

CT OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION
SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY
BACKGROUND CHECKS
SEPTEMBER 14, 2009

Members present: Ralph Baldelli, Ron DeNuzzo, Rick Eddy for Joe Delbuono, Ray Faustich, Pat Javorski, Jay Kelleher, Hank Koritkoski, Dave Leete, Joe Perry, and Joe Tonelli, CIAC Staff

A summary of the February 4, 2009 meeting was distributed and accepted.

Joe T reported that the boards were very cooperative in submitting the date of birth of their members. Some boards asked for a little more time to gather that information and will be sending it to us.

Effective July 1, 2009, Minnesota and Pennsylvania have joined a growing list of states that are requiring officials to have background checks. In Minnesota background checks were mandated by the state high school association. In Pennsylvania, a state law was passed requiring all officials to have a background check as a prerequisite to officiate. The Pennsylvania requirement involves 3 different checks and will cost each official \$ 68.

The National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) position on background checks was distributed. In short, NASO supports a state or association's rights to conduct background checks on officials since it is a protection for the officials, the organizations they represent, and the people they serve.

It was reported that some local boards have already taken some proactive steps to screen their members, and some national organizations are requiring background checks for their members. Gymnastics Officials in Connecticut are also members of US Gymnastics and are required to submit proof of a state police check. Pat Javorski mentioned that the National Field Hockey Association has instituted background checks for their members and she felt that US Lacrosse would probably do the same. Joe Perry stated that the Eastern CT Football board has added some questions on their application regarding criminal history and Ralph Baldelli from Western Lacrosse reported that their new members are required to submit a background check. Ray Faustich reported that the Executive Board of the Fairfield County Chapter of Approved Baseball Umpires now requires all of their members to complete a Background Document that asks specific questions relative to criminal convictions. The FCCABU also amended their Constitution to address this policy that applies to all current members and new applicants. Ray stated that their executive board wanted to take a prudent approach to this issue and felt that FCCABU had an obligation to ensure that their umpires were good citizens and would not pose a threat to the youngsters they serve.

Joe T apprised the committee of the chronology regarding the discussions on the topic of background checks for officials. This illustrates that we have wisely moved forward in a deliberate manner.

CHRONOLOGY OF BACKGROUND CHECK DISCUSSIONS AND UPDATES

JAN 2008	Discussed for the first time at Advisory Board Meeting
MAY 2008	Discussed again by Advisory Board & put it on future agenda for action
JULY 2008	Discussed at Summer NFHS Meeting
OCT 2008	Advisory Board voted to form a Background check committee
OCT 2008	Update to all officials advising that a committee was formed
NOV 2008	First meeting of committee. Minutes posted
FEB 2009	Second meeting. Minutes posted.
APRIL 2009	Officials update as to the progress of committee
JUNE 2009	Discussed with 88 leaders of 47 of 53 boards @ state-wide meeting
JULY 2009	Discussed at NHS Summer meeting. Pennsylvania mandate, Minnesota decision to move forward
SEPT 2009	Third meeting of Background Check Committee. Minutes to be posted

By unanimous consent the committee decided to continue to move forward to finalize the plan to initiate background checks. The committee believes it is important to have a process that is developed by the CIAC, working in concert with the CIAC Officials' Association, rather than be mandated by the state legislators to follow a process in which we would have little, if any input, and be more expensive.

The remainder of the meeting focused on a review of the first rough draft of a policy for high school sports officials in Connecticut. As the committee discussed some of the proposed language of the policy, the following conclusions were reached:

- It should be a CIAC Policy that applies to all high school officials on all boards
- The policy should provide minimum requirements and standards that are applied consistently to all officials
- The policy should include some of the elements of the State Department of Education policy that applies to coaches in Connecticut.
- The policy should be consistent with policies that apply to officials in many states around the country.
- The policy should address the issue of confidentiality regarding the information provided by officials and the results.
- The policy should outline the mechanics of the entire process including consent, notification of non-approval, and due-process procedures
- The policy should identify the database company that will perform the checks
- The rough draft policy should be reviewed by the CIAC attorney for editing.

Joe T. mentioned that he again spoke with the people at the Oregon State High School Association and they continue to be well satisfied with the work provided by the Cris Company. Committee member Joe Perry provided the company with some individuals with known criminal records to test their work, and he was satisfied with the results.

Joe T. emphasized that the draft policy is a "work in progress" which will be further revised with the expertise of the CIAC attorney. We continue to move forward in a slow, but steady pace. The goal of the committee is to finalize the policy and procedure for background checks by late winter, so it can be presented to the CIAC Board of Control for their review. Joe thanked the committee for their time, effort, and willingness to work on this important issue.

The background check committee will meet again at a date and time to be announced.