



# Respect in Sports

Volume 1 Issue 4

A monthly newsletter providing information for anyone involved in youth sports in Minnesota.

## Inside this issue:

SAM Member Spotlight: North Country Region USA Volleyball **2**

The Essence of Sportsmanship **2**

2006 Summit for Youth Sport Leaders—Schedule **2**

An Ounce of Prevention **3**

Looking at the game from an Umpire's Perspective **3**

Focus on Sportsmanship **4**

Book Review—*The Ripken Way* **4**

Officials Training Resources **5**

The Sports Alliance of Minnesota is a coalition of sports organizations whose mission is to provide tools for creating a positive sports environment.

[www.sportsalliancemn.org](http://www.sportsalliancemn.org)

## 2006 Summit for Youth Sport Leaders

On Saturday, November 11, 2006, the Sports Alliance of Minnesota (SAM) will host the **2006 Summit for Youth Sports Leaders**. At the Summit, community sports leaders from around the state of Minnesota will address current issues in youth sports and present ideas to help maintain and create a positive youth sport environment for children of all ages and ability levels. The Summit will be held at Eisenhower Community Center, 1001 Highway 7, Hopkins, MN 55305 from 8:00 am –3:00 pm. Pre-registration is **\$25**. Registration after October 20 will be **\$35**. SAM members receive a special discounted price. Fee includes lunch, conference materials and a conference gift. Register online at [www.sportsalliancemn.org](http://www.sportsalliancemn.org). See advertisement on page 2 of this newsletter.

## Integrity: loyalty to moral principles

By Deb Weinreis, MRPA

Just by definition, it is a characteristic that we all strive for – whether it be in our personal or professional life. And for anyone involved in officiating, it is the fundamental base between being a good or great official. The integrity of officiating can only be defined by the integrity and conduct of its officials.

There is so much more to officiating than just knowing the rules and being able to apply them using proper mechanics. People involved in officiating must also follow a code of conduct much like coaches, participants, and spectators if they want to move to the next level. To the average fan there may not be much distinction between a good referee and a great referee. But there are many intangibles that really do separate the two. And understanding the subtle differences between the two will not only help in officiating, it can apply to many other aspects of your life as well –

### Good

Praised  
Administrates  
Knows and applies the rules  
Knows what to call  
Knows the game  
Honest, ethical, reliable, industrious  
Avoids impropriety  
Communication skills  
Gives best effort  
Enjoys officiating  
Properly dressed and groomed  
Takes care of business  
Proper mechanics  
Interacts with work crew  
Hustles  
Competitors do not violate the rules  
Correct and impartial judgment  
Consistent in calling  
Confident in decisions  
Composed  
Controls misconduct  
Minimizes mistakes  
Remembered for performance  
Accepts corrective criticism  
Works to improve

### Great

Respected  
Facilitates  
Understands the spirit of the rules  
Knows what NOT to call  
Knows how the game is played  
Beyond reproach in character  
Keeps in mind perception is reality  
People Skills  
Knows the game is huge to someone  
Makes the competition enjoyable  
Spic-and-span  
Pays attention to business at hand  
Polished mechanics  
Works as a team, not as an individual  
Hustles without looking rushed  
Neither team gains an unfair advantage  
Unquestioned integrity  
Not afraid to make the tough call  
Looks and acts confident (but not arrogant)  
Has calming effect on everyone  
Prevents misconduct  
Does not make the same mistakes  
Not remembered at all  
Objectively evaluates weaknesses  
Helps other officials improve

What are you doing to make a difference between being Good vs. Great?

## Founding Members

Hennepin County Human  
Services and Public Health  
Department

Minnesota Amateur Sports  
Commission

Minnesota Hockey

Minnesota Recreation and  
Park Association

Minnesota Sports  
Federation

Minnesota State High  
School League

Minnesota Youth Athletic  
Services

Minnesota Youth Soccer  
Association

North Country Region USA  
Volleyball

Tobacco Free Youth  
Recreation

Respect Sports

Thank you to our  
sponsors:



## **The Essence of Sportsmanship**

Reprinted from Michael Josephson's Commentaries with permission of the Josephson Institute of Ethics. ©2006 [www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org). To receive Mr. Josephson's Commentaries in a free weekly e-newsletter, please visit [www.charactercounts.org/knxtoc.htm](http://www.charactercounts.org/knxtoc.htm).

*January, 2006.....*On the verge of the 2006 Winter Olympic Games, it's worth telling the story of Eugenio Monti, an Italian bobsledder carrying the hopes of his nation in the 1964 Olympics.

During the competition the British team headed by Tony Nash had the fastest time in the first run. Unfortunately, before they could launch again, they discovered that a critical axle bolt had broken, disabling their sled. There wasn't enough time to get another bolt and it appeared he would be disqualified.

Monti heard this and as soon as he finished his run he took the axle bolt from his sled and sent it up to Nash. Nash used it and went on to win the gold medal while Monti had to settle for the bronze.

Monti was viciously criticized in the Italian press for giving up the gold, but he was steadfast. "Nash didn't win because I gave him the bolt," he said. "He won because he had the fastest run."

Every real competitor wants to win, but Olympic medalist John Naber says a true sportsman who believes in the Olympic ideal wants to win fairly and against his best opponent on his opponent's best day.

Though Monti won the gold medal at the next Winter Olympics, he isn't known mainly because he won four years later. It's not the wins but the willingness to lose that earned him a prominent place in Olympic history. His act represents sportsmanship at its best: the pursuit of victory with honor.

It's hard to imagine an American athlete today who would jeopardize a potential medal by a similar act, but how proud would you be if it were your chills?

Today, with so many athletes and coaches willing to cheat or behave badly just to win, we need reminders of the noble potential of sports.

## **September Peak**

*Reprinted from BREATHING SPACE, Respiratory Disease Newsletter, MDH*

Please remember that in Minnesota the number of hospitalizations due to asthma peaks in September. This pattern has been consistent since 1998, the earliest year for which MDH (Minnesota Department of Health) has data on asthma hospitalization trends. Though there is no single, proven reason for this peak, it is believed to be influenced by respiratory infections and increased pollen and mold counts.

Minnesota's interactive asthma action plan can be found online at:  
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cded/asthma/ActionPlan.html>



## **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Summit for Youth Sports Leaders**

Saturday, November 11, 2006  
Eisenhower Community Center  
Hopkins, MN 55305  
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

### **Keynote Speaker: Mark Dienhart**

St. Thomas University Executive Vice President, Chief Adm Officer

**Session I:** Sportsmanship: Expectations for Parents, Coaches and Officials

**Session II:** Healthy Youth Development: Training Practices and Healthy Policies

**Breakout Sessions:** Coach's Asthma Clipboard, Screen Smart and WIN!, What do Kids See from the Field/Court/Rink?

The 2005 Summit introduced the Sports Alliance of Minnesota (SAM) and started the conversation around a positive youth sports environment. In 2006 current practices and ideas on sportsmanship and healthy youth development will be gathered and discussed. These materials will then be available in SAM's toolkit for statewide distribution. Pre-registration is \$25. After October 20, registration is \$35. Register online at [www.sportsalliancemn.org](http://www.sportsalliancemn.org).

## Coaching Tip—Integrity

"I think integrity is very, very important. To me it is more important than wins and losses. When you play or coach the game, it is very important that you respect the game and do what is right at all times. Your integrity or lack of, is what defines you as a person, and what you are is the way you will be remembered. So if you have integrity, you will respect the game and, in return, the game and all the people involved, will respect you." - *Tink Larson, Waseca Varsity Baseball Coach, MSHSL Hall of Fame Member, MN Baseball Hall of Fame Member.*

## Member Spotlight: North Country Region (NCR) USA Volleyball



North Country Region (NCR) USA Volleyball was organized in 1975 as a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting widespread interest in the sport of volleyball, to increase the number of participants in the sport, and develop skillful playing of the game. NCR is made up of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the upper peninsula of Michigan. There are 40 regions throughout the United States. Our youth program, more commonly referred to as Junior Olympic Volleyball, is the largest sector of our Region with over 12,000 boys and girls ranging in ages 10 through 18. There are many opportunities for playing: junior girls, junior boys and adults. North Country has a strong Junior program with opportunities for all skill levels through a variety of Junior clubs and teams. Juniors are selected for clubs/teams following tryouts which begin in the early fall. Competition consists of local tournament play to larger national events. New clubs form yearly. Our Adult program consists of Coed Tournaments, Reverse 4's, mini Friday night three's events and Educational Clinics for those adults that feel they would like to fine tune their skills or just learn the game. Educational Clinics are also offered to boys within our Region to help get them interested in the sport and get them ready for their season that gets underway in mid-February.

For more information log on to [www.ncrusav.org](http://www.ncrusav.org).

## An Ounce of Prevention

Submitted by Deborah Istre, Sr. Health Promotion Specialist, Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department

Everyone is familiar with sayings such as "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," "It's an accident waiting to happen," "Better safe than sorry," or "Look before you leap." These old proverbs are good advice for all those involved in youth sports. It is after an injury or incident of some kind that we realize what we could have done something to prevent it.

Players, parents, coaches, officials, and spectators all share in the responsibility of keeping our young athletes safe and healthy. At the very least, all should be respectful of the game, and everyone on and off the field or court. Good sportsmanship should be taught, and modeled in all actions and words.

### Health and safety tips for coaches

Seek training in how to work with youth, and know age-related abilities and sport-specific skills development.

Model and promote healthy behaviors.

Use warm-up and cool-down exercises at practices and on game day to minimize injuries.

Provide water to ensure players are adequately hydrated.

Make first-aid kits and ice packs a part of the team equipment

Know how to treat various injuries including concussion, asthma attack, or a diabetic reaction, and learn CPR techniques.

Ensure good prevention policies are in place concerning various infractions and the consequences for such behavior. They should address alcohol and tobacco use; abusive and disruptive behavior; violence; and bad language by any player, coach, parent, or spectator.

Make sure equipment meets standards set by the National Operating Committee for Athletic Equipment.

Check playing areas for rocks, holes, or broken glass, which could cause player injury.

Know the location of the nearest telephone.

Check surrounding gates that could prevent an emergency vehicle from entering the area.

Be aware of changing weather conditions, and act appropriately.

### Health and safety tips for parents

Be good role models of healthy lifestyle choices and positive behaviors.

Provide healthy food choices.

Encourage adequate hydration before and after games.

Make sure sports equipment fits properly.

Don't forget the sunscreen.

Provide positive support to your kids.

Participation in youth sports should be the start of a lifetime of fun and good health. Help make this a positive experience by teaching the rules of the game and reinforcing healthy lifestyles, attitudes, behaviors, and responsibility. Sweating the small stuff with prevention will pay large dividends in the end.

For more information, check out these websites:

Coaches Kit: <[www.hennepin.mn.us](http://www.hennepin.mn.us)> keyword search *Coaches Kit*

Concussions: <[www.cdc.gov/ncip/tbi/coaches\\_tool\\_kit.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncip/tbi/coaches_tool_kit.htm)>

Asthma: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/asthma/documents/coaches.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/asthma/documents/coaches.pdf)

National Operating Committee for Standards on Athletic Equipment: [www.nocsae.org/](http://www.nocsae.org/)

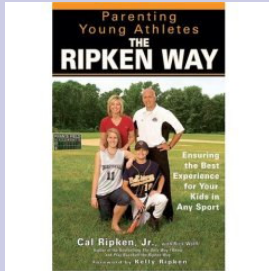
## Looking at the game from an umpire's perspective

**Author: Bryan Bloodworth, Sports Editor for the Pantagraph, Bloomington, IL**

Now, the shoe is on the other foot. And, believe it or not, the fit is pretty comfortable. After spending countless years as a youth baseball coach, I turned my attention to umpiring. The thought was that after questioning and criticizing umpires for so many years, it would only be fair to stand in their shoes and work the game like it should be worked.

It also would afford me the opportunity to help youth baseball by helping fill the void created by a lack of umpires, especially at the youth travel team level. And it would be payback for the years I got caught up in the heat of the battle and tried to do my umpiring from the dugout.

*Continued on page 4*



**Parenting Young Athletes the Ripken Way: Ensuring the Best Experience for Your Kids in Any Sport (Hardcover)**  
by [Cal Ripken](#), [Rick Wolf](#)

Few athletes embody sportsmanship and class as perfectly as Cal Ripken, Jr. Since he retired from baseball in 2001, Ripken has devoted his time to coaching kids, including his own two children. His daughter, Rachel, plays basketball; his son, Ryan, plays baseball. The Babe Ruth League even changed the name of its largest division (more than 700,000 five-to-twelve year-olds) from Bambino Baseball to Cal Ripken Baseball in 1991. But Ripken is troubled by what he sees in youth sports: a competitive intensity that removes the element of fun from playing. Drawing from his experiences as a father, a player, and a coach to his charges at Ripken Baseball, the legend offers his insights and advice in *Parenting Young Baseball Players the Ripken Way*.

**Integrity is what we do, what we say, and what we say we do. Don Galer**

**Ed Vargo,**  
umpire: "We're supposed to be perfect our first day on the job and show constant improvement."

## FOCUS ON SPORTSMANSHIP

*Editor's Note: The following letter was presented by the senior Blair High School (Nebraska) girls soccer players to their parents and teammates at the preseason meeting.*

Dear Parents and Players,

A wise man by the name of Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." In order to successfully work together this season, we believe a key factor for our team is sportsmanship exercised both by players on the field and fans off the field.

To the team: it is up to us to take the lead and to determine the character that we will possess not only as a group of people, but also as an image for the entire school and community. As players both on and off the field, we ask that only constructive comments may be heard and that destructive comments may be kept quiet. Taunting gets you nowhere, let your game do the talking. Most of all, we want this to be a fun and successful season, which will result from playing hard while maintaining positive attitudes.

To the parents: you are the people that influence us the most. We look up to you as role models, which is why we expect so much from you. As daughters, we look to you for guidance, and as athletes, we look to you for support. Please remember to refrain from using profanity and degrading behavior. In a recent study, it was found that 0% of all calls made by referees in soccer games were ever changed due to parental comments. Above all, we ask that you show respect to our team, the other parents, the officials, and the opposing team.

As we approach a new season, we would like to ask both the players and the parents to implement good sportsmanship in all aspects of the game. With the benefit of positive playing and cheering, we know the season will go well. Thank you for helping make our season a success.

Sincerely,

The Seniors

"Improve your performance by improving your attitude."

At Blair High School  
**Sportsmanship is an Expectation!!**  
So please.....

Let the Players, Play  
Let the Coaches, Coach  
Let the Officials, Officiate  
Let the Spectators, Be Positive  
And together Let's Be.....Committed to Excellence  
Thank you and Enjoy Tonight's Game.

### *Looking at the Game from an umpire's perspective* Continued from page 3

This is actually my third year of wearing blue and nothing has changed. There are still the perceived blown calls (depending which side a fan is rooting for), overzealous coaches, parents and players, and occasional loud-mouth hecklers in the stands.

Sometimes, the comments from the bleachers can be rather amusing and show the baseball ignorance of a person regarding the rules of the game. "How can he be out (on a force play) when they didn't tag him?"

Other times, the remarks can be cutting or disturbing, "You cheater." That comment was directed at me by a youth player after a call on a play went against him.

Most times you brush off those comments by players as emotional outbursts made in the heat of a competitive moment.

It also brought back to memory an article that has been printed in numerous publications, including this column space. It first appeared in a book, "A Third Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul" in 1996.

While it was later proven to be urban legend through research by my good friend and colleague, Andy Amey of the Terre Haute (Ind.) Tribune Star; it bears being passed again as a reminder to coaches, parents and players of all sports at all levels as they trek through their seasons.

The story deals with an incident involving a Little League umpire in Terre Haute who was accidentally struck in the head by a thrown bat from a player. He continued to work the game, but later that night experienced dizziness and headaches.

One man practicing  
sportsmanship is better than  
a hundred teaching it..  
Knute Rockne

## OFFICIALS TRAINING

*American Sports  
Education Program  
(ASEP)*

[www.asep.com](http://www.asep.com)

The American Sports  
Education Program  
trains youth sports  
administrators.

*Minnesota Youth  
Athletic Services*

[www.myas.org](http://www.myas.org)

Minnesota Youth  
Athletic Services has  
trained thousands of  
basketball referees and  
baseball umpires.

*Minnesota SRC*

[www.minnesotasrc.org](http://www.minnesotasrc.org)

The Minnesota State  
Referee Committee  
provides training for all  
levels of soccer  
referees.

*North Country Region  
USA Volleyball*

[www.ncrusav.org](http://www.ncrusav.org)

Training provided for  
youth and adult  
officials.

Visit the SAM Web site  
[www.sportsalliancemn.org](http://www.sportsalliancemn.org) for  
additional resources.

### *Looking at the Game from an umpire's perspective*      *Continued from page 4*

He went to the hospital where he was held overnight for observation. During his stay in the hospital, the umpire wrote the following letter to the parents of Little Leaguers:

I am an umpire. I don't do it for a living, but only on Saturday and Sundays for fun. With all the fun I've had, there is still something that bothers me about the job. Some of you folks don't understand why I'm here.

Some of you feel I'm sure there to exert authority over your sons. For that reason, you often yell at me when I make mistakes or you encourage your sons to say things that hurt my feelings. How many of you understand that I try to be perfect? But, no matter how hard I try, I can't be perfect.

Let me tell you about the last game I worked. There was one real close call that ended the game. The runner from the home team was trying to score on a passed ball. The catcher chased the ball down and threw to the pitcher covering the plate. The pitcher made the tag and the runner was called out.

As I was getting my equipment to leave, I overheard one of the parents comment: "It's too bad the kids have to lose games because of rotten umpires. That was one of the lousiest calls I've ever seen."

I felt terrible when I got home. The purpose of Little League is to teach baseball skills to young people. Obviously, a team which does not play well in a given game, yet is given the opportunity by their coach and parents to blame that loss on an umpire is doing the worst kind of injustice to that youngster.

Rather than teaching responsibility, such and attitude conveyed to the youngsters by the parents and coaches is fostering an improper outlook toward the ideas of the game itself. This irresponsibility is bound to carry over to future years.

This afternoon after the game I wanted to quit, but my wife reminded me of another situation that occurred last week.

I was umpiring behind the plate for a pitcher, who pantomimed his displeasure at any call on a borderline pitch that was not in his team's favor.

One could sense that he wanted the crowd to realize that he was a fine, talented player who was doing his best to get along, but that I was a black-hearted villain who was working against him.

The kid continued pitching for two innings, while at the same time yelling at his teammates who dared to make a mistake. For two innings, the manager watched this. But when the kid came to the dugout in the top of the third inning, the manager called him aside.

The lecture went like this, "Listen son, it is time you made a decision. You can be an umpire, an actor or a pitcher. But you can only be one at a time when you are playing for me. Right now, it is your job to pitch. And you are basically doing a lousy job.

"Leave the acting to actors, the umpiring to the umpires or you won't do any pitching here. Now, what is it going to be?" The kid chose to pitch and went on to win the game when it was over, the kid followed me to my car.

Fighting his hardest to hold back tears, he apologized for his actions and thanked me for umpiring the game. He said he had learned a lesson he would never forget.

I can't help but wonder how many fine young men are missing their chance to develop into outstanding ballplayers because their parents encourage them to spend time umpiring, rather than working harder to play the game as it should be played.

According to the legend, the umpire who wrote the above letter never worked another game. He died of a brain concussion the morning after writing the letter.

While this story has not been documented as ever happening by folks in Terre Haute, it still serves as a sobering reminder to everyone – players, coaches, parents and fans – that the emphasis in sports, regardless of the level, should be about a certain degree of sportsmanship and having fun.

It shouldn't be about criticizing or blaming game officials for doing a job the majority of people would never consider. Maybe, that's why there is a shortage of officials in all sports around the country.

Bryan Bloodworth is the sports editor of the Pantagraph, Bloomington, IL. He can be contacted at [bbloodworth@pantagraph.com](mailto:bbloodworth@pantagraph.com)