



National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association

Position Statement: Sports Specialization

WHEREAS the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) believes interscholastic athletics are an integral part of the total educational program;

WHEREAS the NIAAA believes that a well-rounded interscholastic program is integral in providing maximum opportunities to meet the needs and interests of as many students as possible;

WHEREAS the future of a well-rounded interscholastic athletic program will depend on multi-sport participation by a majority of the student-athletes;

WHEREAS sports specialization is being encouraged by parents, coaches, college recruiters, and recreation persons for young student-athletes who have not matured enough physically, emotionally, or mentally to realize their athletic potential;

WHEREAS sports specialization has been advocated as the only solution for an athlete to be able to compete beyond the high school level, it must be recognized that only one in 50 high school athletes participates in athletics at a four-year college and only one in 12,000 high school athletes plays as a professional;

WHEREAS student-athletes who specialize experience higher rates of injury and increased psychological stress – including burnout – are under greater pressure to excel and their opportunities for meaningful social interaction are more restricted;

WHEREAS the NIAAA realizes only a small minority of student-athletes might benefit from sport specialization; and

WHEREAS sports specialization has led to the elimination of interscholastic programs due to lack of participation; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the NIAAA urges its membership to encourage high school administrators, coaches, athletes, and parents to promote multi-sport participation by student-athletes rather than single sport participation.