

Utah Area Sports

Sports News—January 2010

A Presidential Anecdote

President Thomas S. Monson started his remarks to the Salt Lake Regional Conference Priesthood Leadership Meeting on Saturday, October 17, 2009 by telling the brethren what a great friendship he has with the preceding speaker, Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve. After reciting some of Elder Hale's numerous accomplishments and contributions to the church around the world he added, "The only problem is that he's a Yankee's fan." As the laughter settled down President Monson continued, "Everyone knows that it's the New York Giants that one should root for. Of course they moved to San Francisco in the 1950's, but they're still my team." It's kind of nice to know that President Monson likes baseball—and a very loyal fan to boot.

Welcome to our Northern and Southern Friends

For the past two years, *Sports News* has been a publication for the Utah Salt Lake City Area. Now we're going statewide! With this issue we're pleased to welcome all who are involved in Church Sports in Utah Area North and Utah Area South.

The purpose of *Sports News* is to draw attention to the unique ability of Church Sports to bring people together in a positive environment that fosters friendship and fellowship among the saints and with our neighbors who are friends of other faiths. We also try to deal candidly with those who find reason to criticize church sponsored sports—usually as a result of their experiences with poor sportsmanship or competition.

Prior issues of *Sports News* include articles about great coaches, dedicated officials, and insights from those who effectively administer Church Sports in their ward, stake, and (now) at the Coordinating Council level. We have issues dedicated to promoting good sportsmanship, as well as stories of lives that have been changed because of Church Sports. It's amazing how many current priesthood leaders either discovered the church through an invitation to play a church sponsored sport, or who came back into activity as a result of the program—including general and area authorities of the church, members of stake presidencies, and bishoprics. Church sports truly can positively affect the lives of real people.

Sports News is always two pages long—never longer—so you can read it in just a few minutes. We hope it helps

you as you work to explain the program to members and leaders who have not yet caught the vision of all that Church Sports can do to strengthen the church in the wards and in the stakes.

Sports News is written each month by Jerry Borrowman, Communications Director. We also publish a monthly "Sports Calendar" that highlights upcoming sporting events, training opportunities, and meetings.

Join our E-mail List and View Sports News in the Mormon Times. At the direction of the Brethren, we do not have access to any church mailing lists—people need to ask to join our group e-mail list. To do so, please send a note to Tucker White, Assistant Director, at Utah.Area.Sports@gmail.com. You are free to forward the e-mail that sends out each issue to anyone you like.

We also value a partnership we have with the *Deseret News Mormon Times*. Each month they are kind enough to post our newsletter and calendar on their website, www.mormontimes.com under their "Special Features" section. They have archived all our previous newsletters, and you may find it helpful to review past issues when you need ideas for an upcoming talk or sports fireside.

Again, welcome to our peers and associates from across the state of Utah and to any outside Utah who read us online at *Mormon Times*. We welcome your feedback and input—just send a note to Jerry Borrowman, Communications Director at jerryborrowman@gmail.com. Now – on with the news!

Report from the Utah Area Sports Director

Harold Turley, Utah Area Sports Director, recently took a few of his increasingly rare moments to catch his breath and to update us on the progress of transferring responsibility from Area and Regional leadership to supervision by the Coordinating Councils. Here's what you need to know:

Why change the priesthood line of authority relative to Church Sports?

The Brethren felt very strongly that to be fully effective in the lives of participants, the responsibility for Church Sports needs to rest with our local stake presidents, with guidance from the Coordinating Council of which they are a member. To implement the program the following leaders will be called:

- An **Agent Stake President for Sports** will be selected in each Coordinating Council in the State of Utah.
- A **Sports Specialist** to assist the Agent Stake President in supervising the program and implementing sports activities.
- A **High Councilor assigned to Church Sports** in each stake will work directly with the Sports Specialist.

I want to emphasize that each stake president retains control of the program within his stake, but the Area Seventies, Agent Stake Presidents, and Sports Specialists are providing concentrated focus on the program and will work with the other stake presidents to implement the program in their stake.

Not all members are familiar with the term, Coordinating Council. Can you explain?

A Coordinating Council is a group of stake presidents (with from 4 to 25 stakes as members) who are brought together in periodic council meetings under the direction of an Area Seventy. Each Area Seventy in turn reports to Elder Steven E. Snow of the Presidency of the Seventy. Elder Snow has been given direction by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve to utilize the sports program as an effective tool in missionary work, reactivation of the saints in the State of Utah, and also to provide fellowship activities for those who are already actively involved in the church.

How have the Stake President's responded?

Elder Snow asked that the stakes in the Utah North Area make the transition first. Brother Leonard Mecham (Sports Director for Utah North Area) and I have already met with 5 of the 6 Area Seventies and each of their Agent Stake Presidents and Sports Specialists in each of their Coordinating Councils. These good brethren have responded very positively to their new responsibilities and indicate a willingness and desire to use Church Sports to further the work of the kingdom. I value their support and enthusiasm.

What about Regional Tournaments?

Regions no longer exist. If a Coordinating Council decides to host a tournament, it will be a "Coordinating Council Tournament."

Budgets, uniforms and equipment?

All sports equipment, uniforms, and awards will be financed by each of the Coordinating Councils and individual stake budgets—**no more assessment for the sports program at the Area level.**

Individual leaders in the Coordinating Councils and in the Stakes and Wards should use *Staples*, the designated LDS Sports Supplier, to order equipment and uniforms. Contact Teresa Meidlinger at 801-656-3250 or reach her by e-mail to Teresa.meidlinger@staples.com for help in ordering all sporting goods. We've been promised turnaround within 48 hours.

Any concerns about the new program?

No—I'm gratified that everyone I've talked with, including the Area Seventies, have expressed support for the program and believe that this is a wonderful, positive change. They view it as an opportunity of getting every

person in the stake, including those who are not members of our church, involved in healthy sports. There are now 42 different sports available to be played. That means we have a sport or activity that should be of interest to everyone—young and old, alike.

Can you share some ideas that have emerged from your meetings with leaders in the North Area?

One thing that I find exciting is that they are going to conduct surveys with members and friends of other faiths to find out what kind of sports they would like to focus on in their Coordinating Council boundaries and within the individual stakes to get even more people involved. The initial reaction is that once the survey is complete, the Coordinating Council will look to emphasize from 6 to 8 sports in a given year out of the 42 that are officially recognized. Of course individual stakes and wards can use any and all of the available sports in their own programs, but at the Coordinating Council level the focus will be on the highlighted sports.

When will the program become effective in the Utah Salt Lake City and Utah South Areas?

During the first two to three months of 2010 we will be transitioning the Utah South Area into the new program. I will be working with Gary Hooper, Sports Director for Utah South Area to do that. Once that transition is complete, we will work with our leaders in the Utah Salt Lake Area. The program will be fully implemented by June of 2010.

Just to make sure everyone is on the same page, can you reiterate the primary purpose of the Church Sports Program?

There are two primary objectives:

- 1) To draw people closer to the Savior. The spiritual conversion a member goes through must be reinforced by a social transition, and that's where sports can play an integral part in developing friendships with one another. Church Sports can help in missionary work, reactivation, and fellowship among the saints.
- 2) To promote physical fitness. In a world dominated by television and the internet, we need to encourage physical activity. The body is a "temple of the Lord," after all and the "body and the spirit are the soul of man." Physical activity leads to both physical and emotional health, which leads to greater spirituality.

It's a wonderful time to be involved in Church Sports!

To subscribe or unsubscribe to the newsletter, please send an e-mail to Utah.Area.Sports@gmail.com. Comments or ideas for the newsletter to jerryBorrowman@gmail.com.