Bold, new logo unveiled by New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association

New slogan also introduced: “Protecting, Promoting, and Providing for our high school student athletes”

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (September 14, 2011) – The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) -- the non-profit group that represents the best interests of more than 250,000 student athletes from 433 accredited public, private, and parochial high schools -- has unveiled an entirely new logo to be used on informational and marketing materials. In royal blue and white, the logo, which will be utilized in conjunction with the association’s existing seal, features large, block letters along with a green cutout in the familiar shape of the state.

In addition, the logo carries the NJSIAA’s new slogan, “Protecting, Promoting, and Providing for our high school student athletes.”

“Our association has been operating on behalf of student athletes since 1918 – this new logo treatment is simply a way to help make us more visible, so a greater number of people are aware of the services we provide,” explains Steven J. Timko, the association’s executive director. “Our goal is for the new NJSIAA logo – in the form of a flag or banner – to eventually be on display at all our member schools, and at all championship competitions we oversee.”

The development and rollout of the new logo will have no significant financial impact on the association, nor does it signal the elimination or phasing out of the existing NJSIAA seal.

Use of the word “Protecting” within the new slogan was inspired by the NJSIAA’s longstanding commitment to defending and safeguarding the health and well-being of student athletes. The association focuses on issues and regulations related to mandatory and optional protective equipment, while also helping to ensure that the competition itself is fair and that no player or team is at a potentially dangerous physical disadvantage. As an example, the NJSIAA just last week announced that high-impact, protective goggles are now mandatory equipment for all field hockey players.

NOTE: A high-resolution image of the new NJSIAA logo is available at http://tinyurl.com/3psc3vt.

About the NJSIAA
Established in 1918, the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletics Association (NJSIAA) is a voluntary, non-profit organization comprised of 433 accredited public, private, and parochial high schools. A member
of the National Federation of State High School Associations, the NJSIAA conducts tournaments and crowns champions in 32 sports. Championship competition for girls is sponsored in basketball, bowling, cross country, fencing, field hockey, golf, gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, outdoor track, winter track, and volleyball. Boys' championships are determined in baseball, basketball, bowling, cross country, fencing, football, golf, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, swimming, tennis, outdoor track, winter track, volleyball, and wrestling.

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Non-profit group looks forward to continued success of historic steroid testing program for New Jersey’s high school athletes

Four positive tests during 2010-2011 school year

State providing annual $50K reimbursement, under partnership agreement

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (September 28, 2011) – While the Olympics, professional baseball, and other high-profile sporting institutions struggle against the specter of performance-enhancing drugs, New Jersey’s high school student athletes are enjoying ongoing protection against steroid abuse thanks to a first-of-its-kind testing initiative. And now, the sponsor organization is looking ahead to even greater success in the future.

“We had a total of four positive tests this past year – the most in our program’s five-year-history,” explains Steven J. Timko, executive director of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA). “This means our testing protocols are effective and, most importantly, we’re playing a key role in stopping students who are heading down a dangerous path with performance enhancing drugs.”

The program began in June 2006, when the NJSIAA – the non-profit group representing the best interests of more than 250,000 student athletes from 433 accredited public, private, and parochial high schools – implemented a sweeping program that made New Jersey the very first state with a comprehensive steroid testing policy for athletes at the high school level.

Under the program, and in partnership with the association, the state annually provides $50,000 to help reimburse the cost of testing. The NJSIAA – which also contributes $50,000 to the program annually – is next slated to receive the state funds in June 2012, as reimbursement for testing during the upcoming 2011-2012 season. This money represents the state’s sole payment to the association, which is independent.

Currently, the NJSIAA’s steroid testing efforts are restricted to championship tournaments. Timko, however, can envision the possibility of expanding its scope.

“There’s certainly merit to testing year-round, rather than only during tournaments – primarily that it would expose more student athletes and more schools to testing,” he says. “The challenge to this, of course, would be a distinct increase in costs.”

Under the current NJSIAA program, every student athlete from an association member school – plus one parent or guardian – must sign a consent form agreeing to random testing. Otherwise, they are ineligible to compete. And any student who tests positive for steroids or other banned substances included on a list
patterned after the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) list will automatically forfeit one year of athletic eligibility.

In 2010-2011, the association conducted 492 tests on athletes from 86 different member schools – with more than half being focused on student athletes in sports in which steroid use is most prevalent. These include football, wrestling, swimming, and lacrosse. The cost per test is approximately $200.

“Our association’s new slogan is ‘Protecting, Promoting, and Providing for our high school student athletes,' and successful steroid testing exemplifies our commitment to protection," Timko says. “The potential repercussions of abusing anabolic steroids and similar drugs – from fatal health issues, to unfair competition – are terrible. We’ve worked for the benefit of student athletes for nearly a century, and at this point in time there’s nothing we can do that’s more vital.”

The urinalysis test used by the NJSIAA can identify more than 80 banned substances. Athletes randomly designated for testing are selected by the National Center for Drug-Free Sport computer system. The tests themselves are analyzed by the University of California, Los Angeles Olympic Analytical Laboratory.

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# # #
Safer teen driving is goal of new education initiative

NJSIAA and NJ Teen Safe Driving Coalition team up

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (October 17, 2011) – A new, first-in-the-nation education initiative designed to help high school coaches make student athletes aware of the New Jersey Graduated Driver License (GDL) program has been unveiled by the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) and the NJ Teen Safe Driving Coalition. The New Jersey GDL program, which took effect on January 1, 2001, is a three-step licensing system that helps new drivers gain behind-the-wheel experience before becoming fully licensed. The steps consist of the learner's permit, the probationary license, and the basic or unrestricted license.

The two organizations are distributing a pamphlet, “A Game Plan for Talking to Your Student Athletes About New Jersey's Graduated Driver License Program,” to athletic directors and coaches across the state in an effort to help them educate their student athletes about the proven principles of the GDL program. Along with information and statistics about how and why the GDL works to reduce teen crash risk, the pamphlet also includes a sample student athlete code of conduct that athletic directors and coaches may choose to use.

“It’s our responsibility to help athletic directors and coaches protect student athletes by promoting initiatives aimed at keeping these kids safe,” says NJSIAA Executive Director Steve Timko. “We believe making the announcement at the start of National Teen Safe Driving Week is the ideal way to get everyone on board.”

The crucial need for the GDL program was illustrated in tragic fashion this August, when four football players from Linwood’s Mainland Regional High School died in a car crash on the Garden State Parkway. Four other players were injured. Had the GDL provisions – which allow the teen driver to have only one passenger in the vehicle – been followed, this deadly crash may have been prevented.

“The leading cause of teen crashes in New Jersey is distraction and inattention, which is prompted not just by the use of cell phones and texting, but other passengers,” adds Pam Fischer, Leader of the NJ Teen Safe Driving Coalition and the mother of a high school student athlete. “The provisions of the GDL program address those things that cause the greatest risk for teens and that has helped drive teen crashes, injuries and fatalities in our state to record lows. But it’s important that athletic directors and coaches know the facts and can share them with their athletes so that they not only have a winning season, but a safe one.”

The GDL “game plan” pamphlet can be downloaded from the NJSIAA website at www.njsiaa.org.
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About the NJ Teen Safe Driving Coalition
Established in 2010, through a grant from The Allstate Foundation in partnership with the National Safety Council, the New Jersey Teen Safe Driving Coalition is composed of more than 50 individuals and organizations who volunteer their time and resources to help teens and parents leverage the proven principles of Graduated Driver Licensing. The Coalition also works with law enforcement and school officials to deliver outreach, education and training programs that encourage, educate and engage communities to help teens become good drivers for life.

# # #
REVISION OF TICKET PRICING FOR SELECT NEW JERSEY HIGH SCHOOL SPORTING EVENTS – GROUP REPRESENTING 250,000+ STUDENT ATHLETES, 433 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS URGES END TO POLITICAL WRESTLING MATCH

October 17, 2011

The following statement was released today by Steven J. Timko, executive director of the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association), the non-profit group representing the best interests of more than 250,000 student athletes from 433 accredited public, private, and parochial high schools.

“The NJSIAA is working with the Commissioner of Education to determine appropriate ticket prices for championship-level high school athletics competition. We’ve shared our recommendations directly with the commissioner and look forward to his feedback. Of course, ticket pricing helps determine the level of services we offer the more than 250,000 student athletes we serve.

Along with the services the NJSIAA provides to the state’s 433 accredited public and private high schools, in terms of coordinating and managing tournaments in 32 varsity sports, we also actively protect the health and safety of our student athletes. We’re engaged in initiatives to reduce the frequency and severity of concussions, and also to provide for optimum hydration during practices and competitions. We’ve just completed our most successful year ever in detecting abuse of performance enhancing drugs, and just today we announced a sweeping program to keep student athletes safe as they gain behind-the-wheel driving experience. And these are just a few examples among many.

“The funds at our disposal play a direct role in safeguarding the wellbeing of our student athletes. It’s a charge the association is strongly committed to and one that I’m passionate about.

“The NJSIAA’s commitment is to keeping all our student athletes safe – so I’m taken aback by opinions expressed today by a lone New Jersey Assemblyman, John Burzichelli (D-Gloucester). He’s calling on the commissioner to reject any increase in ticket pricing, and suggests the price of our tickets could have a negative impact on families ‘struggling daily to make ends meet.’

“We’re well aware of the challenges many of us face in the current economic environment. But I don’t think any of us – educators, parents, or tax-payers in general – are interested in cutting corners at the risk of our student athletes’ short- or possibly even long-term health. In fact, any hint we should consider doing so is irresponsible.

“If the NJSIAA were unable to continue supporting current health-focused initiatives, the burden of doing so could only fall to individual school districts. In turn, these districts would face the
harrowing decision of either committing more of their finite resources or potentially risking the safety of student athletes by allowing outstanding safety programs to fall by the wayside.

“Today, our nation and state face unprecedented challenges, and politicians like Assemblyman Burzichelli should be fully engaged in finding solutions – not prolonging some self-serving political wrestling match by squabbling over the price of a ticket to high school sporting event that probably costs less than a dinner hamburger with fries.

“At the NJSIAA, we’re focused on protecting, promoting, and providing for more than a quarter million student athletes across New Jersey. And we’re working side-by-side with the Commissioner of Education to ensure that we have sufficient resources to continue doing so.”

# # #
Rowan University to host four New Jersey state championship football games

Revision of venue based on altered construction schedule

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (October 24, 2011) – Rowan University will serve as the host venue for all four South Jersey Region state final football games during the weekend of December 2 - 3. Other championship games will continue to be played at Rutgers University, The College of New Jersey, Kean University and MetLife Stadium.

This announcement, made by the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association), follows determination that the schedule for on-campus construction at Rowan was being altered. Originally, it was thought that the locker rooms at the university would not be available during the championship weekend.

“Based on its location in the southern part of the state, Rowan is the ideal location for these athletic contests,” says Steven J. Timko, executive director of the NJSIAA. “It was always our first choice for the South Jersey Region contests. The overriding factor impacting the decision to relocate games from the other partner schools was our commitment to our student athletes, member schools, and fans, and we’re delighted everything worked out this way. Even our toughest critics realize the value of playing championship games at neutral sites.”

Timko also noted that the NJSIAA has already communicated with its partners at Rutgers University, The College of New Jersey, and Kean University, and all readily agreed that the shift of venues was in the best interests of New Jersey high school football players and fans.

“This was no easy task,” Timko says. “Credit for our being able to adjust the schedule of state final games goes to the NJSIAA football committee, Rowan’s revised construction schedule, and the absolutely exceptional support of our partners at Rutgers, The College of New Jersey and Kean University. They were extremely gracious about our making the change – and I’d like to think that, at least in part, this testifies to the amount of goodwill the NJSIAA has built over the course of time. We oversee the nation’s top rated and largest program of varsity, state championship competition, and I believe our partners are proud of the leading roles they play.”

On a related note, the NJSIAA has been notified by the office of Acting Commissioner of Education Chris Cerf of approved fall season ticket prices for championship events not only in football, but also boys and girls soccer, volleyball, field hockey, and gymnastics. The association is now analyzing this information.

“We appreciate the prompt manner with which the Department of Education responded to us, but we’ll now need to consider what impact bringing Rowan University into the venue equation may have on the
appropriateness of current ticket pricing,” Timko explained. “Once we’ve had sufficient time to review the information at our disposal, we may request further discussion with Acting Commissioner Cerf’s office.”

Timko added: “While additional communication with the Department of Education is pending, the initial ticket pricing structure we received is sufficient to enable us to continue holding championship competitions. However, if not revised, this level of pricing could very well create hardships related to several other important initiatives.”

Information about ticket pricing for specific fall season championship events is available at http://tinyurl.com/4ysln6s.

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# # #
In recognition of Veteran’s Day, NJSIAA to offer FREE admission to all military personnel who show proof of service

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (November 11, 2011) – To recognize the men and woman who have served and are actively serving in the military, the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) is offering free admission to today’s events for those who show a valid military ID or proof of service.

“The primary goal of our association is to protect, promote, and provide for our high school student athletes,” says Steve Timko, executive director of the NJSIAA. “The service men and woman are true examples of what NJSIAA stands for and are great role models for today’s youth. Today we’re showing our appreciation to those who serve, or have served, by offering free admission to all of today’s events.”

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Legendary Names Highlight
NJSIAA Bollinger Hall of Fame “Class of 2011” Inductees

Paul Robeson, “Ducky” Medwick, Larry Doby among those enshrined

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (November 16, 2011) – A civil rights and entertainment pioneer … a 10-time major league All-Star and Hall of Famer … a Negro leagues star who broke the color barrier in the American League. Each is among the 10 Garden State sporting luminaries inducted into the NJSIAA Bollinger Hall of Fame, class of 2011.

Paul Robeson, whose father was a slave, was a phenomenal, four-sport athlete at Somerville High School. After graduating from there in 1915, he became an All-American football star at Rutgers – despite the fact that some opposing teams refused to take the field against an African-American. Once his studies at Rutgers were completed, he had a brief career in the football organization that evolved into the National Football League. But Robeson’s greatest impact was far outside the realm of athletics. As a world famous entertainer he sang on Broadway and appeared in more than a dozen Hollywood films. Ultimately blacklisted by the entertainment industry because of his controversial civil rights activism, he traveled and performed widely throughout Europe. When he died in 1976, Robeson’s obituary appeared on the front page of the New York Times.

Carteret’s Joe “Ducky” Medwick, a lifetime .324 hitter during a major league career that spanned 17 seasons, was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown in 1968. Playing for the Cardinals, Giants, Dodgers, and Braves, he was voted National Leagues MVP in 1937, the year he accomplished the rare feat of capturing the Triple Crown by leading his circuit in batting average, runs batted in, and home runs.

A Paterson native, Larry Doby was 23 in 1947, when – only 11 weeks after Jackie Robinson famously “shattered the color barrier” by becoming the first African-American to appear in a major league game – he took the field for the Cleveland Indians to become the first African-American in the American League. He ultimately played 13 seasons for the Indians, White Sox, and Tigers, and in 1998 was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. In New Jersey, Doby joined the Newark Eagles of the Negro National League at age 17, and was also a baseball and football star at Paterson’s Eastside High School.

“It’s absolutely an honor for all of us at the NJSIAA to enshrine these 10 great individuals who accomplished so much in the athletic arena and, in many cases, beyond,” says Steve Timko, executive director of the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association). “They’re more than sports figures – in many cases, they’re heroes from whom we can all learn. Though passion and commitment, they’ve contributed mightily to the fabric of our society.”
Along with Robeson, Medwick, and Doby, the other 2011 inductees are:

- **Joe Silver** spent 43 years at Hillside High School as a coach, athletic director, teacher, and administrator. He coached basketball, baseball, track, golf, and tennis, and also had stints at Belvidere High School and Florida’s St. Andrews High School.

- **Derek Holloway** was a football and track star at Palmyra High School during the late 1970s. He then went on to appear in four major college bowl games while playing for the University of Arkansas.

- **Carol Parsons** spent 25 years as a coach, teacher, and administrator at Princeton High School, then joined the NJSIAA, where she spent nearly two decades as assistant director and associate director.

- **Tony Meola**, a soccer legend at Kearny High School in the mid-'80s, helped the University of Virginia to a share of the 1989 national title. He starred on the U.S. national team in the 1990 and 1994 World Cup competitions, and was also a Major League Soccer standout. A multi-sport athlete, Meola was drafted by baseball’s New York Yankees out of high school, and tried out as a placekicker for the New York Jets in 1994.

- **Anthony Ferrainolo** has been the baseball coach at West New York (Memorial) High School since 1977. With a total of 756 wins, he’s the most successful baseball coach in NJSIAA history.

- **William “Bucky” Hatchett** earned a remarkable 12 varsity letters at Verona High School before his graduation in 1946, then qualified for 10 more at Rutgers University. He was Rutgers’ first African-American senior class president; Verona’s athletic field is now named for him.

- **Walter Burrows** covered sports across southern New Jersey for more than 60 years. He joined the Courier Post in 1947, and while he frequently wrote about the Philadelphia Flyers and Philadelphia Phillies, he’s best known for reporting on high school athletics.

Established in 1995 and named for Short Hills, NJ-based sponsor Bollinger Insurance, a provider of sports-related insurance products, the NJSIAA’s Bollinger Hall of Fame receives nominations annually from high schools across the state. These submissions are reviewed by a selection committee that makes final decisions regarding inductees. Additional details – including specific criteria and the nomination form – are available by visiting [http://www.njsiaa.org/NJSIAA/10NJSIAAhalloffamenominationform.pdf](http://www.njsiaa.org/NJSIAA/10NJSIAAhalloffamenominationform.pdf).

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# # #
TO: NJSIAA Member Schools
FROM: Steven J. Timko, Executive Director
DATE: November 15, 2011
RE: Homeschooling

On November 9, 2011, the NJSIAA Executive Committee amended a Clarification to the NJSIAA Bylaws to make it clear that a Board of Education could, in its discretion, allow homeschoolers to compete in interscholastic sports, provided both the school and the homeschooled student complied with newly-adopted NJSIAA guidelines.

The NJSIAA Homeschooler Guidelines are attached to this memo and will be posted on the NJSIAA website. In addition, they will be published in the next addition of the NJSIAA Handbook.

The Department of Education website states that a “Board of Education may, but is not required by law to, allow a child educated elsewhere than at school to participate in curricular and extra-curricular activities or sports activities.” (Department of Education Frequently Asked Questions: Homeschooling). In light of this, the NJSIAA Executive Committee believed that it was important to be proactive and to provide guidelines to member schools to regulate any such participation.
The purpose of these Homeschooler Guidelines is to ensure that homeschooled students participate on the same level playing field as other student-athletes. To accomplish this, the Guidelines require (1) that before any homeschooler can participate, he or she must first obtain approval of the board of Education, (2) proof that the student resides in the district, (3) permission of the principal, (4) compliance with the same standards of behavior and performance as all other members of the team, (5) compliance with NJSIAA eligibility rules, (6) demonstration to the satisfaction of the local school officials that the student is receiving an equivalent education, (7) demonstration to the satisfaction of the local school officials that the student is academically qualified to participate, and (8) no transfers to a home school program for athletic advantage. For example, a student cannot drop out of school because of an academic or disciplinary issue and then turn around and participate as a homeschooler. The Guidelines specifically state that “any student who withdraws from a public school program to enroll in a home school program, and is ineligible at the time of withdrawal from the public school program due to his/her failure to meet academic, behavioral or eligibility standards, shall be ineligible to compete in interscholastic athletic competition in the same manner as a student who is transferred from one school to another for athletic advantage.” (Guideline 8).

Once again, the local Board of Education must decide whether it will permit homeschooled students to participate in sports. NJSIAA rules will not stand in the way. However, if participation is allowed, it must occur in accordance with the NJSIAA Homeschooler Guidelines. These Guidelines are designed to ensure that homeschoolers who participate in sports meet the same eligibility requirements as other student-athletes.

As always, NJSIAA staff is available to answer any questions you may have.
New Jersey Homeschooler Guidelines

A home schooled student is eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics if the following conditions are met:

1. Approval by the local Board of Education. Consistent with Department of Education Guidelines, a home schooled student may participate in interscholastic athletics if the local board of education, in its discretion, approves the participation of home schooled students on the high school teams.

2. Residency. The home schooled student must reside in the school district that serves the high school and must meet the residency criteria pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:22 and provide proof of residence as required by the local school board. In school districts that serve more than one town, a home schooled student must be assigned to the school of record in the same manner as other students.

3. Notice and request to Principal. The parents of the home schooled student must submit a written request to the principal of the member school to try out for an athletic team in interscholastic athletics.

4. Compliance with local requirements. The home schooled student must comply with the same physical examination, insurance, age, academic and other requirements for participation as required of all students at that high school. The home schooled student must adhere to the same standards of behavior, responsibilities and performance as other members of the team.

5. Compliance with NJSIAA requirements. Home schooled students must meet all eligibility requirements established by the NJSIAA, including but not limited to rules relating to amateur status, age, recruitment, academic credits, semesters of eligibility and transfers. Home schooled students will be subject to all rulings and decisions of the NJSIAA, and may appeal any adverse decision to the Commissioner of Education under N.J.A.C. 6A:3-7.1 et seq.

6. Demonstration of equivalent education. The parents of the homeschooled student must meet with local school officials to demonstrate that the student is receiving an academically equivalent education.

7. Certification of academic eligibility. The parents of the homeschooled student must submit evidence satisfactory to the Principal that the homeschooled student has met the requirements of the Academic Credit Rule and the requirements of the school’s own academic policy.

8. Transfer to a home school program. Any student who withdraws from a public school program to enroll in a home school program, and who is ineligible at the time of withdrawal from the public school program due to his/her failure to meet academic, behavioral or eligibility standards, shall be ineligible to compete in interscholastic athletic competition in the same manner as a student who has transferred from one school to another for athletic advantage.
9. The rights, privileges, and responsibilities associated with all other student athletes attending NJSIAA member schools will apply to home schooled students who have satisfied the requirements above.
ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (January 19, 2012) – The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) will be joining Seton Hall University and several other sponsors at noon on Sunday, January 22, to hold the 26th annual, statewide celebration of “National Girls and Women In Sports Day.” The event is particularly significant this year as 2012 marks the 40th anniversary of the landmark Title IX legislation. The theme of Sunday’s event is: “Title IX at 40: In It for the Long Run.”

Title IX – a law prohibiting the exclusion of women or men in educational programs based on their sex – opened a window for female athletes. When the law was officially passed, women were no longer denied the ability to participate in school or university sports programs, even if their school did not sponsor female teams.

“Forty years ago a law was passed that would change high school- and university-level sports forever,” says Steve Timko, NJSIAA executive director. “Without Title IX, the amazing talent of so many female athletes would have gone unrecognized.”

The event will begin with a statewide awards luncheon, at which more than 175 outstanding high school and university female athletes will be presented with awards from the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport. Following the luncheon, attendees will attend the Seton Hall vs. Syracuse women’s basketball game.

Additional event sponsors include the New Jersey Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women; the Star Ledger; the New Jersey Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance; the Garden State Athletic Conference; the Montclair State University Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Leisure Studies; the Directors of Athletics Association of New Jersey; the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport; and the Women’s Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

Additional information on this event, which will be held at Seton Hall University, is available on the NJSIAA Web site (http://njsiaa.org/) or by calling the association at 609.259-2776.

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New Hydration Protocols for High School Wrestlers a Success for Student Athletes

**NJSIAA emphasizes safety related to health, competition**

**ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (January 23, 2012)** – New protocols to help ensure high school wrestlers remain properly hydrated were recently implemented for the current season by the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) and are proving to be a major success for student athletes.

Specifically, these measures involve the determination of a wrestler’s lowest acceptable competition weight – via a pre-season certification process – as well as an assessment of whether the athlete is hydrated appropriately. The NJSIAA has also extended its descent plan – an individual wrestler’s season-long plan for weight loss – allowing more time and a safer method for athletes to reach their desired weight classes.

“One of the NJSIAA’s core responsibilities is protecting the student-athletes we serve, and it was with this in mind that we implemented the new safety protocols – to keep our wrestlers as healthy as possible,” explains the association’s Executive Director, Steve Timko. “Serious health risks are associated with the type of acute dehydration that can occur when athletes attempt to drop large amounts of weight within a short timeframe.”

Under the NJSIAA program, after a student athlete has provided a urine sample under secure conditions, they must wait at least 48 hours to re-test, in the event of an initial failure. The new testing period began November 7 and ended December 16 – the first day of the season – to ensure all athletes are properly certified for the first weekend of matches. Testing and pre-testing is conducted by a certified assessor; pre-testing can be done either by an assessor or by designated school personnel. No wrestler is eligible to compete until they’ve passed the certification process.

“Since implementing these new guidelines, we’ve been receiving extremely positive feedback from our member schools and from the student athletes themselves,” Timko adds. “Now, we’re looking forward to some exciting and healthy championship tournaments in February.”

More information on the new protocols is available on the NJSIAA Web site at [www.njsiaa.org](http://www.njsiaa.org), or by calling the association at 609-259-2776.

**About the NJSIAA**

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###
NJSIAA focusing on Skin Cancer prevention

Partnering with the Montclair-based Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (March 12, 2012) – To help prevent skin cancer in teens, the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) is partnering with the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation (RFMF) on the establishment the Team SunSmart educational program.

Skin cancer is the second most common form of cancer affecting young adults (ages 15 to 29), according to the American Cancer Society, and just two severe sunburns during childhood doubles the risk of developing melanoma later in life. This being the case, youngsters who wear sunscreen daily trim their risk of developing skin cancer by as much as 70 percent.

Athletes who practice and compete outside often are exposed to the sun for extended periods of time, thus increasing their potential risk of skin cancer. For this reason, Team SunSmart will provide information about skin cancer, UV exposure, and the positive impact of sunscreen protection to high school teams throughout New Jersey. In addition, the RFMF will provide sun screen to 86,000 athletes around the state, in the hope that these athletes will take the necessary steps to protect their skin.

“The goal of the Team SunSmart initiative is educating student athletes about the risks of overexposure to the sun, and also to have the message spread to the entire student body,” says Steve Timko, NJSIAA executive director. “We hope to accomplish this through the influence of our athletes, as well as through informational posters placed throughout schools.”

The RFMF has also created a related Facebook fan page as well as a Team SunSmart video contest to help spread the word about skin cancer among teens.

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About the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation
The Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation (RFMF) is committed to educating everyone 12 years old and up on the importance of being “Sun Smart”. The foundation’s message is simple – it advocates that everyone should have fun
NJSIAA supporting Students in Action of New Jersey's "Make Service Count Challenge"
Outstanding youth service projects to be recognized at the 2012 NJ Governors Jefferson Youth Service Awards

WHAT: The NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) is supporting the Students in Action of New Jersey's (SIANJ) "Make Service Count Challenge." This program recognizes young people who give their time and talent to projects that improve their schools, community, and world. Outstanding projects will receive a Youth Jefferson Award at the 2012 NJ Governors Jefferson Youth Service Awards.

Award categories:
- Easing Hunger
- Environment
- Citizenship
- Health and Wellness
- Service to Youth
- Peace and Justice
- Community Improvement

WHO: SIANJ's Make Service Count Challenge is open to individuals, teams, groups or entire schools. Participants may be 21 or under.

WHEN / WHERE: Deadline for entries: April 6

Award events: May 5 at the State Museum, Trenton (South Jersey selections)  
May 12 at the Newark Museum, Newark (North Jersey selections)

More information on the Make Service Count Challenge is available at http://www.sianj.com/.

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###
NJSIAA receives $50K annual reimbursement from state for high school steroid testing program

Represents New Jersey's sole contribution to independent association

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (March 20, 2012) – The state of New Jersey recently provided the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) with a $50,000 reimbursement to help fund a steroid testing program designed to protect high school student athletes from the dangers of performance-enhancing drugs.

According to an ongoing partnership agreement, the NJSIAA receives $50,000 annually from the state, which it matches with its own $50,000 contribution. The funds provided by New Jersey represent the state’s sole payment to the independent association.

This latest reimbursement covers costs for the testing program during the current, 2011-2012 school year. The state is committed to additional annual contributions in the future. Each of these reimbursements will be matched by the NJSIAA, which serves as the testing program’s administrator and lone arbiter.

At approximately $200 per test the initiative is costly, but it’s critical in preventing steroid abuse.

"Last year, we had four positive tests, which is the most in this program’s five-year history," says Steven J. Timko, the NJSIAA’s executive director. “That means our testing protocols are effective, and with this renewed funding, we can look forward to continued success in the fight against these potentially lethal drugs.”

The program began in June 2006, making New Jersey the first state with a comprehensive steroid testing policy for athletes at the high school level. In 2010-2011, the association conducted 492 tests on athletes from 86 different member schools – with more than half being focused on student athletes in sports in which steroid use is most prevalent. These include football, wrestling, swimming, and lacrosse.

Under the current NJSIAA program, any student who tests positive for steroids or other banned substances included on a list patterned after the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) list, will automatically forfeit one year of athletic eligibility. Athletes randomly designated for testing are selected by the National Center for Drug-Free Sport computer system. The tests, which can identify more than 80 banned substances, are analyzed by the University of California, Los Angeles Olympic Analytical Laboratory.

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NJSIAA updates ShopRite Cup standings, with two of three seasons now complete

Top high school sports programs of 2011-12 will be recognized for championship play

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (April 5, 2012) – With two of three annual scholastic athletic seasons now complete, the ShopRite Cup standings have been updated by the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association).

Sponsored by ShopRite and the NJSIAA, the ShopRite Cup recognizes the top high school sports program in each of the six group classifications in New Jersey. Sports programs accumulate points throughout the school year for finishing first, second, third, or fourth in group state championship competition. Following the conclusion of the fall, winter, and spring sports seasons, the six schools with the most points in their respective categories receive the ShopRite Cup.

“In its ninth consecutive year, the race for the ShopRite Cup has become a popular tradition within our association,” says NJSIAA Executive Director Steve Timko. “The Cup recognition is unique because it acknowledges the success of each school's entire athletic program, not just a single sport. We’re looking forward to some lively competition during the spring season to determine this year’s six champions.”

The programs leading the ShopRite Cup point race through the fall and winter seasons are:
- Group I: Haddon Township High School
- Group II: Haddonfield Memorial High School
- Group III: Moorestown High School
- Group IV: West Windsor-Plainsboro High School
- Non-public Group A: Christian Brothers Academy
- Non-public Group B: Gill Saint Bernard’s School

The full, updated 2011-2012 winter standings can be found on the NJSIAA Web site, at http://njsiaa.org/

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###
North Bergen H.S. violated athletic recruitment regulations, NJSIAA rules

Placed on two-year probation; will be permitted to retain 2012 state sectional championship

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (May 3, 2012) -- The NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) today issued a decision related to allegations of athletic recruitment against North Bergen High School and retired assistant superintendent and football coach Vincent Ascolese, ruling that the school was responsible for recruiting two players for the 2012 football season. North Bergen won the North Jersey, Section 1, Group 4 championship this past season, with both students in question on the roster.

As a result of the NJSIAA's findings, North Bergen High School will be placed on probation for two years and must comply with a Corrective Action Plan to be prepared by the school and approved by the NJSIAA. Because he is now retired, there will be no penalty against Ascolese -- though the association reserves the right to reconsider this determination if he ever returns to coaching. No eligibility-related sanctions were imposed on the two students involved, because both are seniors and are scheduled to graduate next month.

The ruling permits North Bergen High School to retain its 2012 state regional championship. However, the NJSIAA retains the right to prohibit the school from future championship competition if there are violations of any sort during the probationary period.

"I'm sure we'll hear some 'Goldilocks' sentiments expressed related to this ruling, with some saying the penalty is too harsh and others saying it's too lenient," says NJSIAA Executive Director Steve Timko. "But since the ultimate decision was reached by a committee composed of public and parochial school administrators and athletic officials from across New Jersey, I'm confident we got it just right."

Also under the association’s ruling, the high school’s principal, athletic director, and guidance director will be required to attend an eligibility workshop at the NJSIAA during each year of probation.
The allegations against North Bergen and its former football coach have received significant public attention and media coverage since they arose in January. The formal hearing by the NJSIAA's Controversies Committee was held on March 27.

The full, 13-page NJSIAA report and ruling on the subject is available at http://tinyurl.com/cvc48s7.

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###
By wearing many hats, compact NJSIAA staff handles daunting volume of responsibilities

Members manage multiple sports, tournaments, coordination and much more

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (May 17, 2012) – It's almost hard to believe -- more than 250,000 students in a total of 433 schools ... and a five-person senior staff to coordinate it all.

That's right, the New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) is a remarkably lean organization with each management level staff member expertly managing an array of responsibilities. These tasks include -- but are certainly not limited to -- staging over 80 annual championship tournaments for 32 different boys and girls varsity sports and conducting an average of 75 hearings each year concerning questions and about challenges of rules and results.

“We all excel at multi-tasking; that’s how we manage to wear so many hats at once,” says NJSIAA executive director Steve Timko, who operates the organization with the help of four assistant directors and a small support staff. “My colleagues’ dedication to high school sports is illustrated by their ability to juggle so much at one time -- from tournaments, to credentialing, to scholarships and more -- season after season.”

As an example, one senior staff members handles the management of athletic trainers, the annual Jefferson Awards, the NJSIAA electronic communications to membership, all technology issues, the association Web site, tournament brackets, and also the organization of six sports -- which involves handling entry fee payments, coordinating gym availabilities, assigning officials, ticketing, and all financial operations for each sport.

Another assistant director is in charge of six sports, all clinics and workshops, scholarships, the NJSCA Hall of Fame, coordinating the NJSCA All-Star Games, organizing the scholar/athlete luncheon, the NFHS Football Committee, the Coaches Assoc. Awards, and the awarding of all trophies.

And these are just samplings.

“Each of our staff members is willing to and capable of taking on a wide assortment of functions, so we're able to manage a volume of work that you might expect would require a much larger organization,” adds Timko. “Under different circumstances, I'd guess that all the things we do for New Jersey's high school student-athletes would require a staff at least triple our size. We handle double the number of student-athletes compared to many other states with the same size staff. It's a challenge, but thanks to the
In addition to their NJSIAA duties, staff members also volunteer in a range of national organizations, from one who serves as the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Baseball Rules Committee chair to another who represents the NJSIAA on the NFHS Football Committee to yet another working on the NFHS Track and Field’s Rules Committee.

"If you care to do some simple math, each NJSIAA senior staff member is responsible for approximately 50,000 high school student athletes," Timko adds. "There's no public, private, or parochial school educator in the state who can even remotely approach a number like that."

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# # #
NJSIAA cites positive outcomes from updated concussion policy

New guidelines go even further to protect student athletes

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (May 22, 2012) – More than 250,000 student-athletes are safer today, thanks to a policy revised by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) last year. Since the June 2011 alteration of its concussion policy, the NJSIAA has closely monitored outcomes, and results appear quite favorable. This policy, updated by the association’s Medical Advisory Committee, has been in effect for the entirety of the current, 2011-2012 school year.

Of most significance, the NJSIAA policy now requires that a physician specifically trained in the evaluation and management of concussions provide written clearance – in the form of a standardized Return to Play (RTP) document – before a student returns to competition or even practice. Prior to the policy change, athletes would still be blocked from returning to a game or practice until having been evaluated by a physician, but there was no requirement for written documentation of the clearance.

“Our prior policy on concussions was thorough, but we’re always looking to do everything possible to safeguard our student-athletes from head injuries and their aftermath,” explains NJSIAA Executive Director Steve Timko. “The feedback we’ve been receiving from athletic directors and coaches has been very positive. We already can see that the revised policy has helped prevent a number of athletes from returning to competition too soon after sustaining a head injury.”

Public awareness of the dangerous consequences of concussions has increased rapidly during the past decade, as a number of high-profile athletes who participate in contact sports – with an emphasis on the National Football League (NFL) and the National Hockey League – have struggled with ongoing symptoms after being diagnosed with concussions. Most recently, Pittsburgh Penguins’ superstar Sidney Crosby, likely the world’s most recognizable hockey player, was sidelined for the majority of the past two seasons with lingering symptoms. In addition, popular New York Jets receiver Wayne Chrebet retired in 2005 after a series of concussions, while NFL Hall of Fame quarterbacks Steve Young and Troy Aikman both were forced into early retirement because of repeated head trauma.

“Our intent with the revised policy is shielding athletes with head injuries from aggravating those injuries to the point of creating long-term symptoms,” Timko explains. “Someone with a concussion can become more vulnerable to suffering further concussions – particularly if they return to competition too soon – so we’re working hard to prevent this type of thing from happening.”
The NJSIAA has created a standardized Return to Play (RTP) form – accessible on the association’s Web site (www.njsiaa.org) -- and strongly recommends that these forms be available at all practices and competitions.

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###
NJSIAA to hear appeal of North Bergen football recruitment ruling

Montclair High School files formal challenge

Hearing set for June 6 at NJSIAA HQ in Robbinsville

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (May 30, 2012) -- In response to a formal challenge filed by Montclair High School, the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) will hold an appeal hearing on June 6, at its Robbinsville headquarters, related to the May 3 ruling of its Controversies Committee on North Bergen High School's violation of athletic recruitment rules.

That initial ruling, by an NJSIAA committee composed of five educators and athletic directors, found that North Bergen was responsible for several infractions, including recruiting two players. With these two players on its roster, North Bergen had concluded the 2011 football season on December 3 by defeating Montclair to capture the North Jersey, Section 1, Group 4 championship.

The committee ruling placed North Bergen on probation for two years, during which it must comply with a Corrective Action Plan. No immediate action was taken against Vincent Ascolese, the team’s head coach (and also North Bergen’s assistant superintendent), who had previously announced his intention to retire. However, should Ascolese elect to eventually re-enter the coaching field in New Jersey, the NJSIAA has reserved the right to take additional action. Also, the Controversies Committee took no action against the implicated players, as both are graduating in a few weeks.

Montclair's 13-page appeal to the NJSIAA Executive Committee, submitted by the Newark-based law firm Adams Stern Gutierrez & Lattiboudere, LLC, seeks to have North Bergen's victory voided, though it specifically does not request that Montclair be awarded the championship.

At the June 6 appeal hearing, which will be heard in open session, the Executive Committee will listen to arguments from both sides, then decide whether to affirm, reverse, or modify the original decision.
Commenting on the Montclair appeal, NJSIAA Executive Director Steve Timko says: "While this entire situation is unfortunate, to say the least, the process is moving forward. A committee of our members considered the facts – many of which have never been faced by the association – they issued their decision, now one of the parties is appealing to a larger body of members. The process is membership-driven, open, and transparent."

The Controversies Committee hearing on the matter was originally heard on March 27. The full, 13-page association report and ruling on the subject is accessible at [http://tinyurl.com/cvc48s7](http://tinyurl.com/cvc48s7).

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:** Media outlets wishing to attend the June 6, 11 a.m. hearing at NJSIAA headquarters (1161 Route 130, Robbinsville, NJ) should RSVP to Mike Cherenson (973.992-7800, x.104 / mcherenson@successcomgroup.com) or Kurt Praschak (973.992-7800, x.289 / kpraschak@successcomgroup.com) no later than noon on Tuesday, June 5.
NJSIAA awarded 2012 Class of GDL Champions designation by New Jersey Teen Safe Driving Coalition

Three other organizations/individuals also recognized for work in addressing teen driver safety

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (June 4, 2012) – The New Jersey Teen Safe Driving Coalition recently honored its 2012 Class of GDL (Graduated Driver License) Champions at the Champions School Showcase in Freehold. The NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) was among those organizations/individuals recognized for work in addressing teen safe driving.

Selected annually by the New Jersey Teen Safe Driving Coalition, GDL champions are identified as individuals and organizations who have advocated for the proven principles of the state’s Graduated Driver License (GDL) program. The three-step program (permit, probationary and basic license), which is considered one of the nation’s most progressive, is credited with helping reduce deaths involving teen drivers.

"The NJSIAA has been actively promoting teen safe driving and the GDL program since 2008," says NJSIAA Executive Director Steve Timko. "It’s important that students, parents, coaches and community members be aware of and understand the guidelines of the program, while appreciating the protection it provides our youth."

The NJSIAA partnered with the New Jersey Teen Safe Driving Coalition to develop a first-in-the-nation GDL education program for high school coaches. From there, "A Game Plan for Talking to Your Student Athletes About New Jersey’s Graduated Driver License Program" was unveiled to all high school athletic directors across the state. The NJSIAA not only helped distribute and design the material, but provided free ad space to promote the "GDL Game Plan" in its championship event programs. The initiative has now gone nationwide and is being used by Teen Safe Driving Coalitions in nine other states including California and Texas.

The showcase was part of the two-day iDrive Safe event designed to call attention to Global Youth Traffic Safety Month and car crashes, the leading killer of teens in New Jersey and nationwide. The three other awardees were Arnold “Andy” Anderson, the retired fatal accident reconstructionist (Essex County Prosecutor's Office) and parent of teen drivers in Livingston; Share the Keys, developed by Kean University in partnership with the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety (DHTS) and the New Jersey State Police; and Captain Arthur “Art” Faden, of the Northfield Police Department in Atlantic County.

A high-resolution, digital image of NJSIAA Assistant Director Jack DuBois accepting the Champion award from NJ Teen Safe Driving Coalition Leader Pam Fischer is available at http://tinyurl.com/7wsf6eg.

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