

Summary of Statewide Officials Meetings

For the first time ever, the CIAC Officials Association sponsored statewide meetings on June 11, 18, and 20th for the leadership of all officials' organizations. Approximately 150 presidents, secretary/treasurers, commissioners and rules interpreters, representing most of the 55 boards in CT. attended these very worthwhile meetings.

The main purpose of these meetings was to further open the lines of communication between the individual officials, their respective organizations, the member schools they service and CIAC, and to foster a spirit of cooperation among all groups. Additionally it provided the opportunity to update all groups on the work of the CIAC Officials Association, and to publicly recognize and thank the officiating leaders for their many years of dedicated service to high school sports.

Although many important topics were discussed one of the most valuable and worthwhile initiatives that received unanimous support relates to the game rules, and the role of the state and local rules interpreters in all sports. Everyone agreed that the local officials' associations should do everything possible to provide officials with a thorough knowledge of the rules. To assist in this effort the CIAC and the CIAC Officials' Association has agreed to contribute \$500.00 towards the expenses to send the state interpreter in all sports to the NFHS rules interpretations meeting in Indianapolis Indiana. This is an important first step in the plan for rules education and should have an immediate and positive impact. In fact, the state interpreters in football, soccer, swimming, volleyball, and field hockey recently attended these very well run meetings and received first hand information on the new rule changes and the correct interpretations. The feedback that we received from those who attended has been outstanding.

The NFHS rules meeting schedule for all sports is available on the NFHS website and will be posted on the www.ciacofficialsassociation.org web page as it becomes available. The plan is to have the correct new rules interpretations passed on from the state interpreters to the local interpreters and from the local interpreters to all officials and coaches. This will put everyone on the same page and foster consistent rule interpretations throughout the state.

Additionally, with the input from the rule interpreters CIAC has clarified in the 2007-2008 CIAC Handbook the protocol that must be followed by member schools. To obtain Official rules interpretations member schools will be directed to work through their local interpreters when they want a routine question answered. If the play or situation actually occurred in a game, the local interpreter will consult with the state interpreter before reporting the official ruling to the school. CIAC will not be making game rule interpretations. Instead this important task will be handled by the experts, namely the local and state rules interpreters.

Some other topics and information that resulted from the input of the CIAC Officials' Association Advisory Board and those that attended the meetings which should be of interest to all officials:

- The enrollment period deadline for the CIAC Officials Association for 2007-2008 is September 1, 2007. The new membership cards cannot be processed until all groups have enrolled in order to list all sports on the same card for multi-sport officials.
- 10,000 professionally done recruitment brochures will be printed by September 1, 2007 and will be available for distribution by local boards and CIAC.
- CIAC has made it mandatory for head coaches or their designee to attend preseason rules clinics.

- The new direct web address for the CIAC Officials' Association is www.ciacofficialsassociation.org . This website is designed to assist all officials by providing meeting minutes and other worthwhile information. Also, there is a direct link to the NFHS web page for each sport and the latest rules interpretations.
- All attendees agreed that ejection of a player or coach should be the last resort. CIAC emphasized that all ejections by a game official will be upheld by CIAC and not be reversed.
- Effective in the fall of 2007 CIAC will institute an online reporting system for ejections that will be initiated by the official who made the ejection and sent to his/her commissioner who will forward this information to the CIAC.
- An excellent article that provided tips for completing an ejection report appeared in Referee Magazine and will be sent to local boards to pass on to officials. In short, the best advice when completing a report is to just state the facts! Do not editorialize!
- The commissioners discussed the challenges of getting postponement information in a timely manner. Matt Fischer, the CIAC Director of Information and Technology was praised by many for the progress that has been made toward achieving this goal through the CIAC on line notification system. All parties must do their part to make the system work effectively and continue to enhance communication.
- Speaking of improved communication, we are proud of the fact that every single official or prospective official who e-mailed or called the CIAC Officials' Association for assistance or information received a response in a timely manner. Based on the many positive comments and notes that we received, we know that the Officials appreciate having someone to contact when they have questions or concerns. This membership benefit that we view as a common courtesy will become our trademark and is the key to all quality organizations.
- Since e-mail is the most efficient way for CIAC to communicate with 4,000 officials please provide your board with your email so it will become part of your membership data.

In conclusion the meetings were very successful, well attended, and beneficial to everyone. The input and feedback that we received from veteran officials, officers, commissioners, and rules interpreters will help us better serve the officials and high school sports.

Thank you very much for your service to high school sports and for your excellent your cooperation and support.