



Sports Risk and Safety

With the recent reduction in school funding, several districts have been faced with reducing or eliminating several levels of sports programs.

In some cases a district has eliminated the middle school sports program and/or a specific team at the middle school level. In other cases a local volunteer organization has stepped forward to offer assistance providing coaches and other resources in order to keep the program active. This arrangement is very unique and detailed.

Some of the questions that must be addressed include:

- Who is going to maintain the field for practice and games?
- Is the field that will be used the appropriate size and marked accordingly?
- Who is going to maintain care, custody and control of the school age participants?
- Will the school still provide the same level of support services that were provided when the program was in-house.
- Is there now a contractual arrangement to provide these services?
- If the school facilities are in use with a volunteer organization running the sports program, does the organization have use of a trainer or any needed medical assistance?

While it is imperative that school districts con-

tinue to maintain an appropriate balance between academics and sports, it is important to continue to evaluate all of the safety concerns.

How do we effectively manage risk in relation to interscholastic sports? There are many risks involved with coordinating and scheduling a team, a practice, and eventually the actual game.

A risk and safety checklist should be used each and every time a practice or game is scheduled. Some key indicators are listed here for review.

- Is there a site administrator on duty and available?
- Is there a trainer or other available medical personnel?
- What is the ratio of coaches to student athletes?
- Are there qualified and certified officials assigned to officiate the game?
- If there is a volunteer organization, is there an appropriate detailed contract specifically identifying roles and responsibilities?