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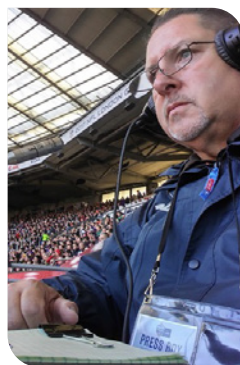
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P.A. Announcing Job Description Benefits Everyone

By Jeff Kurtz, CPAA
Kent State University, Kent, OH



Jeff Kurtz

The National Association of Sports Public Address Announcers (NASPAA) has, from its inception, held as one of its foundation principles, the standards of professionalism expected of public address announcers.

As the representative organization of P.A. Announcers it was critical for the NASPAA to establish recommended protocols and procedures for announcers to follow at a variety of levels (amateur, youth, high school, college) while keeping in mind the inherent differences between the levels of sports. The creation of "industry standards" in an effort to provide a template for consistency and quality has been one of the most challenging rewarding aspects of our organization.

One of the key factors in helping to ensure a level of professionalism and to communicate the expectations for announcers is to have a written job description. This simple document will allow the person or organization responsible for hiring a public address announcer to clearly outline the duties and responsibilities expected of the announcer, and will also create a guideline to help train and evaluate the announcer after they are hired.

At the high school level, the hiring of game day staff will, in most cases, be the responsibility of the athletic director. By creating a job description similar to the ones used for coaches and other departmental staff, the

expectation for professional standards, education, experience and knowledge of responsibilities for the public address announcer will be made clear.

In many cases a public address announcer is hired simply because they are available and not necessarily because they are qualified. Often the microphone is handed over to someone out of necessity without the opportunity to interview, audition or evaluate their capabilities. By creating and utilizing a job description that outlines all of the duties and expectations of this important position, the AD can help ensure that the person(s) hired will be a competent, professional and dependable P.A. Announcer.

On the other side of the job description are the expectations of the applicant or candidate for the position. As an aspiring or veteran Public Address Announcer it is helpful to have a clear idea of what will be expected. While much of what P.A. Announcers do on game day is very similar regardless of where they are working, the specific duties may vary from site to site. For example, the higher the level (HS, college, pro) the more help and information may be provided to assist the announcer with his or her duties.

This assistance may come in the way of rosters, additional scripted announcements, timelines, spotters, etc. At lower levels P.A. Announcers may find themselves responsible for setting up their own equipment, playing music, writing their own scripts, creating rosters and performing other duties in addition

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GAME OPERATIONS

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to simply announcing the game. These expectations or realities of the position can and should be outlined in the job description to help ensure that all parties



Having a job description that includes expectations will be beneficial to everyone.

have a clear understanding of what should be part of the job of the P.A. Announcer and reduce the possibility of surprises.

Another benefit to creating and utilizing a job description is that it allows for clear and concise evaluation of the announcer, and will help provide a road map for recommended growth and development that will ensure a high level of professionalism behind the microphone!

Since 1981, Jeff Kurtz has served Kent State University, his alma mater, as its primary P.A. Address Announcer, highlighted by more than 35 years as the voice of Kent State men's and women's basketball, wrestling and gymnastics. Additionally, he has announced NCAA Division I football for nearly 30 years. He also has announced more than 35 Mid-American Conference Tournament events in baseball,

men's and women's basketball, cross country, field hockey, men's and women's golf, gymnastics, soccer, softball, track and field and wrestling. His announcing resume also includes NCAA, NIT and WNIT basketball tournament events, the 2001 NCAA Field Hockey Final Four and the 2011 NCAA Women's Gymnastics National Championships. At the high school level, he has announced football (including the OHSA State Championships), gymnastics, baseball, basketball, lacrosse, track & field, wrestling, and volleyball. Professionally, he has worked for the Cleveland Indians, Cleveland Browns and Cleveland Cavaliers. His announcing resume also includes being named the 2009-10 NASPAA NCAA P.A. Announcer of the Year Award recipient. He is the Course Chair and lead instructor of Leadership Training Course 625 Athletic Administration: Management of Game and Event Announcing, offered by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA).



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P.A. Announcers Play Role in Sportsmanship

THE VOICE

A key ingredient in education-based athletics is sportsmanship. Unfortunately, many believe that sportsmanship applies just to athletes or competitors, but they would be wrong! Sportsmanship applies to everyone at an event, including coaches, officials, fans, cheerleaders the band and, yes, even the P.A. Announcer. Promoting good sportsmanship and a positive environment have always been expectations of P.A. Announcers. Here's what Steve Bongiovi, Seaford, NY; RD Keep, Oskaloos, IA and John Johnson, East Lansing, MI had to say about the role of P.A. Announcers in fulfilling those expectation.

Steve Bongiovi

The job descriptions and task expectations for Public Address Announcers are as varied as the events, venues and audiences we serve. The most obvious and enjoyable part of the job for an announcer is announcing the game. There are, however, other responsibilities



Steve Bongiovi

such as providing an extra level of security, communicating a wide array of public service messages, promoting the event host(s)/sponsor(s), and encouraging patrons to purchase concessions and souvenir items, just to mention a few.

These ancillary services become increasingly more significant at the scholastic and youth levels. In those circumstances, the P.A. Announcer effectively becomes the face of the school district on site.

I'm amazed at the myriad of questions directed at a P.A. Announcer, who somehow is mystically rendered an "expert" simply by dint of holding a clipboard of game notes. Consequently, as that font of all information, the P.A. Announcer must undertake the crucial

task of communicating the significance of sportsmanship and its sacred contents.

I announce for several different entities, each of which has its own sportsmanship statement template. The initial in-game announcement that I make is about sportsmanship, be it at the first time out, the first break in the action, or in the middle of the first inning. I prefer the announcement then, because the sportsmanship message stands alone as the single message being conveyed at that moment.

I have found that including the sportsmanship announcement in the pregame announcements, fans don't often pay total attention to it, because it tends to get buried in the excitement of the introduction rituals. As a singular announcement particular unto itself, I can isolate it for better emphasis and improved audience awareness. I always vary the text, so that the wording differs game to game and does not become overly familiar "white noise."

Rather than a rote reading of any particular organization's sportsmanship statement, I mix and match from the wide variety pre-approved messages from the supervisory boards. The most oft-used phrases include "Respect all officials, coaches, players and fans, and extend all courtesies to them" (Section 8 Nassau County in NY), "Be loud, be proud, be positive" (New York State Public High School Athletic Association), and "conduct in a manner that reflects good sportsmanship" (Skyline Conference, NCAA Division III).

No matter the verbiage, I conclude with a thank you "in advance" for serving as a role model/example/symbol, etc, of good sportsmanship.

Steve Bongiovi has been announcing for 41 years. At Seaford High School (Seaford, NY) he announces football, basketball, lacrosse, wrestling and baseball where he has been behind the mic since 1979. He is also a championship announcer for the New York State Public High

School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA). At the college level, he announces football and lacrosse for Nassau Community College (Long Island, NY) and men's and women's basketball for Farmingdale State College (Farmingdale, NY).

RD Keep

Small college athletics is one of the best gigs. For the past 25 years I have continued to hone my skills and keep positive vibes going even when the teams are not doing well. While teams may be up and down, the one thing that never changes for me as the P.A. Announcer is my focus on sportsmanship.



RD Keep

During my pre-game announcements, I include a sportsmanship announcement, and reference it to the NAIA's Champions of Character program. When I began announcing, William Penn University (WPU) did not have any pre-game protocol or sportsmanship announcements. That has since changed. By working with athletic administrators and the sports information department, we now have a complete game protocol.

There's no better feeling as a P.A. Announcer than fans, cheerleaders, dance team, mascot, etc., showing support for their team. Making sure that the standard WPU has established to encourage them to participate in a positive manner is something that I take seriously.

In my opinion, tone and demeanor carry far more weight than the words themselves. Sometimes it is hard to keep an even tone when WPU scores a touchdown or makes a great defensive play.

Nevertheless, I understand my role, and do my best to refrain from doing anything that could distract from good sportsmanship.

RD Keep is the voice of the William Penn Statesmen (Oskalo, IA) where he has announced football and men's and women's basketball for the NAIA school for 25 years.

John Johnson

The Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) has always said that the public address announcer plays a critical role in setting the tone for good sportsmanship in education-based athletic events. We want the P.A. Announcer to be a



John Johnson

welcoming voice to everyone in attendance and for fans to feel confident that this person is competent and can be trusted.

That trust begins by providing the expectation that good sportsmanship is essential to the event. Sportsmanship is something that has to be taught. A brief, well-worded read just prior to the player introductions helps set the table.

During the game/event, a couple of general announcements promoting the values of sportsmanship will hopefully elevate the focus and importance of proper behavior. Ideally, these sportsmanship messages will resonate with fans throughout the game/event and at its conclusion when tensions may be high.

John Johnson has spent over 45 years in athletics publicity, and since 1987 has been on the executive staff of the MHSAA. During his career with the MHSAA he has expanded and enhanced the MHSAA's presence and image by creating initiatives such as Internet and statewide radio networks for championship events and directing its television efforts including the MHSAA Network. He has also spearheaded P.A. Announcer education in Michigan through clinics and by providing resources. Johnson has served as chair of the National Federation of State High School Association's (NFHS) National High School Sports Record Book Committee, and is a member of NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee. Last year, the Michigan Association of Broadcasters recognized his radio show, "This Week in High School Sports" as the 2019 Best Radio Network Sports. In December, after nearly 34 years of service to educational athletics, he will retire.

Photo Credit: NJCAA



Sportsmanship announcements can help promote positive fan behavior.

Go With What You've Got

By Gary Williams, Stadium Announcer

Oakland Raiders

THE VOICE



Gary Williams

I'm not a huge country and western music fan...but I do like Asleep at the Wheel....that long running, well known Texas country swing band.

The lead singer Ray Benson has a rich baritone voice that is made for

Friday Night Lights and would put most of us public address announcers to shame. Go to iTunes or google Ray Benson, if you don't believe me.

"Mr. Benson, the AD from Texarkana High School is on line 1. They're looking for a new football P.A. guy and are convinced you are the perfect fit."

What does all this have to do with what we do as an enjoyable avocation you ask? There is a connection. Asleep at the Wheel has a song...whose lyrics include..."Dance With Who Brung You... Swing With Who Swung You." It's their way of saying "Go With What You've Got."

It holds true on the dance floor but it also applies to us announcer types, as well.

The lesson we P. A folks can learn is... don't waste your time trying to "be like Mike"....the odds are, the real you will fill the bill. After all, it's gotten you whatever P.A. gig you currently have.

It's one thing to pattern yourself after a P.A. Announcer who you admire...nothing wrong with that...but working hard to copy someone else's delivery seems to me to be a waste of time. Why not work to improve on what you do best rather than pretend be someone you're not.

We've all heard them...The "Ronnie Radio Guy" trying so hard to impress you with his deep, mellifluous pipes...but face it... most fans sitting court-side or on the 50-yard line, can spot a phony from a million miles away. Do me (and yourself) a favor...don't be that guy. Better to be an improved version of yourself than a poor imitation of "Joe Blow."

Most people who succeed at whatever they do in life do so with some level of effort. Bryce Harper doesn't just show up at game time and go 4 for 4 with two home runs, a triple and a bases- loaded double. Somewhere along the line, he's spent hours in the batting cage working to get better.

My hunch is Lebron James spends more time shooting hoops in the gym than relaxing by his pool. Well...maybe not at the moment.

The same principle holds true in the P.A. world. Yeah, you can just show up a wing it, and you'll probably get by... but if you really want to get any better, why not practice in front of a mirror or record yourself. You'd be amazed how much better you would sound when its "showtime." It's called pride in your work...and it costs you nothing but time.



A key to success is just being yourself.

Will it pay big dividends down the road? Absolutely!

As a guy who carved out his living and sent four sons to college doing voice overs, (thanks gentlemen for going the public university route), I'm always amused when a client or director tells me they are looking for a "Morgan Freeman" or "James Earl Jones" type read. I think to myself, "Why don't you just give Mr. Freeman or Jimmy a call and hire them? Then I realize that would cost them a small fortune and what they are really looking for is the less expensive Gary Williams imitation. So I swallow my pride, give them the delivery they're looking for and cash the check. Clearly I have no shame.

But if there's one life lesson I can pass on to aspiring public address announcers it's this, be yourself. Dance With Who Brung You and Swing With Who Swung You. Odds are its good enough...and if you can carry a tune, so much the better. Maybe down the road, Asleep At The Wheel will be looking for a new lead singer.

It may not be as fun as announcing that big game....but I can pretty much guarantee you that the pay will be better. You can't have everything!

Gary Williams has been the Oakland Raiders Stadium Announcer for 15 years. Prior to joining the Raiders, he spent 10 years as the football P.A. Announcer for Stanford University. Gary can now be heard on Saturdays at California Memorial Stadium, home of the University of California Golden Bears, where he announces football. He has also done work for the Oakland Athletics. In his real life, Gary makes his living voicing TV/radio commercials and corporate narrations. He was the announcer at the CBS affiliate in San Francisco for eight years. Now, most of his work is recorded at his home studio. He is a popular master of ceremonies at events throughout the San Francisco Bay area. He has conducted several NASPAA Football P.A. Announcers' Clinics.

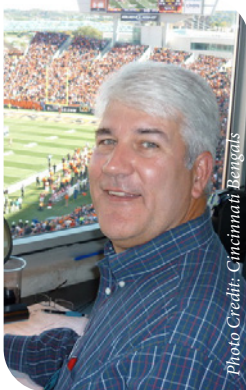
What Not to Do When Announcing Football

THE VOICE

With the 2020 football season hopefully just around the corner, the NASPAA thought it would be prudent to point out some of the things that football announcers should avoid. Here's what Tom Kinder, Stadium Announcer for the Cincinnati Bengals and Don Essig, P.A. Announcer for the University of Oregon Ducks consider to be the top items on their "don't say it lists."

Tom Kinder

We announce our games much the same way today as we did 52 years ago. What is it we shouldn't do?



Tom Kinder

What not to do: Entertain.

Explanation: First off, our job is to keep the fans in the stadium both engaged and informed. The Bengals see my role as a conduit for information, not the entertainment. This principle goes back to our earliest years when Paul Brown, Bengals founder and first coach, insisted his players act as professionals. For example, when scoring not doing end zone dances or drawing attention to one's self. Even Icky Woods, famous for the "Icky Shuffle," did his shuffle on the sideline nearest the Bengals bench. Coach Brown's philosophy was simple....don't do something that could help motivate your opponent. The same is true for me. My job is to inform the fans. I am not a cheerleader.

What not to do: Speculate on anything.

Explanation: Whether it's informing the crowd of the identity of an injured player, pronouncing a name, penalty, etc., a professional will never guess. You only have one chance to get it exactly right!

Tom Kinder's work with the Bengals has spanned all 52 years that the team has been



Never announce or speculate on an injured player's injury.

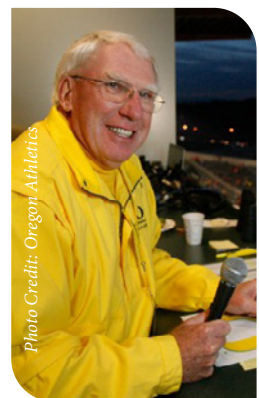
part of the professional football scene in Cincinnati. He got his start as a spotter during the very first Bengals' game in August 1968...a pre-season game featuring two Hall of Fame Coaches, Paul Brown (Cleveland Browns) and Hank Stram (Kansas City Chiefs). He eventually became the Bengals' Stadium Announcer in 2005, replacing his father, who was the team's first and only announcer for 37 seasons. At the high school and college levels, he has announced football

and basketball. In the spring, he broadcasts the Verizon Heritage, a PGA event for ESPN Radio. He worked for Procter and Gamble Company for 32 years, and was the Company's Global Vice President of Customer Business Development when he retired in 2009.

Don Essig

What not to do: Announce a player setting a record (game, season, or career) during the game while the player is still playing in the game.

Explanation: Giving this announcement could have an effect on the player's performance for the rest of the game. Only make such an announcement if the SID or athletic administrator give permission.



Don Essig



Before announcing what the penalty play is for, wait until the referee gives the official signal.

What not to do: Give personal opinion of a player's performance.

Explanation: Only factual announcements should be made. Editorializing or using words like "outstanding play," "terrible attempt", "hurtful loss" are inappropriate.

What not to do: Announcing a player's injury.

Explanation: When a player is injured, because fans would like to know who the injured player is, announcing the player's name is permissible. However, speculating on the type or extent of the injury, or

the fact that he is leaving the field for the locker room, should be avoided. If injury information is to be disclosed to the media, that task would best be served by the coach or approved school representative, i.e., athletic administrator, medical staff member, etc.

What not to do: Announce the score of another critical game that could have an effect on the home team's performance.

Explanation: For games that have title, ranking or standing implications, the SID or someone in authority from the athletic department should make that

decision. If the score is to be announced, consideration should be given to how and when it should be announced or revealed, i.e., on the big screen or at halftime when the home team is in the locker room or until after the game.

Don Essig will be starting his 53rd year as the football P.A. Announcer for the University of Oregon. He is also the Ducks basketball P.A. Announcer. He has been behind the mic for more than a 1,000 NCAA Division I football and basketball games and gymnastic meets. He is well known for emceeing University of Oregon football and basketball banquets, as well as fund-raising events for a numerous non-profit organizations in his community.

P.A. ANNOUNCERS: THE VOICES OF SCHOOL SPORTS



Key members of every school's athletic event staffs are its P.A. Announcers. Now Athletic Administrators can show these individuals the appreciation they deserve by nominating them for the National P.A. Announcer of the Year Award.



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20-Year Record Gone in Seconds

THE VOICE

For P.A. Announcers who have announced a national record-setting achievement, the experience is something special. However, many announcers will never realize what it is like to announce an event where a performance or result sets or contributes to a national record, much less a world record. In each newsletter, the NASPAA features a record as a tribute to the announcer or announcers who were fortunate to be part of history.

This month's newsletter remembers the achievements of a track athlete who was one of the nation's most accomplished sprinters at any level. Christian Coleman, while running for Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School (Fayetteville, GA) track team, set records at the 2014 Georgia High School Association State Track & Field Championships where he won the 100m (10.38), 200m (21.10) and 4x100m relay (41.88).

He continued his sprinting career at the University of Tennessee where he placed first in the 60m dash at the 2016 SEC Indoor Track & Field Championships. That same year he won the 200m at the National Track & Field Championships, and qualified for the 2016 U.S. Olympic team.

In 2017, he sprinted to victory in the 60m (6.45) and the 200m (20.11) at the NCAA Indoor Track & Field Championships. Later that year, he also won the 100m (10.04) and the 200m (20.25) at the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships.

A highlight of his career came at the 2018 U.S. Indoor Track & Field Championships when Coleman set a world record in the 60m at 6.34 beating Maurice Green's world record of 6.39, which he had held for 20 years. To watch the video, click here. www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TJjZfKiMFM



Christian Coleman



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An Ear for the Radio Leads to a Voice on the Microphone

THE VOICE



George Estelle

encouragement from family and friends, I

Growing up, I liked watching TV, but not nearly as much as I enjoyed listening to the radio. Listening to the radio allowed my imagination to soar and I wondered how exciting it would be to be on the radio. As I grew older, my voice changed and with

started thinking there might be a future in the broadcasting field for me.

After graduating from college I taught for a year and then spent the next 20 years utilizing my voice doing lead generation by making business to business calls, while simultaneously working nights and weekends as an on air disc jockey. Over time, I had the opportunity to hear some very good announcers, some not so good announcers and of course the middle of the road ones. I wanted to be one of the good ones. I am happy to say that my work experience and my love of listening to the

radio led to an amazing Public Address Announcing career.

www.forsythnews.com/sports/forsyth-central-high-school/longtime-forsyth-central-announcer-george-estell-reflects-career/

George Estelle, CPAA, had a P.A. Announcing career of 20 years before retiring in December, 2019. He finished at Forsyth Central High School (Cumming, GA) where he was the "Voice of the Bulldogs" for 12 years, announcing football, basketball and baseball.



Do You Qualify for the NASPAA Milestones Listing?

THE VOICE

If you have announced at least 1,000 athletic games or events and would like to be included in the Milestones listings on the NASPAA website, please e-mail the information requested below to Brad Rumble, NASPAA Executive Director at brumble@naspaa.net.

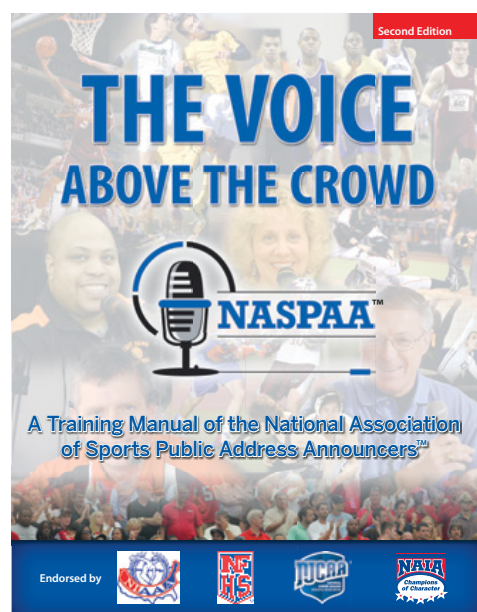
- Name
- City/State
- Number of years you have announced
- Year you began announcing

- Sports that you have announced
- Schools/Association/Organizations that you have announced for
- Significant events you have announced

Also include a digital high resolution color headshot. If your photo already appears in the Milestones listings, you have the option of replacing it with a more current photo, if you like.

The Voice Above the Crowd

The Voice Above the Crowd (2nd edition) is the nation's foremost P.A. announcing manual, and is the only P.A. announcing manual endorsed by the NFHS, NIAAA, NJCAA and NAIA.



About *The Voice Above the Crowd*

- » 376 pages
- » Covers 22 sports with scripts for each sport
- » Includes officials' signals charts for several sports
- » Comes with 34-minute CD
- » Price is **\$64.95**, plus shipping

To order, go to
www.naspaa.net.



"P.A. Announcers, as well as athletic administrators serving as leaders of interscholastic programs, will find *The Voice Above the Crowd* invaluable."

Dr. Mike Blackburn, CMAA
NIAAA Executive Director



NASPAA Member Logo Available

THE VOICE

Active members are entitled to use the NASPAA Member Logo on business cards, letterhead, P.A. Announcing 3-ring binders, notebooks or banners. If you would like to obtain the logo, or are using the logo in ways other than those that are listed or would like to use it on items other than the ones listed, please contact Brad Rumble, NASPAA Executive Director at **brumble@naspaa.net**.



The NASPAA Member Logo is the only NASPAA logo allowed for use by members. Use of the NASPAA logo is prohibited.



NOT A MEMBER?

For information about the membership and the NASPAA, go to **www.naspaa.net**.

"Whether you are a rookie announcer or a seasoned veteran, the NASPAA can help you to become a better announcer, connect with other announcing professionals and provide tools for self-evaluation and continued professional growth in the field."

Jeff Kurtz, CPAA
Kent State University P.A. Announcer
and NASPAA Board Member



If you are a P.A. announcer or have the responsibility of hiring or assigning P.A. announcers, the NASPAA would like to invite you to become a member. The annual individual membership fee for adults is \$30 and \$20 for students. Schools may join for \$69, which entitles them to six memberships.

Affiliate Members

THE VOICE

The following associations and organizations are NASPAA Affiliate Members. NASPAA Affiliate Members share the same core values and similar P.A. Announcing philosophy as the NASPAA. The NASPAA serves as the P.A. Announcing resource for NASPAA Affiliate Members.



National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association



Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association



Ohio High School Athletic Association



Mississippi High School Activities Association



Missouri State High School Activities Association



Kansas State High School Activities Association



Georgia High School Association



Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association



College Sports Information Directors of America



National Junior College Athletic Association



National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics



National Federation of State High School Associations



Indiana High School Athletic Association



Oregon School Activities Association



Louisiana High School Athletic Association



American Legion Baseball



Michigan High School Athletic Association



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Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union



Football Writers Association of America



Cotton Bowl Athletic Association



U.S. Basketball Writers Association



Iowa High School Athletic Association