

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

August 14, 2001

For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces: **Character Counts! Sports Summit: *Pursuing Victory With Honor***

Saturday, August 18, 2001, Holiday Inn Visalia

Visalia: Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak is hosting a seminar on sportsmanship, ethics and character building August 18, 2001 at the Holiday Inn in Visalia. The seminar, which will be held from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., is designed to help coaches, athletic directors, officials and administrators build character in student athletes.

Michael Josephson, founder of the national Character Counts! program will moderate three panel discussions comprised of area coaches, teachers and athletes. The first panel is entitled *Academics and Sports*. In this presentation, Mr. Josephson and panelists will explore whether competitive sports have a constructive role in education and character building. The second panel is entitled *Sportsmanship vs. Gamesmanship*. Here, Mr. Josephson will discuss when “smart play” becomes cheating; taunting and trash-talking; altering equipment and the field of play; and deceiving officials. The final panel is entitled *Special Problems in Sports*. Topics discussed will include: hazing, eating disorders, alcohol and binge drinking, tobacco use, substance abuse, performance-enhancing drugs, and sexual misconduct.

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Olympic Gold Medal Winner John Naber will deliver the seminar's keynote address. At the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, swimmer John Naber captured four gold medals, becoming America's most decorated athlete at those games. During Naber's climb to the top of the sports world and his subsequent role as commentator and host on ABC's Wide World of Sports and ESPN, John has become a speaker on the subject of excellence in sports. Following the keynote address, Michael Josephson will deliver a special challenge to high school administrators to raise awareness of codes of conduct for athletes, coaches, parents and spectators.

“So much attention is given to sports and the students who play them,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “It’s important that we establish a foundation for ethical conduct so that sports are played fairly when everyone is watching, and when they’re not. I’m delighted to offer this important seminar to the coaches, athletic directors and officials of the Central San Joaquin Valley.”

There is no cost for the seminar. The Visalia Holiday Inn is located at 9000 West Airport Drive in Visalia. For registration information, contact Darlynn Billingsley (darlynnb@tcoe.org) at 733-6302, or Christine Chapman (chrisc@tcoe.org) at 733-6172.

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