

MSHSLconnect

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League to unveil new technologies

PRIOR TO THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR, the Minnesota State High School League's Board of Directors established a strategic mission plan and goal setting that included an improved technological infrastructure and presence to support the needs of member schools, students and community members. What began as a journey of discussions, visioning exercises and valued input from stakeholders has morphed into the reality of something special is close in store.

In July, the League is expected to unveil the first phase of a much-anticipated public-facing website that brings updated technology features to a platform that not only provides management tools for member schools and League Staff, but also offers informational services to participants, their fans and the media that cover them.

"The League is looking forward to providing technology services that align with what member schools and public stakeholders expect in today's technology-rich world," said Laura Mackenthun, the League's director of technology.

The journey toward new technology has lasted more than a year. Identifying and organizing needs while matching them with audiences was critical in the initial steps. This was accomplished by working with member schools through Area Meetings, advisory groups and input provided by many others.

The project gained significant momentum in December when the League's Board of Directors approved an agreement with Gravity Works to build new technology systems and structures. Gravity Works, a Michigan-based company, is experienced in building websites and tools for state-level organizations, colleges, universities and non-profit organizations. A Gravity Works team has been assigned to the project and has worked closely with League Staff throughout the rebuilding process. Gravity Works has provided work in three areas:

- The building of a public-facing website
- Building management tools for member schools and League Staff
- Providing maintenance as needed on parts of the current website until new tools are built.

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Featured News



Loss of handshakes can create other forms of sportsmanship

By Dr. Karissa Niehoff, NFHS

THE “NEW NORMAL” is one of the many terms we hear repeatedly as the country begins its return to normal activities from the COVID-19 pandemic. Keeping six feet apart from other people, wearing a mask and frequent washing of hands are three of those important warnings. And then there is the new “no-no” that cuts at the heart of high school sports—the handshake. Shaking hands has been a part of our culture for centuries and a mainstream of high school sports forever. It is hard to imagine high school sports without handshakes.

In addition to emotional displays among team members involving handshakes, high-fives and hugs, the handshake has been a way of demonstrating good sportsmanship toward the opponent. In wrestling, for instance, shaking hands before a match is a part of the rules, which, of course, will have to be relaxed for the coming season. There are handshakes at the coin toss in football and before the opening tap in basketball. After a hard-fought, back-and-forth tennis match, players meet at the net to shake hands—congratulating each other for their efforts. The actions are the same after golfers battle each other for 18 holes—removing the cap and shaking hands.

These age-old practices demonstrate respect for the opponent, and in the case of postgame handshakes, graciousness in victory or defeat.

The emotions in high school sports are often off the chart, with end-of-game celebrations by players, coaches and fans involving handshakes, high-fives and hugs. So, as the early phases of return to sports occur this fall, how do we meet social distance guidelines and continue to exhibit emotions and emphasize sportsmanship, which typically have involved touching between individuals?

While the social-distancing and no-contact guidelines are necessary—at least for the short term—to diminish the spread of the virus, they should not dampen the enthusiasm and emotion by everyone involved with high school sports. We hope these types of restrictions will be lifted at some point down the road, but for now, this is our “new normal.”

The absence of these time-honored ways to express respect for the opponent does not diminish the importance of displaying sportsmanship in high school sports. In fact, we believe concern for fairness

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voices *we asked, you answered*

Among the end-of-the-year salutes, school activities administrators, the ones typically overseeing those presentations behind the scenes, are deserving of festive send offs, too. The League caught up with two retiring ADs and posed this question:

“What will you cherish most about your service and role as an activities administrator?”

PATTI WELDON | Robbinsdale Armstrong

“After a satisfying teaching and coaching career for 19 years, I concluded that I yearned for something more. I loved being a person who took the initiative to lead others with my ability to educate and influence. This led to a position in athletic administration for the past 17 years. I hope it can be said I left a legacy about benefiting the students at Armstrong High School in a variety of ways. Whether it was creating the foundation for education-based athletics and hiring coaching who embrace that philosophy with clear expectations and high standards for themselves and the students they work with, or expanding opportunities for our students to participate in athletic programs, fine arts and club activities. Those opportunities for extra-curricular activities provided situations for student-athletes to develop leadership skills that not only helped serve as positive ambassadors for our school, but also established guidelines to develop lifelong qualities and values to become outstanding citizens in our communities. I worked hard every day to do the best I could to create a positive and rewarding environment for our athletes and coaches. Care, effort, and compassion are more important and longer lasting than winning state titles. Doing what was right and best for all students and coaches, all the time, is what I will cherish the most, and hopefully, will be remembered as my legacy to Armstrong high School.”



STEVE BENGTON | Warroad

“I think the single biggest thing I will cherish will be the friendships I have created and also all of the people this position has allowed me to meet. Athletic directors are truly a special breed and only fellow directors completely understand what the job entails. Through this understanding many lifelong friendships have been created. I also will miss the coaches, athletes, officials and everything that is associated with high school athletics. It was an unbelievable experience to be the AD of Warroad High School and I will always bleed black and gold. Go Warriors!”





Outgoing Board Members



Bonnie Spohn Schmaltz



Rob Carpentier



Eric Lehtola



Kris DeClerk-Thompson



Jill Johnson



Joel Boyd

Incoming Board Members



Ceil McDonald



Dawn Engebretson



Bill Tauer

Activities administrators retiring

With the 2019-20 school year drawing to a close, the Minnesota State High School League salutes the activities administrators that have retired during the school year or will do so at the end of the month. The League, along with the Minnesota Interscholastic Activities Administrators Association, the more than 500 member schools, participants and communities thank you for your service and leadership. Best wishes to all in the next chapter of your journeys.



Steve Bengston
Warroad



William Feuchtenberger
Southland



Marc Helmrichs
Pequot Lakes



Dave Mergens
St Paul Humboldt



Craig Rayman
Glenville/Emmons



Patti Weldon
Robbinsdale Armstrong

NFHS news

- For the first time in its history, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) will host an abridged, virtual version of its annual Summer Meeting to accommodate public-gathering restrictions brought on by the Coronavirus.

<https://nfhs.org/articles/nfhs-summer-meeting-to-be-held-virtually-this-year/>

- The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Ice Hockey Rules Committee proposed a total of five rules modifications as a result of its meeting April 27-28, which were all subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors. Measures to reduce the risk of injury for participants and to provide an additional scenario for instant replay usage comprise the prominent components of the 2020-21 high school ice hockey rules changes.

<https://nfhs.org/articles/risk-minimization-modified-instant-replay-headline-2020-21-high-school-ice-hockey-rules-changes/>



do you know?

- Who hit four home runs during the 1968 baseball state tournament?
- In a three-year period, the League becomes the first state association to do what?
- What feat did Rochester John Marshall accomplish from 1972-79?
- In 1950, what was the registration fee for a sports official?
- True or False?
- In 1944, an eligible high school student that had entered the military service prior to graduation and who had received an honorable discharge was eligible to participate in League activities.

Answers on page 4

New technologies

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Extensive work has transpired in the past months with League Staff committed to working diligently in keeping the project advancing at high levels. League Staff have signed off on numerous pages and Gravity Works remains in full development mode. Other web pages continue to be worked on through drafts and revisions.

As member schools are completing their annual registrations, that data will build the database that creates a page for each school and a page for each activity as a school. The Transfers and Reviews portal continues to be tested and reviewed. Alignment with bylaws, providing notifications, tracking, sorting and filtering are key parts of the process. The Coaches Education portal is also being built. This portal provides activities for coaches including mandatory and optional trainings and submissions of forms for coaches of all activities. It also is crucial in providing reporting to ADs and League Staff on the status of these activities.

By later this month, League Staff will have the ability to log into the portal and work through testing and final revisions with Gravity Works prior to the scheduled release.

Phase 1 of the League's projected mid-July release will include:

- A new public-facing website with updated color and artwork
- Dashboards for League Staff, member schools and coaches
- Directories
- Transfers and Appeals portals
- Coaches Education

"We are excited about the new systems that will be rolled out with Phase 1 this summer," Mackenthun said. "This will provide tools for member schools to manage activities that support student involvement and better meets the needs of those who use the public website. Providing management tools and education for more than 500 member schools and their 22,000 coaches will benefit the more than 240,000 students that participate in League activities. Additionally, the public will have access to current news, information about member schools, activity information, records and a state tournament archive."

Phase 2 of the project will be introduced later this year. It is expected to include:

- Brackets
- Fine Arts judges registration
- Media credentials registration
- Dashboard for Administrative Regions
- Competitive sections
- Games wanted
- Officials registration
- Communications modules

Ensuing phases are expected to follow with the building of additional tools and functionality.

The League welcomes feedback during this exciting and anticipatory time of launching updated technologies. To submit feedback please contact Laura Mackenthun at lmackenthun@mshsl.org or Tim Leighton at tleighon@mshsl.org.

The League thanks you for your continued support and partnership during this technology project.

Handshakes

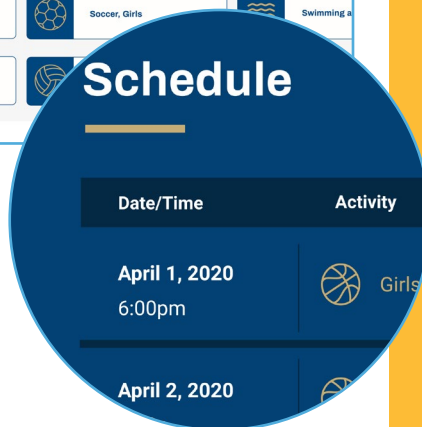
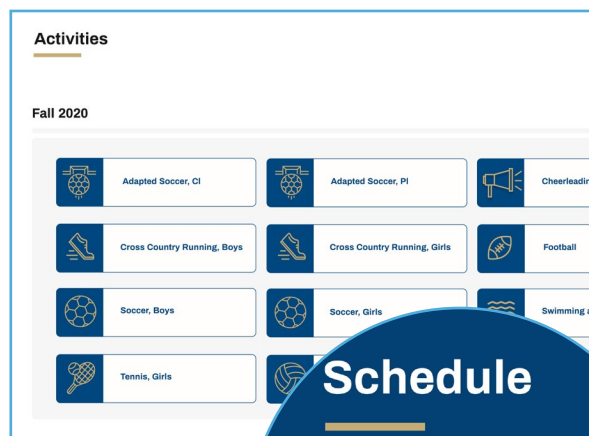
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and displays of kindness, respect and graciousness will be more pronounced once high school sports resume; however, the methods of sharing these feelings will be different.

Although perhaps not as endearing as a handshake, high-five or hug, there are other ways to express these feelings and emotions—for the opponent as well as teammates.

Some alternatives to consider are a slight bow with the palms pressed together, an air high-five, a smile and quick wave, a double-tap of the right hand across the heart and a wink with the thumbs up. Certainly, there are other possibilities—in fact, teams could develop their own methods for demonstrating sportsmanship to their opponents and celebrating big plays or victories with teammates. Through their resilience and great spirit, we look forward to how the millions of participants in high school sports and activities will accept this challenge.

There will be many concessions necessary to resume athletic competition, and shaking hands is one that must cease—at least for now. However, let's view this change as an opportunity to find new ways to showcase sportsmanship in high school sports.



quiz answers

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1. Cretin's John Pack
2. Sanction Robotics (2012) and Clay Target (2014)
3. The Rockets won eight consecutive Big 9 Conference boys track and field championships. In that span, the Rockets were the runner-up at the state meet five times.
4. It was \$1.50 for one sport and \$2 for two. Reciprocity to officiate in Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota was 50 cents each.
5. True