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MNIAAA

ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

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MINNESOTA INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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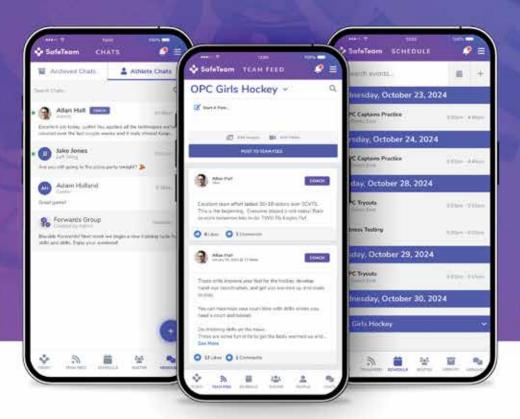
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PRESIDENT MESSAGE



By Bill Quan, MNIAAA President, Irondale

Stronger Together: Fostering a Culture of Belonging and Support

As we move through another school year, I want to take a moment to recognize the great work happening in every corner of our state. The fall season is wrapping up, and before we can catch our breath, the winter season is already knocking at the door. This time of year always seems to come with a mix of pride, exhaustion, and anticipation — and yet, it's also one of the most rewarding stretches of the calendar.

We've all felt the challenges of this profession: the long days, the unexpected situations, and the constant balancing act between supporting our students, coaches, and communities. And now, with the uncertainty around the Arbiter transition, that balancing act has an extra layer of complexity. Change always brings a learning curve, but it also presents an opportunity — an opportunity to connect, share knowledge, and support one another as we adjust to new systems and expectations.

One of the greatest strengths of the MNIAAA is the collective wisdom and generosity of its members. No one understands the demands of this role better than another athletic director. Whether it's troubleshooting a scheduling issue, navigating the new platform, or simply offering a listening ear, we all benefit when we reach out and lean on each other.

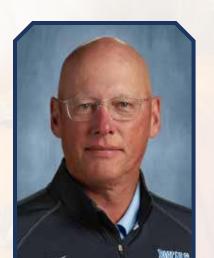
This community has created a culture of belonging among athletic directors across

Minnesota. When every AD feels welcomed, valued, and supported, our organization grows stronger. Each conversation, shared resource, and word of encouragement not only helps us do our jobs better, but also reminds us why we chose this profession in the first place.

Part of fostering that sense of belonging means encouraging one another to become more involved in our professional organizations. Whether it's helping run a tournament, serving on a committee, mentoring a new AD, or contributing to the MNIAAA or MSHSL in other ways, your involvement matters. Just as importantly, we should all look for opportunities to build capacity and confidence in others — to invite and empower colleagues who may not yet see themselves as leaders to take that next step. When we help others find their voice and place in this work, we strengthen the future of our profession and the sense of community that sustains it.

As we close out the fall and move into winter, I encourage each of us to take a moment to connect — call a colleague, send an email or reach out with a quick text message. Celebrate the successes of your peers and offer support where it's needed. Together, we can ensure that each one of us — and each of our programs — continues to thrive.

Here's to a strong finish to the fall season, a smooth start to winter, and a continued spirit of teamwork and belonging across the MNIAAA. When we help each other, we all win.



MN IAAA

EXECUTIVE **DIRECTOR'S** MESSAGE

By Dan Johnson, MNIAAA Executive Director

Amateur

Have you ever looked for the definition of what it means to be an amateur? When you consider the word as a noun, that reads like "a person who engages in a pursuit, especially in a sport, on an unpaid rather than a professional basis".

On the other hand, when you consider the word as an adjective, it says "done in an incompetent or inept way".

The lines between have been blurring for some time and have now been lost on pretty much any athletic endeavor. Remember when the Olympics were true amateurs and were unpaid? Now there are Olympic training centers that house, feed, condition, train and coach individuals year around, and pay them well to be there. And, Olympic hockey and basketball teams are now made up of the highest paid athletes in the world.

We used to watch the Final Four, the Frozen Four, the football bowl games, and the College World Series with deep satisfaction, knowing these were true amateurs. Now, they are making millions while acting as student/athletes at the collegiate level. The only aspect of collegiate athletics that has been more damaging than NIL is the transfer portal. To that end, it is hard to differentiate between the two because each is now the reason the other exists!

I realize that I am the old man that is screaming at

the kids to stay off my lawn and I am fighting the world of AI on a daily basis. I am not surprised or angered by the evolution of the "paid amateurs" as it were. I bring these points up because of my love for high school activities. In most cases, there is room for everyone, there are opportunities for students in each season, and the kids and coaches are developing skills, relationships, and character. Our role, as activities administrators, will be viewed as one or the other of the definitions I had listed at the start of this article...engaged & pursuing or inept.

The opportunity for students to pursue their interests is critical in every one of our schools and departments. We need to be the force behind those opportunities to make sure that we are providing the pathways to engage and pursue. When we come up short in those areas, we give the perception that we are the adjective...inept.

Every now and then, each of our schools has a student/athlete that is destined for greatness and we can take pride in knowing that we had a part in that greatness. We made it possible for that student to grow within the program, while becoming an outstanding athlete. It is imperative that we make sure to look at each of our student participants with the same eye - to give each of them the chance to "engage and pursue"... the noun.

Peace.

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FEMALE REPRESENTATIVE

By Meghan Potter, Wayzata

Congratulations to the following MNIAAA members on their professional development! Over the past year, we had 10 ADs earn their Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA) designation and four earn their Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA) designation. These nationally recognized certifications, provided through the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA), represent significant growth professional and а strong commitment to serving student-athletes, schools, and communities.

CAA Recipients - Jacqueline Lacy, Cory Holten, Taylor Tvedt, Kiristen Robinson, Paul Brunner, Joe Perkl, David Langerud, Katie Carter, Dan Krause, and Daren Messmore.

CMAA Recipients - Cory Holten, Kiristen Robinson, Joe Perkl, and Daren Messmore. The CAA designation demonstrates a high level of knowledge and expertise in athletic administration, while the CMAA represents the pinnacle of professional achievement, requiring advanced coursework, a written project, and a deep commitment to leadership in our field.

This summer, I was honored to step into the role of MNIAAA LTI Coordinator. As part of this responsibility, I attended the NIAAA Summit in Indianapolis, where I had the opportunity to collaborate with LTI coordinators from across the country. It was valuable to learn how other states are increasing participation in Leadership Institute (LTI) courses and Training supporting their ADs in the certification process.

Together with Matt Percival, our MNIAAA State Liaison, we are working to make the CAA and CMAA process clearer and more accessible for Minnesota ADs. Our goal is to expand certification opportunities and encourage more of our members to take this important step in professional growth. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out with ideas of which LTI classes you'd be interested in taking. We want to make this professional development worth your time and energy.

Please be on the lookout for more information as we prepare for our State Conference in March—we look forward to supporting you on your professional development journey!



NIAAA LIAISON

By Matt Percival, Eastview

Minnesota AD's - Hope your fall seasons are off to a great start! It is impossible to capture the energy around a high school campus each Fall! Meghan Potter as the LTI Coordinator and me as the State Liaison were proud to represent Minnesota at the 2025 NIAAA State Liaison Summit held in Indianapolis, where state coordinators and liaisons from across the nation gathered to collaborate, learn, and plan for the future of professional development. The weekend featured a jam packed agenda professional development, networking, and forward-thinking discussions aimed at equipping state coordinators and leaders with the tools they need to be successful and grow opportunities for ADs in our state.

If you have not already done so, now is the time to make plans to attend the 2025 National Athletic Directors Conference (NADC) in Tampa! This annual event is the premier professional development opportunity for interscholastic athletic administrators across the country, and we'd love to see another strong showing this year from Minnesota.

The NADC offers the perfect blend of networking, leadership training, national-level insights, and personal growth — all in one location. With over 50 Leadership Training Institute (LTI) courses, engaging workshops, and keynote speakers,

there's truly something for everyone, whether you're just beginning your career or are a seasoned vet looking to expand your leadership skills. The feedback from those who attended last year focused on four key areas:

- Grow Your Professional Network Connect with ADs from around the country, share challenges, and learn best practices.
- Advance Your Certification Earn credit toward your RAA, CAA, or CMAA through in-depth LTI courses designed to equip you with tools you can use right away.
- Learn from Others National speakers, panelists, and practitioners will present on timely topics impacting our schools, students, and athletic programs.
- Recharge Your Passion Step away from the daily routine, gain fresh perspective, and return inspired and energized.
- Info and Registration: https://www.adconference.org/

Whether you're new to the profession or pursuing your CMAA, the LTI course line-up at the NADC is unmatched. Having 50 plus courses available at one conference and all taught by National faculty and course designers covers everything from legal issues, student leadership, and Title IX, to budgeting, facilities management, and using technology in your role as an AD.

In addition to the offerings at NADC we will be offering LTI options again at our Minnesota State Conference in Late March. Please stay tuned for a brief survey to assist us in planning our upcoming course offerings as well as some other preferences for times, locations and platforms for future professional development.

One of the most rewarding aspects of attending national events like the State Liaison Summit is the opportunity to learn best practices from colleagues across the country. It's both humbling and encouraging to hear how others are navigating the same challenges we face — and to realize that we are not alone in this profession. There's a real sense of community and shared purpose that comes from those conversations. We return to Minnesota not only with new tools and strategies, but with renewed energy and a deeper commitment to continuous improvement. Meghan and I are excited to implement the innovative ideas and approaches we've learned from other states to better serve all of you as Minnesota AD's!





CULTURE BUILDING THROUGH STUDENT **LEADERSHIP**

Todd Waterbury, Mankaro East

One of the best things we have put into place in my years as Activities Director at Mankato East to foster positive culture is the formation of a Student Section Leadership team five years ago. Encouraging student ownership in the process of developing culture has been instrumental. Not only in the development of the expectations and type of engagement, but in the ability to promote and communicate a consistent approach and message. Our student leaders have been phenomenal in the aspect of sharing the message and creating a foundation for us to build upon.

We have modified the experience over the years to the process we have in place now. We have ten student leaders this year, which has grown over the years, that are responsible for a variety of events and growth opportunities. This allows a manageable core of responsible students to lead the cultural growth and support at most of our events. There are monthly meetings, for 30 minutes each, to discuss where we are at and where we want to go as a group. This is a time where basic standards are put into place, but there is a fluidness to each year that is encouraged with each group in relation to the direction and energy for building the culture we and they are hoping for. Each meeting, of course involves pizza as an extra motivator. not to mention the all-important Black and Gold striped bib overalls that each leader receives.

How do we decide who is a part of this group

on a yearly basis you ask? Well, the students have to be nominated by a teacher or by a member of the leadership group from the prior year, which is done in May. At that point, they then fill out an application for membership on a google doc. The group is eventually chosen by



our Administrative team and students are pulled together in August to start their work. They are responsible for developing theme nights that are accessible to all students, engaging all age levels to be involved, work with our middle school students on expectations of support and are highly visible at each of our contests and in a positive way to name a few expectations. They still need to be coached up on occasion, but we have had some wonderful experiences through the process and I can't tell you how much more fun our game night experiences have been, not that they were ever truly horrible. It has been a big step in our culture shift and, while it is certainly not the only thing we are doing to define our culture, it sure has been a great building block for a very visible part of it.



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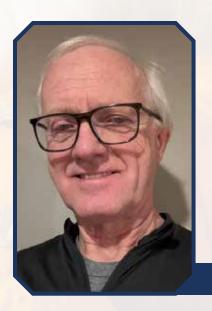
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ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

By Ken Hubert, Associate Treasurer & Newsletter Editor

While being a high school or middle school AD can be a fun, exciting, and fulfilling occupation, as with any profession, we know that there are challenges to be faced. Depending on your district and support structure, some of these may be more daunting than others. Here are a few such challenges with an idea or two on how to move forward. I plan on continuing this column in the next newsletter. As with any of these issues, however, everyone's situation is unique and each must be addressed on their own merits.

1. Budget Constraints and Resource Allocation Challenges

- Many athletic departments operate with tight budgets. Costs for travel, equipment, facility maintenance, and insurance keep rising. For the time I was an active AD, I only had a very few years where I wasn't asked to help solve a budget issue, either by making cuts or raising revenue.
- Activities directors may have limited control over some parts of the budget. When you are in a conference that is geographically spread out, how do you control bus costs? As costs like these rise, solutions may be limited and have effects in many other areas. Or, as was the case in one school recently, when the school board cuts funding for the athletic trainer, but still says that you need a trainer at the events, how do you move forward?

Implications

- Compromises may weaken safety or the quality of the student experience.
- Some activities may be under-resourced or excluded, which can reduce opportunities for students.
- Facility deterioration could lead to safety hazards, liability risks, or inability to host events.

Possible responses

- Stronger fundraising and partnerships with local businesses, booster clubs, or community groups. Some schools have moved forward with naming rights to their gyms, fields, etc.
- Creative budgeting and prioritization: focusing on high-impact safety and health issues first.
- Advocating for more consistent or increased district/state funding.
- Exploring shared services among schools or districts (e.g., shared athletic trainers, joint facility maintenance).

• I am working with a group on trying to create a long-term solution for Faribault Activities. Many private schools survive by building endowment funds. We have started a Faribault Activities Endowment Fund. The long...long...long term goal of the fund is to completely cover the cost of Faribault school activities allowing the dollars from activities to go back to the classroom while insulating activities from future budget cuts. In todays dollars, we would need about \$30 million in the fund assuming that we will have 5% available per year. That's a long way away...but when you plant a tree, it's the next generation who will benefit from the shade of that tree. And that's what we're doing...we're planting a tree and hope to build the fund by tens or hundreds of thousands per year. Meanwhile, on an annual basis, Faribault Activities will receive a check that will continue to grow each year. Don't hesitate in contacting me if you are interested in what we are doing.

2. Health, Safety, and Medical Staffing Challenges

- Student-athlete welfare is always a core concern: injury prevention, concussion protocols, emergency response, heat illness, cardiac risks, etc. Athletic directors are responsible for ensuring safe practice and competition environments.
- Many schools lack full-time athletic trainers; some have none. Barriers include cost, lack of understanding
 of what athletic trainers do, and district constraints on hiring.
- The evolving legislative, regulatory, and public expectations around student safety (e.g. concussion laws, return-to-play rules) add pressure. Athletic directors must keep up with best practices and ensure compliance.

Implications

- Without proper medical staff or safety protocols, there's risk of serious injuries or long-term health
 consequences for students. Even is you have the dollars available, finding enough trainers to cover
 several events on a given night is a continual problem. If you have home wrestling, hockey, gymnastics,
 and swim (think diving board injuries) all on the same night, where do you prioritize if you only have one
 trainer available?
- Legal liability increases, and the school's reputation and trust with parents/community may suffer.
- Possible loss of participation if parents and students don't feel safe.

Possible responses

- Educate stakeholders (administration, board, parents) about the value of athletic trainers and other medical staff; sharing data and case studies can help.
- Apply for grants or sponsorships designated for health/safety.
- Use volunteers or partnerships with local medical facilities when feasible (though with clear professional oversight).
- Regularly review and update safety policies, ensure proper training (coaches, staff) in medical emergencies, first aid, etc.

3. Recruiting and Retaining Qualified Coaches Challenges

- Quality coaching has a big impact on student-athlete development, safety, morale, and the culture of the athletic program.
- With the continued loss of staff members being involved in coaching, it is harder to find community
 member coaches who align with educational values (not just wins), who understand student welfare, and
 who can commit time.

Coaching stipends or pay are often low relative to the demands (many hours, many responsibilities-don't
ever ask your coach to figure their hourly wage!). Sometimes the role is volunteer or very part-time,
making it less attractive.

Implications

- Gaps in coaching can lead to unsafe practices, overuse injuries, poor supervision, or inconsistent skill development.
- If coaches burn out or leave, it leads to turnover, instability, and difficulty building team identity.
- If coaching quality drops, participation and competitive success may suffer, which in turn can erode community support, fundraising, morale.

Possible responses

- Enhancing compensation / incentives where possible: stipends, professional development, recognition.
- Investing in coach coaching: mentoring programs, clearer expectations that align with student welfare and character development.
- Recruiting from the community: finding non-traditional coach candidates, offering flexible arrangements.
- Partnering with local clubs or organizations to share coaching resources or co-train.

Final Thoughts

If I go back to my high school days (and that's a long time ago), the big, new challenge was the addition of girls' sports. As a 1973 high school grad, I watched as girls sports were added in our school...gradually and not without a little bit of controversy and pushback from the old guard. Within the next few years, however, girls' sports had grown significantly and by my first year of teaching, I was asked if I'd help start a 9th grade volleyball program in our school. Two years later, I was head coach for girls swim and never thought twice about whether or not Title IX was a good thing. The ADs in those days helped make our schools and programs better.

Today's ADs, in my opinion, face a more challenging daily diet of issues. You are at the center of sports, education, community, health, and youth development. Depending on the size of your community and the expectations laid on each of you by your district, you may experience growing: financial pressures, rising safety demands, competing expectations (from parents, clubs, students), and evolving norms in youth sports, each adding to your daily challenge. To be successful, you need to be a strong leader, effective communicator, strategic thinker and be willing to stand up and advocate for your programs, coaches, and kids.

Again, this can be a challenging job, but when your focus is clear, you will positively enhance the experiences of multitudes of kids and help your school achieve an exciting and supportive environment.



CERTIFICATION NIAAA AND IMPROVING AS AN AD

"It's getting better all the time, better, better, better, better!" -The Beatles

In 1996, the NIAAA first began offering courses in the Leadership Training Program to help ADs get better as athletic administrators. Although certification began in 1988, the LTI program helped to standardize the educational process. Through this, ADs across the country have invested time and effort to become better leaders for their schools and communities. As levels of certification have been added, there are now several options:

RAA – Registered Athletic Administrator RMSAA – Registered Middle School Athletic Administrator

CAA – Certified Athletic Administrator
CMAA – Certified Master Athletic Administrator

Requirements for each are as follows:

RAA - Bachelor's Degree

- LTC 501, 502, 503
- \$75 for NIAAA members to apply

RMSAA - Bachelor's Degree

- LTC 501, 502, 503, 504, 700, 701
- · Employed as an AD or Middle School AD
- \$100 for NIAAA members to apply

CAA – Bachelor's Degree

- LTC 501, 502, 503, 504, 506
- 2+ years experience employed as an AD

- Pass the CAA Exam (given at the
- National Conference and/or the
- MNIAAA conference)
- \$175 for NIAAA members to apply

CMAA - Bachelor's Degree

- LTC 501, 502, 503, 504, 506, 508, 510
- 1 course at the 600 level
- 1 course at the 700 level
- 3 Elective courses
- Complete a qualified project
- \$200 for NIAAA members to apply

You'll hear reference to both LTI and LTC. LTI stands for Leadership Training Institute and refers to the overall program and all the courses involved. LTC stands for Leadership Training Course and is used with each individual course...LTC 501, LTC 502, etc.

All LTI courses are offered at the National Conference each year in four different sessions. Plus, all courses needed for RAA or CAA certification are available online through the NIAAA. Over a three-year period, the courses needed for CAA will be offered at the MNIAAA state conference along with a few others. And, even if you do not plan to apply for certification, the opportunity to improve yourself through these courses can't be overstated. You will learn and you will be better at what you do.

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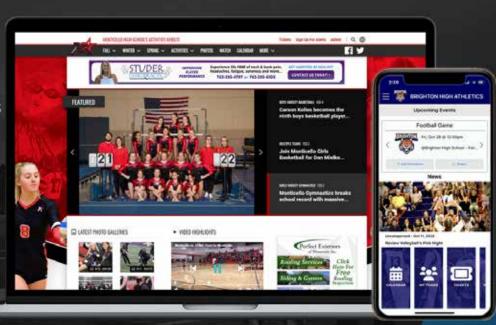
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GET TO KNOW

Kevin Kleiner, Burnsville Blaze

1. What is your educational background?

University of Northwestern - St. Paul: Bachelor's of Accounting

University of Northwestern - St. Paul: Master's of Organizational Leadership

Bethel University: Business Education Teaching Licensure

Hamline University: K-12 Principal Licensure

2. In what sports and/or activities were you active in high school and/or college?

Football, soccer, basketball and baseball. Played four of football and baseball at the University of Northwestern - St. Paul.

3. What schools have you served as a teacher, coach, director, or administrator? How many years at each and what sports/activities have you coached/directed?

Teaching:

- Bethany Academy: 2013-2015
- Robbinsdale Cooper H.S.: 2015-2016

Coaching:

- University of Northwestern St. Paul
- Football: 2010-2014; 2015-2016
- **Bethany Academy**
- Boys Basketball: 2010-2011 Assistant Coach; 2011-2015 Head Coach
- Baseball: 2011 Assistant Coach: 2012-2015 Head Coach
- New Life Academy
- Football: 2014 Assistant Coach

Administration:

- New Life Academy Athletic Director: 2016-2019
- New Prague Area Schools Assistant Activities Director: 2019-2021
- Faribault Public Schools Activities Director: 2021 Dec. 2022
- Burnsville-Eagan-Savage District 191 Athletic Director: Dec. 2022 present
- 4. Who were some of the role models who have influenced your career as a coach, director, or athletic administrator?

Jeff Ray who was my high school coach and AD and later became my boss when I was a coach at



Bethany Academy. Kirk Talley who was the Football Head Coach at the University of Northwestern - St. Paul. I got to play for and then work with Coach Talley. Trent Hanson, AD at Hastings, was gracious enough to let me get my high school admin experience hours for my Admin License. Trent continues to be a mentor and positively influences my career to this day. Brad Skogerboe, New Prague Activities Director, who I got to work with for two years as Assistant AD. I learned so much working with AD Skogerboe and I couldn't be more grateful for those two years.

5. Who are current colleagues who have made a positive impact on your work?

Being at four schools and in six conferences in 10 years of doing this, you make a lot of connections. From my New Life Academy days in the MN Christian Athletic Association and the Skyline Conference, to New Prague in the Wright County Conference and Metro West Conference, to Faribault and the Big 9 Conference, and now to Burnsville and the South Suburban Conference. It has been a pleasure to work with and learn from so many great athletic administrators.

6. Please provide a little info about your school...size, location, conference, region, are you a consolidation of various communities, etc.

School: Burnsville High School

Enrollment: 1626 (MSHSL enrollment)

Location: Burnsville is in the south metro of MSP

Conference: South Suburban Conference

Region: 3AA

7. What has been your most memorable moment in interscholastic activities? What made it memorable?

The MNIAAA State ADs Conferences and the NIAAA National ADs Conferences are two of my favorite events each year. I enjoy the learning and relationship building among those who do what we do everyday. I have enjoyed teaching LTC 502 with Dan Roff the last two MNIAAA State ADs Conference.

8. How would you describe the athletic climate in your community?

We compete hard and are making every effort to improve. We strive to provide a positive experience for all of our student-athletes.

- 9. What part of your job might be unique compared to other ADs around the state?
- I only do Athletics, which is becoming a rarity in the State. I do oversee 6th-12th grade Athletics, but I have the help of two great Middle School ADs.
- 10. What is your favorite Minnesota sports venue whether high school, college, or pro? Why? You are probably looking for a Stadium or Arena, but I'm going to go a different route. I will say The Quarry at Giants Ridge Golf Course.
- 11. What are some of your spare time interests? Spending time with my family and golfing.
- 12. Married? Children? If so, how are they involved because of your role as an administrator? I have been married to my wife Alyssa for 10 years come November. We have two children: Molly (7 years old) and Tommy (3 years old). They are involved by being understanding and supportive while I am gone in the evenings.

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PLAYED,
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GET TO KNOW

Randy Comfort, SPA Spartans

1. What is your educational background?

I have a B.A. in Social Science and a Master's in Public Administration from California State University, Chico (CSU, Chico). I have a Certificate in Education Leadership from the U of MN and have my K12 Principal License active through 2029.

2. In what sports and/or activities were you active in high school and/or college? In high school in California, I played Cross Country (x2), Football (x2), Soccer (x4), and Baseball (x4). I was fortunate to be able to play Baseball in college as well.

3. What schools have you served as a teacher, coach, director, or administrator? How many years at each and what sports/activities have you coached/directed?

I was at Mounds Park Academy for 19 years serving as Upper School Assistant Director, then Director, then Director of Guidance programs. I coached Middle school soccer for several years. I was an assistant varsity baseball coach for a few years, then became the varsity head coach. In total, I coached baseball at MPA for over a decade. I am now in year 4 as the Upper School Athletic Director at St. Paul Academy (SPA) and oversee all high school sports and levels. Prior to moving to MN in 2001, I taught social studies and helped with baseball teams for over 10 years in far northern California.

4. Who were some of the role models who have influenced your career as a coach, director, or athletic administrator?

My college coach, Ritchie Price, was one of the best teachers I ever had as he taught me so much more than just baseball. He recently retired from being the longtime coach at the University of Kansas and we have kept in contact for many, many years. Another role model was MPA's longtime AD, Joe Kordosdky, as he has been such an important friend over the years. He was a great coach and supported me as I grew as well. Lastly, Rick Johns has been an important mentor and has guided a lot of my development as an AD as well.

5. Who are current colleagues who have made a positive impact on your work?

I could not do what I do without the SPA athletic department Operations Coordinator, Hope Walcheski, as her organizational skills are legendary. She is very good at what she does and that allows me to do more of what I need to do as well. My Upper School Administration (principal Minnie Lee, Deans Stacy Tepp and Tom Anderson, are also really great to work with!

6. Please provide a little info about your school...size, location, conference, region, are you a consolidation of various communities, etc.

SPA is located in the Highland Park/Mac Groveland area of St. Paul and has around 415 high school students, but around 950 in the prek-12 system. Two campuses. We are in Region 4A and in the IMAC conference. We do host some Co-Ops and participate in some others, but SPA is over 125 years old and is a stand-alone community.

7. What has been your most memorable moment in interscholastic activities? What made it memorable?

I have had the privilege of having teams go the state tournament in various sports (most recently at SPA) and the view of seeing an entire community come together to support a team is a powerful community builder. There are no guarantees about returning to a state tournament, or winning one, so I think it is so important to enjoy those moments when they come around.

8. How would you describe the athletic climate in your community?

SPA is a rigorous academic community, but it also has vibrant arts and athletics programs. A little over 70% of high school students will be a part of a high school team at some point during the year, so there is widespread participation. According to the MSHSL data, the school is in the top 20 in the state in terms of team titles won, so I would describe the athletic climate at SPA as dedicated and somewhat quiet about it.

- 9. What part of your job might be unique compared to other ADs around the state?
- I don't think my job is unique to what other AD's go through around the state. It is challenging work to balance the rigors of a high-level college preparatory system with all that is demanded of athletes, but again that is what we all do everywhere.
- 10. What is your favorite Minnesota sports venue, whether high school, college, or pro? Why? I do really love some of the baseball parks around the state, from Target Field and CHS, to the Chaska ballpark, to St. Anthony high school. I also love the town ball parks around the state as they are pretty amazing.

11. What are some of your spare time interests?

I play adult baseball in the Federal League (35+) and the M50BL (50+) and will typically play around 60 games a year. This past summer (2025) I was inducted into the Federal League Hall of Fame and that was an honor for sure. Outside of baseball, I do love to cycle around the White Bear Lake area where I live, love to spend time on boats with friends, and like to read and travel.

12. Married? Children? If so, how are they involved because of your role as an administrator? Married for 33 years to a Minnesotan that brought this Californian to the Midwest and we have two great grown kids. They all understand the long hours and the span between the great stuff of athletics and the sometimes difficult conversations/situations that happen in my world. They are supportive of what I do, and they have some pride in knowing that I am happy doing what I love - working with kids/families, athletics, academics, and general life learning.

















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GET TO KNOW

Mark Chamernick, Warroad Warriors

1. What is your educational background?

BSED in History Education from Northern State University. Master's and K-12 License from St. Mary's University.

- 2. In what sports and/or activities were you active in high school and/or college? Sports: Football, hockey, baseball. Played football and club hockey for Northern.
- 3. What schools have you served as a teacher, coach, director, or administrator? How many years at each and what sports/activities have you coached/directed?
- Kimball Area for 3 years as a Social Studies teacher: coach head baseball, assistant wrestling, and assistant football.
- St. Cloud Cathedral HS: 18 years as Social Studies Teacher, 15 years for football, 3 years as head coach. Girls hockey head coach for 12 years. Softball head coach for 11 years. JV baseball for 3 years. Middle School Coordinator for 3 years
- Warroad: 6th year as an AD. 5 Years as a Dean of Students and currently 1st year as an AP and AD
- 4. Who were some of the role models who have influenced your career as a coach, director, or athletic administrator?

Bob Karn for softball, Emmett Keenan for being an AD, Lynn Grewing for being an administrator

5. Who are current colleagues who have made a positive impact on your work?

Emmett Keenan, I can call him anytime on AD stuff. Brita Comstock and Dennis Abernathy for being an administrator

6. Please provide a little info about your school...size, location, conference, region, are you a consolidation of various communities, etc.

Warroad, small town on the international border. Only port town on Lake of the Woods. We have 1200 students preschool through 12th grade: Hockeytown USA and Marvin Windows is our biggest employer.

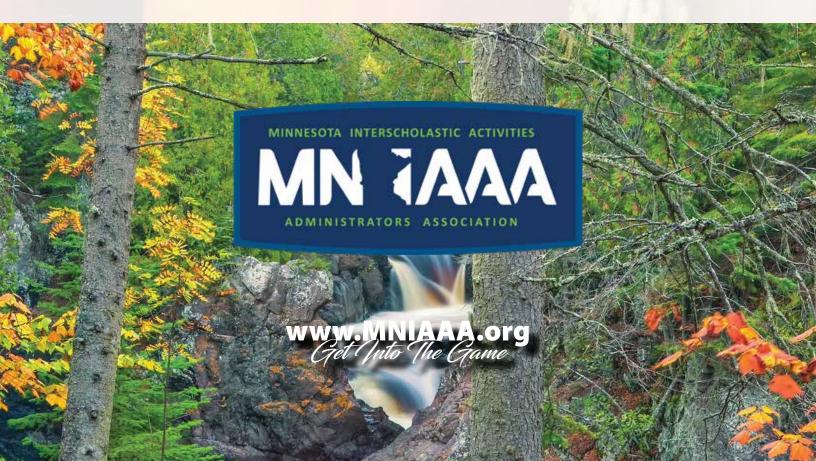
7. What has been your most memorable moment in interscholastic activities? What made it memorable?

Watching my daughter win back-to-back state championships in girls hockey. I got to witness her holding up the plaque as an AD and take a picture.

8. How would you describe the athletic climate in your community?

We are a hockey town. The boys and girls program competes at a high level each year. Our girls program has gone to the state tournament for the last 11 years in a row. Although we are a hockey town, we do have a turf football field that was installed a year ago. Also, our basketball team started the year 18-0 last year before we lost our first game.

- 9. What is your favorite Minnesota sports venue, whether high school, college, or pro? Why? High School hockey, Hibbing Memorial. It is an old building that has a lot of character and tradition. Old Husky Stadium in St. Cloud for high school football. The field overlooks the Mississippi River and is very cool to see in the fall time. Baseball: Veterans Stadium in Ely. Big grandstand with concessions underneath and high top seating on the sides of the field located in downtown Ely.
- **10.** What are some of your spare time interests? Hunt, fish, camping, taking care of the big garden,
- 11. Married? Children? If so, how are they involved because of your role as an administrator? Married for 25 years to Heidi, 3 children: Abigail 20 attends Hamline University and plays hockey and softball, Son Ryan, senior at Warroad, plays football, hockey, baseball, and daughter Madison, 9th grader at Warroad. Plays volleyball, hockey, softball.



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Stadium Steve





GET TO KNOW

Jed Helwig, North St. Paul Polars

1. What is your educational background?

I hold a Master of Arts degrees in Education & Leadership from the University of St. Thomas and a Bachelor of Science in Vocational Rehabilitation with an emphasis in Special Education from the University of Wisconsin–Stout.

2. In what sports and/or activities were you active in high school and/or college?

In high school and college, I was actively involved in athletics—most notably basketball, baseball and football. These teams gave me the chance to develop and demonstrate leadership skills that connected me to the broader student activities community. These experiences fueled my passion for helping students succeed both on the field, court, stage and in the classroom.

3. What schools have you served as a teacher, coach, director, or administrator?

- Coolidge High School, Arizona (1998–2001): Special education teacher; coached football (defensive backs, wide receivers, special teams), girls basketball, and track & field.
- North St. Paul High School (2001–2007): Special education teacher for students with emotional behavior disabilities; Head Boys Basketball Coach, Assistant Varsity Football Coach.
- North St. Paul High School (2007–present): Activities Director for athletics, fine arts, and student clubs.

4. Who were some of the role models who have influenced your career?

My father was my first and most important role model. He was also my baseball coach, and he taught me invaluable lessons about leadership, humility, and the importance of treating all people with respect. From him, I learned how to be a good teammate and how to prioritize relationships and character above wins and losses. Losing him to ALS last year was incredibly difficult, but his influence continues to guide me every day in both my personal and professional life. Beyond my father, I have been fortunate to have several mentors in both coaching and educational leadership. These individuals modeled what it means to lead with integrity, to make decisions that are always student-centered, and to prioritize equity and inclusion in every program. Their guidance has shaped my commitment to building sustainable, inclusive, and high-quality opportunities for all students.

5. Who are current colleagues who have made a positive impact on your work?

I value the relationships I've built with my Classic Suburban Conference colleagues, Metro East Conference colleagues, district administrators, and MSHSL peers. Collaborating with this network challenges me to think innovatively and provides a strong support system as we navigate the ever-changing landscape of student activities.

6. Please provide a little info about your school.

North St. Paul High School serves approximately 1,900 students in Independent School District 622. Located just outside of St. Paul, we're part of the Metro East Conference and compete in Region 4AA. Our school reflects a diverse and vibrant community, and our extracurricular programs play a major role in uniting students across cultural and academic backgrounds.

7. What has been your most memorable moment in interscholastic activities?

Most recently, watching our boys volleyball team qualify for the first-ever MSHSL State Boys Volleyball Tournament stands out as a historic milestone. It was memorable because it highlighted years of growth, showcased student leadership, and allowed our school community to be part of Minnesota history.

8. How would you describe the athletic climate in your community?

Our community is proud, passionate, and deeply supportive of our students. Athletics and activities are central to our school's culture, and we consistently see strong engagement from families, alumni, and local organizations.

9. What part of your job might be unique compared to other ADs?

As an Activities Director, I oversee a large and diverse urban activities program that includes athletics, fine arts, and more than 30 student clubs and organizations. Beyond my work at North, I am honored to serve in leadership roles at the district, conference, and state levels. This includes my service on the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) Board of Directors, the Audit/Finance Committee, the Education Committee, and the St. Paul Athena Awards. Balancing these responsibilities at multiple levels provides me with a broad and unique perspective—one that strengthens my ability to advocate for students and create meaningful opportunities both locally and statewide.

10. What is your favorite Minnesota sports venue?

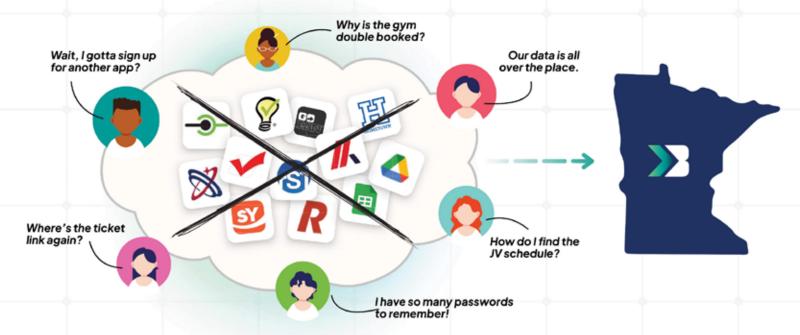
You'll often find me at Huntington Bank Stadium on Saturdays, cheering on the Gophers and joining in to "Row the Boat" for Gopher football. I also enjoy spending time at Williams Arena, "The Barn," catching Gopher basketball. Beyond that, I truly value how the MSHSL and the state of Minnesota provide student-athletes the opportunity to compete in ELITE state tournament venues. These experiences create lasting, unforgettable memories for students across the state.

11. What are some of your spare time interests?

In my spare time, I enjoy coaching my children's youth sports teams, which allows me to stay connected to their growth while giving back to the community. I also make time for working out, biking, fishing, and recreational boating—anything that keeps me active and outdoors. Attending sporting events is another passion of mine, whether it's cheering on local teams or supporting my own kids. Above all, family and community are at the heart of how I spend my time outside of work.

12. Married? Children?

Yes, I am married to my wife, Maggie, who also serves as a district administrator. Together, we share a deep commitment to education and supporting young people. Our four children are actively engaged in athletics and activities at different stages of their journeys—Finn is in 7th grade, Colbie is a sophomore in high school, Rya is attending Iowa State, and Jacob is at UW–Stout. Watching them compete, perform, and grow has been incredibly rewarding. Their involvement gives me the unique opportunity to experience the student-athlete journey not only through my role as an administrator but also as a parent. That dual perspective continually shapes and strengthens my leadership, reminding me of the importance of creating meaningful, well-rounded experiences for all students.



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Minnesota Interscholastic Activities Administrators Association State Conference March 23-26, 2026 River's Edge Convention Center & Kelly Inn St. Cloud, MN

Andy Ourada has been working hard at putting together a great 2026 state conference for the MNIAAA. Below is a draft of the conference as it stands right now. Registration will open by the end of the month. A notice will be sent out to all members on how and where to register when the registration opens.

MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2026

1:00PM - 2:30PM MNIAAA Board Meeting

Husky Room, Kelly Inn

3:00PM - 4:30PM Region Rep Meeting

Husky Room, Kelly Inn

5:30PM Region Rep Dinner

5:00PM - 9:00PM LTC - TBD

University A, Kelly Inn

LTC 502 - Strategies & Organizational Management

University B, Kelly Inn

7:30PM - 10:00PM **Husky Room Social**

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026

9:00AM - 1:00PM LTC - TBD

University A, Kelly Inn

9:00AM - 1:00PM LTC - TBD

University B, Kelly Inn

9:00AM - 1:00PM LTC 790

Husky Room, Kelly Inn

12:00PM - 2:00PM Conference Registration for Attendees

Terry Haws/Convention Center

12:00PM - 5:30PM Vendor/Exhibit Hall Open

Terry Haws/Convention Center

1:00PM - 1:30PM New AD Cohort 24 & All 2nd year ADs

Weidner

New AD Cohort 25 & All 1st year ADs

Clarke

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026

1:40PM to 2:10PM BIPoC Activities Administrators Roundtable

University B, Kelly Inn, Bill Quan

2:20PM to 2:50PM Female Activities Administrators Roundtable

University A, Kelly Inn, Meghan Potter

3:00PM - 4:15PM **OPENING GENERAL SESSIION**

Herberger Suite

SafeTeam Welcome

Introduction of At-Large Candidates - Regions 7A & 8A

Introduction of Female Administrator Candidates - Regions 1A, 2A, 5A, 6A

KEYNOTE - Marney Gellner, Minnesota Broadcast

Personality

4:25PM 1st Door Prize Drawing - Retired ADs

Exhibit Hall-Must be present to win

4:45pm - 5:15pm 1st Mini Session (30-minute session)

5:25pm - 5:55pm 2nd Mini Session (30-minute session)

Sponsored keg beer is served! 6:00pm

6:15PM - 7:15PM Breaking Bread Dinner - Sponsored by MUSCO!

Exhibit Hall

6:30PM The Initials Game!

7:30PM - 10:00PM Pool Side Conversations & Treats, Kelly Inn Pool Area

Sponsored by MECA

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026

7:30AM - 8:45AM Breakfast - Open to all attendees!, Kelly Inn Pool Area

Sponsored by Fellowship of Christian Athletes & Affinety Solutions

7:45AM - 8:45AM FCA Meeting & Featured Speaker, State/Sunwood

8:00AM - 12:00PM CAA Exam, University A, Kelly Inn

8:30AM - 1:00PM Vendor/Exhibit Hall Open

Convention Center

Coffee available in the Convention Center!



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026

9:00AM - 9:45 AM **REGION CAUCUS MEETINGS**

> 1A - Alexander 5A - Stockinger 1AA & 2AA - Clarke 2A - Convention Center 6A - Room 140 - Kelly Inn 3AA & 4AA - Bell

3A - Board Room C 7A - Poolside 5AA & 6AA - Edelbrock 8A - Herberger Suite 7AA & 8AA - Wilson Suite 4A - University B

10:00AM 2nd Door Prize Drawing, Retired ADs

Exhibit Hall-Must be present to win

10:15 AM - 11:00 AM Hot Topic: (TBD), Herberger Suite

Bob Madison & Lisa Quednow, MSHSL

10:15 AM - 11:00 AM Retired AD Meeting, Husky Suite, Kelly Inn

11:15AM 3rd Door Prize Drawing, Retired ADs

Exhibit Hall

Lunch - Deli Buffet - Sponsored by FieldTurf/Beynon! 11:30AM - 12:30PM

Exhibit Hall

1:00PM - 2:00PM 2nd GENERAL SESSION, Herberger Suite

Mr. Erich Martens

Executive Director, MSHSL

SALT Presentation

2:15PM - 2:45PM 3rd Mini Session

3:00PM - 3:30PM 4th Mini Session

5:15 PM - 7:15 PM

Past President's Reception, Husky Suite, Kelly Inn 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Hosted by Emmett Keenan, St. Cloud Cathedral

3:45PM - 4:30PM Athletic Administrators Roundtable Sessions

"A" School AD Round Table, Herberger Suite

"AA" School AD Round Table, Weidner

Assistant AD Round Table, Stockinger

3rd GENERAL SESSION - ALL AD's, Glenn Carlson Hall

MNIAAA Annual Awards Banquet

Region AD's of the Year

Recognition of Bolton & Menk Scholarship Winners

Retiring ADs

Dinner is Served

Distinguished Service Award

State Award of Merit

MNIAAA Hall of Fame

"A" & "AA" AD of the Year



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026

7:15 PM - 10:00 PM

Social Happiness Event Poolside, Kelly Inn

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026

7:30AM - 8:45AM

Breakfast Buffet

Poolside, Kelly Inn - Sponsored by the MNIAAA!

8:00am - 8:45am

Roundtable Review & Recommendations

BIPOC - Kelly Inn Grand Ballroom - Quan

Female - University A - Potter

Private School - University B- Keenan

9:00AM - 10:15AM

4th GENERAL SESSION Grand Ballroom, Kelly Inn

Announcements

Presentation - John Millea

Annual Meeting

Legislative Report

MNIAAA Financial Report

MNIAAA Service Awards

Election of At-Large- Voting on SportsYou

Recognition of Outgoing President/Female/ At Large - Ourada

Final announcements - Ourada

Door Prize Drawings - Must be present to win

Silent Auction - Closes 10 minutes after adjournment

Conference gift sponsored by Healy!

Conference Evaluation - Email sent to all attendees after conference

10:30am - 12:30pm

MSHSL Head Coaches Course - Required for ADs!

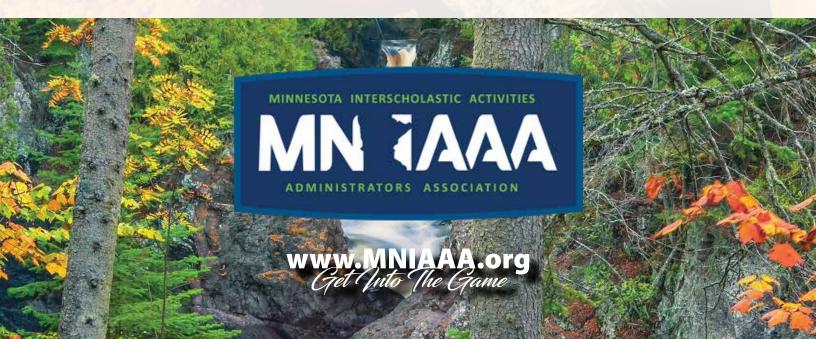
Kelly Inn Grand Ballroom

Charlie Campbell, MSHSL

10:30AM

Executive Committee Meeting

Husky Suite, Kelly Inn



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