

THE HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC COACHES ASSOCIATION

A Brief Glance...

In the 50s and early 60s, high school coaches and athletic directors from around the country were invited to annual sessions of the Division of Men's Athletics (DMA) of the NEA/AAPHER group. Special conferences were occasionally scheduled for high school coaches in Washington, D.C., but only as an adjunct of the college physical educator dominated DMA. DMA was one of seven divisions of AAPHER, which was one of 33 departments of the NEA. The high school coaching leaders in America realized that high school sports and coaching were very low in the pecking order of DMA/AAPHER/NEA.

At one such meeting in 1964, in Washington, D.C., a group of key people were aroused by the lack of real concern for the high school coaching profession and held a called meeting to discuss some alternatives and a new national direction. The concerned people included: Joe Fontana, Paul Smarks, Carey McDonald, Pinky Babb, Bob James, Sam Burke (then president of the National Federation) and many more. A steering committee was appointed with directions to plan another meeting in Atlanta, Georgia in July, 1965.

Dwight T. Keith was elected to serve as the Chairman for the July 10, 1965 meeting. After considerable discussion of pros and cons of organizing a national coaches association, Carey McDonald moved and Fred Farretson seconded that the group organize at that time. The motion passed and the National High School Athletic Coaches Association (NHSACA) was born. A

1965-1966 slate of officers was elected after the adoption of the new constitution and by-laws.

The 1966 National Convention was held in Cincinnati, Ohio. Other convention sites included Miami Beach, Florida in 1967 and 1993, San Francisco, California in 1969, Chicago, Illinois in 1970, Atlanta, Georgia in 1971, Pueblo, Colorado in 1972, Jackson Hole, Wyoming in 1973, New Haven, Connecticut in 1974, Orlando, Florida in 1975 1979 and 1986, Portland, Oregon in 1976, Hampton, Virginia in 1977, Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1978, Seattle, Washington in 1980, Biloxi, Mississippi in 1981, Indianapolis, Indiana in 1982, Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1983, Lexington, Kentucky in 1984, Denver, Colorado in 1985 and 1992, New Orleans, Louisiana in 1987, Cromwell, Connecticut in 1988 and 1996, Phoenix, Arizona in 1989, Nashville, Tennessee in 1990, Bismarck, North Dakota in 1991, Des Moines, Iowa in 1994, Tuscon, Arizona in 1995, San Diego, California in 1999, Lincoln, Nebraska in 2000 and the upcoming National Convention in Fargo, North Dakota in 2001.

Dwight T. Keith served as the Executive Secretary from 1965 to 1973 and was a guiding light through the early years of the association. The National High School Coach of the Year Awards Program was initiated in 1968 in football, basketball, track and baseball and continued under that format until wrestling was added in 1971. In 1975, the other 11 sports were included to complete a total recognition program in 16 sports areas for

high school coaches and athletic directors.

Association membership numbered about 5,000 in the late 60s. The dual association membership was inaugurated in 1969-1970. By 1973, the membership rolls had increased to 8,700 with 11 dual state associations. An aggressive national thrust by the association during the past decade has seen the membership top 50,000 in 1998-1999.

The NHSACA program of recognition, education, and competition has reached into every state and most schools. The association has achieved a national stature through involvement in varied activities with corporate, governmental, and educational groups. The NHSACA national office serves as a constant source of information and counsel to individuals and groups from all areas of the country.

The student recognition programs, such as U.S. Navy All-America selections, involve thousands of boys and girls each year. Hundreds of coaches and athletic directors receive national publicity annually through the coach and athletic director of the year awards program. Close contact and coordination of the NHSACA and the state associations is producing mutually beneficial services.

From a meager and humble beginning, the NHSACA has assumed a role of leadership which is only limited by the initiative of each member and their state association. The NHSACA is only as strong as the state associations and the challenge to all is at hand.