



NCHSAA TO ADD PROGRAM TO ITS SPORTSMANSHIP INITIATIVES

CHAPEL HILL – Charlie Adams, executive director of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, announced today an effort to improve sportsmanship by utilizing an online sportsmanship education program that includes an emphasis on anti-bullying and the hazards of performance-enhancing substances.

Starting with the 2008-09 academic year, every student and coach in the state of North Carolina will have access to the *STAR Sportsmanship*[™] program. North Carolina will be one of nine states using STAR on a statewide level next year. There are 381 member schools in the NCHSAA for the coming year, involving about 150,000 student-athletes and 6,000 coaches.

“Across the nation and even right here in North Carolina, we’ve seen an increase in certain incidents of poor sportsmanship. Even though the vast majority of our athletes and coaches are good sports, we have seen some incidents among players and fans that do cross the line,” said Adams. “We have been working hard on this area for some time.”

The NCHSAA has promoted a number of sportsmanship initiatives in the past several years. The Association was one of the first to have an ejection policy that included a team component, so that if a team accrued a certain number of ejections for unsportsmanlike behavior, including fighting, it would be disqualified from postseason competition. In addition, the NCHSAA has developed an awards program, recognizing schools for being ejection-free and providing other sportsmanship awards.

We believe the addition of the *STAR Sportsmanship* program to our set of initiatives will be very valuable,” said Adams, “providing an important educational component to our efforts.”

STAR Sportsmanship is an interactive, role-playing program designed to help student-athletes, coaches and parents make good decisions on and off the playing field. It also educates participants about the dangers of steroid abuse. STAR is being utilized across the country, and school districts and even entire states are seeing reductions in ejections as a result. STAR includes specialized programs that are designed for elementary, middle, and high school students; coaches, parents and officials; and a remediation program for players with ejections or infractions.

STAR Sportsmanship has won numerous national education awards, including the 2007 Best Educational Software Award (BESSIE) and the 2006 Educational Software Review Award (EDDIE) as the best social skills website for middle and high school students. It has also been named as a finalist for the prestigious CODIE Award.

A pre-test and post-test will assess the program's impact on student attitudes and behaviors regarding sportsmanship. Participating schools will also track unsportsmanlike incidents, such as ejections, to help determine the impact of the pilot program. The "STAR Coaching" version includes parent training for pre-season orientation meetings. *STAR Sportsmanship* is published by Learning Through Sports (LTS), an online publisher of interactive educational programs featuring engaging sports activities.

For more information on LTS, call (866)552-9192 or visit www.learningthroughsports.com.
For more information on the NCHSAA, visit www.nchsaa.org

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