

Joe Namath Generation Called 'Brightest Ever'

WASHINGTON (GNS) — The "Joe Namath Generation" of high school athletes got a going over from its coaches here, but, as one expressed it, "they're the brightest youngsters the world has ever seen."

Long hair, drugs and "associated unrest" were the topic as the National Conference of State High School Coaches Association held a panel discussion at the National Education Association headquarters.

Robert Sterling, director of athletics at Piscataway, N.J. High School heads the coaches' association. One of the participants observed of the New York Jets quarterback, "I think Joe Namath's a bum, but he's the one they follow."

And Sal De Giorgi, of Annandale, Va., told his fellow coaches that the problems they are facing "will be with us a . . . mighty long time," and they will have to "get with the times."

De Giorgi said he thinks there will be "more and more drugs" in athletics" but he noted that marijuana use generally starts in a community several years before it reaches the schools.

No one disagreed with his contention that athletes caught using drugs should be banished from teams.

De Giorgi said the scholastic atmosphere has "changed dramatically" in a few years. "In some form or another," he told fellow coaches, "the problems are going to be on your doorstep in three to five years."

But, he added, "The great hair hassle may not be the real problem."

De Giorgi said, "Authority has become a dirty word, but it is dirty only when it is abused." It must be exercised justly and fairly, he said, and while

there must be "a certain discipline in sports, we must adjust without throwing it out the window."