

# Sports News

December 2008 – Newsletter of the Utah Salt Lake City Area Sports

## NOTES FROM SPORTS LEADERS

### TRAINING MEETING

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Sports leaders from throughout the Salt Lake Valley gathered on Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup> for the first ever Utah Salt Lake City Area Sports Training Meeting under the direction of Brother Harold Turley, Area Men's Director. The chapel was full and the chatter was cheerful as the meeting was called to order. The program included an introduction to all the men and women who serve at the Area and Division level with an explanation of the role each director, specialist, or coordinator plays in supporting the regions, stakes, and wards in establishing and maintaining a great sports program. We then heard from Sister Kae Strong, Area Officials Coordinator and Sister Lori Zundel, Assistant Area Director responsible for Women's Sports and from Brother Turley.

Sister Strong spoke with deep conviction about the importance of sports in the lives of members, and of the obligation members have to treat officials with the same respect that we would show to any other member who has been called and set apart to serve. She shared some disturbing examples of fans berating officials in front of young men and women and then asked all to ponder the scripture, "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone..." indicating that many criticize while not really knowing the rules. In one instance, she had implored a non-member to act as an official at the last moment—a highly qualified individual who has been officiating high school games for many years—and yet a handful of members treated him with contempt. Fortunately, this individual was well-composed and quietly acknowledged the criticism and then dismissed the fans. Sister Strong concluded with, "...go and sin no more..." a plea for players and spectators to show respect and courtesy to those who officiate—even if they make some mistakes while learning.

Sister Zundel expanded on the theme expressed in last month's *Sports News* about how important it is to establish Women's Sports under the direction of priesthood leaders and Brother Turley spoke to the theme of the Area Sports Program – "To Invite All To Come Unto Christ," along with an interesting discussion of an individual who decided to provide superlative service in his profession, even though it wasn't the norm to do so. This emphasized that the success of our callings is in our individual control. To those who may feel inadequate Bro. Turley quoted President Uchtdorf "Whom the Lord Calls, He Qualifies." He then thanked everyone for their devoted service to their callings in Church Sports.

### STAKE FIRESIDES ON SPORTSMANSHIP

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The most often expressed concern of stake presidents and bishops about Church Sports is poor sportsmanship, and the ensuing hurt feelings and loss of the Spirit that follows.

Some stakes have positively influenced the attitudes of their members by sponsoring a Fireside prior to the start of a particular sports season, where the stake president presides and sets the tone for what he expects from stake members who participate.

Items that may be covered include:

- A review of the spiritual side of sports—the unique power sports has to attract less active and non-members to come into our buildings and onto our playing fields where they can feel the spirit of our members.
- The physical and emotional benefits of sports.
- Emphasize that coaches, officials, and event organizers have been called and set apart, and

that they are entitled to respect and courtesy both during and after competitions.

- Outline rules for unacceptable behavior for that particular stake. For example, a bishop may decide that if a player gets a specified number of technical fouls he has to sit out until he has a bishop's interview to set goals to control his temper and rectify hurt feelings.
- Testimonials by members who have stayed closer to the Church, or been attracted to it, because of Church Sports.
- A strong affirmation on the part of stake leaders that the goal of the program is, indeed, to "bring people to Christ," and that Church Sports is a spiritual activity, not something separate and distinct from other Church programs.

## **SPREAD THE WORD...SPORTS NEWS IN THE "MORMON TIMES"**

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The goal of the Utah Salt Lake City Area Sports program is to "bring people to Christ" through the unparalleled fellowship activities that sports provides to both members and non-members. This requires well-organized programs in stakes and wards; well-trained coaches and officials; and a commitment to good sportsmanship on the part of participants and spectators. This is the task of our Area, Division, and Regional leaders.

The goal of our communications strategy is to help all members, including priesthood leaders, recognize the spiritual element of Church Sports and to reduce the barriers to participation caused by previous bad experiences with the program.

Acting under the direction of the Presidency of the Seventy we have implemented the following communications strategy:

- Face-to-face visits with Stake Presidents and other stake leaders by our Area, Division, and Region Men's and Women's Sports leaders to educate and encourage implementation of a vibrant Church Sports program in their units. These are particularly successful when the stake leaders extend the invitation for the meeting.
- Area training meetings for everyone called to serve in the Church Sports program at all levels.
- Area Sports Clinics for officials, coaches, and participants.

- Monthly e-mail distribution of our newsletter, *Sports News* and *Next Up*, to everyone involved in Church Sports.
- Monthly posting of *Sports News* and *Next Up* on the Mormon Times Online edition. Current and previous issues can be accessed at [www.mormontimes.com](http://www.mormontimes.com) under "Special Features." To maintain this favorable posting we hope members will visit this site frequently.

### **Expanding our current reach:**

Our e-mail distribution list currently includes more than 400 individuals involved in Church Sports. It should be closer to 1,500 if one considers all those involved in sports in the wards and stakes. But it's difficult to keep the list up-to-date.

- As a matter of courtesy we do not send e-mails to stake presidents and bishops, unless they ask to be placed on our mailing list.
- We're making a sincere effort to gain the e-mail addresses of Stake High Councilors assigned to Church Sports so they can do a second round of distribution within their stake. This is strictly a voluntary effort since the Church provides no e-mail addresses to Area directors.
- We hope to attract the general membership to our location on the *Mormon Times Online* edition so that it becomes a permanent resource to those seeking ideas on how to reactivate members, make missionary contacts with friends and neighbors, and for those who enjoy sports, but want to know how to receive training and who hope to invite the Spirit into their athletic contests with exemplary sportsmanship. Plus, we believe that we can help Mormon Times increase their readership, which strengthens the faith of those who visit this site.
- Since *Sports News* and *Next Up* are approved publications, you are free to re-distribute them within your stake or ward if allowed by Priesthood Leaders. You may even wish to distribute *Sports News* and *Next Up* to every family each month with the Ward Newsletter.

**LET US KNOW:** If you do forward *Sports News* by e-mail or printed copy, please reply to this e-mail and tell us how it's going. We'd like to gauge the success of our communications effort. For comments on the newsletter please write to [jerryborrowman@hotmail.com](mailto:jerryborrowman@hotmail.com)