

- * **STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL - Sportsmanship Symposiums**
- * **NFHS PARENT BENCHMARK STUDY**
- * **NFHS CAMPAIGN - Before It's Over**
- * **PARENT GUIDE - Making the Most of High School Sports**
- * **NFHS LEARN - Communicating with Today's Students**
- * **HOW TO BE A BETTER ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATOR**
- * **COACHES CORNER - 3 Behaviors of Culture**
- * **THE DAILY COACH - The Illusion of the Obvious Choice**
- * **2026 FALL STATE ACADEMIC CHAMPIONS**
- * **STATE SOCCER SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS**
- * **STAFF LEADERSHIP BOOK OF THE MONTH - 7 Habits of Highly Effective People**

**REAL PERFORMANCE.
REAL FUEL. REAL DAIRY.**

DAIRY WEST
REAL GOOD™



**November
2026 ISSUE**



IHSAA EXPRESS

Supporting Education Through Activities



Connect with us using
IDHSAA



YOU'RE INVITED!

SPORTSMANSHIP SYMPOSIUMS

DISTRICT LEVEL SESSIONS

Presented by the IHSAA Student Advisory Council

WHAT ARE THE SYMPOSIUMS?

The IHSAA Student Advisory Council is hosting district level sportsmanship symposiums to bring together student leaders, coaches, administrators and community members to discuss, share and build on the importance of sportsmanship in Idaho high school activities.

AT THE SYMPOSIUMS, WE WILL:



Hear from student leaders and fellow schools



Discuss real-life situations and solutions



Build a stronger culture of respect, inclusion and positivity



Learn how we can all "Give Everyone Their Moment."

**BE PART OF
THE SOLUTION.**

Sportsmanship isn't just about the game—it's about people. These symposiums are an opportunity for your school to be part of the conversation and help make a difference.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?



STUDENT LEADERS
(ASB, student council, athletes, etc.)



COACHES
(head coaches and assistant coaches)



ADMINISTRATORS
(principals, assistant principals, athletic directors)



COMMUNITY MEMBERS
(parents, fans, school staff)



STUDENTS FROM ALL SCHOOLS
(every voice matters)

WITH EVERY CHOICE, CHOOSE GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP.

**Local SAC members
will conduct a
sportsmanship
symposium in
promotion of their
"Be a GEM"
sportsmanship
campaign**

2026 GEM STATE OF MIND SYMPOSIUM DATES

District I

November 10 **Coeur d'Alene HS**

District II

November 12 **Moscow HS**

District III

November 5 **West Ada SC**

District IV

November 4 **Twin Falls HS**

District V

November 2 **Marsh Valley HS**

District VI

November 3 **Rigby HS**



‘Before It’s Over,’ Create a Positive High School Sports Experience

The NFHS Report

Davis Whitfield,
NFHS Executive Director



There is simply no time like high school, especially when it comes to involvement in sports, performing arts and other activity programs. In so many ways, that period of our lives is unmatched.

Many of the former high school athletes inducted into the National High School Hall of Fame who have excelled at the college and pro levels have pointed to their years in high school sports as the key to their eventual success. Why? Primarily because they had parents, coaches and administrators who intentionally created positive experiences during that time in their lives.

And in this ever-changing time in sports at other levels, the NFHS believes it is crucial to focus on making those short three or four years in high school as positive and meaningful as possible.

That is why yesterday we announced a partnership with Positive Coaching Alliance to launch a national campaign entitled “Before It’s Over.” The goal is to reinforce the important role that parents, coaches and administrators play in creating positive experiences for students during their high school years.

We are pleased to be working with the Positive Coaching Alliance in this effort to make the four years of education-based sports and activities the most meaningful time in the lives of high school student-athletes and to prepare them for successful careers down the road. Our 51-member state high school associations will be involved as well by displaying banners at state championship events and in high school facilities nationwide.

We know from the recent National Parent Benchmark Study created by the NFHS that the majority of parents are supportive and believe that school-based athletics and activities are an important part of a student’s overall education, but the Before It’s Over campaign will help everyone – students, parents, coaches, administrators – focus on what’s really important and take time to smell the roses and enjoy the ride.

At times, in their quest to see athletes earn trophies, championships and scholarships, parents – and coaches – can lose focus and perspective. The goal is for parents to be supportive of coaches as coaches work with all student-athletes on the team.

There should be an appreciation for the specialness of high school sports as it is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that can positively impact students for the rest of their lives.

If that short three or four years of competition is going to be maximized for students, there must be more encouraging and less correcting, more watching your athlete and less focusing on officials, more postgame support and less postgame critiquing, more asking questions and less giving speeches, more learning from mistakes and less chasing perfection.

For parents and coaches, there should be more respecting officials and less arguing calls, more modeling composure and less sideline outbursts, more “I’m proud of you,” and less “you should have won that game,” more high-fives and less finger pointing, more “I love watching you play” and less “what were you doing out there?”

While most everyone involved in high school sports has a competitive nature and wants to win, that goal is sometimes over-emphasized by parents. Student-athletes? Surveys have shown that most say having fun and spending meaningful time with their friends is the biggest positive takeaway from involvement in high school sports.

As you move through the 2026-27 school year, we encourage **MORE** of those positive actions to benefit students, and **LESS** of those behaviors that are negative in nature.

During that short window of time in high school, we encourage everyone to focus on what matters most, with students using sports, performing arts and other activities to learn about teamwork and relationships, and to gain confidence, discipline and skills for a career after high school.

BEFORE IT'S OVER

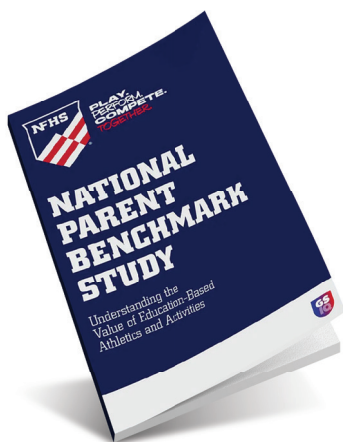
- ➔ MORE ENCOURAGING. LESS CORRECTING.
- ➔ MORE COMPOSURE. LESS OUTBURSTS.
- ➔ MORE SUPPORT. LESS CRITIQUING.

LEARN HOW:
morethislessthat.org

PARENTS GUIDE:

Making the Most of High School Sports

The NFHS and Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) have teamed up to bring you the Parents* Guide to Making the Most of High School Sports. This guide is designed to support you in centering the high school sports experience around appreciation, connection, and growth for your athlete.



From the NFHS National Parent Benchmark Study

WHAT PARENTS SEE

2,500 parents of high school athletes and activity participants, surveyed nationwide. **Here is what they said.**

Grades First. Then the Game.

85%

of parents say their school requires students to meet academic requirements in order to participate

The IHSAA exists to hold that order in place.

The student comes before the athlete, and school comes before the game.

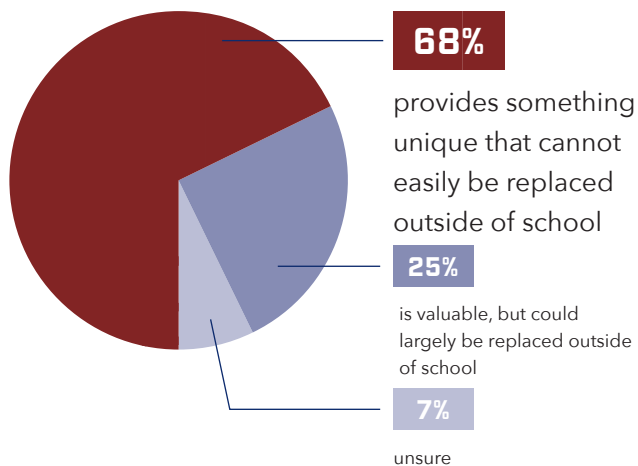
More Connected. More Motivated.

Parents comparing their child now with before they participated:



Sports Outside the School Serve a Different Purpose.

Asked to choose between two statements about their child's school-based experience:



This Is Education, Not an Extra.

91%

of parents say school-based athletics and activities are

an important part of a student's overall education, not just an extra or add-on.

Asked to name the single greatest benefit, parents chose teamwork and relationships. Not winning.



Source: NFHS National Parent Benchmark Study, 2026. Parent-reported findings from a national online survey of 2,500 parents and guardians of current high school participants, fielded May 27-June 5, 2026. Full findings: www.nfhs.org/resources/the-parent-perspective





High School Sports Leaders,

High school sports have the power to teach, connect and shape young people in ways that extend far beyond the field or court. As leaders, you play an important role in creating an environment where those experiences can happen.

That's why the NFHS and Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) created the Before It's Over campaign. High school sports go by fast. Not every athlete plays four seasons, experiences Senior Night or a championship. But every athlete deserves an experience filled with opportunities to grow, build relationships, overcome challenges and create meaningful memories.

The adults around athletes help shape that experience. The way we cheer, communicate and respond to challenges can either add to the experience or create unnecessary pressure. Before It's Over encourages all of us to pause, put things in perspective and focus on what matters most.

Inside this toolkit, you'll find resources to help bring the campaign to your school or athletic program, including:

- The Parents' Guide to Making the Most of High School Sports
- Practical tips and tools for parents and caregivers
- Resources for navigating common challenges
- Positive game-day behavior tips, including No-Directions Cheering
- Campaign messaging and materials for your school and community

We encourage you to share these resources with coaches, parents and community members. Use them in athletic department communications, parent and coach meetings, and social media throughout the year.

This campaign isn't about being perfect. It's about small, intentional choices and actions that can make a meaningful difference.

- More celebrating. Less critiquing.
- More connection. Less pressure.
- More support. Less blame.

Thank you for helping create an environment where student-athletes can grow, compete, connect and enjoy the experience.

Because Before It's Over, we have an opportunity to help parents and athletes make more moments count.

The NFHS & Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA)

ADMINISTRATORS

“In The Know”

FROM THE IHSAA

- + Fall Concussion Data due December 1st
- + Review IHSAA Rule 17 with all coaches
- + Verify ALL Team Scores in MaxPreps (Avoid \$1500.00 fine)

DATES TO REMEMBER

11/1	State Swim Seeding Meeting
11/2	1st Girls Basketball Practice
11/2	District 5 SAC Sportsmanship Symposium
11/3	District 6 SAC Sportsmanship Symposium
11/4	District 4 SAC Sportsmanship Symposium
11/5	District 3 SAC Sportsmanship Symposium
11/6-7	State Swim Meet
11/9	State Football Pictures & Rosters Due
11/10	District 1 SAC Sportsmanship Symposium
11/11	Veterans Day
11/12	District 2 SAC Sportsmanship Symposium
11/13	1st Girls Basketball Competition
11/13	1st Boys Basketball Practice
11/16	1st Wrestling Practice
11/20-21	Football Milk Bowl
11/26	Thanksgiving Day
11/28	1st Boys Basketball Competition

NOVEMBER AD CHECKLIST

- ___ Make time for family
- ___ Check Pixellot in the gym
- ___ Check basketball/wrestling scoreboard, flag & PA system
- ___ Prepare winter practice schedules for gyms
- ___ Arrange/finalize winter bus schedules
- ___ Review winter event cancellation procedures
- ___ Finalize spring schedules
- ___ Verify winter coaches requirements are met
- ___ Review winter gate procedures with staff
- ___ Confirm basketball and wrestling DragonFly schedule
- ___ Distribute sportsmanship information to coaches/players/parents



COMMUNICATING WITH TODAY'S STUDENTS



When coaches communicate effectively, teams perform better, learn faster, and grow together. Communication is the central mechanism coaches use to shape the interscholastic athletic experience and establish a positive team culture.

In this course, you will learn the importance of strong communication for high-performing teams, reflect on your own communication style and its impact on students, parents, and fellow coaches, learn how to increase engagement and strengthen relationships, and develop practical strategies for everyday coaching interactions that will further enhance your communication skills.

HOW TO BE A BETTER ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATOR



- Scott Garvis, CMAA

From managing schedules and staff to building school culture and setting a vision, the responsibilities of an athletic director go far beyond game day.

In this guide, Scott will share practical ways to become a more effective, respected, and impactful athletic director.

Whether you're new to the role or a seasoned vet, these strategies will help you lead your program with confidence and clarity.

Cultivate Exceptional Communication Skills

Effective communication is the cornerstone of successful athletic administration. ADs must articulate expectations clearly to coaches, athletes, parents, and the broader school community. Regular meetings, detailed newsletters, and open-door policies can foster transparency and trust. By ensuring that all stakeholders are informed and heard, ADs can preempt misunderstandings and build a cohesive athletic environment.

Here are specific recommendations to help you cultivate exceptional communication skills:

Hold Regular Stakeholder Meetings

Schedule consistent check-ins with coaching staff, student-athletes, and booster clubs. Even an informal weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly coaches' meeting keeps everyone aligned and allows for proactive problem-solving.

Use a Unified Communication Platform

Investing in one singular communication tool for your entire program allows you to centralize messaging across teams and seasons. This reduces miscommunication and keeps everyone on the same page.

Create a Monthly AD Newsletter

Use this to share updates, policy reminders, student-athlete spotlights, and upcoming event info. Keep it short, visual, and easy to skim; this becomes a touchpoint that keeps your program top-of-mind.

Develop a Clear Chain of Communication

Ensure that everyone understands who to contact and when. For example, student-athletes should report concerns to coaches before escalating them to the AD. Communicating this protocol prevents confusion and builds efficiency.

Practice Active Listening

When issues arise, listen with empathy and without interrupting. Reflect back what you hear to ensure clarity. Active listening builds trust and helps resolve conflicts with integrity.

Use Video for Important Messages

Record short video messages for key announcements like playoff details, new policies, or celebrations. It's more engaging than email and helps put a face and voice to leadership.

Maintain an Open-Door Policy

Let your coaches and athletes know they can reach out directly. Being approachable builds rapport and helps catch small issues before they become big problems.

PRIORITIZING THE

EDUCATION

IN EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES





COACHES CORNER



COACH AJ  MENTAL FITNESS

SHAKA SMART: 3 BEHAVIORS OF CULTURE

"Culture is simply how we act, interact, and respond. That's it. Our job is to bring it to life, and the most important component of that is the people in our room."
— Shaka Smart

1. How We Act → Character

- Your actions every day reveal what matters most.
- Do you give maximum effort? Do you cut corners or maintain standards?
- Do you do the right thing when no one's watching?
- Your behaviors influence others. Your actions shape the culture.

2. How We Interact → Connection

- It's how you treat your teammates. How you communicate. How you show up for others.
- Do you bring energy? Do you serve others? Do you lift up the people around you?
- Do you make the people around you better or do you drain them?
- Great teams have great teammates. And great teammates make everyone better.

3. How We Respond → Resilience

- Your response to adversity reveals the team's true identity.
- Do you blame others or take ownership?
- Do you stay composed under pressure or do you fall apart?
- Champions aren't defined by what happens to them — but by how they respond.

Culture isn't mission statements or posters on the wall - It's your behaviors that are lived out daily.

3 BEHAVIORS

- **Act**
- **Interact**
- **Respond**

The most important component is always the people in the room.

Because they define whether character, connection, and resilience actually exist or if they just sound good on paper.

COACHES CORNER

5 THINGS EVERY GREAT PRACTICE HAS

- 1 A clear purpose.**
Every practice should answer one question: What are we trying to get better at today?
- 2 Game-like intensity.**
Practice should match the speed, effort, and decision-making athletes will face in competition.
- 3 Constant feedback**
Great coaches teach throughout practice—not just at the end.
- 4 Maximum player engagement.**
Avoid long lines and standing around. Every athlete should be involved as much as possible.
- 5 A strong finish**
End with something that reinforces confidence, competitiveness, or team culture—not just conditioning.



COACHES CORNER

4 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF AFTER A GAME

- 1 Did I coach the kids or the scoreboard?**
It's easy to let the final score drive every decision and every reaction. Great coaching shows up in how you taught, encouraged, and corrected, whatever the outcome.
- 2 Who didn't get enough attention today?**
Every team has quiet players who never ask for feedback. Make a note of who got overlooked so you can find a moment with them before the next practice.
- 3 How did I handle pressure situations?**
Don't skip the wins in your own coaching. Knowing what worked in a tight moment, like a timeout, a substitution, or your composure, helps you repeat it.
- 4 What will I change in practice tomorrow?**
Pick one thing, not ten. A single clear adjustment turns reflection into action.





2026 Fall Sports Academic State Champions

GIRLS GOLF

6A	Meridian	3.965
5A	Sandpoint	3.917

BOYS GOLF

6A	Mountain View	3.859
5A	Bishop Kelly	3.836

GIRLS SOCCER

6A	Timberline	3.888
5A	Idaho Falls	3.888
4A/3A/2A	Sugar-Salem	3.861

BOYS SOCCER

6A	Bishop Kelly	3.690
5A	Sandpoint	3.669
4A/3A/2A	Fruitland	3.698

GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

6A	Meridian	4.000
5A	Sandpoint	3.979
4A	Filer	4.000
3A	Compass Charter	3.986
2A	Logos	3.790

BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

6A	Meridian	3.912
5A	Moscow	3.910
4A	Kimberly	3.827
3A	West Side	3.953
2A	Rockland	3.899

VOLLEYBALL

6A	Highland	3.928
5A	Blackfoot	3.927
4A	Bear Lake	3.892
3A	Soda Springs	3.880
2A	Riverstone	3.975
1A	Rockland	3.837

FOOTBALL

6A	Madison	3.527
5A	Bishop Kelly	3.501
4A	Weiser	3.460
3A	West Jefferson	3.644
2A	Raft River	3.352
1A	Rockland	3.817

GIRLS SWIMMING

6A	Mountain View	3.944
5A	Nampa Christian	3.977

BOYS SWIMMING

6A	Highland	3.772
5A	Kimberly	3.735

THE DAILY COACH

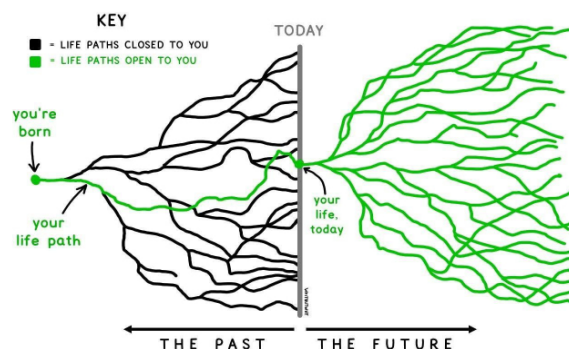
The Illusion of the Obvious Choice

Every decision closes off possibilities we'll never fully understand. What does that mean for the choices we're making today?

Picture your life as a tree. Behind you, a tangle of black branches, hundreds of roads you didn't take: the job you turned down, the city you didn't move to, the person you didn't call back. Ahead of you, the same tangle in green, still alive, still open. The two halves meet at a single point labeled "today."

That's the shape Søren Kierkegaard was pointing at in 1843, long before anyone drew it. "Life can only be understood backwards," he wrote in his journal, "but it must be lived forwards."

It's also the idea behind the graphic from Tim Urban, who runs the blog Wait But Why and who has captioned it: "We think a lot about those black lines, forgetting that it's all still in our hands."



Looking back, your path looks inevitable: Of course, you took that job. Of course, you married that person. Of course, you left when you did. The other branches are dead, so the one you're standing on looks like it was always the plan. But nobody living inside a decision gets that clarity. The job offer didn't come with a black branch and a green one attached. It just came, and you guessed, whether it was an educated one or not.

Coaches live at this fork more than many, because their decisions usually get graded in public, immediately, by a scoreboard:

- The decision to go for it on fourth down instead of punting, with the season on the line
- The choice to bench a struggling starter and hand the job to a younger player
- Calling timeout to ice the kicker, or letting the moment play out
- Sticking with a system for one more season instead of blowing it up
- Cutting a talented player whose attitude is dragging down the locker room
- Pulling a pitcher one batter too early, or one batter too late

None of those calls come with a green branch and a black branch attached. They come with incomplete information and a play clock. The coach who goes for it and converts looks like a genius, while the coach who goes for it and fails looks reckless. Same decision, same reasoning, different branch.

Looking backward for confidence can be a trap. The certainty you feel about your past choices is manufactured after the fact, by the simple mechanism of everything else going dark. It was never there in the moment.

Let's ask ourselves:

- Are we choosing this because it's right, or because it's the choice we'll be able to defend later?
- What would we decide if we knew nobody would ever find out how it turned out?
- Twenty years from now, looking back at this branch, what will we wish we'd had the nerve to do today?

The branches we didn't take will always be a mystery. We won't know what would have happened if we'd stayed, left, waited or taken the risk. All we can do is make the best decision possible with what we know today, understanding that a good decision won't always produce a good outcome. Twenty years from now, the path we chose may look obvious. That doesn't mean it was.

2026 FALL CHAMPIONS



6A
GIRLS

COEUR D'ALENE
VIKINGS



6A
BOYS

TIMBERLINE
WOLVES



5A
GIRLS

TWIN FALLS
BRUINS



5A
BOYS

BISHOP KELLY
KNIGHTS



6A
GIRLS

TIMBERLINE
WOLVES



6A
BOYS

MOUNTAIN VIEW
MAVERICKS



5A
GIRLS

POCATELLO
THUNDER



5A
BOYS

CALDWELL
COUGARS



4A
GIRLS

FRUITLAND
GRIZZLIES



4A
BOYS

TETON
TIMBERWOLVES



2026 STATE SOCCER SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS

The IHSAA State Sportsmanship Awards are presented to the school in each classification that exhibits the best sportsmanship throughout the State Tournament. Schools are judged on Team, Coach, Administration, Student Section, Cheerleaders, Band, Adult Fans, and Inappropriate Behavior.



CONGRATULATIONS to each school and their communities for demonstrating a
GEM STATE of MIND

6A
GIRLS

BOISE
BRAVE



5A
GIRLS

POCATELLO
THUNDER



4A
GIRLS

MARSH VALLEY
EAGLES



6A
BOYS

BOISE
BRAVE



5A
BOYS

IDAHO FALLS
TIGERS



4A
BOYS

SUN VALLEY
CUTTHROATS



PARENTS, COACHES AND STUDENTS—

YOUR BEHAVIOR SETS THE TONE

Lead by example by modeling composure,
integrity and respect at every game.



OFFICIAL FUEL OF HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS



DAIRY WEST
REAL GOOD™

Packaging is illustrative. Nutrition values by brand, see product labels.

WHISTLE WHILE YOU WORK

Ever wonder what it's like to love
your job?

Help bright, talented young minds
achieve more every day by becoming
a high school sports official.

You'll make a difference in your
community, support high school sports
programs and get paid to do it. That's
a win-win.

So put your whistle where your mouth is
and sign up to #BecomeAnOfficial
today at [HighSchoolOfficials.com](https://www.HighSchoolOfficials.com)



**BECOME
AN OFFICIAL**





Favorite Leadership Book of the Month

by the **IHSAA Staff**

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

by Sean Covey

OVER 40 MILLION COPIES SOLD

THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

Stephen R. Covey

UPDATED WITH FRESH INSIGHTS BY
SEAN COVEY
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

FOREWORD BY JIM COLLINS
AUTHOR OF GOOD TO GREAT AND COAUTHOR OF BUILD TO LAST

In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, author Stephen R. Covey presents a holistic, integrated, principle-centered approach for solving personal and professional problems. With penetrating insights and pointed anecdotes, Covey reveals a step-by-step pathway for living with fairness, integrity, service, and human dignity--principles that give us the security to adapt to change and the wisdom and power to take advantage of the opportunities that change creates.

Riley's favorite quote from the book:

"As human beings, we are responsible for our own lives. Our behavior is a function of our decisions, not our conditions."



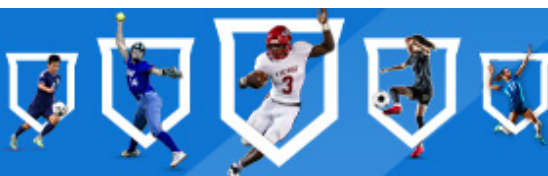
**Be the future. Stay
vape, chew, and
smoke free.**

Visit
ProjectFilter.org
to learn more.

**PROJECT
FILTER**
IDAHO FIGHTS TOBACCO®

**MY LIFE
MY QUIT™**

WATCH FALL SPORTS
**LIVE ON THE
NFHS NETWORK.**



All the fall sports you love,
just a click away.

WATCH LIVE NOW

**NFHS
NETWORK**