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## Current Practices in Interscholastic Athletics for Class B Junior High Schools in Selected Counties of Southeastern North Dakota

John M. Rhode

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CURRENT PRACTICES IN INTERSCHOLASTIC  
ATHLETICS FOR CLASS B JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS  
IN SELECTED COUNTIES OF SOUTHEASTERN  
NORTH DAKOTA

by

John M. Rhode

An Individual Research Paper  
Submitted to the Physical Education Department  
of the  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The problem of interscholastic athletics in junior high schools is one in which it is most difficult to reach an agreement between philosophy and actual practice. A sound intramural program is a necessity for the junior high school age group. If schools do not sponsor interschool athletics in junior high schools there is always the danger of outside groups coming into the community and sponsoring teams. This may not be conducted to the best interest of young boys.

Advocates of a well rounded interschool athletic program in junior high schools wish to increase competition. These people believe that athletics benefit the whole school because all pupils are participants in one way or another. It is pointed out that youth need to have outlets for their abundant energy and that they will play competitively anyway, either on the streets or elsewhere, so the school might as well provide the activities and supervise them.

An interscholastic athletic program contributes much to the spirit and pride of a school. It develops sportmanship and citizenship. It is an excellent opportunity for



teaching of cooperation and teamwork.

The opposite philosophy advocates decreasing the amount of interscholastic competition in junior high schools. In interscholastic sports there is always the danger that the pressures of publicity and spectator interest may obscure the educational objectives for which the schools have sponsored teams. Pupils should not be subjected to strains even when able leadership is present until they are mature enough to be able to cope with them. In certain interscholastic sports which promote a high degree of spectator interest, there is always danger that these sports will dominate the physical education program to such an extent that the skills in these sports are emphasized in classes and in intramurals to the exclusion of other more appropriate activities. Even in the earlier grades the influence of high school interscholastic programs may be so great that the physical education instruction becomes primarily a farm system for high school interscholastic athletics and thereby neglects activities more suitable to the growth and development of younger children.

The disagreement of these few points of each philosophy indicates clearly the controversial nature of junior high school interscholastic athletic programs.



Purpose. - The purpose of this investigation was to determine the practices and extent of competition in interscholastic athletics in junior high schools.

Need for the Study. - Physical educators are concerned with the practices and extent of interscholastic competition in junior high schools. Various opinions have been expressed on this subject. Indicative of the seriousness of the situation is the statement made by Dr. Louis E. Means. He quoted Dr. Karl Bookwalter of Indiana University as follows: "Don't tell me you are worrying about whether or not to give your blessing to competitive basketball for the junior high boys. In Indiana we have gotten to the point now where we are fighting to keep the kindergarten grade from having interscholastic basketball."<sup>1</sup> Other physical educators advocate that interscholastic competition be provided in junior high school as the final stages of an intramural program.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>James L. Brinkman, "Trends in Interscholastic Athletic Competition Grades 7-8-9 and Below Grade 7 in the Central District of the American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation" (unpublished Master's thesis, Dept. of Physical Education, University of North Dakota, 1951)

<sup>2</sup>G. I. Werner, "Interscholastic Athletics", Journal of Health and Physical Education and Recreation, XIX (Sept., 1948) p. 466-467.



Delimitations. - The study was limited to the problem of interscholastic competition for junior high boys of twenty-two class B schools. These schools are found in southeastern North Dakota in the following counties: Ransom, Richland, Dickey, Sargent, LaMoure, Cass, Kidder, Logan, Stutsman and McIntosh.<sup>3</sup> Sports included in the survey are basketball, football, track, baseball and wrestling.

#### Definitions

Interscholastic competition. - scheduled competition between elementary or secondary schools, usually in athletics but also in such activities as speech, music and dramatics.<sup>4</sup>

Junior high school. - the lower part of a divided reorganized secondary school comprising usually grades seven, eight and nine.<sup>5</sup>

Class B school. - a school whose enrollment in grades nine through twelve as of October 1 as indicated in the annual report was seventy-five or above exclusive of the Class A Schools, provided, however, that schools with nine to twelve grade enrollments of fifty-six to seventy-four may elect to compete in either Class B or C competition, such

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<sup>3</sup>Appendix C gives the list of cities returning the questionnaire, county by county.

<sup>4</sup>Dictionary of Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1945, p. 88.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. p. 231.



choice to be made by October 1 of the current year and to extend for a three year period. Provided further, that any school below Class A which has traditionally competed in Class B may petition the Board for permission to continue in this classification. Upon concurrence of the Board such school must compete in Class B and can change its classification only upon two years notice to the Board. Provided further, that when the high school enrollment in grades nine to twelve as of October 1 rises above seventy-five or drops below fifty-six, that school shall have one year of grace in which to choose its class of competition.<sup>6</sup>

Registered official. - Registered status shall be secured by making application to the Board through the secretary. Qualifications and standards for approval shall be set by the Board and only such officials as are properly registered shall be eligible for approval.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Constitution By-Laws of North Dakota High School Activities Association, 1960, p. 19

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. p. 25.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Delbert Oberteuffer<sup>8</sup> lists arguments favoring junior high school interscholastic competition. Several of these arguments are:

1. The boys would play football and basketball anyway on the corner lot.
2. The boys love to play.
3. Boys who aspire to greatness should be started early on their practice and game experience.
4. Experience can be gained in junior high school.
5. It is never too early to begin the development of the competitive spirit.
6. Sports are excellent media for the outpouring of extra energy and vitality.

There are arguments in opposition to competition at this level. Some of them listed by Oberteuffer<sup>9</sup> include:

1. Playing in competitive games at such a young age interferes with growth and development.
2. The games tend to overshadow the physical education program because they are so popular.
3. It is too early to specialize in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades.
4. The players are not psychologically or emotionally equipped to react well to the excitement, tensions, and price which are put upon the struggle for victory under typical interscholastic conditions.
5. The son is pushed into the games at an early age because of the father's impatience.
6. Townsfolk have no right to expect such young children to supply entertainment and feed the ego of the mob by supplying them with victory.

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<sup>8</sup>Delbert Oberteuffer, Physical Education (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), p. 265.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. p. 266-267.



Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the extent of competition in junior high schools in various sections of the United States.

Francis Wayman<sup>10</sup> served as chairman for a study conducted by The American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. The study covered the entire nation and was based on the dispatching of one hundred and fifty questionnaires to selected schools. The results indicated that sixty-seven (59%) schools of the one hundred and thirteen schools did not have interschool competition, while forty-six (41%) of the schools did have interschool competition. Basketball was played in thirty-four of the schools, softball in twenty-six schools, track in twenty-three schools, baseball in twelve schools, and volleyball in eight schools.

Hollis Fait,<sup>11</sup> an instructor in physical education at East Oregon College of Education, conducted a local survey of schools in his area. The purpose of his study was to determine the extent of inconsistency between the policies and practices in eastern Oregon schools and

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<sup>10</sup>Francis Wayman, Chairman, "Interschool Competition in the Elementary School", Journal American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, XXI (May, 1950). p. 279-280.

<sup>11</sup>Hollis Fait, "Needed, A Policy on Junior High Interschool Athletics", Journal of American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, XXI (Oct., 1950). p. 20.



current professional opinions. It was found that a very high percentage of schools participated in interschool athletics at the seventh and eighth grade levels. All schools which included the seventh and eighth grade and employed four or more teachers were included in the survey. Of the fifty schools responding, forty-seven participated in interschool competition. Basketball was the most popular sport of the forty-seven schools with only one school indicating it did not play basketball. Nineteen of the forty-seven schools had no football while seventeen of the forty-seven schools participated in track.

James Brinkman<sup>12</sup> conducted a questionnaire survey on practices and trends in interscholastic competition in the nine states comprising the Central District of The American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Results of this survey indicate that very little heed is paid to the committee report given by Dr. S. A. McNeeley<sup>13</sup> during The American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation convention held in Boston in 1949. Brinkman contacted seven hundred seventy-

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<sup>12</sup>James L. Brinkman, "Trends in Interscholastic Athletic Competition Grades 7-8-9 and Below Grade 7 in the Central District of The American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation" (unpublished Master's thesis, Dept. of Physical Education, University of North Dakota, 1951).

<sup>13</sup>See Appendix D.



five schools and received five hundred seventeen answers or an average return of sixty-seven per cent. An attempt was made to pick representative number of cities on a state by state basis according to population.

Ellsworth Tompkins and Virginia Roe<sup>14</sup> conducted a survey in conjunction with the National Association of Secondary School Principals Committee on Junior High School Education. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent of specified interscholastic athletic competition in separately organized junior high schools; to find the degree of agreement or conflict between philosophy and practice; to determine significant trends in junior high school athletics.

A questionnaire was mailed to principals of all four thousand five hundred fifty-nine separately organized junior high schools in the nation. A total of two thousand three hundred twenty-nine separately organized junior high schools sent completed replies. The findings reveal a little more than eighty-five per cent have some program of interscholastic athletics; a little less than fifteen per cent do not.

In order, basketball, track, tackle football, baseball, softball are reported by the one thousand nine hundred sixty-eight schools as the most popular sports activities. Seven out of ten junior high schools having both interscholas-

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<sup>14</sup>Ellsworth Tompkins and Virginia Roe, "A Survey of Interscholastic Athletic Programs in Separately Organized Junior High Schools", Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, XXXXII, (Nov, 1958).



tic athletics and intramural programs report that the interscholastic program stimulates the intramural program. The ratio of expansion to limitation of interscholastic athletics is approximately three to two schools in favor of expansion.

The comments of the principals and the data in the tables of this survey reveal a degree of dichotomy between theory and actual practice. Although some published pronouncements have spotlighted the undesirability of interscholastic athletics for early adolescent youths, the fact is that the majority of junior high schools have a program of interscholastic athletics and that their administrators regard it as desirable.



## CHAPTER III

### METHOD OF PROCEDURE

A questionnaire was dispatched to class B schools in ten counties of southeastern North Dakota.<sup>15</sup> All of the class B schools in this geographical location were included in the survey. The questionnaires were addressed to the coaches of schools in the cities selected. Included in the two and one-half page questionnaire were statements which each coach could answer objectively. A check mark was the only requirement in completing the questionnaire. A blank space was provided in each answer whereby a coach could answer the question in his own words if he so desired. The questionnaire was not lengthy and required approximately five minutes to complete. A letter of transmittal was included.<sup>16</sup> The questionnaire attempted to determine the administrative policies and degree of competition of the interschool athletic program in each junior high school system.

One hundred per cent of the junior high schools responded to the questionnaire. Some of the schools did not complete every item in the questionnaire.

A master sheet containing all questions of the

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<sup>15</sup>See Appendix B.

<sup>16</sup>See Appendix A.



survey was used in tabulating the results. As responses of each junior high school were received, the results were registered on the master sheet.

The extent and practices of competition of junior high schools in southeastern North Dakota can be determined on the basis of these responses. These practices were compared with results of similar surveys and with recommendations of the American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation.



## CHAPTER IV

### EXTENT OF INTERSCHOLASTIC COMPETITION IN SOUTHEASTERN NORTH DAKOTA

This survey reveals that the amount of interscholastic competition is quite high. All (100%) of the schools included in the survey affirmed that they carry on such a program.

There are many schools that allow freshman boys to participate in high school athletics. This survey did not include those individuals. A statement in the questionnaire stated that freshman who played on high school teams be excluded when answering the questionnaire.

#### Participation in Intramural Athletics

The second question of the survey concerned itself with intramural athletics. An attempt was made to discover the amount of intramural participation. Nineteen of the twenty-two schools surveyed indicated that an intramural program was carried on. No attempt was made in the survey to discover the type of intramural program in progress. Eighty-six per cent of the schools conducted some form of intramural program.



The effect of interscholastic competition on the intramural program is interesting. Nineteen schools indicated an intramural program was in progress. Nine (47%) schools answered that interschool competition added to the interest of the intramural program. Ten (53%) schools said interscholastic competition had no effect on the intramural program.

Degree of Interscholastic  
Competition in Specific Sports

Every junior high school included in the survey participated in basketball. This sport was followed by football with fifteen (69%) schools participating; track, eight (36%); baseball, five (23%); and wrestling, one (5%).

The order of popularity of sports revealed in this survey differs in the order revealed in the Wayman<sup>17</sup> report. Basketball is the most frequently mentioned sport conducted in both reports. The difference exists in the order of the sports that follow basketball in popularity. The same is true as noted in the survey conducted by Hollis Fait.<sup>18</sup> However, the survey by Brinkman<sup>19</sup> is almost identical in sport popularity with this survey.

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<sup>17</sup>Wayman, op cit. p. 280.

<sup>18</sup>Fait, op cit. p. 20.

<sup>19</sup>Brinkman, op cit. p. 26.



Table I indicates the comparison of sports popularity of the four surveys mentioned.

TABLE I  
SURVEY COMPARISON

Survey	Total Schools	Basketball	Softball	Track	Baseball	Volleyball	Wrestling	Football
Wayman Survey	46	34	26	23	12	8	-	-
Fait Survey	47	46	31	17	31	-	-	28
Brinkman Survey	517	442	-	185	83	-	-	238
Rhode Survey	22	22	-	8	5		1	15

Results of this survey illustrate that a large majority of schools concentrate on major sports, basketball, football, track, and baseball. Wrestling was conducted in only one school. McNeeley<sup>20</sup> recommends that any sport whose objective is to injure an opponent shall not be included in interschool play. The results of these surveys reveal that little heed is paid to this recommendation.

<sup>20</sup>See Appendix D.



### Rules Used in Competition

McNeeley<sup>21</sup> states in his recommendations that rules should be modified to safeguard the health of the child.

Five (23%) schools did not use any modified rules. Seven (32%) schools used modified rules for competition in basketball and football. Ten (45%) schools failed to respond to the question. The length of the playing time is modified. Quarters in basketball are shortened to six minutes while each quarter in football is limited to eight minutes.

### Average Number Games Per Season

A great degree of variance exists in the range of the number of games played by the junior high schools in southeastern North Dakota. This is especially true in basketball where a range of from five to twenty-one games are played per season. This is not the case in football where a range of two to four games are played.

The average number of games played per season in basketball was ten games per season. In schools having interschool competition in football, ten played three games per year, two played four games a year and three schools played two games a year. The average number of basketball

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<sup>21</sup>See Appendix D.



games played in three schools was ten games while one school played eight games.

Of the eight schools competing in interscholastic competition in track, six schools entered two meets each season while two schools competed in only one meet each year. Only one school competed in wrestling and it participated in eight meets a year.

Length of Season  
in Various Sports

One school played basketball for sixteen weeks, eighteen schools played a twelve week season and three limited the season to ten weeks.

The range in length of the football season was five to nine weeks with an average of six weeks. One school had a season consisting of nine weeks; one school, eight weeks; ten schools, six weeks; and three schools, five weeks.

The average length of the baseball season was six weeks with four schools playing for that length of time. Another school limited their season to four weeks.

Five schools conducted competition in track for six weeks and three schools had a five week season. The lone school engaged in interschool wrestling competition had a season of eleven weeks.



### Days Per Week Practice Held

The schools of southeastern North Dakota reported a definite preference for conducting practice four days a week in football, track, and wrestling. All schools with interscholastic competition in football, track, and wrestling held practice four days a week. Sixteen schools practiced three days a week in basketball and six schools practiced twice a week in the same sport.

In baseball, three schools practiced four days a week and two schools practiced three times a week. From the above discussion it is apparent there was not an appreciable difference in the number of practice sessions per week.

Several of the schools responding in the survey indicated practices were held each day except the day of a game.

### Practice Period Before The Opening Game

Sufficient time should be given between the start of practice and the opening of actual competition between schools. This time should be devoted to learning of fundamentals in order to assure that all boys will perform with satisfactory skill and safety. Schools conducting competition show a close relationship as to the number of days



practice is held before the opening game of the season.

Ten schools reported an average of fifteen days practice in football before the opening game, two schools reported fourteen days and six schools reveal a practice period of ten days before the opening game.

The majority of junior high schools have sufficient practice periods before their opening basketball game. Five schools held practice ten days before the opening game; six schools had fifteen days of practice; eight schools had twenty days; three schools indicated a training period of thirty days. The average pre-game period in basketball, track, and wrestling was fifteen days.

No attempt was made in the questionnaire to determine the kind of practice or the time of day in which the practice sessions were held.

#### Attendance at Athletic Contests

Attendance figures are often misleading because many times these games are played as preliminaries to varsity games. Thus, many more spectators witness such games than would otherwise attend. This is especially true in basketball, track, and wrestling.

Largest attendance occurs at basketball games with a range of fifty to three hundred fifty spectators. Football ranks second with a range of forty to one hundred spectators.



The attendance in baseball varies from fifty to one hundred. An average of one hundred fifty attended the wrestling events. None of the schools responded as to the number in attendance at the track meets. Track meets are usually free of charge and no records are kept. This may be the reason for the lack of response to this question.

Distances Traveled to Participate

McNesley<sup>22</sup> states that competition should take place within a small geographical area. Table II shows the longest distance traveled in miles one way to participate.

TABLE II  
DISTANCES TRAVELED IN MILES ONE WAY

Sports	100	60	50	45	40	37	25	20
Football	5	-	6	-	4	-	-	-
Basketball	-	5	6	9	-	1	-	1
Baseball	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-
Track	-	5	3	-	-	-	-	-
Wrestling	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

Because of wording in the questionnaire it must be assumed that shorter trips were made by many of the schools.

<sup>22</sup>See Appendix D.



It should be noted, however, that five schools indicated they traveled one hundred miles to play a football game. The majority of the schools said that a distance of forty-five to fifty miles is necessary to participate. These practices, when compared to the McNeeley<sup>23</sup> recommendation, indicate a need for a much greater degree of control on the part of school authorities as to distances traveled.

#### Tournaments

Basketball tournaments are very popular in southeastern North Dakota junior high schools. This is evident in that fifteen schools participated in two tournaments during the season. Seven schools indicated they did not enter tournament competition. Three (38%) schools entered at least two track meets each year. These are the only two sports in which tournament play takes place.

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<sup>23</sup>See Appendix D.



### Administrative Practices

In each school there should be a fixed responsibility for the enforcement and administrative practices of interscholastic competition. Decisions affecting interschool competition should be made at the administrative level. The success of an athletic program rests on coordinated planning by the personnel of the school. Responsibilities are delegated to the coach of the team but his actions must be in harmony with the administration. This will help insure the success of the athletic program.

### Scheduling of Games and Coaching of Teams

The schools of southeastern North Dakota make the coaches responsible for scheduling of games. The coach schedules games in twenty-one of the schools while only one school has the principal scheduling the games.

A separate junior high school coach handles teams in sixteen (73%) of the schools. The high school coach handled teams in three of the schools while the physical education instructor coached the teams in the three remaining schools.

The general practice in southeastern North Dakota is to have the high school coach schedule the games and the junior high school coach to handle the teams.



### Practice in Regard to Travel

McNeeley<sup>24</sup> made the recommendation that no games should be scheduled for interschool athletics which necessitates staying away from the student's home overnight.

Twenty-one schools (93%) revealed that they never make trips which would necessitate staying overnight. One school's response indicates they do stay overnight occasionally.

Buses are used by fourteen schools as the means of transportation. Cars transport the players in the remaining eight schools. Several schools said that cars were used when the distance was quite great.

### Method of Financing

Admission to games is charged by sixteen (73%) of the schools in southeastern North Dakota. The range in admission charged is from twenty-five cents to sixty cents with the average at thirty cents. Six schools indicated that they charge no admission to their games. Recommendation five of the McNeeley<sup>25</sup> report suggests that no admission be charged to interschool games in junior high schools. The reason admission is charged in such a large percentage of schools is undoubtedly due to the fact that many of these games are preliminaries to varsity games. Gate receipts from these

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.



games are included as admission charges for junior high competition.

#### Officials

Hired officials are used by ten schools to officiate games in junior high schools. Faculty members and coaches officiate in five schools while two schools indicated high school boys officiated the contests. The seven schools of the Southeastern Conference (Lisbon, Ellendale, Kulm, Oakes, Edgeley, LaMoure, and Enderlin) have a conference rule which makes it mandatory that registered officials from some other town work the games. This trend is especially true in basketball and football games.

#### Publicity

The method of publicity does not vary to any great extent among the responding schools. All twenty-two schools said that they carry on some form of publicity. Nine schools revealed that posters, school paper and local paper were used. Five schools used local paper and school paper; five schools used just the local paper while two schools used posters and local paper to publicize their contests. None of the schools used television or radio to publicize the games.



### Awards and Pep Squads

Eighteen (82%) of the schools do not give any type of awards to participants in junior high school interscholastic athletics. Of the four schools giving awards, one school gave letters and certificates, one school gave only letters, one school presented numerals, and one school gave ribbons for placing in track events.

Twenty (91%) schools sponsor pep squads. These cheer leaders are not made up of the same students which constitute pep squads of varsity games.

### Health Examinations

Every child who participates in interschool athletics should be approved by a qualified physician at the beginning of each school year.

Responses of this survey revealed that seventeen (77%) schools of southeastern North Dakota do have special health examinations before the season begins. These examinations are given by the local physician. Five schools indicated that no special health examination is given to participants of interschool athletics. Several of the schools revealed that health examinations are given both before and after the season is in progress.



### Insurance Coverage

All twenty-two schools taking part in the survey responded that they do carry insurance as protection for students participating in athletic events. All these schools are covered by the North Dakota State High School Activities Association Plan. A brief description of this plan follows;<sup>26</sup> All benefit payments are made according to a printed benefit schedule. In all cases where the benefit does not equal the charges made for medical, dental and hospital services, the family is expected to assume this cost. The fund does not propose to set up a schedule of charges to be made by the medical or dental professions, and all payments made by the Accident Benefit Fund should be considered a "benefit payment" which may or may not cover all costs. Schools that elect to carry one or more of the various plans offered should feel their responsibility in explaining to their students the liberal benefits which are offered.

### Parental Consent

McNeeley<sup>27</sup> reports that parental consent should be received before the child takes part in interscholastic competition.

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<sup>26</sup>Group Accident Benefit Fund, North Dakota High School Activities Association, (August 1, 1960) p. 2.

<sup>27</sup>See Appendix D.



Obtaining the consent of parents is the policy in nineteen (86%) schools included in this survey. Only three schools do not require permission.

#### Purpose of Interscholastic Competition

There were four possible replies to check in response to this question. Nine schools list the purpose of interschool athletics as the development of future material for varsity teams; eight schools to provide competition and four schools as culmination of the physical education and intramural program. Many of the schools gave all three as responses to the question. Other answers in addition to those listed were to help develop individuals, interest boys in the physical education program, and extension of the physical education program with physical education goals as the purpose.

McNeeley<sup>28</sup> also recommends that interschool athletic schedules should be brief and serve as the culmination of the intramural program. Southeastern North Dakota junior high schools rank the culmination of physical education and intramural program least important.

#### Trend of Competition

None of the schools reported a trend towards less

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<sup>28</sup>See Appendix D.



emphasis on interschool competition. The overall trend is for interschool competition to be emphasized relatively the same as it has been. Sixteen (73%) schools checked relatively the same in answering the question. The remaining six schools revealed greater emphasis is being exhibited in junior high schools concerning interschool competition.

Twenty-one schools responded favorable when asked their reaction to these trends. One school indicated unfavorable to greater emphasis being placed on interscholastic competition at this grade level.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Physical fitness is an acute problem in the United States today. The schools are receiving much of the blame with the physical education program receiving the direct blame for the poor physical condition of our young men. Increased emphasis is being placed on physical education and sports programs in the schools today. Many educators feel that a good place to begin to correct this situation would be the junior high school. These educators wish to enlarge the interschool athletic program. Others are completely opposed to this phase of education.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the practices and extent of competition in southeastern North Dakota junior high schools, and compare the findings with other surveys and with recommendations suggested by The American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

All junior high schools of southeastern North Dakota participate in interscholastic athletic competition. Basketball is played by all twenty-two schools surveyed. Football, track, baseball and wrestling rank in the order named. Modified rules are used in many of the contests particularly in football and basketball where the length of playing time



is shortened.

All of the responding schools conduct a physical education program with the majority of the schools meeting two days a week. Eighty-six per cent of the schools had an intramural program which should be enlarged upon. Many schools have merely an intramural program involving a few basketball teams. Numerous other team sports should be included together with individual sports such as tennis, badminton, and archery.

In the intramural program, the external pressures upon the participants and the instructors which are characteristic of much interscholastic competition are not likely to be intense. While competition in intramurals may be keen, games can be played for fun. The final score has transitory interest. It does not become a cause for wild celebration or deep dejection. A constructive balance between the objectives of sportsmanship and the pressure of competition can be maintained easily in the pupil's thoughts and actions.

A maximum of one game per week is a recommendation of McNeeley.<sup>29</sup> The average number of basketball games played per season was ten games. An average of three football games was played each year by junior high schools. The length of the football, track, and baseball season will vary somewhat in this geographical location due to unpredictable weather

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<sup>29</sup>See Appendix D.



in the spring and fall.

The common practice periods were held four times a week. Several schools indicated practices were held every day except the day of a game. Fifteen to twenty days of practice was usually held before the opening game of the season.

McNeeley<sup>30</sup> recommends no admission be charged to interschool games. Seventy-three per cent of the schools charged admission to spectators of the various contests.

The average distance traveled one way to play an interschool game was forty-five miles. Only one school indicated an overnight stay. This school answered occasionally to the question. The majority of the schools traveled by bus. Some responses revealed both cars and buses were used depending upon the distance of the trip.

Basketball tournaments are very popular in southeastern North Dakota. A large majority of junior high schools participate in either a conference or invitational tournament. Several of the schools participated in two such tournaments each year.

Many of the junior high schools have a separate coach handling the teams. He is also responsible for scheduling of games. In all the schools, with one exception, it was the job of the coach to schedule the games or event.

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<sup>30</sup> See Appendix D.



All twenty-two schools publicize their athletic contests with posters, local papers and school papers being the most common forms of advertisement.

A health examination for each child is very important. Seventy-seven per cent of the schools made it mandatory that each child have a health examination by the local physician before competing in interschool athletics. This practice adheres to McNeeley's<sup>31</sup> recommendation that each child participating in interschool athletics should have a medical examination before the season begins. McNeeley<sup>32</sup> also recommends parental consent before a child can participate in interscholastic athletics. Permission is obtained by eighty-six per cent of the school systems included in this survey.

The main objective of the junior high school interschool athletics appears to be that of developing material for future teams. Nine schools listed this as the main objective. Several schools checked several responses but each time the development of future material always appeared. McNeeley<sup>33</sup> suggests interschool athletics be used as culmination of the physical education and intramural program.

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<sup>31</sup>See Appendix D.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.



Seventy-three per cent of the schools indicated the trend in regard to interschool athletics to be relatively the same as it has been in the past. Six schools revealed greater emphasis while no school indicated less emphasis.

From the results of this survey it is self-evident that very few of McNeeley's recommendations of The American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation are being followed. However, these recommendations can be used as a basis to set up each junior high school program.

The interscholastic program has tremendous spectator interest which has often expressed itself in ways inimical to the welfare of the pupils. Therefore, a statement of policy governing interscholastic athletics, formally adopted by the board of education, is essential.

The attention of the school must be focused upon the physical and moral welfare of the pupil. The school should not attempt to compete in any sport unless there can be provided adequate personnel, supplies, equipment, and playing facilities in addition to those which are needed for the basic physical education program and the intramural activities.

Many physical activities take place in the form of sports where competition provides a strong incentive. The competitive spirit may appear as individual meets individual or as team meets team. Its operation is easily observed



through the powerful effect it exerts upon contestants.

Competition is neither good nor bad. Whether it is beneficial or destructive will depend upon the way it is used and how children are taught to conduct themselves when under its influence. A good coach, in addition to his concern for the physical condition of his players and the development of their skills, will manifest his qualifications as a teacher through his own high ideals and through his ability to guide his players into rightful attitudes.

It is important, therefore, that the local board of education should study recommendations and formally adopt a statement of policy which makes paramount the welfare of the pupils participating in contests. The active implementation of this policy by the school administrators and coaches will do much to stave off any unwholesome pressures which might arise. Such a statement of policy will also serve to keep expenditures for the interscholastic program in proper proportion to the other financial needs of the school. Community support of the junior high school interscholastic program can only be justified when these conditions are met. In this way competition at this level can be organized and brought under control.



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## APPENDIX A

Enderlin, North Dakota  
September 15, 1960

Dear Sir:

I am attempting to determine the trends of inter-scholastic competition in junior high schools in the southeastern counties of North Dakota. In recent years The American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation and the Education Policies Commission have given their recommendations concerning this controversial issue.

A response from your school is important in order that an accurate picture of the trends in southeastern North Dakota may be obtained. I would appreciate it very much if you would complete the form and return it promptly.

It will take you approximately ten minutes to complete the enclosed form. If you desire a copy of the results, check the blank at the bottom of the form and a copy will be mailed to you upon completion of the study.

Sincerely yours,

John M. Rhode

JMR

Enc.







ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES  
OF JUNIOR HIGH INTERSCHOLASTIC COMPETITION

1. Who is responsible for scheduling games? Principal  Coach  Administrator  Others \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who coaches the team? High school coach  Physical education instructor  Junior high coach  High school student
3. How do the teams travel? Bus  Cars  Train
4. Is admission charged for the games? Yes  No  Amount \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do teams stay overnight while away on a game trip? Never  Occasionally  Frequently
6. Who does the officiating? Registered officials  Faculty members  High school students  Coaches  Others (list) \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Are games publicized? Yes  No  How are they publicized? Posters  Radio  School paper  Local paper  Television
8. Are awards given for participation? Yes  No  Type of award. Letters  Ribbons  Certificate  Medals
9. Is a special health examination required for those participating? Yes  No  Who administers the examination? Local physician  School physician  Nurse
10. Is each child covered by insurance plan? Yes  No  With whom carried? Private insurance company  State High School Activities Plan
11. Do children obtain parents written consent to participate in activities? Yes  No
12. Do you have regular pep squads? Yes  No
13. Purpose of your interscholastic competition is to
  - a. Develop future material for varsity \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Culmination of physical education and intramural program \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. To afford competition which would otherwise be lacking \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Other reasons \_\_\_\_\_



14. What effect does this competition have on the intramural program? Adds to program \_\_\_\_ Distracts from program \_\_\_\_ No effect \_\_\_\_
15. What appears to be the trend of competition in your area? Greater emphasis \_\_\_\_ Less emphasis \_\_\_\_ Relatively the same \_\_\_\_
16. What is your reaction to these trends? Favorable \_\_\_\_ Unfavorable \_\_\_\_ Opposed \_\_\_\_ Indifferent \_\_\_\_
- Check if copy of results is desired \_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX C

NORTH DAKOTA  
SCHOOLS COOPERATING IN THIS STUDYRansom CountyEnderlin  
LisbonSargent CountySargent Central  
Havana  
MilnorRichland CountyFairmont  
Hankinson  
Lidgerwood  
Wyndmere  
St. FrancisDickey CountyEllendale  
OakesLaMoure CountyLaMoure  
Kulm  
EdgeleyCass CountyCasselton  
PageKidder County

Steele

Logan CountyGackle  
NapoleonStutsman County

Streeter

McIntosh County

Ashley



## APPENDIX D

Committee Report - American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation - Chairman, Dr. S. A. McNeeley, Boston, Mass., 1949.

RESOLUTION RELATING TO INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS  
IN GRADES SIX SEVEN, AND EIGHT

1. Whereas, interschool athletic competition is defined as any type of athletic activity in which students from two or more schools participate while representing their respective schools;
2. Whereas, interschool athletic competition is widely conducted in grades six, seven, and eight in America;
3. Whereas, properly conducted interschool athletics are an important part of a well balanced program of physical education;
4. Whereas, interscholastic athletic competition provides an enriched program for the physically gifted child;
5. Whereas, the properly conducted interscholastic athletic program stimulates both the class and the intramural program;
6. Whereas, interscholastic athletics provide an outlet for the inherent adventure drive of children;
7. Whereas, interscholastic athletics broaden the social horizon of the child;
8. Whereas, school morale can be developed through properly conducted interschool athletics; and
9. Whereas, properly conducted interschool athletic competition aids in the development of the competitive spirit operating under law which characterizes the American way of life;

We, therefore, recommend; That activity for all students be stressed in grades one through eight in the physical education program; that a strong intramural program be developed for students in grades five through eight; and that an interschool athletic program based upon the principles which follow be



incorporated into the school program for grades six, seven, and eight as a natural outgrowth of the regular physical education instruction program and of the intramural program.

RECOMMENDED PRINCIPLES FOR CONDUCT OF INTERSCHOLASTIC  
ATHLETICS IN GRADES SIX, SEVEN, AND EIGHT

1. The major objectives of interschool play in grades six, seven and eight should be mastery of skills, development of organic vigor, social growth, and character development.
2. Interschool athletics should be recognized as a component part of the total physical education program, but only when conducted under school supervision and closely coordinated with other activities in the physical education program.
3. Interschool athletic schedules should be brief and serve as the culmination of the intramural program. Schools having too few students to carry on a satisfactory intramural program in team sports should stress intramurals in individual and dual sports, while conducting interschool team competition.
4. Interschool competition must be so conducted that health and safety hazards are reduced to a minimum. Such protective devices as wall padding, spectacle guards, and catchers' masks should be provided by the school and their usage required of participants during both practices and games.
5. Spectator emphasis should be avoided and no admission fee charged.
6. Sports whose objective it is to injure an opponent shall not be included in interschool play.
7. Every child who engages in interschool play should have his parents' written permission to do so. (Note: This is not legally binding upon the parent or child but many schools have found that the use of this procedure has been instrumental in avoiding difficulty).
8. Practice in each sport should be sufficient to enable players to participate in games with a satisfactory degree of skill and safety.
9. Players should not take part in more than one competitive game per week.



10. Rules for games should be modified in such a fashion that health is safeguarded, while still retaining enough "risk" value to insure interest in the sport. Players should be limited in the number of events they may enter in such activities as track and swimming.
11. Practice periods and games should be avoided at night.
12. No game should be scheduled for interschool athletics which necessitates staying away from the students' home over night.
13. Competition should take place within a small geographical area.
14. Students shall be classified in such a manner that competition will be upon a basis approximate equality of ability and maturity.
15. Every child who participates in interschool athletics should be approved by a qualified physician at the beginning of the year.
16. There shall be no participation in tournaments which require intensive participation in a number of games during a short period of time. This especially applies to basketball tournaments which bring a number of teams together for a day or two scheduling each team for two or three games per day.
17. The eligibility of boys and girls for participation in interschool contests should be the same as for any other extra-class activity.
18. No credit should be awarded for participation in interschool athletics and such participation should not be used as a substitute for regular class instruction.
19. Students should be given an opportunity to take part in planning schedules, rules, etc.
20. Student leadership should be developed by using boys and girls as officials, assistant coaches and captains.
21. Sportsmanship and pleasant social relationships among contestants should always be stressed. Interschool play should be accompanied by social events in which the host-guest relationship is encouraged. The serving of refreshments after group activity is desirable.
22. The activities included in the interschool athletic program



must be varied enough to maintain the childrens' interest. They should be so planned as to provide a progression of skills and increasing difficulty from grade to grade.

23. The school should provide adequate facilities and equipment for the interschool athletic program.
24. The interschool athletic program should be directed by a fully credited teacher who is well trained in general education and in physical education.
25. A faculty representative should be present at every game.
26. Awards given should be inexpensive and should serve only as a memento of an athletic event. Team, rather than individual awards are recommended.
27. Publicity concerning the interschool program should stress team rather than individual achievement and should emphasize the broad educational values of the program.