



- * *OP-ED - Keeping Education First in HS Sports*
- * *IAAA STATE CONFERENCE - Register TODAY*
- * *EDUCATING PARENTS - Enjoy the High School Experience*
- * *IHSAA STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL - Apply NOW*
- * *GIRLS BASKETBALL SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS*
- * *RULE 12 - Participation at Special Events*
- * *WINTER STATE/ACADEMIC CHAMPIONS CHAMPIONS*
- * *COACHES PAGE - 5 Rules for Clear Communication*
- * *UNITED SOUND - Start a Unified Music Program Today*
- * *NFHS LEARN - Engaging Effectively with Parents*
- * *LEADERSHIP VIDEO - Know Your Why, Michael Jr.*
- * *NATIONAL WOMEN IN COACHING DAY - March 7th*

March
2026 ISSUE

unbottled.

IHSAA EXPRESS

Supporting Education Through Activities



Growing Is the Purpose: Keeping Education First in High School Sports

By Dr. Karissa Niehoff, Chief Executive Officer of the NFHS, and Chad Williams, Executive Director of the Idaho High School Activities Association (IHSAA)



High school sports are experiencing record participation.
It is also experiencing unprecedented pressure.

Across the country, young athletes are training earlier, competing year-round and navigating expectations shaped by a rapidly expanding youth sports economy. For many families, athletics now feel like increasingly high stakes.

High school sports operate differently by design. They exist within schools, alongside classrooms, guided by the same educational mission. Participation is structured to support academic success and to teach intangibles like discipline, teamwork, resilience and responsibility. Rules around eligibility, seasons and competition are not barriers to ambition; they are safeguards for students.

As expectations around winning and advancement continue to rise, we at the IHSAA believe it is worth reaffirming the role that high school athletics play in education and why that purpose matters.

Every high school athlete is a student first, and we see high school sports as a vital extension of the classroom. In “the last class of the day,” student-athletes develop character and integrity and learn life lessons they will carry with them long after their playing days are over.

Today’s high school student-athletes will be tomorrow’s leaders. So, while the goal of playing high school sports is to win, the true purpose is much greater for students to learn and grow as people.

How? By keeping high school sports educational, competitively balanced and accessible for all students. Why? To ensure high school sports develop the whole person, not just the athlete.

Last summer, the New York Times published an article stating youth sports is now a \$40 billion industry. Private lessons, club sports, travel teams and elite competitions are costly and wildly popular.

For many student-athletes, their sports experience is focused on becoming an elite athlete and landing a college scholarship.

But according to the NCAA, of the 8.2 million high school student-athletes in the U.S. (an all-time record), only 7% go on to play in college, and only 2% earn any type of scholarship.

Further, data from College Board’s “Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2025” report shows that **the total published cost of attendance (tuition, fees, room and board) at four-year colleges now averages roughly \$31,000 per year in-state and more than \$50,000 per year out-of-state** underscoring why families feel intense pressure to secure athletic scholarships.

That’s why the purpose of high school sports must be so much more than winning, earning trophies or advancing to the next level.

Only a select few go on to play in college and even fewer get scholarships. But nearly all student-athletes benefit from participating in high school sports. They experience personal growth. They learn leadership skills. They build community and more. When athletics are education-based, students’ long-term development and well-being remain the top priority above all else.

With the guiding principle of students first, the NFHS and state high school associations like the IHSAA are committed to preserving the integrity, opportunity and educational alignment of high school sports for all student-athletes.

The purpose of high school sports—helping students learn and grow as people—is what we are here to protect and preserve for generations to come. And it is our honor to do so.

PRIORITIZING THE

EDUCATION

IN EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES



ADMINISTRATORS

“In The Know”

FROM THE IHSAA

- + Winter Concussion Survey due April 1
- + Verify all spring coaches are certified
- + Verify ALL Team Scores in MaxPreps (Avoid \$1500.00 fine)
- + REGISTER for IAAA State Conference

DATES TO REMEMBER

3/2	3A/4A Golf Start Date
3/5-7	Boys Real Dairy Shootout
3/11	1st Spring Sports Competition
3/13-14	State Debate
4/1	Winter Sports Concussion Survey Due

MARCH AD CHECKLIST

- ___ Add spring team rosters and pictures to your MaxPreps account
- ___ Send sportsmanship information to parents
- ___ Prepare spring facilities (scoreboards, fields, equipment)
- ___ Sign contracts for 2026-27 sports seasons
- ___ Turn in concussion survey for winter sports
- ___ Verify Spring Sports Eligibility
- ___ Verify spring coaches requirements
- ___ Nominate a student for the IHSAA Student Advisory Council
- ___ Nominate a student for the Interscholastic Star Scholarship
- ___ Put together a Unified Track Team from your school

IHSAA Rule of the Month

Rule 12 - Participation in Special Events

- 12-1** Exceptional student-athletes may participate in a maximum of three* special events where participation is by invite-only, earned by the athlete, or will create future participation opportunities without loss of eligibility provided:
- 12-1-1** Approval is obtained from the school principal and the IHSAA at least 30 days prior to the event.
- 12-1-2** The student has made prior arrangement to complete all missed academic obligations before the end of the grading period in which the absence will occur.
- 12-1-3** The student will miss no school-sponsored or association-sponsored event in that sport without permission of the IHSAA.

***Note:** The third event request within the same season will be approved or denied based on the level of the event which must be a national-level event or equivalent.



2026 IAAA CONFERENCE

April 12-14
Riverside Hotel
Boise, Idaho

REGISTRATION
FEE DEADLINE MARCH 27TH
[CLICK HERE](#)

2026 IAAA HALL OF FAME RECIPIENTS



Tim Cronnelly



Ted Reynolds



LEARNING
CENTER
NFHSLearn.com

ENGAGING EFFECTIVELY WITH PARENTS



Engaging Effectively with Parents, provides a unique student-centered curriculum and presents essential techniques and methods for coaches to effectively communicate and interact with students, parents and guardians.

This course features specific guidance for speaking, listening, and implementing a communication system, and provides strategies for dealing with problematic parents and guardians. The course provides many printable resources coaches can use in their programs.

[Start Learning](#)
Click here

The world seems to be accustomed to delaying gratification less and less, which means the rewards of delaying gratification grow more and more.



5 Rules For Clear Communication

Be Concise

Say only what is necessary.
Long explanations lose players.

Be Actionable

Ensure players can carry out what you are instructing.

One Message

Players can't act on 5 messages at once. Once message at a time.

Consistency

Use the same terms every time.
Build a shared language.

Check Understanding

Don't assume the players get it.
Watch, ask, confirm.



COACH I Do Make a Difference

I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the athletic arena.

It is my personal approach that determines the coaching style of my staff.

It is my daily mood that creates the culture within my program.

As a coach, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous.

I can be a tool for torture or an instrument of inspiration.

I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.

In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a mistake or crisis is magnified or mitigated.

And in turn, a child's athletic experience is rewarding and enjoyable or abusive and intolerable.

"I Do Make a Difference" – "I am their coach"

Adapted from Haim Ginott Teaching Philosophy.
Re-written by Ted D'Alessio, Retired AD, Millburn HS
Former Chair of the NIAAA Coaches Education Committee.

Sentences that will Maximize your Coaching Intelligence

To discover blindspots, build an inner circle that will give you honest feedback.

Avoid complaining or gossiping (nobody likes to hear it).



Educating Parents on Enjoying the High School Experience - 7 good lessons

BY - Greg Berge

- 1. Cheer for ALL players on the TEAM:** when your child signs up for a team sport you become a member of the team. In essence you have adopted the other players as your own. Cheer for them all. This is the purpose of team sport. This is the right thing to do.
- 2. Support the Officials Officiating:** It is a very difficult job. We are losing officials left and right. If you cannot not treat the officials kindly, then leave. If we do not have officials, we do not have team sports. Do your part -> Be a Role Model -> Lead by Example.
- 3. Coaching is a very demanding job:** Coaches are getting harder to find as well. It is the coaches job to think of the TEAM first. Your child's individual interests always come second to the team. Speak to the coaches instead of gossip about coaches. Don't be that parent.
- 4. Encourage and Support your Child:** Your child needs you as a support for them. They do not need you to solve their issues. Talked them through the adversity that naturally occurs in team sports. These are wonderful life lessons that will make them a better person.
- 5. Ask Questions instead of Opinions:** Don't act like you know more than the coach. You are not at practice each day. It is very difficult to manage and lead a TEAM. Until you have done it, ask questions -> don't give opinions.
- 6. Be a influence at games:** Parents are tone setters too. Be an influence at all sporting events. Your attitude is contagious to others. Be a positive role model. Lead by example.
- 7. Be a fan of the TEAM:** This is the beauty of team sports. Turn yourself into a fan of the team and know that your child has an important role. Don't obsess about playing time. Let Go. You will enjoy the experience so much more. Think WE > ME.

NWCD

NATIONAL WOMEN COACHES DAY 3.7

#NWCD

7

MARCH
2026

START HERE

CLICK HERE TO LEARN ABOUT ALL
OF THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES,
ASSETS AND CONTENT TO HELP
YOU CELEBRATE #NWCD

QUICK START GUIDE | IN-GAME PA READ
SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING GUIDE | CAPTIONS
PRINTABLE POSTERS | PRESS RELEASE

LOGOS

NWCD
NATIONAL WOMEN
COACHES DAY 3.7
POWERED BY WeCOACH + hudl

VIDEO BOARD
ELEMENTS



SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

HOW TO PARTICIPATE | OPEN MIC
SAVE THE DATE | TITLE IX



MAKE SURE TO TAG @WeCOACHSPORTS ON ALL OF YOUR
SOCIAL CONTENT TO HELP AMPLIFY THE NATIONAL STORY!

Unbottled[®]

PERFORM. REFUEL. RECOVER. REPEAT #UNBOTTLED
[CLICK HERE](#)



WE WANT YOU...



To Be a Part of the Idaho High School Activities Association

IHSAA Student Advisory Council



The SAC is a diverse group of students who participate in interscholastic athletics/activities and are focused on providing education and leadership through open and honest communication with IHSAA member schools.

This committee serves as a liaison between students, administrators and the IHSAA Staff and Board of Directors. The Student Advisory Council promotes the ideals of the IHSAA including leadership, sportsmanship and integrity.

Students nominated for the IHSAA Student Advisory Council must:

- **Display strong character and commitment to sportsmanship and integrity**
- **Demonstrate leadership in their school**
- **Be involved in at least two IHSAA sponsored activities/ sports**
- **Demonstrate a commitment to representing the interest of all students participating in interscholastic activities.**

The 2026-27 SAC will consist of multiple students from each activity district. Any IHSAA member school administrator can nominate a current Sophomore (2028 graduate)

Two students will be chosen for an all-expense paid trip to attend the National Student Leadership Summit in Indianapolis, Indiana during the summer of 2026

Applications are Due May 1st



IHSAA x Athletes Go Live

New Partnership to Support Your Baseball & Softball Teams This Season

The Idaho High School Activities Association is pleased to announce a new partnership with AthletesGoLive (AGL) to provide all IHSAA programs with improved tools for scoring, streaming, and supporting athletes throughout the season.

This collaboration is designed to make game-day operations easier while giving coaches, athletes, and families a unified experience.

What This Partnership Provides to IHSAA Schools

For Coaches

- Complimentary access to AGL's digital scoring tools
- Full season stats to help with lineup decisions, player development, and post-season preparation for fans
- Three free ways to watch every game live
- A reliable viewing experience for those who can't make it in person

For Student-Athletes

- Easy video-tagging and highlight sharing
- A simple way for athletes to showcase their best moments and stay engaged throughout the season

How to Get Started

Visit www.athletesgolive.com/download to download the app and create your account.

If you need assistance getting started, visit our Training Academy resource page.

To learn more about how AGL can make your high school season simpler, visit www.athletesgolive.com/schools.

IHSAA is excited to bring these enhanced resources to every school across the state.



Getting Started:

Step 1: Download the App

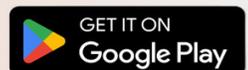
Step 2: Create Your Team

Step 3: Visit the AGL Training Academy



Official Scoring App Partner

Download AthletesGoLive on the
App Store or Google Play



**BE LOUD.
MAKE US PROUD.**



2026 Winter State Champions



unbottled.



State Champions

- 6A Eagle HS
- 5A Pocatello HS
- 4A Bear Lake HS
- 3A Malad HS
- 2A Lapwai HS
- 1A Deary HS



unbottled.



Dance Champions

- 6A Eagle HS
- 5A Shelley HS
- 4A Declo HS

Cheer Champions

- 6A Highland HS
- 5A Blackfoot HS
- 4A American Falls HS
- 3A Nampa Christian HS



unbottled.



State Champions

- Girls Eagle HS
- 6A Meridian HS
- 5A Minico HS
- 4A Snake River HS
- 3A Malad HS



Be the future. Stay
vape, chew, and
smoke free.

Visit
ProjectFilter.org
to learn more.



MY LIFE
MY QUIT™

“

Remember, being happy
doesn't mean you have it
all. It simply means you're
thankful for all you have.

”

@UpskillYourLife

“

The Key To Life:
Show Up.

”

@UpskillYourLife

“

There is so much power in
believing that everything
will workout.

”

@UpskillYourLife

“

The only worthwhile
comparison is YOU
yesterday vs YOU today. If
you want to be happy, you
have to focus on that.

”

@UpskillYourLife



REBEL
ATHLETIC

Webinar

YOU'RE INVITED

MARCH 31ST

6PM MST

Learn about the Rebel Challenge, our partnership
with IHSAA, and why Rebel is the
best option for all coaches.

REBEL LEVEL® BENEFITS

- › LETTERING ALWAYS INCLUDED
- › FREE NO STRINGS ATTACHED PROTOTYPES
- › REAL FASHION DESIGNERS
- › UNMATCHED CUSTOMER SERVICE
- + SO MUCH MORE!

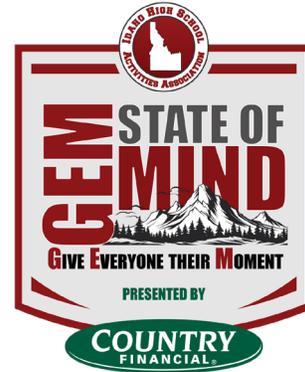


**FREE
REBEL
DREAM
BAG**

FOR ATTENDING
OUR WEBINAR.
(\$113 RETAIL VALUE)



2026 GIRLS STATE BASKETBALL SPORTSMANSHIP WINNERS



CONGRATULATIONS
2025-2026
Winter Academic Champions

Academic State Champions are awarded to the team of each classification with the highest team cumulative GPA in all IHSAA sports and activities.

GIRLS WRESTLING

All Classifications Malad 3.758

BOYS WRESTLING

6A	Highland	3.632
5A	Sandpoint	3.546
4A	American Falls	3.454
3A	Malad	3.617

DANCE

6A	Mountain View	3.911
5A	Jerome	3.855
4A	West Side	3.820

CHEER

6A	Highland	3.772
5A	Blackfoot	3.847
4A	Bear Lake	3.737
3A	West Jefferson	3.762

GIRLS BASKETBALL

6A	Owyhee	3.871
5A	Preston	3.986
4A	Sugar-Salem	3.899
3A	Soda Springs	3.908
2A	Riverstone	3.960
1A	Rockland	3.874

BOYS BASKETBALL

6A	Canyon Ridge	3.750
5A	Minico	3.758
4A	Filer	3.833
3A	Declo	3.747
2A	Riverstone	3.754
1A	Rockland	3.811



6A **Madison Bobcats**



5A **Columbia Wildcats**



4A **Weiser Wolverines**



3A **Malad Dragons**



2A **Oakley Hornets**



1A **Salmon River Savages**

THE IDHSAA PRESENTS

BATTLE OF THE FANS

DUE: MARCH 12, 2026

HOW TO BATTLE:

- Create a 90 second (max) video
- Introduce your school
- Show why your school should be selected
- May include tik toks/lip syncs

JUDGING CRITERIA:

- Sportsmanship
- School Spirit
- Activity diversity
- Originality
- Student participation

POST TO YOUTUBE & EMAIL:
federicom@idhsaa.org

Know Your Why
Michael Jr.

Great lesson to share!

The reason you _____
is to help find “the why”!

**1.**
Leadership is not being in charge

Being in charge relies on authority and position.
Leadership is different because it is about influence, not control.
People can obey authority without truly believing in the person giving the orders.

2.
Leadership means taking care of people

A leader’s role is to look after people they lead.
This means supporting their growth, protecting their interests, and helping them succeed, not just extracting results.

3.
Responsibility defines leadership, not rank

You do not need a title to be a leader.
Leadership starts when you take responsibility for the wellbeing and success of others, regardless of formal power.

4.
Compliance is not loyalty

People may follow instructions because they have to, but that does not mean they care or trust the leader.
Loyalty only exists when people choose to follow, not when they are forced.

5.
Trust creates voluntary followership

The strongest leaders inspire people to follow them willingly.
When trust exists, people will stay, commit, and even leave secure positions to continue working with that leader.

6.
Service is the core of leadership

Leadership works best when it is an act of service.
When leaders prioritize others over ego or status, they create environments where people thrive.

7.
Loyalty is earned through care

When people feel a leader genuinely has their back and wants them to succeed, they respond with loyalty, commitment, and belief.
That bond cannot be demanded, only earned.

I hope you give yourself credit for trying, persisting, and showing up even when things didn’t go as planned.

I hope that as you continue to learn, grow, and heal, you also continue to find deeper levels of self-acceptance and self-understanding.

I hope you keep the lessons learned, but leave the guilt and shame behind.

I hope you give yourself the grace that you deserve.

– Mitchell C. Clark, *Eyes On The Road*



**OUR MISSION:
REMOVE BARRIERS
AND FOSTER SOCIAL
CHANGE THROUGH MUSIC**

UNITED SOUND

relationships that resonate



HOW

United Sound is intended to be a very simple process. Structure (how to run the chapter, parameters, permission slips, registrations, etc.) is set forth by the organization in an effort to decrease the time commitment required of participating teachers. We understand that a clear and simple process is a sustainable commitment. Teachers receive ongoing training from United Sound throughout the process. Special education teachers have the responsibility to teach the mentors how to be effective. Music teachers guide the musical process. Students receive training in a variety of ways. Online training videos give

mentors the opportunity to watch successful peer mentors in action. Professionals guide them through the process, pointing out what to look for, and encouraging creativity in their own teaching. Special education teachers host a training session prior to the start of United Sound, explaining the individualities of the New Musicians. These teachers are hands on during rehearsals as well, moving from group to group, and offering real-time advice. Two student chapter presidents are chosen from each school to represent the chapter in monthly online training/leadership sessions. These opportunities to connect with peers and share ideas are meaningful learning environments. Presidents then take ideas and goals back to their own schools for implementation.

CONTINUOUS, MEANINGFUL TRAINING FOR BOTH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The United Sound curriculum was created with research-based principles in mind. Using colors and foods, the abstract concepts of music (rhythm and pitch) are transformed into concrete steps.



TRAINING

Our student training module breaks teaching into three categories:

COMMUNICATE



Effective, patient, and sometimes creative communication strategies are employed by Peer Mentors.

MODIFY



Mentors begin by using appropriate modifications they have learned through training and then create their own paths for individual success.

EMPOWER



Meaningful participation, accountability, authentic teaching, and genuine celebration of success empowers everyone involved in the process.

Mission

United Sound, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to remove barriers and foster social change through music. One of our goals is to support individual music educators in creating their own United Sound ensembles through training, curriculum, support, and organizational resources so that all children have access to meaningful and authentic music education and musical experiences.

**OUR VISION:
10 STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES INVOLVED IN
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AT
EVERY SCHOOL IN AMERICA.**

What We Do

Partnering with existing music programs on school campuses around the country, United Sound is a peer mentoring program that pairs students with and without disabilities in the band and orchestra setting. Music teachers and their students utilize United Sound's specialized curriculum, training, and structure to create band and orchestra chapters. New Musicians (students with intellectual or developmental disabilities) are taught by Peer Mentors to play the instrument of their choice at a personally modified level. United Sound students then join the full band or orchestra to perform in concert, twice per year, with their peers.

WHO



Each United Sound Chapter is run by a music teacher and a special education teacher, working together. Peer Mentors and New Musicians are chosen from the on-campus population, creating a system that exists entirely "in house" as New Musicians become part of the existing school band or orchestra.

WHEN

Most United Sound Chapters meet once per week, usually outside of the regular school day. Our goal is to create an experience that adds value to the existing music program.



WHERE



There are United Sound chapters at High Schools (public and private), Middle Schools, Colleges, Universities, and in Community Ensembles! Wherever music is being made, we establish peer to peer, like age, relationships.

WHY

Through our own experiences, we know that the joy of learning in and performing with an ensemble can be life-changing. We believe that everyone, especially in the school setting, should have this opportunity. The opportunity for peer mentors to teach and serve is life-changing as well!



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Who Can Join?

- New Musicians: Students with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD)
 - Students will have the opportunity to experience and perform music on an instrument of choice with musical adaptations and accommodations
- Peer Musicians: Typical students who are enrolled at the participating middle school, high school, college/university, or community ensemble and are members of the participating Band or Orchestra program



Benefits:

- New Musicians
 - Authentic learning, music making and performance opportunities
 - Ability to find their "niche", new friend-set opportunities, and social connectedness
 - Important avenue for exploration and expression
- Peer Mentors
 - Service opportunities develop an increased sense of social responsibility
 - Ability to apply academic learning to real human needs
 - Exposure to diversity
 - Build relationships

Details:

- Peer Mentor/New Musician ratio is 2-3/1.
- Weekly rehearsals
- 1 performance per semester (New Musicians, Peer Mentors, and Support Ensemble)

ULTIMATE GOAL:
We are creating a community of people who understand one another. Participation in United Sound will have the life-long effect of creating a huge body of people who will work better together and protect each other from discrimination and harm. Consider the impact as they grow up and become better, more compassionate adults. This, above all else is the importance of our work.

JOIN US!

- www.unitedsound.org
(sign up to receive newsletters on our website!)
- www.facebook.com/unitedsoundmusic
- instagram.com/united_sound/
- info@unitedsound.org