

# Sports News

## September 2009— Newsletter of the Utah Salt Lake City Area Sports

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### Notable Quotes

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"I always turn to the sports section first. The sports page records people's accomplishments; the front page has nothing but man's failures." *Earl Warren, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court*

"The trouble with referees is that they just don't care which side wins." *Tom Canterbury*

"The finish line is sometimes merely the symbol of victory. All sorts of personal triumphs take place before that point, and the outcome of the race may actually be decided long before the end." *Laurence Malone*

"We can't win at home and we can't win on the road. My problem as general manager is I can't think of another place to play." *Pat Williams*

### More than just fun...

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At the practical level Church Sports is about having fun—everyday people getting together to enjoy some mildly competitive physical activity in a safe and familiar environment. It includes, for example:

- A Melchizedek Priesthood vs. the Aaronic Priesthood in a ward 3-on-3 basketball tournament where it doesn't matter so much who wins as the fun the participants have with one another in a setting where age disappears as a barrier.
- A co-ed Volleyball game where husbands and wives can share some time together playing their neighbors.
- Organized hikes for Relief Society sisters who want an occasional alternative to the solitary time they spend on the treadmill.
- Young Adults throwing a Frisbee or Ultimate Disc to each other where laughter is the predominant feature.

- A place for senior members to have fun playing low impact Pickleball.
- A Young Woman feeling the satisfying whack as she connects a bat with a softball and then races to beat the throw to first base.

But as important as the practical implementation of Church Sports is, it's meant to be much more than that. It's actually one of the most useful tools in the toolbox of activation, fellowship, and missionary work. Wise Priesthood leaders know how to use Church Sports to draw their members and neighbors closer to each other, and therefore more easily reach their stake and ward goals and objectives.

For example, Elder Michael Holmes, Area Seventy, previously taught: "*New members have to make two important changes in their lives: 1) Doctrinal Conversion, which is facilitated by personal study and the Holy Ghost; 2) Social Transition, which is the responsibility of members of the church. This is often the more difficult challenge as the new member is called upon to form new friendships, abandon difficult habits, and feel welcome in a new and unfamiliar environment. **Church Sports is an excellent tool to help with Social transition.** Consider this quote from the Utah Area Sports website, [www.utahareasports.org](http://www.utahareasports.org)*

*Church sports activities are designed to help members focus on and accomplish the mission of the church, which is to "invite all to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59) and "be perfected in Him." (Moroni 10:32) These activities offer many opportunities for fellowshiping, activating, and sharing the gospel with others. When participants demonstrate Christlike behavior and attitudes, physical activities can help them grow spiritually. (Utah Area Sports Manual, introduction)*

*Church activities should strengthen testimonies and foster personal growth. They also should provide opportunities to apply gospel principles and help*

*participants develop friendships in a wholesome environment. (Church Handbook of Instructions, Bk.2:Sec.10:p.271) Church sports programs offer opportunities for members to participate in activities where adherence to Church standards and gospel teachings is expected and required. (Utah Area Sports Manual, introduction)*

## **Ward Organization** (from the Utah Area Sports Manual)

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As with all activities, the bishopric is ultimately responsible for the ward sports program. Generally, the program includes:

- Bishopric
- Ward Activities Committee
- Ward Sports Specialists
- Coaches
- Participants
- Spectators

### **The Bishopric has the following responsibilities:**

1. Ensuring that the sports program follows Church policies and guidelines, emphasizing Christlike conduct and sportsmanship for players, coaches, and spectators
2. Calling and setting apart the ward sports specialists for the priesthood and women's programs. Recommendations for sports specialists may come from the activities committee and from priesthood and auxiliary leaders.
3. Calling and setting apart coaches for ward teams. Recommendations for coaches may come from ward sports specialists and from priesthood and auxiliary leaders.
4. Ensuring that all who are called to work in the sports program are trained by appropriate stake and regional leaders.
5. Approve eligibility for individuals and teams representing their ward.

### **Coaches should do the following as they serve:**

1. Focus on the primary purpose of Church competitive sports, which is to assist quorums and classes in meeting the mission of the Church.
1. Emphasize participation, sportsmanship, fellowship, and activation for both members and friends of other faiths. While excelling and winning are worthy goals, participation and sportsmanship are more important.
2. Exemplify Christian principles in appearance, conduct, teaching, and expression at all times. Avoid questionable strategies.

3. Accept responsibility for team behavior and not tolerate unsportsmanlike behavior from any team members. Instill in players respect and courtesy for officials and opposing players and coaches, thus promoting good sportsmanship.
4. Submit the Eligibility Declaration and team Roster together with any Rule Waivers to the ward sports specialist before stake play begins.
5. Display a knowledge of the sport to be coached and be willing to attend training clinics, workshops, practice sessions and games to increase knowledge and skill. Review program guidelines and rules of play often, encouraging players to do the same.
6. Respect the spirit as well as the letter of policies and rules.
7. Openly and sincerely acknowledge excellence and effort in their own players, in those of the opposing teams, and in officials.
8. Give team members opportunities for practice and conditioning.
9. Give players individual help and encouragement. Always treat them with love and respect, and shown concern for their health and safety.

### **Participants should:**

1. Maintain self-control and be an example of Christlike conduct and good sportsmanship
2. Know the rules of the sport at the beginning of the season and review them often
3. Show respect and courtesy to officials and opponents
4. Acknowledge in positive ways outstanding performance by opponents as well as teammates.
5. Keep winning in proper perspective.

### **Spectators should:**

1. Be enthusiastic, but always maintain self control, showing respect and courtesy.
2. Acknowledge outstanding performance by players on both teams.
3. Recognize that officials, sports specialists, coaches, and scorekeepers are fulfilling their Church callings. Give them respect and support.

Refer to the Utah Area Sports Manual for specific direction for the Activities Committee and Sports Specialists. Remember, all these positions are callings and should be treated with dignity and respect.

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