STATE OF MICHIGAN

COURT OF APPEALS

SHEILA WOODMAN, as Next Friend of TRENT WOODMAN, a Minor,

FOR PUBLICATION August 12, 2008

Plaintiff-Appellee,

V

No. 275079 Kent Circuit Court LC No. 06-000802-NO

KERA, L.L.C., d/b/a BOUNCE PARTY,

Defendant-Appellant.

SHEILA WOODMAN, as Next Friend of TRENT WOODMAN, a Minor,

Plaintiff-Appellant,

 \mathbf{v}

No. 275882 Kent Circuit Court LC No. 06-000802-NO

KERA, L.L.C., d/b/a BOUNCE PARTY,

Defendant-Appellee.

Advance Sheets Version

Before: Bandstra, P.J., and Talbot and Schuette, JJ.

SCHUETTE, J. (concurring).

First, I concur with my distinguished colleague, Judge Talbot, in his lead opinion that plaintiff did not establish that defendant's conduct was grossly negligent, that the Michigan Consumer Protection Act, MCL 445.901 *et seq.*, has no applicability to this case, and that the facts, circumstances, and pleadings of this case do not involve a premises-liability action.

I further concur, although reluctantly, in the conclusion reached by Judge Talbot that judicial precedent in the state of Michigan requires this reviewing court to invalidate the preinjury waiver of liability signed by the minor child's father in this case. I also strongly share the sentiments expressed in the concurring opinion of my distinguished colleague, Judge Bandstra. I write separately to emphasize several issues of extreme legal and policy significance that should be addressed as a consequence of this decision.

Plaintiff's claim concerning the validity of a preinjury, parental waiver of liability for a minor is a newly emerging issue for our courts. As described in Judge Talbot's thorough lead

opinion, courts across the United States are grappling with this issue, and now it is Michigan's turn. I believe that under *McKinstry v Valley Obstetrics-Gynecology Clinic*, *PC*, 428 Mich 167, 192; 405 NW2d 88 (1987), we are required to invalidate a preinjury, parental waiver of liability to a minor child.

In *McKinstry*, a preinjury waiver case, our Supreme Court determined that a mother could bind her unborn child to arbitration under § 5046(2) of the Medical Malpractice Arbitration Act (MMAA), MCL 600.5046(2).¹ Our Supreme Court stated:

Our interpretation of § 5046(2) is a departure from the common-law rule that a parent has no authority to waive, release, or compromise claims by or against a child. Schofield v Spilker, 37 Mich App 33; 194 NW2d 549 (1971); Reliance Ins Co v Haney, 54 Mich App 237; 220 NW2d 728 (1974); 67A CJS, Parent and Child, §114, pp 469-470. However, the common law can be modified or abrogated by statute. Bean v McFarland, 280 Mich 19; 273 NW 332 (1937); O'Brien v Hazelet & Erdal, 410 Mich 1; 299 NW2d 336 (1980). Thus, a child can be bound by a parent's act when a statute grants that authority to a parent. Reliance Ins Co, supra, p 242; Wilson v Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, 141 Cal App 3d 891; 190 Cal Rptr 649 (1983). We believe that § 5046(2) of the MMAA changes the common law to permit a parent to bind a child to an arbitration agreement. [McKinstry, supra at 192-193.]

Some might argue that the above-referenced quotation is dictum and hence not binding on lower courts in Michigan.² Or, some might contend that the plain meaning and use of the word "claim" by our Supreme Court in *McKinstry* may only be interpreted to apply to postinjury waivers, because a claim can only occur after, not before, an injury has been caused.³ Yet, in *McKinstry*, our Supreme Court stated that "the common law can be modified or abrogated by statute," *McKinstry*, *supra* at 192, seemingly implying that, in the absence of a statute to the contrary, Michigan adheres to the common-law rule prohibiting parental waiver of liability in preinjury, as well as postinjury, situations.

¹ MCL 600.5046(2) was repealed by 1993 PA 78, effective October 1, 1993.

² Dictum is ""judicial comment made during the course of delivering a judicial opinion, but one that is unnecessary to the decision in the case and therefore not precedential (though it may be considered persuasive)."" *Carr v City of Lansing*, 259 Mich App 376, 383-384; 674 NW2d 168 (2003) (citations omitted).

³ A claim is defined as:

^{1.} The aggregate of operative facts giving rise to a right enforceable by a court 2. The assertion of an existing right; any right to payment or to an equitable remedy, even if contingent or provisional 3. A demand for money or property to which one asserts a right [Black's Law Dictionary (7th ed), p 240.]

The decision in this case is bound to have enormous consequence and profound impact throughout Michigan. Of equal significance will be our Supreme Court's review of this decision, given the dearth of preinjury, parental-waiver-of-liability cases in Michigan and the wide variety of rulings emerging in other jurisdictions throughout the federal and state courts of this nation. See, e.g., *Brooks v Timberline Tours, Inc*, 941 F Supp 959 (D Colo, 1996); *Lantz v Iron Horse Saloon, Inc*, 717 So 2d 590 (Fla App, 1998); *Sharon v City of Newton*, 437 Mass 99; 769 NE2d 738 (2002); *Hojnowski v Vans Skate Park*, 187 NJ 323; 901 A2d 381 (2006); *Zivich v Mentor Soccer Club, Inc*, 82 Ohio St 3d 367; 696 NE2d 201 (1998). Of similar importance is the manner and speed with which the Michigan Legislature responds to this public-policy issue, given the absence of any statute codifying the validity and scope of preinjury, parental waivers of liability for a minor. Most certainly, legislators will come to hear about the impacts of this decision from constituents and interest groups of every competing philosophy and occupation.

Certainly, no one in the Michigan judiciary desires to turn a deaf ear or a blind eye to wayward businesses, dishonorable nonprofit organizations, or volunteer groups that might place a child in a dangerous situation, notwithstanding a parent's executing a release and waiving liability for resulting injury. Equally significant is the fact that an immense amount of youth activities—church groups, Boy Scouts, sports camps of all kinds, orchestra and theatrical events, and countless school functions—run and operate on release and waiver-of-liability forms for minor children.⁴

Voices will be heard, as this Court heard during oral argument, that no court of law should acquiesce to a piece of paper protecting a business, nonprofit organization, or school group from liability when a child is injured. Equally strong will be the chorus of church, school, and volunteer organizations, and passionate parents, decrying the "chilling effect" of the invalidation of preinjury waivers, freezing out adult volunteers from participating in youth activities and camps of all kinds, with a Sword of Damocles, ⁵ liability speaking, lurking in the weeds or hanging over their heads.

⁴ Appended to this opinion are but a few examples of preinjury, parental waivers, which demonstrate their widespread use. Such waivers are used by youth and community organizations, universities, and nonprofit groups for an immense array of activities across Michigan, including: Arcadia Daze 5K Run (Appendix A), SpringHill Summer Camps (Appendix B), Jeff Trickey Quarterback Camps (Appendix C), University of Michigan Gymnastics Camp (Appendix D), Ann Arbor YMCA (Appendix E), Detroit Free Press/Flagstar Marathon (Appendix F), and Wayne State University Mort Harris Recreation and Fitness Center Youth Fitness Camp (Appendix G).

⁵ The "Sword of Damocles" was a sword suspended over the head of Damocles in a Greek myth. Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sword_of_Damocles_%28disambiguation%29 (accessed July 29, 2008).

But in the end, the Michigan Legislature will have to determine whether a statutory exception to the commonlaw rule for preinjury waivers should be adopted, and whether there should be any differentiation between for-profit and nonprofit groups as some states have seen fit to do. See *Sharon*, *supra* at 109-110; *Zivich*, *supra* at 372; *Hohe v San Diego Unified School Dist*, 224 Cal App 3d 1559, 1564; 274 Cal Rptr 647 (1990). I hope that the Michigan Legislature acts thoroughly and promptly.

/s/ Bill Schuette



ARCADIA DAZE RUN WAIVER

I know that participating in a foot race is a potentially hazardous activity. I should not enter unless I am medically able. I assume all risks associated with participation in this event, including, but not limited to: falls, contact with other participants, the effect of the weather, traffic, and the condition of the road, with all such risks being known and appreciated by me. Having read the waiver and knowing these facts and in consideration of you accepting my entry, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my Behalf, waive and release the Arcadia Lions Club, and all other sponsors, their representatives and successors from all claims of liabilities of any kind arising out of my particlpation in this event. I grant permission to all of the foregoing to use any photographs, motion pictures, recording, or any other record of this event for any legitimate purpose.

Signature
Parent Signature if under 18 years of age

Date

Sponsored by Arcadia Lions Club and made possible with financial support by B J Hopwood, Inc., General Contractor

May copy this form.

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(Signature required for admittance into Summer Camp)

Photographs and video footage of my child as a result of participation in activities at SpringHill may be used in SpringHill's promotional materials or website.

III. Photo Release

Parent or Guardian's Legal Signature

Jeff Trickey Quarterback Camps

2008 QUARTERBACK CAMP APPLICATION FORM

My son has my permission to attend the JEFF TRICKEY QB CAMP. I certify that within the past two years, he has had a physical examination and that now, he is physically able to participate in football camp activities without restriction. In the event of an illness or injury, I give my consent for medical treatment and

permission to attending physician to hospitalize, secure proper treatment, and order injections, anesthesia, or surgery. I will be responsible for any medical or other charges in connection with my son's attendance in camp.

I acknowledge that at the JEFF TRICKEY QB CAMP my son will participate in a sport that may involve, among other things, physical contact of the body with other persons or objects, including the ground, and that at the JEFF TRICKEY QB CAMP, he may incur a risk of injury. I specifically waive, give up and release the JEFF TRICKEY QB CAMP and staff from liability for any claim for damages which I or my son may have for injuries or illness that he may sustain at camp.

Camper Signature:	
Parent's Signature:	

NO PLAYER WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PARENTAL APPROVAL

Important Michigan Gymnastics Camp Information:

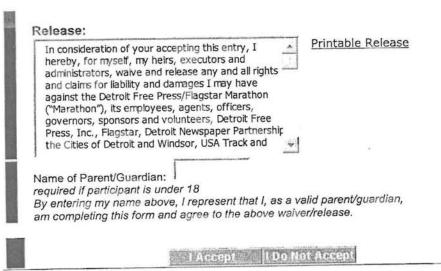
Parent/Guardian Consent, Medical Release and Release from Liability Agreement

	ring information carefully before ampleted. Please read the following	signing. information carefully before signing.
Activity:	Activity Time Period:	
Activity Sponsor:		
Participant Name:		
Parent/Guardian Name	e(s):	
In consideration for all of Participant, agree to	lowing Participant to participate in the following:	Activity, I/we, as parents and/or guardians
Authorize Participant	to participate in the Activity for the	e Activity Time Period stated above.
except for damages ca	d hold harmless the Activity Spon- cused by the sole gross negligence out of the participation of Participa	sor and University from any and all damages, or intentional misconduct of Activity Sponsor and in the Activity.
sufficient opportunity	ement of the Activity, I/we were m to inquire further, and understand behalf of Participant, all those in	ade aware of the nature of the Activity, had the Activity has inherent risks and I/we and nerent risks.
University and Activity	ty Sponsor. Possession of firework and cause for immediate expulsion	to the policies, rules and regulations of the s, explosives, any weapon, illegal drugs or from the Activity. Further, any Participant licies, rules or regulations may be expelled from
Sponsor") the authoric limited to x-ray examicare which may be resurgeon, for Participa during his/her participany costs incurred and their employees and a	ty to seek, obtain, and approve any ination, anesthetic, medical, dental commended and provided under the which, in their judgment, is necessation in the Activity. I/We further agree to hold the Activity Sponsor	medical care and treatment including, but not or surgical diagnosis, or treatment and medical e general supervision of any physician or essary for the health and well-being of Participant agree that I/we are(am) solely responsible for or and the Regents of the University of Michigan, narmless for any liability arising out of any good ticipant.
The above agreement	s are binding upon us, our estates,	heirs, representatives and assigns.
Parent/Guardian Sign	ature	Date
Parent/Guardian Sign	ature	Date
Participant Signature		Date

Ann Arbor YMCA School Age Permission Form

FIELD TRIP/TRANSPORTATION PERMISSION	
I give permission for my child from his/her school to the YMCA on the days he/she is	, to be transported by the Ann Arbor YMCA registered to attend. I give permission for my child
to go on any field trips supervised by the Ann Arbor YM	
consist of short walks to nearby locations. I understand	
longer trips and that, if any vehicle is used to transport i	my child, each child will be required to wear a seat
belt or be placed in a car seat that I would provide.	
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
PHOTOGRAPHY AND RECORDING PERMISSION	
I hereby irrevocably release, consent and allow the Ann photograph/likeness/voice, as it pertains to participation efforts without expectation of any reimbursement in cor	Arbor YMCA and its agents to use my child's with the YMCA, in any manner for promotional
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
LIABILITY I understand the physical activities which my child may be limited to: swimming, running, playing and sports. I from any liability for the risk of injury, illness or death facility or on account of my child's involvement in any activity.	agree to assume all liability and release the YMCA on account of my child's presence in a YMCA
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
SWIMMING	
I give permission for my child Youth Aquatics Program. A kindergartner or school-ag	to participate in the YMCA
Youth Aquatics Program A kindergartner or school-ag	red child may participate in youth recreation swim
when available.	,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
SUNSCREEN/BUG SPRAY	
My child (circle one) should should not wear sur application at home. Sunscreen should be supplied by allows staff to apply sunscreen to my child. This does to	you, the parent. I understand that selecting "should"
My child (circle one) should should not wear but application at home. Bug spray should be supplied by allows staff to apply bug spray to my child. This does	you, the parent. I understand that selecting "should"
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
PHYSICAL HEALTH	
I hereby attest that my child	is in good health. Further more any activity
restrictions, allergies, medications taken by the child, o Record. Immunization records or appropriate waivers a	r any other needs are listed in the Child Information
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date

Detroit Free Press/Flagstar Marathon: - October 19, 2008 Registration Fees | Registration Form



Detroit Free Press/Flagstar Marathon Waiver/Release

In consideration of your accepting this entry, I hereby, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, waive and release any and all rights and claims for liability and damages I may have against the Detroit Free Press/Flagstar Marathon ("Marathon"), its employees, agents, officers, governors, sponsors and volunteers, Detroit Free Press, Inc., Flagstar, Detroit Newspaper Partnership, the Cities of Detroit and Windsor, USA Track and Field, and their representatives, successors and assigns, for any and all injuries or death suffered by me in or arising from said event. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to understand the risks and determine whether I am fit to safely complete this event and the precautions I should take. I attest and certify that my physical condition and ability to safely complete this event have been verified by a licensed medical doctor (except where the latter is in violation of religious principles); and that I am physically fit and have sufficiently trained to complete this and future competitions. I grant to the Marathon and its sponsors and licensees the exclusive right to the free use of my name, voice and/or picture in any broadcast, telecast, advertising, promotion or other account of this event. I acknowledge that my entry fee is non-refundable and non-transferable, even if the race is cancelled. I agree that any legal claim or dispute arising out of or in any way relating to my participation in this event will be governed by the laws of Michigan and will be adjudicated exclusively by and in the Courts of Michigan.

The registrant acknowledges that MarathonGuide.com/Web Marketing Associates has no responsibility for the operation of the Detroit Free Press/Flagstar Marathon and associated events and is only acting as an agent to register applicants who wish to participate in the Detroit Free Press/Flagstar Marathon and associated events. Accordingly, the registrant agrees to hold MarathonGuide.com/Web Marketing Associates and its agents harmless from any liability or injury resulting from the Detroit Free Press/Flagstar Marathon and associated events. Furthermore, the registrant agrees that it shall have no claim against MarathonGuide.com/Web Marketing Associates for any Injury that may occur during the Detroit Free Press/Flagstar Marathon and associated events. The individual event operators and sponsors have provided information included in this site and MarathonGuide.com/Web Marketing Associates does not verify the accuracy or completeness thereof. All confirmed orders are final once payment is submitted. MarathonGuide.com/Web Marketing Associates does not issue refunds.

2008
Mort Harris Recreation
and Fitness Center

Youth Fitness Camp



Fun and Fitness 11-15 yrs.

Wayne State University 5210 Gullen Mall Detroit, MI 48202 313-577-2348 www.rfc.wayne.edu



WAIVER AND RELEASE STATEMENT. All exercise and participation is done at the risk of the participant (s). Wayne State University, its employees and agents are not liable for personal injury. By signing this form, I am releasing Wayne State University, its employees and agents from any and all claims for injuries, including bodily injury, damages and property loss the participant (s) might sustain through participation in any Wayne State University Recreation and Fitness Center programs. I understand that it is my responsibility to obtain medical clearance for the participant (s) if necessary and that I will be personally responsible for the cost of any medical expenses incurred by the participant (s) as a result of participating in any Recreation and Fitness Center activities. This Waiver and Release is binding on my and the participant's heirs, administrators, executors, successors and assigns. In the event that the paricipants (s) require emergency treatment and neither I nor the designed emergency contact can be reached, then I consent to the provision of emergency treatment by a licensed physician or hospital. I have read and understand this paragraph. I gave Wayne State University, its employees and agents the irrevocable right to use my child's, picture, portrait, or photograph in all forms and media and in all manners, including composite, for advertising, for publication or any other lawful purposes, and I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written copy, which may be created in connection therewith.

Signature	40.000		Date
Signature			

Printed Name