

Newsletter



2008 NIAAA Scholarships

The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2008 NIAAA Scholarships. The scholarship program includes three levels of evaluation. Winners selected in each state are forwarded for completion into one of the eight geographical sections of the United States. The male and female section winners are then advanced to national completion. A female and male national winner is selected by the NIAAA board of directors. The recipients are selected based on high school academic and athletic performance and the student's written essay addressing the topic "How High School Athletics has Impacted my Life".

The section one recipients include Jenna Matisewski, Cranston High School West, Cranston, Rhode Island and Andrew Esposito, Ledyard High School, Ledyard, Connecticut. The section two recipients are Alexandra Stockdale, University High School, Morgantown, West Virginia and David Cencula, Colonel Zadok Magruder High School, Rockville, Maryland. The section three winners are Christina Hursey, Salmen High School, Slidell, Louisiana and Jeb Stefan, Acadiana High School, Lafayette, Louisiana. The Section four recipients are Ashley Nault, Fond du Lac High School, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin and Mitchell Zajac, Holt High School, Holt, Michigan. The section five recipients are Crista Bechard, Holton High School, Holton, Kansas and Dane Johansen, Beulah High School, Beulah, North Dakota. The section six winners are Casey Simpson, Paonia High School, Paonia, Colorado and Tyler Moore, Aspen High School, Aspen, Colorado. The section seven recipients are Blanca Ramirez, Round Mountain High School, Round Mountain, Nevada and James Conway, Sabino High School, Tucson, Arizona. The section eight recipients are Misty Corwin, Waldport High School, Waldport, Oregon and Neil Evans, Lake Oswego High School, Lake Oswego, Oregon. Each of these individuals will receive a \$1000 scholarship from the NIAAA.

From these section winners were selected a female and a male national winner who will each receive an additional \$2000 scholarship. The national winners are Ashley Nault, Fond du Lac High School, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin and James Conway, Sabino High School, Tucson, Arizona.

Ashley graduated from Fond du Lac High School ranked first in her class of 630 students with a GPA of 4.00. In addition to receiving numerous academic awards, Ashley earned ten varsity letters during her high school career participating in basketball, soccer, and volleyball. Ashley also spent numerous hours in community service both in the school setting and in the community. She wrote in her essay, "Athletics have taught me more than just how to shoot a jump shot, spike a ball or score a goal; I have learned priceless values that I will be able to apply in my daily life and in the future." Ashley is the daughter of Susan and Michael Nault.



Message from the President...

I am honored and humbled to address you as the 2008-09 CADA Board President. For those of you who are new to the profession, we WELCOME you with open arms and are here to serve and support you. If you are one of our veteran members, we will continue to rely on you for your knowledge and expertise you bring to our State. My mom always told me when I was younger that there is no greater gift in life than to serve and that is exactly what we do as athletic directors each and every day. Whether it is serving your staff, students, parents or community; each of us holds that opportunity to make a difference.



Just as each of you are each out there serving others, the CADA organization is here to serve each and every one of you as well. So as President, I welcome your thoughts, ideas and input. The Board meets on a monthly basis to strive to achieve our goal which is "to support educational athletic programs through the promotion of the professional growth and image of interscholastic athletics administrators."

I don't know about you, but I have truly enjoyed these Olympic games in Beijing, China. I can't help but think to myself that many of those athletes were part of high school athletic programs such as ours somewhere in their careers. They all had to start somewhere (and some are still in high school) and the world has had the opportunity to see the fruits of their labors. I have been in awe at the level of competition as well as how many Olympic and World records have been broken throughout the Games. Once again, the United States shows how strong we are in most every sport. This is a true testament to the young men and women athletes from our country who have committed themselves to being the very best.

As your year begins and everything seems to be coming at you all at once, I hope each one of you takes the time for yourself and remember that life is truly short and we must always stop to smell the flowers. Although that might sound a bit old-fashioned, it has important value to it. Don't forget to take time for yourself and your family and encourage those around you to do the same. I believe Nike summed it up perfectly in that "Life is SHORT – Play Hard" and be sure to enjoy every minute of it.

As you venture through this year know that we are all in this together. I leave you with a quote from Chief Justice Earl Warren: "I always turn to the sports pages first, which records people's accomplishments. The front page has nothing but man's failures." (Chief Justice Warren must have known an athletic director.) Let us all focus on the accomplishments of life.

I wish you all the best of luck for a successful year. If you have any questions or are in need of some type of assistance from CADA, please don't hesitate to contact any board member and we will do our best to help our fellow athletic directors across the state.

Yours in Sport,

Diane H. Shuck



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Commissioner's Report

By Bill Reader

OUR VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

I have had the opportunity to be on a school improvement committee this year for a local school district. At the first meeting, a representative from the school district distributed a document that showed the vision, the mission and the values of the district. The document was a clear description of what the district was about and in what they believed.

At the same time, I remembered that the CHSAA also had developed the same three messages, but had never put the three together. The vision statement was developed in 1987 by then commissioner Ray Plutko, the mission statement was developed in 1992 by commissioner Bob Ottewill and the core values created by the current staff in 2006.

For your edification:

OUR VISION

"Seeking excellence in academics, activities and athletics"

OUR MISSION

In pursuit of educational excellence, the Colorado High School Activities Association strives to create a positive and equitable environment in which all qualified student participants are challenged and inspired to meet their highest potential.

To fulfill this mission the Colorado High School Activities Association will:

- Act as an integral component of the educational process.
- Administrate, interpret, and seek compliance with the CHSAA By-laws as needed to promote fair play within Colorado activities and athletics.
- Provide diverse and equitable opportunities for participation that encourages all qualified students to take part in the activity/athletic experience.
- Provide an environment that enhances personal

development through sporting behavior, character education, teamwork, leadership, and citizenship while increasing values that partner the educational standards of the State of Colorado.

- Recognize the outstanding accomplishments of Colorado athletes, teams, coaches, and administrators through our academic and activity awards programs.

OUR CORE VALUES

- Participation is a Privilege
- Athletics and Activities Programs are Education-based
- Participation in Athletics and Activities Teach Life Skills
- Appropriate Perspective is Taught Through Participation
- FUN is primary reason for a student's participation
- Participation Supports the Academic Mission of the school
- Participation Supports the Development of Positive Character

Headliners



**Josh Cochran -
Stargate School**

When I started teaching at Stargate School four years ago we did not offer an interscholastic athletic program. With a lot of hard work, support from local AD's, the administration and our Board of Directors we are now entering our third year of competition with over 70% student participation.

During my four years at Stargate I have spent three of them as the Athletic Director. I finished my Masters Degree in Administration and Supervision from the University of Phoenix in December 2007 and became the Assistant Principal in March 2008.

I was a three sport athlete at Thornton High School and received my Bachelors in Health and Physical Education K-12 from Nebraska Wesleyan University. I played football and baseball and earned All Conference Honors in each.

I currently coach on the Legacy High School football staff, I have been assisting with offensive line and special teams for four seasons. I also spent two years as an assistant baseball coach at The Academy.

I am very excited for this upcoming school year and very thankful for the opportunities I have had thus far in my career.



**Cecilia Studdard -
Cresthill Middle School**

Cecilia Studdard is a middle school physical education teacher at Cresthill Middle School in Highlands Ranch, Colorado where she has been teaching for the past 12 years of her 20-year teaching career. She teaches both 7th and 8th grades and is a coach for volleyball, basketball and track. Cecilia is in her 9th year as the PE Department Chair, she has been the Athletic Coordinator for the last three years, on the Leadership Cabinet, on the Douglas County Middle School PE Study Team for five years, a 2007-2012 Master Teacher, and has been designated an Outstanding Teacher in the Douglas County School District, each school year from 2001-2008.

She graduated from Bay City High School in Bay City, Texas in 1975 where she lettered three years in both basketball and tennis. During the summers Cecilia,

swam competitively and played fast pitch softball. She attended the University of Texas and earned her teaching degree in 1979. Her first teaching job was at Travis Heights Sixth Grade in Austin, Texas.

Cecilia is the 2007 Colorado Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year, the 2008 Central Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year, and a 2008 National Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year Finalist.

Cecilia is a single mom with two grown children; Katie lives and works in Austin, Texas and Kasey plays professional football for the Houston Texans.

Decades of excellence

By Neil H. Devlin - *The Denver Post*

Leslie Moore oversaw Denver's high school athletics through times of great change.

Prominent on her to-do list after retiring this month from a four-decade career in the Denver Public Schools is saying hello to the Statue of Liberty, a grand, old girl Leslie Moore must meet.

"It's something I've always wanted to see," said Moore, 60.

Her preparation for the July trip includes standing tall among kids, notably as a vital beacon for ushering in Colorado girls sports and as a source of much-needed stability for the Denver Prep League.

As the 2008 Dave Sanders Colorado Coach Award winner, in honor of the teacher-coach murdered while attempting to save other during the Columbine shootings in 1999, Moore is a lifelong city girl who went from frustrated tomboy in the 1960s to champion of all Denver athletics, an ever present figure who was as much a fixture at city events as the scoreboard.

Said Columbine principal Frank DeAngelis: "Whenever we played any DPS schools, she was actively involved. She has really done an outstanding job to promote athletics and the DPL. And she was a pioneer for female athletics."

Her hands-on approach, East boys basketball coach Rudy Carey said, "was important and gave us so much more structure than in the past. She gave us balance, which we didn't have before. She's a coaches' advocate and a strong leader, someone who supported us."

Opportunity for girls

The daughter of a 40-year city teacher and coach may not have had any games to play when she was a schoolgirl, but she believed in what became Title IX and was determined to do something about it.

"It was huge," Moore said. "That's when I decided I wanted to get into education. I got into it to see



Leslie Moore went from coaching three girls sports to running the entire athletics show for the Denver Public Schools. (Kathryn Scott Osler, *The Denver Post*)

that girls had that opportunity, wanted to make sure that didn't happen to anybody else."

Moore's perspective is legitimate - there would be gatherings termed "sport days" for girls as a high-schooler at Thomas Jefferson, but no score was kept. She never played full-court basketball until she was at Western State College. Even girls uniforms were sparse. She remembers wearing button-down blouses.

"These kids didn't even know it," Moore said of telling a few tales to today's students. "When I told them I wasn't allowed to play, they say 'What?' In one way, that's great. I don't want them to even have to think about it."

Moore competed in AAU basketball for a couple of years, then got a teaching job and immersed herself in physical education and coaching basketball, track and field, and gymnastics. The mid-1970s were the advent of sanctioning for in-state girls sports. Her teams went on to league championships and undefeated seasons, and included athletics such as John F. Kennedy's Sharon Burrill, who remains one of Colorado's best-ever female jumpers.

Wearing many hats

Continued on page 6...

Moore’s appetite grew to include administrative duties. Committees. Serving as an official. Hosting league and state playoffs. Her leadership role grew to city, state and national levels, although she never forgot where she came from - she’s Denver through and through, and probably could drive to any city site in her sleep.

“When you’re a leader, you always have to be out there, and she was,” Thomas Jefferson baseball coach Tom Humphrey said. “She had more attendance at games than a lot of other administrators.”

Selected as the coordinator of city girls athletics in 1992, Moore became district athletic director in 1998. And, sure, she was tested.

“All the men coaches were, like, ‘Oh boy, here we go. Now it will all stop, we won’t get anything and all she’ll do is girls sports,’” Moore said. “But I went to every single football game, basketball, I went to everything. I went to that more than the girls stuff. They saw I was for athletics as a total program, not boys or girls, but athletics for everybody. That’s the way I attacked it. I had to get their respect.”

She attained it - Moore was elected president of the Colorado High School Activities Association’s executive committee from 1996-98, overseeing its board of control. Since 1921, there have been 55 male presidents. Moore was the only female.

“She was chosen for that,” former CHSAA commissioner Bob Ottewill said. “She’s terrific, a great compromiser with a very good knowledge of athletics. And she was very inclusive. She didn’t do the big-me, little-you stuff as some in Denver could do.”

Moore did get big nationally, working with the National Federation of State High School Associations and National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators when hurdling even larger gender issues.

“It was very difficult,” she said. “Once I got into administration, (former Jefferson County District AD) Chris Bullard and I would go to national

conferences and there would be maybe 10-15 women, over 1,500 men. No minorities, only white males. It’s kind of the way it was. It has grown for me to be elected president.”

Somber day

While attending what appeared to be an uneventful Colorado Athletics Directors Association gathering in 1999, Moore was in the hotel conference room where Kevin Land, Columbine’s AD, was informed of reports about shooting at his school.

“His face got ashen,” Moore said.

Though she didn’t know Sanders, the gut-wrenching aftermath convinced her that “Dave was a hero... I’ll never forget it. It’s totally in my brain forever.”

Moore, whose replacement is Karen Higel, has a lot to remember, such as Montbello’s girls basketball title in 1997, the only one by city schools. “I was so moved, I had tears,” she said.

The consecutive Class 5A-4A boys basketball championships the past two seasons by East and Abraham Lincoln are personal sources of pride, as are TJ’s in 2005 and 2006, but so is everything from TJ’s consecutive title-game showings in baseball from 2007-08 to newly reopened Manual’s ninth-graders, who began anew in her final school year.

“That’s all I know, DPL and its kids, and how they are,” Moore said. “They don’t have a lot.”

CHSAA commissioner Bill Reader watched Moore “serve a lot of different masters. She had to deal with a lot of variables. Socioeconomically, (DPL high schools) are all different. She dealt with the whole spectrum, and thankfully so.”

Land called Moore “a very good selection for this award. She helped a lot of kids in a lot of different areas. She was always at the front line.”

Her mid life-crisis sports car, a new set of King Cobra golf clubs and travel will occupy most of her time, but she’ll remain in the Washington Park area, not far from a couple of her previous homes away from home: All-City Field and All-City Stadium.

“This is hard. I’m going to miss a lot of people,” Moore said. “I’ll still go to games - I’m not that far away.”

About the Dave Sanders Award

By eyewitness accounts, William “Dave” Sanders was a hero on April 20, 1999, the date of the worst tragedy in the history of American high schools. The 47-year-old teacher and coach, a Columbine High School faculty member for 25 years, helped get numerous students to safety before he was killed, along with 12 teenagers, by student gunmen. In honor of his commitment to young people, notably girls athletics, The Denver Post

presents an annual Dave Sanders Colorado Coach Award. In accordance with the Sanders family, including his widow, Linda Lou Sanders, The Post recognizes a high school coach who not only has longevity and success in the ranks of teaching and coaching but also outstanding character. In 2000, Sanders, who was heavily involved in girls sports, was awarded an ESPY and the Arthur Ashe Courage Award. He was honored posthumously with the first Post award in 1999. Retiring Denver Public Schools athletic director Leslie Moore is the 2008 honoree.

Title IX Tantrum

Courtesy of Athletic Management Magazine

The debate concerning the enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 — the federal statute banning sexual discrimination in education — and its effect on college athletics has long been a contentious one. Following today’s release of a Women’s Sports Foundation study concerning participation levels for male and female athletes during the past decade, don’t expect the argument to end any time soon.

The sports foundation hopes the study will put to bed what it says are false claims by some critics that Title IX has led to a decrease in male participation in college sports. Critics of the foundation, however, argue that the recent study is nothing more than repackaging of misleading data, ignoring what some see as the problems of gender-quota enforcement of the statute.

Institutions can achieve Title IX compliance if its athletics program has a population of male and female athletes proportional to the population of male and female undergraduate students enrolled. Still, an institution does not need to meet this quota if it has a history of expanding athletic programs to meet the needs and interests of the underrepresented gender or it appears to meet such demand already. Critics often take issue with

the proportionality option to meet the standard of Title IX and not the spirit of the statute itself.

Chief among the major findings of the study, the women’s sports group asserts that both men’s and women’s participation levels in college athletics have increased during the last 25 years. Evaluating Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA) data — required of all institutions participating in intercollegiate athletics by the Department of Education — and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) data, the study notes that men’s participation on intercollegiate teams increased by about 6 percent between 1995-96 and 2004-5. By comparison, the study states that women’s participation increased by more than 20 percent during the same period. It also notes that although women’s participation has slowed in recent years, the gap between male and female participation has not substantially changed in the years since 2000-01, when the annual growth in female participation has averaged at around 1.5 percent a year.

The study also argues that colleges and universities have largely responded to Title IX by increasing female participation in their athletics programs rather than by decreasing male participation. In one example, the study notes that institutions that

were not in compliance with the statute in 1995-96 were more likely to add female athletes during the next nine years than those institutions which were either in compliance with Title IX or closer to it. Additionally, those same institutions were also less likely to eliminate slots for male athletes than those other institutions during the same time period.

Marj Snyder, chief planning and programming officer at the foundation, said what she characterizes as the "Title IX blame game" must cease.

"It's just become an easy whipping boy," Snyder said. "It's a lot easier to blame Title IX than it is to tell the men's football and basketball coach to do some cost control. ... There are a number of ways to improve gender equity and one of the primary ways it happens is by adding female athletes and not decreasing male athletes. To characterize all adding and dropping of sports [as] because of Title IX is inaccurate."

In its final major point, the study argues that the earliest growth in women's athletic programs favored sports that had the highest levels of racial and ethnic diversity. Now, the study states, more recent growth in women's athletics favors sports with less diversity. Snyder said this trend affects black female athletes most as they are considerably segregated by sport. The study notes that almost 68 percent of black females participate in either track and field or basketball.

The College Sports Council, a group that advocates for Title IX changes on behalf of male athletes and men's sports teams, challenges many aspects of the sports foundation's study. Jim McCarthy, a council spokesman, said he believes this report is a "copycat" analysis of a study it did last year, which analyzed similar data but reached a different conclusion. He argues that men's participation has declined since the introduction of the federal statute. The sports foundations' close relationship with the NCAA makes this data suspect to critics like McCarthy.

He said data are available only in the aggregate from the NCAA in comparison to the individual institutional assessment garnered by the Department of Education. He argues this use of aggregate data, which cannot be verified, can

often be used to form misleading conclusions.

"They're trying to paper over the drastic harms that proportionality has caused in men's athletics," McCarthy said. "This activist group has pushed for years with the NCAA for the proportionality quota. This has decimated men's participation and men's teams that have to endure artificial quotas. It's all smoke and mirrors."

Additionally, McCarthy said the study fails to discuss the nature in which Title IX has distorted women's athletics. He said small-roster sports teams, some with traditionally high participation, are being abandoned for large-roster sports teams that often do not have significant participation among high school women. Gymnastics teams, for example, might be eliminated to introduce a women's rowing or ice hockey team simply to increase the number of female athletes in a program.

"You can slice the data in different ways to show different levels of harm," McCarthy said. "It seems apparent to us that the data is inaccurate."

— David Moltz

James graduated from Sabino High School in Tucson, Arizona ranked thirteenth in his graduating class of 364 and had a GPA of 4.0. James earned twelve varsity letters while participating in the sports of baseball, basketball, cross country, soccer, tennis and track. He earned at least one varsity letter in each of the six sports and served as the team captain in cross country and soccer. He was the Arizona Wendy's Heisman male winner his senior year. James wrote in his essay, "Whether high school sports bring devastating loss or joyous celebration, the lessons and opportunities that they afford are ones that you can carry into any aspect of your life. I have experienced the great range of emotion and teachings that sports can provide, from triumph to tragedy and I am grateful for every moment of it." James is the son of Frances Gallagher and James Conway.

The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association is an organization for high school and middle school athletic administrators dedicated to providing interscholastic athletic administrators the professional development, resources and support that will assist in providing quality participation opportunities for high school and middle school students. The national office for the NIAAA is located in Indianapolis, Indiana.

2008 SECTION SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS					
Name	Parents	Address	City	State	Zip
National Recipients - Red					
Section 1:					
Jenna Marie Matisewski	Joanne & Walter Matisewski	16 Tricia Circle	Cranston	RI	02921
Andrew Charles Esposito	Mary & Charles Esposito	5 Cornell Court	Gales Ferry	CT	06335
Section 2:					
Alexandra Power Stockdale	Sherry & Thomas Stockdale	107 Mont Chateau Road	Morgantown	WV	26508
David Alec Cencula	Barbara & Paul Cencula	18416 Cape Jasmine Way	Gathersburg	MD	20879
Section 3:					
Christina M. Hursey	Lori & Richard Hursey	305 Cumberland Drive	Slidell	LA	70458
Jeb Michael Stefan	Peggy & Paul Stefan	109 Foxworth Drive	Lafayette	LA	70506
Section 4:					
Ashley Marie Nault	Susan & Michael Nault	51 Cumberlynn Drive	Fond du Lac	WI	54935
Mitchell S. Zajac	Lori & Marc Zajac	2191 Moorwood Drive	Holt	MI	48842
Section 5:					
Crista Kay Bechard	Pam & Richard Bechard	13820 Long Street	Overland Park	KS	66221
Dane Allen Johansen	Lisa & Tim Johansen	1225 1st Avenue NE	Beulah	ND	58523
Section 6:					
Casey Rose Simpson	Jodi & Craig Simpson	13264 4100 Road	Paonia	CO	81428
Tyler C. Moore	Debra & Gary Moore	231 N. Spring Street	Aspen	CO	81611
Section 7:					
Blanca Ramirez	Robin & Vincente Ramirez	PO Box 1873	Round Mountain	NV	89045
James David Conway	Frances Gallagher/ James Conway	4051 N. Hidden Cove Pl	Tucson	AZ	85749
Section 8:					
Misty Ann Corwin	Bobbi & Steven Corwin	448 SW Wakonda Beach Rd	Waldport	OR	97394
Neil Reza Evans	Maryam Bonu/John Evans	59 Aquinas	Lake Oswego	OR	97035

The Altitude of Your Attitude

By: Dan Cardone; Courtesy of Athletic Management Magazine

With a new school year upon us, now is the perfect time to analyze adjustments we can make in our behavior and attitude. From time to time, we all need to replace negative thinking with a fresh and positive outlook.

Suzie McConnell-Serio, head women's basketball coach at Duquesne University has lived by the saying "your attitude determines your altitude." Told early on that she was too short to make a difference as a player, Suzie led her high school team to a state championship and went to Penn State University, where she was a four-year starter, an All-American, and became the NCAA all-time career assist leader.

Suzie was given the opportunity to try out for the U.S. Olympic women's basketball team in 1988. Again, the critics said she would never make the final cut, and again she proved them wrong. She made the team and led Team USA to a gold medal. Had she not ignored those who tried to dampen her attitude, her dreams might have remained unfulfilled. There are lessons in Suzie's story for all of us. After all, attitude is everything.

As athletic administrators, we all complain and we all cry foul from time to time. Maybe you've said to yourself, "I only have three years left until I retire and can get out of this place." However, as athletic administrators, we have to nip that type of thinking in the bud and model behaviors that reflect a can do attitude. Think about what an honor it is to have a small part in the development of our student-athletes.

To use a golf analogy you may all understand, here are four daily "swing thoughts" that can help you have your best year ever as the leader of your sport programs.

• Plus or Minus?

One easy way to turn your attitude around is by keeping a mental tally. If I find myself being short with people early on in the day, I tell myself I need to balance this out in a hurry. Therefore, I might walk down the hallway, stop an athlete, and tell them how impressed I was with his or her performance at a recent event. I physically get up, move to another location and work to "get on the plus side."

• Doer or Complainer?

A long time ago, someone told me there are two types of people in the world: doers and complainers. If I am talking negatively about someone, then I am not doing. When I see the custodian making regular deliveries of athletic equipment to the athletic office, I often pitch in and help move the boxes. I thank him for his effort, and he in return appreciates a willingness on my part to help. In contrast, when I participate in the complaint department that regularly holds court in the faculty lounge, I feel I have done a disservice to my attitude. By being a doer, I can conscientiously be a difference maker.

• Problem Solver or Problem Creator?

Solving problems is all about approaching a situation and looking for common ground. This can require making concessions, but it also means drawing on others' experiences to improve the decision-making process. For example, when a coach wants to take a risk, I always try to be supportive. I'll tell them, "Hey, that is a great idea! Go for it!" I find that giving support is much easier than placing obstacles and barriers in someone's way.

• Winner or Loser?

Sports are all about competition and putting your best foot forward on gameday. Winning can generate team camaraderie, infuse spirit into the school, and yield positive publicity about your program. A winning attitude inspires those around you to aim higher, to achieve things they did not think were possible, and to create a sense of we, versus one of me.

There are a lot of things to overcome in our positions as athletic administrators, and those obstacles can breed negativity, but that doesn't need to be the case. I've always wanted to be known as a person who carries a positive attitude and these swing thoughts help me do that. By following some of these strategies this school year can be your best ever—which will carry over to those who you lead.

Dan Cardone is Athletic Director at North Hills High School in Pittsburgh, Pa. He is a frequent contributor to Athletic Management.

Signs of the Times

Courtesy of Athletic Management Magazine

Between increasing gas prices and a down economy, most athletic directors are dealing with squeezed budgets this fall. Some have been hit even harder and are battling major cuts that are threatening their programs. But they're finding ways to survive by cutting back and getting creative.

Cuts In California: As a result of statewide budget cuts, the Alameda (Calif.) Unified School District faced a \$4.5 million budget shortfall this school year. To help bridge the gap, district trustees threatened to cut the entire sports budget of \$465,000, then eventually decided to slash it by \$265,000—still a huge loss for Unified's two high schools, Encinal and Alameda. In response, an emergency residential tax was put to vote in early June, and student-athletes and their parents went to work stumping for its passage. They constructed signs, developed a Web site with a student-produced YouTube commercial, and directly appealed to residents through phone calls. Initial results showed the vote failed by about 100 ballots. Almost a month later, however, absentee and provisional ballots pushed the total to just over the two-thirds majority needed to pass. "It's a big relief," says Encinal Athletic Director Kevin Gorham. "All the hard work we put in paid off in the end. We're going to be able to maintain our high school sports." Now Gorham is focusing on a strategy so there is no repeat of the situation down the road. "This is a call to athletic directors that we need to push for more fiscal responsibility," he says. "We can't ask the public to bail us out again in four years. If you look at the state of this country's economy right now, to be able to pass a parcel tax says a lot about what our programs mean to the community, and we will now watch every penny and be more financially responsible."

High Gas Prices: One answer to gas price hikes is to travel less, and Mississippi high school teams will take that approach during the 2008-09 school year. This summer, the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA) announced it will cut game schedules by 10 percent in all sports except football. "Many of our school districts had a difficult time adjusting their budgets with the increase in fuel prices this past year, and next year will only be worse," says Dr. Ennis Proctor, Executive Director of the MHSAA. "We had a statewide meeting with our superintendents about how to approach the gasoline

issue, and this was one area where we, as state leaders, could help out. "Ten percent isn't really a big reduction for each sport, but spread across 20 sports, it adds up to significant savings," Proctor continues. "From 30 basketball and baseball games, we're going down to 27—that's still an awful lot of games. We've had very few complaints." The Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) is helping out its member high schools by reconfiguring into three classifications and 16 geographically based districts in football, basketball, baseball, softball, and volleyball in an attempt to keep travel to a minimum for the 2009-10 school year. "When you look at the economy, cost of gas, every school I know is in a budget crunch," a TSSAA Board of Control member told the Knoxville News Sentinel. "We need to play as close to home as possible, and this plan does that." Other high schools around the country have started competing against the same school in multiple sports on the same day so that teams can travel together. And several districts have eliminated non-conference play to keep team buses from traveling out of the immediate area. "I'm sure we'll see more doubleheaders in baseball and softball, too," Proctor says. "There are many different ways we can all save, we just have to find them."

Asking For Help: What was originally a dire situation for Brainerd (Minn.) High School—a failed levy referendum that forced the high school to impose dramatically higher pay-to-play fees—turned into a shining example of community support and cooperation. After the referendum failed, a group of parents and Brainerd Athletic Director Todd Selk got together and started a foundation to aid families that can't pay the higher fees. Begun in December, the foundation has raised over half a million dollars by simply asking community members who can afford it to open their wallets. "The interesting thing about these donations is that the largest single gift was only \$15,000," Selk says. "There were over 800 individual donations, but there was no one big hitter. This was truly a community-wide effort." The foundation is set up to work much like a needs-based college financial aid package. "If a family makes X amount of money and the fee is \$300 per sport, the family can get maybe \$150 of it offset by the foundation," Selk explains. "We have a tremendous history of athletics here, and the community said, 'We're not ready to let it go. Let's solve this problem together.'"



Calendar of Events

NORTHERN

January 14, 2009	9:00 am	Thompson R2-J School District Building - Loveland
April 1, 2009	9:00 am	Thompson R2-J School District Building - Loveland

DENVER METRO

January 8, 2009	7:30 am	Adams Five Star School District Building
April 7, 2009	7:30 am	Adams Five Star School District Building

WESTERN

January 14, 2009	9:00 am	Mesa State College - Liff Auditorium
April 7, 2009	9:00 am	Mesa State College - Liff Auditorium

SOUTHERN

January 13, 2009	9:30 am	Belvedere Restaurant - Canon City
April 2, 2009	9:30 am	Zalman Center (Harrison HS) - Colorado Springs

SOUTHEASTERN

January 14, 2009	9:00 am	Lamar Truck Plaza
April 8, 2009	9:00 am	Lamar Truck Plaza

EASTERN

January 7, 2009	9:00 am	Limon Golf Course
April 1, 2009	9:00 am	Limon Golf Course



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