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Event Management Suggestions

Efficient management of interscholastic athletic contests, both at home and away, is an increasingly important and paramount aspect of administering a high school athletic program. The following recommendations have been assembled to assist schools in preparing adequately for crowd control at athletic contests.

1. Pre-season and pre-game responsibilities are shared by both schools competing in any athletic contest.
2. Responsibilities during the game are shared by both schools, with the home school assuming the major role. At neutral sites, dual responsibilities exist and should be coordinated.
3. Post-game responsibilities are shared by officials of both schools, local police and the citizens of the community.
4. Advance preparation of all details pertaining to athletic contests is necessary for efficient and effective administration.

PROCEDURES BEFORE THE GAME: Home School

1. Develop a written operational plan for each home event.
2. Contact the visiting school as early as possible to arrange for a meeting or telephone conversation to discuss the game, including prior and existing school/community control problems. Time and location of pregame security meeting should be confirmed.
3. Discuss any situations peculiar to your stadium (or gym or off-site venue) and send a map of the stadium (venue) and parking areas to the visiting school.
4. Formulate plans which provide directions and instructions for all visiting personnel regarding safest routes, parking, seating and dismissal from bleachers, and loading and unloading buses and automobiles. Be alert to the impact of new construction projects. Travel the visiting team departure route prior to game time. Predetermine departure times and routes of visiting spectators.
5. Evaluate the type of/use of pregame music.
6. Evaluate the conditions and factors of on-site construction projects and the resultant impact on entrance and departure procedures.
7. Evaluate the use of separate spectator entrance/departure gates/ doors.
8. Have parking areas well lighted. Arrange for on-site parking of visitor's autos and buses.
9. Have stadium or gym secure and all gates locked prior to the scheduled opening time.
10. Arrange for supervision to continue until after all visitors have left the area, including the team bus.
11. Prepare a supervision chart and inform in writing the assigned personnel of their duties before the game. (Persons on duty from both schools should have some type of identification- jackets, staff shirts, arm bands, badges, etc.)
12. Evaluate location of spectator seating and team locker rooms. Teams should not enter/leave in front of opponent seating area. Arrange appropriate accommodations for the handicapped.
13. Lightning policy/procedure should be available and reviewed by coaches and officials.
14. Provide for adequate police supervision before, during and after the game.
15. Be sure that there is both inside and outside police supervision at games including off-site parking areas and streets.
16. Be sure to contact and make arrangements with local police departments at the highest level possible in order that adequate police protection will be available to control the spectators at the conclusion of the contest. Develop a plan of action in cooperation with the police for measures to be taken in the event of trouble. Review

prior and existing school/ community control problems, along with gang activity. Crises prevention should be part of the review.

17. Develop in consultation with police, emergency evacuation plans relating to activated fire alarms, bomb threats, security breaches, and acts of violence.
18. Arrange for diverting traffic away from the athletic field or gym so that spectators leaving the game can do so quickly.
19. Work with local police to provide “no parking” signs around the stadium or gym, blocking off streets if needed, arranging for one-way traffic where necessary.
20. Give specific instructions to auxiliary police, ushers and faculty members hired by the school, concerning their responsibilities; designate someone to provide further instructions and direction to paid auxiliary police, ushers and faculty members at the game.
21. Develop a supervision chart for police coverage before, during and after the game. Police supervision of the on-site and off-site parking areas during the game should not be forgotten.
22. Stagger police scheduling, so that all police will not arrive and leave at the same time.
23. Suggest a suitable location to detain anyone arrested by the police until they can be taken away with the least amount of confusion.
24. All security personnel should be readily identifiable by the public. Prevention, not apprehension after trouble begins, should be emphasized.
25. Review the need for and the provision for metal detection equipment. All spectators should be screened - not just visitors. If such equipment is to be used, inform administrators of visiting school prior to the day of the event and admission screening. (This includes the use of police bomb dogs.
26. Make use of video technology whenever possible. Make sure that video technology continues to be used until the game site is emptied of the athletes, spectators and parents and the site is secured by the host school.
27. Arrange for supervision to continue until all visitors have left the area, including the team bus.
28. Depending on local conditions, you may wish to advise ticket sellers to screen for troublemakers and group agitators. In some communities, it may be necessary to consider the advisability of not admitting elementary and junior high students unless accompanied by adults.
29. Instruct the operator of school designated recording equipment to keep the camera operational during any/all incidents of inappropriate behavior, including time outs.
30. Have all special seating areas roped off prior to opening the gates. Use school service club members (monogram club, student council, etc.) for ushers and monitors of student sections and make sure that these students are rehearsed in their duties.
31. Provide reserved seats for bands. The amount of time they will have for halftime activities should be known to them and should be strictly observed.
32. Seat students from opposing schools in separate sections. Seating for home and visiting spectators should be adequate. Spectators should remain on their side of the field or gymnasium throughout the contest. Do not oversell the facility.
33. Arrange for school staff to assist with supervision of general admission section
34. Check fire code for seating capacity and other recommendations.
35. Assign a school employee to meet the visiting team when they arrive and to direct them to their dressing quarters.
36. Provide security measures to protect visitors’ clothing and valuables while the visitors are on the field or court. The playing field or court and the area immediately adjacent to it at all athletic contests shall be restricted to team members, coaches, managers, officials, and other parties necessary to the conduct of the game.
37. Faculty associates shall wear something distinctive so that they may easily be identified. Sufficient personnel shall be provided by the host school to enforce this regulation. The visiting school shall see that this rule is enforced in their area. Schools must bear a dual responsibility when playing at a neutral site.
38. Provide reserved parking for game officials and medical personnel.

39. Take care in the preparation, printing, and sale of athletic programs. All programs should have
40. correct names and jersey numbers of participants.
41. Statements concerning spectator behavior have proved effective. The following message has been adopted by the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations and may be considered for inclusion in game programs and should be announced several times throughout the game during breaks for time-outs; quarters; halves, etc.
 - a. These are high school athletes who are performing here tonight. They are friendly rivals as members of opposing teams. They are not enemies. This basically, is the theme of interscholastic athletics ... the idea of friendly competition. The visiting team tonight, and in every interscholastic game, is a guest of the home team. They are expected to be so regarded and so treated. The officials are people who, by agreement between competing teams, are assigned to administer the rules of the game. Their experience and their integrity qualify them for their part in this friendly interscholastic contest. This attitude of sportsmanship should be reflected by all spectators, too, no matter what their personal feelings of loyalty may be to one or the other of the teams in tonight's contest.
42. Have properly trained adult scorers and timers for officials at games. The same assistants should be used the entire season.
43. The announcer is a key person and carries a great deal of responsibility. What is said and how it is said may have serious effects on crowd behavior.
 - a. The game should be reported without showing favoritism to teams or players.
 - b. Proper language should be used always.
 - c. Announcers can show enthusiasm without losing control.
 - d. Plays, should not be anticipated.
 - e. Only those in charge of the event should be permitted to use the microphone.
 - f. Under no circumstances should officials' decisions be criticized directly or indirectly.
44. Visiting Schools must provide security in the stands to ensure that the bleachers are not being damaged during the game. Failure to comply could result in punitive actions which could include the cost to repair and/or replace the damaged bleachers. The host school must inspect these areas as soon as the bleachers are cleared after the game and immediately report any damage to the visiting school supervisors.
45. For evening events, be alert to possible loss of power. Have in place: a. Knowledge of the location of emergency energy resources. b. Exit plan for teams and spectators. Review plan with coaches, security staff, police, and custodians. c. Ticket refund plan. d. Available working flashlights.

VISITING SCHOOLS

1. Contact home school or neutral site manager to discuss game preparations and obtain information on:
 - a. safest route to and from stadium or gymnasium.
 - b. location of visitors' parking area.
 - c. visitors' entering and exit gates.
 - d. visitors' seating area.
 - e. prior and existing school/community control problems.
 - f. time and location of pregame security meeting.
 - g. facilities for the handicapped.
2. Consider transporting students by bus if there is inadequate parking at the stadium.
3. Student buses should have staff supervision.
4. Have adequate faculty and administrative supervision going to the game, at the game and after the game. Provide identification for school personnel. Establish an acknowledgment of attendance with home management.
5. Check on amount of time allotted for band or other halftime activities and adhere strictly to the time limit.

DUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide opportunities for cultural exchange between student bodies through assemblies.

2. Ask student councils to help by planning campaigns for spectator sportsmanship.
3. Plan assemblies to inform students about game rules or issue a book of rules and regulations so that everyone knows how to watch a game intelligently and knows what is expected of him. Utilize Physical Education classes to instruct these activities and extend the knowledge of the playing rules.
4. Any type of mascot shall be kept on the side of a school's rooting section.
5. Be alert to prior and existing community or cross-community and gang control problems.
 - a. Monitor and stop inappropriate chants and cheers.
6. Every effort should be made by both the host school and the visiting school supervisors to ensure that the student spectators are kept separated and do not go cross over into the designated home and visitor sections of the bleachers.

PLAYERS

The less notice the player takes of the spectators and the more he concentrates on his part in the game, the more absorbed the crowd will be and the less likely to misbehave.

1. Players should refrain from showing surprise or irritation at a call of an official. The official's ruling-just or unjust-should be accepted with politeness.
2. "Playing to the crowd" can cause trouble-particularly in basketball where the player's facial expressions are clearly visible to the bench and stands. Players should not communicate with the spectators.
3. Unsportsmanlike gesturing or the harassing of individual opponents should be avoided.
4. Substitutes on the bench should not heckle the opposing team.
5. The relationship of players to each other before, during and after the game affects and helps establish crowd rapport.

SCHOOL REPORTERS

1. Stories should be presented fairly and accurately.
2. Losses do not need to be explained or alibied.
3. Wins should not be over stressed.
4. School Reporters are encouraged to speak out for good sportsmanship.
5. Reporters should refrain from criticizing high school athletes in a school newspaper.

MEDIA

1. Should contact site director (home athletic director) in advance to request accommodations.
2. Should not enter the surrounding playing area whereby they may interfere with the players, officials or coaching staff.
3. Should be directed not to conduct post-game interviews in the playing area.

SPECTATORS

Spectator sportsmanship may be encouraged in the following ways:

1. Student councils can develop codes of sportsmanship.
2. Cheerleaders and bands can help promote good sportsmanship.
3. Proper sportsmanship must be clearly defined by the administration.
4. Sportsmanship trophies can be given to encourage good conduct.
5. Pep boosters can promote better sportsmanship.
6. Handbooks on regulations dealing with crowd conduct are helpful.
7. Disorderly persons should be removed promptly.
8. Posters can be used to stress courtesy and sportsmanship.
9. Noisemakers (of any kind) must not be permitted.
10. Drunkenness must not be permitted.
11. Students should sit as a group. Students and adult spectators who have a general knowledge of game rules and of officials' techniques and signals seldom cause disturbances at athletic contests.

Other Considerations:

1. The Threat:
 - Take all threats seriously.
 - An improperly handled threat can be worse than an actual incident.
 - A properly coordinated level of response thwarts the purpose of the threat.
2. Post a copy of the crowd control policy in a conspicuous place in the gym and/or lobby.
3. If prior circumstances indicate the possibility of problems, change the time of the game to the afternoon.
4. Prior to the event, evaluate the format of all music
5. Provide free admission to faculty members accompanying the visiting team. (Notice should be given.)
6. In gymnasium/arena settings, do not allow spectators in first row or rows of bleachers/seats. Reserve these seats for cheerleaders, administrators, security, press, or keep vacant.
7. Make use of video technology whenever possible.
8. Busses (team/spectator) * Unload/load/park in well-lighted, predetermined locations. * Vehicles from opposing schools not be together or intermixed. * Check prior to the end of the contest that the busses are in the proper location. * Portable mid-court security barriers (rope/movable fence/ personnel)
9. For indoor contests, at the end of the game consider: * Portable mid-court security barriers (rope/movable fence/ personnel) * Have losing team leave first. Hold winning team in seats (announce).
10. The following should be included as prohibited activities for all student sections, as part of all School, Leagues & Conferences Handbooks or Guidelines:
11. Booing officials or opponents at any time.
12. Holding up newspapers during the introduction of the opposing team and/or shouting "Who cares?" after each individual introduction.
13. Pointing and chanting "You, you, you" after fouls. Pointing to the goalkeeper and chanting "sieve" after a goal in ice hockey. Near the end of games, chanting "We're No. 1" or singing "Na, na, na, hey, hey, good-bye." If you think the cheers are questionable, stop them. Work with Student Leaders to encourage proper sportsmanship.