

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR VARSITY ATHLETICS IN THE  
CLASS 4-A AND 5-A HIGH SCHOOLS  
IN THE STATE OF KANSAS

by G80

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## INTRODUCTION

An awareness of public relations and what a good program can do to create interest in high school athletics is becoming more and more important to today's coaches and athletic directors. No athletic program is any better than the job of selling which has been done by those responsible for its operation. Not only must a coach or athletic director be a good tactician in order to be successful, he must also be able to meet people in the community and convince them that what he is doing is right and just.

It is the job, mainly of the athletic director, to develop a selling program that will increase the interest and gain the support of the community, the students, the faculty, the administration, and the board of education. Some of the methods he uses to create good public relations will overlap in their influence; others will be aimed at one particular group.<sup>1</sup>

Many people still believe that athletics are conducted merely for the purposes of advertising the school and increasing gate receipts at athletic events. This has been true too frequently in the past and it is becoming increasingly clear that the public must be made aware that these motives are in the minority. Therefore, the public must be educated in regard to the objectives of athletics by means of educational publicity.

Publicity is the use of all possible means of influencing the opinions of the public as a group of individuals.<sup>2</sup> It makes contacts and establishes

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew Grieve, Directing High School Athletics (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 271.

<sup>2</sup>William Leonard Hughes, and Jesse Feiring Williams, Sports--Their Organization and Administration (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1944) p. 235.

relationships with individuals not reached directly. Poor publicity is to blame for many athletic evils today. Selling athletics, as a phase of publicity that suggest the necessity of making athletics desirable for every student and worthy of public support, is commendable, but if selling athletics means gross exaggerations, exploitation of stars, or the making of misleading statements, it should not be tolerated.<sup>3</sup>

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report was to determine the extent of public relations programs conducted in the class 4-A and 5-A high schools in the state of Kansas. These classifications were designated for athletic purposes by the Kansas State High School Activities Association.

The reason for choosing the larger high schools for the survey was that most of them are located in areas of relatively high population density, as compared to smaller schools in outlying rural areas. The larger schools would naturally serve more people and in turn would bring about the need for a more complex program of public relations.

The higher population areas would also contain a greater variety of mass media outlets which are an integral part of a complete and successful public relations program. It is understandable that the more outlets there are for a high school public relations program, the better informed the public will be, thus the chances for misunderstanding will be reduced.

The results of this report may also prove to be of value to coaches and athletic directors in all high schools, regardless of size, in starting a program of public relations or improving their existing program.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Publicity. The use of the term publicity was interpreted as meaning the use of any method or device which would advance the cause of high school athletics. This included the use of radio, television, newspapers, the postal service, word of mouth, or any other means which would serve the purpose.

Advertising. For purposes of this report, advertising is referred to as one part of publicity or a public relations program. Advertising can be either free or bought but is used mainly in newspapers or on radio or television to make the public aware of an athletic event or program.

Media. As used in this report, media is the means or device used by the high school athletic director to convey information about the program to the public. It is commonly thought of as being either radio, television, or the newspapers, but it could also be a school bulletin board or any other method of relating information to someone else.

Broadcast fee. Since this report deals in part with radio and its coverage of high school athletics, it is important to define "broadcast fee" to avoid any possible confusion as to its meaning. Some high schools feel that a radio station which charges merchants to advertise on the air should, in turn, have to pay a fee for the right to broadcast an athletic event held at their school. The high schools feel that this "broadcast fee" is just, because the radio station is actually using the school for a commercial purpose.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Much has been written on the subject of public relations in high school athletics by a number of well-known and qualified writers, but only a brief

summary of what the investigator feels to be more pertinent information will be given here.

Public relations is a much defined term with most experts in the field disagreeing as to the exact definition. Philip Lesly speaks of it as comprising the activities and attitudes that are used to influence, judge, and control the opinion of any individual, group, or groups of persons, in the interest of some other individuals. Professor Harwood L. Childs defines it as a name for those activities and relations with others, which are public and have significance socially. J. Handly Wright and Byron H. Christian refer to it as a program that has the characteristics of careful planning and proper conduct, which in turn will result in public understanding and confidence. Edward L. Bernays lists three items in his definition: First, information which is for public consumption, second, an attempt to modify the attitudes and actions of the public through persuasion, and third, the objective of attempting to integrate the attitudes and actions of the public and of the organization or people who are conducting the public relations program.<sup>4</sup>

Benjamin gives the following definition:

Public relations is more than a narrow set of rules--it is a broad concept. It is the entire body of relationships that go to make up our impressions of an individual, an organization, or an idea. In building good public relations, we must be aware of all the forces, drives, emotions and conflicting and contradicting factors that are part of our social life and civilization.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to defining what public relations means to them, some authors have set forth proposed lists of methods for building and maintaining

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<sup>4</sup>Charles A. Bucher, Administration of School and College Health and Physical Education Programs (St. Louis: The C. V. Mosby Company, 1967), p. 301.

<sup>5</sup>Benjamin Fine, Educational Publicity (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1943), pp. 255-256.

an effective program in high school athletics. Forsythe<sup>6</sup> presented a list of fifteen methods, which is by no means complete, but suggests possibilities to athletic directors who have not used some of them. They simply are listed as possibilities because in some instances they have been reported as successful.

1. Liberal use of the school paper. Have material prepared for its use each issue.
2. Direct communications (cards or letters) to parents and school patrons.
3. Athletic banquets at which parents and athletes are present. It is recommended that they be held early in a sports season so that objectives of the sport may be explained to all. This provides a fine opportunity to meet parents.
4. Issuance of student general school or athletic handbooks.
5. Preparation of seasonal or annual reports to school administration.
6. Use of athletic posters. Often these can be prepared in cooperation with the school's art department.
7. Preparation of motion pictures depicting the scope of the athletic program.
8. Use of brochures and pamphlets that present the athletic program in the school.
9. Preparation of school surveys in which interscholastic athletics are included.
10. Arrangement of exhibits in the school building and in prominent places downtown.
11. School assemblies, which provide excellent opportunities to stress public relations. Each student in school can be an ambassador of good sportsmanship and good school citizenship if properly indoctrinated.
12. Attendance by athletic staff members at civic and luncheon clubs. This is most important and a commonly followed practice. It can be a most valuable one.
13. Paid newspaper advertisements. These may be desirable and necessary to carry contest information.
14. School bulletin boards, used to advantage. Remove out-of-date notices. Keep athletic announcements neat and brief.

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<sup>6</sup>Charles E. Forsythe, The Athletic Director's Handbook (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), pp. 276-277.

15. Signs, streamers, and stickers, used sparingly and with discretion.

Another author who has written in the area of high school public relations programs is Katchmer. His writing differs somewhat from others, such as Forsythe and Grieve, in that he approached the program from the angle of raising money:

Possibly the most important phase in money raising ventures is the public relations maintained by the athletic department in relation to the community. A sound public relations program can virtually assure success to any project initiated. Too often this valuable avenue to the public is over-looked or half heartedly utilized. Any type of a public relations program is better than none at all, but to be truly successful in your innovations, the criteria of success will be established by the channel your public relations program opens up to your public.<sup>7</sup>

Katchmer goes on to say that a good public relations program must begin at the top with the school principal and have the approval of the board of education. He emphasized that mistakes will come with any program but that it was important for the coach or athletic director to use the best possible methods in gaining the support of those in the school and the community.

Katchmer also outlined the basic fundamentals in organizing an effective program of public relations. He covered such items as use of the student body, preparing information for and working with newspapers as well as radio and television stations, the value of movies in stirring public interest, utilization of bulletins, exhibits, and posters, and participation in community affairs of the coaches and their assistants.<sup>8</sup>

Hughes and Williams said that certain principles should be kept in mind when planning athletic publicity and prescribed a list of these with emphasis

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<sup>7</sup>George A. Katchmer, Finance Your Athletic Program (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Burgess Publishing Co., 1953), p. 11.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13.

on publicity for newspapers. They called the list, "Elements of Planned Publicity".<sup>9</sup>

1. Newspapers want news.
2. News articles should be short with all the essential facts, such as names and dates in the first sentence.
3. Stress the human interest element.
4. Emphasize the unusual.
5. Get the story in early. Time is a most important factor in publicity.
6. Avoid boasts and alibis.
7. Get the news into the daily press by:
  - (a) A personal interview with the reporter.
  - (b) A typewritten article submitted to the press for use in the news column or as a feature story.
  - (c) Photographs around which an interesting story can be printed.
  - (d) Statistical information for editorials.
  - (e) Letters to the editor from which news stories may be written.
8. Give every possible courtesy to reporters.
  - (a) Never allow him to "cool his heels" in the outer office.
  - (b) Have a story to tell him each time he calls, with a written summary of the facts.
  - (c) Have the facts prepared and ready for him such as names, home addresses, and weights.
  - (d) Give him as much time as possible.
  - (e) If the reporter is capable, do not go over his head to the city editor with important stories.
  - (f) Do not complain to the city editor about stories written by the reporter. Talk frankly with the reporter himself. You may need his friendly cooperation at some future date.

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<sup>9</sup>Hughes and Williams, op. cit., pp. 238-239.



- (g) If there are several papers in the community do not favor one over the other.
- (h) Reporters should be trusted with confidence. If some news must be withheld to protect the institution or some individual, talk frankly to the reporter and request that the information not be published.
- (i) It is usually bad policy to attempt to have a story suppressed, except in extraordinary circumstances.
- (j) In large cities it is desirable to know the workings of a large newspaper and the functions of the personnel from publisher down to the reporter.

Only a brief review of some of the literature concerning public relations in high school athletics has been presented here. Many other authors have written on the subject at great length, but the investigator felt that the material thus presented was sufficient to be a proper sampling and that any additional remarks would serve no useful purpose.

#### METHOD OF STUDY

For this study, a survey questionnaire was designed to collect as much pertinent information relating to public relations in high school athletics as possible. There were four main divisions or areas of concern, including these: Newspapers, radio, television, and other sources.

The questionnaire was a two page form and included yes and no questions, a few short fill-in answers, and questions that could be answered by simply making a check mark in a blank space. The reason for using these short-answer type questions was to make it possible for each athletic director surveyed to spend a minimum amount of time filling out the questionnaire and also make it possible to collect a large amount of pertinent data.

A list of the class 4-A and 5-A high schools in the state of Kansas was taken from the 1968-69 issue of the "Kansas State High School Activities

Association Membership Directory". The largest sixteen high schools in the state were designated 5-A and ranged in size from an enrollment of 1,617 up to 2,717. There were thirty-two high schools in the 4-A classification with the smallest having an enrollment of 633 and the largest having 1,557. The name of the athletic director at each school, as well as the address of the school, was also provided in the membership directory, and this list was especially helpful in preparing the questionnaires for mailing.

A questionnaire, along with a letter of explanation, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for convenience were sent to each athletic director of the class 4-A and 5-A high schools. A copy of the questionnaire and also the form letter are included in the Appendix.

The results of the questionnaire were as follows:

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Questionnaires mailed   | 48 |
| Questionnaires returned | 43 |
| Percentage of returns   | 90 |

The results were compiled in table form and presented in the body of the report.

## THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

### Newspapers

The first part of the questionnaire deals with the use of newspapers in the community or nearby area and how they are used in an effective public relations program. The questions pertain to local or area newspapers that are published either weekly or daily and does not include the school newspaper, which will be covered in another part of the questionnaire.

#### Question 1.

How many newspapers are there in your community or nearby area?

Table 1

#### NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS

| Number of<br>Newspapers | Number of<br>Schools |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1                       | 11                   |
| 2                       | 20                   |
| 3                       | 7                    |
| 4                       | 1                    |
| 5                       | 2                    |
| 10                      | 1                    |
| 15                      | 1                    |

Table 1 shows the number of newspapers located in each community or nearby area and includes both weekly and daily papers.

From the data collected, it was found that eleven schools had only one newspaper in the community or nearby area. Twenty schools were served by two newspapers, seven were served by three papers, and one school had four papers in its community or nearby area. Two schools reported five newspapers in the community or nearby area. These last two schools were in the Kansas City area and the newspapers would include those in the suburbs and outlying communities.

The reason for one reporting ten and the other reporting fifteen would probably be due to the fact that the two schools had a slightly different concept of how close a newspaper was to the school to still be included in the area.

All schools had at least one newspaper in the community, which was the low reported with the fifteen reported by the school in the Kansas City area being the high. The average number of newspapers in a community was two, which was reported by twenty of the schools.

#### Question 2.

Of this number, how many publicize your athletic events in one way or another?

Table 2

#### NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS PROVIDING COVERAGE

| Number of<br>Newspapers | Number of<br>Schools |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1                       | 13                   |
| 2                       | 23                   |
| 3                       | 5                    |
| 4                       | 1                    |
| 10                      | 1                    |

Table 2 shows the number of newspapers in the community or nearby area that actually gave some type of coverage or publicity to the schools athletic events.

Thirteen of the schools indicated that one newspaper provided coverage of some type. Twenty-three schools reported that two newspapers covered their athletic events while five schools indicated that they received coverage from three newspapers. One school reported coverage of its athletic events by four newspapers while another school, obviously in the Kansas City area, indicated it received coverage of some type from ten different newspapers.

The least number of newspapers that provided coverage of any of the school's athletic events was one while the ten reported by the school in the Kansas City area was the high.

### Question 3.

What type of coverage do these newspapers give your athletic events?

Table 3

#### TYPE OF NEWSPAPER COVERAGE

| Type of Coverage               | Number of Schools |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Game stories                   | 43                |
| Scores only                    | 0                 |
| Feature stories on individuals | 38                |
| Use of pictures                | 38                |
| Individual and team statistics | 34                |
| Seasonal or weekly schedules   | 35                |
| Other                          | 3                 |

Table 3 shows the specific type of coverage that a school's athletic events received by the local or area newspapers. From the data collected it was found that all of the schools had a game story of some type printed in the local newspapers. Length of the story was not ascertained by the questionnaire but at least a few of the details of the games appeared in the game story. None of the schools which replied indicated that local newspapers used their scores or results only, meaning that they all received some type of in-depth coverage. Feature stories on individuals and the use of pictures were the second most popular types of coverage after game stories. Thirty-eight of the forty-three schools which replied indicated that local newspapers used individual feature stories and pictures. Thirty-four of the replies indicated that the local newspaper used individual and team statistics and thirty-five indicated

the use of seasonal or weekly schedules. In the space provided for "Other" replies on the questionnaire, there were three responses. One athletic director indicated that the local newspaper wrote game stories only on league games, while another, in the Kansas City area, replied that some papers gave much more comprehensive coverage than others but did not elaborate. One of the athletic directors said that only occasionally did the local paper write any feature stories on individuals.

Question 4.

Do you provide press passes or free admittance to newspapers or other media that give your athletic events actual coverage?

Table 4

FREE ADMITTANCE TO THE PRESS

| Answer | Number of<br>Schools |
|--------|----------------------|
| Yes    | 43                   |
| No     | 0                    |

Forty-three out of forty-three of the schools that replied to this question indicated that they did provide press passes or free admittance to the newspapers or other media that were actually covering the athletic events.

Question 5.

Do you provide adequate game press accommodations for most athletic events?

Table 5  
PRESS ACCOMMODATIONS

| Answer         | Number of<br>Schools |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Yes            | 43                   |
| No             | 0                    |
| Other comments | 3                    |

Forty-three, or all the athletic directors replying to this question, indicated that their school did provide adequate game press accommodations for most athletic events. Three "Other" comments were also added on this question. One athletic director indicated that his school provided the best accommodations possible for the present condition of the facilities. This indicated to the investigator that the school was either fairly old or that the school was too small to provide any better accommodations for the press. Another comment received said that the school provided a table on the floor in front of the crowd for indoor events and that maybe this would not be considered adequate by other schools. A basic point of misunderstanding was that one should have been more specific and defined exactly what adequate press accommodations included. A third comment by one of the athletic directors was that his school provided the best press accommodations in the state. This opinion is, of course, one that would be debatable.

Question 6.

Does your school ever buy advertising in a local newspaper for the purpose of publicizing athletic events? If yes, how often and how much space?

Table 6a  
NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

| Answer | Number of<br>Schools |
|--------|----------------------|
| Yes    | 13                   |
| No     | 30                   |

Table 6a indicates that only thirteen out of the forty-three schools surveyed bought any type of newspaper advertising for the purpose of publicizing athletic events. Thirty schools indicated that they did not buy advertising.

Table 6b  
FREQUENCY AND AMOUNT OF  
NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

| Number of<br>Schools | How Much<br>Space? | How Often?                     |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3                    | 3 inches           | Once a year                    |
| 1                    | 3 inches           | All games                      |
| 1                    | 3 inches           | Half of the games              |
| 1                    | 10 inches          | Not indicated                  |
| 3                    | $\frac{1}{2}$ page | Twice yearly                   |
| 2                    | $\frac{1}{2}$ page | All home games                 |
| 1                    | Full page          | Twice yearly                   |
| 1                    | Full page          | Start of each sports<br>season |

Table 6b is a breakdown of the amount of space and frequency of newspaper advertising purchased by the thirteen schools which indicated that they bought advertising. Three of the schools surveyed bought a three-inch ad once a year and one school bought a three-inch ad prior to all home games. Another school bought a three-inch ad for half of the games but did not indicate if



this meant for alternating games or exactly what method was used to determine when an ad was to be bought. One school replied that it purchased a ten-inch ad but did not say how often while three schools indicated the purchase of half-page ads twice yearly, presumably at the start of football and basketball season. Two other schools also indicated the purchase of half-page ads for all home games. One school bought a full-page ad twice yearly and another bought a full-page at the start of each sport season.

Although only thirteen out of the forty-three schools surveyed indicated that they bought advertising in the local newspaper for the purpose of publicizing their athletic events, one might assume that a large percentage of the schools not buying advertising probably received free publicity from the newspapers on a donation basis.

#### Question 7.

Do you, as athletic director, provide any type of information concerning athletics to the newspapers or other media? If yes, what type of information do you provide?

Table 7a

#### INFORMATION PROVIDED BY ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

| Answer | Number of<br>Schools |
|--------|----------------------|
| Yes    | 33                   |
| No     | 10                   |

Table 7a indicates that in thirty-three out of the forty-three schools surveyed, the athletic director did provide some type of information to the newspapers and other media. Ten schools reported that they did not provide information.

Table 7b  
TYPE OF INFORMATION PROVIDED  
BY ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

| Type of Information            | Number of<br>Schools |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Periodic news releases         | 20                   |
| Schedule of coming events      | 33                   |
| Team and individual statistics | 19                   |
| Other information:             |                      |
| Pictures                       | 1                    |
| Weekly letter to parents       | 1                    |
| Records and comparisons        | 1                    |

Table 7b gives a breakdown of the type of information provided to the press by the athletic directors in the thirty-three schools that did provide some type of information. Twenty of the schools reporting indicated that they prepared periodic news releases, usually weekly, with information about their school and its teams. All thirty-three schools replied that they sent a schedule of the coming events, either on a weekly, monthly, or yearly basis, to the newspapers and other media in their area. Nineteen schools provided team and individual statistics to the media. Other types of information provided by the schools included team pictures, a weekly letter to parents of the athletes, school or state records set, and comparisons of past team performances.

The fact that thirty-three out of the forty-three schools surveyed provided some type of information to the newspapers and other media in the area, indicates a realization on the part of these schools of the value of good public relations.

#### Question 8.

Does your school publish any type of sports brochures or pamphlets for use by the press and others? If yes, for which sports do you publish these?

Table 8a  
SPORTS BROCHURES

| Answer | Number of<br>Schools |
|--------|----------------------|
| Yes    | 15                   |
| No     | 28                   |

Table 8a indicates the number of schools that publish sports brochures or pamphlets for use by the press and others. Only fifteen out of forty-three schools in the survey publish these, as opposed to twenty-eight that do not.

Table 8b  
TYPES OF SPORTS BROCHURES

| Types of brochure                     | Number of<br>Schools |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Football                              | 10                   |
| Basketball                            | 10                   |
| Track                                 | 2                    |
| Gymnastics                            | 1                    |
| Golf                                  | 1                    |
| Cross Country                         | 1                    |
| Wrestling                             | 1                    |
| One each for fall, winter, and spring | 3                    |
| All sports                            | 3                    |

Table 8b is a breakdown of the brochures published by the schools according to the sport. Ten schools reported that they published a football brochure, and the same number indicated that they published a brochure for basketball. Two of the schools surveyed published a track brochure, and gymnastics, golf, cross country, and wrestling brochures were published by one school each. Three schools indicated that they published three brochures a year and grouped the sports according to the season. In other words, they published one bro-

chure in the fall, one in the winter, and one in the spring. Three other schools surveyed said that they published individual brochures for all sports.

The main reason suggested for more of the schools not publishing brochures or pamphlets for use by the press and others was the high cost of printing.

#### Question 9.

How would you rate the coverage given by local newspapers to athletic events at your particular school?

Table 9

#### RATING OF NEWSPAPER COVERAGE

| Rating    | Number of<br>Schools |
|-----------|----------------------|
| Excellent | 11                   |
| Good      | 22                   |
| Fair      | 10                   |
| Poor      | 0                    |

Table 9 shows the rating of the coverage of athletic events by the newspapers in the area as judged by the athletic directors surveyed. Eleven of the schools reported the coverage as excellent, twenty-two said it was good, and ten rated the coverage as fair. None of the athletic directors surveyed gave a poor rating to newspaper coverage of athletic events at their school. Results of this table would indicate that most of the athletic directors were fairly well pleased with the coverage their school's athletic events received, but that there is always means for improvement.

## Question 10.

Do you feel that you and the coaches in your school get along with and have a good working relationship with most of the newspaper people and those from other media that cover your athletic events?

Table 10

## WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESS

| Answer | Number of<br>Schools |
|--------|----------------------|
| Yes    | 43                   |
| No     | 0                    |

Table 10 indicates that the athletic directors, all forty-three of them in the survey, had a good working relationship with most of the newspaper people and those from other media that covered their athletic events. The purpose of this question was to ascertain if there might be a personality conflict between sportswriters and athletic directors who rated the coverage as poor or fair in question nine. This theory proved to be false in this case.

Radio

This part of the questionnaire deals with the public relations aspects of local or area radio as a means of publicizing a school's athletic program. Such topics as coverage and broadcast fees are included.

## Question 1.

How many radio stations are there in your community or local area?

Table 11  
NUMBER OF RADIO STATIONS

| Number of<br>Radio Stations | Number of<br>Schools |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1                           | 12                   |
| 2                           | 9                    |
| 3                           | 3                    |
| 4                           | 3                    |
| 5                           | 5                    |
| 6                           | 3                    |
| 8                           | 1                    |
| 9                           | 1                    |
| 10                          | 3                    |
| 12                          | 1                    |
| 15                          | 1                    |
| 20                          | 1                    |

Table 11 shows the number of radio stations located in the community or local area that might possibly provide some type of coverage for a school's athletic events. Twelve of the schools reported only one radio station in its community or area and nine schools reported two radio stations. The highest number of stations reported in the survey was twenty by a school in the Kansas City area.

Question 2.

How many radio stations in your community or local area give coverage of some type to your athletic events?

Table 12  
NUMBER OF RADIO STATIONS PROVIDING COVERAGE

| Number of<br>Radio Stations | Number of<br>Schools |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1                           | 17                   |
| 2                           | 11                   |
| 3                           | 5                    |
| 4                           | 1                    |
| 5                           | 2                    |
| 6                           | 3                    |
| 9                           | 1                    |
| 15                          | 1                    |
| None                        | 2                    |

Table 12 shows the number of radio stations in the community or local area providing actual coverage of the school's athletic events. Seventeen of the schools surveyed indicated that one radio station provided some type of coverage and eleven of the schools reported that their schools received coverage from two stations. The highest number of radio stations providing coverage to a school was fifteen reported by one school. Two schools replied that the radio stations in their communities or local areas provided no coverage of any kind to the school's athletic events.

Question 3.

What type of coverage do these stations give your athletic events?

Table 13  
TYPE OF RADIO COVERAGE

| Type of Coverage                                                                         | Number of Schools |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Game Broadcasts                                                                          | 36                |
| Use of scores or results                                                                 | 37                |
| Schedule of future events                                                                | 28                |
| Interviews with coaches or players                                                       | 27                |
| Regularly scheduled coaches shows                                                        | 12                |
| Other:                                                                                   |                   |
| Pre-season interview with the athletic director concerning ticket sales, schedules, etc. | 2                 |
| None                                                                                     | 2                 |

Table 13 shows the specific type of coverage provided by the local or area radio stations. Game broadcasts were a common type of coverage, with thirty-six schools indicating that stations broadcast at least part of their games during the season. The most frequent type of coverage was the use of scores or results with thirty-seven schools indicating that the radio stations announced these. Twenty-eight schools reported that stations in their community or area announced the schedule of future events and twenty-seven schools indicated that local stations held occasional interviews with coaches or players. Twelve schools reported that their coaches had regular shows, usually weekly, during the season.

In the space provided for "Other" comments, two athletic directors indicated that the radio stations in their communities usually carried an interview with them describing the sale of season tickets, future schedules, and other pertinent information prior to the start of each sport season.

The same two schools which reported no coverage from the local or area radio stations in the preceding question also answered "None" on this question.



## Question 4.

Does your school ever buy time on local radio stations for the purpose of publicizing athletic events? If yes, how often and how much time is bought?

Table 14a

## RADIO ADVERTISING

| Answer | Number of<br>Schools |
|--------|----------------------|
| Yes    | 3                    |
| No     | 40                   |

Table 14a indicates that only three out of the forty-three schools in the survey bought any type of radio advertising for the purpose of publicizing athletic events. Forty schools indicated that they did not buy advertising.

Table 14b

FREQUENCY AND AMOUNT OF  
RADIO ADVERTISING

| Number of<br>Schools | How much<br>time?        | How often?                     |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1                    | One-minute spots         | Twice yearly                   |
| 1                    | Five one-minute<br>spots | Half of all<br>sporting events |
| 1                    | Four one-minute<br>spots | The day of each<br>game        |

Table 14b is a breakdown of the frequency and amount of time of radio advertising purchased by the three schools that indicated that they did buy advertising. One school bought one-minute spots twice yearly but did not indicate how many spots it bought at a time. Another school reported it purchased five one-minute spots for half of all the sporting events but did

not tell how this was done. The third school reported that it bought four one-minute spots on the day of each game.

One of the schools which reported that it did not buy advertising said that it felt this was a very good method of publicizing athletic events and that plans to do this in the future were being made.

#### Question 5.

If local or area radio stations do live broadcasts of games held at your school, do you charge a broadcast fee? If yes, how much? If no, has your school ever charged a fee in the past? How much?

Table 15

#### BROADCAST FEES

| Do you<br>charge a fee? | Number of<br>Schools | How<br>Much? | Have you ever<br>charged a fee? | Number of<br>Schools | How<br>Much? |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Yes                     | 1                    | \$100        | Yes                             | 1                    | \$100        |
| No                      | 42                   | ----         | No                              | 42                   | ----         |

Table 15 shows both the schools that now charge a broadcast fee and those that charged a fee at one time for the right to broadcast games from the school. Only one school out of the forty-three surveyed now charges a fee and only one school did at one time charge a fee but no longer follows this practice. The fee in both cases was \$100 per broadcast and both of the schools were in the Kansas City area. One school reported that it did not presently charge a fee but would like to.

After reading books on the matter and talking with authorities in the radio field, two main reasons for charging a broadcast fee became apparent. The first one was that the schools felt that radio broadcasts hurt, to some extent, the attendance at both home and away games. This topic will be

covered more fully in question six. The second reason was that the schools felt they had a right to charge a fee because the radio stations were charging sponsors advertising fees and actually using the school's athletic events for commercial purposes. The question of whether or not to charge a broadcast fee is not presently as controversial in the state of Kansas as it once was.

Question 6.

Do you feel that live game broadcasts hurt attendance at your athletic events?

Table 16

AFFECTS OF RADIO BROADCASTS ON ATTENDANCE

| Answer    | Number of<br>Schools |
|-----------|----------------------|
| Yes       | 14                   |
| No        | 27                   |
| Undecided | 2                    |

Table 16 shows the effects of live game broadcasts on attendance at athletic events. Fourteen of the athletic directors surveyed indicated that they felt broadcasts hurt attendance at their athletic events. Twenty-seven indicated that they felt that broadcasts did not hurt attendance and two of the athletic directors surveyed were undecided on the question.

Several of the athletic directors wrote additional comments on this question. One of them said that he felt that game broadcasts helped stimulate interest in the school's athletic program. Two others expressed the opinion that broadcasts hurt attendance, especially when their teams were playing out of town. Three athletic directors indicated that the broadcasts hurt attendance during bad weather.

## Question 7.

Does your school have any type of an agreement with local radio stations to trade free advertising of athletic events for the right to broadcast games? If other agreements exist, please explain.

Table 17

## BROADCASTING AGREEMENTS

| Answer           | Number of<br>Schools |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Yes              | 4                    |
| No               | 39                   |
| Other agreements | 0                    |

Table 17 indicates that only four out of the forty-three schools surveyed had an agreement with local radio stations to trade free advertising of athletic events for the right to broadcast games. None of the schools reported any other types of agreements. Of the four schools that had agreements, three were written and one was a mutual agreement but not written. One of the schools that had no agreement of any kind expressed the opinion that it felt this type of agreement could be a problem but did not elaborate. Another of the schools with no agreement said that if the radio station would provide sufficient notice prior to broadcasting the game, the school would aid the station in lining up advertisers. This same school, however, was critical of the radio stations for frequently coming into the school to broadcast a game with very little advanced notice and expecting the school to have space and facilities readily available.

## Question 8.

How would you rate the coverage given to your athletic events by local radio stations?

Table 18  
RATING OF RADIO COVERAGE

| Rating    | Number of<br>Schools |
|-----------|----------------------|
| Excellent | 12                   |
| Good      | 21                   |
| Fair      | 7                    |
| Poor      | 3                    |

Table 18 shows the rating of the coverage of athletic events by the radio stations in the area as judged by the athletic directors surveyed. Twelve out of the forty-three schools in the survey rated the coverage as excellent, twenty-one said it was good, while seven indicated it was fair, and three rated the coverage as poor. Results shown on this table indicated that at least thirty-three of the forty-three athletic directors in the survey were fairly happy with the coverage given by local or area radio stations while ten were dissatisfied with the coverage. The majority of those that rated the coverage as fair or poor were located in large metropolitan areas, such as Kansas City or Wichita, where the costs of broadcast time are higher than in less populated areas. There are also numerous schools in the Kansas City and Wichita areas and the problem of providing adequate coverage to all of them would be impossible to solve.

### Television

This part of the questionnaire deals with television and the part it plays in a school's athletic public relations program. This section is considerably shorter than the others because television does not yet play as important role in high schools athletics as do newspapers and radio. It is becoming more and more important all the time, however.

## Question 1.

How many television stations are there in your community or local area?

Table 19

## NUMBER OF TELEVISION STATIONS

| Number of<br>Television Stations | Number of<br>Schools |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1                                | 4                    |
| 2                                | 3                    |
| 3                                | 24                   |
| 4                                | 1                    |
| 5                                | 1                    |
| None                             | 10                   |

Table 19 shows the number of television stations located in the community or local area that might possibly provide some type of coverage for a school's athletic events. Four of the schools in the survey indicated only one television station in the community and three schools reported two stations. Three stations were the most commonly reported with twenty-four schools indicating this number. One school each reported four stations and one school reported five stations in the community with ten of the schools having no stations nearby.

## Question 2.

How many of these television stations give your athletic program some type of coverage?

Table 20

## NUMBER OF TELEVISION STATIONS PROVIDING COVERAGE

| Number of<br>Television Stations | Number of<br>Schools |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1                                | 5                    |
| 2                                | 4                    |
| 3                                | 19                   |
| None                             | 15                   |

Table 20 shows the number of television stations in the community or local area providing actual coverage of some type to a school's athletic events. Five of the schools indicated that they received coverage from one station and four schools reported coverage from two stations. The largest number of schools in one group was nineteen, which indicated that they received coverage from three different stations. It was somewhat of a surprise when fifteen schools reported no coverage of any type. It must be realized that the high cost of television production and the scarcity of time are two important factors that explain why high school athletics do not get more coverage than they do.

### Question 3.

What type of coverage do these television stations give your athletic program?

Table 21

#### TYPE OF TELEVISION COVERAGE

| Type of Coverage                      | Number of Schools |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Use of scores or results              | 31                |
| Interviews with coaches or players    | 13                |
| Schedule of future events             | 14                |
| Video tape or film highlights of game | 12                |
| Other                                 | 4                 |
| None                                  | 12                |

Table 21 shows the specific type of coverage provided by the local or area television stations. The most common type of coverage reported by the forty-three schools was the use of scores or results. This would be the minimum type of coverage provided by the television stations, requiring less time than other methods. Thirteen of the schools reported that the local stations carried live or filmed interviews with coaches or players. Fourteen schools indicated that the television stations carried schedules of future games or

matches and twelve reported that video tape or film highlights of games were used by the stations. In the space for "Other" comments, four responses were noted. Two schools indicated that local or area television stations periodically carried special shows, such as those honoring championship teams or outstanding performances by individuals. One school said that the stations in the area usually carried a small story on a sports show preceding an important game, relating records of the involved teams or other pertinent data. A fourth school said that stations in the area used game films provided that the school was responsible for taking and processing them. Twelve of the schools reported no coverage by the local or area television stations.

#### Other Sources

This final section of the questionnaire is devoted to the other sources of public relations available to the high school athletic director. It includes such topics as booster and civic clubs and special campaigns used to promote and draw attention to a school's athletic program.

#### Question 1.

What type of organizations within the community, if any, support your school's athletic program?

Table 22

#### COMMUNITY BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS

| Types of<br>Organizations    | Number of<br>Schools |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Quarterback or booster clubs | 26                   |
| Civic or fraternal groups    | 7                    |
| Others                       | 4                    |
| None                         | 11                   |



Table 22 gives a breakdown of the various types of community booster organizations which give either financial or moral support to a school's athletic program. Quarterback or booster clubs were the most common type with twenty-six schools reporting this method. Seven of the schools received backing from various civic or fraternal groups in the community. Four schools replied in the space for "Other" comments. One of the schools indicated that a downtown "Ambassadors Club," composed of local merchants, donated money for time on a local radio station so that the games could be broadcast. One school had its own boosters organization composed of parents and interested patrons that, for the most part, provided moral support. Another school indicated it had a group of honorary directors but did not say what their function was, while a fourth group, in a Catholic high school, sponsored an annual awards banquet. Eleven athletic directors replied that there were no such organizations connected with their schools.

#### Question 2.

What type of activities do these booster organizations in the community undertake?

Table 23

#### ACTIVITIES OF COMMUNITY BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS

| Types of<br>Activities    | Number of<br>Schools |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Ticket sales              | 11                   |
| Financial support         | 16                   |
| Sponsor athletic banquets | 10                   |
| Others                    | 3                    |
| None                      | 11                   |

Table 23 shows the various types of activities undertaken by the booster, civic, and fraternal organizations in the community. Eleven of these groups aided the school in preseason ticket sales and included groups of parents as well as interested businessmen. Sixteen schools reported receiving financial support of some type from these booster organizations. This financial support was mainly in the form of money for extra athletic equipment, game films, and athletic banquets. Ten of the schools reported that these booster organizations sponsored annual athletic banquets while three other schools indicated slightly different activities. Two schools said that the organizations in their community helped build enthusiasm and aided the schools in publicizing their athletic events. One of the booster organizations sponsored and financed trips for the team members to see college and professional games in the area. Eleven schools reported that there were no organizations of this type in the community.

Question 3.

What other methods of publicizing athletic events in your community or school are used?

Table 24

## OTHER METHODS OF ATHLETIC PUBLICITY

| Other methods<br>of publicity                            | Number of<br>Schools |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Large poster schedules                                   | 36                   |
| Wallet-size schedules                                    | 42                   |
| Bulletin boards, signs, handbills, leaflets              | 13                   |
| Parents night                                            | 24                   |
| Windshield or bumper stickers                            | 9                    |
| Assembly or recognition banquets                         | 32                   |
| Store window displays                                    | 13                   |
| Pep clubs                                                | 37                   |
| School newspaper                                         | 42                   |
| Coaching clinics                                         | 9                    |
| Talks by coaches to community or school<br>organizations | 30                   |
| Game movies                                              | 26                   |
| School yearbooks                                         | 38                   |
| Blotters, seals, car tags                                | 13                   |
| Seasonal or annual reports to school<br>administration   | 18                   |
| Other                                                    | 6                    |

Table 24 presents a list of the many varied methods used by the schools in the survey to gain better publicity and also to promote better public relations within the school and the community. Thirty-six of the schools surveyed said that they had large poster-type schedules printed for each sport and distributed them to merchants throughout the community. Another type of printed schedule used frequently by the schools was a small, wallet-size card that forty-two of the schools distributed among its patrons. Thirteen schools reported that they utilized a wide variety of bulletin boards, signs, leaflets, and handbills which were effective. These were made or drawn by the students in the school for very little cost or printed commercially, depending on the money available for such a project. A school in the Kansas City area, which was especially resourceful, assigned its commercial art classes the project of

making posters promoting the various sports and distributed them throughout the nearby villages and shopping centers. This same school also made large sign boards on which season schedules were printed and placed them on some of the busier intersections in the area.

Twenty-four schools reported that they held a "Parents Night" at least once a year. These gatherings usually consisted of explanations of practice and game procedures by the coaches to the parents and included time for questions. In some schools it was customary to go through an actual practice session so that the parents could see exactly how the various skills were developed. This also gave parents a chance to study the coach and his teaching methods. These functions might be quite helpful in avoiding any misunderstandings that could arise between the parents and a coach.

The use of windshield or bumper stickers was reported by only nine of the schools. These usually contain the name of the school and its mascot and are usually displayed on automobiles but may also be used in other places. The sale of these is ordinarily handled through some type of school pep club or other school organization and are used mainly to promote school pride among the students.

Thirty-two schools out of the forty-three surveyed reported that they held some type of an assembly or recognition banquet at least once a year. These could either be a school assembly honoring a championship team or a banquet at the end of the year where all the participants in a varsity sports program were introduced and awarded letters or other special recognition.

Thirteen schools reported cooperation from community or area merchants in making window displays to promote a sport. These displays might consist of

pictures of the team or individuals but could also include the display of a uniform, along with other necessary equipment which would help the public better understand the sport.

Pep clubs were reported by thirty-seven of the schools in the survey. The function of these clubs are many and varied and may consist of both boys and girls or, as in some schools, may be limited to one sex or the other. Pep clubs could perform such functions as distributing schedules, selling tickets, or leading cheers as a group at athletic contests, and, when used properly, could be a definite asset to any high school athletic program.

Forty-two of the forty-three schools reported they had a student newspaper, which can be an effective means of building interest and enthusiasm in an athletic program within the school. The school newspaper can perform the same function as a paper printed in the community by using game stories, schedules of future events, or feature stories on individuals, and has the advantage of being able to go into greater depth than a commercial paper.

Ten of the schools surveyed reported they held coaching clinics from time to time. These can be designed to help grade school and junior high athletes gain and develop better skills, or they can be used to promote better understanding between coaches at the senior high and junior high level in the same school system. One such clinic, held by a school in the Kansas City area, invites successful coaches from all over the United States to speak on different phases of the game. The clinic is open to high school and junior high coaches from Kansas and surrounding states.

Thirty of the athletic directors reported that the coaches in their schools gave talks to community or school groups periodically. This can be an effective means of public relations, in that it can help promote better

understanding between the coaching staff and the public and increase interest in the entire athletic program.

Game movies were used by twenty-six of the schools in the survey to help promote better public relations. These can be used in conjunction with a talk given by the coach to a school or community organization to illustrate graphically what is being done by the coach and the team in a particular sport. They are also effective in improving team performance and in eliminating mistakes.

Thirty-eight of the athletic directors in the survey reported that their school published an annual yearbook. Authorities agree that these are effective in promoting the athletic program among the students, through the use of pictures and short resumes of individual games and the season.

Such items as blotters, seals, and car tags were reported by thirteen of the schools. These are usually used to promote pride in the school among the students but are also sold within the community to various individuals interested in the school's athletic program.

Eighteen of the athletic directors surveyed reported that they were required to make seasonal or annual reports to the school administration or the school board. One of the purposes of this report is to give a brief summary of the preceding season, but more important, it is used to give a breakdown of the money spent on a particular sport and also the needs for the future. These reports are especially important in promoting better understanding between the coach or athletic director and the administration.

Six other ideas were proposed by the athletic directors surveyed in addition to those already mentioned. One school had large calendars printed which included the schedules of all the sports and distributed them to businessmen in the community and also displayed one in each classroom in the school.

Another school prepared a two-page list of ideas, suggestions, and proposals which it used to promote its athletic program in the school and community. One such idea was the establishment of a publicity committee which was responsible for writing articles concerning future games and opponents and distributing them to area newspapers. Another effective device was a letter, written by the coaches and athletic director, which was sent to the parents inviting them to all athletic contests along with schedules of sporting events. The school also sponsored a "Father's Night" during basketball season to honor the fathers of all members of the varsity and reserve teams. An effective method used within the school was announcements over the loud speaker system in the cafeteria asking the students for support. These announcements were made by the cheerleaders and lettermen on the team. One other idea used by this school was a special night for each of the junior high schools within the attendance area of this particular senior high. The junior high school students were admitted free on their special night and were responsible for presenting the halftime show. This was a good way of improving public relations between two schools.

Having concluded the list of questions, the investigator then asked for any additional comments or observations from the athletic directors that they felt might make the survey more comprehensive or complete. None of the athletic directors made any comments pertinent to the survey.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Several authors have written books on the subject of public relations in high school and college athletics, defining many terms and describing certain philosophies in detail. It was found, however, that no studies had been done on the public relations practices in the two largest classes of high schools, class 4-A and 5-A, in the state of Kansas.

There were forty-eight questionnaires mailed out, thirty-two in class 4-A and sixteen in class 5-A, and results were received from forty-three of the schools. The four main headings or parts of the questionnaire included newspapers, radio, television, and other sources.

The average number of newspapers in the area or community where these schools were located was two, reported by twenty schools, and the average number of papers covering the athletic events at the school was also two, reported by twenty-three schools.

Game stories were the most frequent type of coverage reported with all forty-three schools in the survey indicating that their area papers carried these. The next two most frequent types of coverage were feature stories and pictures, reported by thirty-eight schools each, while individual and team statistics were reported by thirty-four schools and seasonal or weekly schedules were reported by thirty-five schools.

All forty-three of the schools in the survey provided free admittance or press passes to members of the press, radio, or television who were actually covering their athletic events. All the schools also indicated that some type of press accommodations were provided for people from the newspapers and other media.



Thirteen of the schools surveyed made use of paid advertising in the local or area papers. Amount of space bought ranged from three-inch ads to a full page and the frequency ranged from once a year to every game or athletic contest.

Thirty-three athletic directors surveyed provided some type of information for use by the newspapers or other media. Schedules of coming events were the most commonly provided type of information, reported by thirty-three schools, while periodic news releases were provided by twenty athletic directors and team and individual statistics were provided by nineteen athletic directors.

Fifteen schools in the survey published some type of sports brochures, with brochures for football and basketball reported by ten schools each, being the most common.

Eleven schools in the survey rated the coverage by newspapers as excellent, while twenty-two rated it as good, and ten as fair. None of the schools rated the coverage as poor. This indicated that the schools were generally pleased with the coverage from the local or area papers.

All forty-three schools surveyed either had a radio station in their community or area. The low, reported by eleven schools, was one station and the high was twenty stations, reported by one school. Seventeen schools received coverage from at least one station while only two schools reported no coverage of any kind. Use of scores or results was the most frequent type of coverage, reported by thirty-seven schools. Thirty-six schools indicated game broadcasts either on a part-time or regular basis.

Only three schools in the survey bought any radio advertising for the purpose of publicizing athletic events.

Fourteen athletic directors felt that live game broadcasts hurt attendance at both home and road athletic events. Twenty-seven felt broadcasts did not hurt attendance and two were undecided.

Four schools surveyed either had written or oral agreements with local or area radio stations to trade free advertising of athletic events for the right to broadcast games.

Twelve schools rated the radio coverage as excellent, twenty-one said it was good, seven rated it fair, and only three said it was poor. This indicated that most of the schools were generally pleased with the coverage they received.

The most frequently reported number of television stations in a community or area was three, reported by twenty-four schools. Nineteen schools said they received coverage from three stations. Coverage in the form of scores or results was most frequently reported by thirty-one schools, while twelve schools reported no coverage at all.

Quarterback or booster clubs were reported by twenty-six schools on the section of the questionnaire concerning other sources of public relations. Sixteen of these organizations provided financial support to the school's athletic program while eleven sold season tickets and ten sponsored athletic banquets.

Other commonly reported methods of publicity and public relations were the use of wallet-size schedules, school newspapers, school yearbooks, large poster schedules, pep clubs, and assembly or recognition banquets.

Taking the results of all the questionnaires into consideration, the assumption was made that the majority of the schools surveyed was fairly well-pleased with the type of coverage received from the various media. Many of the

schools could possibly have received better coverage had a better job been done of selling the school's athletic program to the public. Public relations must be a two-way process in order to be effective. There is always need for improvement by both the schools and the media which serve them.

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## A P P E N D I X

## FORM LETTER MAILED TO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

Route 3  
Manhattan, Kansas 66502  
March 4, 1969

To: Athletic Directors

Dear Sir:

In cooperation with the physical education department at Kansas State University and as a project for my masters report in physical education, I am conducting a survey of the public relations practices in athletics utilized in the class 4-A and 5-A high schools of Kansas.

My purpose in conducting this survey is to determine the ways coaches and athletic directors in the larger Kansas high schools actually publicize their athletic events, some of the various techniques used in drawing attention to the various varsity sports, and their evaluations, criticisms, and suggestions as to how a high school coach could better make use of the public relations devices available to him in the community.

I feel that the results gained from this survey could be very interesting and most helpful to young coaches just entering the field and also to those who have been out of college for a number of years.

My advisors, Mr. T. M. Evans and Mr. Ray Wauthier, have both approved the questionnaire and I am now asking for your cooperation by taking just a few minutes from your busy schedule to complete it and return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope I have enclosed. Your personal reply will be kept confidential and only group statistics and information will be used and published.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Mullen

## SURVEY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES

## IN THE CLASS 4-A and 5-A HIGH SCHOOLS OF KANSAS

Name of school \_\_\_\_\_  
 Class: 4-A 5-A (circle one)

## NEWSPAPERS

1. How many newspapers are there in your community or nearby area? \_\_\_\_
2. Of this number, how many publicize your athletic events in one way or another? \_\_\_\_
3. What type of coverage do these newspapers give your athletic events?  
 Game stories \_\_\_\_ Feature stories on individuals \_\_\_\_  
 Scores only \_\_\_\_ Use of pictures \_\_\_\_  
 Individual and team statistics \_\_\_\_ Seasonal or weekly schedules \_\_\_\_  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you provide press passes or free admittance to newspapers or other media that give your athletic events actual coverage? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
 If answer is no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you provide adequate game press accommodations for most athletic events? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_
6. Does your school ever buy advertising in a local newspaper for the purpose of publicizing athletic events? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
 If answer is yes, how often and how much space? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you, as athletic director, provide any type of information concerning athletics to the newspapers or other media? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
 If yes, check the type of information supplied:  
 Periodic news releases \_\_\_\_ Schedule of coming events \_\_\_\_  
 Team and individual statistics \_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Does your school publish any type of sports brochures or pamphlets for use by the press and others? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ If answer is yes, for which sports do you publish these: \_\_\_\_\_
9. How would you rate the coverage given by local newspapers to athletic events at your particular school? Excellent \_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_  
 Poor \_\_\_\_
10. Do you feel that you and the coaches in your school get along with and have a good working relationship with most of the newspaper people and those from other media that cover your athletic events? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
 If no, how do you feel the relationship could be improved? \_\_\_\_\_

## RADIO

1. How many radio stations are there in your community or local area? \_\_\_\_
2. How many give coverage of some type to your athletic events? \_\_\_\_

3. What type of coverage do these stations give your athletic events?  
 Game broadcasts \_\_\_\_\_ Use of scores or results \_\_\_\_\_  
 Schedule of future events \_\_\_\_\_ Interviews with coaches or players \_\_\_\_\_  
 Regularly scheduled coaches shows \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does your school ever buy time on local radio stations for the purpose of publicizing athletic events? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, how often and how much time is bought? \_\_\_\_\_
5. If local or area radio stations do live broadcasts of games held at your school, do you charge a broadcast fee? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_ If no, has your school ever charged a fee in the past? \_\_\_\_\_ How much? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you feel that live game broadcasts hurt attendance at your athletic events? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
7. Does your school have any type of an agreement with local radio stations to trade free advertising of athletic events for the right to broadcast games? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If other agreements exist, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
8. How would you rate the coverage given to your athletic events by local radio stations? Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_

#### TELEVISION

1. How many television stations are there in your community or local area? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many of these give your athletic program some type of coverage? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What type of coverage do these television stations give your athletic program? Use of scores or results \_\_\_\_\_ Interviews of coaches or players \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule of future events \_\_\_\_\_ Video tape or film highlights of games \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### OTHER SOURCES

1. What type of organizations within the community, if any, support your school's athletic program? Quarterback or booster clubs \_\_\_\_\_ Civic or fraternal groups \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
2. What type of activities do these organizations undertake? Ticket sales \_\_\_\_\_ Financial support \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Check the other methods of publicizing athletic events in your school or community which are used?  
 Large poster schedules \_\_\_\_\_ Wallet-size schedules \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bulletin boards, signs, handbills, leaflets \_\_\_\_\_ Parents night \_\_\_\_\_  
 Windshield or bumper stickers \_\_\_\_\_ Assembly or recognition banquets \_\_\_\_\_  
 Store window displays \_\_\_\_\_ Pep clubs \_\_\_\_\_ School newspapers \_\_\_\_\_  
 Clinics \_\_\_\_\_ Talks by coaches to community or school organizations \_\_\_\_\_  
 Game movies \_\_\_\_\_ School yearbooks \_\_\_\_\_ Blotters, seals, car tags \_\_\_\_\_  
 Seasonal or annual reports to the school administration \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_



PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR VARSITY ATHLETICS IN THE  
CLASS 4-A AND 5-A HIGH SCHOOLS  
IN THE STATE OF KANSAS

by

ROBERT LYNN MULLEN

B. S., Kansas State University, 1968

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Physical Education

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An awareness of public relations and what a good program can do to create interest in high school athletics is becoming more and more important to today's coaches and athletic directors. No athletic program is any better than the job of selling which has been done by those responsible for its operation.

The purpose of this report was to determine the extent of public relations programs in the class 4-A and 5-A high schools in the state of Kansas. Class 5-A schools are the sixteen largest high schools in the state by enrollment and class 4-A are the next thirty-two largest high schools.

A questionnaire was designed with short answer and check-the-blank type questions and was divided into four main parts: newspapers, radio, television, and other sources. These questionnaires were then mailed to athletic directors of the forty-eight schools designated class 4-A and 5-A. Forty-three questionnaires were returned within a time span of one month.

The average number of newspapers in the community was two, reported by twenty schools, and the average number of papers providing coverage to the high school's athletic events was also two, reported by twenty-three schools.

All forty-three schools reported that the local newspapers used game stories on most sports. Thirty-eight schools indicated that the local papers used feature stories and game pictures. Individual and team statistics were reported by thirty-four schools.

Free admittance to members of the working press, radio, and television was reported by all the schools surveyed as well as press accommodations for these people.

Thirteen of the schools in the survey made use of paid advertising in the local or area papers. Amount of space purchased ranged from three-inch ads to a full page and varied from as often as once a year to every game.

Thirty-three athletic directors indicated that they provided information to newspapers and other media. All the athletic directors provided schedules of future events. Twenty provided periodic news releases and nineteen provided team and individual statistics. Fifteen schools published sports brochures with football and basketball, reported by nine schools, being the most common.

Eleven athletic directors rated newspaper coverage as excellent, twenty-two rated it as good, and ten as fair.

All forty-three schools surveyed had at least one radio station in the community or nearby area and received coverage from this station. Use of scores or results, reported by thirty-seven schools, was the most common type of coverage. Thirty-six schools indicated game broadcasts by local or area stations.

Only three schools in the survey bought radio advertising for the purpose of publicizing athletic events. Four schools had agreements with radio stations to trade advertising of athletic events for the right to broadcast games.

One school in the survey charged a broadcast fee to radio stations for the right to broadcast games. One school indicated it had ceased to follow this practice.

Fourteen athletic directors felt that live game broadcasts hurt attendance at both home and road athletic events.

Twelve schools rated radio coverage as excellent, twenty-one rated it good, seven indicated it was fair, and three rated it as poor.

The most frequently reported number of television stations in a community or area was three, reported by twenty-four schools. Nineteen schools reported coverage from three stations. Coverage in the form of scores or results was most frequently reported, by thirty-one schools, while twelve schools indicated no coverage at all.

Twenty-six schools reported the existence of quarterback or booster clubs in the community. Sixteen of these organizations provided financial support, eleven sold season tickets, and ten sponsored athletic banquets.

Other commonly reported methods of publicity and public relations were the use of wallet-size schedules, school newspapers, yearbooks, poster schedules, pep clubs, and assembly or recognition banquets.