

CIAC OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION
ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
OCTOBER 2, 2008

Members present: Melissa Arms, Buddy Chernovetz, Ray Faustich, George Ford, Barry Fowler, Lucy Goodridge, Kevin Holmgren, Hank Koritkoski, David Leete, Joe Miller, Barbara Startup, Lev Torgerson, and Joe Tonelli, CIAC Staff.

Every Sport was represented!

Action Items/Discussion Items

On a motion by George Ford, the minutes of May 14, 2008 were approved.

The membership report was distributed and reviewed. Of note is that enrollment figures indicate that 3,525 individuals occupy 4,226 officiating slots. Many boards had a successful year recruiting new officials and this number is expected to increase. We will get you posted.

Membership cards have been mailed out way ahead of last year's schedule, thanks to the cooperation and efficiency of the local and state board secretary/ treasurers. The cards were sent first class and the red print indicating "membership card enclosed" proved to be worthwhile. We are in the process of resending cards to the small number of individuals whose mailing was returned to us because of incorrect addresses submitted to us by local boards. We are also correcting any cards that may have been missing a sport. A mailing of this magnitude is a labor intensive task and the entire process went extremely well.

Optional membership in the NFHS Officials Association has grown to close to 1,000 members which is fantastic in such a short period of time. The first officials' group to enroll all their members was soccer. If an entire board chooses to join the fee is only \$12.00 per member and includes excellent liability and accident/medical insurance coverage from Bollinger. It is a great deal with many other benefits that go along with being affiliated with the NFHS organization that writes our playing rules and governs high school athletics in the country. The insurance policy covers officials for high school games and all other games (except semi-pro or pro) for 52 weeks a week. Additionally, you can purchase optional D & O (Directors & Officers) Insurance that protects your entire organization as well as your officers and board members. Other membership benefits include: Officials quarterly magazine written by and for high school officials; exclusive online services for members ONLY that includes access to the rulebook and casebook and other educational material; eligible for State, Sectional and National awards; eligible for representation on the NFHS rules committee. Interested boards should contact Joe Tonelli at CIAC as soon as possible.

The budget committee presented the draft budget for 2008-2009 which reflects an increase in income. Since 50% of income can be expended to benefit all officials a

very favorable financial picture was presented. This is possible because of a generous CIAC subsidy and the support of Mike Savage, CIAC Executive Director. After discussion and on a motion by Ray Faustich, the 2008-2009 budget was unanimously approved.

The new recruitment brochures were distributed and board members were encouraged to take enough to distribute to their members. The brochure is an excellent marketing piece that contributes to the recruitment efforts. The Eastern Basketball Board has requested 300 brochures to assist with a push for new candidates. If you are in the Cheshire area feel free to stop by the office to pick some up or we can mail them to you.

Old Business/Informational Items

The rules interpretation meetings continue to serve a positive purpose, and for the most part, are well attended. It was noted that attendance by coaches in the area of the CCC League has been sporadic in some sports. One reason for this is that the CCC currently does not hold preseason meetings for their coaches in all sports which would provide an additional and convenient opportunity to for their coaches to fulfill this obligation.

Regarding the upcoming winter meetings Joe requested that the dates be sent to him as soon as possible. A schedule for submitting these dates is as follows: Fall Sports by June 1; Winter by October 1; and Spring by January 1.

It was reported that all fall sports were represented at the NFHS rules meetings in Indianapolis financed by the CIAC Officials' Association.

Various board members who attended a NFHS rules meeting shared their very positive experiences in all sports. This has been a great initiative and keeps all Connecticut officials current and up to date on the rules.

Joe reported that the DQ reports are serving a positive purpose and a recent report of an ejection of a coach resulted in a 5 day suspension imposed by the school.

Board members signed up for upcoming CIAC Board Meetings as follows: October 23- Ray Faustich, November 20- Kevin Holmgren, December 11- Dave Leete, January 22- Joe Miller, February 26- TBA, March 19- Jane Dahl, April 23-Lev Torgerson and May 21-Barbara Startup.

New Business

Background checks for officials were discussed at length. It was the unanimous feeling of the board that background screening for officials is coming and we should be proactive in forming a committee to study the issue and develop a feasible plan to address it. Gymnastics officials are required by their national organization to be cleared by a background check and the New Haven Basketball Board now screens all new candidates before approving their membership.

Joe has done considerable research and has excellent information provided by a NFHS survey that clearly indicates that more and more states are making background checks a prerequisite for becoming a certified official. The committee is being formed and includes volunteers Barry Fowler, Ray Faustich, and Joe DelBuono. More members will be added in the near future.

The charge of the committee is to develop a plan to initiate some form of background screening in the near future. Also, the committee will develop a series of questions that should be on all applications for officiating boards which would be an excellent initial step in the screening process. Joe will research companies that do background screening. It should be noted that there seems to be a ground swell regarding this topic and we hope it is not legislated before we have the chance to formulate a plan. We will keep you posted.

Jim Butler, the President of the State Football Board and a member of the Eastern Football Board asked me to poll the Advisory Board to determine if physicals are required in other sports for all officials. We learned that most groups do not require physicals. One board that does have a requirement is the NH Football Board. Soccer does have a physical fitness test. Sadly, a year ago, a member of the Eastern Football Board suffered a fatal heart episode after officiating a game which naturally raised the level of concern about this issue.

George Ford, a CPA, once again expressed a concern relative to safeguarding the social security numbers of officials to prevent identity theft. Two practical ideas surfaced that may help. The person asking the officials or handling the form should be an adult. Secondly, after the form has been completed it should be secured in a sealed envelope. We will make these suggestions to the member schools.

Joe Tonelli mentioned that Paul Hoey, CIAC Associate Executive Director, mentioned that we should consult with the Connecticut School Business Managers Association to see what they think about this topic. Maybe we can enlist their support by putting out a directive to member schools. The idea seems worth pursuing.

The topic of inappropriate comments in the media directed at officials by coaches was discussed. Soccer rep, Joe Miller, mentioned that he recently saw an article in which the coach's comments were totally out of line. Barry Fowler, the football rep, recounted a similar situation a few years ago in which a coach did a similar thing. Barry emphasized that local boards should address the issue through proper channels by contacting the athletic director first to seek his or her cooperation in addressing the breach of coaching ethics. Barry recommended and the board agreed that this is the proper protocol that should be followed. The same protocol is advisable when schools call CIAC to complain about the actions of an official. The school will be directed by CIAC to contact the official's board and to go through the proper channels.

Joe Tonelli emphasized that CIAC should be kept in the loop because when member schools know CIAC is involved they are likely to handle the situation in an appropriate manner. If the situation warrants, CIAC will communicate with the school by phone or by letter to further support the officials to whatever extent is advisable.

Joe gave an update on scrimmage fees and reviewed the guide lines that were developed through the collaborative effort of the CIAC Officials negotiating committee and a group of officials that attended one of their meetings. This officials' committee has been in place for more than 30 years and negotiates fees and deal with issues relative to the contract and working conductions. Looking at the issue from the officials viewpoint the most important change is that practically all schools now pay something for scrimmages, and more officials than ever before are being compensated for working scrimmages. It has been said that "Timing is everything" and although the athletic directors, most officials groups, and others would like to see scrimmage fees negotiated, it may be risky to establish additional fees in the worst budget climate that schools are about to face in many years. This topic is still being discussed by the officials committee. I believe that eventually the fees will be determined through a formal negotiation, but until then I offer the following suggestions: Most importantly, please don't set scrimmage fees unilaterally. The guidelines encourage mutually agreed upon fees. This can only be accomplished through dialogue between the leadership of officials groups and representatives from the schools you service. Is this an ideal situation? NO! But I am confident that when fair minded people open the lines of communication the fee decided upon will be fair for all. A half fee or a JV seems to be something that most people feel is reasonable, but that is for schools and boards to work out at this time. Your cooperation will be very much appreciated. The bottom line is, that when you look at the "Big Picture", no one can deny that the recent trends relative to scrimmage fees, is heading in the right direction for the vast majority of officials. Progress has been made and we ask that work things out in a fair and reasonable manner.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:15pm.
The next meeting is Tuesday January 6 2009@4pm@CIAC.

NOTE: As I transcribed these minutes, I could not help but think how much we accomplished at the meeting, and more importantly, the spirit of cooperation that exists amongst the board in an effort to assist all officials, while working together to benefit high school sports. 100% attendance... That's great!
Thanks for your cooperation!