

ATHLETE'S OATH: Advice to athletes, coaches and parents

Michael Muldoon

(Editor's note: To honor Michael Muldoon's incredible life — he passed away in the spring of 2022 at the age of 60 — and his 35 years here at The Eagle-Tribune, we are running his favorite column for students in your high school. This piece has appeared in the paper every year since 2001. Mike's message should always be heard. He would make slight adjustments some years. This was the last one he wrote, verbatim. Thank you, Mike!)

Teachers, coaches, parents, classmates and entire towns do a tremendous disservice by giving a star athlete special treatment.

True story. After playing big-time college football, the most popular, best looking kid in my high school class was living under a bridge. He had turned into a drug addict who robbed the unsuspecting, aging parents of his friends.

I always wondered if his receiving kid-glove treatment due to his athletic prowess was the reason.

Here is some advice for athletes, coaches and administrators worth keeping in mind this school year:

If the kid deserves to be failed, fail him. If he deserves to be suspended, suspend him. If he deserves to be arrested, arrest him.

If all your friends are athletes, you are shallow.

A lot of middle-aged guys who can't play ball with their kids today thought they were doing the right thing playing with pain.



CARL RUSSO/Staff photos

Let the games begin: The Haverhill Hillies run through a play during the first day of preseason practice in August.

Listen to your body.

Pay it forward.

Kill them with kindness.

Girls, if he mistreats you, break it off immediately and never look back.

BEGINS AT HOME

The greatest gift a child can have is devoted parents. Nothing else is close.

At my last reunion, most of the pretty girls and handsome guys were no longer pretty or handsome. But the classmates who had hearts of gold, still had hearts of

gold.

From the ages of 12-18, there is nothing more important than being popular. From the ages of 19-99, there is nothing less important than having been popular from ages 12-18.

Ted Williams was dead wrong. The toughest thing in sports isn't hitting a baseball. It's being a parent of an athlete. Good parents shut their mouths, stay glued to their seats and let the players play, the coaches coach and the officials officiate.

It is easier to get into an Ivy League school than to earn a full

scholarship. and that's a fact.

Value tradition.

Whether you like them or not, always look out for classmates in need.

BE THE SMART KID

Don't tease the smart kid. Work to be that smart kid.

Go out of your way to befriend the fat kid, the kid with the acne problem or the kid with the troubled home life.

Make sure you show the same respect to your high school coach as you do to your club team coach.

No matter how unsatisfying the

season may have been for you, never skip the team banquet.

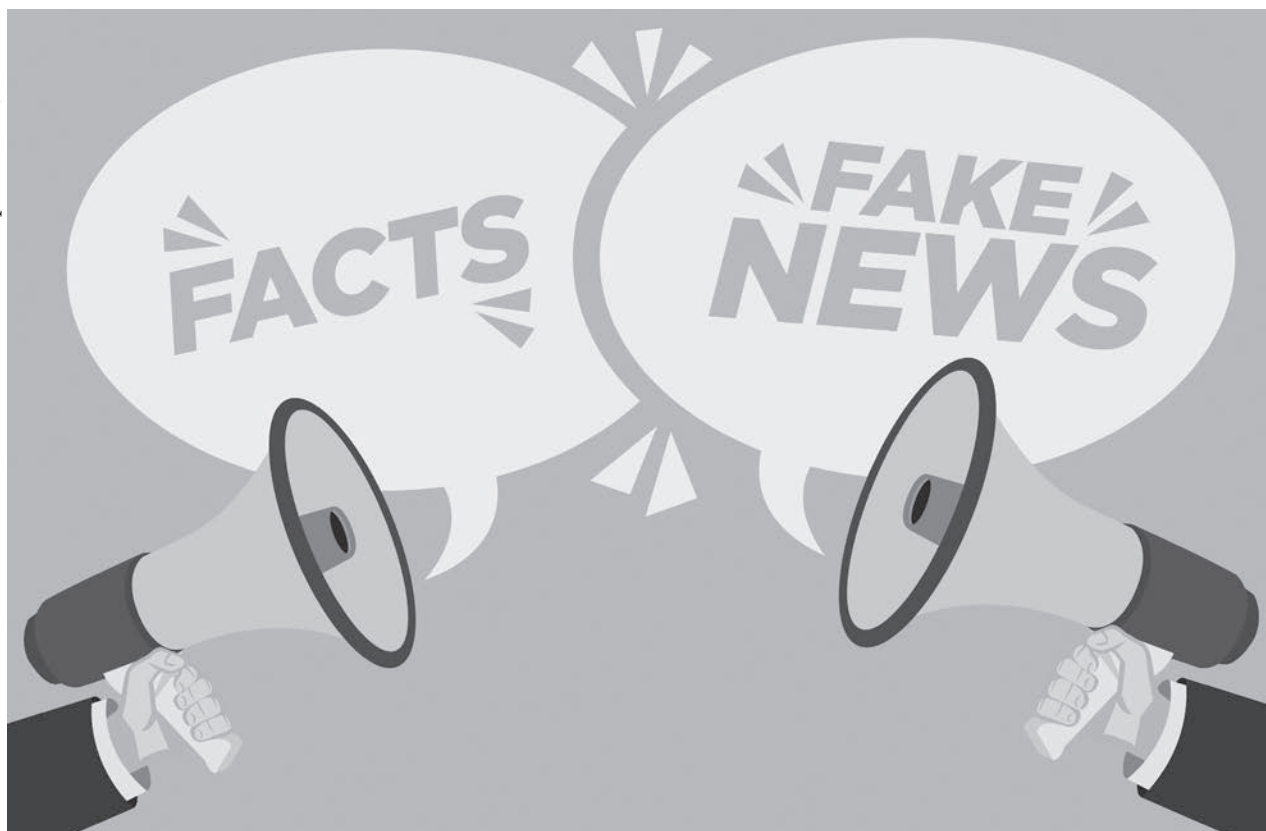
That's the ultimate slap in the face to your teammates and coaches.

Your coach doesn't have it in for you. Repeat, your coach doesn't have it in for you.

Always give a kid a second chance.

Be a multi-sport athlete. You think that 155th AAU game of the year is making you a better player? The number of athletes who do one sport year-round who blow out their knees or quit from

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Looking to combat fake news?

Here are some resources to help you determine if what you've read is true:

» **Politifact** is the Pulitzer Prize-winning fact checking operation run by the nonprofit Poynter Institute. The site fact-checks statements by politicians and debunks myriad Facebook hoaxes.

<https://www.politifact.com/>

» **FactCheck.org**, run by Annenberg Public Policy Center, performs much of the same tasks, and also let's you ask questions of the fact checkers. An example question: Did the Supreme Court rule that it is illegal to take the oath of office with anything but the Bible? (The answer is no.)

<https://www.factcheck.org/>

» **Snopes** is the original fact-checking website. Use the site's search bar to get to the bottom of political statements, viral videos and urban myths.

<https://www.snopes.com/>

» **A Google reverse image search** is the best way to find out if that photo you saw making the rounds on Twitter or Facebook is real. This story from PC Magazine walks you through how to do it on your desktop or your phone.

<https://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2492468,00.asp>

» **Still need help?** Contact us at the Eagle-Tribune, and we'll get the answer for you, no matter the topic. Email editor Tracey Rauh at trauh@eagletribune.com.



REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

How the program works

Your school can have access to local, trusted journalism from The Eagle-Tribune on a daily basis. We report on news throughout the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire, covering all things local – from schools, to sports, to government, people profiles, business, entertainment and more. You get the facts – the real news – from experienced reporters, photographers and editors you can count on at no cost to your school.

Here are the basics of the program:

What is it? The Eagle-Tribune partners with local businesses to provide free digital access to our newspaper to anyone within the school at no cost to the school. This access encourages students to value the vital news coverage being produced by The Eagle-Tribune. They will build awareness and gain critical thinking skills in the process.

Who can participate?

This program will benefit teachers, students, and the broader school community.

Where does it take place?

You can access our newspaper online. Teachers can incorporate the program into their curriculums, even having reporters, photographers and editors visit your class.

When can we start benefiting? As soon as we have your commitment to participate in Real News in Schools we will go to work to find a local business who wants to sponsor you. Once we have one, we will work with your IT Department to get the program up and running.

Why is this valuable?

There's a lot of fake news out there on social media and elsewhere. The Eagle-Tribune, founded in 1868 as the Lawrence Daily Eagle and a twice Pulitzer Prize winning publication, has a long track record of fair and accurate reporting that cuts through the misinformation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
EAGLETRIBUNE.COM/REALNEWS

You have a right to know. Protect it.

Jim Zachary
Commentary



All government business is your business.

Government can only be of, by and for the people

when it is out in front of the people.

State Sunshine Laws should not only codify the public's right to know but should facilitate access to both records and meetings while providing real penalties when elected and appointed officials block or stall access.

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Unfortunately, as a combined Eagle-Tribune, its parent company CNHI and Associated Press nationwide report revealed earlier this year, in the vast majority of states public access laws have little to no teeth, and in the states that do have stiff penalties for violations, enforcement is sparse at best.

That needs to change.

Every last penny government spends is your money.

It is your right to know every transaction, every decision, every expenditure and every deliberation of your government.

Whether at the White House, the Statehouse or the county courthouse, all the documents held in government halls belong to the people, and all the business conducted by our governors is public business.

The understanding that we are the government and the government is us is primary to our Republic.

The only powers held by federal, state or local government are the powers we give.

So, whether it is Congress, state political leaders, city council members or the board of education, it is your right to know all the people's business.

When you attend local city, county or school board meetings and ask questions and hold elected representatives accountable, you are not minding their business, you are minding your own business.

When you make a public records request, you are not asking local records custodians to give you something that just belongs to them or the office where they work. You are simply asking for your own documents. Those custodians need to understand that.

The Bill of Rights guarantees the freedom of the press for very important reasons. The founders built a hedge of protection around the media because the press, as the Fourth Estate, guards and fights for the public's right to know, holding government accountable.

Journalists help keep an eye on government, shine the light on its actions, fight the good fight for access to documents and meetings, champion transparency and defend the First Amendment because of a core belief in your basic, fundamental rights — principally, your right to know.

Access to public information, though, is not just for the press. It is for each and every one of you too.

Jim Zachary, CNHI director of newsroom standards & practices, can be reached at jzachary@cnhi.com.

» Oath

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burnout is frightening. Ask any college coach — they prefer multi-sport athletes.

CLASS AND GRACE

Class and grace never go out of style.

When you're 90, it will still eat you up inside that you bullied that classmate as a teenager. There's a special place in heaven for the classmate who sticks up for the bullied peer.

Man, nothing is going to be sweeter than proving those critics wrong.

Being a captain is an honor not a right. If you aren't chosen, don't pout, moan, whine, hold your breath or try to get the coach fired. Parents, same goes for you.

Better to have three true friends than 3,003 Facebook friends.

The perpetually offended will suck the joy out of any room.

A suggestion, before every school year, read "The Ugly Duckling."

Good teachers keep their politics out of the classroom. Good schools demand it.

Coaches Award winners tend to be more successful in life than team MVPs.

Humility is a virtue. False humility makes you a bore.

ONLY YOUNG ONCE

You have the rest of your life to get a job.

Future employers may not be a big fan of that cool tattoo you got in high school. Think before you ink.

If a coach positively affected your life, write him/her a thank you note. You'll have a friend for life.

Don't use the n-word, regardless of your race.

Never be ashamed of being . Never be ashamed of being rich.

Any coach or athletic director who drones on about "kids nowadays" should get out of the business.

Any coach who swears too much is a lousy coach and



CARL RUSSO/Staff photos

Play for the love of the game and only the love of the game: Alexis Ormaza and the Lawrence High boys soccer team last fall.



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Never, ever give up: Liam Finn was diagnosed with cancer at just 6-years-old. He beat the illness, and went on to star for the Andover High football team.

an even worse role model.

The undersized bench-warmer who doesn't miss practice in four years should be more admired than the All-State quarterback who can barely fit his head in his helmet.

Thinking about spending too much for the prom? Cap it at \$500 and give the rest to the Jimmy Fund. You'll feel so good.

DO RIGHT THINGS NOW

Do the right things now, reap the benefits for the next 70 years.

You'll never regret having said no to alcohol, drugs and sex in high school.

The pain you can inflict with social media is immeasurable. Don't hit send if you are in a bad mood, had too good of a time at a party or have a voice in the back of your head saying this might not be such a good idea.

If your coach instructs you to cheapshot an opponent, quit the team immediately.

Treat the team manager with the same respect as the star of the team.

A coach who makes fun of a boy's weight is a boor. A coach who makes fun of a girl's weight is dangerous.

Few things are more true than you reap what you sow.

HEART OVER BICEPS

The size of your nose, biceps or breasts is inconsequential to anybody who truly cares about you. The size of your heart is all that matters.

Any coach/athletic director who voluntarily hosts invitational events is a gem.

Any athletic director who doesn't have rosters for the fans for state tourney games isn't doing its job.

Administrators must stand up to meddlesome parents or it will be a slippery slide to chaos.

Play for the love of the game and only the love of the game.

You're not going to make the pros. Our region sends about one baseball player and one football player to the pros every 10 years. We've produced two NBA players in 70-plus years. You have a far better chance of becoming a brain surgeon.

SHOCK THE WORLD

A good captain will lead his team to a state title. A great one will take a stand against hazing.

It's never too late to change.

Look around your home-room. Take a look at your teammates at practice. Now, finally, look in the mirror.

You've likely just witnessed several people whose lives will be ruined by drugs. Be smart.

A real athlete never misses a game or a practice for a dance, a concert or Senior Skip Day.

A loss should hurt like hell. Getting thrown out of a game should hurt even more.

Steroids make you a bigger athlete and a smaller person.

You're worth it.

Always feed the bench-warmer the ball at the end of a blowout.

Don't listen to the coach who cut you. Work like the dickens and shock the world next year.

Let the games begin.

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'I knew my training'



MCKENNA JENNINGS/Courtesy photo

From left are Mayor Melinda Barret, PrideStar Trinity EMS's Chris Dick and Leah Terroux at the ceremony in August.

Teen lifeguard saves man at YMCA pool

By Jonah Frangiosa

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HAVERHILL — A shrill shriek from the lifeguard's whistle clattered against the echoing walls of the pool at the YMCA. The strokes and splashes of the ordinary Sunday swimmers were interrupted by the call to action.

It happened in a heartbeat, and Leah Terroux dove headfirst into an emergency that would leave her hailed as a hero for saving a man's life.

In late June, 17-year-old Terroux sprang from her lifeguard stand upon spotting a swimmer motionless under the water. Her training, along with quick thinking, kicked in, and the teenage lifeguard bravely rescued the man.

For her heroism, she was celebrated by the mayor and City Council, as she was presented with citations and certificates alongside EMS paramedics and personnel.

On June 29 she was clocked into her usual shift: reminding children not to run or stopping any dives into the shallow end. But while scanning the shimmering blue waters, Terroux spotted one of her regulars, 82-year-old Bruce Malbon, hidden beneath the pool's surface.

Malbon, a lifelong member of the YMCA, typically spends his Sunday afternoons poolside with his grandchildren.

"He usually does his exercises in the water while the kids free swim. But, out of the corner of my eye, I saw him underneath," Terroux said. "I immediately knew something was wrong."

A panicked look unfolded across his grandson's face as he glared at his grandfather fully submerged, she added. So, Terroux leapt into action.

Every swimmer scrambled away as her whistle pierced the air. She slammed her hand against an



TIM JEAN/Staff photos

Lifeguard Leah Terroux, 17, a lifeguard at the YMCA in Haverhill, saved a regular swimmer at the Y from drowning. She was recently honored by the City Council, Mayor Melinda Barrett and EMS for her heroism.



MCKENNA JENNINGS/Courtesy Photo

Bruce Malbon, left, is reunited with Leah Terroux, right, at the ceremony held in August at Haverhill City Hall.

emergency button, calling for backup and alerting others of the emergency. Then she lunged into the water.

Terroux locked her arms around an unresponsive Malbon and lifted him from the watery depths.

She pulled him poolside and her training continued to take over. She administered CPR while someone nearby busted out the defibrillators.

"The color started coming back with each compression," she said. "It was all very quick, and then firefighters came minutes later."

As signs of life returned in Malbon, a swarm of emergency personnel — firefighters, police officers, and EMTs — arrived on scene

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and surrounded the man. Terroux had successfully resuscitated him, and once the professionals stepped in, she comforted his grandchildren while he was attended to.

Malbon was stabilized and transported to a nearby hospital. It was a job well done for Terroux as this was the first time her training had been tested in a real, life-or-death situation, she said.

“We do a bunch of training for stuff like this, but I never expected it to happen at all,” she said. “Something like this, your brain starts going, ‘What do I do?’ But, I knew my training, locked in, and got him out. It’s like a flip of a switch.”

Terroux sharpens her skills monthly, first learning how to handle such an emergency under the training of Haverhill YMCA’s Aquatics Director Kristin Rodis.

“I am beyond proud of the swift and professional response of our staff. Their teamwork and training made a critical difference in this emergency, and their actions reflect the very best of who we are as an organization. Leah’s actions as a lifeguard were nothing short of heroic and highlight the impact of teen employment,” said Tracy Fuller, executive director of Haverhill YMCA.

On Aug. 13, the City of Haverhill, Prid-eStar EMS, YMCA, and City Council members came together to honor Terroux for her timely response and heroic actions. The ceremony was filled with applause, awards, and emotional reunions as this was the first time she and Malbon had seen one another since the incident.

“Leah, I knew. She was always the lifeguard on Sunday afternoons, when I’d be there with my grandsons,” Malbon said.

He said he previously taught at Haverhill High School and was familiar with the teenager from there as well.

Mayor Melinda Barrett and City Council President Thomas Sullivan presented Terroux with official citations recognizing her lifesaving efforts, while Prid-eStar EMS gifted her an appreciation certificate.

Terroux stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the other emergency personnel. She, herself, was a first responder that day.

“The ceremony went very good — a little nervewracking,” she said. “So many people were there for us.”

With her senior year approaching, Terroux is unsure of what the future holds, but said the experience of saving Malbon’s life has changed her perspective on helping others forever.

I’m still watching, but from the sidelines

Tom Walters

Commentary



Ah, the start of another new school year, the pictures of busloads of students making their way down the steps in front of the school to be welcomed by their teachers and school administrators.

I wouldn’t say that there are universal expressions of delight at the prospect of returning to classes, though there are plenty, along with some looks of solemn acceptance. Yes, the arrival of the new school year is inevitable.

I think back a few years to that wonderful commercial for an office supply store. Dad is dancing down the aisle loading up a shopping cart, while two children, eyes glazed and looking shell shocked, trudge along behind him. “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year” plays in the background.

The start of school is a new beginning – a fresh one, particularly if last year wasn’t the best. There are new teachers, new classes, and hopefully new perspectives. It’s time to get to know everyone, for the first time or again if the summer has passed with all the changes that take place for students in those few short months.

Our daughter started new classes at Emory University in Georgia this week. She moved down there this summer to a new apartment, a new setting, and a sea of change. We know she’ll be great. As will so many new teachers starting out. A potent mixture of excitement, anticipation, and a little bit of fear.

That’s natural. I had the privilege over the years of working with a number of rookies and a bunch of student teachers. The vast majority were great, and it was gratifying to see them turn their college preparation into successful careers.

I had 38 “opening day” experiences over the course of my career in education. Although, in later years when we had marching band camp in August, opening day was just another day. We knew each other well by then.

Each year, the veteran band members – particularly the seniors – would tell me that they had serious doubts about the underclassmen. The band “isn’t as good this year,” they’d say. I’d remind them that they were remembering last year at the end of the marching season, when the show looked its best. It didn’t start out that way in August, though.

On my first opening day at North



TIM JEAN/Staff photo

Students get off buses and are greeted by new West Middle School Principal Matthew Fox, right, during the first day of school in Andover this week.

Andover High School, a colleague greeted me as a new teacher, telling me how remarkable it was that I knew so many of the students’ names. I didn’t have the heart to tell him I’d had them all at the middle school, and they knew me, too.

I used to say that, particularly for some middle- and high-school students, school was a social event in which some learning might take place. So, for those students, social gathering begins. There will be unofficial “welcoming” conversations in the lobby and in the hallways. At lunchtime, the really serious chitchat begins. There’s a thorough analysis of what happened over the summer and what new social interactions can be expected going forward. Yes, that is high school, but I’ve never seen a silent cafeteria at lunch in an elementary school either. There’s lots to talk about.

Opening day was a time for setting out policy, as well as getting to know each other. One of the funnier stories I heard was on the radio of teachers reminiscing about the first day, and this one came from a retired kindergarten teacher.

She had just settled her young brood on the floor when, for some inexplicable reason, the fire alarm went off. Apparently, an administrator decided that would be a good time to have a fire drill. She gave hurried instructions for the children to line up at the door, and escorted her troops outside where they waited patiently for the “all clear.”

They then went back inside and were reseated, a bit visibly shaken. One angelic, blond and blue-eyed little girl in the front row ventured a question: “What the h ... was that?” she asked. That must have been a fun year.

Our daughter, the one mentioned above, enjoyed school and, as one would imagine,

was a good student. I have to say, too, that her primary summer excitement came from gathering school supplies. Like the father in the aforementioned commercial, that would have been her dancing up and down the aisles. She loved visiting a supply store, buying notebooks – one for each class, trappers, and other supplies. We’d order a backpack, which was a gift from her grandfather, with her initials. There was the official “set-up,” so that everything was ready – a ritual each year.

Many parents create an “archive” of important memorabilia. They fill file cabinets with report cards, essays, projects, quizzes and tests. We did keep some, but my guess is that most were lost in the move to the condo as she went off to college. In retrospect, we probably should have opened a museum someplace where it could have been suitably displayed.

For parents who are heaving great sighs of pleasure (and relief) that their offspring are going back to school, I say “savor the moment.” The school years pass so quickly. They’re learning to crawl and climb, and then suddenly, wham – they’re in high school and on college searches.

Our nephew’s son is at that stage. He’s beginning his senior year, and the family has spent the summer touring colleges. What happened? At this time next year, there will be a new beginning somewhere else, away from home.

Best wishes, everyone, particularly students and their educational “first responders,” for a happy, healthy, and successful start to the academic year. We on the sidelines will be cheering you on.

Tom Walters is a retired music teacher and school arts administrator. He lives in Londonderry, and has a blog: imthinkingno.com. Reach him at tomwalters729@gmail.com.



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