



2018 SURVEY

*Recruitment Strategies
& Membership Trends*



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Sport	Board	Membership Is Increasing	Membership Is Decreasing	Membership Is Staying The Same	New Officials Per Year
Baseball	Middletown Baseball				3
	Western Baseball				10
	Eastern Baseball				12
	Hartford Baseball				15
	New Haven Baseball				20
	Torrington Baseball				3
	Central Baseball				7
	Fairfield Baseball				12
Basketball	Northeast Basketball #35				10
	Eastern Basketball #8				15
	Litchfield Basketball #7				15
	Fairfield Basketball #9				15
	New Haven Basketball #10				25
	Hartford Basketball #6				25
Field Hockey					10
Football	Eastern Football				7
	Hartford Football				12
	Fairfield Football				2
	Western Football				5
	Colonial Football				7
	New Haven Football				8
Gymnastics					2
Ice Hockey					20
Lacrosse	Boys LAX Western				8
	Boys LAX Northern				12
	Girls LAX				15

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Sport	Board	Membership Is Increasing	Membership Is Decreasing	Membership Is Staying The Same	New Officials Per Year
Soccer	Western Soccer				7
	Central Soccer				15
	Coastal Valley Soccer				6
	Fairfield Soccer				8
	Eastern Soccer				10
	New Haven Soccer				12
Softball	Middlesex Softball				1
	Northwest Corner Softball				2
	Independent Softball				3
	Eastern Softball				5
	North Central Softball				5
	Fairfield Softball				5
	Northeast Corner Softball				1
	Manchester Softball				2
	Plainville Softball				2
	New Haven Softball				5
	Waterbury Softball				5
New Milford Softball				8	
Swim	Connecticut Swimming				3
	Western Swimming				3
Volleyball	Fairfield Volleyball				6
	Northern Volleyball				10
	Southern Volleyball				4
Wrestling					5

SURVEY – RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES - 100% RESPONSE RATE!!

Membership Trends

In an effort to summarize the survey document and responses, we combined some of the questions and listed the responses most frequently mentioned.

What percentage of new candidates become a registered official?

- More than 80 to 90% finish the training – It's actually retaining them beyond the first year that is difficult.
- Many leave in the first 3 years of service – If you keep them three years, then you usually have them long term.

Does your Board have a website?

- 65 to 70% of the boards have a website.

Does the website include the new members' applications?

- A majority of the websites contain the membership applications;
- It seems logical that if your board has a website, a new candidate's information should be on it.

What groups do you target in your recruitment efforts?

- Many indicated that their members are their best recruiters, so their main target group is friends, siblings, relatives, and friends of their members;
- Officials from other sports was also ranked high;
- Next was college students and athletes, followed closely by youth and recreation league officials, high school students, athletes, and other school personnel;
- Ex-players and coaches was also mentioned as a specific target group;
- Public servants and retired military individuals were also mentioned;
- We would like suggest that you also ask your new candidates if they have a relative or friend that may be interested in starting the training program with them.

Recruitment Strategies used and what works best?

- Word-of-mouth and one-on-one personal contact was the most repeated strategy mentioned, as the best way to recruit officials;
- We get the majority of our officials from our current members – Members are the best recruiters! (numerous responses said the same);
- Website/free newspaper advertisement, email blasts (numerous people responded that they use free newspaper blurbs);
- We have business cards that our members distribute to prospective recruits;
- Social Media - Facebook and Twitter etc.;
- Recruiting other sport officials – CIAC made a big push in 2007 in this area and it was successful;
- The CIAC website which contains a recruitment PSA and a brochure with contact information;
- Notices sent to local high schools to attract high school seniors;
- Having a table at the state finals to attract new members;
- Post flyers at work - CIAC can help;
- Talking to youth officials turning 18 years old;
- Email messages sent to local community colleges and universities;
- Send email to client AD's and other program directors/managers/high school and college coaches;
- Work with local AD's to speak to graduating seniors and other students who are interested;
- Referees registration with US Soccer;
- We train local little-league high-school-aged umpires and try to groom them for high school. I have also included several adults in the little-league training, two of whom have gone on to work high school games.

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Do you have any incentives to attract new candidates?

- Most boards do not have any incentives, free or reduced membership fees;
- We offer current members a bounty of \$25 to secure new applicants with no maximum;
- We give a \$25 restaurant gift card to any current member who can get one new member to join;
- We have an incentive for current members to bring on new members (reduction in dues, if a new member stays for two years);
- Discounts for new members (college students).

When a potential candidate contacts you or you receive a referral from CIAC or others, do you have a standard response that is sent to the candidate?

- Follow-up personally and let them know that we will have them on the field that season;
- Direct contact - We talk to them by phone or e-mail since personal contact is the best way to recruit (numerous people mentioned this);
- Custom, personalized response to each inquiry;
- Members in charge of new recruits send information packets including training sessions, by-laws, constitution and other important information;
- Standard email with attachment, welcome letter, and link to online application;
- Our website shows the information needed to become an umpire;
- Since some are transferring in as seasoned officials from other areas and some are completely new to Lacrosse, we have two different responses that go out to new applicants;
- Send them an email to explain our organization and inform them that we added them to our data base for notification when the training begins.

Does your board have a working relationship with the college or university intramural directors in your area?

Which one?

- UCONN has the best college program in the state for training officials to work their intramural games, and the boards that have established a working relationship with this program have benefitted;
- Some boards have established a relationship with Connecticut College, Trinity, WCSU, and some community colleges;
- Bhavin Parekh, who heads up the UCONN program, is willing to work with any board member who is interested. He has also provided a list of contacts at the other colleges in Connecticut.

When officials in other sports join your sport does it usually work out?

- Most said this works out well - They are accustomed to the routine and fit in quickly;
- Especially the ones that have game-management skills and want to get better as an official;
- We do in fact have officials that work other sports, thankfully.

Does your board have requirements that must be met before an official is assigned a game?

(We also included the responses that dealt with the training of officials. *Note: We included a lot of comments here to indicate the excellent job that boards do to train officials.*)

- Complete our new-members class which is the protocol for most boards;
- Three apprentice meets including diving and follow-up on each from meet referee;
- Must attend an interpretation meeting, complete a refresher exam, and must attend board meetings;
- Attend training class, field sessions, and clinics;
- Be observed by veteran officials and be recommended for specific levels;
- Attend sensitivity training class;
- References and our association's annual exam. Probationary member for two years;
- Complete NFHS Concussion Course and attend a jamboree;
- Must be physically fit and pass physical-fitness assessment;
- Have the correct uniform and equipment needed to officiate;

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- IAABO requirement of a pass-completion of written exam and floor test prior to any game assignments;
- Must attend mandatory on-field clinic as well as pass a physical-fitness assessment;
- New this year: Four classroom sessions and four cage sessions in addition to working with an experience official;
- Training session in a gym with our assignor and training committee. Classroom sessions to provide rules and mechanics over-view via video, power point, and questions and answers;
- New official meetings an hour before each board meeting and also mentoring from partner and other officials;
- Classroom and field sessions - Review of rules and case studies. Shared knowledge with experienced umpires;
- We have a ten-week training program with eight weeks of rules and mechanics training plus two clinics. One clinic is with live pitching also covering plate mechanics, and the second clinic being a base mechanics session. Both of the clinics are done indoors;
- Several meetings going over rules and mechanics and a field clinic then shadowing at scrimmages;
- Training includes both Part 1 and Part 2 of the NFHS Exam, classroom training, and on-court training during the summer. In addition, we provide on-court training during a pre-season Jamboree where new officials are paired with seasoned officials and trainers along with pre-season scrimmage training on court;
- In addition to other training methods, we include test-study groups and webinars online.

Please indicate the reasons your board members stop officiating by checking all that apply.

- Number 1 – Age and health issues;
- Number 2 – Work/jobs;
- Number 3 – Job requirements preventing officials from being available;
- In the past, many officials were school teachers. Teachers are now required to remain at school later in the day limiting their availability;
- Some new candidates leave once they find out the time commitment; and some leave because of the verbal abuse from fans and coaches especially at the lower levels;
- Dissatisfaction with schedules – Thinking they deserve the 'A' games;
- Abuse from coaches and parents is also a factor but not to an extreme;
- Relocation;
- Today's new members expect to be working high-level games right away;
- Join and then advance to the college level exclusively;
- Conflict with the board;
- Official/parent coaching and/or watching their children play sports;
- The disparity in the game fee for lower level high school officials compared to our youth games has driven our lower level officials to just do youth games.

Does your board provide any mentoring services for new officials?

- Encourage all veteran officials to mentor all new officials when they can;
- Those just beginning to be observers this year;
- Offer off-season clinics and camps;
- Have HUDL accounts for all our members and our board will pay for an extra one or two officials to work JV/freshman games with newer officials;
- We apply observation program through our better officiating committee;
- We strongly encouraged all new officials to attend varsity level matches on their off days;
- Assign a veteran official to work the games with the new candidate when possible;
- We offer a camp reimbursement program;
- Use camera to record action on field and then review to correct areas needing improvement;
- Our mentoring program to provide the new official with a seasoned official where they will work approximately five (youth or lower level high school) games together in a season. We receive grants from US Lacrosse for observation. I will go out as the assigner and observe officials on a regular basis. We do indoor

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lacrosse leagues during the off-season. We will bring in officials that want to improve. This usually is mechanics training (example: three-man mechanics);

- Scholarships available for CWLOA members for off-season training opportunities provided by US Lacrosse;
- We attempt to assign a specific mentor to every first-year official.

Do you have any suggestions relative to other ways to recruit and retain more officials?

- Emphasize to athletic directors and coaches to encourage former players to look into officiating;
- Email blasts from CIAC to coaches and athletic directors asking them to help encourage new officials;
- We continue to offer training and support to second and third year officials to help keep them energetic and eager to improve;
- Target younger candidates, including younger players being active in their sport, well after their playing days;
- Encourage more publicity and positive support for officials and less on the negative side;
- Emphasize to your membership that they are the best recruiting tool;
- Work closer with local colleges;
- Incorporate youth-training initiatives;
- Provide new officials with a more defined and consistent pathway to success;
- Majority of members were recruited from teaching back in the 1980's (70%). Now we are lucky to get 10-15% from teaching. Schools should allow those who teach to not have after-school duties when they are assigned to games;
- Go directly to high school athletic directors and coaches about players who are graduating high school;
- Suggest that you ask your new candidates if they have a relative or friend who may be interested in starting the training program along with them.

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Have you
been thinking
about becoming
a high school
sports official?

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NEED YOU!**

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Call Joe Tonelli
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The
Game*

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