principles and Core Practices of Sports Done Right

We recognize that school sports experiences can contribute greatly to the values and ethics of each student-athlete. Positive sports experiences teach important life skills, encourage teamwork, help shape character and citizenship, encourage an active lifestyle and often contribute to success in academics.

We know that a beneficial interscholastic sports program is a joint venture of the school and the community, requiring positive input from both. We recognize that students, parents, community members, coaches, athletics staff, administration and members of the school board need to subscribe to the Core Principles and Core Practices, described in *Sports Done Right: A Call to Action on Behalf of Maine's Student-Athletes*.

We are dedicated to making healthy and positive sports programming accessible to every eligible student in our school community. Sports experiences for students in our school community are intended to complement, to support and to add to the learning they are experiencing in their academic programs.

- 👉 Our student-athletes know they represent this community at home and away, and should conduct themselves respectfully and compassionately on and off the court.
- 👉 Our coaches appreciate their important role in providing enriching sports experiences that build good habits and self confidence in each student-athlete.
- 👉 Our school board and administrative team consistently strive to provide quality athletic programs.
- 👉 We will help our parents and community members to understand the importance of contributing to a positive experience for everyone at our sports events, whether they are held at home or away.

The promise of participation in sports helps to shape our young people. We pledge to provide exceptional opportunities for our students to experience the very best of interscholastic athletics in a setting where “sports are done right.”

We are actively and positively contributing to what our student-athletes know and the character of who they are—helping to fulfill the vision of graduating smart students who are good people.

Chair, School Board

Superintendent of Schools

Principal

Athletic Director

Maine Center for Sport and Coaching

Sports Compact for Parents and Student-Athletes

Honoring the Core Principles and Core Practices of Sports Done Right

We recognize that healthy sports experiences take commitment from student-athletes and their parents. This Compact is based on the Core Principles and Core Practices of *Sports Done Right: A Call to Action on Behalf of Maine’s Student-Athletes*. We have agreed upon the following Core Practices to support quality sports experiences in our school community:

- Student-athletes and parents exhibit good sportsmanship and show respect for everyone associated with the program, including teammates, coaches, support staff, opponents and officials.
- Student-athletes and parents understand the value of competition-without-conflict and how to handle success with grace and failure with dignity. The spirit of excellence replaces a “win at all costs” mentality.
- Student-athletes and parents recognize that opportunities for college scholarships and professional play are severely limited.
- Student-athletes and parents commit to upholding substance abuse policies endorsed and enforced by the school and supported by the community.
- Student-athletes and parents commit to a focus on lifetime health and fitness, including habits of fitness and good nutrition.
- Student-athletes and parents appreciate sports opportunities regardless of the degree of success, the level of skill or time on the field.
- Student-athletes and parents respect coaches and appreciate the importance of contributing to the team and its success, even when there may be differences of opinion.
- Student-athletes and parents attend relevant school meetings to build relationships and support with coaches and athletic directors, and to learn first-hand about the expectations for participation in interscholastic athletics.
- Parents serve as role models, see the “big picture,” support all programs and athletes and help their student-athletes to do the same.
- Student-athletes seek, and parents encourage, participation in multiple sports and activities, with academics placed first and foremost.

We know that school sports experiences can contribute greatly to the values and ethics of each player, and that positive sports experiences teach important life skills, encourage teamwork, help shape character and citizenship and encourage an active lifestyle.

Parent	Student-Athlete
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Maine Center for Sport and Coaching

Sports Compact for Parents

Honoring the Core Principles and Core Practices of Sports Done Right

We recognize that healthy sports experiences require support and input from parents. This Compact is based on the Core Principles and Core Practices of *Sports Done Right: A Call to Action on Behalf of Maine's Student-Athletes*. We have agreed to honor the Core Principles and these Core Practices in support of our student-athletes and a positive learning process:

- Parents give consistent encouragement and support to their children regardless of the degree of success, the level of skill or time on the field.
- Parents stress the importance of respect for coaches through discussions with their children, and highlight the critical nature of contributing to the team and its success.
- Parents attend school meetings at the outset of sports seasons to meet coaches and school officials and learn first-hand about the expectations for participation in interscholastic athletics.
- Parents serve as role models, see the “big picture” and support all programs and athletes.
- Parents agree to abide by the rules guiding the conduct of sports, modeling the principles for their student-athletes.
- Parents ensure a balance in student-athletes' lives, encouraging participation in multiple sports and activities with academics placed first and foremost.
- Parents leave coaching to coaches and do not criticize the coaches, the strategies or the team performance. They avoid putting pressure on their children about playing time and performance.

We know that school sports experiences can contribute greatly to the values and ethics of each player, and that positive sports experiences teach important life skills, encourage teamwork, help shape character and citizenship and encourage an active lifestyle.

Parent

Maine Center for Sport and Coaching

Sports Compact for Coaches

Honoring the Core Principles and Core Practices of Sports Done Right

We recognize that school sports experiences can contribute greatly to the values and ethics of each player. Positive sports experiences teach important life skills, encourage teamwork, help shape character and citizenship, encourage an active lifestyle and often contribute to success in academics.

We are dedicated to making healthy and positive sports programming accessible to every eligible student in our school community. We know that coaches are pivotal to quality sports experiences, and pledge to uphold the Core Practices based on *Sports Done Right: A Call to Action on Behalf of Maine's Student-Athletes*.

The coach promotes the connection between sports and academic learning, sports and character development, and sports and life-long learning.

The coach offers motivation and positive communication and assists student-athletes to make good decisions.

The coach is a role model at all times, recognizing his/her profound influence on student-athletes.

A coach maintains the flexibility required to work successfully with a diverse group of students. Each coach supports the complex needs of maturing adolescents, assisting student-athletes to develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

A coach is sensitive to the fact that different approaches will be needed for different individuals, according to their needs and backgrounds, including their age, gender, size and culture.

A coach must master the fundamentals of the game and continue to learn, using professional development and mentor relationships. The learning goes beyond techniques and strategies to include the teaching of ethics and sportsmanship and effective communication with parents and the public.

Coaches recognize the need for balance in the lives of student-athletes, a balance that respects the needs of the family.

The promise of participation in sports helps to shape our young people. We pledge to provide exceptional opportunities for our students to experience the very best of interscholastic athletics in a setting where "sports are done right."

We are actively and positively contributing to what our student-athletes know and the character of who they are – helping to fulfill the vision of ***graduating smart students who are good people.***

Coach

Compilation of Out-of-Bounds

Philosophy

- 👉 Coaching approaches and strategies that are incompatible with the philosophy of the school
- 👉 Those who act disrespectfully toward opponents or officials
- 👉 Players and coaches who do not honor the spirit and intent as well as the letter of the rules
- 👉 Parents focused only on their children's or their own personal needs and who fail to consider the team and the other players on it
- 👉 Those who fail to respect individual differences and diversity
- 👉 Continued imposition on youth and interscholastic sports of a professional/collegiate model that is focused on determining a single winner in each sport, diminishing the concepts of competition without conflict and of sports played for the joy of the game

Sports & Learning

- 👉 Programs that fail to balance academic learning opportunities with athletic learning opportunities
- 👉 Programs that highlight the elite athlete and fail to provide a broad range of sports opportunities at all levels
- 👉 Parents, coaches and others who view sports as a showcase for star players rather than as a learning opportunity for all team members
- 👉 Turf disagreements between coaches and teachers that fail to consider the best interest of the student
- 👉 Programs that emphasize winning rather than the development of the student-athlete

Parents & Community

Parents

- 👉 Pressure on student-athletes to perform at unrealistic levels
- 👉 Displays of disrespect toward coaches, officials and opposing teams
- 👉 Encouraging early specialization, leading to year-round participation in a single sport
- 👉 Attitudes that stress the playing time or position played by their child over the success of the team
- 👉 Over-involvement that includes sideline coaching, interventions and conversations with their child during contests or practices

Community

- 👉 Out of control spectators who berate and taunt officials, coaches and the opposing team through their actions, words and signs
- 👉 Inadequate support for school budgets that leads to increased dependence on booster club fund-raising for essentials and/or the institution of "pay-to-play" policies

- 👉 Emphasis on select, travel teams that compete for limited local financial resources and preclude student-athletes from participating in more than one sport

Quality of Coaching

- 👉 Coaches who fail to understand that first and foremost they are teachers
- 👉 Autocratic coaches who communicate through intimidation
- 👉 Coaches with a “win at all costs” philosophy
- 👉 Coaches who promote the highly-skilled, elite athlete at the expense of others, or exhibit other examples of unfairness
- 👉 Coaches who promote specialization by their athletes
- 👉 Coaches who lack self-control and display poor sportsmanship
- 👉 Excessive expectations on the part of coaches who put pressure on student-athletes to perform at unrealistic levels

Opportunity to Play

- 👉 “Pay-to-play” practices that constitute an economic or social barrier for children in poverty, despite well-intentioned scholarship programs
- 👉 Cutting when there are no other opportunities for team play in the community
- 👉 Putting pressure on students to participate in costly out-of-school sports programs or camps

Health & Fitness

- 👉 Inappropriate, premature focus on a single sport
- 👉 Unrealistic expectations and pressure from parents and coaches that emphasize physical performance over personal health, and set unrealistic expectations
- 👉 Excess training and conditioning
- 👉 Use of performance-enhancing drugs
- 👉 Students who work to get in shape for sports while damaging their health with tobacco, alcohol and drugs
- 👉 Programs and personnel that fail to ensure proper care and treatment of injuries, and students and staff who fail to report all injuries

Leadership, Policy & Organization

- 👉 Inequitable distribution of human and fiscal resources that results in the support of more opportunities for one sport over another or one gender over another
- 👉 Unrealistic expectations for athletic administrators leading to superficial program oversight, excessive turnover and an inability to do the job well

Middle Level Co-Curricular Recommendations of the Maine Principals' Association

Philosophy of Middle Level Activities

An understanding of the physical, social, and emotional complexities and of the great variation among students at the middle level is of vital importance in developing a philosophy for activities at this level.

A wide variety of activities, both non-athletic and athletic, should be available to middle level students. As a rule, they should not interfere or distract from instructional time. The emphasis should be on creating a worthwhile and enjoyable experience for students, while broadening their education in areas such as sportsmanship, leadership, citizenship, and participation in life-long activities. Middle level activities should help each student gain the knowledge and skills associated with the activity for his or her enjoyment and benefit.

Position Statement Guidelines

1. "Middle level schools should focus on creating teaching and learning environments which are developmentally appropriate for young adolescents" (McEwin, Dickinson & Jenkins, 1996) in the total academic/athletic curriculum.
2. Schools should give priority to strong, well-organized intramural activity programs which are based on the assessed needs of students. Interscholastic activity programs should maximize student participation and develop out of these intramural programs.
3. Middle level activities should be encouraged at local and/or league levels with a limited number of contests and should not be carried to the levels of state competition.
4. Decisions regarding intramural and interscholastic activity programs should be governed by a sincere concern for the safety, health, developmental needs, and educational well-being of middle level students by providing an enjoyable experience for all participants.
5. It is recommended that all middle level coaches meet the Coaches' Eligibility Standards set by the MPA. All middle level coaches should be responsible to the principal/athletic director.
6. Programs should exist to develop good citizenship, leadership, and character. They should teach common courtesy and respect for rules and organizations by persistently teaching principles of justice, fair play, and good sportsmanship, and by emphasizing the discipline required in extensive training and practice.
7. When working with others in a democratic society, a person must develop self-discipline, respect for authority, and the spirit of hard work and sacrifice. The team and its objectives should be placed higher than personal desires.
8. Middle level activities should help students to develop desirable personal health habits, to be active contributing school citizens, and to maintain physical fitness through exercise and sound health habits.
9. Equitable Programming—Reasonable playing time for athletes should be assigned in each contest provided that each athlete has put forth appropriate effort and

commitment to the teams. The philosophy of the program is to provide a quality developmental athletic activity for all students.

Co-Curricular Eligibility Policy

Co-curricular activities are an integral part of school life. The knowledge and skills learned through these activities are critically important to the healthy development of students. Students should be passing all subjects. Administration of this policy should be carried out by the schools. Athletes should be allowed to continue to practice while making up failures. Music students may participate in concerts but should not participate in exchange concerts, district festivals, or other trips as determined by the school.

Any student who fails a subject during a marking period or mid-term report period should be ineligible to participate in any co-curricular activity (excluding intramural) for a period of up to two weeks (10 school days) and/or until passing. During the two-week period, students are on academic probation. They may continue to practice but are not allowed to participate in games or performances. If at the end of a two-week period the grade(s) have improved to passing, the student should become eligible for participation. If not, the student should be removed from the team or club roster.

Recommended Administrative Guidelines for Middle Level Athletics

1. Activities should begin as soon as possible after school with minimal loss of instructional time.
2. Scheduling
 - a) No practices or games on Sunday.
 - b) Avoid scheduling practices and games on Saturdays, holidays, or during vacation periods.
 - c) Limit the number of contests for each sports season.
 - d) Middle level programs should not practice or play more than five times a week.
3. Limit the amount of publicity.
4. Do not encourage league team championships.
5. If awards are presented, they should be given to all participants.
6. Due to health and safety reasons, middle level athletes should be discouraged from participating on two teams during a season.

Sports Season Recommendations

In the absence of other appropriate standard guidelines, we recommend that the National Federation of State High School Associations rulebooks be used in all sports. Exceptions are ski – MPA rulebook; tennis – U.S. Lawn Tennis Association; and golf— U.S. Golf Association.

Start:

1st day of school—fall season

November 1st—winter season

April 1st—spring season

Pre-season:

All sports should complete two weeks of pre-season practice prior to the first countable contest.

- Leagues will set each sports season, which should not overlap.
- Middle level practice should not occur prior to the first day of school.
- Establish a beginning and ending dates for each athletic activity.

NFHS Coaches' Education/Training Statement

The committee suggests that schools provide for the proper training/education of middle level coaches to insure the safety of middle level student-athletes and improve the overall quality of the interscholastic program. This is identical to the high school coaches' eligibility program as provided in the MPA Handbook. Individuals who have met equivalent guidelines are exempt from taking additional courses. The only addition is that the committee believes that Level One: Basic Education, Level Two: Beyond the Basics, and Coaching Principles courses should be part of the middle level coaches' education program.

Program Recommendations

The Maine Principals' Association encourages middle level schools to provide young adolescents with opportunities to participate in both athletics and in other developmentally appropriate activities (music, drama, dance, etc.) while concentrating on the academic aspects of their educations. With this in mind, the MPA recommends that sports seasons should reflect approximately 75% of the allowable high school maximum number of contests. League master schedules should reflect an average of no more than two contests per each week after competitions start.

Whereas the focus of athletics at the middle level should be on individual and team development, it is recommended that when schools field more than one level of team in a given sport that the teams are determined by grade level when numbers allow.

Teams should be referred to as the 8th grade and 7th grade teams. A and B teams or varsity and junior varsity indicate that less able students participate on those teams.

Under this premise, first priority on an 8th grade team is given to 8th graders. No 8th grade student should be eliminated from a roster spot by a 7th grader. If there are enough 8th grade students interested in participating at that level, then the team should consist purely of 8th graders. Eighth graders should not play down and athletes should not be participating at two levels in the same season.

Similar conditions should exist for the 7th grade level. If 6th graders are allowed to participate on said teams, it should not be at the expense of a 7th grader.

When numbers warrant expanded teams, 7th and 8th graders may be used.

Boys and girls may participate in all sports with the following exception—girls only in field hockey and softball.

Each individual team member should participate in each athletic contest.

Baseball

The MPA pitching rule is in effect:

1. A pitcher who pitches in four or more innings may not pitch again until three calendar days have elapsed.
 - Throwing one pitch constitutes an inning pitched.
 - A day of rest shall be a calendar day.
 - A player who pitches in more than one inning and less than four innings may not pitch again until one calendar day has elapsed.
2. An L-shaped screen is mandatory for both teams to use during warm-ups.

Cheering

1. Coaches should recognize the physical limitations of middle level athletes and plan a sequential program of instruction for a competitive routine accordingly.
2. Schools with fall cheering squads should start practice with the opening of school and end before the conclusion of the last fall sports contest.
3. The competitive season should start no earlier than the start of basketball season and end before the start of the spring season.
4. Separate tryouts should be held for the fall cheering squad and the competitive squad.
5. Middle school cheering programs should only compete against other school-sanctioned programs.
6. Middle level competitive cheering squads must cheer for at least one other team such as basketball or ice hockey.

Softball

A pitching screen must be available for both teams to use during warm-ups.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

The safety of athletes (participants), spectators, coaches/directors, school personnel, and all others present at an athletic contest must be the first and foremost concern to the contest officials and building administrators.

1. When an interscholastic contest has been scheduled and dangerous playing conditions exist or severe weather is anticipated, the following should be considered:
 - a. Prior to beginning an athletic contest, when severe weather is anticipated, the head contest official and the principals of each school, or their designees, will meet to review the suspension and/or postponement procedures. This would include any playing rule book coverage.
 - b. The host school administrator will be responsible for informing contest officials, visiting school administrators, and if applicable, the individual responsible for public address announcements of designated shelter areas.
 - c. When lightning is observed in the vicinity of a contest conducted outdoors, play should be suspended.

- d. If any other life-threatening condition occurs, play should be suspended immediately, and predetermined directions to safe locations will be announced.
- 2. When a suspension of a contest occurs, the following should be considered:
 - a. If the suspension is forty-five minutes or greater, resuming at a later date should be considered.
 - b. Play shall not be resumed until 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning.
 - c. When it appears that weather conditions are no longer a threat to the safety of participants, spectators, or contest officials, administrators from all schools involved will meet with the head contest official to determine if play will continue. If any administrator or the head contest official casts a negative vote for play to resume, the suspension should continue.
 - d. If play is to be resumed, contestants will be given at least a fifteen-minute warm-up period prior to competition.

Ad Hoc Committee to Review Middle Level Activities:

William Crumley, Surry Elementary School

Carol Hathorne, Hope Elementary School

Larry Malone, Mattanawcook Junior High School, Lincoln

Michael McGuire, Whitefield Elementary School

Jeremy Ray, Appleton Village School

Stephen Rogers, Lyman Moore Middle School, Portland

Ansel Stevens, Chair, Bonny Eagle Middle School, Buxton

Jack Hardy, Greely High School, Cumberland

Neal Genz, Caribou Middle School

REFERENCES

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McEwin, C.K., Dickinson, T.S. and Jenkins, D.M. America's Middle Schools: Practices and Progress: A 25 Year Perspective. Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association, 1996.

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Revised: 9/12/03 (Final)

wddata\adhoc\midlevel\middle level athletics info

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

November 3, 2004

Dean Robert Cobb
University of Maine
College of Education & Human Development
5766 Shibles Hall
Orono, ME 04469

Dear Fellow Mainers,

Congratulations to the University of Maine and Dean Robert Cobb for the fine work that has been done on this important project. When Dean Cobb approached me about securing federal funding for this effort, he promised a product that would benefit the entire State of Maine. The Select Panel has exceeded those lofty expectations and produced a report that can serve as a model for the entire nation.

The benefits of participating in sports are numerous. Student-athletes learn skills and develop habits that will help them throughout their lives. Lessons learned through athletics about fitness, work ethic, discipline, responsibility, leadership, determination, winning, and losing help make young people better students and ultimately, better adults.

Despite the exalted status of sports in our society – and, in some instances, perhaps because of it – there are many challenges that have the potential to detract significantly from the benefits of athletic participation. The shortage of qualified coaches, overly intrusive parents, unruly fans, teams outside the schools, and increased pressure of specialization all threaten to undermine scholastic sports programs.

This report addresses those challenges head on and sets forth important core principles that provide guidelines for structuring quality sports programs. The issues raised are critical and deserve the attention of all student-athletes, coaches, administrators, parents, and fans.

"Sports Done Right" is a report done right. We owe Dean Cobb, Duke Albanese, and the Select Panel a debt of gratitude for their meaningful contribution to the future success of scholastic sports.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

SMC:jad



JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

November 26, 2004

Members of the Select Panel:


On behalf of the State of Maine, I commend you for your outstanding work in recognizing and improving the important educational contributions and lifelong benefits of sports for Maine youth.

As Governor and as a former member of Congress, I am proud, once again, to see that Maine is leading the way, developing a national model that will align a coaching and sports initiative with timely educational issues and the state's learning standards.

The publication of *Sports Done Right* provides educators, parents and communities with core principles and core practices that will guide Maine middle schools and high schools in developing and conducting healthy interscholastic sports programs for our student athletes. This work positions Maine as an innovative national leader in educational reform. I am honored to endorse this report, and I look forward to participating in the policy conversations it should generate statewide. As a parent, I appreciate the Select Panel's efforts in steering the sports experience toward a steady course, one that focuses on the positive, developmental needs of our youth.

Congratulations to the University of Maine for envisioning and spearheading this significant project and to the knowledgeable and dedicated Select Panel of citizens for its tremendous service to our student athletes and to our schools.

Sincerely,



John E. Baldacci
Governor



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER



JOHN ELIAS BALDACC
GOVERNOR

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
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04333-0023

SUSAN A. GENDRON
COMMISSIONER

December, 2004

Dear Education and Athletics Enthusiasts,

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I congratulate the members of the Select Panel as well as the University of Maine for the exemplary work they have done with the completion of the publication *Sports Done Right*.

As the Commissioner of Education I am reminded daily of the importance of the well-rounded student. All aspects of children's development complement their educational growth and interscholastic athletics can play such an important role in the lives of our young people. The core principles and core practices put forth in this report will facilitate the offering of healthy sports programs for all young people both within and outside of our school systems.

Sports Done Right is the perfect complement for so many of the initiatives that the Department of Education supports as it works to improve education for Maine's youth. I believe that along with the *Maine Learning Results*, *Promising Futures*, and the Maine Learning Technology Initiative, this report will contribute significantly to our state's ability to provide Maine students, their families, and communities with innovative educational programs that will serve as national models.

The future of Maine is our young people and it is our responsibility as educators, policy makers, community members, and parents to be sure that we set the highest standards for our students. There are so many lessons to be learned through athletics and the guidance that this report will provide is essential to the growth and success of our student-athletes.

Sincerely,

Susan A. Gendron
Commissioner of Education

Acknowledgements

Special thanks for facilitating the creation of *Sports Done Right* to:

U.S. Senator Susan M. Collins of Maine
Steven Abbott, Chief of Staff, Office of U.S. Senator Susan M. Collins

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Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association
Maine Principals' Association
National Center for Student Aspirations
Senator George J. Mitchell Scholarship Research Institute

Special thanks to student presenters and consultants for sharing expertise with the Select Panel:

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There is no finish line. Set your goals. Follow your heart. Live your dreams.



*Joan Benoit Samuelson, Gold Medalist, Marathon, 1984
Los Angeles Coliseum (finish line), August 5, 1984, the first women's marathon.*