

WADA UPDATE

JANUARY 2024

[HTTPS://WWW.GOWADA.ORG/](https://www.gowada.org/)



THRIVING TOGETHER: NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND FOSTERING RESILIENCE IN 2024

by Shawn Groshek, WADA President

Dear WADA members,

Welcome to 2024! I wish you nothing but your best in the year to come! Being January, with the lack of daylight, a lot of individuals struggle with the limited access to sunlight.

We all experience the challenges and stress that come with our jobs. Although we feel as if we are on an island, remember you are not! You have plenty of personal relationships and friendships that can help us not only survive but also thrive in the face of these difficulties.

Understanding the Challenges: Working in any profession comes with its fair share of challenges. From tight deadlines and demanding clients to long working hours and high-emotional situations, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. However, it's important to remember that you are not alone in facing these challenges.

The Power of Personal Relationships: One of the most effective ways to navigate the challenges of the job is by cultivating strong personal relationships. Whether it's with your family, partner, or close friends, having a support system can make all the difference. Those relationships provide a safe space for you to vent, seek advice, and find solace during tough times.

Building Strong Friendships at Work: In addition to personal relationships, fostering strong friendships with your colleagues can also be incredibly beneficial. Having friends at work not only makes the job more enjoyable but also creates a support network within the workplace. These friendships can provide a sense of camaraderie, collaboration, and emotional support.

Seeking Assistance: Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Whether it's seeking guidance from a mentor, reaching out to a colleague for advice, or seeking professional assistance, reaching out is a sign of strength, not weakness. As Athletic Directors, we all go through difficult times and using others experiences to help your current situation is a great way to assist you to get through those times. Remember, we all need support at times, and seeking assistance is a proactive step towards overcoming challenges.

Self-Care and Work-Life Balance: Taking care of yourself is crucial for managing stress and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Make sure to prioritize self-care activities such as exercise, hobbies, and spending quality time with loved ones. Setting boundaries between work and personal life is essential to prevent burnout and maintain overall well-being.

Thriving Through Resilience: Resilience is the ability to bounce back from setbacks and adapt to change. Cultivating resilience is a valuable skill in navigating the challenges of the job. Surrounding yourself with a strong support system, practicing self-care, and developing a positive mindset are all key components of building resilience.

Remember, you are not alone in facing the challenges of your job. By nurturing personal relationships, building friendships at work, seeking assistance when needed, and prioritizing self-care, you can not only survive but also thrive in your professional journey.

I hope you find this letter helpful and inspiring. If you have any specific topics or questions, you would like me to address in future editions, please feel free to reach out. Wishing you strength, resilience, and thriving relationships.

Important Upcoming Dates

Friday, January 19

WIAA/WADA Zoom meeting @ 1:30 pm

Wednesday, January 24

WIAA Sports Advisory Committee meeting

Wednesday, January 31

WIAA Board of Control Meeting

Thursday, February 1

DEADLINE Winter Tournament Participation and Co-op Applications



Shawn Groshek, alongside NIAAA Executive Director Phil Rison, awarded Wisconsin's 100% membership for the 2023 year at the National Athletic Directors Conference in Orlando in December.



A collective photo capturing the majority of the Wisconsin contingent commemorating Greg Smith's induction into the NADC Hall of Fame and Todd Sobrilsky's NIAAA Citation Award.

WADA PERSPECTIVES: A LETTER FROM OUR ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by Greg Harvey, WADA Assistant Executive Director

Dear Fellow Athletic Directors,

To say that I am humbled and honored to be in the position of Assistant Executive Director of WADA would be a gross understatement. When I was presented with this opportunity, I wasted no time in accepting the offer. My experiences with WADA have been quite simply the most rewarding of my entire career in education; and the chance to stay connected and relevant within the organization was an opportunity that I could not pass up.

I have served in numerous roles with WADA including as a District 2 rep, a Mentor, the Vendor Coordinator, as well as Vice President, President Elect, President, and Past President. In each of those roles, the chance to serve my fellow Athletic Directors has always been an honor that I treated with nothing but the utmost respect; I truly want to see each one of you have a long career in your roles and, most importantly, feel successful in your roles. Success defined as being content, feeling supported, and knowing that you make a difference in the lives of the people you encounter each day.

One of the charges that I have been directed to take a leadership role in is to provide you all with a sense that your membership and participation in WADA is something special. To assure you that what we offer you has true meaning, benefit, and long-lasting impact on your career and your lives. We want to raise the bar and make membership in WADA something that you feel you can't do without. That is a lofty expectation, but then again, if we are not making membership something special, why would you want to join? Hopefully, you already have the feeling that WADA membership is highly beneficial to you as an Athletic Director; support, education, and professional development are areas we excel in. But do you feel that the WADA experience is special? To that end, I ask you to reach out to me anytime to offer your ideas and

and thoughts as to how we can enhance your experience as a WADA member. I too will be reaching out to colleagues across the country to see what they do for their members; to see if we can't learn from our peers, and to put into practice opportunities that positively answer the question, is this something special?

In conclusion, I want to thank all of you for this opportunity to serve you. I believe in this organization and it's membership. As a result of the excellence of our past leadership teams, I have seen WADA evolve over the years and become a nationally recognized presence, and an organization that is highly respected around the country. I am committed to maintaining and expanding upon that standard of excellence in my new role. I very much look forward to working with you all to make this organization special, and one you are immensely proud to be a part of.



In the image above, all five states within Section 4 received recognition from the NIAAA for the 2022-23 school year. From left to right: Rob Seymour, President (Indiana); Scott Battas, President (Illinois); Eric Albright, President (Michigan); Brent Buttjer, President (Iowa); Shawn Groshek, President (Wisconsin).

In the image to the right, Eric Plitzuweit receiving his certificate for being nominated for the Bruce D. Whitehead Award at this year's NADC.



STEPPING INTO BIG SHOES AND EMBRACING LEADERSHIP

By Jeff Sitz, CMAA, WADA Executive Director

As I step into the role of Executive Director of the Wisconsin Athletic Director's Association, I feel a bit like the 5 year old jumping into daddy's boots. Big shoes to fill and lots of room for me to grow. As our organization says good-bye and thank you to the legendary WADA and NIAAA Hall of Famer Greg Smith, we look to the future, confident of our solid past.

WADA has been served by many leadership giants in many different roles... men and women who have diligently served our membership with talents and gifts that have grown our organization. Greg's 13 year run as our Executive Director was certainly a defining era in the long and colorful history of the WADA. We are forever thankful to all who have served the WADA membership and the critically important profession of the Director of Athletics.



Greg Smith, Retired Executive Director of WADA, Honored with Hall of Fame Award in Orlando, Florida.

Vince Lombardi once quipped, "We will strive for perfection, and will reluctantly settle for excellence." I have witnessed that mentality in my long association with WADA. Having been a member since 1985, and a Board member for some 12 years in two different terms, I have witnessed many who shaped and defined the WADA that we proudly see today. Going Beyond what is expected, seems to be a trait that all great leaders share, and one that certainly defines those who have shaped and molded WADA.

Forward! is the badger state motto and also the inclination of WADA. While appreciative of our storied past, we continue to strive forward in the support of the profession of the Athletic Administrator, the excellence in our school programming and the need for excellence in professional development for our membership. The WADA Board is passionate about continuing the pursuit of perfection.

We are certainly excited to welcome Greg Harvey as WADA's Assistant Executive Director. Greg is a great addition to the leadership of our organization and one who has served WADA in many different roles over the years. The result of last year's membership election was to select Kyle LeMieux, CMAA of Waukesha West as your next Vice President Elect.

Finally, as I jump into these big boots, I leave you with this thought recorded in the book of Romans, chapter 12: "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment...we have different gifts according to the grace given each of us...If it is serving, then serve, if it is teaching, then teach; if it to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is to lead, do it diligently."

I am grateful for the opportunity you have given me to serve this organization, and look forward to working with you to continue to move WADA Forward!

TAKE A TIME OUT WITH COACHES

Swid Law Offices LLC

The end of any sports season (fall-winter-spring) is a good time for administrators to meet with and evaluate their coaches. Supervision is an important legal duty that administrators need to be mindful of when they consider renewing a coach for another season. While good coaches may feel this process is redundant from a prior year, and unnecessary, there are always good take-aways from these types of meetings. Here are some helpful tips to consider in these meetings:

- Ask the coach to evaluate his assistants. Are they meeting the same expectations as required for the head coach?
- How are the volunteers serving the program?
- Is the relationship with the booster club healthy? Are the financial arms of the program healthy and in good order?
- How is your budget? Should it be increased or reduced?
- What are the numbers of your participants (what is coming up through your middle school and community programs)?
- Have you inventoried your equipment and supplies? Is equipment satisfactory and meeting NFHS standards and requirements?
- What are goals and expectations for the upcoming year(s)?

While these types of interviews may seem like a poor use of time, they are invaluable. They not only allow the administrator to evaluate the coach, but to spend premium time determining whether the program is in good shape, and consider any areas of potential risk. It also requires the coach to answer questions that otherwise may get ducked or avoided during the season, saying they're "too busy" to take the time to dedicate to meaningful conversation.

It is highly recommended that administrators attend a few practices each year, to observe the head coach, as well as the assistants, and document those observations. The same goes with observing and evaluating the coaches during the game. How do they present themselves? How are they dressed? What is their demeanor? Do they display good sportsmanship? Do they require their student athletes to follow the rules, or do they promote slight "cheating"? Documenting these reviews and conversations in the coach's file is important if a future issue – or dispute – arises.

Do not forget that above all, administrators are supervisors. Failure to supervise is a neglect of duties. Having a "time out" with your coaches with constructive conversation is the first step to good supervision.

