Remember 9/11

The 20-year anniversary of the 9/11 attacks takes place soon. If you are planning to remember 9/11 at a game or event that you will be announcing, here are two announcements for you to consider.

Announcement #1—I know that for all of us here today – and for all Americans – September 11, 2001 forever changed our world.

Just the phrase “nine-eleven” evokes a special meaning, a memory of a moment in our history when the world as we knew it was changed forever.

It is fitting that every year on September 11th, Americans join together to honor the memory of the more than three thousand people who died that day.

We remember our sons and daughters; grandsons and granddaughters; husbands and wives; co-workers and friends – who were doing nothing out of the ordinary for a typical Tuesday morning.

September 11 has indelibly shaped who we are and how we live our daily lives.

The United States of America remains one of the most desirable places on this planet to live; not for our oceans and plains, not for our mountains and rivers, not for our material possessions. But for our freedom.

In the days after September 11, we were left to console the inconsolable.

In the weeks after September 11, we tried to explain the unexplainable.

In the months after September 11, we tried to make sense out of the senseless.

And even today, 20 years after September 11, 2001, we strive to find hope in the moments of hopelessness that still haunt us.

No words, no ceremony, no plaques or stones – no amount of tears – will ever replace our losses.

But our American spirit is defined by our ability to move forward in the aftermath of overwhelming loss, even when it seems easier to quit.

And it is fitting that on this, the 20th Anniversary, we observe a moment of silence as a tribute to those lives cut short, and as a symbol of the empty places left behind in the hearts of those still living.

PAUSE ... Thank you, and God Bless America.

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Please remain standing and join us as we honor America with the playing of our National Anthem.

Announcement #2—We now take a moment to remember, 20 years ago, the tragic events of September 11th, 2001, that took place in New York City, Washington D.C. and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Those who lost their lives, and the heroes who put their lives on the line in an effort to save others, should never be forgotten as the years pass. If you are able, please rise and join us in a moment of silence to remember all those lost on that day 20 years ago today. Thank you.

Ron Mazzola announces wrestling for Old Bridge High School ( Matawan, NJ) and Spotswood High School (Spotswood, NJ). He has been announcing for 30 years.

Tom Winiecki, CPAA, has been behind the mic for 40 years, announcing football, boys’ and girls’ soccer, field hockey, boys’ and girls’ basketball baseball, boys’ and girls’ lacrosse, and wrestling at Fayetteville-Manlius High School (Manlius, NY). At the college level, he announces men’s and women’s lacrosse and field hockey at Syracuse University and men’s and women’s basketball at Colgate University.

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Poor Sportsmanship, Pandemic Contributing to Shortage of Officials

By Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff, NFHS Executive Director
Indianapolis, IN

As high schools begin a third school year of sports and other activities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, a familiar issue continues to challenge administrators nationwide: finding enough individuals to officiate all scheduled contests.

In some states, Friday Night Lights have become Thursday or Saturday Night Lights as teams consider playing on alternate dates to accommodate the lack of individuals to officiate games.

The shortage of officials in high school – and middle school – sports has been a growing concern for several years – in large part due to unsportsmanlike behavior by parents and other adult fans. Now, additional sports officials are electing to stay on the sidelines because of health concerns related to COVID-19, or they are uncomfortable wearing a mask during games.

The challenge for schools and state associations remains two-fold: how to recruit more individuals to become officials, and how to retain those people currently serving as officials. Short of unexpected events like the coronavirus, if a new official remains active after the first three to five years, the outlook for a long-term career is pretty good.

Hoping to make an impact nationally on the officiating shortage and the sportsmanship issues at hand is Dana Pappas, who joined the NFHS staff last month as the new Director of Officiating Services. Pappas joins the NFHS staff after 24 years with the New Mexico Activities Association, including the past 17 years as commissioner of officials.

Although there was a hope that the post-pandemic behavior of parents and other fans would be improved, Pappas said the jury is definitely still out as sportsmanship issues have continued to exist.

“From some of the early reports, there are still acts of bad sportsmanship occurring,” Pappas said. “There are still people who are going after sports officials after games, during games, and it continues to be an adult problem. I don’t think too many of the issues we see are really the kids. It’s generally the spectators, although it can be coaches at times when their behavior incites the crowd.

“I think the sportsmanship issue is something that continues to keep individuals from officiating, or we lose them because of poor sportsmanship.”

Pappas noted that in addition to losing officials due to the COVID-19 concerns and poor sportsmanship, others may have changed jobs during the pandemic, and with some games being moved earlier in the day, they are unable to get free from their jobs to handle officiating assignments.

While the loss of officials because of the pandemic is understandable and uncontrollable, losing individuals from the officiating ranks due to the boorish behavior of parents and other adults is unacceptable.

The Kansas State High School Activities Association has implemented a new ejection policy. Any participant (player, coach, spectator) who is ejected for making contact with an official or who is ejected for unsporting behavior directed toward an official shall be subject to a non-appealable suspension from the next contest at that level and for all contests at any level until the suspension has been served.

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Poor Sportsmanship, continued from page 3

Pappas said there are states, like Kansas, that have made this statement: “If you act in an inappropriate manner, you will have to pay.” While these programs are necessary, she also believes proactive plans should be in place as well.

“Doing preseason meetings with coaches and parents is important, but I think having officials go and address parents and talk to them about rules changes is important. It would be great for officials to go and talk to parents and kids so that they understand that they are not just the bad guys in the striped shirts, that they are someone who wants to be a part of the educational process, who’s giving back and there really to help and educate.

“There needs to be shift in those expectations and remind parents of what it was like when their kids didn’t have an opportunity to play. Everyone agrees that was not good for anyone last year. And if you continue to abuse officials, we are going to be exactly where we were because there won’t be any way to adjudicate these games.”

The NFHS has been actively recruiting officials for four years through its #BecomeAnOfficial campaign. More than 50,000 individuals have expressed an interest in officiating through this national effort at www.highschoolofficials.com.

Most recently, the NFHS has been targeting high school coaches to consider officiating another sport in their off-season after previous campaigns directed to other groups. Assisting state associations and schools in recruiting more officials is also on Pappas’s To-Do list.

“Kids coming out of high school think they have two options – to play sports or to coach sports. They forget about the people who are officiating their games! So, how do we make officiating something that is at the forefront of their minds? When they are leaving high school or leaving college, they need to understand that there is an entire career path they could follow in the world of high school officiating.”

As fall high school sports swing into full action this month, let’s respect the men and women who are giving of their free time so that once-in-a-lifetime opportunities of high school activities can continue for our nation’s youth.

Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff is beginning her fourth year as executive director of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) in Indianapolis, Indiana. She is the first female to head the national leadership organization for high school athletics and performing arts activities, and the sixth full-time executive director of the NFHS. She previously was executive director of the Connecticut Association of Schools-Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference for seven years.

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P.A. ANNOUNCERS: THE VOICES OF SCHOOL SPORTS

Key members of every school’s athletic event staffs are its P.A. Announcers. Now Athletic Administrators can show these individuals the appreciation they deserve by nominating them for the National P.A. Announcer of the Year Award.

For information and to nominate, go to Awards at www.naspaa.net.

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Replacing a Legend Is an Earned Privilege

Paul Harvey, a radio giant, is immediately associated with “...the rest of the story.” Last month’s newsletter had a story about finding a replacement for long-time Public Address Announcers. The insights of each contributor were good for those among our NASPAA newsletter readership. They echoed our core values as certified P.A. Announcers, and they provided insight to each announcer’s nuances and ingredients for longevity, and for success.

One of the contributors was Ron Henry, Warsaw Community High School’s P.A. Announcer. He is no longer doing football, but will still be heard at Warsaw’s basketball and baseball games. He is 85 years old and has been announcing for 65 years! Now, here’s the rest of the story:

I’m the P.A. Announcer who replaced Mr. Henry beginning Friday, August 20th. It’s not my first time in the press box, though. I announced sub-varsity football action and other varsity and middle school sports for seven previous seasons. I view this move to the Friday Night Lights role as an earned privilege.

Mr. Henry spoke of his core values and announcing style in last month’s contribution. With that said, listening to him on Friday nights was like a class lecture for me followed by my labs for honing my craft during sub-varsity football games.

He walks the walk.

I believe part of the reason for my “bump-up” was approaching each P.A. Announcing role I had among various Warsaw Community High School events as if each individual event, not just each full season, was an audition.

Football is my favorite sport, so my new role is very special to me. However, I shall continue to announce sub-varsity gridiron action. Those games will help me experiment – constructively of course – with things like cadence, for example.

Football P.A. Announcing has its trappings, though. The event’s fans, friends and family are going to hear the P.A. Announcer’s voice an average of 110 times each game. Shouting annoying things over the loudspeaker like, “That’s another (team name) FIRST DOWN!” or “Get up and make some noise!” will quickly irritate the guest team’s followers, whose gate and concession proceeds are an important portion of high school athletics’ operating funds.

Worse yet, the continued “boom-bastic” announcements in a lopsided game in favor of the home team will begin to feel – even for your home fans – like watching the kids in the skeleton suits beat up the Karate Kid.

Unlike the bigness of the NFL and its well-compensated, highly competitive athletes and its rabid fan base, we should remember high school athletics are an extension of the classroom with their on-field lessons learned.

I’ll also be covering most of the varsity football games I announce as a sportswriter for the Warsaw Times-Union, as I have in two previous seasons. It seems our decent-sized town has trouble finding freelance sportswriters, too.

I speculate there were no challengers to my varsity football P.A. audition/meeting with the athletic director. If it’s true, it’s a shame.

However, my experience and professionalism demonstrated in other events witnessed by the athletic director and his staff outside the spotlight events – remembering every event I announce is an audition – was a factor in moving me into the Friday Night Lights role.

Frequently replacing a P.A. Announcer is not something an athletic director wants to be saddled with at the start of each scholastic sports year. When you seek such a role, it’s good to manage your personal expectations. Friday nights from August through November are blocked off from the open dates in your social calendar.

It’s a big commitment. You’re not like a revolving door guest host of (Friday) Night Live.

Not many people want to be “that person” who replaces a beloved long-time boss, coach, teacher, or P.A. Announcer, for that matter. I don’t mind. I’ve been “that person” numerous times in my day job. My goal this season, in fact, is to have fans forget there is a different voice coming over the loudspeaker, and just digest the content I deliver to them.

The main event is on the field.

Chip Davenport, CPAA, announces varsity and middle school football, as well as basketball and girls’ softball for Warsaw Community Schools. He has been announcing for eight years.
Oh No He Didn’t

Just when you think you’ve heard it all, you realize that you haven’t. A member who was attending a high school game shared some details about the announcer of a game that he recently attended. Names have been omitted to protect the innocent…and the guilty. In his own words, here’s what he had to say.

“The announcer, and I kid not, celebrated one of his team’s touchdowns with “Wham, bam, thank you ma’am!” Additionally, he did the now-all-too-familiar open-ended announcement, “Good for a (team)” with the crowd answering “First Down!” But he wasn’t through. To prove his alleged coolness, he immediately followed with, “That’s what I’m talkin’ about.”

The pitifulness quotient was then ratcheted up by repeatedly complimenting home team players, by name and/or number, when they made a good play, such as “Boy, that John Smith is some kind of athlete, isn’t he?”

If you have a story about an experience you had at a game or event that you would like to share, please e-mail Brad Rumble, NASPAA Executive Director, at brumble@naspaa.net.
Play-by-Play Announcing Course Launched by NFHS Learning Center

By Dan Schuster, NFHS Director of Educational Services
Indianapolis, IN

The proliferation of online streaming of high school athletic events has put a new focus on the need for a qualified play-by-play announcer when broadcasting live games. With the release of the new, free online course “Play-by-Play Announcing,” the NFHS Learning Center provides important training to properly announce a live game.

“The NFHS Learning Center is pleased to introduce this first online course and valuable resource specifically for play-by-play announcers,” said Dan Schuster, NFHS director of educational services. “We are committed to assisting members of the interscholastic community and beyond with professional development opportunities to enrich the experience of the young people we serve.”

The best play-by-play announcers use their voice as an instrument. This course instructs users how to use proper tone and inflection when delivering game action to the audience and how to determine the important and relevant information of the contest.

An entire section is devoted to starting a broadcast, including planning the open, setting the scene and introducing the game’s participants.

The course demonstrates how to professionally prepare for a game as a play-by-play announcer, before arriving at the game and just prior to broadcast. It also provides a chapter on developing team chemistry with an analyst or sideline reporter.

For more information and to access “Play-by-Play Announcing,” please visit: nfhslearn.com/courses/play-by-play-announcing.

The Voice Above the Crowd

The Voice Above the Crowd (2nd edition) is the nation’s foremost P.A. announcing manual, and is the only P.A. announcing manual endorsed by the NFHS, NIAAA, NJCAA and NAIA.

About The Voice Above the Crowd
- 376 pages
- Covers 22 sports with scripts for each sport
- Includes officials’ signals charts for several sports
- Comes with 34-minute CD
- Price is $64.95, plus shipping

“P.A. Announcers, as well as athletic administrators serving as leaders of interscholastic programs, will find The Voice Above the Crowd invaluable.”

Dr. Mike Blackburn, CMAA
NIAAA Executive Director

To order, go to www.naspaa.net.
Ten years ago, the NASPAA reported on a service that the University of Oregon was starting. If the school or organization for which you announce is providing such a service, the NASPAA would like to know. Please e-mail Brad Rumble, NASPAA Executive Director at brumble@naspaa.net.

Fans who attended Autzen Stadium for the Oregon Ducks’ first home game of the football season on Saturday likely noticed a new feature on the Duck Vision scoreboard.

The University of Oregon is now captioning athletics events at Autzen Stadium, joining just a handful of other universities around the country. The UO is committed to offering the service at other venues on campus as well.

According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), the number of Americans with a hearing loss has doubled during the past 30 years to more than 28 million. The national increase and urging from the local chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America led UO Athletics staff to make the change at Autzen Stadium.

The in-stadium announcements by Don Essig and game officials, and voiceover of programming during stoppage of play, is displayed as text on Duck Vision to enable all fans to have a more complete experience in a venue known for its loud crowd involvement.

When asked by the NASPAA for his thoughts on captioning, Essig had this to say: “Attention all P.A. colleagues! This may be coming your way soon! I guess we will need to be really sure our microphones are turned off when we aren’t announcing the plays.”

“The addition of captioning at Autzen Stadium will provide a larger portion of the population with a full fan experience,” said Mike Duncan, senior associate athletic director for Facility Operations and Events. “The game-day experience involves audible and visible details that are improved for everyone with text captions, and we’re happy to launch it this football season.”

The service is provided by LNS Captioning, based in Portland. A trained captioner – working remotely – receives an audio feed of what’s being broadcast in the stadium, and types the captions to be displayed on Duck Vision with a minimal time delay. LNS provides captioning service for the Eugene City Council live webcasts, as well as NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB, MLS and other college sports teams in the U.S.

“The Athletics Department in general, and Mike Duncan and his staff in particular, have made captioning of events in major athletic venues a priority, an effort which is trend setting and which we, representing people who are hard of hearing and deaf, heartedly applaud,” said Clark Anderson, vice president, Oregon Communication Access Project (OR-CAP).

Commencement ceremonies in 2010 and 2011 were captioned at the UO. Plans are underway to provide captioning for additional events at the Matthew Knight Arena, PK Park and Hayward Field.

The University of Oregon is among the 108 institutions chosen from 4,633 U.S. universities for top-tier designation of “Very High Research Activity” in the 2010 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. The UO also is one of two Pacific Northwest members of the Association of American Universities.

Don Essig (center) is the voice of the Oregon Ducks.
Active members are entitled to use the NASPAA Member Logo on business cards, letterhead, P.A. Announcing 3-ring binders, notebooks or banners. If you would like to obtain the logo, or are using the logo in ways other than those that are listed or would like to use it on items other than the ones listed, please contact Brad Rumble, NASPAA Executive Director at brumble@naspaa.net. The NASPAA Member Logo is the only NASPAA logo allowed for use by members. Use of the NASPAA logo is prohibited.

Not A MEMBER?

For information about the membership and the NASPAA, go to www.naspaa.net.

“If you are a P.A. announcer or have the responsibility of hiring or assigning P.A. announcers, the NASPAA would like to invite you to become a member. The annual individual membership fee for adults is $30 and $20 for students. Schools may join for $69, which entitles them to six memberships.”

Jeff Kurtz, CPAA
Kent State University P.A. Announcer and NASPAA Board Member

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The following associations and organizations are NASPAA Affiliate Members. NASPAA Affiliate Members share the same core values and similar P.A. Announcing philosophy as the NASPAA. The NASPAA serves as the P.A. Announcing resource for NASPAA Affiliate Members.