

# Sports News

October 2008 – Newsletter of the Utah Salt Lake City Area Sports

## **THOUGHTS FROM A PROPHET**

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“There need be nothing debasing in wholesome contests. In a sense, life itself is a contest in the counter play of all the forces – physical and spiritual – which affect our living; and the development of strength and virtue comes largely out of such contests.” *Elder Stephen L. Richards of the Quorum of the Twelve at the dedication of the BYU Smith Field House in 1951.*

## **Every Sport a Missionary...**

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In a recent Sacrament Meeting talk, Brother Gordon Furness of the Draper Utah Eastridge Stake High Council coined a great phrase relative to missionary work, “Our success is in the asking.” He went on to explain that in fulfilling the call to share the gospel with others we are not responsible for the outcome, but rather for extending the invitation. It’s up to our friends to decide whether or not to learn more. But it is up to us to ask!

Most are aware that church authorities are placing an increased emphasis on members sharing the gospel, and their call to service is making a profound impact in the Utah Salt Lake City Area. Consider that the two Utah missions are generally number one in convert baptisms.

It isn’t by accident that this occurs. It’s really the natural result of living in an area where Church membership is large enough that all the programs are fully implemented in the lives of our members. Stated another way, we are blessed to live in the “City which is set on the top of a hill,” and it is truly a beacon to those whose hearts are open to the Spirit.

Living in this blessed place also means that there are many ways to find success by asking, since there are so many programs that are attractive to people. A partial list of some of the many ways you can invite people to a gospel related activity include: Family History; attending a concert by the Tabernacle Choir; Visiting Temple Square; participating in a Church sponsored sport, etc.

Experience suggests that this last one – Church Sports – is extremely effective since it’s so easy to ask someone if they’d like to “play a round of golf,” or “shoot a few baskets,” or to work out the stress of the day by playing some Volleyball.

But what about the non-athlete? How can Church Sports help there? The way that some stakes in our Area have done that is to emphasize non-traditional sports, such as *bowling, checkers, biking, dodgeball, and ping-pong*. Ward Relief Societies invite their members to an aerobics or Pilates night. Since many of these sports can be played Co-Ed or family style, it’s a great way for couples and families to have fun together with friends and neighbors.

Truly, in the Utah Salt Lake City Area Sports Program, we strive to insure that “Every Sport is a Missionary.” Is your stake and ward taking advantage of the various opportunities Church Sports offers to help in your activation and missionary work?

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

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- That two of the goals of the Utah Salt Lake Area Sports Program include: Every stake member (age 12 years and older) should have at least one sports experience every year; Officials should have a goal of being thanked by the losing team at the end of every game.

- That bishops and stake presidents who have successfully sponsored Church Sports programs use the occasional poor sportsmanship incident as an opportunity to meet with the offending members to challenge them to live up to their priesthood responsibilities. Rather than being a reason to cancel the program, it becomes an opportunity to improve the lives of the team members as they learn to discipline themselves in the competitive environment of sports. This, in turn, blesses these men and women in their families, at work, and in their daily lives.

## **PERSONAL PROFILE: Sister Kae Strong, Area Officials Coordinator**

Today, Sister Kae Strong is a confident and self-assured leader who has personally refereed many hundreds of games in a variety of sports, as well as teaching hundreds of others how to be effective sports officials in their wards and stakes.

But it wasn't always so. In fact, as a young woman Kae discloses that she felt rejected by the members of the ward where she lived. "As a teenager I was very shy, in part because I was tall, which I felt made me come across as fat and unacceptable." When, at the age of 12, she had to have serious leg surgery she missed four months of school. In that time not one person from the Church called her, stopped by to visit, or even troubled themselves to send a card. It was a discouraging and lonely time. When she returned to school her hurt had turned into anger and she decided never to step foot in a church again.

Fortunately, a few years later, a young woman from Scotland moved to Utah and decided to approach Kae as a potential friend, asking if she might sit by her on the bus. Reluctantly Kae agreed, and this young woman began to make Kae part of her life. Eventually, her new friend asked, "Some of us are going to play basketball – why don't you come play..." It was at the church, and even though Kae's recollection is that no one else on her team went out of their way to share the ball, her Scottish friend and Kae successfully stole

the ball enough to make some great plays, which made for a good time.

At the end of the game her coach asked Kae if she would be interested in learning more about the game by attending an officials training program the next weekend, and Kae agreed.

The clinic proved to be a turning point in her life. As she learned the rules she was complimented on her grasp of the game by the people hosting the clinic, and they encouraged her to come again and get certified, which she did. Suddenly, the "tall and unacceptable" girl was being treated with respect, particularly when neighboring stakes started calling her to officiate at their games.

Plus, the girls in her own ward started to appreciate her talents. It was then that her Scottish friend said, "The problem is that to participate in tournament play, you need to attend church at least 80% of the time." So Kae had a decision to make, continue to nurse a grudge or start going to church. She chose church and has been an active and faithful member ever since.

So, Kae numbers herself among the many thousands who have found their way into full fellowship by virtue of the Church Sports program, albeit through an unusual entrance through sports officiating.

Perhaps you'll have a chance to meet Kae personally at an officials training program. If so, you'll be struck by the depth of her commitment and character, as well as her love of Church Sports. She's certainly an excellent example of the high caliber of people who work in the Church Sports program at the Area, Region, and local levels of play to make the program effective in the life of our members.

## **GET THE WORD OUT**

Help us build our e-mail list by talking with your Stake High Councilman in charge of Activities/Sports about who should receive this newsletter, then send the e-mail addresses to Asst. Director John Pohlman at [pohlmanjohn@hotmail.com](mailto:pohlmanjohn@hotmail.com). Thanks for your help.