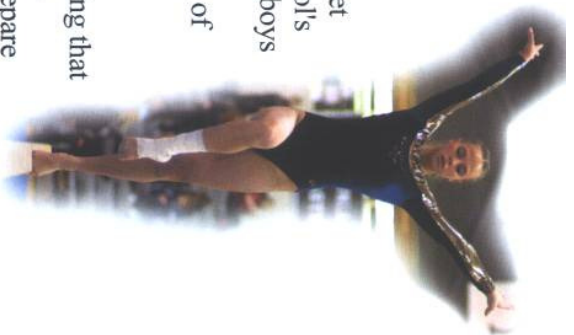


That's not the primary focus of high school sports.

Only in America is this after-school activity so tightly entwined with, but yet secondary to, a school's mission – educating boys and girls to become productive members of society; tomorrow's leaders.



It's in understanding that high school athletics primarily serve to prepare young people for the next level of life – not the next level of sports – that defines high school sports as a unique and positive force in the lives of our young people and communities.

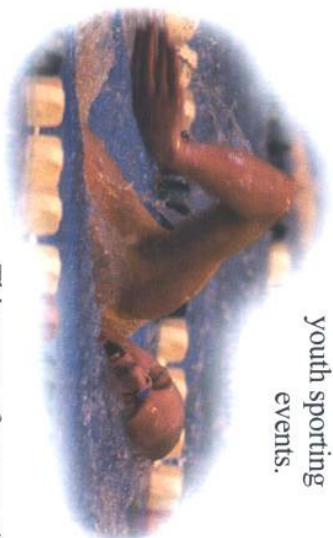


The opportunities to play organized athletics beyond high school come to only a select few.

College athletic scholarships are earned by one in a hundred participants, and the stories of people like Tiger Woods and LeBron James are one in a million.

School sports are defined by the experiences of thousands of youngsters – the day to day student-athletes. It is their stories and their lives that are more important to the vast majority of school sports administrators.

School sports are defined by community, a community of teachers and students. A community of pep rallies; car caravans behind the yellow school bus to games; classroom teachers coaching their students after school; community newspapers and broadcasters reporting on games; cross-town and cross-county rivalries, where league and city championships are the big deal. That doesn't



happen at non-school youth sporting events.

This sense of community is popular with over 95 percent of high school sports participants, and in step with the principles of educational athletics:

- Voluntary, after-school activities available to those enrolled at the school and meeting its eligibility standards – a privilege, not a property right.



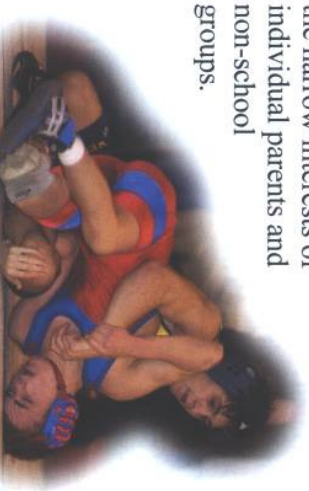
• Tools to help reach and motivate students, aiding classroom performance and rallying community support for school programs in general.

- Games that are conducted in a classroom requiring the proper atmosphere – good sportsmanship

- Teaching loyalty to school, community and team over self.



- Promoting the ideals of school spirit, teamwork, hard work, discipline, personal sacrifice, leadership and sportsmanship. Helping participants gain a lifetime appreciation for the arts, sports and healthy lifestyles.
- Achieving these objectives at the varsity and subvarsity levels.
- Emphasizing participation and academic scholarship in the classroom for the many, not college athletic scholarships for so very few.
- Programs where local school administrators make decisions in the best interests of all participants, not the narrow interests of individual parents and non-school groups.



- Programs emphasizing local competition, not statewide and national events.

In these financially challenging times, where access fees threaten participation



opportunities for kids and make school teams look more like non-school travel and elite programs only available to those with the financial ability to pay, we should remember who we are, what we are, when and where we take place, and why we exist:

Who? We're educational athletics – not big time event promoters.

What? We're the builders of tomorrow's community leaders – not farm clubs for college and professional sports.

When? We're an after-school activity – not a year-round endeavor. These are programs which should allow kids to be kids.

Where? Our games should be played locally. There's plenty



where kids can learn and grow through athletics in most of our backyards. We don't need national schedules to accomplish our purposes.

Why? Because it's the right way to do

it. Schools offer these programs because they enhance the educational experience of the youngsters who participate. If that message gets lost, then so do the programs. We can't afford to have the message of educational athletics get lost in the shuffle.



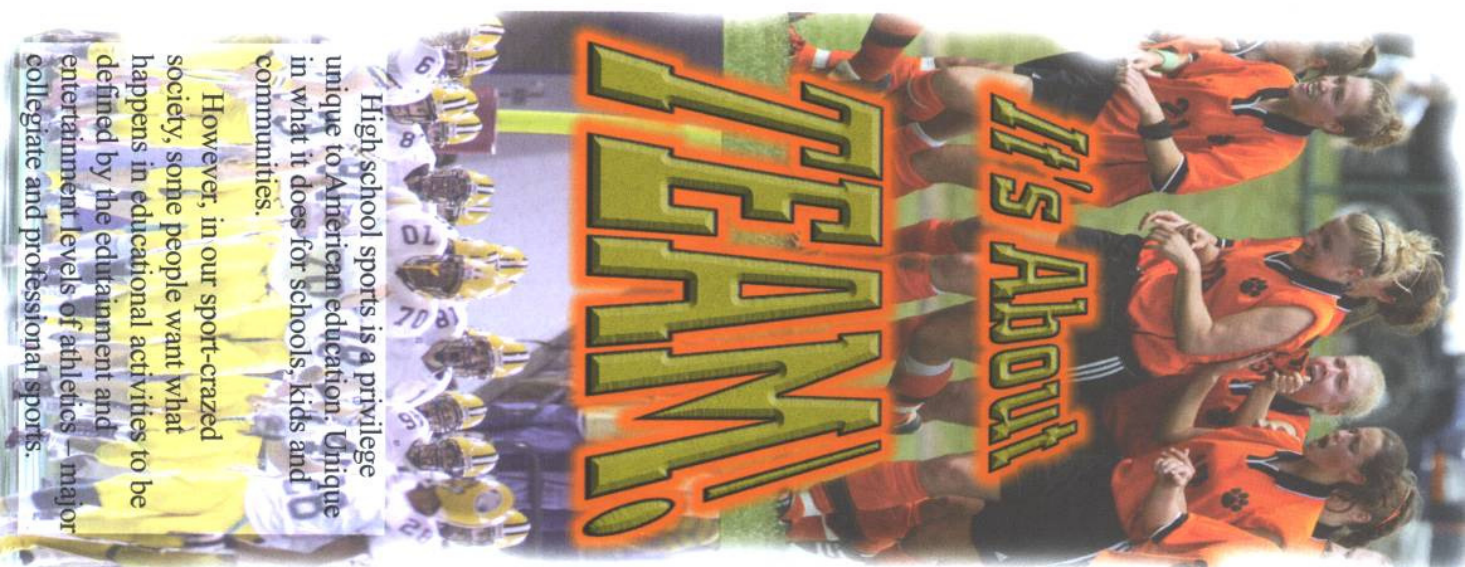
There is nothing wrong with striving to be the best. School sports

programs must strive to develop all the kids who want to participate to be their best – their best as individuals, as students, as teammates, as members of the community – not just their best as athletes.

In school sports, we win if we develop winners. We may very well lose if all we care about is winning.



This is one of the most exciting experiences of a young person's life – the privilege of participating in educational athletics. We hope you maintain the proper perspective in your journey through this educational experience.



High school sports is a privilege unique to American education. Unique in what it does for schools, kids and communities.

However, in our sport-crazed society, some people want what happens in educational activities to be defined by the entertainment and entertainment levels of athletics – major collegiate and professional sports.