

CIAC OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION
STATE-WIDE MEETING SUMMARY
JUNE 18, 2009

The meeting was attended by 88 officials representing 47 of the 53 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, and to share ideas for mutual benefit.

Matt Fischer, CIAC Director of Information Services, reviewed the following websites
www.ciacofficialsassociation.org , www.ciacsports.com, www.NFHS.org.

MEMBERSHIP TEMPLATE - Specific step by step instructions to simplify the submission of membership rosters were distributed and illustrated. Any questions please email Matt Fischer at mfischer@casciac.org. Membership templates should be emailed to Matt and returned no later than August 15, 2009. Matt explained the three (3) additional fields which must be submitted by all boards. Specifically the three (3) additional columns are *male/female, maiden name and date of birth*. **He assured the group all information will be password protected and safeguarded.**

The date of birth column will be hidden and used for the sole purpose of verifying a person's identity in a background check, when it is decided to move forward with this initiative. Data base companies need either a social security number or a date of birth and we do not intend to ask officials for social security numbers. Both the Background Check Committee and the CIAC Officials Association Advisory Board unanimously support requesting the DOB from all our members and it is a required field to be registered with CIAC. We are confident that the leadership of all boards will make sure their membership fully cooperates with this request.

BACKGROUND CHECKS – Although no definitive plans have been formalized, Joe Tonelli made the point that it is a reasonable expectation by schools and the general public that organizations servicing our youth do so with individuals who are solid citizens. The background check committee of the CIAC Officials Association will meet again in September to further develop a proposal to address this concern. Joe emphasized the CIAC wants to work together with all officials groups to provide leadership and direction in this regard, rather than simply mandate background checks and place the entire responsibility on the local officials' organizations like some states have done. We want to be proactive and adopt a reasonable plan that not only protects the local boards and the people you serve, but also it is paramount that the confidentiality of the information is safeguarded to protect the reputation of all officials. Background checks are a complex issue, and proceeding steadily and deliberately is the best approach to accomplish our goals. We will keep you informed.

LOCAL & STATE BOARD INITIATIVES - Since the topic of background screening of officials has been surfaced several local and state boards have voluntarily initiated various methods as a first step to screen their members. Some of these initiatives are as follows:

- Fairfield County Baseball Umpires Assoc. instituted a ‘background screening document’ that all of their members are required to complete. Vin Procachini, the FCBUA secretary, reported that they received 100% cooperation from their membership with this initiative and everything was handled discretely and worked out well.
- The Volleyball Officials also asked their new members on their application if they have ever been convicted of a crime of moral turpitude.
- The New Haven Basketball Board application indicates that new candidates may be subject to a background check.
- The Football State Board has directed the local board secretaries to screen their members through the Connecticut Sex Offender Registry, which is a free public website.
- The Western Lacrosse Officials Association also has taken steps to institute background checks of their membership, and several other groups are considering requiring new members to have a background check.
- It should also be mentioned that the CT Gymnastics Officials are required by US Gymnastics to have a background check with fingerprinting, paid by each member.

HANDOUTS – Here is a snap shot of the information contained in the meeting packets distributed to all attendees that was not previously discussed.

CIAC OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION MISSTION STATEMENT, GOALS & ISSUES – A discussion of this information and examples revealed that much progress has been made. Many of these issues are a work in progress and there is always room for improvement.

MEMO TO MEMBER SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND ATHLETIC DIRECTORS FROM THE CIAC BOARD - In support of all officials and in the interest of promoting sportsmanship, the CIAC Board sent a memo to principals and athletic directors to remind schools and coaches of the key role they play in setting the tone for proper conduct. In part, the message emphasized that it is inappropriate to confront an official after the game and it is unethical to publicly criticize the game official in the media. This support from the CIAC Board was very much appreciated!!

COMMUNICATION - PROTOCOL FOR LODGING A COMPLAINT BETWEEN MEMBER SCHOOLS AND OFFICIALS GROUPS –The CIAC Board of Control recommended that a protocol be established to continue to enhance the personal and professional relationship between member schools and officials groups. To comply with this request the CIAC Officials’ Association put together a protocol for lodging a complaint – *member school to officials group and officials group to member school*. This procedure will be in the 2009-2010 CIAC Handbook. We encourage all officials groups and member schools to follow this recommended protocol. To access the Protocol, click this link - http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/ciachandbook_0910.pdf. Go to page 162.

TOP & BOTTOM 10 MOMENTS IN SPORTS – The list identified the best and worse behaviors in sports.

CIAC OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2009 - This was distributed to emphasize that the minutes of all meetings are posted on the www.ciacofficialsassociation.org website.

NFHS OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION – Included the membership benefits and insurance benefits of joining the NFOA. The insurance covers officials for high school and all other amateur leagues. We currently have 1,100 CT officials who joined this past year through their local boards. Boards interested in joining or in need of more information are asked to contact Joe Tonelli as soon as possible. There are more than 110,000 NFHS Officials Association Members.

NFHS OFFICIALS EDUCATION – The use of technology and video is expanding. Through the officials association website you can access the educational clips in basketball, softball and soccer. Other sports will be added soon.

2009-2010 CIAC OFFICIAL FEES – A handout listing all the regular season and tournament fees was distributed. As many of you know the officials fees in CT are among the highest in the country and this was confirmed by the latest survey published in the Referee Magazine.

NFHS INTERPRETERS MEETINGS – This initiative is paying dividends and increasing the rules knowledge of officials and coaches. The process begins with CIAC covering the cost of sending the state rule interpreters to the NFHS interpretation meeting to get the correct information from the horses' mouth. The preseason rules meetings for coaches' continue to serve a very positive purpose in getting everyone on the same page.

IDEA SHARING – This portion of the meeting was very beneficial. Unfortunately, it was necessary to devote considerable time explaining the new membership template, background checks and the rationale for needing the date of birth etc, which limited our discussion time. Some of the topics discussed and the ideas that emerged were as follows:

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION of OFFICIALS

It appears that the economy has increased the new candidate's pool... the most significant increase was in baseball (150 new ump's). Some successful ideas mentioned are as follows: Utilize free advertising in papers; make the CIAC recruitment brochures available, recruit high school seniors and sons and daughters of officials and coaches; provide incentives for first year members, institute a mentor mentee program and pair new members with more experienced officials, and give the new officials games as soon as possible.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

- Use a team of trainers, if possible, to increase the number of candidates you can accept;
- provide support from veterans but also from 2nd and 3rd year officials who can encourage new officials to stay with it;

- Consider using game observers to critique officials,
- Incorporate an evaluation system getting input from coaches and fellow officials.

RULES EXAM and MECHANICS

- All officials should be required to pass a yearly exam;
- Review mechanics regularly
- Your more experienced officials should strive to be good role models for proper mechanics rather than take the attitude that *“this is the way I have done it for years”*.
- Regarding the rules, it is the job of all officials to enforce the rules consistently;
- Officials must not be selective or make up their own rules.
- It is important to critique all officials, not just the less experienced ones.

MENTOR & OBSERVER PROGRAMS

- All boards should at least consider initiating these valuable programs to some degree. Boards that already utilize these programs should consider expanding them. Some boards pay a minimal fee or at least cover the travel expenses of the observers. Other boards use volunteers and do not pay them.

TIME LINE for DUES COLLECTION

- Many boards collect their membership dues a year in advance and some collect the dues at their annual banquet.
- It is a mistake to wait until the season is about to begin to get the dues since it lends to members defaulting. Bottom line...the veteran secretary-treasurers advocate getting the dues well in advance.

MEETING WRAP UP

Joe thanked the group for the excellent cooperation and support that CIAC has received from all officials groups and for their dedicated service to high school sports. Let us know how we can continue to support your efforts. Enjoy the rest of the summer.