



# Prep beat

## The coaching shortage

By Tom Stienstra

As if high school coaching staffs didn't have enough problems already, another dilemma has popped up—a shortage of qualified coaches.

The quality of instruction and the existence of many teams is at stake.

The shortage of coaches stems initially from an overall shrinkage of student numbers. The fewer the students, in other words, the smaller the staff. And since it's optional for juniors and seniors in the Palo Alto Unified School District to enroll in physical education, the problem has heightened.

Normally, each staff coach supervises two sports teams. With less coaches and the same amount of teams, the consequence is a shortage.

"The coaches are reluctant to do more (for free)," said Elaine Rotty, Gunn High athletic director. "Already we're subsidizing education. We have 39 coaching positions at Gunn and only 16 can be filled with full time staff. It's a problem."

Schools have responded by seeking what officials call "para-professionals," qualified coaches who are not members of a teaching staff. In the PAUSD, they are paid \$750 per season—\$250 less than the Sequoia District pays its para-professionals. "We have to make the pay better," Rotty believes.

Interns from San Jose State and Stanford, who are working toward a teaching credential, have been effective instructors, according to athletic directors.

However, such prospects are not easy to come by. "We've had to beat the bushes," said John Williams, Palo Alto High athletic director.

In addition, a credentialed school representative must attend every athletic event—by state law—so the numbers game is still a problem.

Two alternatives exist:

In order to offer a full program, get relief help for the coaching staffs—from other teachers. Reducing a teacher's course load by one period as credit for coaching a team would provide incentive.

In order to reduce the coaching burden, eliminate sports the community could provide, such as soccer (AYSO), swimming (AAU), tennis (USTA), softball (Bobby Sox) and baseball (American Legion).

Santa Clara Unified School District that they have the chance to pay the new \$10 pay-to-play fee which was approved Tuesday. The district could have taken the direction of cutting sports—as have the West Valley, Mount Hamilton, North Peninsula and Mid-Peninsula Athletic Leagues.

Due to passage of Proposition 13, sports budgets at each of the district's four schools were slashed by \$5,000.

A maximum of \$20 per family may be charged—and a special fund will be established, under California law, for families who cannot afford the fee.

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Prep notes—Jody Lansford, a first-team all-leaguer at Wilcox last year in the SCVAL in football, basketball and baseball, has apparently shifted gears in his long-range athletic goals.

Lansford (6-4, 215) originally planned on giving up baseball this summer in order to concentrate on weight training for football, in which he was the SCVAL's Defensive Player of the Year as a junior.

But after brother Phil was picked in the first round in the baseball draft by the Cleveland Indians, Jody got an eyeful of the contract and decided baseball could be his sport after all. He went to Alaska and spent the summer playing semi-pro baseball against some of the best college players in the nation.

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Three major rule changes have been made in this year's high school football rules:

—When a kicker is roughed, the defense will be charged with a 15-yard penalty, as before, but henceforth the offense will be automatically awarded a first down.

—The penalty for an invalid fair catch signal has been reduced from 15 yards to five yards.

—Under certain circumstances, players with artificial limbs will be allowed to participate.

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Bellarmino's football team has changed its schedule for the next two weeks. The Bells no longer have Buck Shaw Stadium in Santa Clara for use for their non-league games and will meet Woodside at 7:30 Saturday night at Townsend Field in Santa Clara. The following Saturday at 8 o'clock, Bellarmino will travel to Fremont High to meet the Indians.

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Athletes should be thankful in the