

**Duke Conference on Doping
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The Significance of Leadership from Above

Thank you for affording the National Federation of State High School Associations the opportunity to address this gathering of individuals who have a goal of keeping sports free of the influence of any type of performance enhancing product.

First, I would like to tell you who the National Federation is. We are 51 state associations (including the District of Columbia) with 17,000 plus schools and 6 million plus participants with offerings of 33 different athletic-type activities.

These offerings range from the obvious football, volleyball and track programs to such things as adaptive sports for the handicapped, riflery or bowling.

So what do our states feel high school sports are about? It's all about lines: here's the line—now cross it; leap over it; kick a ball through it. We draw lines to mark a passage of imaginary barriers: lines of logic; of x's and o's; lines of chalk and tape; of arcs and spirals and of balls passing between still more lines.

It's all about numbers: points totaled; runs scored; goals made; its 100 meters; its 90 feet of time parceled out in quarters, innings, periods, laps and ticks of a stopwatch.

High school sports is all about emotion, intensity, tenacity, elation, defeat, perseverance, patience of digging deeper, trying harder, reaching higher, reaching in and finally reaching out.

It's all about history: about records set, achievements noted, about continuity and legacy of moments seized and memorialized on medals made precious by the names and accomplishments etched on them.

High school sport is about people. It's about six million student athletes, about millions of parents who drive everyday to practice then come back every weekend to fill the hard benches of stadiums and gymnasiums and make them shake and roar, it's about the 500,000 teachers and motivators and best friends we call coach.

It's about the thousands of administrators keeping budgets balanced and watchful eyes on the future.

It's about the referees and umpires and game officials who drag the chains and stop the watch and make the tough calls because someone has too.

So you can see "kids" are important to us; as interscholastic sports programs are the only amateur level remaining in the nation for those who want to participate and do not possess great talent but want to have fun.

The NFHS is responsible for the writing of the game playing rules for these various sports. When going through this rules writing process we keep three things in mind: safety of the participants, balance between offense and defense, and tradition of the game.

Supplements may be an item that affects at least two of those over-riding guidelines.

We also oversee the areas of cheerleading, speech/debate and music activities. These participants are another integral portion of a schools' activities program. These people have the same concerns as we, the rules makers.

Last, the NFHS cannot mandate any rule in basketball or any other activity -- state associations have the prerogative as to what is best for their state based on state statutes or philosophy of their schools. Hopefully, the rules that are promulgated are the wisest for all to follow. So you can see we are not law makers. But that's not what we are here today to talk about it is about "doping in sports."

The National Federation of High School Associations does have the health and well-being of participants as the ultimate outcome when establishing or changing a rule. That should also be the purpose of this meeting. This can only be done if everyone is "on the same page" or "dancing to the same drummer." No matter what we call it, leadership is the key ingredient!

What is the NFHS doing to create opportunities for athletes to be better leaders? One of the program offerings that many state associations have taken advantage of is entitled "Citizenship Through Sports and Fine Arts Curriculum." This curriculum is about citizenship which is akin to leadership.

Let me quote a portion of the opening statement from the overview document: "Citizenship—that's what we stand for – that's what we can and do deliver on behalf of this system called secondary school education. Sports and activities provide not only the opportunity to teach and learn respect for self and respect for others, they also place participants in a unique context – competition – that can further instill and hone values necessary for the development of respect for self and respect for others." With this thought in mind – leadership – is what we teach.

Should or are athletes being held as role models?

The following is somewhat troublesome when you think of heroes or role models that appear in headlines on a day-to-day basis. From the Horatio Alger Association a poll was taken concerning “who is the biggest hero today?” The results were disturbing. The mistrust that many teens have may extend to other public figures. When asked to name their biggest hero today, the leading responses are “no one,” cited by 21 percent of teens, and a parent, named by 16 percent.”

Athletes are more frequently selected as heroes than other public figures – especially by male teens, who more often name an athlete than a parent as their biggest hero. Conversely, girls are more likely than boys to name parents, religious leaders and friends as heroes. Seven percent or fewer name a religious leader, music, friend, actor or educator as their biggest hero.

What can leaders do? They can change mores’; they change attitudes; they can re-establish respect; and they can encourage cooperation.

I would like to close with an example of one of the many things our members do for the participants they are charged by moms and dads to protect and see that participation is fair.

It is entitled “Integrity”

More than anything else in this world, I wish to have integrity. More than money, more than prestige, more than power...I seek integrity. What is this thing I seek? At its root, the word means unity or wholeness. An integer is a whole number—one that isn’t divided into fractions. To integrate is to blend all ingredients.

A man of integrity is whole—not lacking any ingredient. He has a boldness to try and the compassion to comfort. He has the patience to wait, the persistence to keep on, and the poise to give in. The man of integrity knows that honor is more important than honesty...that is, knows that honor means doing not only what he is legally obligated to do but also what he is morally required to do.

Thus, the man of integrity has a highly developed conscience and he listens to it, having the courage to act on his convictions.

The man of integrity, in other words, is obedient to the unenforceable. No one makes him choose a code of conduct that is a cut above the norm, he does it anyway. No one makes him obey his conscience, he does it anyway. No one makes him love his god, he does it anyway. That is the man I seek to be, but am not yet, and may never fully be.

(There are copies available if you would like to have one)

In closing, I want you to think: where are we going with sports, what are we doing to sports, what have we done to sports and are sports really bigger than life?

Too many times we see actions that most every person would consider an unsportsmanlike act.

Jim Desmarais, president of the NFHS said: “Could it be because what happened was “unfair”, “dishonest” disrespectful” or even “just against the rules.” They are unsportsmanlike because they are unethical. All of us involved in the molding of the lives of our youth must continue to promote ethics and ethical behavior?”

This, again goes back to leadership.

Thank you for this opportunity. As has been stated before --- the youth of our nation are our future --- lets not lead them in the wrong direction.