* *MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE IHSAA STAFF*
* *2027 IHSAA LEGENDS OF THE GAME*
* *"OFFICIALLY" MAKING IHSAA HISTORY - Sierra Harlan*
* *SAC - Student Section Guidelines/Battle of the Fans Contest*
* *NFHS LEARN - Fundamentals of Coaching*
* *HOW TO BE A BETTER ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATOR*
* *COACHES CORNER - Great Things Coaches Do Beyond the Scoreboard*
* *STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL - Sportsmanship Symposiums*
* *2026 FALL STATE CHAMPIONS - VB/XC/SW/FB*
* *STATE VOLLEYBALL SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS*
* *IHSAA STAFF LEADERSHIP BOOK OF THE MONTH - Theo of Golden*

REAL PERFORMANCE. REAL FUEL. REAL DAIRY.
DAIRY WEST
REAL GOOD™



December 2026 ISSUE

IHSAA EXPRESS

Supporting Education Through Activities

Connect with us using IDHSAA





ANNOUNCING THE 2027 IHSAA LEGENDS OF THE GAME

Honoring championship teams and lasting legacies in Idaho high school basketball

The Idaho High School Activities Association is proud to announce its 2027 Legends of the Game honorees in girls' and boys' basketball. This recognition celebrates teams whose accomplishments, championship success, and lasting impact have helped shape Idaho high school basketball history.

Girls' Basketball: 2003 Timberline Wolves

The IHSAA is pleased to honor the 2003 Timberline Wolves as the 2027 girls' basketball "Legends of the Game."

This outstanding team captured District, Academic State, and State Championships while compiling an impressive 26-1 record. The Wolves dominated the state tournament, winning all three games by a combined margin of 97 points and establishing themselves as one of the premier teams in Idaho girls' basketball history.

The 2003 Timberline team set a standard of excellence for future generations of student-athletes and left a lasting legacy within the Timberline basketball program. Congratulations to these great "Legends of the Game"!

Boys' Basketball: 1974 West Jefferson Panthers

The IHSAA is pleased to honor the 1974 West Jefferson Panthers as the 2027 boys' basketball "Legends of the Game."

This team captured the first boys' basketball state championship in school history and finished the season with an outstanding 23-1 record. More than 50 years later, the 1974 Panthers remain the only boys' basketball team in school history to bring home a state title, creating a legacy that continues to inspire the West Jefferson community.
Congratulations to these great "Legends of the Game"!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THESE TRUE LEGENDS OF THE GAME

The IHSAA Student Advisory Council hosted district level sportsmanship symposiums, bringing together student leaders, coaches, parents and school administrators to discuss, share and build on the importance of sportsmanship in high school activities and how to create a "GEM State of Mind"

GEM STATE OF MIND
Give Everyone their Moment
PRESENTED BY COUNTRY FINANCIAL

Key Takeaways: Leadership, Respect and the Power of Conversation

The IHSAA Student Advisory Council Sportsmanship Symposium provided students with an opportunity to share perspectives, engage in meaningful conversations and reflect on the role each individual plays in creating a positive high school activities environment.

Throughout the discussions, several common themes emerged. Students recognized that sportsmanship extends beyond competition and that leadership, respect, communication and understanding are essential to building a positive culture in our schools.

1. Relationships and Communication Make a Difference



- Connecting with people makes a significant difference in the level of participation and involvement.
- Meaningful discussions can have a lasting impact. Sometimes, simply creating an opportunity for students to talk openly can be the most powerful part of an experience.
- Listening is just as important as speaking. Being positive, understanding others and knowing when to listen rather than respond are important skills.
- Acknowledging and respecting different perspectives is essential, especially in competitive environments.
- Understanding how others receive criticism and being aware of those around you can help create stronger relationships.

2. Leadership Takes Many Forms



- Everyone has an opportunity to lead, regardless of their position or role.
- There are times to step forward and take action and other times when the best form of leadership is simply being present for someone.
- Effective leaders also know when to follow, listen and allow others to lead.
- Leadership skills are important when dealing with conflict. Developing those skills helps individuals respond appropriately and positively to challenging situations.
- Everyone leads and responds to leadership differently. Recognizing different perspectives makes teams and school communities stronger.
- Leadership within athletics starts with the adults, who set the example for students to follow.

3. Sportsmanship Is Everyone's Responsibility

- Everyone plays a role in creating a sportsmanlike environment.
- Sportsmanship is not just about the physical aspects of competition; it is about attitude, character and how we treat others.
- Sportsmanship may look different to different people, but it should always reflect a positive approach.
- Respect goes both ways in high school athletics. Athletes, coaches, officials, administrators and spectators all have a responsibility to demonstrate respect.
- Officials deserve respect and understanding. They are human, too, and are doing their best.
- How individuals respond to conflict reflects not only on themselves but also on their teammates, coaches and schools.
- Respect, encouragement and positivity should extend beyond athletic competition and into every aspect of the high school experience.

4. Recognition and the Overall Student Experience Matter



- Students believe school activities deserve greater recognition for the positive impact they have on school culture and student involvement.
- Activities provide opportunities for students to develop relationships, leadership skills, confidence and a sense of belonging.
- Mental health matters in athletics. Supporting one another and recognizing the pressures students face are important parts of a healthy school environment.
- Creating an inclusive and supportive atmosphere requires the involvement of students, coaches, school personnel and the community.

The Biggest Takeaway: Student Voice and Conversation Matter

Perhaps the most meaningful takeaway from the symposium was the impact of simply bringing students together and giving them an opportunity to talk.

At the beginning of a discussion, students may be hesitant to share their thoughts or perspectives. However, as conversations develop and students become more comfortable, meaningful dialogue begins to happen. Those conversations can challenge perspectives, build understanding and create connections that last long after the symposium ends.

The symposium reinforced an important message: Sportsmanship is more than what happens during a game. It is reflected in our attitudes, our relationships, our willingness to listen and the way we treat one another every day.

When students, coaches, officials and school communities embrace these principles, we create an environment where everyone has the opportunity to belong, contribute and make a difference.







GIVE EVERYONE THEIR MOMENT

Do Not Stand on the court or the field of play

Do Not use profanity or negative language

Do Not Target or Single out any individuals

Do Not throw things within your student section/at the field

Do Not Boo or Yell at the Referees or participants

DO:

Welcome EVERYONE into your student section

Show respect to the coaches, Refs, athletes, and parents

Be Loud and Proud ALL GAME!

Be creative with themes and group cheers!

Follow the direction of staff and student leadership

DON'T:

ASK 3 GROUPS OF PEOPLE:

A) Visting players
B) Officials
C) Visiting fans

Does your student section have a GEM State of Mind?



Idaho High School Activities Association
Student Advisory Council
Sportsmanship
Achievement
Character

RESPECT HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS!

BENCH BAD BEHAVIOR

POWERED BY NFHS

BATTLE OF THE FANS

WINNER WILL GET A BANNER!

Due: April 3rd

How to compete:

- Create a 2-2 ½ minute (max) video
- Introduce your school
- 1A-3A schools include at LEAST 1 non-sport activity
- 4A-6A schools include at LEAST 3 non-sport activities
- Show off your school!

Judging Criteria:

- Sportsmanship
- School Spirit
- Activity Diversity
- Originality
- Student Participation

POST TO YOUTUBE AND EMAIL TO FEDERICOM@IDHSAA.ORG
RESULTS WILL BE OUT APRIL 15TH!

OFFICIAL FUEL
OF HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS



DAIRY WEST
REAL GOOD™

Packaging is illustrative. Nutrition varies by brand; see product labels.

ADMINISTRATORS
"In The Know"

FROM THE IHSAA

+ Fall Concussion Data due December 1st
+ Verify Winter Coach Certification
+ Verify ALL Team Scores in MaxPreps (Avoid $1500.00 fine)

DATES TO REMEMBER

12/1	Fall Sports Concussion Survey Due
12/1	Wrestling Weight Assessment Window Closes
12/2	1st Wrestling Competition
12/4-5	State Drama
12/7	IHSAA Board Work Session/Appeals
12/8	IHSAA Board of Directors Meeting
12/25	Christmas Day
12/31	Wrestling Growth Allowance
1/1	New Year's Day

DECEMBER AD CHECKLIST

____ Enjoy the Holidays with family and friends
____ Work with student section on a sportsmanship - Do & Don't
____ Publish Spring Schedules
____ Organize Fall Opponents
____ Organize Winter Opponents
____ Develop/Review Winter Cancellation Checklist



NFHS LEARNING CENTER
NFHSLearn.com

Fundamentals of Coaching

This NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course provides a unique student-centered curriculum for interscholastic teacher/coaches, assisting them in creating a healthy and age-appropriate athletic experience that supports the educational mission of our nation' s schools. Please check with your state association to see if this course complies with your state requirements. Upon purchase, an individual will have access to the course for one year.

BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

Professional Development credit for NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching is now available!

To register and pay for professional development credit through Boise State University, please follow the link below. The registration and payment process is quick and easy to complete, but if you encounter any problems, please feel free to contact Extended Studies Customer Service for assistance at (208) 426-1709.

Credit Registration Deadline: December 4th, 2026

REGISTER HERE

HOW TO BE A BETTER ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATOR



- Scott Garvis, CMAA

From managing schedules and staff to building school culture and setting a vision, the responsibilities of an athletic director go far beyond game day.

In this guide, Scott will share practical ways to become a more effective, respected, and impactful athletic director.

Whether you're new to the role or a seasoned vet, these strategies will help you lead your program with confidence and clarity.

Develop a Strategic Vision for Your Activities Program

A clear, strategic vision provides direction and purpose. ADs should collaborate with stakeholders to establish goals that align with the school's mission, emphasizing both athletic excellence and personal development. Regularly revisiting and reflecting on this vision ensures that the athletic program evolves to meet changing needs and challenges.

Here are specific recommendations to help you develop a strategic vision for your athletic program:

Start With Core Values

Identify the foundational principles of your athletic department. These could include sportsmanship, academic achievement, inclusivity, character development, or community engagement. Use these values to shape your vision and all major decisions.

Create a Vision Statement

Write a clear, concise vision statement that captures what you want your program to become. Example: "To build a culture of excellence where student-athletes grow as leaders, succeed in the classroom, and compete with integrity."

Set Short and Long Term Goals

Develop annual goals as well as long-term benchmarks (3–5 years). Goals could include:

- Increasing participation rates to X amount.
- Improving X-Y-and Z facilities.
- Launching a leadership development program for student-athletes.
- Enhancing community involvement.

Collagorate With Stakeholders

Get input from coaches, parents, students, and administrators. Use surveys, small-group discussions, or a strategic planning committee to ensure the vision reflects shared priorities.

Develop an Action Plan

Once goals are set, map out how you'll reach them. Assign responsibilities, set timelines, and identify resources needed. For example, if a goal is to increase community sponsorship, your plan might include forming a fundraising committee and developing marketing materials.

Regularly Revisit and Reflect

Your strategic vision isn't static. Schedule annual reviews to measure progress, celebrate wins, and adjust for new challenges. Make these updates visible and communicate progress to your community..

Communicate Often and Everywhere

Your vision should show up in everything from preseason parent meetings to hallway posters to school board presentations. Repetition reinforces direction and builds buy-in.

COACHES CORNER

ALL IN

10 THINGS GREAT COACHES DO BEYOND THE SCOREBOARD

1. KNOW THE PERSON BEFORE THE PLAYER
2. TEACH THE WHY
3. CREATE BELONGING
4. CORRECT WITHOUT EMBARRASSING
5. DEVELOP THE LAST PLAYER TOO
6. TEACH ATHLETES TO REFLECT
7. HOLD STANDARDS CONSISTENTLY
8. NOTICE GROWTH THAT DOESN'T SHOW UP IN STATS
9. PREPARE ATHLETES FOR MORE THAN SPORT
10. REMEMBER THEY'RE SHAPING PEOPLE

THE SCORE TELLS YOU WHO WON THE GAME. IT DOESN'T TELL YOU WHO YOU'RE HELPING THEM BECOME.

COACH THE PERSON THEN THE PLAYER

Athlete-centered coaching starts with seeing the whole person.

Seeing the PERSON creates deeper connection and long-term motivation.

Understand their needs, build trust, guide behaviors, and coach in ways that honor who they are.

Build TRUST with consistent tone, clear expectations, and full attention.

Tune into daily NEEDS like energy, confidence, and emotional readiness.

BEHAVIORS: Use SIMPLE examples like redirecting posture or resetting focus calmly.

LIFT ENERGY without YELLING

You don't need volume to motivate. Use positive tone, encouraging body language, and controlled enthusiasm that helps athletes regain energy.

Positive TONE boosts confidence without adding pressure.

Controlled ENERGY often motivates better than shouting.

Use supportive BODY LANGUAGE that invites athletes to rise.

Highlight VISIBLE effort so athletes feel noticed and valued.

ENERGY: You can say, "I love that effort. Give me that again."

GLAZIER 50 CLINICS YEARS

December 12th & 13th

FREE VIRTUAL COACHES CLINIC

TRACK & FIELD/XC
SOCCER
GOLF
TENNIS
LACROSSE

104 SESSIONS
49 COACHES & EXPERTS

Fundamentals
Techniques
Sport Specific Skills
Situations & Drills
Culture
Program Building
Leadership & More

FEATURED PROGRAMS

Ole Miss · Princeton · Clemson · Baylor · Wake Forest · Louisville · North Texas · Feed the Cats

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TURN MISTAKES INTO MOMENTUM

Mistakes happen. Shift attention forward, normalize errors, give a simple fix, and help athletes use each mistake to build momentum.

Treat errors as NEUTRAL moments athletes can learn from quickly.

Help them RESPOND fast so doubt doesn't build.

Normalize small ERRORS to keep athletes confident and aggressive.

Give a SIMPLE FIX they can apply immediately.

MOMENTUM: Try saying, "That's done. Here's your next play."

2026 FALL CHAMPIONS

2026 Idaho High School Volleyball State Championships

DAIRY WEST RealGood | IHSAA

6A	OWYHEE STORM	
5A	IDAHO FALLS TIGERS	
4A	KIMBERLY BULLDOGS	
3A	AMBROSE ARCHERS	
2A	BUTTE COUNTY PIRATES	
1A	HORSESHOE BEND MUSTANGS	

2026 Idaho High School Football State Championships

DAIRY WEST RealGood | IHSAA

6A	ROCKY MOUNTIAN GRIZZLIES	
5A	BISHOP KELLY KNIGHTS	
4A	HOMEDALE TROJANS	
3A	DECLO HORNETS	
2A	HAGERMAN PIRATES	
1A	KENDRICK TIGERS	

2026 Idaho High School Swimming State Championships

DAIRY WEST RealGood | IHSAA

6A GIRLS	BISHOP KELLY KNIGHTS	
6A BOYS	TIMBERLINE WOLVES	
5A GIRLS	SANDPOINT BULLDOGS	
5A BOYS	SANDPOINT BULLDOGS	

2026 IDAHO HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

DAIRY WEST RealGood

IHSAA

	GIRLS		BOYS
6A	BOISE BRAVE	6A	COEUR D'ALENE VIKINGS
5A	BISHOP KELLY KNIGHTS	5A	SKYLINE GRIZZLIES
4A	SNAKE RIVER PANTHERS	4A	TIMBERLAKE TIGERS
3A	MALAD DRAGONS	3A	NAMPA CHRISTIAN TROJANS
2A	VICTORY CHARTER VIPERS	2A	VICTORY CHARTER VIPERS

2026 STATE VOLLEYBALL SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS

The IHSAA State Sportsmanship Awards are presented to the school in each classification that exhibits the best sportsmanship throughout the State Tournament. Schools are judged on Team, Coach, Administration, Student Section, Cheerleaders, Band, Adult Fans, and Inappropriate Behavior.

GEM STATE OF MIND — Give Everyone Their Moment — Presented by COUNTRY Financial

CONGRATULATIONS to each school and their communities for demonstrating a

GEM STATE of MIND

6A	EAGLE MUSTANGS	5A	LEWISTON BENGALS	4A	FRUITLAND GRIZZLIES
3A	NAMPA CHRISTIAN TROJANS	2A	HAGERMAN PIRATES	1A	HORSESHOE BEND MUSTANGS





NO-DIRECTIONS CHEERING

BEFORE IT'S OVER

Commit to no-directions cheering to help your athlete succeed.

It's disconcerting for athletes to have parents/caregivers yell out instructions.

Athletes may struggle to decipher what to do when they get instructions from the stands *and* from their coaches – especially if they are conflicting. Being mindful of what you are yelling to your athlete can help them better focus on the game and the strategy that the coach employs.

Commit to no-directions cheering to help your athlete succeed. Eliminate verbs in your cheering because you can't give advice without verbs. Instead of: "Pass the ball, Sarah!", try "Great pass, Sarah!". With this shift, you are not giving direction, but instead commenting appreciatively on what you see Sarah doing.

Here are some examples of No-Directions Cheering:

- "Great effort!"
- "Good hustle!"
- "Way to play defense!"
- "Nice hit!"
- "Terrific play!"
- "Way to go!"



No-Directions Cheering is important because your athlete will do better if it's their game. So provide encouragement without direction – or even enjoy the game in silence. The more space you leave them to be the actor – a proactive player rather than a puppet on a string – the better.

NFHS x POSITIVE COACHING ALLIANCE

BEFORE IT'S OVER, THE GAME PLAN IS SIMPLE. MORE THIS. LESS THAT.

Join the movement! Click here or scan the QR code to download our free toolkit.

Making History: Sierra Harlan Breaks New Ground in Idaho Football Officiating

A milestone moment on the gridiron highlights the growing opportunities for women in high school sports officiating.



October 31, 2026, will be remembered as a historic date for Idaho high school football officiating.

During a playoff play-in game in Grangeville, Sierra Harlan of Moscow became, to the best knowledge of former Idaho High School Activities Association Executive Director Ty Jones, the first female official to work an Idaho high school football playoff game.

Harlan, a District II football official, made history as the linesman on a five-person officiating crew. The accomplishment was particularly meaningful for District II, where she is believed to be the first female football official in the district's history.

"I've been involved in football officiating for 48 years, and she is the first female football official to work in our district," said the District II assigning commissioner, who has served in that role for approximately 10 years. "I knew when I assigned Sierra to this game that she was making history in our district. I just wasn't sure how significant that accomplishment might be statewide."

Harlan worked alongside four fellow officials on the October 31 crew: Referee Dan Davenport, Umpire Paul Elston, Back Judge Dylan Canaday and Line Judge Jaymon Udy.

While the playoff assignment marked a significant milestone, Harlan's path into football officiating has a family connection. Her father, Jason Shultz, is also a football official, working in District III, and is believed to have first sparked her interest in the profession.

The father-daughter connection has already produced a memorable moment on the football field.

Last season, Harlan was scheduled to work a game in Troy. She was told that, because of a shortage of officials, she would need to work a three-person crew rather than the usual four-person crew. However, when the fourth official arrived, she discovered it was her dad!

Shultz had contacted the District II assigning commissioner ahead of time, explaining that he would be in town and would welcome the opportunity to work alongside his daughter. The surprise was arranged, with Shultz assigned as the referee, creating what may have been another Idaho first: a father and daughter working together on the same varsity football officiating crew.

From a surprise family moment to a milestone on the state playoff stage, Harlan's story is a reminder that opportunities in high school athletics continue to expand. Her accomplishment represents an important moment for Idaho football officiating and serves as an inspiration to others who may see a place for themselves in the officiating profession.

Congratulations to Sierra Harlan on making Idaho high school sports history!

2026 IDAHO HIGH SCHOOL Drama STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

DAIRY WEST RealGood

IDAHO HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION IHSAA

December 4–5

MOUNTAIN VIEW HIGH SCHOOL

MAKE THE RIGHT CALL

BECOME A HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS OFFICIAL.



WE WANT YOU

Yes, you. We want you to join our group of talented, qualified, hard-working high school sports officials.

Why? Because high school sports are great, and we think that you can make them even better.

Officials play an important role in both the development of student-athletes and the communities in which they compete. Officials are role models, examples of excellence and what it means to be cool under pressure. Officials make tough decisions look easy, and they do it with fairness, integrity and a measured attitude.

AND HERE'S WHY

Day in and day out, officials enjoy a front-row seat to the sports they love. They don't just watch from the sidelines, they get in the game, keeping pace with every minute of the action, every step, swing and stride of the way. And they get paid to do it, too.

WHY SHOULD YOU BECOME AN OFFICIAL?

- Be a role model for the student-athletes
- Make a difference in your community
- Stay close to the sport(s) you love
- Earn extra money
- Work when you want to
- Stay physically active
- Join a community like no other
- Forge lifelong friendships

GET IN THE GAME.

Go to HighSchoolOfficials.com and sign up today!

THE PATH TO BECOMING A LICENSED HIGH SCHOOL OFFICIAL.

- **Step 1: Complete the interest form at HighSchoolOfficials.com.** After submitting your information, you should receive an automated email providing additional information specific to your state.
- **Step 2: Connect with the individual(s) who will train you to become an official.** You should be contacted by someone in your local area within 10-14 business days of submitting your information. This person will explain how and where you can register to become an official, where local training will take place, where to purchase uniforms and anything else you need to get started.
- **Step 3: Get registered/licensed to officiate.** Now it's time to register either with your state or local officials' association. Officials' associations charge registration fees, which can cover a variety of items, such as rulebooks, testing, officials' insurance, background checks and other educational items. These fees vary by governing body.
- **Step 4: Enjoy the journey!** After you have registered/licensed with your state or local association and have met their respective requirements for officiating, you can start to officiate games!

NFHS

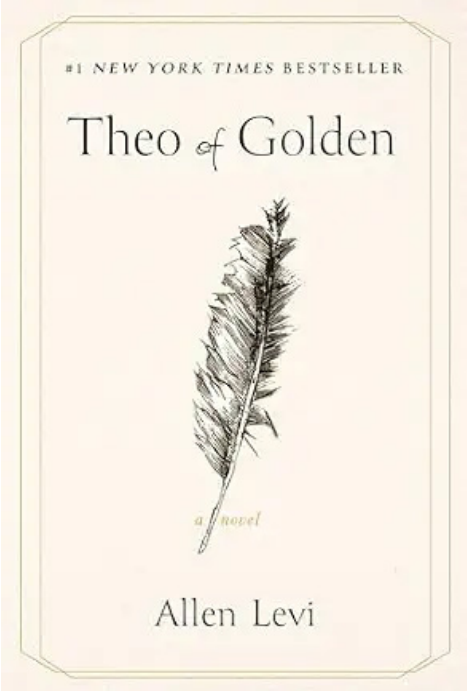
#BecomeAnOfficial

@NFHS1920 @NFHS_ORG @NFHS_ORG



Favorite Leadership Book of the Month

by the IHSAA Staff



Theo of Golden

by Allen Levi

One spring morning, a stranger named Theo arrives in the small Southern city of Golden. He doesn't explain much about where he came from or why he's there but when he visits the local coffeehouse, where pencil portraits of the people of Golden hang on the walls, he begins purchasing them, one at a time, and giving each portrait to the person depicted. In exchange, he asks only for the person's story. And so portrait by portrait, person by person, secrets are revealed, regrets are shared, and ordinary lives are profoundly altered.

A story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen, Theo of Golden is an unforgettable novel about the power of generosity, the importance of connection, and the quiet miracles that happen when we choose kindness and wonder.

Mike's favorite inscription from the book:

"Read, reflect, and remember that your choices matter. One gesture can ripple far beyond what you see."

Presence is a gift that costs nothing but matters deeply

