



Kentucky High School Athletic Association

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COMMISSIONER DEVRIES ANNOUNCES KHSAA STAFF REORGANIZATION

LEXINGTON – Commissioner Brigid DeVries announced several changes in staffing at the KHSAA offices today, and outlined a framework for other changes that may be forthcoming. “Probably the most notable change is the designation of a Compliance Coordinator,” DeVries said. “We are at a point in our history where our membership and other constituent groups are supportive of an increased emphasis on compliance by our member school coaches and representatives. The KHSAA has long been a leader within National Federation of State High School Association membership, and this innovative compliance approach will be another chance to focus on a very important initiative for Kentucky high schools.”

DeVries announced that Assistant Commissioner Darren Bilberry, who has been with the staff since February, 2007, has been designated as the Compliance Coordinator for the office. Bilberry has extensive compliance experience. Prior to being hired by the Association, he had over 11 years of experience in this area at the University of Kentucky, Southern Illinois University and Auburn University.

“Rules Compliance is not just about investigations and transfers,” DeVries said. “It is about developing an attitude of compliance and institutional control that is vital for the KHSAA membership.” Bilberry will continue with other sports assignments, but will be the primary contact person for compliance and inquiries.

DeVries announced the promotion of Butch Cope, who has been the KHSAA Director of Promotions and Media Relations, to the Assistant Commissioner position vacated by the retirement of veteran Assistant Commissioner Larry Boucher. Cope, who will begin his new position on August 11, will continue his work as the primary contact for KHSAA Corporate Sponsors and several special programs in addition to taking on day to day responsibilities in Golf, Volleyball and Tennis.

“Mr. Cope has proven his ability not only to manage events, but to manage the professional relationships within the Association, and will be a great contributor as an Assistant Commissioner,” DeVries said. “He has done a wonderful job in his current position, but is certainly deserving of an opportunity to expand his role within the Association and continue contributing to our success.”

Cope joined the Association in 1995 as Sports Information Director and was promoted to Director of Promotions and Media Relations in 2002. He was recently selected to serve a four year term on the National Federation of State High School Associations Citizenship Committee.

A 1986 graduate of Marshall County High School, Cope holds a Bachelor’s Degree of Business Administration in Marketing (1990) and a Master’s Degree in Sports Management (1995), both from the University of Kentucky.

“I’m so appreciative of the opportunity to further my career with the KHSAA,” Cope said. “The last 13 years have been most rewarding and I look forward to working with individual sports as well as continuing efforts with our great special programs.”

The Association will be posting an announcement for a Sports Information Director in the near future to complete the staff.

In addition, DeVries announced that Michael Barren, former Athletic Director at Paul Dunbar High School, has been named to the newest Assistant Commissioner position authorized by the Board of Control. Barren, who recently retired after 28 years with the Fayette County Public Schools, will begin his duties in early September.

"I am sure Mike would have been perfectly content to retire following the outstanding career he had in public education including serving as a full-time classroom teacher, department chair, and Athletic Director, simultaneously" DeVries said. "Mike has an excellent sports background and is well qualified for the varied responsibilities of an Assistant Commissioner. I was pleased that he showed interest in this position, and feel that he will be an excellent member of our Association leadership team."

Initially, Barren will transition into handling the daily responsibilities for student eligibility, Cross Country, Track and Wrestling. He will also be a liaison with the Athletic Directors in the state and coordinate other special programs.

Barren received his Master Athletic Administrator Certification from the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrator Association in 2006 and has been active among the group including serving as a state liaison. He served as president of the 11th Region Athletic Directors Association and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Kentucky High School Athletic Directors. Barren's previous experience also includes a three year stint on the KHSAA Board of Control, including one year as vice president.

Barren is a 1975 graduate of North Hardin High School and received BA (1979) and MA (1985) degrees from the University of Kentucky.

"This is a goal I have worked toward and is an exciting opportunity to serve high school athletics," Barren said. "I look forward to being a part of the team."

Barren and his wife Brenda are the proud parents of twins Madelyn and Ethan and new born Tristan. He will begin his duties with the KHSAA September 5.

DeVries noted that Ken Tippett, former Principal at Woodford County High School and a Fundraising Consultant on the KHSAA staff since 1992, has decided to retire. While at the KHSAA, Tippett assisted in the formulation of the "Sweet 16 Club" for basketball and was instrumental in the creation of the Forcht Group of Kentucky/KHSAA Statewide Sportsmanship Recognition Program. He assisted and helped develop the existing corporate sponsor program during his tenure with the Association as well as efforts with the Dawahares/KHSAA Hall of Fame and golf tournament and was responsible for several corporate sponsorships.

"Ken Tippett is one of the most dedicated educators I have ever come in contact with," DeVries said. Tippett had been on a year-to-year contract with the Association, and decided that following the 2007-2008 year, he would retire. "He has given of himself tirelessly and will be missed by the Association. Ken stated that he and his wife Sharon have many things they want to do and we wish him nothing but the best in his retirement."

DeVries also announced long-time Assistant Commissioner Julian Tackett will assume the duties related to the Officials Division and oversee technology management for all sports. He will also manage the regular season in boys' and girls' basketball vacated with the retirement of Boucher. DeVries noted that some of the job assignments are obviously subject to change over the coming months. The KHSAA Board of Control, at its August 1 meeting, approved the hiring of a full-time general legal counsel to work in the Association office in Lexington.

"This is an exciting time and we all are looking forward to the addition of staff," DeVries said. "We will continue to provide the services and manage our events in a first-class manner as we have in the past."

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About the Kentucky High School Athletic Association

The Kentucky High School Athletic Association was organized in 1917 and is the agency designated by the Kentucky Department of Education to manage high school athletics in the Commonwealth. The Association is a voluntary nonprofit 501 3(c) organization made up of 280 member schools both public and private. The KHSAA sanctions state championships in 19 sports, licenses and trains over 3,900 officials, provides catastrophic insurance for its member school student athletes as well as overseeing coaching education and medical symposium programs.