

SECTION XI HISTORY

Prior to 1937, athletics in Suffolk County had no formal organization; and in 1938, a constitution was adopted for the Suffolk County Public High School Athletic Association. Meetings were held twice a year—on the second Saturday after Labor Day and the Saturday preceding the January Regents Week. Representation to the State Association was through affiliation with Section VIII.

Athletic competition and County meetings diminished during World War II because of restricted transportation. "Railroad" leagues were established based on the available transportation, and by 1947, 31 schools were participants.

On September 23, 1957, the first Section XI Council Meeting was held. As noted on page 1 of the minutes of that meeting, Southampton's Superintendent, Bill Jones, was the leader of a committee which laid the groundwork for the creation of Section XI. The organization represented 39 schools; Huntington was the largest with 1,453 pupils, Brentwood was 13th with 709 pupils, and Sachem was 29th with 245 pupils.

By 1967, 52 schools were members. In the allocation for 1967-68, Ward Melville first appeared in a full varsity program, grades 9-11. Brentwood led the schools with an enrollment of 4,086, Half Hollow Hills was 16th with 1,495, and Ward Melville was 26th with 1,069 students.

For many years, the boys' modified program was organized as an adjunct to the Section XI Council. Junior High Principals and Athletic Directors alternated in leading the administration of this program. For several years, the girls' modified program operated informally as a scheduling device. A June, 1967, referendum approved a Junior High Athletic Council constitution which provided for the organization and administration of the modified program for both boys and girls.

The early years of girls' athletics in Suffolk County emphasized competition with neighboring schools. The principal sports were field hockey, basketball, volleyball, and softball. Competition on a league basis was nonexistent, and banners were won at play days conducted at the end of each season. Paradoxically, it should be noted that Pete Rogers led an East Islip girls' basketball team to the finals of the girls' State Championship in 1931.

By 1949, the need for a girls' athletic organization was recognized. Led by Jean Berger (Bay Shore), Jeannette Rogers (Babylon), Ruth Gracey (Port Jefferson), and Anna McKeever (Sayville), organizational meetings were held.

Babylon, Bay Shore, Central Islip, Huntington, Kings Park, Northport, Sayville, and Smithtown were primarily responsible for the early growth of the organization in 1949 and 1950. Through the efforts of the physical education teachers from these schools, a constitution for the Suffolk County Girls' Athletic Association was adopted.

The first SCGAA Banquet was held in June, 1951, at Lincks' Restaurant in Northport at which time 32 students were honored. The Gold Key Award was instituted at the Annual SCGAA Banquet in 1953.

In 1957, the first leagues were to be formed on a trial basis; and in 1969, 34 schools were officially competing on a league basis. By 1973, all Section XI schools were members of the Association.

The growth of the competitive program for girls is evidenced by the following: In basketball, 193 Varsity games were played in 1971-72, 386 played in 1976-77, and 512 played in 1985-86. In track and field, 12 schools participated on the Varsity level in 1975-76, 23 schools in 1976-77, and 48 schools in 1985-86. Other sports experienced similar growth patterns.

Leaders in Section XI and SCGAA worked on reform resulting in a new organization which assumed the responsibility for administering the athletic program for boys and girls in Suffolk County. Section XI President Bob Young, Past-President Jack O'Donnell, SCGAA President Lorraine Michels, and Past-President Ann Bieling took very active roles in formulating this new organization established in 1977 which continued to be called Section XI.

Section XI is part of a larger, statewide organization, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association, Inc. This parent federation encompasses nearly all of the public school districts in the state, excluding New York City (which has its own athletic association). NYSPHSAA governs matters which affect athletics in the state and also supervises State Championship competition.

New York State is divided into 11 geographical sections in order to allow for the varying needs of the different regions in the state. Suffolk County falls into the 11th section, hence the name Section XI. NYSPHSAA is part of an even larger, nationwide network dealing with interscholastic sports, the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations, based in Kansas City.

At present, 60 high schools and 77 middle schools are members of our Section. The governing body is the Athletic Council, comprised of elected representatives from member schools.

From a Section Office located in Smithtown, an Executive Director administers the affairs of the Section such as facilitating communication, enforcing compliance with regulations, adjudicating disputes, arranging meetings, supervising tournaments, assisting sports chairmen, devising schedules, assigning officials, etc. The Section sponsors 32 high school level sports and 21 modified sports. Approximately 3,600 teams participate in a total of 25,000 contests each year. 1400 sport officials are employed to service these contracts.

We point with pride to the diversity of our program and the unsurpassed achievement of our student athletes at all levels.