

## **Guidelines for Public Address Announcers at High School Events**

*This article has been developed from a request by the IHSAA Football Play-off Committee.  
The IHSAA offers it with the hope that it will assist your event announcers at all events.*

Public address announcers are invaluable to the school and the audience that supports an interscholastic contest.

It is often a difficult position to fill and not an easy one for which to train a new person. Pronunciations can be tricky and there is a language unique to each sport. Endeavor to pronounce each person's name correctly. The announcer may disagree with a play that is made or an official's call, but must sit on his feelings. There is always an urge to cheer the home team on or get the crowd into the game. This is common at college and professional events. **But high school athletics is different.** The game is played by the pure amateur student-athlete. To an exclusive degree in Iowa the players are coached by professional educators. The game itself is educationally based and the result has no lasting negative effect on the values students derive from the game.

In a very real sense, the public address announcer at a high school event is a **“Champion of Character.”** He/she can **influence the atmosphere of the contest by what they say and how they say it. Quite simply, the announcer’s job is to provide information that is timely and pertinent and to do it professionally. They ARE EXPECTED to refrain from trying to entertain or incite the crowd, lead cheers, make remarks about the officiating or players, second-guess coaches, or editorialize in any way.** Their job **should never be confused** with play-by-play announcing which is inappropriate for the public address. Your sports public address announcer is your information specialist!

Following are a few examples of some of the differences we have referred.

<u><b>Sports Play-by-Play Announcing (refrain from on PA)</b></u>	<u><b>Sports Public Address Announcing</b></u>
Blair pitches to Hanks on the sweep. He slashes to the 45 yard line, carrying tacklers with him.	Hanks is the ball carrier. His gain is to the 45 yd line. Jones and Nelson on the tackle. It will be second down and three.
Basket by Johnson. That is her 15th point.	Field goal by Johnson.
Larson with a 3-point goal. It is raining three's here in Enid.	Three-point goal by Larson.
The Hawks lose momentum with this 15-yd penalty for offensive pass interference. It takes them back to their 25	The penalty for offensive pass interference puts the ball on the 25. It will be third down and 22 yards for the first down.
Now batting is right fielder #10 Carlson, who was robbed of a home run in her last at bat.	Now batting for the Cardinals is #10 right fielder Carlson.
Cantrell is sacked for a big 10 yard loss by that swarming Eagle defense. That makes it 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 20.	Loss of ten on the play. Medford, Evans and Larson in on the tackle. Third down, 20 yds to go.
FIELD G-O-O-O-A-L by Larson; and the Huskers have erased a 12 pt. deficit. Albright now has four fouls and Larson will try to complete the three point play	Larson with the field goal. Foul is on Albright and Larson will attempt the free throw
Johnson slashes to the 40. That's ANOTHER Cowboy . . . <b>FIRST DOWN!</b>	Johnson on the carry to the 40-yard line. First and 10 for the Cowboys.

In most instances, announcers feel like they are providing the fans a service by doing play-by-play and adding a commentary. While some play-by-play is an inherent part of sports public address announcing, the announcer must be vigilant that they refrain from comments that can be construed as being disrespectful to the opposition and other participants.

Following are some guidelines from the National Association of Sports Public Address Announcers Association's Code of Conduct that we feel are worthy of consideration.

- Announcers will introduce the raising of the **flag and the playing of the national anthem** at the start of the contest in a manner that **promotes respect and honor for our country**.
- Announcers **shall not attempt to be bigger than the game** or event by doing play-by-play or by providing a commentary in an effort to draw attention to them.
- Announcers shall **understand that because they have a tremendous influence** on the crowd and that cheerleading or antics designed to incite the crowd for the purpose of gaining an advantage for their team is inappropriate.
- Announcers shall **promote good sportsmanship** by what they say and how they act.
- Announcers shall **treat the opponents and their fans as guests**, not the enemy.
- Announcers shall **respect** the officials, participants of all teams and remain neutral when introducing the officials, the starting line-ups, substitutions and the outcome of plays or performances by participants.
- Announcers should be **familiar** with emergency procedures that may have to be announced.
- Announcers shall **respect** the individuals who are responsible for the administration of athletic contests such as officials, coaches and administrators and avoid making any comments that reflect positively or negatively on them.
- Announcers shall be **prepared** and familiar with the correct pronunciations of the names of officials, participants and coaches, knowledgeable about the rules of the sport, officials's signals and how the game is played.
- Announcers shall endeavor to exhibit **professional behavior** and represent their school and community with respect and dignity at all times by what they say, how they act and how they appear.
- Announcers will make additional announcements during the contest but only those **authorized** by the host administration.

The IHSAA wishes you the very best for you and your announcer(s) every season. Thank you for contributing positively to the overall education of Iowa students.