

# CIAC OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION STATE-WIDE MEETING SUMMARY

*JUNE 18, 2015*

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was attended by approximately 100 officiating leaders representing practically all local or state boards. The main purpose of the meeting was to keep the lines of communication open, to update the members on important issues, share ideas for mutual benefit and to gain insight on various topics from guest speakers. The featured speaker was Clark Evans, the Chief Operating Officer of Arbiter Sports.

## **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

The group observed a moment of silence for the officials in Ct. that died this past year. May they rest in peace.

## **WELCOME** –Steve Wysowski, CIAC Associate Executive Director

Steve brought a welcome from CIAC and expressed appreciation for the excellent working relationship that exists between the officials' groups, the member schools and the CIAC. He also thanked the group for providing excellent service to high school athletics. Steve also informed the group that the first "CAS-CIAC "Hall of Honors" will take place on Saturday, October 17, 2015 at the Aqua Turf. It will be an annual event and Steve encouraged them to nominate deserving individuals from the officiating ranks for consideration. This year, from the officiating ranks, "Ro" Carlucci, a legendary 2 sport officiating leader in gymnastics and field hockey, and a 3 sport coach will be inducted posthumously. Steve, who is in charge of this event, mentioned that a press release with the initial class of inductees and ticket information will go out soon.

## **MEMBERSHIP TEMPLATE (2015-16)** – Joe Tonelli and Jadwiga Brown

Joe introduced Jadwiga, who is the administrative assistant to the CIAC Officials Association and the point person for the membership database. The registration process is working well and the membership template is the same as last year. The Boards were instructed to send additions, deletions and new candidates to [officialsupdates@casciac.org](mailto:officialsupdates@casciac.org) as per the instructions with the appropriate payment. The membership in the CIAC Officials' Association runs from July 1 to June 30 as does the NFHS membership for those boards that also join NFHSOA. No new members should be submitted unless they have consented to a background check and provided the information required, including their date of birth and middle name. Joe mentioned that it is important to send your 2015-16 rosters to as soon as you can. He also emphasized that we need full names, including the middle names or initials for the background checks. The CIAC membership fee is \$13 per sport and \$17 to join the NFHS Officials Association.

## **CONCUSSION LEGISLATION/ EDUCATION** – Fred Balsamo, CAAD Executive Director / Dir of Coaching Ed

Fred informed the group that concussion legislation for youth sports was proposed but the session ended with no action taken. He reminded the group that officials are not part of the law, but emphasized the importance of instructing all officials as to the signs and symptoms of concussions and following the protocol for Connecticut officials when a head injury or possible concussion is suspected. Since the signs and symptoms of concussion are included in all NFHS rule books it is importance that all officials complete yearly in-service training in recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussion and the protocol to follow when an athlete is suspected of sustaining a concussion. The NFHS has a free concussion course that boards should consider having their officials view.

Fred also reviewed the rule when a coach is ejected from a game. The game cannot continue until the member school replaces the ejected coach with a certified coach. If this cannot be accomplished in 15 minutes after the ejection, the official in charge will declare a forfeit win for the opposing team. It is important to note the official does not have a duty or a responsibility to verify that the individual who replaces the ejected coach is a certified coach. By Connecticut state law, that responsibility rests with the school.

## **NFHS NETWORK** – Joel Cookson, CIAC Director of Media Relations

Joel provided a handout in the packet pertaining to the NFHS Network and mentioned the expanded TV coverage of regular season and CIAC tournament games. He emphasized that the games can be viewed by anyone in the country at no cost after a 72 hour time period. (The NFHS network does charge to watch the game live). Joel provided the following link and instructions to view a particular event. Go to <https://NFHSnetwork.com/CIAC...> Then scroll down and

click the “More on Demand” button to see the entire archive of games available. Then just select the game you want to watch. This provides officials with a great opportunity to view games that you or others have officiated.

### **NFHS ELECTRONIC EXAMS / NFHS RULE BOOKS / ELECTRONIC COPIES OF EXAMS / ELECTRONIC ANSWER KEYS –**

These can be obtained through CIAC by contacting Joyce Smith at 203-250-1111 or email Joyce at [jsmith@casciac.org](mailto:jsmith@casciac.org).

NFHS ONLINE RULE INTERPRETERS MEETINGS - Joe T will notify the interpreters since he arranged for the interpreters in all sports to register individually. A schedule of all online meetings was included in the packet as well as the contact info for Joyce for rule books.

### **COACHES RULES INTERPRETATIONS MEETINGS**

Boards were encouraged to provide this service which enhances the relationship amongst coaches, leagues, and officials’ groups. Joe asked the interpreters to cover the CIAC protocol for lodging a complaint that was included in the packet as well as the new rules.

### **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

Joe T stressed that when meeting with new candidates it is helpful to provide them with a copy of the background check policy and consent form. Use the new consent form that can be obtained on the officials’ association website under downloads. The form includes a place for the middle name which is required and maiden name, if applicable. It was emphasized that boards should submit their new officials for the background check when they become candidates and not wait until they have passed all requirements. In accordance with the background check policy, officials that get arrested for crimes that could result in jail time must report the arrest to their local board and the local board will then notify CIAC. This is important especially when the arrest occurs during the season.

### **ARBITERPAY**

ArbiterPay is being used by several states to pay officials and this payment method is expanding at a steady pace. As you know ArbiterPay is already being used by several schools in Ct. If the use of this method of payment follows the pattern that has occurred in other states, the number of schools may increase. In fact, at the request of the leadership of the ice hockey officials in our state, the CIAC used ArbiterPay for 2015 ice hockey tournament and it work out very well. Therefore, we thought it would be wise to be proactive and provide all board leaders with the opportunity to learn more about ArbiterPay from an expert. We were very pleased that Clark made the trip from Utah to not only educate the officiating leaders about Arbiter Pay, but he also agreed remain after we adjourned the regular meeting to hold a special session with the assigners to address their questions and concerns relative to the Arbiter Assigning program that is used by 95% of the assigners in Ct .

In discussing ArbiterPay, Clark stated that it was developed by a basketball official, who is an accountant executive, and a banker by day and a ref at night. The goal was to give officials a more secure way to provide schools with the required info to process game fees; to provide schools with a more efficient method to make the payment to officials at a reasonable cost; and most importantly, he wanted to provide an option for officials to have the game fee deposited into their account quickly and at no cost to the officials. Clark also explained the mechanics and the security of the system and dispelled some of the incorrect notions about ArbiterPay and answered all of the questions from our group. Clark was a great addition to our state wide meeting as he provided a wealth of useful information to all the attendees.

### **ISSUES SURFACED DURING THE 2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR**

**Protocol Issues** –Please remind the officials to follow the protocol for lodging a complaint included in the state wide meeting packet when they have any issues, concerns or complaints that they would like to bring to the attention of a member school. Individual officials should bring these concerns to the board leadership rather than contact the coach or AD directly. Officials represent their respective boards and they should work through the board leadership who would decide the proper course of action to take, if any follow up is necessary. The reverse holds true also; Coaches, AD’s or school personnel should not contact officials directly; Schools should work through the athletic director and the AD will bring the matter to the attention of the assigner , if follow up is warranted so the matter can be addressed in a professional manner. This method has worked well in problem solving when issues arise.

**Comments that come back to haunt us** – All of us have made comments that, in hindsight, we wish we never made. But when unprofessional or inappropriate comments come from a game official during or after a game to coaches, school personnel, spectators or in a report, it is difficult to defend. The best officials maintain a calm demeanor and put out fires rather than throw gas on them.

**Conflict of Interest** – This issue seems to be coming up more these days because of the social media. It is a difficult dilemma for assigners in a small state like Connecticut, especially with the challenge of covering all the games on any given day. We are also dealing with “perception vs. reality” relative to this issue. Most people don’t realize that the refs don’t care who wins. Officials approach each game the same way as players and coaches do, and try to do the best possible job in every game they work. Conflict of interest was discussed at the Officials Association Advisory Board level and we all agreed that there seems to be more scrutiny about this in “big games” and tournament games, when the stakes are higher. Also, it usually comes from the team that loses. However, we also agreed that the onus is on the officials to let assigners know if they have a personal or professional conflict with certain schools so these issues can be avoided, when possible.

**Ideas worth sharing** – As always, this topic generated excellent ideas and revealed many of the outstanding programs conducted by local boards aimed at improving the quality of officiating, such as but not limited to the following initiatives: training for new candidates, training for younger or less experienced officials to get them to reach the next level; mechanics and on field review for all interested officials, observer programs (paid & unpaid), mentor programs aimed at retaining officials in years 1-3, evaluation programs to rate their officials and some spring sports boards mentioned that they take their officials to indoor facilities during the winter to work on the mechanics and other officiating skills. The bottom line is that the boards in Ct work extremely hard to provide quality service to the member schools and implement new programs because they know there is always room for improvement.

#### **PACKET HANDOUTS**

The packet contained the following information: Agenda, Advisory Board Minutes of May 14, 2015, CIAC & NFHS Membership counts, Instructions on Registering your board for 2015-16, Background check info, Timeline for roster and payment, NFHS Network info and a link for free viewing of games, CIAC Officials Concussion Protocol, Instructions for taking the on line free Concussion in Sports course, Listing of the 2015-16 NFHS on line interpreters, meetings, Info on ordering rule books from CIAC and obtaining the electronic exams and answer keys, Communication Protocol between member schools and officials groups for lodging a complaint, Revised Consent Form for background checks, Explanation of the CIAC arrest policy, Hard copy of a blank 100 question exam answer key, Decision of the judge in favor of the state association in the Oklahoma case where an official made an Incorrect ruling and called back the winning touchdown and 2015-16 Officials fee schedule for all sports.

THANK YOU!!! Have a great summer!