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NYSPHSAA: Robert Zayna NYS Section V Ed Stoves

Date: tetober 2, 2015

This letter is an attempt to share with you our desire to encourage the NYSPHSAA to discontinue the practice of allowing non-public schools to participate in post-season play (sectionals, states). We feel strongly that by allowing its non-public schools to participate in the tournaments, NYSPHSAA has created a very un-level playing field for our student athletes it was conceived to protect against

While it is true that the NYSPHSAA constitution permits non-public schools to petition for membership, it is disappointing that the organization that was founded for the promotion of sports as integral to the public education system has allowed for this to become so inequitable.

The rules of the NYSPHSAA, as integrated into the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, strive to discourage the solicitation and recruitment of student athletes solely to enhance a school's athletic prowess. A simple analysis of recent tournament results discloses that non-public schools dominate to a degree wholly inconsistent with the premise of these rules and regulations. It is our opinion, as well as the opinion of many in the public sector, that logic compels the conclusion that at least several of NYSPHSAA's non-public members, have built their sports programs upon the talents of outstanding student athletes enticed from their home public schools.

A discussion of the exact manner or means of such solicitation is neither possible nor relevant in the context of this letter. I this context, the ratio of tournament successes of certain non-public school members, with student populations miniscule in comparison to their public school rivals, cannot be explained by outstanding coaching, physical resources or school pride driven performance. We ask NYSPHSAA to consider that these very successes prove the assumption that outside influences have placed public school athletes at a disadvantage in the very arenas intended to foster their pride and enhance their educational experience. It is our belief that the NYSPHSAA rather than promoting its goal to foster consistency and fairness for its public school members, and those that provide the bedrock financial and participatory support, is instead conducting tournaments that serve as a showcase for its non-public school programs that have ignored the premise of no solicitation/recruitment of athletes.

Consider the following results, simply from Section V programs!

In the combined sports of Boys and Girls Basketball, Football, and Boys and Girls Soccer in the non-public schools that include Aquinas, Bishop Kearney, McQuaid, Mercy, Notre flame, Nazareth, and Northstar Christian Academy there is a total of 85 sectional titles, and 6 state titles. These accomplishments are disproportionate over time given the number of non-public schools in comparison to the public schools in the section.

Subsequently, only a few of our public school athletes have had the opportunity to experience, an experience of a lifetime that will be a highlight of their public school education.

The disproportionate results exemplified above have occurred notwithstanding the well intentioned efforts of those charged with enforcement of recruitment rules. We question if it is probable that consistent and effective enforcement is simply beyond the scope of the NYSPHSAA. We are fully aware that strict enforcement could lead to endless challenges and appeals, and the ever present specter of litigation, but will bring consistency, equity, and fair play back where it belongs as sanctioned by NYSPHSAA.

Moreover, we feel the current provisions under which inclusion of non-public school members in league play is determined by component sections further distorts the NYSPHSAA tournaments as a true statewide competition where the student athletes of our public high schools can participate with a reasonable hope for success.

Accordingly, the Monroe County Council of School Superintendents is proposing that the role of the NYSPHSAA's non-public school members be limited to league play and that they be barred from post-season tournaments in the interest of promoting the very public school athletic programs the organization was founded on

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s/s/smcossnysphsaa