

# THSADA NEWSLETTER

Presented by Home Team Marketing



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## TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION Executive Director's Report *Rusty Dowling, Executive Director – THSADA*

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to San Marcos, Texas and the 45th annual Home Team Marketing-THSADA State Conference. We hope you have a great time and find the Conference not only a unique social experience but equally as rewarding in fulfilling your professional needs and requirements. This will be our 4th State Conference in the role of Executive Director with prior State Conferences held in San Angelo, Houston and Frisco. We are very excited about the quality of the Professional Development opportunities that are being offered at the State Conference and we look forward to your participation in all scheduled events.

Last June the THSADA had a strong turnout and support at the annual UIL Legislative Council meeting. The THSADA has been actively involved with the UIL through its participation in the Revenue Advisory Committee work and THSADA members sitting on various UIL committee's supporting all of the work that our UIL does. President Chris Feris conducted a session at the annual TGCA Summer Convention and saw a large turnout of attendees at his presentation on Leadership. The annual Coaching School that was held this past summer in Houston saw a record number of attendees at our annual PBK Sports-THSADA Hall of Honor Banquet. This is a marquee night for the THSADA where we have the opportunity to recognize and honor our THSADA Award winners and annual Hall of Honor inductees. The Monday General Session featured Eric Hyman-Director of Athletics-Texas A&M University, the installation and introduction of our new THSADA Board of Directors and the recognition of our outgoing Region Directors and retiring

AD's. Tuesday the newly-elected members of the Board of Directors went through an orientation process to prepare them for the current calendar year.

The THSADA has also been instrumental in providing training for New and Aspiring Athletic Directors in Texas. The THSADA office has been involved in advising ISD's on athletic administrative protocol, procedures and processes that are essential in fluid administrative and operational concerns of athletic leadership. Numerous New and Aspiring AD's have attended these sessions that are held at the THSADA office. It will be the decision of the Board to expand these services and develop the requisite curriculum to further assist those individuals interested in athletic administration in the State of Texas.

The THSADA office has also added a part-time position of Special Events Manager. Handling this position will be Keith Kilgore, former long-time Director of Athletics for the Fort Bend ISD in Houston. Specifically, Keith will be handling the State Conference Professional Development presentations. Keith's many years of successful experience will be significant and further strengthen the different programs and initiatives of the THSADA.

With the upcoming 85th Texas Legislature, the THSADA will be in the loop on those bills, discussions and decisions that affect athletics in the State of Texas. All of the Texas Associations do a great job of staying informed and ready to get involved when the situation necessitates a collaborative movement.

The THSADA hosted athletic administrators at NRG Stadium over the UIL State Football Championships weekend in Houston at the end of

December. There was a good turnout of AD's for the games as the Association continues to make this an annual event for all athletic administrators. It's a great time to network with not only other AD's but the UIL, other coaches Associations, Superintendents and various individuals and companies we deal with on a daily basis. Plan now to attend next year.

We had the opportunity for a visit to Cleveland, Ohio and specifically to the offices of our State Conference sponsor-Home Team Marketing. It was an extremely interesting visit as we had the opportunity to see all of the action behind the scenes and meet the people that make HTM go. The corporate offices of HTM are located in downtown Cleveland in a very unique building and office set up. Patrick Spears acted as our host and introduced us to most of the entire office and what their duties and functions were. It was also on this visit that HTM and the THSADA confirmed their continued partnership for the next several years. We also had a chance to visit with NACDA. NACDA stands for the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics. This was significant because a lot of what we do with the THSADA mirrors several of the administrative functions used by NACDA, specifically the Tradeshow setup and operation. Denise Manak acted as our host and introduced us to the entire NACDA staff and what function each individual had. It was extremely interesting and a visit that we will plan on doing on regular basis.

The THSADA membership has risen to over 800 members in both public and private schools. This has placed the THSADA as one of the largest athletic administrator associations in the country. All of our Regions have noticed

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a significant increase. Sponsorship levels have also risen tremendously as businesses welcome the opportunity to partner with the THSADA and THSADA members have reciprocated by giving our sponsors first opportunity to do business with Athletic Directors. Sponsorships are vital to the existence of THSADA as to allow us to provide a quality State Conference, support Board of Directors meetings and position the THSADA to create other Professional Development opportunities for THSADA members. The THSADA State Conference Tradeshow has also seen an increase in those businesses wanting to support the THSADA by becoming an exhibitor at our annual State Conference. We are at an all-time high of 130 exhibitors as of the writing of this column. Registration for the State Conference is also ahead of schedule and we estimate that attendance could be

between 350-400 athletic administrators attending the Conference. Sunday is always a busy day at Registration as a large number of AD's will register on-site.

Make every effort to attend your Region meetings as that is where the latest information for Athletic Administrators is distributed regarding UIL news and initiatives and any state legislation that we need to stay abreast of. For those of you who have never attend the PBK Sports-THSADA Hall of Honor Banquet at Coaching School, you should make plans to attend. It's a very rewarding evening for our members as we have a chance to recognize the accomplishments and success of athletic administrators from around the State of Texas.

In closing the THSADA calendar looks forward to more Region meetings, UIL legislative Council, both TGCA and THSCA Summer Conferences along with our pinnacle event, the PBK Sports-THSADA Hall of Honor Banquet. ★

### THSADA Upcoming Events – 2016

**June 14th – June 15th:**  
UIL Legislative Council-site: TBA

**July 12th – July 14th:**  
TGCA Summer Conference  
Arlington, Texas

**July 17th – July 20th:**  
THSCA Summer Conference  
San Antonio, Texas

**July 17th:**  
PBK Sports - THSADA Hall of Honor  
Banquet-Hyatt Regency Riverwalk

**July 18th :**  
THSADA General Session  
Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center

**July 19th:**  
THSADA New Board of Directors  
Orientation-Hyatt Regency  
Riverwalk

## TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

### President's Remarks *Chris Feris, President – THSADA*

Welcome to the 2016 Home Team Marketing-Texas High School Athletic Directors Association State Conference in San Marcos, Texas. This is our 45th annual conference, and we are excited to host more than 300 athletic administrators and over 130 exhibitors. Whether you are a first time attendee or have attended more than you can count, I know you will receive great benefits from the sessions and activities that are planned over the next three days.

Our growth and elevated profile continue to amaze me. The THSADA now has over 800 members, which is up from just over 300 members just four years ago. This makes us the second largest high school Athletic Director association in the nation. I have no doubt that we will be the largest association in the country within the next few years.

The theme of this year's conference is "Leading in a Culture of Change". This conference allows athletic

administrators from all over the state an opportunity to network with their peers and gain insight and motivation. As we return back to our home districts, we will be able to use these programs and knowledge to lead in our ever changing athletic environments. We hope that you will find the enclosed agenda activities and sessions to be a great resource to you for the rest of the school year and in your professional growth.

As administrators of our school's athletic programs, you are the key to success within each district. We look forward to helping you lead by example and set the high expectations for your coaching staffs, student-athletes, fans and parents. Your contributions to our profession and association continue to be remarkable, as evident, by the excellence of athletic programs in our state.

The conference will again provide you

with the opportunity to actively visit over 130 Exhibitor Booths. The Exhibitors have always helped our association's growth. It is very important that we show our appreciation and visit all the booths. The latest products on the market will be on display, and you will have the chance to gather information from company representatives that is pertinent to the operations and safety of our students and programs.

I would like to thank Rusty Dowling, our Executive Director, and Kathy Mathis, Administrative Assistant to the Director, for their leadership and oversight of the conference. Please take advantage of all the opportunities that the conference has to offer this year. I believe that you will take home beneficial information and insight that you can use as you "Lead in the Culture of Change". ★

THSADA President

## JOE MARTIN *Asst. Executive Director - Texas High School Coaches Association*



Joe Martin graduated from Lewisville High School in 1974 where he played quarterback on the 1972 state finalist team. He graduated from Eastern New

Mexico University with a B.S. degree in 1978 and played quarterback for the Greyhounds from 1975-77.

Coach Martin enjoyed a 26-year coaching career in Texas public schools. He served as a head coach for 18 years at four different high schools (Lake Dallas, Mabank, Garland, Allen) while compiling a 150-54-4 career record. Coach Martin's teams won 9 district championships, had 13 playoff appearances that included two trips to the semifinals and one state championship.

While at Garland High School, the Owls won the 1999 5A Division II state championship. He left Garland after the 2000 season as the winningest coach in GHS history (81-22-3).

In 2001 he became the head coach and assistant athletic director at Allen. During his tenure the Eagles won 3 district titles and advanced to the semifinals in 2003.

During 2003-04 Coach Martin served as president of the Texas High School Coaches Association and in May 2004 accepted the position of Assistant Executive Director of the Texas High School Coaches Association, a position he currently holds.

Martin has received numerous awards during his career. He was selected Coach of the Year many times, was inducted into his high school Hall of Fame at Lewisville High School in 2009, his college Hall of Fame at Eastern New Mexico in 2007, Garland Sports Hall of Fame in 2000 and the Texas High School Coaches Association Hall of Honor in 2008.

Joe now resides in Bulverde, Texas with his wife of 37 years, Peggy. They have two sons, Josh and Ryan. Josh is currently the assistant offensive line coach at Arizona State and Ryan is beginning his first year as assistant offensive line coach at Brenham High School. ★

## Social Media and the Student-Athlete

Social media continues to be a hot topic in high school athletics. When used properly, social media outlets like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can promote a high school team and help student-athletes successfully promote themselves and their teammates. In reality, too many times student-athletes post inappropriate content that reflects poorly on their team, school, community, or family. Freedom of speech does not always mean freedom from consequences. Although many high school athletic departments have adopted social media policies, reviews from court cases have been mixed as to how well these policies hold up in a court of law.

Lee Green is an attorney and a professor at Baker University in Baldwin City,

Kansas, where he teaches courses in sports law, business law and constitutional law. Green states that "courts continue to struggle with the issue whether schools have the authority to sanction students or student-athletes for inappropriate, off-campus postings on social media websites in violation of school or athletics codes of conduct. Since 2011, six cases have been decided on the issue by U.S. Courts of Appeal and a dozen other rulings have been issued by U.S. District Courts. In precisely one-half of those cases, courts have held that such punishments violate student-free-speech rights, while in the others, courts have upheld school action because the speech in question created a substantial disruption at school, constituted bullying or harassment, or manifested a

true threat of violence against members of the school community."

Athletic Directors must continue to be vigilant in adopting and reviewing social media policies. We should encourage the proper use of social media and remind student-athletes of the many college coaches, employers, and community members who are watching. Social media should be an outlet to share information, support your teammates and friends, interact with those you admire, and an opportunity to reflect your true personality. Social media should not be used to express frustrations or anger. ★

*Green, L. (2015). Top Ten Sports Law Issues Impacting School Athletics Programs.*



## Getting to Know: Joe Martin *Asst. Executive Director - Texas High School Coaches Association*

### *1. What major issues do you see currently or in the future facing students and school districts that the THSCA will have to address?*

We remain in constant communication with our superintendents and legislature in support of the athletic period and the full time teacher rule for coaches. The combination of these two rules separates Texas from the other states in the United States as we have professional teachers as coaches that have daily contact with the students and athletes in our schools. The athletic period is utilized by our coaches to create an “Education based Athletic Program” as they not only teach the rules and technique of their sport, but also use this time to teach life and leadership skills through their character development and leadership programs.

We continue to encourage coaches to “Tell Their Story” as we need to provide proof of our worth to the school administration, parents and community. We encourage coaches to get their local media (radio, TV, newspapers, billboard advertising and social media outlets) involved to assist them in telling their story. Coaches need to celebrate all their victories on and off the field and make the public aware of these victories – especially those that don’t have a score... ie... Academic All-State, recognition for All-District, All Area, and All State, community service accomplishments, coaches’ health and safety certifications and completed programs that coaches obtain that are considered “Coaching Beyond the Game.”

### *2. With Student safety being such a hot topic, is the THSCA looking to add or promote any more education for our coaches?*

We continue to promote our Professional

Development lecture series and certification at coaching school. We will continue to advocate for our coaches as we seek a seat at the stake holders table at the capital in regards to health and safety of athletes. We will monitor and lobby during the legislative session for practical health and safety measures for the athletes in Texas. Obviously the concussion protocol and return to play will be scrutinized again during the 85th legislative session in 2017. We will always be concerned with heat and will strive to stay current regarding best practices regarding heat regulations as we stay in contact with the UIL.

### *3. With continued issues relating to AAU basketball, select baseball, volleyball, softball and national 7 on 7 teams, are there any measures the THSCA can recommend to keep these entities from exploiting our players?*

As long as we maintain the UIL restrictions on coaches during the summer, it will continue to be more and more difficult to control these groups. Our suggestion would be to do the very best job possible of “vetting” the leagues and coaches involved. We will ask coaches to help direct parents due to their vetting process and again remind the parents and the community that these leagues and coaches are not interested in “Education based Athletics” or the holistic approach to coaching their kids but are more interested in the financial opportunity that they gain while running those leagues and coaching their kids.

### *4. Specifically with IMG academy awarding “scholarships” to students in our state, would you consider asking member schools to boycott playing them? Any other thoughts?*

Absolutely, not only do we encourage

coaches to boycott them, we encourage coaches to not allow this type of “Athletic Academy” access to their campus, to their athletes or to any video or stats if possible. We encourage coaches to stay within the state of Texas to schedule non-district competition due to the nature of these “Athletic Academy’s.” We will also encourage coaches to become extremely selective when it comes to allowing an outside entity to host a camp, league or activity that involves their student athletes. We are proud of the “Amateur Athletic” status that our UIL sports present in Texas, and will continue to work to maintain this status.

Again, as coaches, we need to prove our worth, tell our story in an attempt to show parents the difference between accepting an “Athletic Academy” scholarship with an escalated educational value and their child being coached and taught by a Texas High School coach that will lead and guide them through their platform to teach winning attitudes, values and character along with becoming a better athlete. Texas High School coaches are not interested in financial gain from their athlete’s athletic performance; their goal is to help young men and women that participate in their programs become better citizens and leaders of our future.

### *5. Is there anything you would like the State AD’s to know about THSCA or is there something we can assist the organization to help get done?*

We would appreciate the support of THSADA in the following areas:

- Promotion of their coaches attendance at the THSCA Regional

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Meeting in February and in July.

- Attendance and support of the Leadership Summit in San Antonio on February 19 Tickets and hotel accommodations available on THSCA website as well as hotel accommodations. Encourage the AD's to bring their administration and any civic and legislative leaders that would benefit from the summit – this is an additional way to tell our story. The Summit is the signature event of the Texas High School Coaches Education Foundation and was developed from our passion to help coaches “Coach Beyond the Game”. The purpose of the Leadership Summit experience is to equip coaches and their staffs with tools necessary to enhance and encourage the lives of their players. The Summit exists to motivate our coaches and other educational leaders across the state with an injection of inspiration, character development and positive

vision for the betterment of our Texas athletes.

- Coaching School dates in San Antonio – July 17-20 Registration, membership and housing available on line at THSCA website.
- Head Coaching Academy at Coaching School on Monday 7/18 from 4-6:30 PM.
  - » This year we will host the 2nd annual workshop for the THSCA Head Coaching Academy, built on our passion to help train the next generation of head coaches. This seminar is designed for head coaches that want to brand their program and hone their administrative skills, as well as, younger coaches that seek the skills and mentoring it takes to become a head coach in the future. The THSCA Head Coaching Academy lecture series will feature an array of topics such as interviewing skills, designing and building your program, goal setting, molding

your team philosophies and administrative skills like budgeting, hiring a cohesive staff and parent/teacher relations. We will also seek to address topics like Social Media and its effects on a team, character curriculum, and the mentoring of the younger coaches on your staff.

» One of our most important responsibilities as coaches is to help our young athletes to confront and comprehend the negative culture that challenges them in this day and time. As head coaches we are responsible for providing our coaching staff with the moral guidance, proper encouragement and leadership to get that task accomplished.

» This event is open to all Coaching School attendees at no additional charge.

» Again, we welcome both current head coaches and aspiring head coaches to attend! ★



## The Transformation of a High School Athletic Compliance Review System

*Developing and Utilizing an Effective Report for Coaches and Athletic Directors as a Tool in Verifying UIL Eligibility*

**Debbie Decker**  
*Executive Director of Athletics,*  
*Katy ISD*

As a critical component of an efficient and effective procedure to review student/athlete data for the purpose of ensuring initial UIL eligibility compliance at the beginning of every sport season, coaches in the Katy ISD utilize a district-developed report designed to provide pertinent UIL compliance information. The Katy ISD “E-School UIL Compliance Report” was developed through the combined efforts of the Katy ISD

Athletic Department and the Katy ISD Technology Division – Enterprise Systems for the purpose of supporting high school coaches in their review of student/athlete compliance data.

Prior to the development of the E-School report and the recent implementation of electronic filing of documents, coaches of every sport program were required to collect specific documents and organize into notebook binders to be presented at a pre-season compliance meeting. All documentation was reviewed by an athletic director in an attempt to identify potential compliance issues.

Although this was a diligent approach and the best system at the time, it was cumbersome, time-consuming and not particularly reliable. Coaches were required to seek the assistance of campus registrars to view transcript information as well as verify birth dates, enrollment data and addresses.

After discussions with the Katy ISD Technology Division – Enterprise Systems, it was determined that the district had in place technological capabilities that could potentially lead to the development of a report that could

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compile the information necessary to verify UIL initial eligibility at the beginning of every sport season and minimize the potential for error. During the development phase of this report, each field of data was identified and tested to ensure that the information obtained through a data base query was valid and reliable. Once the necessary fields were identified and tested, the format and structure of the report was devised and reviewed. The report format was then presented to the high school campus athletic coordinators for their input and, once final approval was given, the E-School UIL Compliance Report was placed into operation.

The Katy ISD Athletic Department mandates that every athletic program at each high school conduct a thorough review of compliance-related data for every member of its program prior to the start of the season. As part of the process, each student/athlete is required to submit an online Katy ISD Bona-Fide Residence Form, a recent utility bill and a copy of his/her birth certificate prior to the start of the season. These documents are stored electronically via the Rank One Sports Management software program. Katy ISD utilizes the E-School Plus student management software program to store student data for all students district-wide. Within this program, coaches are required to build and maintain rosters for all levels of their high school athletic programs.

Accessing the data stored in the E-School data base, which includes vast information on each student from transcript data to enrollment dates, the E-School program allows each head coach to generate a report that will provide pertinent data that will assist in determining initial UIL eligibility. Specific student information in the data base is input and maintained by

campus and district personnel. The E-School program also provides grade reports that are used to review student/athlete grades for the purpose of academic eligibility evaluation.

In preparation for a scheduled pre-season compliance meeting with district athletic directors, head coaches are asked to ensure all documents submitted by student/athletes are scanned and uploaded into the Rank One software program. In addition, they are to ensure that all their athletes are entered into rosters in both the Rank One and E-School programs. No later than two days prior to the scheduled compliance meeting, coaches are to submit a copy of their UIL Team or Individual Varsity Sport Eligibility Form to the district athletic office. Once all athletes are placed on Rank One, E-School and UIL rosters, coaches are to begin reviewing scanned documents on Rank One and the data included on the E-School UIL Compliance Report. Any identified irregularities or indications of compliance concerns are to be marked and researched by the head coach prior to the compliance meeting.

Two days prior to the compliance meeting, district athletic directors will first ensure that all athletes listed on the submitted UIL Varsity Team Sport Eligibility Form are also included on the E-School UIL Compliance Report. Once confirmed, the data for each athlete will be reviewed through a cross-reference between the uploaded documents in Rank One and the UIL Compliance Report. Any identified irregularities or potential concerns will be marked by the reviewing athletic director and addressed at the scheduled compliance meeting. Any outstanding concerns or issues are to be resolved before an athlete is allowed to participate.

The E-School UIL Compliance Report contains all data needed for coaches to

review in order to determine initial UIL eligibility. In addition to basic student information, the report contains data specifically related to UIL compliance such as address, attendance zone, birth date, date of enrollment into grade 9, earned credits, and current and previous year enrollment history. This report is generated by team, by level (varsity, sub-varsity) and is accessible only to designated program sponsors.

Although no system is fool-proof, we believe that the development of the UIL E-School Compliance Report has provided our coaches an outstanding tool that helps facilitate a thorough and efficient process. The review of our athletes for initial UIL eligibility is a crucial priority of the Katy ISD Athletic Department. As we have transitioned to this process, our coaches have become more diligent and conscientious in conducting this procedure and in utilizing this report for the purpose of compliance.

Adjustments and technological reviews are done on a yearly basis and the report is revised accordingly. The cooperation of the Katy ISD Technology Division was instrumental in the development of this report. Specifically, Pat Dowling, Assistant Athletic Director, Ms. Anna Gerdes, Senior Analyst and Ms. Kerry Rampelli, Director of Enterprise Systems, were key in the development of this report and continue to provide valuable assistance to our coaches and athletic department.

This report, and the entire compliance process, is simply an element which contributes to the total purpose of why we do what we do as coaches and athletic directors; to provide opportunities for growth and success of our student/athletes. ★

# Why Athletics.



Participation in athletics provide positive academic outcomes for the students who are involved. Academic success (evidenced by grades, time on homework, and educational aspirations) was related to both physical activity and participation on sports teams (Fox, Barr-Anderson, Neumark-Sztainer, and Wall, 2010).

A recent study about athletics was conducted in Central Texas. In that study, students who participated in athletics were compared to students who did not participate in athletics. Breakdown of the athletes were done by economically disadvantaged, not economically disadvantaged, and by all students grouped together. Several outcomes were analyzed such as Attendance, Discipline, and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) testing in core subject areas such as Reading and Math.

The study found that attendance was significantly impacted. Students who participated in Athletics came to school at higher rate than those of their peers who did not participate in Athletics. This was true of all cases, it did not matter whether you were economically disadvantaged or not. If you participated in Athletics, you came to school more. It may have been the coach influencing the student

directly or indirectly or the student needing to pass a class so they could play in the game that week. Simply put, the students who participated in athletics came more often. The gap was much greater in economically disadvantaged communities, meaning that athletics was even more important when it came to a child attending class in an economically disadvantaged community.

Implications of this that go beyond the child are school finances. Attendance has a great impact on school funding. In short, the more a child is in attendance, the more money that is provided by the Federal government in terms of school funding.

Discipline was also examined in this study. It was found that discipline rates were lower across the board for the students who participated in athletics than those who did not participate. As was the case with attendance, the gap was much lower in economically disadvantaged students than non-economically disadvantaged students. So when students participate on a sports team, they actually behaved better in class.

A coach often has a lot of influence in a kids life. They spend so much time with a kid during practice, on the bus to and from games, etc. These are all opportunities that coaches have to develop relationships and to mentor these young individuals. In so many cases, a coach spends much more time with a student than a regular teacher does.

Without a surprise when STAAR test scores were examined, students who participated in athletics had higher test scores in reading and math than those who did not participate. Again,

economically disadvantaged who participated in athletics scored much higher than those students who did not.

As a result, students should participate in athletics. Athletics should be encouraged and promoted at all levels. The alternative for so many kids can be drugs, alcohol, etc. Without athletics, there is just more time for these adverse activities. Bowen and Green (2014) found that sports participation included cognitively and organizationally demanding activities that developed student self-discipline and leadership skills and was especially helpful for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The next time you go to a sporting event you truly are seeing the cream of the crop. Every student participating has attended their classes, stayed out of trouble, and passed their classes. Isn't this is exactly what we ask all student to do? If there was 100% participation in athletics from every student, every student would benefit. Every school would benefit and every community would benefit. So, *Why Athletics?* (question mark) I like to think of it as *Why Athletics.*(period) If the aforementioned criteria doesn't answer that question thoroughly enough, then simply put, it is what is best for kids. ★

## References:

*Bowen, D. and Green, J. (2014). Does athletic success come at the expense of academic success?*

*Fox, C., Barr-Anderson, D., Neumark-Sztainer, D. and Wall, M. (2010) Physical activity and sports team participation: Associations with academic outcomes in middle and high school students. Journal of School Health, Volume 80, Issue 1, pages 31 - 37.*



## Getting to Know: Susan Elza *UIL Athletic Director*



### *1. Please tell us about your path to becoming the UIL Athletic Director.*

I grew up in Waco, Texas and attended Midway High School. I was fortunate enough to receive a softball scholarship to Southwest Texas State University. The year I graduated from college was the year that UIL added high school softball (1993). I was hired by Homer Johnson to start up the program at Garland Lakeview Centennial. I coached at Lakeview for 3 years, and then was hired by Todd Graham and Steve Williams as the head softball coach in 1996. I was promoted to assistant athletic director in 2000, and retired from coaching in 2004 to assume a full time role as an athletic administrator. I was hired in 2008 as the Executive Director of Athletics for Northwest ISD. In July 2015, I was hired as the Director of Athletics for the University Interscholastic League.

Not sure if you need educational information, but I received a degree in Exercise and Sports Science from Southwest Texas State. I received

my master's degree and mid-management certification from Texas A&M -Commerce. I received my superintendent certification from UT- Tyler. And, finally, I received my Doctorate of Educational Leadership from Lamar University.

### *2. How has the Sunset Review affected the UIL, in regards to daily operations and long term operations? How will this benefit the Athletic Directors of Texas?*

I was not a part of the Sunset Review, but it benefitted the entire University Interscholastic League which in turns benefits school because it pushed us to look at our processes, and evaluate what needed to be changed. The benefits to athletic directors are the same benefits that are afforded to the UIL; cleaner processes, re-defined rules, and removal of rules that are no longer valid.

### *3. Student-Safety, Is the UIL Athletics Department looking to add to the clearance of athletes? An example: Adding ECG's in order to be cleared to play/practice. Helmet safety/concussions etc.*

Our Medical Advisory committee that consists of doctor's, trainers, and association leaders (Sam Tipton, Rusty Dowling, and DW Rutledge), is responsible for reviewing the needed safety standards for our programs. They base their decisions on recommendations and utilize research to make decisions. The committee, in turn, makes recommendations to the legislative council to be voted on during our October or June meetings. They do an outstanding job of keeping kids safe, and have a plethora of both

medical and practical knowledge.

### *4. What are your long term goals for the UIL?*

My goals for the UIL is to continue to build relationships with schools, and work to make sure we have solid relationships with our member schools.

### *5. With the continued issues related to AAU basketball, select baseball/softball, select football 7 on 7 teams, and club volleyball, what steps or measures is the UIL discussing to keep these entities from exploiting our athletes?*

We have a constant watch on the outside influences that affect our schools. A constant dialogue also remains with schools and coaching organizations so that we can stay in tune to the future of athletics as we know it. Where I cannot define what measures will be taken, I can say the schools will a working part of the solutions that are created.

### *6. Anything you would like the Athletic Directors of Texas to know about you/philosophy? (I am glad to know you but there are many AD's who don't. Your chance to get on the soap box.)*

I absolutely love and respect what we do as coaches and athletic administrators. I truly believe that we have one of the best jobs of any profession. There is so much value in what our programs offer to kids, and we have opportunities to make a difference and help kids get better each and every day. We have tough jobs that are constantly scrutinized, and on many occasions we receive more criticism than applause. I believe,

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whole heartedly, that head coaches and athletic administrators have to coach their coaches as much as they have to coach their kids. Leadership is influence, and influence is so valuable, and needs to be utilized in the right way. Our goals each and every day should be to get better as leaders, and help those around us get better.

It's a powerful combination and has a fantastic trickledown effect if done with great intention and purpose.

**7. Anything you would like to add?**

What I would add - I am honored to be in this role as UIL Athletic Director, and am humbled to serve our schools, coaches, and administrators. Texas has

some of the best athletes, coaches, and athletic leaders in the nation. Every day we go to work at the UIL, I know that there are 800,000 student-athletes counting on us to give them our best, and our schools have our commitment to do just that; each and every day. ★



# Try Something New

## Speak Your Fan's Digital Language

*Tendai Charasika, CEO  
SuperFanU, Inc.*

A few short years ago, the best means of communication and connection to fans was word-of-mouth, local news, radio advertising, billboards and print media promotion to build awareness and excitement around the day's events for schools and teams. As an athletic director, if you wanted to garner your fan's valuable attention, you spoke to them in their language and ensured that a connection was made to the most exciting athletic events of the day.

While times have changed, communicating to your fans in a meaningful way that they comprehend has not. In the past, awareness and excitement for events was constrained only by how fast the news spread. Today, it's a national connection through mobile devices, social media and instant communication that makes building awareness leading to increased attendance not only faster but more inclusive of ALL your athletic events. Modern-day fans are constantly connected to their mobile phones 24/7 and aren't talking about

the last newspaper they read to get their information, but more about the last "app" they downloaded that provided them engagement and an abundance of information in nearly real-time. Communication today is consumed instantaneously and goes beyond local boundaries. This has created a greater awareness among today's fans, allowing them to participate in deeper and more meaningful ways.

If you truly want to connect and engage with today's fan, as athletic directors, you must speak their language. You must have programs established that break into your fan's "air waves" and capture their attention regularly and creatively. New means of communication tools are at your disposal that include customized, school specific applications or "apps" for your fan's smart-phones, school and even sport-specific social media channels. Less and less is there a reliance on email or snail mail to deliver your message, and more and more the opportunity for instant and real-time communication. There are a variety of communication vehicles that offer push notifications (similar to text

messages), that provide short, to the point pieces of information, delivered right into the palm of your fan's hands.

If you want to engage your fans, then engage their minds! Try something new on Monday morning - try speaking your fan's digital language! We'll show you how!

If you're attending the 2016 THSADA Conference April 3-6 stop by SuperFanHigh Inc's (www.superfanhigh.com) Session #9 "Today's Technology for Athletic Directors: Moving Past Email and Websites to Connect and Engage your Students, Staff, Fans and Sponsors!" on Monday, April 4, 2016 at 2pm in the Spring Lake Ballroom to learn new and simple ways of connecting to today's modern fan. ★





# A Response to Concussion

A year ago I published an article on both the legitimacy and hysteria around concussions in sports. Injuries, including concussions, are a reality in sports that no parent, coach, league or student-athlete should ignore. Like most things in life, there are risks associated with any decision, and like most things of value, there is a cost.

To briefly recap my article that was published in Texas Coach magazine in February 2015:

- 1). Concussions happen in virtually every sport, and in many common, daily activities such as bicycling, skateboarding, tree climbing, skiing, etc.
- 2). Our athletic department takes concussions very seriously. Our coaches across all sports and our athletic trainers care greatly for the health of our kids. Concussions require wisdom, honesty and partnership between players, parents, trainers, coaches, teachers and administrators.
- 3). Kids playing competitive sports (even contact sports... which, I'd argue most sports are contact sports... some use pads) is important to their development. You're not being an irresponsible parent for letting, even encouraging, your kid to play competitive sports. To forego, and in my opinion, rob kids of the opportunities to develop into men and women for fear of concussions is disheartening.
- 4). 95% (conservatively) of all high school student-athletes will not play competitive sports after high school.

The movie, *Concussion*, is about Dr. Bennet Omalu's discovery of a brain disorder in former NFL player Mike Webster's brain that he coined CTE (chronic traumatic encephalopathy), and Dr. Omalu's fight to get the NFL to acknowledge that CTE was real and wasn't doing enough about it. Dr. Omalu was the first to publish an article on this disorder and has done incredible work to continue to advance the public's and medical community's awareness of CTE.

The movie received mix reviews and I was somewhat hesitant to see it myself,

in large part due to my ignorance of Dr. Omalu's work. After seeing *Concussion*, I shared with many people that it was a movie worth seeing, and, apart from the final scene of the movie offering evidence of why most were frustrated to see it in the first place, thought it was very educational.

Dr. Omalu's opinions on football are well known - we shouldn't let kids play the game. He believes that developing brains can't handle the trauma that comes from the tackles and blocks that are inherent to the game — even if concussions are avoided. His argument is simple: we restrict certain behaviors like smoking and drinking that we know are harmful to young people's vulnerable, developing bodies and brains. "We have given up old practices in the name of safety and progress," he writes — "except when it comes to sports."

I am an Athletic Director and Head Football Coach. I will not pretend to know even a fraction of what Dr. Omalu knows about the brain, brain development and CTE. However, I am also a husband and father, and it is from this vantage point that I will argue a few of Dr. Omalu's opinions.

One, in the movie Dr. Omalu makes a statement, "God did not intend for humans to play football." I do not know the full context of his thought that led to this comment (if, indeed, Will Smith portrayed Dr. Omalu accurately in that comment), but there is no truth to support that claim. There are many things God intended and did not intend for us, but to make this claim towards a sport that provides many, many lifelong benefits to thousands of people who both played the sport and did/do not have CTE is a clear overstatement. Having children who play football (unlike Dr. Omalu), my wife and I both support the inherent positive values that the game teaches our sons. We train our children about risks and reward and we teach them that much of life development comes through doing hard things. Partner this with the truth that life itself cannot be void of pain, and

I think our parenting position is a fair one.

Two, the argument of comparing football to smoking and drinking is weak. Little, if any, evidence exists that smoking and drinking are good for a developing mind and body. We know the down-sides to those actions. Unlike smoking and drinking, competitive sports (including football) offer tremendous upside. A high percentage of our nation's current and former political, business, military and medical leaders played competitive, contact sports (including football) through high school and/or college, and the lessons they learned on the field and court helped shaped them into the leaders they became.

Where I completely support Dr. Omalu is in the math of those who go on to play complete, contact sports for many years in college and beyond. At those levels, it becomes simple math and science. If I were to put on a helmet every day as a profession, knock heads with other guys in the same profession who are 6'2" 260 lbs, can run like thoroughbreds and hit like wrecking balls, I would understand how the risks are far greater for long-term effects from multiple concussions.

In my first couple of years of coaching, I was challenged by a parent who stated, "Until you have kids of your own, you won't understand." He was right. And while the context of that discussion had nothing to do with concussions, CTE or even injuries, it is applicable to my opinions on this subject. Now that I have three children, my perspective on life has changed. And it's in that perspective that I hope we don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. Football, like other competitive, contact sports is important. Like life, those sports are hard and carry risk. We need to be smart about mitigating some of that risk while still allowing our children to develop and grow into men and women that will lead and serve our communities well. ★

*Beck Brydon, Director of Athletics,  
Regents School of Austin  
February 15, 2016*



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