

SUHS board faces tough decisions

by SCOTT NEWTON

Excuse me for wondering out loud, but I can't understand why anyone would serve on a board of education.

Consider the dilemma of the SUHS Board of Directors. We can hope they won't cut out all sports. If they don't, they can put some sports on the "B" ballot and face the irate parents and students in September, or they can pare all sports, thereby weakening entire programs.

"It's an awkward situation for coaches," admitted Mike Kostrba, athletic director. "All our fall sports are well underway by the 21st of September."

Analysis

He added, "It's not a good situation for any activity put on the 'B' ballot, considering the history of 'B' ballots."

The school has had its operating levy voted down twice, and the closure in Estacada last year is on people's minds.

Ron Grantz, volleyball coach, will begin working with his players Monday. He doesn't think the impact of the levy failure has affected the student-athletes yet. "It's a little early. I think as it (the election) gets closer the kids will feel the impact."

He said the Estacada coach told him that the talk in the community before the vote indicated the levy would be voted down, which of course made it difficult for players to be concerned about volleyball.

"Most of these kids are a little surprised that athletics may be cut," Kostrba said. "A good share of their life, what they're involved in, could be cut."

From 200 to 300 students an afternoon spent time on the various fields and courts at SUHS. Dances are scheduled after football games, and clubs raise money by selling concessions at athletic events.

Out of a nearly \$4 million budget about \$232,000 was budgeted for all co-curricular activities.

For athletics \$192,000 was budgeted, with football at the top of the list with \$31,823 in projected expenses.

For the 4 cents per dollar spent on athletics, activities are provided that 758 participated in last year.

Some were two- and three-sport athletes, but about 550 out of 1,200 students found at least one sport to participate in.

It's hard to know the ramifications of any cuts that might be made. Putting football on the "B" ballot would save the most money, but would eliminate a major social outing.

Putting water polo on the "B" ballot would affect fewer students, but would save only \$2,833.

Other considerations abound. The beauty of a sport is in the eye of the beholder. Swimming is a life-long activity.

Of course, if one's particular sport is put on the "B" ballot other factors come into play. Should an athlete switch sports (assuming there is a sport to switch to) immediately after finding out his sport is on the "B" ballot? Or, does that athlete go ahead and work and train, hoping the "B" ballot passes?

There are those who would argue that too many sports are offered, and they'll be for cutting some, or even all, of them out.

Others might opt for across-the-board cuts. Take out a coach or two here and there, and maybe eliminate a freshman or junior varsity program.

"It's no fun for the coaches if they have to fight and scratch for everything," Kostrba pointed out. "It's no fun for the kids if they can't be competitive."

Eliminating freshman and junior varsity programs would undermine a program operated by the best of coaches after awhile.

Basketball, a popular sport for spectators and participants, is a case in point. Twenty-nine freshmen turned out for the sport last year, and two freshman boys teams were suited up.

That would give the coaches a pool of nearly 30 to draw on this year. Eliminate one of those teams and that cuts the pool in half, and more importantly results in coaches sending home 15 disappointed freshman athletes.

"It's not something you want to do for an extended time," Kostrba said.

The interesting thing to Kostrba is that, going into his 11th year at SUHS, the community has always been "very supportive" of athletics. He's seen girls athletics come a long way.

He said, "I don't know what the future holds, (or) what the near future holds."

A lot of student-athletes have gone to the high school to sign up for a fall sport. Many are accompanied by their parents, who ask, "What's going to happen?"

If school closes in September athletes may move to another district and become eligible instantly. Some couldn't afford to move, and only a handful could switch teams in the middle of the season and see substantial playing time.

If the parents didn't move, they could be charged tuition. And, if a student changed schools and played for another team, and then SUHS re-opens and he wants to come back, "he's out of luck."

Said Kostrba, "It's a little complicated."

Jim Wolf, who reports being very happy in his home on Marmot Road, isn't taking any chances.

His family is currently in the process of moving to an apartment in Gresham, an idea he's not crazy about. But his son Troy, a talented three-sport athlete, deserves a chance to go to school and participate in athletics, he believes.

He said Troy has worked hard, both at his school work and at athletics. Troy, a student with about a 3.7 grade point average, attended three basketball camps this summer.

He started on the varsity basketball and baseball teams at SUHS, and was the junior varsity quarterback.

"Basically, what it came down to was so much indecision," Wolf said of their decision to move to Gresham.

"I'd talk to two or three different administrators, and I'd get two or three different answers."

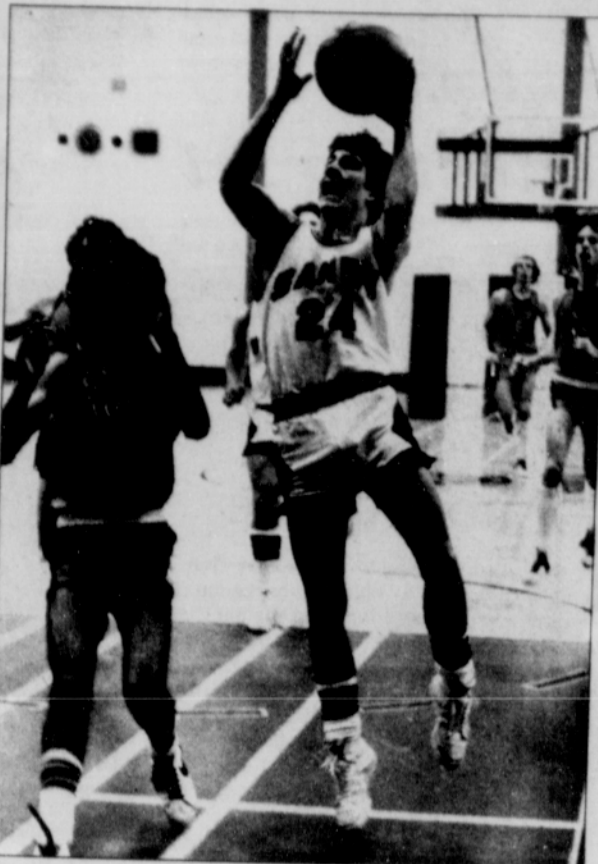
"I would never get a straight answer from anyone."

The decision was "very difficult," Jim Wolf and his father are both SUHS graduates, and Wolf said he has a "strong allegiance" to SUHS and the community.

He said he supported the school in its attempts at passing the levy, having urged his friends to vote for it. A letter to the editor appeared in The Post June 24 that read, in part, "It's time we quit making our young people suffer because of what others have done to the economy."

SUHS has the potential to have a good football team, Jim Wolf believes, and he is appreciative of the time Dan Brisbin, basketball coach, has spent working with Troy.

But he is uncertain enough about the future of SUHS and its athletic program to move his family out of a "lovely" home



Troy Wolf

near Brightwood to an apartment in Gresham.

This question (if there is a season for these sports) will be heard after a close loss in either football, basketball or baseball: I wonder if Troy Wolf would have made the difference?

But such academic exercises are frustrating, and we have to move ahead.

Despite the popularity of recreational sports perhaps the high school can not afford to offer so many alternatives.

Below is a list of sports and the projected cost of each. You decide what should go. Perhaps it'll give you an idea what it's like to be a board member.

Skiing (boys and girls): \$6,236; water polo (boys and girls): \$2,833; gymnastics: \$5,358; golf: \$4,056; tennis (boys and girls): \$7,340; swimming (boys and girls): \$7,064; soccer (boys and girls): \$10,495; cross country (boys and girls): \$2,249; baseball: \$11,406; softball: \$5,990; wrestling: \$13,290; track (boys and girls): \$14,683; volleyball: \$12,043; football: \$31,823; basketball (boys and girls): \$35,731; dancerially: \$6,285.

Other expenses: physical conditioning: \$1,898; trainer: \$4,341; transportation: \$7,000; awards: \$2,000; production center: \$2,700.

Of the total of \$192,191, salaries were projected to comprise \$91,479 of the budget.

Cedar Ridge program called limited

When the Sandy Elementary District's \$1.9 million operating levy passed June 29, the way was paved for a "limited" sports program at Cedar Ridge.

According to Clark Lund, superintendent, Sandy will re-enter the Barlow Trail League, competing in coed soccer in the fall, boys and girls basketball, wrestling and volleyball in the winter, and coed track in the spring.

Football will not be offered "as a matter of cost." Also, according to Lund, few area schools are playing football now, so scheduling games would have been a problem had the sport been offered.

Baseball is not being offered as the early-spring weather results in a number of cancellations, of both games and practices. And, youngsters get an opportunity to play baseball and softball in the Sandy area summer leagues.

About \$17,000 of the district's budget will go toward sports, which Lund termed a "very small" amount.

The majority of that, "probably \$16,000," goes toward coaches' salaries.

The rest goes to officials, for supplies and travel. The Barlow Trail League is comprised of a number of area schools, so travel is limited.

Lund said in 1975-76, his first year at Sandy, the travel requirements necessary to compete in the Willamette Valley League were "horrible," and not in the best interest of education or the taxpayer. Sandy changed leagues the next season.

Though a number of the area schools in the Barlow Trail League are smaller than Cedar Ridge, Lund said that there is good balance.

Lund said students were "disappointed" last year with the lack of an athletic program. "I feel the eighth graders, who will be ninth graders this year, really missed out," Lund said.

School will start Sept. 7, and activities will probably get underway the following Monday, Sept. 13.

For more information call 668-8067.

Hwy. 26, Sandy Phone 668-8058

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