

Behind the Athletic Director's Desk

What a start to the 2010-2011 athletic school year! Our teams are already experiencing a great amount of success and I anticipate that success will only continue for the remaining part of the season and into the State Tournaments. Though our wins are coming at a rapid pace, there are a lot of other things happening in the department that I would like to inform you about.

As many of you witnessed, the 'Friday Night Lights' event was one for the ages. There were close to 2,000 people that night in attendance and it truly was a community event. I would like to thank the neighbors of Stackpole Field for their cooperation and the football coaches and girls' soccer coach Chris Coviello for volunteering their time to set the light towers up. Based on the excitement it brought to the student body at SHS and to the town I plan on hosting one night football game a season.

This fall season we are seeing greater athletic participation than in recent years. I believe the fact that the user fees were reduced is a major reason for this influx. I would like to thank Superintendent Langlois and Town Manager Andy Bisignani for their work in making playing sports affordable to the families in Saugus. The department added a new girls' volleyball program and added a JV football team this fall without eliminating any other programs. It's a great thing to see so many kids wearing their game shirts in school and showing their school pride.

Starting next season the Northeastern Conference and Cape Ann League will be merged in football. There are four leagues which are based first on enrollment and then on power. Saugus will be in the NEC-CAL 3 league which will have Winthrop, Pentucket, Triton, Amesbury, and Newburyport in their respective tier. There will be five other non-league games, including our Thanksgiving Day game; and those games will be against Danvers, Manchester-Essex, Austin Prep, North Reading, and Peabody. These leagues will be reevaluated and possibly realigned every two to three years, but with the same criteria- enrollment then power of those teams. As a department we are excited that we no longer are mandated to play schools double our size. Now we play a more competitive schedule while keeping our traditional games at the same time.

This fall my coaches and players have been extremely cooperative regarding the many changes in their game and practice field locations. There has been a lot of talk about the conditions of our fields and a lot of discussion about the issue of the soccer field that abuts World Series Park. I am not going to discuss that confrontational topic, but I am going to say there are two sides to every story. That being said, I would like to thank the Saugus Youth Soccer Association for their continuous help, as well as Town Manager Andy Bisignani for his help in upgrading the inside part of the track at the Belmonte Middle School. I would also like to give a special thank you to Derek Donachie and Dave Bernard from the DPW. Through their hard work and with limited resources they are able to make the fields the best they can be and it's greatly appreciated. In my opinion the best solution for Saugus is to entertain the idea of turf field. There are many communities investing in turf fields, most recently Medford, Melrose and Everett, but that is a topic for another day.

The fall season is in full stride and our student-athletes are already doing some great things and representing our town in the right way. There is always something going on in the department, so take some time to watch a game and show these hardworking kids your support.....thank you!