

BULLDOG BULLETIN

DECEMBER 2009

CHANGE COMING TO HISTORIC HOCKOMOCK

The Hockomock League, one of the oldest leagues in the state and Canton High School's home for decades, is going to look a little bit different next year (2010-2011). After years of talk of expanding the league and splitting into large and small divisions,

the split will actually happen as the Hock accepts Attleboro High School in the fall of 2010. With the addition of Attleboro the league will be divided into two divisions- one made up of the schools with smaller enrollments and one made up of the school's with larger enrollments.

The split will be based on the enrollments of the ten schools, with the five smallest schools comprising the "small" school division of the Hock and the five largest schools comprising the "large" school division. The league split will be re-aligned every four years based on enrollment. The initial split is not set but the following is for sure-

Hock Small: Canton,
Sharon, Foxboro

Hock Large: Franklin,
Attleboro, Mansfield,
King Philip

To be determined: OA,
NA and Stoughton

Canton will be in the "small" division with Sharon and Foxboro. Stoughton, North Attleboro and Oliver Ames are on the fence while Franklin, Mansfield, Attleboro, and King Philip are in the "large."

The basic premise behind the split is to even the playing field within the league as the growing gap in enrollment between the smaller schools and the larger schools has clearly led to a competitive edge for the larger schools. "There are many factors that lead to successful programs," explained CHS Athletic Director, Danny Erickson. "But there is not a single factor that provides as clear an advantage than the number of students a school has. It is not fair to ask a school with our enrollment (825) to compete consistently with schools like Mansfield (1500) and Franklin (1600). It's just not fair to our athletes."

The split won't sever ties among the large and small Hock schools, just limit the number of contests among them, and/or determine two

league champions based on the size of the schools involved.

How will scheduling work?

Traditional double round robin sports (Field Hockey, Golf, Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, Gymnastics, Boys Ice Hockey, Baseball, Softball, Tennis and Lacrosse) will face the schools in their division twice each season (home and away) and face the other schools in the other division only once- for a total of 13 league games, plus a Hockomock Day* game- for a total of 14 league games. The rest of the schedule will be made up of non-league games.

Traditional single round robin sports will each be handled on an individual basis with some details to be determined. In most cases, Canton will face each of the other nine league schools once. The team from each division with the best record will be Hock Division Champions.

Football will face all nine schools as well with just one champion in the first year (2010). Football is currently going through a state-wide evaluation. It is very likely

that the entire football format will be undergoing major change for 2011- one which may deem leagues meaningless.

The bottom line is that this new divisional break-up should create a more level playing field for all teams in the league. It will maintain old rivalries, yet make changes that are long overdue. The changes should ultimately create a more well-balanced league and a stable home for our Bulldogs for years to come.

***Hockomock Day-** This will be the 14th league game for the double-round robin sports. It will be a game against an opponent from the other division that finishes in the same place as Canton does in our division. For example...if our Field Hockey team finishes in first place in our division, we will face the first place team in the large division in a final league game. It should create some very big games!

BULLDOG CALENDAR

Monday, January 4th– 7:00-
Booster Club Meeting at CHS-
room 303

Friday, January 23rd– 2nd term
ends– determines athletic eligi-
bility for end of winter and be-
ginning of spring seasons

Saturday, February 6th–
Booster Club Comedy Night
Fundraiser at the Town Club.

Saturday, February 13th– Divi-
sion III Wrestling Sectionals

NEW FACES GRACING BULLDOG SIDELINES

With the fall season behind us and the winter season getting into full swing, CHS has welcomed many new coaches to our athletic staff.

The fall saw **Anthony Cosky** take over the reigns of the Varsity Girls Soccer team and turn things around in a

hurry. The team won the Hockomock League championship for only the 2nd time in the program's 26 year history. Several fall programs had new assistant and junior varsity coaches on board. **Lynne Travers** of Milton joined Pat Cawley's Volleyball staff, taking on junior varsity coaching

duties. **Ruben Tiexiera** coached the boys Junior Varsity Soccer team to a strong season that saw the team improve throughout. Tiexiera coaches with the Eastern Mass Futbol Club as well. CHS grad and former football standout **Kevin Foley** joined (continued on page 4)

FROM THE AD'S OFFICE

ARGUING CALLS BY REFEREES DOESN'T ADD UP

By **Danny Erickson**
CHS Athletic Director

Earlier in the fall, I watched the clip of the Serena Williams outburst at the US Open. She was upset with a line judge over a foot fault call against her. She lost it. The expletive-laced tirade resulted in her forfeiture of the match and consequent elimination from the Grand Slam tournament. Serena's spectacle provides a perfect example of how not to act for all CHS sports athletes, coaches and fans.

There is no upside to players, coaches and fans challenging the decisions of officials. When a player argues a call with an official, it takes his/her focus off of his/her job and almost always results in a decrease in effective performance. When fans in the stands react with jeers and disdain when they don't agree with calls, it creates a hostile environment and takes the focus off of the players and the game. When a coach argues a call it almost NEVER results in changing the mind of the official. Perhaps most importantly, in all three cases (players, coaches & fans) arguing calls is simply not the sporting and classy way to approach the game. Arguing calls just doesn't add up.

Why our athletes shouldn't challenge decisions of officials-

Last fall, Canton High School's athletes were visited by Dr. Greg Dale- Duke University sports psychologist. His message to them was designed around focus and concentration. One of his major points was that when athletes let the official's decisions get in their heads, it is tough to get them out. He suggested that our athletes use the "three-

second" rule when things go wrong in a game (ie. an official's decision that is questionable- or just plain wrong). When the official makes a "bad" call, you cannot let it bother you for more than three seconds. If you can't shake it in three seconds, you are not



going to be able to perform your task at your highest level.

I'll turn to US Open Tennis again for another example. During the men's final this year, the greatest player of all-time- Roger Federer- was upset by Juan Martin del Potro in five sets. With a set already in the win column, Federer was looking to win the 2nd set tie-breaker and break the upset hopes of the Argentine. Early in the tie-breaker, Federer argued a line call that went against him. He was clearly agitated. Five points later- still in the midst of the tie-breaker- Federer kept staring down the official that made the call and talking about it under his breath. He couldn't let go of that official's decision- and it cost him. He never regained focus, lost the tie-breaker, and went on to lose in five sets. I point at that moment of the match as when Federer lost it.

It was just one point- one call- but it consumed Federer and cost him many more points and the match. Federer would have benefited from using Dr. Dale's "three-second" rule.

No athlete at Canton High School plays at the level of

Roger Federer, and yet all of them can learn from his performance in that match.

Why our fans shouldn't challenge decisions of officials-

Home field advantage is a phenomenon that just about everyone agrees with to some degree. The idea that teams are going to perform at a higher level when they are in a familiar, comfortable environment with a supportive crowd makes a great deal of sense. However, how that "supportive crowd" behaves can have a huge impact on the athletic contest.

Although we ask our athletes to try to block out outside distractions on game day and simply focus on their jobs, it is not always an easy thing to do. When a student-athlete is on the field and hears the fans loudly objecting to a call that was just made against him/her, it makes it much more difficult for that student-athlete to let it go- in essence, it makes the "three second rule" even tougher to carry out. As a player, when your classmates or parents are screaming about a call that went against you, it will do one of two things: embarrass you or empower you to challenge the call yourself. Either outcome is not productive. Both outcomes create a greater roadblock to getting back to the task at hand.

From an administrative point of view, most serious problems at high school sporting events (fights, ejections, etc) start with fans questioning calls. It causes a hostile environment that simply has no place in educational athletics.

Why our coaches shouldn't challenge decisions of officials-

If we look at it simply in practical terms, coaches arguing the calls of officials doesn't help your team win. In all of my 20 years associated with athletics at CHS, I have NEVER seen a referee change a significant call because a coach argued it. Bulldog coaches arguing with the decisions of officials only hurts the chances of the team winning. One could argue that by arguing the *(continued on next page)*

HOCKOMOCK LEAGUE

FAN BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

- Please cheer positively for your team!
- Personalized, negative chants or comments are not acceptable.
- Obnoxious, rude or flamboyant behavior is not acceptable.
- Let the student-athletes compete.
- Let the coaches coach.
- Let the officials officiate.
- Enjoy the Game!

DOC'S TIPS FROM THE TRAINER'S ROOM

CONCUSSIONS AND HEAD INJURIES

By Richard Stitati, LATC,
EMT- Athletic Trainer

Recent research in the area of sports related concussion has provided medical professionals with valuable new knowledge. Public awareness has also increased due in part by several early retirements of professional athletes.

The colloquial term "ding" should not be used to describe concussions. Although the stunned *confusional* state of the athlete will usually disappear in a few minutes, if an athlete shows any of the concussion-like signs and symptoms after contact to the head, the athlete has at the very least sustained a mild concussion and should be treated for concussion.

Some of the typical signs

and symptoms include varying degrees of consciousness, imbalance, memory loss, along with headache, ringing in the ears, and nausea. Post-event problems can be manifested in cognitive impairment and drowsiness.

It should be pointed out that the concussion can be caused by a direct blow to the head or elsewhere on the body with a force transmitted to the head.

As noted, typically the short lived neurological problem is resolved but in some cases the injury can result in a long lasting effect.

In particular, an athlete who has suffered one concussion could be at risk for more long lasting harm if he/she

suffers a second /third event or returns to play too soon.

Because of this most medical professionals advise that any player should not be allowed to return to play on the day of the injury. In addition, proper assessment should be done both on and off the field after the injury. A variety of tests and examinations under medical supervision should be performed on the athlete before he/she is allowed to return to play. One of the keys to returning to play is that all physical and cognitive issues should be resolved with proper rest followed by a gradual return to play.

Despite a vast amount of research and development, there is no hard and fast rule and in the end the final decision to return to play is a clinical

BULLDOG TIP

Get the digits

Members of the CHS coaching staff understand the importance of effective communication. Communication is improved when a coach is easily accessible to his/her players, and in some cases, parents. Make sure you keep your coach posted about conflicts or absences from practices and games.

At the beginning of the season, a student-athlete should check with his/her coach for his/her best, most appropriate contact information. It may be a phone number, email, or both, but you should have a means of contacting your coach.

No upside to arguing calls of officials (continued)

(continued from previous page)

bad call, the coach is simply posturing to get future calls. My observations have proven to show a different result. Arguing calls only get the officials defensive and leads to more calls against your team. I can't tell you how many times over the years I've watched CHS coaches argue calls only to get more questionable calls against them as the game wears on. As a coach, I have seen it happen to me countless times. It just doesn't pay to argue.

The 2008-09 Boys Basketball team might provide the best example I've ever seen. After a game at Fairhaven last winter, when coach Michael Devoll and his staff were "all over the officials" in the first half, things got bad. Every call the rest of the game went against the Bulldogs (including a bench technical and a player ejection). The plethora of calls against the 'dogs that second half was obviously in some way related to the way in which our coaching staff had questioned earlier calls by the officials.

The best part of this example comes next. After evaluating his part in letting that game get out of control with the officials, coach Devoll instituted a new rule for himself, coaching staff, players and players' parents- NO ARGUING CALLS. It worked. I was at all but a couple of those last half a dozen games of the season and there was no whining coming from the Green and White toward the refs...and we clearly benefited with the calls from the officials. The teams with the coaches who were riding the officials got fewer of the difficult calls than we did. Not arguing calls actually led to the Bulldogs being treated very well by the officials.

The Bottom Line-

I hope this column has laid out why it is not advantageous for Bulldog athletes, fans or coaches to argue with the decisions of officials. But more important than it being in our best interest to treat the questionable calls of officials with respect, it is simply the classy, sporting thing to do. Officials- like athletes and coaches- make

mistakes. Making the right call is not always as easy as it looks from the vantage point of the athlete, coach or fan. If we want to represent Canton well to the other communities we face, we need to show the officials the respect that their hard work deserves. Sportsmanship must guide all of our actions. Let's work together towards this goal.

Go 'Dogs!



PHYSICAL BREAKDOWN

With the start of a new sports season comes plenty of unnecessary anxiety for many kids and families. There is no need to add the stress of needing to get a physical exam on short notice in order for a child to participate in athletics.

The MIAA rule for physical exams is as follows: Student-athletes are only eligible to participate in athletics if a copy of a physical exam (no older than 13 months from the first date of the season) is on file with the athletic department.

The most common area of confusion comes with multiple sport athletes. Given the MIAA rule, it is quite possible for a student's physical to be "good" for one season but not for the next. Students and parents should never assume that because they were "all set" for the fall, that they will be set for the winter or spring.

Some Tips to prevent confusion with physicals at the beginning of a season:

1. Schedule your child's annual physical for a date within **13 months** of the previous one- Many insurance companies will only pay for one/year so schedule it during that 13th month. Make sure to book it **well in advance**.
2. **Send a copy of your child's physical into the athletic office immediately after receiving it.** Don't wait for the start of a season. We will put it on file.
3. **DOUBLE CHECK**- We maintain a list of student-athletes and their most up-to-date physical dates outside the athletic office. Even if you think you passed it in, double check on the list or in the athletic office before the start of a new season.

New Coaches on Bulldog Sidelines

(continued from page 1)

the Bulldog Football staff. Foley is also a Canton police officer.

Two winter programs saw changes at the top coaching spot since last season- Girls Basketball and Girls Ice Hockey. Newly hired CHS Social Studies teacher, **Kaitlin Mills** will be courtside this season as the new Girls Varsity Basketball coach. Coach Mills has been the JV and assistant Varsity coach for the past six years at Scituate High School.

Kelly Rider takes over the head position with the Girls Ice Hockey team. Coach Rider, a graduate of Quinnipiac University, was a member of that school's division one Girls Hockey program. She is currently working on her masters degree in coaching at Boston University. CHS math teacher and assistant Girls Soccer coach, **Sarah Handman**, will assist Rider with the CHS team this winter.

Three of our four sub-varsity basketball coaches will be unfamiliar faces as well. Joining Mills in the Girls Basketball program will be newly hired CHS math teacher, **Lynne Ruozzi**. Ruozzi will be coaching the Bulldog JV team after coaching at a high school in Chicago for the past several seasons.

Randy Collins and **Mike Normant** are joining CHS Boys Varsity Basketball coach Michael Devoll this season- Collins as JV coach and Normant as the Freshmen coach. Both Collins and Normant are coming to CHS from other high school coaching positions.

CHS ATHLETIC BOOSTER REPORT

By Julie Malloy- Booster President

The Booster Club got off to a busy start this fall, renewing its efforts to provide support to Canton High's numerous athletic programs. We are optimistic that our contributions will have a positive impact on our student athletes in the upcoming months.

The booster organization's single, largest financial commitment to date was made recently and it came in the form of a transportation subsidy. This was our response to the Athletic Department's greatest budgetary challenge; how to absorb escalating transportation costs without adversely impacting existing programs. There was a very real risk that game schedules would have to be drastically reduced in order to afford bus related costs. To eliminate this risk, Booster Club agreed to donate \$15K to be used to lease a new bus. This new lease arrangement enabled CHS to decrease its transportation costs to such an extent, that CHS teams were not adversely affected.

Speaking of subsidies, once again, each student athlete will be the recipient of a 'cloth grant'. This year every member of a CHS team will receive a \$40 credit toward the purchase of Bulldog themed athletic apparel and gear. Be sure to check out many of the new styles and colors that have been added including our 'white out' wear. A complete listing of our cloth offerings can be viewed on the booster club website.

For the first time, we are also offering a stipend to our coaches that can be used for sports related professional development. We recognize how important it is for our coaches to stay up-to-date on their sport and on new training and coaching techniques. However, we are most pleased that some of our funds will be used to purchase banners and plaques to recognize the achievements of a number of fall sports teams. We are proud to celebrate four league championships. Congratulations to the field hockey, volleyball and girls' and boys' soccer teams on their fine seasons.

Those are just a few of our short-term initiatives. But we are thinking long-term as well. The Booster Club has begun to focus on how it can play a meaningful role in longer term, strategic initiatives. More specifically, we are looking at how we can contribute to stadium and field related capital improvements that are anticipated down the road.

On the fundraising front, the CHS Booster Club has been very encouraged by the incredible generosity shown by the Canton community and by our corporate partners. Be sure to note the banner on the CHS athletic website which lists some of our larger corporate donors. Our second annual 'Walk the Dawgs' walk-a-thon took place on October 31st with almost 200 student-athletes participating.

The next booster club meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 4th at 7:00p.m. at CHS in room 303. We hope to see you there!

Bulldog Bulletin is proudly printed by: Bootcampdirect.com