

# Sports News

February 2009– Newsletter of the Utah Salt Lake City Area Sports

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## **Notable Quotes: New Era, August 2008**

“Young LDS athletes aim high in both their physical and spiritual goals. Whether they run, swim, jump, throw, or kick, athletes typically achieve victory by prevailing in competition against other athletes. But most of them will tell you that the real victory comes in the competition against yourself. In many ways, athletics parallels our spiritual struggle to overcome our natural selves and become the best we can be. It requires goal-setting, discipline, dedication, and perseverance.”

“Running has taught me about hard work and enduring to the end—even when you want to quit. Because the prize at the end is what matters, and the hardships of life are always worth enduring to obtain that prize.” *Chris Carter, Age 21, Gold medalist in the 2006 World Junior Track and Field Championship in Beijing, China.*

## **Coaching Young Men and Women**

An interview with Brother Lee Mitchell, Head Coach of the nationally ranked, state championship, Boys and Girls Soccer teams at Alta High School. Lee was named 2006 National Coach of the Year of Girls High School Division I by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA), the largest coaches association in the world with 28000 members

### *After 27 years of coaching junior high and high school, why do you think Church Sports is important?*

As a society we have put fitness, physical health, and sports on a back burner in education. The number of required classes are a lot less than it used to be in both middle school and high school. In my district they only need one and half years at high school.

Another problem is that we have kids going in so many directions now that a lot of them don't have time to get into sports. Frankly, anything the Church

can do to encourage physical activity and team involvement is important.

### *From your perspective, why are sports important for young people?*

Mainly for our physical health. We need to stay active to stay physically healthy. We don't go out and farm like people did a hundred years ago. Now we spend our days in front of a keyboard. This is not physically demanding for our bodies—and our bodies were built to work.

Also very important are the values that sports teach when it's done right. I think the way a young man or young woman approaches athletics becomes a blueprint for how they live their life. Sports teaches the value of working hard, being honest and fair, and the value of teamwork. Team sports can provide a positive pattern for other groups we'll participate in, including our family and ward. When you feel connected to others you work together to do the best you can do to be successful.

Finally, I think sports teaches kids to reach beyond themselves to achieve greater success.

### *Your youth soccer teams have achieved great results. What are some of the keys to successfully coaching young people?*

- Kids should have fun and enjoy what they're doing. Competition is important, but having fun is what keeps them coming back.
- Adults need to resist the temptation to live thru their kids—let them choose. A lot of kids are burned out by age 14 because they've already done everything in so many sports (travelled all over the countryside, won tournaments, worn the uniforms). There's nothing really left to accomplish and so they drift into inactivity.
- See each young man or woman as an individual, compliment them on what they do well. Don't expect them to be perfect.
- Still, it's important to demand good performance that is within their skill level. There's a fine line

between pushing too hard and yet challenging them to accomplish something that they can feel good about.

- Motivate: I make our players write out team goals and individual goals. Seniors get together and develop team goals of what they want to do. Each team is different in what they emphasize. For some, having fun is the big priority, for others beating their rival may take top spot. Because of the tradition we have at Alta most teams expect to contend for region or state titles and set that as a goal. They also talk about building team unity and supporting each other. As a coach I put my 2 cents in, but the goals have to be set by the kids if they're to be meaningful.
- After the team sets its goals I make the players write up individual goals. They give me a copy and they keep a copy so I know exactly what they're trying to achieve. They have to put the goals somewhere where they'll see them every day, like taped to the bathroom mirror or in their locker.
- Also, I insist that individual goals have to be more than just athletic goals. Most include family, church, and school.

#### What about sportsmanship?

If you go out and compete, there's going to be emotions. More so with guys. But they've got to realize that they have to have respect for themselves, for their opponents, and for the game itself to do it the right way.

If we can talk to the kids to help them understand that their behavior is not just a reflection on themselves, but on the team, their ward, the Church, then we're better at getting them to manage their tempers and perform with good sportsmanship.

The biggest problem as far as sportsmanship is the adults—just go to a Jazz Game, BYU or Utah Game, high school game, and you'll hear parents yelling at the officials, the opponents, and even their own team if they make a mistake. It's gotten to a point that people go to the game not so much to cheer, but to criticize whoever falls under their eyes. There are times that we'll be playing games that our students on the sidelines are terrible—they embarrass me. Yet, you go to any high school and it's the same thing. Unfortunately, they learn it from their fathers and mothers, so they think it's acceptable. It's the attitude of "You pay your money so you can do what you want." For the most part

people don't even see themselves as being rude and unruly, which means they lack self-awareness.

#### Any advice for priesthood leaders regarding Church Sports?

I would say that it's important that we try to get kids as active as we can, and Church Sports can be an outlet for kids who drifted away from that. I think it's really important that you get the right individual to coach them, so the kids will go out and have fun and be active. They don't want to be embarrassed by getting beat by 80 points—that's no fun for anyone. You need someone who can make them competitive, and yet enjoy it and feel a part of it.

#### Soccer is a Church sponsored sport—care to put in a plug?

It's the best game for kids to start—the kids aren't going to get injured, even if the coach is inexperienced. Lots of activity and running. It's healthy. It provides good footwork and teaches them to work as a team. Even if they later change to other sports, it builds a great foundation.

## **Sports/Events**

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We've had a number of requests to list the various sports, games, and events that have been sponsored by stakes and wards in the Utah Salt Lake City Area. Consider which of the following may be of interest to members in your area.

#### **Sports, Games and Small Group Exercise**

- 1) Basketball; 2) Volleyball; 3) Softball;
- 4) Futsal; 5) Flag Football; 6) Organized Walking;
- 7) Ultimate Frisbee; 8) Golf; 9) Pickleball
- 10) Ping Pong/ Table Tennis; 11) Kickball; 12) Chess;
- 13) Badminton; 14) Dodgeball; 15) Bowling;
- 16) Checkers; 17) Outdoor Volleyball 2/4/6;
- 18) Racquetball; 19) 3-on-3 Basketball;
- 20) Horseshoes; 21) Swimming; 22) Soccer;
- 23) Mini Soccer; 24) Biking; 25) Aerobics; 26) Track;
- 27) Lacrosse; 28) Skeet Shooting; 29) Skiing;
- 30) Snowboarding; 31) Hiking; 32) Frisbee Golf;
- 33) Balloon Volleyball; 34) Deck Tennis;
- 35) Speedminton; 36) Tennis

- All sports can be played co-ed, family, or tournament
- Use proper equipment for all sports to avoid injuries.

#### **Events**

- 1) Family Olympics; 2) Weekly Sports Night
- 3) Health Fair; 4) 5K Run/Walk;
- 5) YSA YM/YW Speed Dating

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