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School athletic programs are caught in the crossfire as community violence spills onto the playing field.

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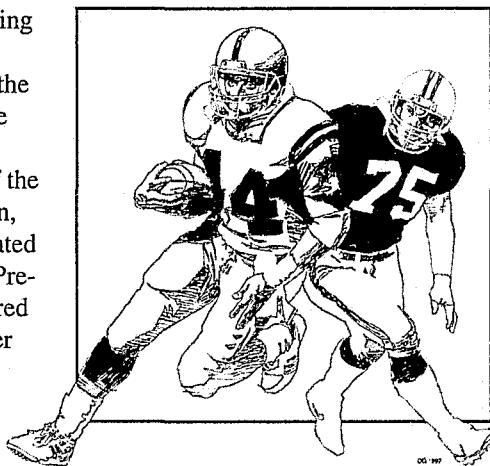
Working on a game plan for safety

Formerly considered safe havens, schools now experience their share of violent incidents. Unfortunately, as violence permeates these time-honored American institutions, certain once-celebrated traditions are being forced to take different approaches. School athletic events are an example.

"Violence at high school athletic events has serious implications, posing a threat to the continuation of interscholastic athletic programs and to the educational value which competitive sports offer," commented Dean Crowley, associate commissioner of the California Interscholastic Federation, Southern Section. Crowley participated in the recent practicum, "Violence Prevention at Athletic Events," sponsored by the National School Safety Center in Westlake Village, California.

Increasingly, the media has reported violence taking place at school football fields, basketball courts and recreation centers. Shootings, physical fights and brawls between rival fans and teams at athletic events are becoming more commonplace. For example:

- March 7, 1991 — Two Edison High students in Dade County, Florida, are wounded while trying to break up a fight during a pick-up basketball game in the school gym after classes.



- January 11, 1991 — At Oakland Technical High School in Oakland, California, athletic officials decide to bar fans, except other players and school officials, from basketball games. The ban is ordered after a ruckus occurred at a districtwide exhibition to kick off the basketball season. Three students were injured.
- October 4, 1991 — A shooting incident occurs at Roosevelt High School in Los Angeles during the final minutes of a Lincoln-Franklin football game, causing school officials to terminate the game. People on the field lie face down as spectators flood from the bleachers; no injuries are reported.
- October 4, 1991 — Two teen-agers are wounded when gunfire erupts in the closing minutes of a football game between archrivals Crenshaw and Dorsey high schools in Los Angeles. Ten to 15 gunmen exchange fire across the field, forcing players to drop to the ground and the crowd of 1,000 spectators to flee the stands.

The threat of violence is becoming so accepted that school officials and coaches have had to develop contingency plans. These include bullet drills, in which students are told that in the event of gunfire, they are to lie face down in the center of the field until the "all clear" signal is given.

The violence near high schools has also prompted a tightening of security at games and special events throughout the country. At some events, spectators have been searched, sometimes with metal detectors, before being allowed into the stands, and police presence at the games has been increased. Football games, once a Friday night tradition, are being scheduled during the day.

Dealing with violence at athletic events has become a top priority. Primary components of a strategy to curb violence

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include facility preparation, an effective communication network, crisis prevention, adult supervision, school/law enforcement partnerships and student participation.

Violence at school athletic events is a community problem, not just a school issue. "Schools are a reflection of the community in which they serve," said Carole Quan, assistant superintendent, Oakland (California) Unified School District. "In essence, then, we are all responsible for the safety, security and well-being of our students; each of us plays an integral role." Safety plans for special events at school should be developed as part of a comprehensive safe schools plan, involving representatives from the entire community.

Creating a partnership between the school, community, and law enforcement can help to identify the concerns of school constituents and solicit their support. Problems of violence within any community have unique characteristics that need to be recognized. School officials can:

- Talk with the coaches, booster clubs, game officials, students and law enforcement representatives to determine their concerns and ask for support.
- Identify local resources to help supervise and respond to emergencies.
- Develop a communication plan.
- Establish an effective communications network.
- Designate a command post.
- Specify who is in charge.

Pre-game planning is crucial. Plans should identify key community agencies and delineate responsibility assignments for all personnel involved in the organization and administration of athletic events. Logistics, event schedules and contingency plans should all be worked out weeks before the actual event. A prepared map of the facility identifying restricted areas, emergency exits, law enforcement stations and assigned staff locations will reduce confusion on the day of the event.

When considering the facility, the site should be assessed for its limitations and potential problems. This includes:

- Providing well-lit parking and walkways;
- Separating parking entrances and exits, concessions and restrooms for the visitor and home teams;
- Choosing a neutral site, if necessary;
- Reading, recording and removing graffiti before each game;
- Scheduling games on weekdays or Saturdays during daylight hours;
- Reviewing the site in terms of crime prevention through environmental design.

The use of barricades, stanchions, portable bleachers and

toilets, and temporary fences may be essential to assure that athletic events remain safe and peaceful. If this is the case, developing strategies well in advance becomes extremely critical. Waiting until the week of the event to request assistance will often result in confusion, poor communication between agencies and a lack of adequate funds.

A close examination of the site may reveal that crime and violence can be reduced through minor changes in the environment. This may include such strategies as creating clearer visibility and eliminating hiding areas by trimming tree branches to the eight-foot level. Bushes and shrubbery should not exceed 24 inches in height. Pedestrian and spectator traffic flow should be thoughtfully designed, with adequate access points and signage. Concessions, restroom facilities and parking should be designed to promote orderly and responsible behavior.

Stadiums that are adjacent to major streets present security problems because of their openness and accessibility. Everyone present is vulnerable. Because of the threat of drive-by shootings, barricading the streets immediately adjacent to stadiums may be necessary.

In addition to having a clear chain of command and specific role assignments, campus supervisors must be linked together in a workable communication system. Two-way radios with cellular phone capability, walkie-talkies and megaphones are essential. An effective communication system links supervisory personnel with the command post, gate control, foot patrol, fire and rescue, law enforcement, concessions, parking and perimeter supervision.

Law enforcement strategies include a crowd control plan, a perimeter patrol, assigned parking areas, traffic control, intelligence gathering and clear guidelines for law enforcement personnel. Law enforcers are there to supervise the crowd, not to watch the game. A marked police vehicle at the entrance will serve as a deterrent. A uniformed officer at the entrance sends a message of expected behavior standards. Bike and foot patrols are also standard practices.

Adequate adult supervision, which includes a strong identifiable teacher/staff presence, is also helpful. Representatives from both schools should be present to screen, control and supervise those seeking admission to the event.

These representatives should be informed about any court orders or restrictions placed on specific individuals to limit their association or presence at school events or on school property. Probation officers also can identify potential troublemakers or those whose conditions of probation may bar them from entry. Based on prior incidents or conduct, troublemakers should be notified in writing that they are barred from activities and will be considered trespassers.

Spectators should not be allowed to leave the stadium and return while a game is being played, since this can result in

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the smuggling of contraband into the stadium. Similarly, spectators should not be allowed to leave the parking area and return once the game is under way. Playing field access should be limited, with field passes required for all sideline participants.

If pre-entry searches will be conducted, spectators from both teams should be notified in advance. Gatekeepers and ticket takers should be trained to look for the types of things that might justify a search for contraband such as alcohol, drugs and weapons. Large purses, suspicious bags, baggy clothing and gang colors may serve as warning signals. Some schools have prohibited the carrying of any containers, especially bottles, into the stadium or gymnasium.

Designate a discrete area away from the crowds to be used as a pull-out or holding area for arrested or troublesome spectators. The holding area should be isolated and well controlled. Anyone causing trouble should be removed from view of the spectators as quickly as possible.

School rules, including special event behavior expectations and league rules, must be clearly posted at all entrances as well as in strategic locations, including restrooms and concession stands. Reading them over the public address system will assure that the message is received. Such rules may include provisions relating to loitering, conduct, contraband, weapons and drug-free school zones.

If necessary, expand the size of the security force. Some school systems will augment their natural supervision by offering free admission to police officers and their families, as well as free admission to staff and faculty of the opposing schools. Recruit special parent and student patrol teams. For instance, senior lettermen's club or senior women's athletic club leaders dressed in distinct colors are excellent crowd control resources. Members of the security team, hired or volunteer, should wear clothing that identifies their role. This increases the sense of control at the event and helps to deter trouble.

Often school employees no longer feel responsible when uniformed security or police are present. Each adult should be informed of his or her expected role. It is important to remember that contracted security personnel are hired to work for the school. School officials are still in charge and responsible for directing the officer(s).

Significant safety problems can occur during the post-game time period when spectators and teams are passing between the field and the parking lot. Spectators can minimize victimization by not wearing local gang colors or professional/college athletic team clothing. They should leave immediately and go directly to their vehicles.

Student participants, including players, cheerleaders and band members, can be protected by being escorted by adult chaperones, having parents ride the student bus to and from

the event, entering and leaving the field in single file, using the buddy system to watch out for each other and leaving the field before the game is over.

Other strategies for preventing violence at school-related events include requiring student identification cards from students of both schools, limiting the size of the crowd and postponing the game when community tension is high.

Analyze ticket sales strategies. Some schools sell tickets throughout the entire game. Troublemakers who come late, whose interest is not in watching the game, may be discouraged from entering the stands if they have to pay the same admission as those who arrived earlier. Schools also have found a direct relationship between dollars and trouble; the more it costs for outsiders to attend an athletic event, the less trouble school officials tend to encounter.

The use of helicopter fly-overs is another strategy that is being used by some schools. This method of deterrence may appear excessive in nature, but school districts that use this approach claim that it has had an impact on keeping the criminal element away from athletic events. Since these helicopters are already in service, making an occasional pass over an event does not present a major inconvenience or expense to law enforcement. A patrol car that cruises by as spectators are arriving at the game also serves as a deterrent. This kind of strategy is often as simple as making a phone call to let local law enforcement agencies know that an event is scheduled.

A crisis response team should be created, establishing procedures as well as back-up support for medical and crowd control emergencies and unexpected, unplanned events. A specific chain of command to manage such crises should also be established in advance.

Effective event management must go beyond intervention and supervision strategies. Most importantly, effective prevention programs must be set in place. This can begin by:

- Establishing clear behavior expectations and rules for special events and general campus behavior;
- Conducting discussions with students, coaches, athletes and staff about their roles and proper behavior;
- Implementing anti-violence curricula;
- Appropriately training supervisors how to intervene; and
- Establishing peer mediation and conflict resolution programs so that students will know how to de-escalate an incident before it explodes.

Having safe school events, as well as a safe campus, requires a collaborative and cooperative effort from students, administrators, law enforcers, parents and community members alike. To make athletic events safe and meaningful experiences, both safety and sportsmanlike behavior must be prominently placed on the educational agenda.

Football pro advocates life skills to alleviate violence

By John Mackey

Two recent *Los Angeles Times* articles provide a fitting introduction, underscoring the need to prevent violence at school athletic events:

- *2 Teens Hurt in Shooting at High School Football Game, October 5, 1992.* "Two teenagers were wounded Friday afternoon when gunfire erupted in the closing minutes of a football game between arch rivals Dorsey and Crenshaw high schools...."
- *No Winners: Questions Linger After Fear of Violence Forces Forfeit of Game, November 11, 1992.* "During last year's Banning-Dorsey matchup, the parents watched in terror as a phalanx of security guards, parents and coaches formed a protective circle around the Banning players and ushered them to safety after Dorsey fans rushed the field in protest over a referee's controversial call."

Violence at a football game when I played high school ball meant players knocking each other down on the field. Today, violence at a game can be deadly.

When I read the headlines my heart sank. I didn't have to ask, "What's happened to our kids today?" I have been involved with young people for many years, as father and friend. I already had a firm grasp of what is happening, especially to young people in the inner city. Unlike when I was growing up in Long Island, New York, carrying my books under one arm and a football or basketball under the other, kids today are faced with tremendous pressures everywhere they go — at home, at school and on the playing field.

I was lucky. I had a strong foundation — a positive father figure, Reverend Walter Mackey, who believed in unconditional love and discipline, and a mother who, alongside my father, instilled in me a strong sense of self, the need for focus and determination, respect for community, and an understanding of the importance of teamwork. We had a large family, six boys and one girl, so teamwork was essential each and every day.

From time to time growing up, my father would ask, "Son, where are your feet?" He always wanted my feet on the ground so I wouldn't get my head too high in the clouds. I tried to monitor what I was becoming as I pursued my goals.

But today, too often, young people are lost by the wayside and emerge from adolescence unprepared for, and unable to see, the wide range of opportunities waiting for them. The consequences of this tremendous loss of potential are as

frightening as they are widespread. What kind of future does that leave for American children? Far from bright by almost anyone's standard.

It is time to look for practical solutions for our society's ills. I am a member of the Advisory Board of Community for Education Foundation (CEF), founded this past year by Los Angeles-based business executive and community enthusiast Jill Siegal, specifically to address the concerns of families, particularly children, within communities across the United States.

Community for Education Foundation, a nonprofit organization, provides life management and job skills courses free to school-age children and their parents, offering a solution by helping people grow to become responsible members of society. Many individuals, corporations and organizations have stepped forward with donations to sponsor CEF kids. I applaud the ef-

forts of Southern California Edison, Honeywell Inc., Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and others for their support.

Life management skills, practical problem-solving, decision-making and communication skills become part of course and classroom instruction as early as kindergarten and continuing through high school. As a result of life management skills principles being taught through school experiences, children will gain greater self-esteem and



Mackey, as tight end for the Baltimore Colts

maturity; willingness to take responsibility for their own actions and consider the impact of their actions on others; greater appreciation and concern for family members; the skills to develop positive relationships; understanding of the concept of community and their role in the community; and, the ability to set and achieve realistic goals.

Life management skills instruction will further provide our children with problem-solving skills that will enable them to weigh the consequences before taking illegal or risky behavior; the power to manage their own lives and determine their own fate, despite a difficult environment; communications skills that will empower them to deal successfully with the tough situations they face on a daily basis; employment-seeking and retention skills for increased self-sufficiency; and, the ability to handle conflict in positive, socially acceptable ways.

CEF's program is one of many solutions. I've been involved with the Better Boys Foundation (BBF) in Chicago for many years. I've seen the positive impact on childhood development that its Corporate/Community Schools of America (C/CSA) has had on hundreds of young people.

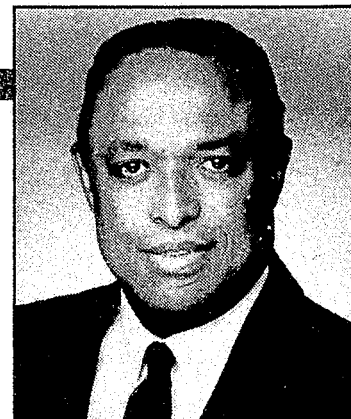
C/CSA is a school for 300 children from kindergarten to sixth grade. Founded by Joe Kellman, C/CSA is a public/private school hybrid, not part of the public school system, yet open to the public and charging no tuition. C/CSA obtains its support from the private sector and models its school administration upon business-style management, coupled with a curriculum immersed in the principles of positive life skills development. Test scores and graduation rates for C/CSA kids and BBF kids are outstanding. And these young people are all from the projects on the South Side of Chicago.

Another program with which I am personally familiar is Jim Brown's Amer-I-Can Program. Jim and I share a common background, having played college football at Syracuse, going on to the pros, and being members of the Hall of Fame. He was my hero growing up and now, too, with the work he is doing in the inner cities.

The Amer-I-Can Program teaches a life management skills curriculum to prison inmates, gang members and their families. I have seen individuals whom most people had written off make a complete change in their lives, from negative to positive. By examining who they are and where they are headed, and by learning to communicate properly with others, make well-informed decisions, set goals, maintain and build their own self-esteem and that of others, Amer-I-Can Program graduates go on to become productive members of their communities.

Violence does not have to be a way of life. And individuals currently leading a destructive existence can make a change for the better. Through programs like Community

for Education Foundation, Corporate/Community Schools of America, Better Boys Foundation and The Amer-I-Can Program, today's young people, their parents and teachers can get the direction they so desperately need. Through life management skills instruction, we can and will make a difference.



John Mackey

John Mackey was inducted into the Professional Football Hall of Fame August 1, 1992. He is a business executive, residing in Long Beach, California.

NSSC continues to respond

Now in its ninth year of operation, NSSC continues to promote safer school campuses. NSSC recently received a commitment from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for funding through 1993.

In addition, supplemental funding from the U.S. Department of Education has enabled NSSC to offer a subscription price of \$59 for the **School Safety News Service** for the 1992-93 school year. Subscribers will continue to receive nine monthly publications, including six monthly updates and three editions of *School Safety*, the NSSC newsjournal. Current subscribers will also benefit; they will receive the news service for an additional year.

The **School Safety News Service** is intended to communicate current trends and effective programs in school safety and to provide a vehicle for exchanging ideas. If you have school safety news or a program that is working, NSSC encourages the submission of original reports, artwork or program descriptions and will review each item for possible publication.

Recent laws and rulings address school safety issues

Districts not liable for gang violence

Banning the wearing of gang colors may help insulate a school district from liability. California's Second District Court of Appeal recently ruled that a school district must exercise reasonable and ordinary prudence, but need not insure the safety of district students against gang-related violence.

Ernest Brownell, a student at Johnson High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), was injured when he was beaten and then shot by gang members while he was standing outside school after classes had been dismissed for the day. Brownell's claim against the district for negligent supervision was rejected, and Brownell filed a complaint in Los Angeles Superior Court, again alleging negligent supervision.

The trial court denied LAUSD's motion for judgement of the pleadings, and in a jury trial, Brownell was awarded \$120,000. On an appeal by LAUSD, the court of appeal reversed and dismissed the complaint.

Citing the case of *Hoyem v. Manhattan Beach City School District*, the court determined that the district's requisite standard of care is "that degree of care which a person of ordinary prudence, charged with comparable duties, would exercise under the same circumstances." However, the court stressed that the *Hoyem* duty of care does not make a school district the insurer of a student's safety. Therefore, the district will not be held liable if injuries result despite the exercise of adequate care.

The court of appeal held that the school had adequately supervised students by taking precautions, such as confiscating weapons and banning the wearing of gang colors, to avoid gang-related incidents.

Virginia endorses Gun-Free Schools Act

Virginia has followed the lead of the federal government by signing into effect a measure to counter the presence of firearms in and around Virginia schools. The act amends and re-enacts certain sections of the Virginia code relating to possession, discharge or brandishing of a firearm, or any

object similar in appearance to a firearm, in a school zone.

Components of the Virginia bill are very similar to those of the federal Gun-Free School Zones Act. Both measures call for enhanced penalties for persons who possess or discharge a firearm on or within 1,000 feet of public, private or parochial schools. Within the Virginia bill, this zone is defined to include any elementary, middle or high school buildings or grounds, the portion of any property open to the public used for school-sponsored functions when the activities are taking place, and any bus owned or operated by any school.

Safety zones set up within busing limits

A new law in New York now authorizes school boards to establish "Child Safety Zones" in areas that are not currently within busing boundaries. School districts will be able to provide transportation to children who reside in safety zones, without having to bus all children within the same distance.

This new legislation authorizes, but does not mandate, districts to provide special transportation services to any student who lives in an area where hazardous, unsafe conditions exist.

First offenders receive work option

The Hesperia (California) Police Department recently introduced a work program for juveniles who are found guilty of a variety of first-time offenses including vandalism, petty theft, malicious mischief and burglary. The Youth Accountability Program offers youngsters an alternative to the juvenile justice system, providing them with the opportunity to pay for their crimes by working instead of spending time at juvenile hall.

The youths, age 11 to 17, are assigned to work with the city's public works department, local service clubs or a county department. After being referred to the program, the youngster, his or her parents and a parole officer are interviewed by a board of community leaders. They then enter a contract, which determines the amount of community service work required. If the juvenile fulfills the contract, his record remains clear. If the contract is broken, the juvenile is referred back to the probation department.

In the first seven months of operation, this community-based program has been very successful. Only two out of 40 offenders who have participated have been referred back to the probation system. Officials have received letters from youths, thanking them for the opportunity to work and to be able to walk away without a record.

Inquiries regarding the program should be directed to Deputy Dale Boatman, Hesperia Police Department, 15776 Main Street, Hesperia, CA 92345.

Guns at school: A topic of national concern

"Guns and Sons" on ABC this fall

Watch for an upcoming episode of the television program "The Commish," to be aired on ABC in mid-October.

Entitled "Guns and Sons," the episode carefully deals with several school safety issues: bullying and peer aggression, weapons in school, crisis management, gun accessibility and storage, and metal detectors.

This timely production dramatizes events that occur after a victim of incessant bullying takes his father's gun to school for protection. In a moment of panic, the gun is discharged in the school restroom, seriously wounding the bully. What follows depicts what is often experienced by members of the school community in the aftermath of a crisis: denial; highly emotional encounters; the perceived need for vengeance; and quick, short-term responses to a problem that needs reflective evaluation and long-term solutions.

Producers of "The Commish" consulted with NSSC regarding the script. The program is televised on Saturday nights at 10:00 p.m.



The "Commish," played by actor Michael Chiklis, confronts bully in a scene from the upcoming episode "Guns and Sons," to be aired on ABC in mid-October.

New Jersey schools use Project STAR

Youngsters in 30 New Jersey public school districts will be studying a new topic in the classroom this year: gun-related violence and how to avoid it.

The pilot project is modeled after a three-year old curriculum developed by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence based in Washington, D.C. The center is headed by Sarah Brady, wife of former White House Press Secretary James Brady, who was seriously injured during a 1981 assassination attempt on President Reagan.

The voluntary statewide program should begin this fall in districts to be selected by the state education department. Project STAR — Straight Talk About Risks — is aimed at middle school children. The program can be included in the standard curriculum for core classes or offered as a separate three-week course.

A four-person team from each school will be trained by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence. Educators will then use books, videos and classroom exercises to teach students how to react when a classmate is carrying a weapon.

Chicago schools opt for metal detectors

Metal detectors will be installed at the request of city high schools in Chicago under a new program aimed at halting the flow of weapons into the classrooms.

Area high schools can choose to have at least two metal detectors permanently positioned at main entrances. The screening devices are identical to those used at airports.

Local school councils must decide whether to install the devices. If all 74 high schools choose to participate, the total cost would exceed \$444,000. School Superintendent Ted Kimbrough said he expects near-unanimous participation.

The city recently released statistics showing that approximately 10,000 arrests were made in and around school property during the 1991-92 school year. The arrest figures include the confiscation of 192 guns; 587 other weapons, including knives, hammers and ice picks; and 950 beepers, used primarily for narcotics trafficking.

Parents of truants go back to school

A municipal court judge in Paterson, New Jersey, has developed an effective plan to reduce chronic absenteeism: parents of truants are sentenced to attend school with their children, assisting where they are needed.

The sentences, generally for 30 days, are an alternative to \$25 fines for first offenders and \$100 fines for repeat offenders. School officials like the results, free work and increased parental involvement.

For more information, contact Hector Sanctos, district coordinator of student attendance, 201/881-6000.

Strategies developed to reduce violence at school events

Media coverage of last year's high school football season was replete with stories of violence in the stands and on the playing fields across the nation. Fans were witness not only to the aggressive rough and tumble of the game of football, but also to the unexpected sight and sounds of gunfire and bullets, spectators fleeing the stands, and players and coaches dropping on the field for cover.

As the academic year and athletic seasons began this fall, the National School Safety Center responded to the growing crisis by bringing together a group of experienced practitioners to review and formulate practical solutions to prevent violence at school athletic events. The meeting focused on developing a set of national guidelines and suggestions from which a more comprehensive program could be formulated on a local level. The goals of the working session were to make interscholastic sports and other special events safer for student athletes, parents, coaches and fans and to preserve healthy competition among schools.

Present at this practicum were Dean Crowley, director of the California Interscholastic Federation's Southern Section; Alfred Dean, director of Security Operations of Phila-

delphia Public Schools; John Burton, coordinator of Child Welfare and Attendance, San Bernardino (California) County Schools; Ken Sjoen, director of Public Safety, University of Nevada; Carole Quan, assistant superintendent, Oakland Unified School District; William Ybarra, education consultant in the Los Angeles County Office of Education; and Ronald D. Stephens, G. Ellis Butterfield and June Lane Arnette of NSSC.

Practicum members stressed the importance of good sportsmanship for all participants in high school sports programs — athletes, coaches, cheerleaders and fans. Poor sportsmanship today often leads to violence. School officials and student leaders need to take a closer look at how school and team spirit are promoted, carefully avoiding activities, cheers, chants and banners that taunt, insult or inflame. Eligibility requirements and team rules need to demonstrate standards of acceptable behavior and good sportsmanship. As professionals, coaches should work together to develop a code of ethics that promotes healthy attitudes about competition.

Some of the strategies developed at this meeting include increasing the size of security force by using both volunteers and trained professionals; displaying rules and regulations in strategic locations; preventing crime through environmental design; and enhancing communication among competing schools, law enforcement personnel, coaches, students and community supporters. Many of the suggestions offered at the practicum are incorporated in the cover story of this issue.

Please join NSSC and other local, state and federal officials and organizations in observing October 18-24, 1992, as America's Safe Schools Week. For further information, contact NSSC at 805/373-9977.

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