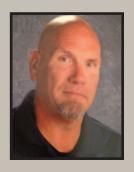
ILLINOIS COACHES ASSOCIATION

SPRING NEWSLETTER





2024-25

Drew Potthoff Executive Secretary Illinois Coaches Association

When former players see me and still call me coach. For me, it doesn't get much better than that.

Coaches, in the end, our career W/L record just won't matter.

It won't be what we will want others to remember us by.

All that will matter will be who we helped, how we went about it & the lasting impression we left on those who crossed our path.

> Live each day with that in mind.

Welcome to the Spring edition of the ICA newsletter TORCH. I hope that all your spring sports have been successful. This is always an exciting time for coaches and athletes as you start the IHSA State Tournaments season. It also becomes a bittersweet time as coaches say goodbye to their senior athletes whom they have coaches throughout their high school careers. You have had a huge influence on these athletes and hopefully they have left you with great memories and experiences. In many cases you may not know how much influence your leadership and mentoring has had on your athletes until years from now when you see what great people they have become! Coaches, make sure you send your seniors off to their next chapter in their lives on a high note.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the TORCH. We have included some great articles that hopefully can be of use to all of you. We also welcome a new sponsor, Geo Surfaces! Check out their company on page 4 of this issue. Also in this issue are the winners of the ICA Scholarships that we offer to our members.

> 2025 NHSACA Coach of the Year Finalists: Neil Alexander Boys Basketball Lincoln HS Tim Racki Football Nazareth Academy HS Jim Burnside Soccer New Trier HS Ken Grams Softball Elk Grove Village HS Jeff Siegal Cheer/Dance Buffalo Grove HS Bob Barber Swim/Dive Hinsdale Central HS Will Schreier Volleyball Wheaton Warrenville HS Jason Clay Wrestling Vandalia HS

2025 NHSACA Hall of Fame Inductees: John Szabo, Bloomington HS Jerry Rashid, Peoria Notre Dame HS, IVC HS

Enjoy the finish to your spring season and good luck in the IHSA playoffs and state tournaments. As always, if there is anything the ICA can do for you, just let us know.



Drew Pothoff / ICA /2730 Via Tivoli Unit 335B / Clearwater, FL 33764 Phone or Fax: 815-405-3821 • soboad@yahoo.com



Get involved! • Be a member! • Help make a difference!



INDEX

| 1 Executive Directors Column 2 Dates to Remember 3 Board of Directors 4 Pivot Performance 5 IHSA Craig Anderson 6 2Words 7 Good Reads 8/9 ICA Scholarship 10 ICA Scholarship 11 ICA Scholarship 11 ICA Scholarship 12/13 ICA Schrine Football 14 LZRD 15 Coaches 16 SportDecal 17 ICA 18 Adrenaline 19 Midwest 20 Endeavor Health 21/22 Article Dr. Behar 23 ICA 24 Sport Decal 25 ICA Scholarship Winners 26/27 TeamBuildr 28 TeamBuildr 29/31 Jason Foundation 32 Shriners Hospital 33 ICA Membership 34 NHSACA 35/36 MaxPreps 37 Loomis & LaPann, INC 1CA 38 ICA 39 Loomis & LaPann 40 Riddell 41 ICA 42 Ads 43 Scoreboard 44/45 Committment Article 46-50 Running Against the Odds |
|--|

CURRENT SPORTS CHAIRMEN

| ı | CHAIRMAN | SPORT | SCHOOL | EMAIL |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| ı | Bill Booker | Baseball | St. Bede Academy | bbooks26@yahoo.com |
| ı | Jim Tracy | IBCA | St. Laurence High School | jimpmaphd@aol.com |
| ı | Rich Montgomery | Wrestling | Rock Falls HS | montgomer@rfhs301.org |
| ı | Henry Johnson | Athletic Director | (Retired) | coachj41@hotmail.com |
| ı | Sara Kinney | Membership | | skinney53@gmail.com |
| ı | John Nalley | Track | Palatine HS | jnalley@d211.org |
| ı | Ken Jakalski | Cross Country | Lisle HS | coachj1@aol.com |
| ı | Lucy Gilbert | Softball | Deer-Creek Mackinaw | lgilbert@deemack.org |
| ı | Kevin Crandell | Football | Rochelle HS | kcrandall@rthssd212.org |
| ı | Jeremy Crouch | Golf Chair | Pekin HS | jcrouch@pekinhigh.net |
| ı | John Beerbower | Strength/Conditioning | McHenry HS | beerbowerjohn@dist156.org |
| ı | Steve Haines | At Large | Seneca HS - Retired | |
| ı | Open Positions | Tennis, Volleyball, Lacro | osse | |
| | | | | |

Anyone interested should contact:

Drew Pothoff / ICA /2730 Via Tivoli Unit 335B / Clearwater, FL 33764
Phone or Fax: 815-405-3821 • soboad@yahoo.com

THERE WILL BE OBSTACLES.
THERE WILL BE DOUBTERS.
THERE WILL BE MISTAKES.
BUT WITH HARD WORK,
THERE ARE NO LIMITS.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Illinois Coaches Association
Serving All Coaches in All Sports
2730 Via Tivoli Unit 335B / Clearwater, FL 33764
Phone 815-405-3821

Website—icacoach.co
<u>Email-soboad@yahoo.com</u>

June 21st ICA/IHSFCA Shrine All Star Football Game,

Bloomington, IL

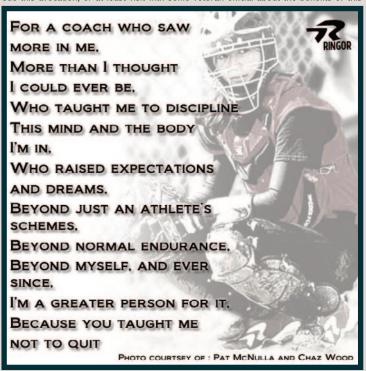
June 22-25th NHSACA Conference, Rapid City, SD

June 30th ICA Senior All Star Baseball Game, Peru, IL

(Pistol Shrimp)

Football Officials NeededIllinois High Schools

Coaches and Athletic Directors are encountering much difficulty in securing officials for Football Games. Many games are being moved to alternate dates, thus disrupting the organization of high school teams. Their is definitely a need for interested parties to become involved as a high school football official. This a great way to stay involved in high school sports and work with young people. Encourage young people interested in football to pursue this avocation, or at least visit with some veteran official about the benefits of this





ICA BOARD MEMBERS



DREW POTTHOFF **EXECUTIVE SECRETARY** RETIRED



SARAH KINNEY MEMBER CHAIR CHILLICOTHE - RETIRED



KEN JAKALSKI CROSS COUNTRY LISLE HS



HENRY JOHNSON IHSA LIAISON



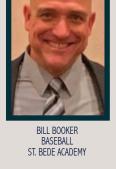
LUCY GILBERT SOFTBALL DEER-CREEK MACKINAW HS



JOHN BEERBOWER STRENGTH/CONDITIONING MCHENRY HS



KEVIN CRANDALL IHSFCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROCHELLE HS





JEREMY CROUCH GOLF CHAIR PEKIN HS



RICH MONTGOMERY ROCK FALLS HS



IBCA ST. LAURENCE HS



STEVE HAINES SENECA HS - RETIRED

ILLINOIS COACHES ASS'N.

lighting the way by sharing ideas





Get involved!

Be a member!

Help make a difference!









Craig Anderson
Executive Director



Greetings ICA Members,

Happy New Year!

The winter season is in full swing with many sports and activities approaching the end of the season and opportunities to showcase a season's work in the upcoming IHSA State Series. As we make our way to culminating another season, please take note of these important reminders as we approach the finish line:

- Track your requirements for state series participation and reporting in the IHSA Schools Center.
- Complete your Season Summary forms and confirmation on time. (Dates and deadlines are posted in the IHSA Schools Center.)
- Complete your seeding within the timeline noted in the schools center.
- Submit Ratings of Officials on all your varsity officials from the regular season and in the IHSA State Series.
- Complete the Participation Survey.
- Review your coaching requirements and those of your assistant coaches to be sure qualifications are met and all coaches are eligible to coach in the IHSA State Series.

As you make your summer schedule in the coming months, please be reminded that IHSA member schools voted to reduce the number of summer contact days from twenty-five (25) to twenty (20) beginning this summer. You have additional days in the summer beyond the 20 contact days to provide strength and conditioning days for your athletes if there is no instruction in the skills of your sport.

We appreciate your attention to these details and wish you the best in the remainder of your 2024-2025 seasons.

And thank you all for your dedication to serving the young people you coach. It's many times a thankless job, but please know that you impact lives for the better every day. Keep it up!

Yours in athletics and activities,

Executive Director

(raig Anderson







FOR BUILDING A CULTURE OF CHARACTER





"This program has the power to make an impact on High School Campuses and student athletes across the state of Illinois!" Drew Potthoff, Executive Director of Illinois Coaches Association

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- X Downloadable workbooks for coaches, captains, athletes, and families
- X New videos & written lessons every year
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- 🔀 Equip coaches through our COACHING EFFECT Program
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- 🗶 Integrate existing leadership strategies or turn-key solutions

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BUILDING A PLAYER-LED TEAM

- 🗶 10 weeks of custom leadership development curriculum
- Game Plan, Prep Guide and scripts for your captains to learn, practice, and use while leading their teammates
- Weekly leadership challenges to grow and develop your captains

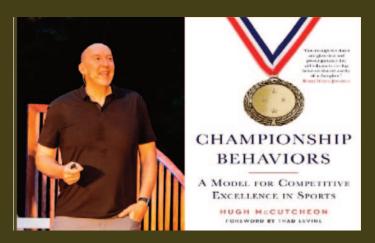




MORE INFO: WWW.2WORDS.TV/PREVIEW







Championship Behaviors: A Model for Competitive Excellence in Sports

by Hugh McCutcheon (Author), Thad Levine (Foreword)

From an Olympic gold medal-winning coach, a new playbook for effective athlete education and team building

Championship results require championship behaviors, it's as simple as that. In this essential book, Hugh McCutcheon provides a proven framework for competitive excellence based in motor learning, psychology, and decades of coaching experience

and success. Championship Behaviors provides athletes, parents of athletes, and coaches a defined path to the "how" of significant achievement while simply and clearly explaining the research behind the "why." McCutcheon speaks to the need for aspiring athletes to work, learn, and compete and the responsibility coaches have to teach, coach, and mentor. As he says, "We won't always have five-star talent, but we can often make up the difference by being five-star teachers, learners, and competitors."

A sought-after coach and consultant, McCutcheon also illuminates the value of integrating the physical, mental, and social aspects of sport to maximize chances of competitive success.

ALL STATE SOFTBALL NOMINATION SITES.

1A- Greg Neisler / gneisler@lth5.k12.il.us
2A- Philip Applebee / applebep@mfschools.org
3A- Dwain Nance / fisherman0916@yahoo.com
4A- Jen Tyrrell / jtyrrell@d230.org





High School Baseball All-Star Game Coming to Peru in June

Illinois Coaches Association to host event at Schweickert Stadium

By Kevin Chlum

Expand

Illinois Valley baseball fans will have an opportunity to check out some of the state's best high school players this summer.

The 48th Annual Illinois Coaches Association Senior All-Star Game is scheduled for June 30 at Schweickert Stadium in Peru, home of the Prospect League's Illinois Valley Pistol Shrimp. The ICA also works closely with the Illinois High School Baseball Coaches Association on the game.

ADVERTISING

"It's another chance for baseball fans to see good baseball," said St. Bede coach Bill Booker, who is the ICA's baseball chairman. "We'll have kids from northern Illinois to southern Illinois and everywhere in between. Last year we had 36 seniors who were all committed to different colleges throughout the nation from JUCO to DI, DII and DIII. It was good baseball. I think our area with as good as baseball fans as we have will really enjoy seeing high school players play at that level."

The game was held at Illinois Wesleyan University the last several summers, but Booker got the wheels turning to move it to Peru.

"When I was first appointed the baseball director for the coaches association, the president Drew Potthoff, who is originally from Peru, and I spoke about trying to get it back to Peru," Booker said. "The last few years we've had it at Illinois Wesleyan, and they were outstanding. It's a turf facility. College campus. It was nice, but we didn't get the interest and support that I thought we would. We had great games. We had great talent playing.

continued on page 9

Illinois Coaches Association



UHSA All Star Game continued

"A few months ago, I approached the city (of Peru) and (Peru's maintenance of parks supervisor) Bob Ghighi. He and I had a discussion, and he thought it would be possible as long as we played on an off day for the Pistol Shrimp. The Pistol Shrimp have been very cooperative. They're going to assist in any way they can. It all came to fruition through early communication and setting the schedule."

The event will feature a doubleheader of two seven-inning games.

Players are selected by a panel of coaches from around the state.

Firecracker or shot fired in Leland? Judge to decide on case Jan. 30, and other top stories from January 24, 2025.

READ MORE

"We've got 15 coaches from around the state," Booker said. "Players have to be nominated by their high school coach. Once we get the (nomination) list, we start filling in the best pitchers first, because you have to be pitcher-heavy. Our pitchers throw two innings and that's it. Then the coaches go through every position from their area and we try to select two to three deep for each position and go from there.

"Sometimes kids opt out if they're going to get drafted or going to a real big (college) program, but for the most part the kids have been very receptive when they get nominated."

Booker has been involved with the ICA for four years but has had experience with the all-star games before that. Booker coached the 2010 game, and his son, Cody, played in the 2012 event. He also is a longtime member of the IHSBCA.

"We've had a great experience," Booker said.



Players pose for a photo before the Illinois Coaches Association Senior All-Star Game last June in Bloomington. (Photo provided by Bi)



The Illinois Coaches Association

Scholarship



lighting the way

By completing the information required in this application, you will enable us to determine your eligibility to receive funds provided specifically to help students whose parent/parents are members of the ICA. This application becomes valid only when the following has been submitted. This scholarship is open to any member's son or daughter planning on attending an institution of higher learning.

To be eligible for the scholarship:

- Your mother or father must be a member of the ICA.
- Submit the attached application.
- Submit a description of all the Community Service projects or activities you have participated in during high school.
- Submit a letter recommendation from your principal, counselor or teacher.
- Submit your High School Transcript and include your ACT results.
- Submit a 200 word essay on the following topic.
 - 1) What are the essential characteristics of a successful teacher or coach?

DEADLINE APRIL 5

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Check List: *Letter of recommendation *Transcript * Essay from applicant

Your application must be mailed to the following before April 5, 2024

Drew Pothoff / 2730 Via Tivoli Unit 335B / Clearwater, FL 33764 Phone or Fax: 815-405-3821 • soboad@yahoo.com



The Illinois Coaches Association Scholarship



lighting the way by sharing ideas

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DEADLINE APRIL 5

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Check List: *Letter of recommendation *Transcript * Essay from applicant

Your application must be mailed to the following before April 5, 2024

Drew Pothoff / 2730 Via Tivoli Unit 335B / Clearwater, FL 33764 Phone or Fax: 815-405-3821 • soboad@yahoo.com



ICA SHRINE ALL STAR FOOTBALL ROSTER

Blue Team

Kayden Banker Wilĺ Baum Kyle Beaty Griffen Becker Landin Benson Wyalan Bice Róbert **Boyd-Meents** Sebastian Brácius Nolan **Brass** Amare Breedlove Carson Brown Caleb Clutteur Adam Cooke Adrian Cooper Riley Crain Kellen Creviston Vince DeLordo Alejandro Duarte Tate Frieders Aian Fryman Elijah Génenbacher Séan Glover Luke Gormsen Avery Grebner Kadén Hearn Phinis Hiler Daniel Kelly Kelsey Ryan Andrew Kinsman Knoll Brayden Kris Lawson Quinn Leffleman Max Maj Andres Medina Billy Miller Nathaniel Hudson Nutter Noah Ramirez

Cole Amari Lucas Taylin Jamar Tate Gavin Brandon Sam Coy Cooper Dawson Payton Cam Lane

Nordwind-Carabello Rinkenberger Rodgers-Parott Schwartzkopf Scott Shered Sigler Simmons Sims Sweeley **Taylor** Temples Thayer Thompson Verner Wheelwright Bohdan Zeleznik

OL (C) OL (T) QB WR RB OL (T) ŔB ATH/QB OL (T) Safety ILB ΤE ATH/QB 0LB Safety QΒ ŎL (G) ILB NT RB ILB **OLB** Safety Corner OL (C) Corner ILB DE OL (G) RB OL (T) DE OL (T) DE WR NT**OLB ILB** Safety WR **OLB** ILB DE OL (G) ATH)

K, P OL (G) WR RB NTRB **ATH** QB Safety

Moline HS Geneseo HS Normal Community HS Breese Central HS Coal City HS Lawrenceville HS Paxton-Buckley-Loda HS Rockford Jefferson HS Byron HS Péoria Manual HS Winchester HS Milford HS Harvard HS Moline HS Carterville HS Routt Catholic HS Jacobs HS Kewanee HS Sandwich HS Sullivan HS Camp Point Central HS Richwoods HS Jacobs HS Metamora HS

Collinsville HS Prosser Career Academy Newman Central Catholic HS El Paso Gridley HS

Benton HS Byron HS Warrensburg-Latham HS

Amboy HS Lake Zurich HS LaSalle-Peru HS DeKalb HS Burlington Central HS Pekin HS Edwardsville HS

Morton HS Collinsville HS Red Bud HS

Quincy Notre Dame HS Centralia HS Le Roy HS Glenwood HS Jacksonville HS Decatur St Teresa HS St. Joe Ogden HS Normal West HS Clinton HS

Monmouth-Roseville HS Freeport HS Farmington Central HS

Le Roy HS

Mike Morrissey Matt Furlong Jason Drengwitz Brian Short Francis Loughran Cory Joergens Josh Pritchard Cody Casazza Jeff Boyer Dennis Bailey Matt Coultas Clint Schwartz **Brad Swanson** Mike Morrissey Brett Diel Barry Creviston Brian Zimmerman Matthew Taylor Kris Cassie John Bertetto **Brad Dixon**

Myles Davis

Brian Zimmerman

Jared Grebner

Colton Rhodes Jason Hosey Mike LeMay Tanner Benedict Justin Groves Jeff Boyer Aaron Fricke Scott Payne Ron Planz Jose Medina Derek Schneeeman Brian Iossi Doug Nutter Kelsey Pickering Adam O'Neill Colton Rhodes David Lucht Jack Cornell **Brad Goewey** BJ Zeleznik David Hay Mark Grounds Brit Miller Shawn Skinner Nathan Fincham Ron Bass Jeremy Adolphson

Anthony Dedmond

Toby Vállas

BJ Zeleznik

COACHES

Brian Glashagel-HC Brian Zimmerman Shawn Skinner Wade Devries Dave Lucht Jeffrey Vlk

Antioch 5a Algonquin (Jacobs) 7a St. Joseph Ogden 3a Roxana 3a Red Bud 2a Buffalo Grove



ICA SHRINE ALL STAR FOOTBALL ROSTER

Red Team Zain Al-Jassim Matt Allen Preston Baker Alex **Branas** Jerell **Brenston** Jaelin Campbell Cooper Christensen Landon Cowper Colton Czekala Cade Danko Diedrich Jaxon Kvle Farrell Carter Foran Thatcher Friedrichs Logan Garcia Grant Gensler Fvan Gilreath Ryker Grauer Aaron Green Heald Josiah Mason High Talan Hull Jackson Jokisch Kellum Tyjaire Dillon Ketelsen-Anton Xavier Koch Nathan Konrad Tory Kupferschmid Robert Lee Bradyn Little Conner Longnecker Cole Matejka Jayden McDonald Josh McNett Caden Mowen Clark Nelson Ryan Nelson Evan Parish Peterson Ryan Zachary Puracchio Rademacher Brody Chris Renford **Dominic** Ricconi Rvan Richards Fernando "Juiu" Rodriguez George Rouse Sandberg Roy Frank Sanders Matt Suaava Azuriah Sylvester Charlie Walrod

Windish Bο Ryan Wisniewski Carson Wort Jesser Zepeda COACHES John Walters-HC Glenbard East Matt Silkowski Lincoln Seneca Terry Maxwell Jeff Fritchtnitch Casey-Westfield

Rochelle

Ret HOF CPL/Hubbard

Washington

Kennedy

Kyle Kissack

Elton Harris

ATH/QB DE QB **ILB** Safety Cornér QB OL (T) OL (C) WR WR Safety WR Corner NT RB OL (G) ILB WR DE NT TE WR RB Safety WR OL (G) OLB RB QB RB/DL DE NT ΤE OL (G) ATH[^] **OLB ILB** OL (C) DE RB WR OL (G) WR

QB

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K. P

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4a

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5a

HOF

ATH/QB

Chester HS Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley HS Breese Central HS Buffalo Grove HS Perspectives HS Freeport HS Sullivan HS Metamora HS Rochelle HS Downs Tri-Valley HS Du-Pec Coop Wilmington Monticello HS Sycamore HS Richmond-Burton HS Rochelle HS Olney East Richland HS Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley HS Chicago HOPE Academy Fulton HS Monticello HS ROWVA Williamsfield Coop Shelbvville HS Murphysboro HS Annawan-Wethersfield Coop Centralia HS Quincy HS Eureka HS West Chicago HS Quincy HS Calhoun HS University HS Prosser Career Academy Galena HS Farmington Central HS New Berlin HS Wilmington HS Bismarck-Henning-Rossville-Alvin Bloomington Central Catholic HS Minooka HS Seneca HS Glenbard East HS El Paso Gridley HS Casey-Westfield HS DePaul College Prep Champaign Central HS Cambridge (Ridgewood Coop) Lincoln HS Paxton-Buckley-Loda HS West Aurora HS Woodstock HS Chicago HOPE Academy Elmwood/Brimfield Coop Richmond-Burton HS

Billy Belton Chad Augspurger Brian Short Jeffrey VIk Terry Jones Anthony Dedmond John Bertetto Jared Grebner Kyle Kissack Josh Roop Tyler Hoffman Jeff Reents Cullen Welter Joe Ryan Mike Noll Kyle Kissack Luke Carmody Chad Augspurger Christopher Mallette Patrick Lower Cullen Welter Grant Gullstrand Bill Duckett Gary Carter Tony Gripp Brad Goewey Rick Little Jason Bachman Adam Chavez Rick Little Aaron Elmore Brody Walworth Jason Hosey Ed Freed Toby Vallas James Dambacher Jeff Reents Mark Dodd Kevin Braucht Matt Harding Terry Maxwell John Walters Tanner Benedict leff Fritchtnitch Michael Passarella Matthew Leskis Patrick Elder Matt Silkowski Josh Pritchard Nate Fimer Michael Brasile Christopher Mallette Todd Hollis Mike Noll Josh Talley Justin Groves

Pawnee HS

Benton HS









One American dies of a drug overdose "nearly every five minutes around the clock-that's unacceptable."

Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH White House Office of National Drug Control Policy March 31, 2023

112,000

"For the first time in U.S. history, fatal overdoses peaked above 112,000 deaths, with young people and people of color among the hardest hit."

- NPR News, December 28, 2023



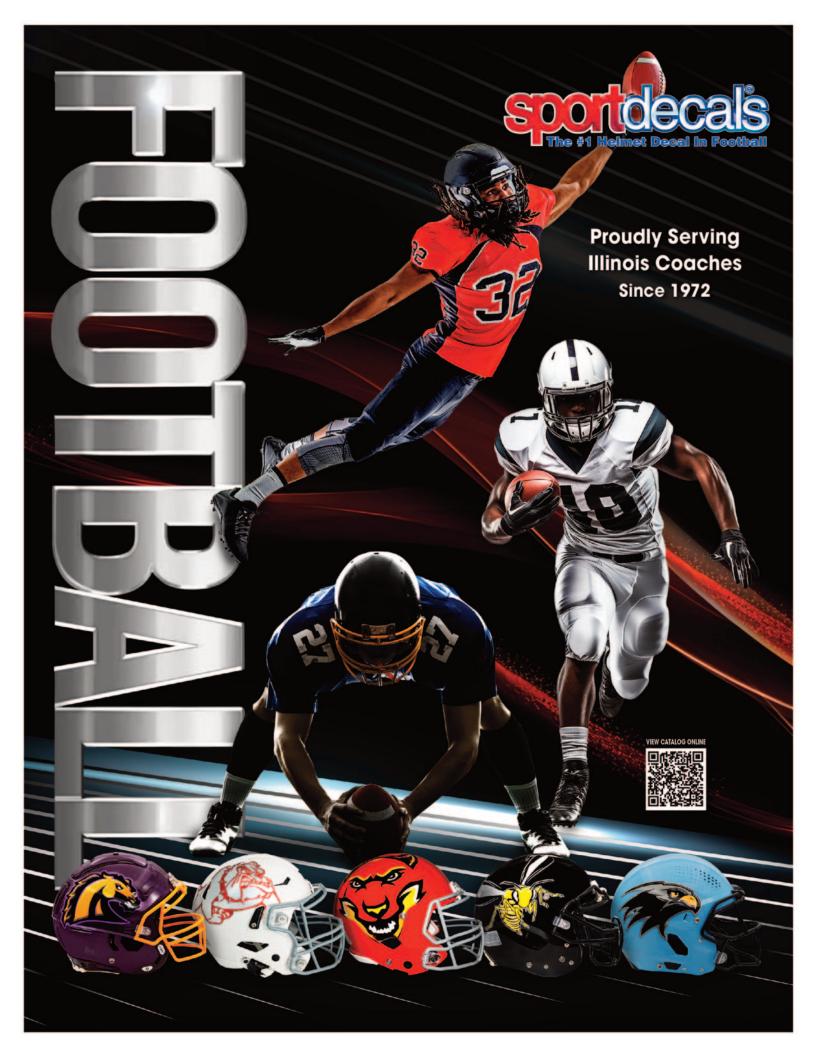
The Gameplan: Prevention + Education + Drug Disposal

Coaches vs. Overdoses combines proven public awareness, education, prevention, and community drug disposal practices. The program provides coaches, parents, and student-athletes with best-inclass evidence-based tools to tackle the youth opioid/ overdose crises and help save lives.

During fall of 2023, 453 high schools hosted Coaches vs. Overdoses games across 5 states. During which, over 233,000 in-home drug disposal kits were distributed, and prevention and education materials were provided to over 1.23 million parents and student-athletes.

Scan Here to Learn more and Get involved.









We are excited to announce that the ICA website has a new look and many new features that will Benefit our membership. Please go to www.icacoach.org





Did you know that the Illinois Coaches Association now has a Twitter account? Follow the ICA, coaches and high schools around the state: @ICA_Illinois





"Coaches Corner" in every Torch that will include articles written by our coaches for our coaches. If you have an article, idea, new drill or special play you would like to share, please send it to me. Email your articles directly to me at soboad@yahoo.com I have taken the liberty of the first "Coaches Corner" to submit my own article. This article is for all of the coaches who have had, or will have the pleasure of coaching their own son or daughter. Coaching your own children can be a challenge, but the rewards can be limitless. The submission is something I wrote for my son when I was coaching him in youth football. Check it out in "Coaches Corner"; I hope you enjoy it.



We can't stress the importance of our corporate partners in the operation of the ICA. Check their website and ad in this edition. Remember - Give them your support!!! They are the lifeline of our programs!!! WHEN PURCHASING, USE THEIR PRODUCTS PLEASE!!

Coaches should all be aware an ICA membership includes the \$2,000,000 Liability as a benefit. Inform your fellow coaches of this benefit and encourage them to obtain a membership. Urge your Athletic Director to take advantage of the school membership and at least purchase for the Head Coaches. At the ICA, we feel this is a benefit which all coaches can take advantage of by becoming an ICA Member. (Check the information in this publication)

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF BENEFITS AVAILABLE.



The ICA is constantly working to improve sports activities for young people as well as benefits for coaches.

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THEY ONLY SAID IT WOULD BE

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Mark Fredrickson

markf.mws@gmail.com

mwscholastic.com

J.C. Fish

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Scan this qr code to check out to see what coaches are saying and to view more of our recent rings we have produced.





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Glenview
Gurnee
Lincolnshire
Skokie







5 Ways to Prevent Low Back Injuries in Student Golfers

By Dr. Alex Behar, Physiatrist

As we prepare for the upcoming fall golf season at high schools, now is the perfect time for coaches to help student athletes build a strong foundation for performance and injury prevention. While golf may seem low-impact compared to other sports, it demands a surprising amount of physical strength, coordination, and endurance—particularly on the spine.

One of the most common complaints among high school golfers, both boys and girls, is lower back pain. As a physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) specialist focusing on sports medicine, I see young athletes every season whose training regimens or swing mechanics have led to preventable injuries. With summer golf play in full swing, coaches can help athletes prepare safely and effectively.

Common Golf Injuries in Youth Athletes

Repetitive motions, poor conditioning, and overuse can lead to several types of injury for student golfers:

Lumbar Strain and Sprain: The twisting motion of the golf swing puts significant stress on the lumbar spine. Inadequate warm-up, poor swing mechanics, or sudden increases in practice time can strain muscles and ligaments.

Spondylolysis: A stress fracture in the vertebra, most often seen in adolescent athletes, especially boys. This condition can be worsened by repetitive hyperextension of the back during the swing.

Disc-related issues: Repeated compression and rotation can irritate spinal discs, leading to pain, stiffness, or even nerve irritation.

Girls may also be at increased risk for flexibility-related injuries, especially if they are hypermobile or lack core strength to stabilize the spine.

Summer Preparation: Strength, Flexibility, and Mechanics

To help your golfers avoid injury and build toward a successful season, coaches can encourage student athletes with these 5 ways to take a proactive approach over the summer months:

Core Conditioning: A strong core stabilizes the spine during rotation. Recommend exercises like planks, bird dogs, and dead bugs. Avoid heavy weights and focus instead on control and endurance.

Dynamic Warm-Ups: Before hitting the course, athletes should spend 10—15 minutes on dynamic stretches that target the hips, spine, and shoulders. Examples include walking lunges with torso rotation, leg swings, and arm circles.

Flexibility Training: Tight hip flexors and hamstrings can cause compensatory motion in the lower back. Encourage regular stretching, especially post-round. Yoga or mobility routines 2—3 times per week can also be beneficial.

continued on page 20



Swing Analysis and Coaching: Poor swing mechanics are a leading cause of overuse injuries. Athletes should work with a coach or golf pro to ensure proper technique. A swing that's too aggressive or unbalanced can increase torque on the spine.

Gradual Build-Up: Avoid sudden spikes in play or practice time. Recommend that students follow a structured practice schedule that gradually increases duration and intensity, with scheduled rest days to prevent overuse.

If Injury Strikes: What to Know

If a golfer experiences persistent or sharp low back pain—especially pain that radiates down the leg or worsens with activity—it's essential to get evaluated by a medical professional. Treatment options may include:

Rest and modified activity

Physical therapy focused on stabilization, mobility, and posture

Anti-inflammatory medications

Injections including lumbar epidural steroid injection and nerve blocks

In some cases, bracing or imaging to rule out stress fractures or disc issues

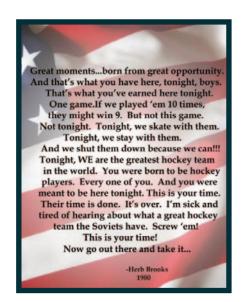
Early diagnosis and proper treatment can reduce the risk of long-term issues and help the athlete return to play safely.

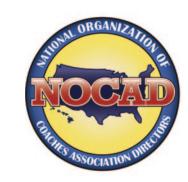
Preventing Re-Injury: A Long-Term Approach

Once an athlete has recovered, it's critical to prevent recurrence. Return-to-play should be gradual, with continued focus on core strength, swing mechanics, and workload management. A movement screen by a physiatrist or physical therapist can help identify any lingering imbalances or weaknesses.

As coaches, your encouragement and attention to proper training go a long way in protecting young athletes' health. Golf should be a sport they can enjoy for a lifetime—but that starts with protecting their backs today. With smart conditioning, good habits, and support from both coaches and healthcare providers, student golfers can play pain-free and competitively this fall.













GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Who is covered?

Member scholastic school coaches.

What is covered?

 Claims made by negligent acts, accidentally committed resulting in bodily injury, personal and advertising injury or property damage to others.

When are you covered?

• During your coaching activities and in the classroom.

What are the limits of liability?

- 1M per occurrence.
- 2M general aggregate per coach.

Additional policy coverages

- Participant Legal Liability.
- Defense costs outside of the limits of liability.

Exclusions

- The transportation of athletes.
- All Star games that are not approved by your state coaches association.
- The loss, cost or expense arising out of infectious or communicable disease.







"To Build Character, a leader must exhibit competence, connection, and character."
John C. Maxwell

"A leader does not deserve the name unless he is willing occasionally to stand along."
- Henry Kissinger

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs, ask yourself what makes you come alive, because what the world needs are men who have come alive." - John Eldredge

"You are closer to your dream than you think. You're one decision, action, etc. away!" - Ed Mylett

"POURING into OTHERS is a CARING act that shifts the focus from me to WE. It's giving YOURSELF UP with the intention to create the best team culture."

- Freddie Quartlebaum Jr.

"You don't have to live in the labels that others try to give you. BE YOU".

- David Nurse

. .

And of course, I always want to remind everyone...
LIFE IS ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS



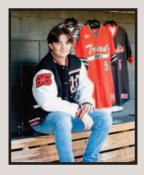
ICA Academic Scholarship Winners 2024

For the twentyfourth year the ICA has scholarships available to a son or daughter of a ICA member.

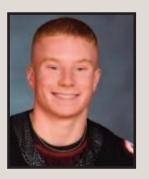
This year the offerings include five young adults. We feel that this is a substantial benefit of membership.

Students application process includes an essay, academic standing and recommendations by school personnel.

The screening process is handled by the ICA Board of Directors.

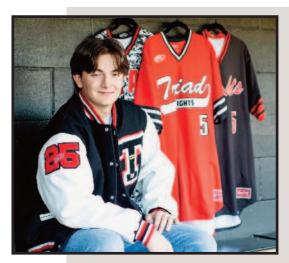


Hayden Bugger Triad HIgh School



Hudson Nutter Pekin High School

Tim "Mo" Caldwell Scholarship



Hayden Bugger Triad HIgh School

Congratulations!



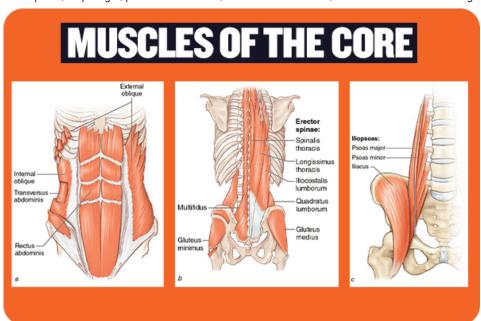
The Truth About Isolated Core Training for Athletes

Written by Mike Richards

Strength and conditioning programs of all sports, levels, and populations train the core in some way. Some do this through isolated, direct core training such as planks, sit-ups, etc.; others do this through large compound movements such as squats, cleans, deadlifts, etc. This article will explore the spectrum of core training from isolated, direct core training to the use of explicitly large, compound movements.

What is the core?

Before we discuss how to best train the core, it is important to first understand what makes up our core. The core is a group of muscles that work to provide various, essential functions for daily living and athleticism. Major muscles of the core include the transverse abdominis, multifidus, internal and external obliques, erector spinae, diaphragm, pelvic floor muscles, and rectus abdominis, with minor muscles including the lats, traps, and glutes.



Images courtesy of Human Kinetics: https://us.humankinetics.com/blogs/excerpt/build-your-core

Through these muscles, the core provides various functions that help athletes produce force, keep the spine safe, and bend the body in various ways necessary for sport. More specifically, the muscles of the core work to provide stability, protection of the hips and spine, balancing of load through the body as well as providing pressure for that load (Valsalva maneuver), and transference of force and power between different areas of the body.

Importance of Training the Core

As previously mentioned, there are various functions of the core for athletes to train. Probably most important is improving their stability and balance through strengthening and learning dynamic trunk stabilization. Strengthening and improving stability allows the athlete to train power, or generate and transfer force through the body. This transference teaches the athlete how to utilize their full kinetic chain to elicit maximum athleticism, but also helps in reducing the risk of core-associated injuries such as the spine, and pelvis. Overall, almost every athletic movement requires the use of the core muscles. Throwing, running, change of direction, skating, tackling, catching, kicking, etc., all require core strength, stability, and control.



Training the Core

There are largely three ways to train the core; the first being direct, isolated core training.

This type of core training is the common core exercises we think of such as planks, Russian twists, etc. This way of training focuses on isolating the muscles of the core and performing exercises targeted at strengthening them. Most of these exercises focus on the isometric action of the muscles or a very limited range of motion of the muscles. Direct, isolated core training has been the most popular way of training the core for a long time and is not necessarily incorrect, it just may not be the most efficient way to train the core for athletes, Unfortunately, the benefits of isolated core training fall off quickly, evidenced by heavy, long duration planks that can easily be achieved.

The second way to train the core is through participation in the sport itself. Working the core through the specific demands and movements required of the sport is about as specific as you can get in core training. This type of training allows the athlete to learn dynamic trunk control and stabilization in real-time while performing the movements required of their sport, enhancing the transferability of the supplemental training. This is usually a passive style of training since the athlete is not thinking of their core while at practice or in a competition, and you can't (or shouldn't) load the core while participating in the sport.

Finally, the third way to train the core is through the larger, compound movements themselves. This method of training the core involves learning and understanding trunk control and bracing while performing compound movements such as a squat or a clean. This method may be the best of the previous two because we are training the core muscles under load while performing movements similar to the demands of sport. When looking at the needs of almost every sport, there is a large requirement for power or transference of power. Learning how to perform this transference, while maintaining bracing, as we see in cleans, allows the athlete to become more powerful in their sport, as well as improve on speed and agility.

Looking at the three methods of training the core, with the main limitations and time restrictions most S&C coaches face in the weight room, the third method seems like the most logical, bang-for-our-buck method of training the core. If we take football for example, we have a high-intensity, high-contact sport, with a higher rate of lower back and

body injuries. Taking an exercise such as a clean directly trains the needs of the core for this sport. Something like the clean requires strong bracing before the first pull so the transfer of power from the legs to the hips can help accelerate the weight for the athlete to release their core bracing to pull under the bar and brace their core again for the impact of the catch.

These demands very closely mimic tackling (or being tackled) and prepare the player to be able to brace and transfer the force to have a successful tackle and not get hurt. This example applies to the whole core and most movements in sports. When we look at the obliques or transverse core training, we easily achieve that through single-leg movements like a safety bar split squat/lunge.

Using compound movements to train the core is great for strengthening the core and teaching dynamic stability. We can further elevate this training by using kettlebells and medicine balls. Medicine balls are widely used in baseball and softball for rotational core power, mirroring movements such as pitching and swinging, but can also be applied with any rotational power sport. Kettlebells are unique since their center of gravity can change based on how the athlete holds it. This variation allows for a wide array of movements that not only train the core but also other muscles in synchronization with the core.

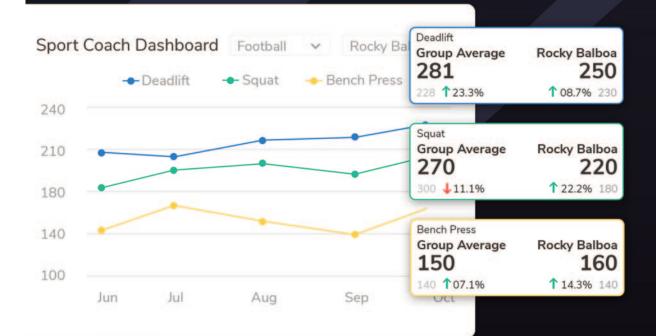
Conclusion

Throughout this article, we have discussed what the core is, its role in athletics, and various ways to train it. The main point of this article was that although direct, isolated core training is not wrong, it may be ineffective when we look at the use of the core in larger, compound movements like a clean or a squat and how much time we have to train athletes each week. We may not need to directly train the core, and if we are looking at the needs of the sport, we shouldn't rely on training the core or any other muscles in isolation, because no muscles ever work in isolation. Teaching our athletes trunk control and control of their bodies in general, allows for better transference of force through the body to elicit more power and more athleticism. Removing isolated core training from your programs, and focusing on mastering the large, compound movements, will allow for better time management in the workout, and a more efficient athlete.





KEEP SPORT COACHES IN THE LOOP WITH ATHLETE PROGRESS



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https://blog.teambuildr.com/wearables-dashboard-for-coaches





Athletes and Mental Health

Coaches have a lasting impact on the lives of young athletes. Not only do they guide their physical development, but coaches must also serve an athlete's mental health needs. Attached is a link to an article sharing the impact of mental health on the lives and performance of athletes. Making the mental health of athletes important is the new norm and coaches must continue making the mental health of athletes a priority.

https://health.clevelandclinic.org/mental-health-in-athletes/

Jason Foundation NOCAD Video https://youtu.be/Xi3ySU0X37E







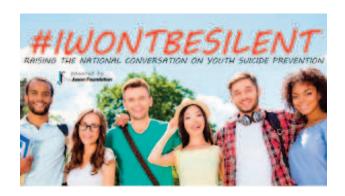
Coaches are in a unique position to have a farreaching impact on student-athletes. The Coaches Assistance Program (CAP) provides articles concerning young people and good mental health. Added to the CAP is a video exploring youth suicide and the unique pressures faced by student-athletes. "A Training for Coaches and Athletic Personnel" is an excellent tool accessible to coaches at no cost.





As a theme for the year in partnership with the Jason Foundation,

the ICA is attempting to increase the narrative of speaking about the "silent epidemic" of youth suicide.



Our theme of "I won't be silent" has increased suicide awareness.

Coaches please visit iwontbesilent.com to enhance awareness and education of youth suicide.









Chicago

cleft lip and palate orthopaedics specialized plastic surgery spinal cord injury care

Referrals: 773-385-KIDS (5437)

St. Louis

orthopaedics specialized plastic surgery

Referrals: 800-850-2960

shrinershospitalsforchildren.org



ATTENTION:

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ICA Active Membership Benefits

- The ICA Newsletter 'The Torch'
- \$2,000,000 Liability Insurance Policy
- Discount on Accident/Medical Insurance for participants in sports camps (Available to Illinois Coaches Association Members Only)
- Illinois Coach of the Year Awards and membership in the National High School Athletic Coaches Association (NHSACA)
- Eligibility of Son or Daughter to Compete for one of five \$750
 Scholarships Annually
- Eligibility of Son or Daughter to compete for our new "Memorial Scholarship" for \$500
- Eligibility to nominate athletes for the ICA/Shrine Football All Star game & All Star Baseball game

Individual Membership is \$20 School Membership for all coaches on staff is \$10.00 per coach

| | Individual Membership \$20.00 | Retired Membership \$ | 5.00 |
|----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| NAME | | | |
| Last | | First | Middle Initial |
| ADDRESS | | | |
| Street | City | State Zip | |
| SPORTS COACHED | | EMAIL | |
| SCHOOL NAME | | | |
| ADDRESS | | | |
| Street | City | State | Zip |

| ICA SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP FORM | \$10.00 p | per coach (No School Fee) | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|--|
| ROSTER OF ALL COACHES ON STAFF | Coach | Sport(s) Home Address | |
| School Name | | | |
| Address | 3 | | |
| | 4 | | |
| | 5 | | |





2025 HALL of Fame Inductees

John Szabo Jerry Rashid



NHSACA Coach of the Year Finalists

Neil Alexander
Tim Racki
Jim Burnside
Ken Grams
Jeff Siegal
Bob Barber
Will Schreier
Jason Clay

Boys Basketball Football Soccer Softball Cheer/Dance Swim/Dive Volleyball Wrestling Lincoln HS
Nazareth Academy
New Trier HS
Elk Grove Village HS
Buffalo Grove HS
Hinsdale Central HS
Wheaton Warrinville HS
Vandalia HS

Congratulations!







Best Answer is MaxPreps

Submitting stats and data to America's source for high school sports important for many reasons.

As a high school sports website, MaxPreps doesn't usually send representation to collegiate clinics, but I had the opportunity to attend the Women's Basketball Coaches Association Convention in Columbus, Ohio during the 2018 Final Four.

The main topic college coaches discussed? Player statistics on MaxPreps and their value as a recruiting tool.

We weren't talking to Geno Auriemma, Kim Mulkey or Muffet McGraw. We were talking to coaches on other NCAA D-I, II, III, NAIA and Junior College staffs. The common theme was most coaches and programs don't have exorbitant recruiting budgets and use MaxPreps as their first point of player exploration. Not having individual stats on MaxPreps – they would echo – leaves them looking elsewhere for answers.

Why is this important? In my stint at MaxPreps, the biggest hurdle I've heard is getting coaches to submit individual stats online. Why? Not wanting the opposition to see stats for scouting purposes is the most popular excuse. I've never understood that stance considering the current availability of information via social media. Neither have others, including Bob Corwin.

"Some coaches think by hiding (information), they will sneak up on the opposition," Corwin wrote. "By and large, those days are long over." Yep.

Corwin, a girls basketball veteran of nearly four decades who contributes to the MaxPreps National Rankings, previously published a piece entitled "Why High Schools and Prep Schools Should Post on MaxPreps" on passthaball.com.

He made several valid points:

- * MaxPreps is FREE.
- * Every school team in every sport in the country has a page and team admin.

- * Fans, scouting services and colleges can find out when teams play and how they are doing.
- * MaxPreps is living and documented history. It can be accessed forever.
- * MaxPreps allows each sport to build and contribute to a national network connecting all high schools in the country.

Other positives include populating statewide statistical leaderboards, recognizing athletes as

Players of the Game (online and hardcopy) and the ability to send complete box scores directly to multi-

By Eric Frantz @EFrantzMP



ple media outlets at once.

"Parents and players should urge their team's leadership to help grow girls' basketball," Corwin said, discussing his sport of focus. "It may only be a small way, but posting on MaxPreps contributes to that cause."

To make things easy for coaches to enter stats, MaxPreps offers:

- 1) A season-stat entry option.
- 2) The ability to delegate the responsibility to someone else on staff or in the school.
- 3) Over 80 stat partners that make importing/uploading stats a couple-click job.
- 4) The MP Teams App for coaches and ADs to utilize before, during and after games.

The resources are readily available for all. For free.

"How can fans, college coaches and journalists keep up with players and teams across the country?" Corwin pondered. "The best answer is Max-Preps."

Hands down. -EF

MAXPREPS.COM



MaxPreps is the "Official Statistician and Media Partner" for the Illinois High School Association. The IHSA partnership with MaxPreps provides great opportunities to promote your team and players and enables the IHSA to efficiently manage regular-season game results for the IHSA Score Zone, post-season seeding summary forms, statistical leaderboards, state records, media publications and more. In order to accurately manage these initiatives, all IHSA coaches are required to enter their scores into MaxPreps after each game. They are encouraged to enter statistics to be included on all IHSA stat leaderboards.

- 1. What do coaches need to do? Coaches need to enter their rosters and schedules at the start of each season, report scores immediately after each game and enter statistics to appear on statewide stat leaderboards.
- 2. What do Athletic Directors need to do? Athletic Directors need to communicate with coaches to keep their scores and other team information updated. While MaxPreps recommends coaches are responsible for their own team information, Athletic Directors can also control every single team page from their "School Administration" page on MaxPreps.
- 3. How do I get started? Coaches and Athletic Directors can register here by simply entering their email and following the prompts. If you are already a Max-Preps member, simply login in the top right corner using your current credentials.
- 4. Does MaxPreps have an app? Yes, the MaxPreps App allows coaches to update a score on their phone after the game. Coaches can also manage their schedule, stats and roster. The free app can be downloaded by ADs, coaches, athletes and parents from the iTunes app store and the Google Play store.
- 5. Is MaxPreps compatible with other stat programs? Yes! In addition to MaxPreps' own mobile, tablet and desktop tools, MaxPreps is compatible with over 80 different stat companies across multiple sports. HUDL and GameChanger are both MaxPreps Partners. Click here to see MaxPreps' stat partners.
- **6.** Can coaches allow a team statistician or assistant coach to help manage their team information? Yes! Once the coach has access to their team page, they

can give other individuals access to their page to help keep their team information accurate and up-to-date. Fans, parents, communities, college athletic departments and media outlets rely on this information.

- 7. Can I send my information to the media after each game? Yes, after scores and/or statistics are entered into MaxPreps, coaches may send that information to multiple media outlets at the same time. Click here for instructions on how to send boxscores and season statistics to media.
- **8.** How can fans participate with their teams? Parents, fans and/or team personnel can provide live scoring updates on their mobile device during the game and post pictures, video and chat with others. All scores/updates will be available statewide on the IHSA Scoreboards and sent to those who follow the team.
- 9. Who can I contact with additional questions? Coaches and ADs may contact MaxPreps state representative Eric Frantz at efrantz@maxpreps.com, or may direct questions to MaxPreps coach support at support@maxpreps.com, or 800-329-7324 x1.

MaxPreps also has a support website at support.maxpreps.com that can help answer specific questions such as how to enter scores, schedules, rosters and stats, how to upload a team photo, how to sync with stat partners, etc.

MaxPreps and the IHSA are happy to provide this great partnership for member schools, coaches, student-athletes and communities.

Thank you for your important role in making this partnership a success!



Loomis & LaPann, Inc. is proud to insure over 100,000 high school coaches, including the Illinois Coaches Association.



For any insurance or camp insurance questions, contact us at 800-566-6479 or sports@loomislapann.com



www.loomislapann.com







lighting the way by sharing ideas

ICA MEMBER BENEFITS

GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM

As a membership benefit, coverage is provided by the Commercial General Liability Policy issued to the National Organization of Coaches Association Directors. This policy will provide general liability coverage to the Illinois Coaches Association and its members.

CARRIER

HDI Global Specialty (A Rated)

POLICY PERIOD

August 1, 2024 - August 1, 2025

LIMITS OF INSURANCE

| \$1,000,000 | Each Occurrence |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| \$2,000,000 | General Aggregate (per Member) |
| \$1,000,000 | Products/Completed Operations |
| \$1,000,000 | Personal & Advertising Injury |
| \$ 300,000 | Fire Damage |
| \$ 50,000 | Sexual Abuse (per Member) |
| Excluded | Medical Payments |

COVERAGES

- Educator Professional Liability
- Participant Legal Liability for insured members
- Liability assumed under insured written contract
- Defense Cost outside limits

EXCLUSIONS

- The use of automobiles, buses, watercraft and aircraft
- Property of others in the care, custody, and control of the insured.
- This insurance does not apply to members that coach at an All-Star game that is not approved by your state coaches association.
- This insurance does not apply to any loss, cost or expense arising out of infectious or communicable disease.

CAMP INSURANCE

Today, most Coaches are involved in some type of sports camp. Please note that our General Liability Program follows insured members while working at camps and/or conducting their own personal camp.

In addition, Participant/Accident Coverage is required for coaches and/or participants. Should an accident occur during a camp, clinic or event, this secondary coverage helps offset the loss suffered by families affected by such accidents.

PROCEDURE FOR CAMP INSURANCE

As a member benefit of your state coaches association, all members in good standing have a \$1,000,000 per occurrence General Liability policy limit that provides coverage for their coaching activities. In order to protect the General Liability policy from potential claims, the insurance company has mandated that all coaches must obtain signed waivers and provide Participant/Accident insurance for their participants.

In order to obtain a certificate of insurance showing proof of insurance or naming an additional insured, the following must be in place:

- ❖ Waivers: Signed waivers showing indemnification language
- Participant/Accident Insurance: You must have Participant/Accident coverage in place for all participants attending sports camps.

PURCHASE INSURANCE

 Camp Insurance Request form is available on our website: https://www.loomislapann.com/page/camp-insurance-2.html

INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR



<u>www.loomislapann.com</u> (P) 800-566-6479 | (F) 518-792-3426

Greg Joly Lori George gjoly@loomislapann.com lgeorge@loomislapann.com

Disclaimer: This is an insurance overview for summary purposes only; for complete policy terms and conditions please refer to the NOCAD Master Policy.





NEW CAMP INSURANCE REQUIREMENT: PARTICIPANT/ACCIDENT COVERAGE

As a member benefit of your coaches association, your members will continue to have General Liability coverage for their coaching activities (for example, State Association sanctioned All-Star Events, camps, other coaching activities and classroom coverage). The new requirement from the General Liability Company is that if a coach operates/conducts a camp he/she must have Participant/Accident coverage for all participants/campers attending the camp. Your member coach has the option to provide proof of existing Participant/Accident coverage or to purchase the coverage at a discounted rate through the NOCAD Camp Insurance Program.

WHY THE CHANGE?

When a coach is coaching at his/her school, student athletes are always covered by an Accident Insurance Policy that is provided by the school or the High School Association. The coverage is in place to help schools and High School Associations eliminate potential litigation; because when someone is injured, the Participant/Accident Insurance Policy can pay medical bills.

Even if the injured party has Primary Medical Insurance, most policies no longer pay 100% of the medical bills and parents could have high out-of-pocket expenses. For example, if a student has a \$50,000 ACL injury and the parents' Primary Medical Insurance Policy has an 80/20 co-pay, the insurance company is going to pay \$40,000 and the parents would have \$10,000 in out-of-pocket expenses.

In today's legal climate, everything possible must be done to protect our General Liability Policy from lawsuits being filed for negligent acts when someone is injured. Camp Liability Policies could be unavailable in the near future if Participant/Accident coverage has not been added.

Thank you,

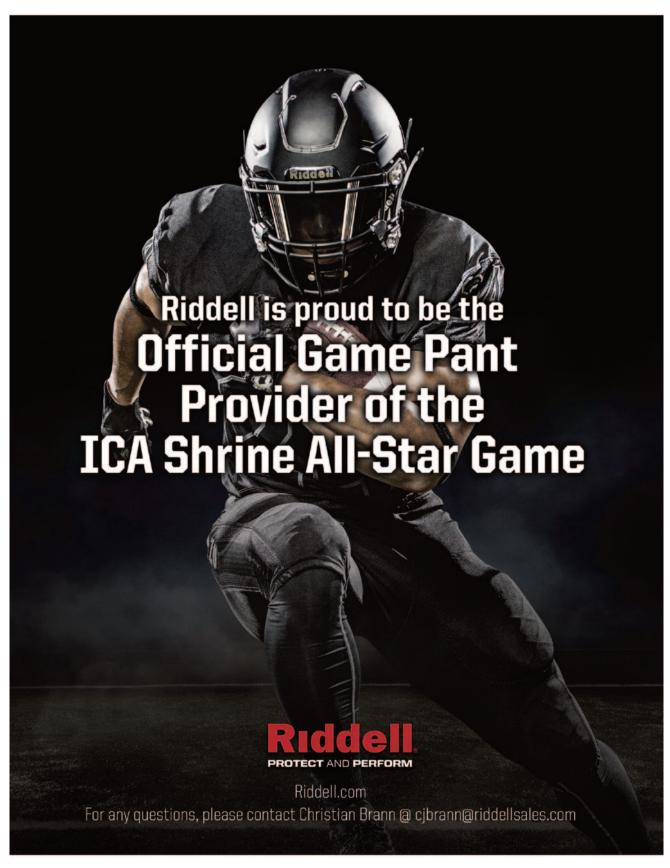
Greg Joly: gjoly@loomislapann.com Lori George: lgeorge@loomislapann.com

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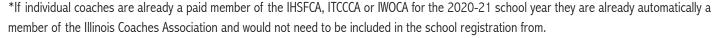
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- \$2,000,000 Liability Insurance Policy
- Discount on Accident/Medical Insurance for participants in sports camps (Available to Illinois Coaches Association Members Only)
- Membership in National High School Athletic Coaches Association NHSACA

FREE Coach and Athlete Subscription

- FREE year-long access to digital editions of Coach & Athletic Director Magazine
- Normal Digital Subscription \$9.95 annually per coach
- FREE Podcasts featuring Proactive Coaching Series Coaching for Significance
- Eligible to submit photos to Coach & Athletic Director Magazine of facility upgrades, sideline coaching, and in game action shots for an opportunity to be featured in issues of the publication.
- FREE year-long access to digital editions of Training & Conditioning Magazine
- Individual coaches can opt in for additional FREE resources:
 - Weekly eNewsletter from Coach & AD
 - Weekly eNewsletter from Training & Conditioning
 - · Announcement and invitations to Webinars
 - Announcements from marketing partners containing key product information
 - Eligible for Proactive Coaching Plus annual subscription discount for all state association members - preview
 - Eliqible to offer discounted benefits & services for all state association members preview
 - Eligible for Gipper (Social Media Content Platform) discount for all state association members
- Illinois Coach of the Year Awards for NHSACA
- Eligibility of Son or Daughter to Compete for one of five \$750 Scholarships Annually
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School Membership for all coaches on staff is \$10.00 per coach



Any questions please contact:

Drew Potthoff / soboad@yahoo.com / 815-405-3821









Calling all Authors! Do you have an article, coaching drill, coaching philosophy or innovative idea you want to share? Send it to us and we will put it in the TORCH and on the website:

Email submissions directly to soboad@yahoo.com

CHANGE OF ADDRESS--Be certain to let us know at the ICA if you change your address.

We want to be certain that you get all mailings. If you are getting your mailings at your school

WE DO NOT HAVE A HOME ADDRESS!!!

Remember, we work daily with parents' most prized possessions, their children.

The ICA website is www:icacoach.org

The ICA continues to make efforts to increase benefits for coaches and young people. We have partnered to provide an opportunity for members to participate in a plan that would help save \$\$\$\$ on your electricity costs. Look elsewhere in this publication for the information from Constellation Energy.

" A happy life consists not in the absence of but the mastery of hardship."

Helen Keller





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Bruce McClelland Head Coach Terry Sanford High Football

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Commitment and Keeping Everyone Involved

Zach Wehner — Malcolm — Baseball

Commitment

Back in the Spring of 2021, it was a no brainer when our AD, Dallas Sweet, asked me if I would be interested in coaching Malcolm's High School Baseball Team. This would be the first year Malcolm would have their own team without cooping with another school. Having taught at Malcolm for ten plus years and coaching the high school boys in basketball and football I knew what kind of boys and families I was going to get to work with. When we started putting things together, I was shocked with the commitment the boys and families were willing to put in to get the program up and running. We had a lot of families willing to donate time, equipment and facilities to make sure the program got off to a good start. As soon as school started in the fall I was getting donations of equipment, clothing and what we call "our gold" (practice balls). I was able to talk with a couple of local guys with a lot of baseball experience, and convince them to join the coaching staff to bring in as much knowledge and experience possible. Our first year we had a great group of boys that took it upon themselves to make sure everyone was putting in work on their own during the offseason. This leadership has passed down throughout the years. All of the boys have been very committed to getting better whether it is summer, fall, or winter. We are extremely lucky to be close to Lincoln where a lot of boys find hitting and pitching coaches to help their development throughout the winter. Their work during the winter has really helped when it comes to the first day of practice. Some of the boys are close to being in mid-season form when we meet at the field for day one of practice. Entering our fourth year of High School Baseball the commitment from the boys, families, and community has not faded. Last year we were playing on an outdated field with a dirt infield and a short outfield. We had a group of parents that came up with an idea to make improvements to the field. At first, I thought the idea would be at least a five-year process. I couldn't have been more wrong with the time frame of this project. Once the village approved updates to the field, demolition started. We have had a lot of community members donate money, supplies and probably more important, time. We have had families and community members down at the field working every weekend for the past five months. The community showing this commitment to the program has shown the boys that baseball is something more important than just the game. They want to bring everyone together, and when the boys are working in the offseason, they remember this.

Keeping Everyone Involved

Keeping Everyone Involved One of the biggest challenges we have during the season is pushing our varsity guys to become the best players they can, while also developing our younger guys so they are ready when their number is called. Our number of baseball players at Malcolm has increased over the years. When we first started our program in 2022 we had 29 guys. This year we are looking at being around 40 players. We have been very fortunate that along with our three paid coaches we have also had three volunteer coaches offering their time to come in and help. All of the coaches on my staff know the game, and have various backgrounds playing baseball. Having this luxury, I am able to split our squad into groups to work with different coaches on different skills and I know the guys are learning the game and being pushed. A typical day of early season practice consists of a bulk of station work and ending with teamwork. I split the squad into 4 groups depending on their positions for stations. Our groupings consist of varsity infield, varsity outfield, JV infield, and JV outfield. We have our utility players switch from infield group to outfield group daily so they can get some reps both in the

Illinois Coaches Association



continued from page 44

infield and outfield. The first couple weeks of practice we must utilize the time we are at practice wisely. After we meet as a team and stretch we go ahead and split into our groups. For our first station I send one group to the cage right away to get their hitting in while the other three groups start with their throwing and daily fundamental work. Each station is thirty minutes long, so the guys know there is not a lot of time to mess around if they want to get better. Besides our warm-up station and hitting stations we do a lot of fundamental position work. Our infielders will take ground balls and making throws for 20 to 30 minutes. Our outfielders work on flyballs, cutoffs, and grounders for 20 to 30 minutes. Being able to have 4 different groups this gives every guy a lot of reps at the position work. We preach how every rep is meaningful and needs to be treated like a game time situation. To add a little more pressure to our infield and outfielders we throw some red baseballs in our buckets. These balls are called the "money balls". If there is an error fielding or making a throw with these balls that player has to run to the fence and back before they can enter the drill again. After our stations are finished, we always end practice with team work. This is our time to work on baserunning, hitting cuts, PFPs, live defensive reps and some live hitting. To make sure everyone is getting reps at this time we will typically split the squad into three groups. We will have one group playing defense, one group running bases, and one group hitting off a coach or a pitching machine. This is a time we try to simulate a game, but at a much faster pace. Our mid-season practices are a lot like our early season practices, but we do change our groups to only two or three each day. This is to give us more time to work as a team. To make sure everyone is getting meaningful reps we will send our Reserve and JV team to our Pony Field with two coaches. This give them time to work on basic fundamentals that they need to work on and give us an opportunity to work on advanced skills with the Varsity team. Our post-season practices are probably one of the best times for all of our guys. While we are preparing the Varsity for district play we will have a 3-game series with our Reserve and JV guys. I have two of our volunteer coaches draft teams and they play a full game on three consecutive days. These games give the younger guys a lot of reps and they get to have some fun doing it. One rule is they have to have a different uniform each day for the game. We have seen everything from camo uniforms with painted faces to the players wearing their old little league uniforms. This is just another time we can get the boys some playing time while having a little fun to end the season. We feel as a coaching staff it is important to get all our guys as many reps as possible throughout the season. I am very fortunate to have a great coaching staff with a lot of baseball knowledge and guys that are like sponges when learning the game of baseball.





Running Against the Odds

By Daniela Prado - Johnson HS Head Cross Country Coach

Youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnic minority groups often encounter significant barriers when it comes to participating in sports. These include, but are not limited to, financial hardship, limited access to resources and facilities, and a lack of support from their families.

Running Journey

I have been running since I was 14 years old. Joining the cross country team as a freshman was a significant moment in my life, and I will always be grateful for the doors it has opened for me. I was labeled as "economically disadvantaged," an identification that classified me as an at-risk youth. Without a high school education and immigrating to Laredo from Mexico, my hard-working parents had to work low-paying jobs. Because they often struggled with making ends meet, my parents preached the importance of an education and to always do our best. "Echale ganas," do your best, was the motto growing up. My parents taught my siblings and I the importance of a strong work ethic, and their love and support is the foundation of our success.

Coming from a very humble background and with the encouragement of my parents, I used the gift of running to help me earn a college education. As a college freshman at a D1 school, I worked hard to earn a top 8 spot to run at the conference meet. Unfortunately, that year was cut short due to a femoral neck stress fracture requiring urgent surgery. I was devastated. It was incredibly daunting, both mentally and physically, to come back from this injury, but I did and ran even faster. I didn't know it then, but I believe the lessons I learned throughout that journey is what has contributed greatly to my coaching methods and the person I am today.

Breaking barriers

Only about 30% of head coaches are female. I was in disbelief at the statistics, considering we are in the year 2024. Then I did the math. Out of the ten head cross country coaches in my hometown, two are female. However, being one of two females didn't intimidate me. In fact, it empowered me, and I credit that to my mentors and my family. They have given me the tools to grow as a leader, and their belief in me has given me strength to build a competitive program.

Community Context

Laredo is located in South Texas along the Rio Grande River. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanics contribute to 95.2% of the total population with a per capita income of \$24,584.

Student Realities

Lyndon B. Johnson High School has a yearly enrollment of about 3200 students, 91.7% of which are labeled as "economically disadvantaged." Students attending JHS live in the Laredo area as well as the neighboring communities of El Cenizo and Rio Bravo. JHS is unique in that it also houses two early college programs. The early college program allows students to graduate with their high school diploma and an associate of arts. The Biotechnology & Life Sciences Innovative Academy, BLSIA, offers students the opportunity to graduate high school with an associate of science. These programs provide students with a head start into the real world while eliminating additional financial burdens that come with attending college.



The school is located about a mile from the Rio Grande riverbanks, and law enforcement units are a familiar sight. Because most students live near the riverbanks, they often witness crime making them desensitized to the adversity they experience on a daily basis.

Student-Athlete Realities and Impacts

Coaches at JHS face unique challenges that impact our approach to training. With about 600 athletes, we typically have athletes in common with other sports. More often than not, our programs serve as a safe haven. Our programs provide autonomy, community, support, and opportunity.

The cross country team self-reflects by answering thoughtful questions before and after the season, and during times where the team vibes may need a "reset." When there are moments of strife on the team, I typically share a personal story so that they know it is ok to be vulnerable followed by self-reflection. These are the questions I used in our most recent self-reflection session:

Getting to Know Each Other

- What's your favorite thing to do outside of running?
- What's a hidden talent or skill you have?
- If you could have dinner with any person, past or present, who would it be and why?
- What's a personal goal you're working toward (inside or outside of running)?



Team and Running Focused

- What's the best piece of advice you've ever received about running?
- Why did you start running, and what motivates you to keep going?
- What's a race or practice moment that made you feel proud of yourself or the team?





• What's something you appreciate about being part of this team?

Having the athletes self-reflect has allowed me to learn so much about them that I may have otherwise never learned. On our team, we have competitive Rubik's cube solvers, master chess players, artists, cooks/bakers, skateboarders, and baseball/softball players. Those same individuals may also be suffering from chronic adversity. They may have a parent who is currently incarcerated, deaths in the family, raised by a single parent, and/ or may not see their parents as often as they'd like. These factors, along with many others, have refined my approach to training and competition.

Having grown up with similar circumstances, it has caused me to think about what I needed when I was in their shoes. Of course, it would be impossible for me to implement everything on my own. Coach Alvarado, my assistant and former college teammate, has played a large role in developing a positive team culture and competitive program. His upbeat personality and knowledge of what terminology is currently "in" helps bridge the gap and helps us connect better with the team. Coach Alvarado and I spend the time before practice making casual conversation and laughing with the runners. We want them to feel "seen" and cared for. Due to their backgrounds, many of our runners struggle with trust issues, so we make it a point to explain the importance and purpose of each workout. We encourage them to ask questions in order to eliminate any doubt, and we want them to feel safe enough to ask questions or to come to us with concerns they may have. They're able to free themselves from worries that consume them even if it's just for that moment.





Important Factors

Two of the most important factors to a successful program are consistency and communication. We need to make sure our runners are at every practice, but with so much against us, we had to reevaluate our approach to practice and how absences are communicated. These are the actions we take to maximize attendance:

- 1. Provide a weekly calendar and share important information with parents and athletes via sportsYou.
- 2. Provide the weekly goal and mileage so that athletes take ownership of their attendance.
- 3. Keep the practice schedule as consistent as possible. (Many have to make arrangements for practice.)
- 4. Minimize any changes, and update parents and athletes ASAP.
- 5. We ask the runners to communicate their absences with us. If something was more important than attending practice, then it is worth informing us. (This requirement has also lowered the amount of absences since it holds them accountable. We are teaching life skills.)



Another important factor to a successful program is parental involvement. At our parent meeting, we made it clear that we didn't want to become an additional stressor. We were here to support the parents by checking on grades, calling home when we notice a change in behavior, and by providing equipment to help keep their children healthy. The look of relief on their faces was undeniable. We do ask for their support by making sure their child attends practice and runs on their own when they're required to. We take these actions to support our parents:

- 1. Build rapport with parents. This builds trust and makes communication easier when having to discuss important issues.
- 2. Have a group of committed booster parents. Our booster officers actively participate in fundraisers and volunteer work.
- 3. Explain the goal and process of the fundraiser to parents. This will make sure each runner is involved.

Training and Program Development

Adaptation and Resilience

On summer days, we meet at 6:45 a.m. based on feedback from the parents. Starting any later was affecting the time they arrived at work, and without hesitation, we changed the time. As the season starts, we move practice to 6:15. Since we have multiple runners who are in the early college programs, they cannot be a part of the athletics block. Therefore, we make sure we bring them in early enough to be able to complete the workout and head to class. We do what is best for the team above all.

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Our training program is outlined by four mesocycles that consists of base phase, pre-competitive phase, competitive phase, and championship phase. Our weekly mileage averages anywhere between 30-55 miles per week. Since training surfaces mainly consist of pavement and asphalt, we supplement their running with HIIT training and a "prehab" two-four times a week. By implementing the supplementals, we have been able to minimize the occurrence of shin splints and other aches and pains.

lighting the way by sharing ideas

Due to financial burdens, members of our team may not be able to get a new pair of shoes every 300 miles. Through fundraising, we have been able to provide running shoes and spikes, snacks, waters, and sports drinks to help keep them healthy year round. The money we raise also pays for additional meals when we travel. To avoid placing anyone in an uncomfortable situation, we do not make it a requirement to bring their own money. As we have raised more funds, we can now provide snacks for travel and team dinners, which is something the team looks forward to.

Success Stories

Despite all the variables, we have built a competitive program by creating a safe and nurturing atmosphere and by teaching them to become students of the sport. The 2021 season was my first year as a head coach for both the boys and girls. The team had not advanced since the state qualifying team more than 16 years ago. I was excited and driven to get the program going again, but I knew it was important to set realistic goals. With that said, we had a talented group of sophomores and juniors on the boys' side; however, the girls side needed more time to develop into a competitive team. Our first goal was to advance to have the boys advance to regionals, and they did. They were the district champions that season! During the '22 season, the boys team became back-to-back district champs! They went from placing 14th to 7th in a highly competitive region. This team set the tone for the program.

As I mentioned earlier, our girls' side needed time. By the time I was a third year head coach, I knew they were ready. We set our goals early on in the summer months, and we knew this was the team that would advance. We did not have a lot of depth, and we also had no room for error. Once I made my decision to only run five girls instead of seven, I made it a mission to make sure the girls were mentally ready and tapered their training to peak at district. They became a regional qualifying team that season by earning a 3rd place finish at district! Now both the boys and girls' teams have set the standard for the program.

This past season, we welcomed the addition of another school to our district, which made the district meet even more competitive. As usual, we set our goals at the beginning of summer training. I prefer to revisit our goals during this time as it helps mentally prepare the team for base training. We had three boys and one girl earn their ticket to the regional meet. We were the only school who had three runners in the top 10 on the boys' side. The regional qualifier on the girls' side was not ranked to advance, but she trusted her training and executed the race strategy precisely. The first thing our individual regional qualifiers did was thank their coaches and their teammates. They knew their teammates contributed to their success.

The Bigger Picture

As coaches, we constantly remind the team that we are teaching them life skills such as communication, accountability, and resilience. I believe it is the adversity they experience on a daily basis that is shaping them into resilient individuals.

As a member of our team, they learn to use their struggles as motivation. They learn the value of a strong work ethic. They learn the importance of education. They learn to always strive for more. They learn to not become complacent. They develop grit. With this in mind, I hope each runner who has gone through our program continues to achieve their goals and continues to implement the tools they have learned as a member of the Johnson High School Cross Country team.

Want to read the entire March 2025 issue of Texas Coach magazine?

https://issuu.com/thscacoaches/docs/texas_coach_-_march_2025_-_volume_lxix_no._7?fr=xKAE9_zU1NQ





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As we approach the conclusion of another IHSA sports year, we want to extend our sincere appreciation to each of you for your dedication, leadership, and commitment to student-athletes across Illinois. Your support of the IHSA Mission continues to shape the lives of the young people you serve helping them perform and grow as individuals educationally and in their respective sports/activities. No matter the outcomes of your sports seasons, we encourage you to celebrate the hard work, sportsmanship, and achievements of your teams. In preparation for summer contact days, please take note of the following by-law changes being implemented this summer:

- Elimination of any all-star participation restrictions for underclassmen during the summer months.
- Reduction in the number of summer contact days from 25 to 20.

Finally, please enjoy your summer activities including some rest and time with your family. We celebrate those who are retiring after significant years of dedication to coaching and welcome those replacing those leaders. Please stay connected with us and the happenings at IHSA in the coming year!