

MSHSAA Student News & Views

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Overtraining Injury Leads to Not-So-Perfect Season for Runner

by Halle Musfeldt

Park Hill High School sophomore

Going into a sport, an athlete imagines greatness. We suffer from exhausting practices, and we find the power to push through off-season training. Our dedication and discipline defines us. Our high hopes drive us. The thought of a season-ending injury stays clear from our minds.

I run cross country. I spent my past summer running countless miles as part of my daily routine. In my mind, I was doing everything right. I thought running 40 plus miles a week without rest was what I needed to win. Overtraining seemed impossible at the time. All summer I wondered what my competition was doing. I wanted to beat them; I had the burning desire to win.

The first weeks of the season came to me as a surprise. All summer I imagined myself winning races and becoming all-state, but I never truly thought it could happen. I won my first varsity race at the Blue Springs Invitational. *Big River Running* ranked me No. 5 in the state. Throughout the season I won more races, and I felt like a threat, as if everyone was watching out for me.

As the season progressed, I got sore and suffered from occasional shin splints, but I didn't consider it to be serious. Right before our conference meet, I felt sharp pains in my calves. My stride turned into what teammates called the "pimp run." It felt unnatural and awkward. I ignored what my body was telling me, and I kept on running. I placed second at the Kansas City

Suburban Conference, but I wasn't satisfied. I wanted to be healthy again, and I didn't want running to be painful.

Over the next three weeks, my injuries worsened, and my body broke down. A few days before sectionals, a joint on the top of my foot began to swell and bruise. At sectionals, I ran a disappointing race. At the two-mile marker I was in second, but my body stiffened up, and I ended with an 18th place finish. I was embarrassed, and I hate it when people see me as being weak. I am used to finishing at the top,



After finishing 46th at the MSHSAA Class 4 Cross Country Championships as a freshman, Halle Musfeldt had high expectations for her sophomore season. Overtraining and running through an injured foot caused her to miss the 2007 state meet ending an otherwise dream season. (Columbia Photo).



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and I felt like I disappointed my coaches and teammates.

Even though the sectional race was a downer, I managed to qualify for state. We left for Jefferson City the Friday before the race to preview the course. I struggled through the easy pace my teammate and I set. Every time my foot hit the ground, I felt a pinch as if the laces were too tight. I walked half the course, and I limped throughout the rest of it. The next morning my coach told me she was not going to let me run. I raced all season with aspirations of being an all-state athlete, and now it was ripped away from me. On the day of the race, I watched my teammates and runners from my area compete while I watched.

Now I walk around school with a boot on my injured foot, and I realize my coach made the right the decision. I'm not allowed to start running until January. This season taught me the damages of overtraining. Next season, I'll listen to my body and my coaches. I have survived my season-ending injury, and I know there will be more opportunities for greatness in my future.

Drug Testing for Activities Participants: A Student's Perspective

by Sara Smelser

New Madrid County Central High School
junior

Have you every wondered if drug testing is a good idea for your school district? At New Madrid County Central, drug testing for all students participating in interscholastic activities is required.

One mandatory test is conducted at the start of the sports season, or prior to an event such as a band or choir competition. A random test is also conducted mid-season. The drug testing company chooses a large portion of the students participating in the drug testing using a lottery-style selection procedure.

The Reasons

The purposes for drug testing are: to send a clear message that the district is committed to eliminating student chemical abuse and helping students experiencing chemical abuse problems; to work cooperatively with the parents by assisting them in keeping their children free from chemical abuse; to deter chemical abuse or misuse by all students; to establish standards of conduct for the district's students; to identify students who are misusing drugs so that intervention plans can be implemented by home and school; to establish a safe environment for student-athletes and competitors during competition; to provide a vehicle for parents to become aware of chemical abuse problems involving their children so that corrective action may be taken; and to provide referrals for students who need evaluation and counseling.

The district's purpose and intent of the chemical abuse policy is not to identify the students for punishment under the district's discipline code.

The Rules

Any student wishing to perform in the district's interscholastic activities and his or her parents must sign a form indicating their attendance at the mandatory education session and agree to participate in the testing program. At the mandatory education session, each student and parent (or guardian) receives information on the problems due to drug use and are advised of the requirement that all

Student Advisory Rep Speaks Out for Small Schools by Britton Wilson

North Pemiscot High School sophomore

To have a student from a school as small as mine serve as a representative on the MSHSAA Student Advisory Council may appear a wasted seat to some, but I submit that it is not. An athlete is an athlete, regardless of the size of the school, the size of the team, or the size of the opponent.

What matters most is the spirit of competition that unites the hearts of all athletes, if not necessarily all team members, regardless of all else. My school district has a combined K-12 enrollment of approximately 345 students. I am a 15-year-old sophomore, but because of our limited population (and therefore extremely limited athletic talent pool), I hold a starting position on our varsity basketball team.

In a recent invitational tournament, our first-round opposition was a Class 4 school. We took six players to the tournament, and they dressed 19 players. We lost, unsurprisingly. Still, I am an athlete and a team player, and there are others just like me who need a voice. MSHSAA gives us that voice. And that is what matters.

In fact, I propose that some of us from exceptionally-small schools have as much desire and inner motivation to play as athletes from the schools that receive the most attention and media coverage.

For example, who among us doesn't know the concept of performing a required task because of a fear of what will happen if we fail to execute? We take out the trash because we don't want to be grounded. Many players,

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participants are subject to both mandatory and random drug tests. Each student also receives information regarding the method of testing to be used in the program.

A Student's Point of View

Throughout the school day, the first initial and last name of students who are to be tested are called over the intercom to report to the lobby. Upon arrival at the site of testing, you enter the restrooms where you are greeted by the tester.

The tester asks the student to fill out a form that includes his or her first and middle initial, last name, and the last four digits of his or her social security number. After completing the form, the student empties his or her pockets, sanitizes his or her hands and empties the testing package onto the table.

The student then enters the bathroom stall -- which is taped off to retain a controlled environment -- where the student provides a urine sample. There is a blue sanitizing dye in the toilet which prevents any other student from mixing his or her urine with yours. Finally, the student returns to the tester where he or she opens

another testing package with test strips. Within a few moments the tester has the student's results. The student then empties out the urine, disposes the cup, and returns to class.

Students Testing Positive

If a student tests positive, he or she may request a retest at his or her own expense within a 24-hour period of the positive result.

The principal will schedule a conference with the positive-tested student's parents to explain the results. The student is then suspended from all interscholastic activities for 21 days. During the suspension, the student is allowed to attend other school-sponsored activities, however, he or she may not attend practice or act as a member of an interscholastic group.

After the 21 days, the student may be retested by the district's outside testing agency at the student's expense. If the student tests positive again, he or she is not allowed to attend practice or participate in an interscholastic activity for one calendar year. After the one-year suspension, the student must test negative for his or her suspension to be lifted.

Students Weigh In on the Discussions for Proposed Changes

The Case for Eliminating the Enrollment Multiplier for Nonpublic Schools

by Tess Hart

St. Mary's (Independence) High School junior

Are you more than just one person? Most would answer a definitive "no" to this question, but for anyone attending a private high school in the state of Missouri, the answer is yes.

When calculating school enrollments for classification size, Missouri uses a 1.35 multiplier to calculate a private school's enrollment. This means that each student counts as 1.35 people. The multiplier greatly inflates a school's enrollment which in turn bumps many private schools into a larger class and forces them to compete with schools much larger than themselves and putting them at a competitive disadvantage.

Missouri is just one of a handful of states to implement an enrollment multiplier, doing so in order to combat the "disproportional number" of state titles won by nonpublic schools. The 2002 vote by Missouri schools to implement the multiplier was undoubtedly fueled by some as a means to punish the private schools who allegedly recruit.

Not everyone agrees with the use of the multiplier. The issue is widely debated and is currently being discussed by the MSHSAA Public/Nonpublic Relations Committee. Some proponents feel it helps control the above mentioned issues, while many critics feel instead of leveling the playing field, it simply tilts it in the opposite direction.

The debate is far from over, and I hope that administrators around

the state are intelligent enough to find an alternative solution to this issue. Clearly the practice of making the whole greater than the sum of its parts in Missouri private schools diminishes the fact that its students are individuals -- not factors of 1.35 people.



Since the implementation of the 1.35 enrollment adjustment factor for nonpublic schools in 2002-03, the percentage of state titles won by nonpublic schools has remained virtually unchanged (34 to 33%). (Helias High School photo)

Considering the Welfare of Students Should Help Raise the Academic Bar

by Daunte Monroe

Center (Kansas City) High School junior

The bar for athletes will be raised for the 2009-2010 school year when the minimum MSHSAA academic requirement changes (By-Law 213-a). Of all the high school athletes in the state, a good number have the potential to receive athletic scholarships to participate in sports on the collegiate level. But how many actually have the potential to succeed academically in a college setting?

I would argue that right now, less than half of the student-athletes with college aspirations don't have the educational foundation to make it through most colleges.

And a good number of college teams require student athletes to maintain a certain GPA in order to play and retain their awarded scholarship.

How is the state of Missouri addressing this issue at the high school level? By a 3:1 ratio, schools voted last April to increase the minimum state academic standard to 3 units of credit per semester for athletic participation. Consideration for a statewide minimum GPA requirement is also being discussed this winter for the first time.

However, it is my belief that student-athletes in Missouri are held to a low standard of achievement by most school districts. How can we call athletics "extracurricular" when we encourage participation under dire circumstances such as failing a class?

I don't believe that the academic requirement should be unreasonably high, but I do believe that as leaders on the court or field, we should be leaders in the classroom as well. Thus, I believe the requirement should be slightly above the average GPA, and I believe that raising the bar will take academics off the back burner and better prepare student-athletes for college.

This in turn will equip all students with the tools necessary to succeed -- not only in college, but also in life. In the end, emphasis on academic success fulfills the purpose of the educational system as a whole.

Future Change to MSHSAA By-Law 213-a (academics)

Effective July 1, 2009

213.0 ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

a. Grades 9-12 -- A student in Grades 9-12 must have earned, the preceding semester of attendance, a minimum of 2-50 3.0 units of credit or have earned credit in 70% 80% of the maximum allowable classes in which a student can be enrolled in the semester, whichever is greater, and shall currently be enrolled in and regularly attending courses that offer 2-50 3.0 units of credit or 70% 80% of the maximum allowable credits which may be earned, whichever is greater; or a student must be enrolled in a full course at his or her level in a special education program...

Type of Schedule	Current Requirement	New Requirement
6-period day	Must pass 5 of 6	Must pass 6 of 6
7-period day	Must pass 5 of 7	Must pass 6 of 7
8-Block (0.5)	Must pass 6 of 8	Must pass 7 of 8
4-Block (1.0)	Must pass 3 of 4	Must pass 4 of 4
10-Block	Must pass 7 of 10	Must pass 8 of 10

Note: In April 2007, this proposed by-law change passed by a vote of 310-102 by MSHSAA member schools and will take effect on July 1, 2009.

Playing Hurt is Not Playing it Smart

by Mike Revis

Rockwood Summit High School junior

We can all agree that no matter what sport you play -- contact or not -- injuries are bound to happen.

Even in a relatively low-risk sport like golf you could pull a muscle on a bad swing or even get hit by an errant drive from the adjacent fairway. The issue that many young athletes face with injuries is how much is too much.

Let's face it, for most injuries you just need to ice it on your own and "suck it up." But for those rare cases when the injuries are more severe, it is necessary that it be taken seriously. Most young athletes, especially males, will try to push themselves too far before they talk to a trainer or have the injury checked out.

Ignoring symptoms can lead to more serious problems both in the near future and down the road. I'll admit, I have even tried to go too long without reporting an injury and I ended up being out longer than I otherwise would have. Often the reason for this is because the athlete doesn't want to

appear weak in front of their coaches and teammates.

For this reason, coaches need to emphasize the importance of getting injuries checked. Trainers also need to talk to each team, introduce themselves, get to know the players, and stress the importance of seeking attention for serious injuries. Each player should communicate with the trainer before their season starts so they can build trust and feel more comfortable going to that person if an injury or medical question arises.

Everyone knows his own body better than anyone else. After 14-18 years, you can tell when something is not right. So when seeking the help of a doctor or trainer, athletes must be prepared to go through the necessary procedures to get back to normal. This may mean missing out on playing time, physical therapy, monitoring an injury, or maybe even stepping down from playing that sport.

All athletes should be more worried about their own health and future rather than what others will think of them. When you think about it, most high school athletes will not be able to continue to play at the college level. The odds of realizing dreams of professional ball are even slimmer. It's great to have dreams but you also need to realize you cannot depend on your body to last forever to play sports. Therefore, if a doctor says sit out for a while or to do physical therapy, it is important to do what he or she says so your body can last.

The reason pros can play through greater injuries is because they have the world's leading medical authorities at their disposal, they get paid to play, and they have the whole off season to relax and recoup.

I don't mean that if you stub a toe or get a bruise you should sit yourself out for a couple of weeks. It's never a bad idea to check with a trainer or medical personnel, but only in cases when you know something is out of the ordinary.

Taking the time to strengthen your body after an injury is one of the most important things for an athlete to do, and coaches should stress that health is the number one priority.

Small Schools (from page 2)

even good players, attend practice because they don't want to run bleachers or wind sprints.

Sadly, in small schools that logic does not often extend to the basketball court or playing field. In a small school, if the coach attempts to punish a player, that player may quit. If that player quits, the numbers may diminish enough to eliminate the team. Therefore, there are rarely any negative consequences when a player misses practice for any reason.

Likewise and consequently, if a player has a strong reaction to something and quits, the coach has little choice but to allow that player to eventually return to the team if he so chooses just to ensure maintain the numbers required to field a team!

Teammates who really have no grasp of the concept of "team" are a negative fact of life in small schools. As ludicrous as this sounds, this is a true state of affairs in our small schools. The upside of this is that true team players attend solely out of inner motivation because there is no fear of reprisal.

There are those of us who never miss a practice simply because we want to become better; because we want to do our part to will a team into being where only a semblance of a true team exists.

There are those of us who take time outside of practice in a cold, dark gymnasium to sharpen our shots. We don't physically have the advantage or enjoy the luxury of brotherhood and camaraderie that bigger schools and teams assume daily, but in character, we are athletes and competitors just the same -- fiercely devoted to the spirit of sport. We are out there, and we love athletics.

Through MSHSAA, 11 student representatives from around the state comprise a standing Student Advisory Council, and truly, all student athletes are given a voice. And that is what matters.

Resources: The MSHSAA provides steroid education materials, including brochures, posters, public service announcements and informational DVD's, at no charge. If you would like to be a leader in steroid education for your team or school, contact Rick Kindhart at the MSHSAA at (573) 875-4880.



CHOICE ISN'T ALWAYS EASY. Young athletes make choices every day that can determine if they succeed or fail -

MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

MSHSAA Student News & Views is published each semester with contributions by real Missouri high school students. To contribute a story or story idea or to comment on an issue, put "MSHSAA Student News & Views" in the subject line of an email to: email@mshsaa.org.