



A Year of Pandemic Sports with Mr. Ceglarski

Martha Heffernan, Sophomore
REPORTER

As this school year is coming to an end, I wanted to reflect on what a year we had. From full remote to hybrid learning, many students and faculty had to make drastic adjustments in order to have a successful year. As for athletes, this year has been filled with ups and downs. I talked with the Athletic Director at MHS, Gregory Ceglarski, to see how this year has been compared to previous sports seasons.

Fortunately this year, we managed to have a Fall, Winter, Fall 2, and Spring season for sports, which is incredibly impressive, given the circumstances. Lots of changes were constantly being made to the schedule, and until right before the school year, athletes were unsure if they were going to have a season. Mr. Ceglarski said one of the biggest challenges at the beginning for him was during the spring and early summer

of 2020, since the overwhelming factors that were unknown during that time were hard to deal with and overcome.

Another challenging aspect of this sports season has been the everyday logistics of making sure they met all the health guidelines and regulations. Games and meets often had to be rescheduled and plans were shifting every other day. "It was a change of

pace almost every day. Each week was different, and you couldn't really plan ahead," he says. "For example, we could have the week figured out on Monday, and by Wednesday, we would be playing a different team at a different location and have to make all the changes that come with that. It's a domino effect as well," Mr. Ceglarski adds. "Buses go somewhere else, refs have to be canceled/moved/assigned, practices for other teams are adjusted, parents all of the sudden couldn't watch their kid play if it was an away game; it was a constant change of plans." Having to deal with spectator rules and constant stay-at-home orders made it difficult to make official events for teams.

With all of these hardships of the season, there have still been some positive outcomes that our teams didn't expect. Using technology made it so more people were able to

more games than I anticipated, and that's something we are not only looking to continue next year but also improve on," he reveals. "It gives people all around town, and the country for that matter, a chance to watch their kids, grandkids, neighbors, etc. play for the town they love."

All sports had their own unique set of rules to ensure safety. All sports required masks at all times, and tempera-

tures and symptoms had to be checked before every practice and game for each athlete. Soccer stood out to Mr. Ceglarski when I asked what sport had the most limitations, "COVID was still very new when their guidelines came out, and they had a lot of limitations to their sport." The fall season in general was a lot more strict since we still didn't know a lot about the virus. Now in the spring season, a lot of the guidelines have

been lifted, so the fall season was more challenging, "In the fall, we were limiting touching any surfaces—equipment,

benches, etc. Now we are able to play football and even wrestling!" Also, in the earlier seasons, we could only schedule games with just league opponents, but now in spring, we are able to have games against teams outside our conference.

The positive reaction of being able to compete this year from coaches and athletes was overwhelming. The student-athletes were grateful and appreciative

for the opportunity. "All [the athletes] wanted to do this year was make it as normal as possible, and athletics was a key piece to that. Getting out to see their friends, compete for something, and continue to develop their game went a long way with our community." After such an odd spring and summer, students craved a normal routine life that included competing, so we're lucky we were able to. All student-athletes were required to go through a process of pool-testing, which

ended up being a very smooth experience. "Our student-athletes rolled with the punches. Some were a bit hesitant at first, but after a few days, it became

"Mr. Ceglarski, Mr. Tarmey, and Mr. Desjardins have done extraordinary work this year to help athletics function during the pandemic. This tireless devotion to our students is not a surprise. They are professionals who care for our students and staff, as well as understand the important role of connecting students through extracurricular activities."

Dan Bauer,
MHS Principal



"I have many words to describe the herculean effort Greg, Mark and Will the trainer went through in order for our soccer students to have a season last fall: determined, courageous, organized, and leadership. At the end of every practice and every game, Greg was the last one to leave, making sure everybody went home safe, and the lights at Piper were shut down. I told myself many times how fortunate I was to work with such a great leader who didn't go home, until all of his troops had left the premises safe and sound."

Elmer Magana, MHS Boys'
Varsity Soccer Coach

Mr. Tarmey: Your Behind-the-Scenes MVP

Caroline Johnson, Senior
REPORTER

The greatest unsung hero of MHS athletics is without a doubt Mr. Tarmey, our Assistant Athletic Director. Mr. Tarmey has worked for MHS since 2002 and was the Athletic Director from 2010 to 2016. After having major heart surgery, he became the Assistant Athletic Director. Mr. Tarmey does a lot of the behind the scenes that we don't hear about as much—organizational work that makes sports possible. He's the reason our buses show up on time and we arrive at the correct place for games and meets.

Although every year poses its own challenges, COVID made some scheduling very different, necessitating four short seasons that challenged teams to get enough playtime. The added variable of teams being shut down due to COVID cases created uncertainty of whether or not sports would even continue. For example, during the fall season, all sports had to be shut down for two weeks, and all games had to be rescheduled or cancelled.

"In my 20 years of coaching here, I have witnessed just how much being a member of the team can have a positive influence on the kids. We have Mark and Greg to thank for that opportunity this year."

Brian Heenan, MHS Varsity Boys' and
Girls' Varsity Cross Country Coach

second nature for everyone. Thankfully we never had to stop because of a positive pool test in athletics, which is another tip of the cap to our players!"

Finding motivation in such a dark time for the world was difficult. But the Athletic Department found many things that kept them going and motivated for each season to happen. The main thing that made Mr. Ceglarski eager to work was "making sure [his] department did everything [they] could do to give our student-athletes and coaches the best chance to play every day, and keep their season going." It was crucial to stress the importance of the guidelines to the coaches and players, since if any rules were broken, their season could have been over.

"Coach, what's up with Ceglarski ruining our celebration?!"

"Mr. Ceglarski is the reason we are playing in the first place."

That was my simple response to a soccer player asking why we could not celebrate our successful endeavor in impeding an undefeated Masco during our last game of the season in front of disgruntled newspaper photographers. Without the combined efforts of Mr. C and Mr. T, there would be no gift horse to orally examine.

Justin Greenwood, MHS JV Boys' Soccer

"The players and coaches for the girls are truly grateful for the incredible amount of work that both Mark and Greg did to get our team on the field this past fall. Without their commitment we would not have been able to play."

John Dormer,
MHS Girls' Varsity Soccer Coach

Every day that sports could take place had to be appreciated more than ever because a single positive could shut a whole team down. The fact that we were able to get every sports season in this year is definitely due in part to Mr. Tarmey's flexibility and organization. Even though a lot of his work is not immediately recognizable on the surface, without his organization and coordination of events, things would not run as smoothly as they do. As Mr. Tarmey said of himself, "They might not notice everything that I do, but if I didn't do it, they would surely notice." He says the most rewarding part of the job is seeing when all his hard work pays off and games go off without a hitch, plus all the joy



sports bring to athletes at MHS.

His parting advice to graduating seniors who are continuing their sports in college is to take advantage of this great opportunity because the skills and friendships you build playing at that higher level will carry over into all aspects of life after college. To those who are ending their athletic career as seniors, try and maintain some degree of involvement in a sport if you really love it. There are many opportunities in college and beyond to play at club and intramural levels. Athletes' love of athletics can be lifelong even if their competitive careers end after high school or college.

All coaches and athletes were extremely flexible and understanding of the circumstances, which inspired Mr. Ceglarski and the rest of the Athletic Department to support them. There seems to finally be light at the end of the tunnel, and as of May 20, athletes and coaches no longer had to wear masks, which immediately changed the energy and tone of

practice. Seeing everyone's smiling faces helps give hope to next year's season. In response to next year, Mr. Ceglarski says, "Ideally there would be no restrictions on sports, but I'm not sure, to be honest. My guess is there may be some small limitations to some of the high contact sports like football, wrestling, hockey, and boys lacrosse, but we'll have to wait and see how everything goes the rest of this spring and this summer."

As playoffs begin for sports and the spring season starts wrapping up, then gearing up for Fall 2021 starts right back up again. The future is still uncertain, but things are looking good, much better than they were last year at this time.

THANK YOU to Mr. Ceglarski, Mr. Tarmey, Mr. Desjardins, and Mr. Roundy for your constant effort, patience, perseverance, care, kindness, and TIME during this extraordinary year

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Last Week's Meeting!

