Over the course of the winter sports seasons, thousands of students will be granted the opportunity to showcase their skills, represent their schools and communities and most importantly participate in several state championship events!

A simple Google search on the value of high school sports participation will yield over 200 million results in a little more than half a second. Articles demonstrating the advantages of participating in interscholastic athletic programs can be quickly found. Peer reviewed research detailing the stark differences between the successes of those students who participate in high school sports compared to those students who do not are relatively easy to find.

The issue is not finding the benefits, but continuing to promote the value of interscholastic athletics every chance we receive. It is for this reason our association has redesigned our website, focused attention on social media and continues to publicize the importance of education based sports for the students who participate and the communities in which they live.

Robert J. Zayas
NYSPHSAA Executive Director

BATTLE OF FANS:
On February 21st the New York State Public High School Athletic Association announced Norwich High School (Section IV) as its first Battle of the Fans State Champion. Norwich outlasted three other finalists in the Association’s first ever contest. The public was invited to vote for the winner in a Facebook poll following a visit by the NYSPHSAA staff to each of the finalist schools during a home basketball game. A video was produced by NYSPHSAA for each finalist documenting interviews from student leaders and highlights of the student body cheering, then posted on the NYSPHSAA web site for viewing and voting.

Any NYSPHSAA member school was eligible to participate simply by submitting a three-minute video by January 11th showing its enthusiasm, positive energy, and originality. Other criteria included organization of fans at contests, leadership, and overall impression of the fan experience at games.

RESTORATION OF GAMES:
Several sections, during the January 31st Executive Committee meeting, expressed their desire to restore the games which were reduced in January 2009 as part of the fiscal reductions; the moratorium is scheduled to conclude at the end of the 2014-2015 school year. Additional discussion will take place at the May 2, 2014 Executive Committee meeting with a potential vote to occur during the Central Committee meeting in Lake Placid in late July.
PLAYING RULES PROPOSAL:
During the January 31st Executive Committee meeting, discussion involved the utilization of NFHS playing rules in all sports in which the NFHS develops rules. This has been a topic of conversation recently within the association. Currently, the NYSPHSAA uses ASA rules for softball and NCAA rules for girls’ basketball, as well as girls’ and boys’ volleyball. This proposal will be voted upon during the May 2, 2014 Executive Committee meeting.

GIMMICKS CAN DECEIVE STUDENTS:
At this time of the year many high school students, particularly seniors who are involved in athletics receive literature about various awards programs for which the student might have been nominated. Many times these programs request information about the student-athlete and promise services, and also offer to include the student’s name in publications which will be disseminated to colleges throughout the country. Although some of these programs may be sponsored by legitimate businesses, many others exploit students and their families. It is wise for administrators, coaches and counselors to examine all information carefully and ask for, and check references, if a student is contacted.

NYSFHSAA RULE HIGHLIGHT:
The NYSPHSAA Handbook (Page 95) states:
“COMBINING OF TEAMS - The joining together of students from two or more member schools in the same district or close proximity to form a single team shall be permitted subject to the following conditions……” The students must join together to form a single team. Therefore, schools cannot form multiple teams in the same sport with separate combinations (for example: six students want to play football; three cannot go to school A to form a combined football team, while the other three go to school B to form a combined football team; they must form one combined football team).

CHEERLEADING INVITATIONAL (EAST/ WEST):
The NYSPHSAA was proud to host the second East/ West Cheerleading invitational for our member schools. The 2014 events witnessed nearly 100 teams compete, with more than 2,000 fans attending. The 2014 events were held February 9 (West- SRC Arena at Onondaga Community College- Section 3 RIGHT PHOTO) and February 22 (East- Sullivan Community College- Section 9 LEFT PHOTO).

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NYSPHSAA HANDBOOK PRINT EDITION:

The Executive Committee approved (January 31st) to no longer have a print edition of the NYSPHSAA Handbook beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. The NYSPHSAA Handbook has traditionally been printed for a two year period; shortly after the handbook has been released, there are portions which are modified or revised through the Executive Committee and Central Committee meetings. Since the Association staff recommends that schools should always reference the online version of the handbook, because this is the most up to date copy available, the staff recommended no longer having a print edition.

LOOKING AHEAD:

Feb. 28-Mar. 1  Boys Swimming & Diving Championships (Webster-Schroder HS, Webster- Section 5)
Feb. 28-Mar. 1  Wrestling Championships (Times Union Center, Albany- Section 2)
Mar. 1   Girls Gymnastics Championships (SUNY Brockport- Section 5)
Mar. 1   Girls/ Boys Indoor Track & Field (Barton Hall; Cornell University, Ithaca- Section 4)
Mar. 1   Rifle- Regional (West Point- Section 9)
Mar. 1-2  Girls/ Boys Bowling (Babylon Lanes- Section 11)
Mar. 8   Boys Volleyball Regional (Oneida High School- Section 3)
Mar. 8-9  Ice Hockey Championships (Memorial Auditorium, Utica- Section 3)
Mar. 14-16  Girls Basketball Championships (Hudson Valley Community College, Troy- Section 2)
Mar. 14-16  Boys Basketball Championships (Civic Center, Glens Falls- Section 2)
Mar. 21-23  Girls/ Boys NYS Federation Basketball Championships (Times Union Center, Albany- Section 2)
April 14  Executive Committee meeting packet released for May 2nd meeting
May 2   Executive Committee meeting (Hilton Garden Inn- Troy)

QUOTE TO REMEMBER:

“I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

–Michael Jordan