



THE CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

June 17, 2020

Dear Connecticut Officials,

OFFICERS:

Chair

Anthony Azzara, Principal
Sacred Heart High School,
Waterbury

Vice Chair

Sheila Riffle, Principal
Old Saybrook High School

Secretary

Matthew Ryan, Principal
East Hartford High School

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Glenn Lungarini

Associate Executive Director

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I hope this correspondence finds you and your family well as we continue to manage our way through the COVID-19 pandemic. As the CIAC enters its 100th year of operation, we have taken time over the past year to review our business relationship with officials' boards/associations. Through our review, the CIAC was pleased with the relationship we have developed over the past 20 years and has provided services above and beyond the stated terms of our agreement. We also discovered several items that must be addressed as we move forward. As such, I am writing to you as the executive director of CAS-CIAC to ensure that all officials hear directly from me on the areas requiring attention and to address any misunderstanding that may have arisen during this process.

An important clarification is that the CIAC has no interest in controlling officials' boards/associations operations, assigning, scheduling, or structure as independent organizations. Also, the CIAC has no interest in altering the status of officials as independent contractors who maintain their own boards/associations to run as they see fit. Simply, the CIAC needs to address areas that present a risk to our member schools and our organization; address database alignment and accuracy between officials' boards/associations and the CIAC; and, address the financial disparity incurred by CIAC throughout our business relationship. While addressing these areas of concern, the CIAC is also interested in collaborating with all officials' boards/associations to update the original/current agreement to better align with the current environment of officiating and increase joint decision-making among our groups.

Items Requiring Address

1. Connecticut is a 100% NFHS state. This means that CT officials enjoy benefits such as representation on NFHS rules committees; an unlimited number of free electronic NFHS sport rules (Part I and II) and mechanics exams for officials; free access to sport rules PowerPoints; free access to online rule interpreter's meetings; access to the NFHS online "Fundamentals of Officiating" course; access to the NFHS rules app; exclusive online education content; insurance coverage for all levels of officiating with a \$2,000,000 per occurrence limit and \$5,000,000 aggregate limit; eligibility for NFHS awards program; and a reduced fee for NFHS sport-specific courses. As a 100% state, Connecticut officials pay \$17 to NFHS for membership. In addition to the benefits each official receives by registering with the NFHS, it is a necessary part of CIAC's verification that all officials meet this standard. As part of the exclusivity granted to CT officials by the CIAC, it is CIAC's responsibility and liability to ensure that all officials who service our member schools are properly trained, certified, background checked, and understand and are able to apply NFHS rules. This year, it was realized by the NFHS and CIAC that not all CT officials have been registering with the NFHS as required, however, have been benefiting from CT's 100% state status.

- o An email from the NFHS Chief Operating Officer addressed this issue and stated, "I wanted to follow up our conversation earlier this week regarding Connecticut and your NFHS 100% state status. As you know, this program is designed to be cost-

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effective as well as provide ALL of your contest officials with NFHS assets. However, in order to accomplish this goal we require that all officials in a 100% state be part of the program and registered with us... so that we are able to monitor the value of the program. Having said that... you have a group of officials... that are not registered as part of the 100% state program through the state of Connecticut. If that is the case, this would exclude ALL Connecticut officials from receiving the \$17 - 100% state rate, and would move Connecticut to a Tier 2 status at a cost of \$25 per official, or to an Individual status at a cost of \$35 per official... Our wish is to maintain Connecticut in the 100% state program. Yet, based on our conversation, I need you to verify that 100% of your officials are registered and enrolled in the NFHS 100% state program.”

- This means that all officials in CT must register with the NFHS moving forward. As the executive director of CIAC, I have offered to speak with NFHS and attempt to negotiate putting this requirement off until the 2021-2022 registration year. The CIAC understands that various groups choose to pay a membership fee with sport specific national officials’ associations. However, those elective memberships are not required to officiate games in CT. Whereas, CIAC requires membership with NFHS and CIAC to officiate games with our member schools.
2. Implementation of Arbiter’s registration technology to correct common reoccurring errors by officials’ boards. Arbiter charges a \$6 fee for individual official’s registration through its system. This item has been misunderstood as an increase in CIAC fees. Registering through Arbiter significantly enhances record keeping and communication capabilities for both secretaries of officials’ boards and the CIAC. The additional \$6 fee is paid directly to Arbiter and stays with Arbiter. The CIAC fee remains at \$13. The CIAC does not benefit financially through this \$6 fee paid to Arbiter. However, after 20 years of operating and communicating through Excel spreadsheets, it is necessary to eliminate commonly reoccurring errors by utilizing the technology provided to both officials’ boards and CIAC, by Arbiter.
 3. The significant annual cost absorbed by CIAC specific to our business partnership. On an annual basis the CIAC absorbs nearly \$83,000 of costs resulting from our partnership. This is not COVID related. This annual deficit has been constant for several years and is the result of the CIAC only increasing dues by \$3 over the past 20 years. It is estimated that an increase in annual CIAC membership fees from \$30 (which includes \$17 to NFHS) to \$59 (which includes \$17 to NFHS and \$6 to Arbiter) would bring CIAC’s annual loss to approximately \$5,000. After speaking with the CIAC Officials Advisory Board, it became clear that more time was needed to address this item. Therefore, the CIAC agreed to postpone any dues increase to the 2021-2022 school year and commits to engaging officials’ boards in dialogue to review costs, services provided, and options for correcting this imbalance. While the existing agreement between officials and the CIAC gives the CIAC sole authority to determine fees and terms of membership, the CIAC agrees with the rationale shared by many officials’ boards that a joint review is more appropriate and, in the interest of moving forward in a continued positive and productive partnership, is ready to engage in that dialogue.

What This Means for 2020-2021

- The CIAC registration fee per official will remain at \$13 in the 2020-2021 school year.
- The NFHS 100% state fee will remain at \$17 per official for the 2020-2021 school year. Those officials who have benefited from CIAC ‘s 100% state status without registering with the NFHS will need to come into compliance, unless the CIAC executive director comes to an agreement with the NFHS, and those officials not in compliance, to delay implementation to the 2021-2022 school year.
- To improve the accuracy of registration records and communication capabilities for both official’s boards and the CIAC, we are seeking to use Arbiter technology for the registration of all CIAC officials. Upon registering, each official will be charged a \$6 fee by Arbiter, which stays with Arbiter. The CIAC does not receive any portion of that \$6 fee.
- The CIAC will review the annual fiscal loss that results from the current business relationship with interested officials’ boards to determine a new structure for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond.

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In addition to these points, the CIAC wants to ensure officials that there is no interest in profiting off our business relationship or assume control of any aspect of your independent boards/associations. To this fact, as executive director of CIAC, I have offered consideration of the following:

1. The CIAC and the Officials Advisory Board will conduct an annual review of collected CIAC fees and expenses. If in any one year the CIAC shows a profit from collected officials fees, the CIAC and Officials Advisory Board will jointly agree how to manage the surplus. Options may include refunding boards a share of the surplus, using the funds to offset dues the following year, using the funds to send officials to conferences, applying the funds to a student scholarship, etc.
2. If the annual financial review shows two consecutive years of a deficit, the CIAC and Officials Advisory Board will jointly explore options to reduce costs or identify an appropriate fee increase.
3. Again, the CIAC has no interest in taking control of any aspect of your individual boards/associations or change your status as independent contractors. The CIAC is interested in collaborating with interested officials' boards to revise the original/current agreement and develop new language that better represents the current state of officiating and joint decision-making.

Current Agreement Between the CIAC and Officials

Recently, I have participated in three extensive Zoom meetings and one in-person meeting with leaders of various officials' boards. Frequently, I have heard from a select few about what was agreed upon at the inception of our business relationship. Over the past 20 years, the agreed upon relationship has not changed and is written into the CIAC handbook. What has changed over the past 20 years is the level of services, access, and increased need for conflict resolution. To assist our younger officials in understanding the original/current agreement that is often referenced, I will provide the current agreement as Appendix I to this letter. Furthermore, Appendix II provides a sample of the services that CIAC provides officials.

It is my hope that this communication has provided you with a deeper understanding of the current dialogue between officials' board's leadership and the CIAC. Additionally, it is my hope that this correspondence acknowledges my interest in improving communication with all officials, working with interested officials groups to modernize our relationship and services, and establish a system that will provide a true collaborative balance for the future.

Sincerely,



Glenn Lungarini
Executive Director
CAS-CIAC

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Appendix I

The current agreement reads that the CIAC Board of Control:

- Shall have the sole authority to designate which association or associations of officials shall be recognized as a governing authority over officials in each interscholastic sport.
- Shall have the sole authority to designate which association or associations of officials shall represent the officials in each interscholastic sport for purposes of negotiating fees and working conditions.
- Shall have the sole authority to negotiate or set regular season and tournament fee schedules and working conditions for officials of all CIAC-sponsored interscholastic sports; member schools shall adhere to all published CIAC officials fee schedules and working conditions.
- Shall have the sole authority to register game officials for interscholastic competition, and shall have the sole authority to determine requirements for membership, conditions for revocation, probation or suspension of registration. A school shall use only persons registered with the CIAC Officials' Association and on the approved list established by CIAC for purposes of officiating interscholastic contests controlled by CIAC, at all levels of play.

CIAC RECOGNIZED OFFICIALS GROUPS

The CIAC has recognized the following officials' groups to officiate high school contests:

- Connecticut State Board of Approved Baseball Umpires
- Connecticut State Board of Approved Basketball Officials
- Connecticut Football Officials Association
- Connecticut Field Hockey Association Official's Board
- Connecticut Charter of National Association of Women's Gymnastic Judges
- Connecticut Chapter of National Ice Hockey Officials
- Connecticut Lacrosse Officials Association
- Western Connecticut Lacrosse Officials Association
- Connecticut Women's Lacrosse Officials Association
- Connecticut National Federation of Softball Umpires (Affiliated with USA Softball CT)
- Connecticut Soccer Officials Association
- Connecticut Swimming Officials Association
- Western Connecticut Swimming Officials Association
- Connecticut Board of Volleyball Officials
- Connecticut Wrestling Officials Association

EXCLUSIVITY

Exclusivity means that at all levels of play the CIAC requires all member schools to use only officials who presently are members of a recognized officials group and on the approved list established by CIAC unless assignments cannot be filled due to shortage of officials. This will include anyone who is a member of a group listed above. It also means that no new group of officials will be allowed to become eligible to officiate contests in member schools unless they become part of the state officials' group which is presently recognized by the CIAC for negotiating purposes. These groups are listed below:

- Connecticut State Board of Approved Baseball Umpires
- Connecticut Board of Approved Basketball Officials
- Connecticut Field Hockey Association Official's Board
- Connecticut Football Officials Association
- Connecticut Charter of National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges
- Connecticut Chapter of National Ice Hockey Officials
- Connecticut Lacrosse Officials Association

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- Connecticut Women's Lacrosse Officials Association
- Connecticut National Federation of Softball Umpires (Affiliated with USA Softball CT)
- Connecticut Soccer Officials Association
- Connecticut Swimming Officials Association
- Connecticut Board of Volleyball Officials
- Connecticut Wrestling Officials Association

Note: When a state board does not exist, for negotiating purposes, the CIAC recognizes the officials group that services the largest number of CIAC member schools for that sport.

SERVICE TO MEMBER SCHOOLS

No officials group listed in "CIAC Recognized Officials Groups" and "Exclusivity" section will have the right to withhold services from any member school which seeks assignments without the expressed approval of the CIAC.

AGREEMENTS

- Both CIAC member schools and the officials associations which provide officiating services for CIAC member schools are obliged to honor the conditions of these respective agreements. Grievances or concerns related to any of the conditions of any agreement should be resolved between the official(s) and the school and, if necessary, be referred to the CIAC Officials Committee. CIAC sport committees are requested to notify the Officials Committee regarding any changes in rules or game conditions which may affect any provision of an agreement.
- The CIAC instructs each member school to pay the fees as published for that sport in this handbook. Payment should be made within a 30-day period.
- The CIAC Board of Control herewith expresses its appreciation to the various officials' associations for their cooperation and continued support of high school athletics.
- Any concerns or questions related to these agreements should be made to the executive staff of CIAC.

RECOGNITION STANDARDS FOR SPORT OFFICIAL ASSOCIATIONS

1. Provide by July 1 an electronic membership roster to the CIAC Officials' Association of all officials certified to do high school contests. The electronic roster should be sent to officialsupdates@casciac.org and must include all of the information specified in the membership template. All officials must be 18 years old to service high school sports as an official.
2. Provide by July 1 of each year a constitution and by-laws.
3. Provide evidence that regular meetings are held during the year.
4. Provide by July 1 of each year a list of officers for the association.
5. Provide a list of criteria as evidence that the officials on the roster are skilled, trained, and knowledgeable of the game rules adopted by the CIAC in each respective sport.
6. Provide evidence that all officials have successfully completed yearly in-service training clinics, and an annual examination on the rules.
7. Provide evidence 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.
8. Provide evidence that the association has an on-going program for evaluation officials.
9. Provide by July 1 a list of assignment commissioners including addresses, e-mails and telephone numbers.
10. Provide evidence that there is an on-going program to encourage new membership and to train new officials.
11. Provide a statement that the association does not discriminate according to age, sex, race, creed, etc.
12. Provide evidence that the association is serving a minimum of eight (8) CIAC member schools and does not limit service to one league exclusively.
13. Provide the criteria used to determine when an official is qualified to officiate varsity level contests (i.e. number of years at the sub-varsity level, etc.)

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BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR OFFICIALS

All officials must be cleared through a CIAC background check to be included on the approved list for CIAC-sanctioned contests, and to be accepted as a member of the CIAC Officials Association. Such checks were performed on all current officials and new candidates during the initial year of the program (2011-12). Subsequently, background checks will be performed on new candidates only. Current members can be subject to a follow-up background check at any time at the discretion of CIAC.

It is the responsibility of the local officials association to obtain the date of birth of each of their members and verify for the CIAC that the individuals submitted to the CIAC Officials' Association have consented to the CIAC background check.

To best serve our member schools and student-athletes, local boards are expected to adhere to the CIAC Policy for Connecticut High School Sports Officials that can be accessed at www.ciacofficialsassociation.org under downloads, and assign only those officials from the approved list to officiate CIAC-sanctioned contests.

CIAC STATE RULE INTERPRETERS AND PROTOCOL

Official game rules interpreters for sports that are governed by the National Federation are selected by their respective state officials' organizations. The primary responsibility for the CIAC State Rule Interpreter will be to assist the CIAC staff by interpreting game rules to member school athletic directors, coaches and others that need clarification or interpretation. This process allows for experienced and knowledgeable individuals to uniformly apply appropriate interpretations to game rules.

The athletic director shall contact the local board rules interpreter with the question or situation. If it is a routine information type question, the local interpreter will provide the ruling, or if necessary, he/she will consult with the state interpreter. If the inquiry from the athletic director is an actual game situation, the local interpreter must consult with the state rule interpreter before providing an official ruling. Athletic directors should always work through their local interpreter and should not contact the state interpreter directly. The state interpreter is responsible for communicating with CIAC regarding all requests for rulings that result from an actual game situation. Contact information for local and state interpreters can be accessed on the www.ciacofficialassociation.org web site.

FEE SCHEDULES

All CIAC member schools will only pay the fees published in the CIAC Handbook.

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME FEES

Member schools/leagues must pay the following fees for league championship games:

1. All games of a league championship other than the final game – quarter-final CIAC tournament fee for that sport.
2. Final league championship game – semi-final CIAC tournament fee for that sport.

GUIDELINES FOR SCRIMMAGE FEES

- Officials should be compensated for working scrimmages.
- Schools and/or leagues that are able to make their own arrangements with local officials to work scrimmages may pay mutually agreed upon fees. That should be determined during budget season so districts can prepare for paying the cost.
- Long-standing scrimmage fee arrangements for ice hockey and lacrosse and for geographical areas of the state will remain in effect.
- Officials who are asked to work more than two (2) hours or the length of a regular game contest should receive additional compensation for the extra time worked.
- Schools should expect to pay fees only for the number of officials who work games in that sport. Fees may be shared among officials if more officials than needed work the contest.
- If schools request officials' organizations to assign scrimmages, officials will be paid a minimum of 50% of a regular season fee for working the scrimmage.

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CIAC OFFICIALS MISSING CONTESTS RESOLUTION

1. School complaints resulting from officials missing contests must first come before the local officials' board to determine the validity of the complaint.
2. Only cases which result in the cancellation of contests will be acted upon. If contests are not cancelled, but rather played through alternate arrangements, the matter will not be forwarded to the respective officials' organization for resolution.
3. Only cases which result from CIAC-sponsored activities at any high school level will be heard.
4. When a complaint is heard by the state officials' association and the official in question is found to be at fault and caused the cancellation of a contest, the maximum financial penalty will not be greater than the fee that would have been paid to the guilty party(s).
5. All cases that cannot be resolved by the state officials' association will be referred to the CIAC officials committee, whose responsibility it will be to meet with the school and official(s) in question along with the state officials' board, and negotiate an agreement.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL BETWEEN MEMBER SCHOOLS AND OFFICIALS' GROUPS

The CIAC Board of Control expects principals to remind all of the coaches of their responsibilities as role models for good sportsmanship, especially in their interaction with the officials during the game and immediately after the contest. It is inappropriate for coaches to confront an official after a game and to publicly criticize the game officials in the media. It is also important that officials conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and be a calming force when confronted with a volatile situation.

The communication protocol has been established to continue to enhance the personal and professional relationship between member schools and officials' groups and to keep the lines of communication open for mutual benefit. It is the expectation of the CIAC Board of Control that this protocol will be followed by all parties to resolve issues that may arise.

LODGING A COMPLAINT – MEMBER SCHOOLS TO OFFICIALS' GROUPS

To lodge a complaint or express a concern regarding game officials or other members of the officials' association, coaches and others should work through the athletic director of the school. The athletic director will contact the assigner first, or the president of the officials' board, only when necessary so the matter can be referred to the person or group designated by the board to handle issues of this nature. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the officials' board may request that the concern be expressed in writing. The appropriate individual will look into the matter and follow-up with the athletic director.

LODGING A COMPLAINT – OFFICIALS' GROUPS TO MEMBER SCHOOL

To lodge a complaint regarding a coach or to express other school related concerns, the official or the association should work through the assigner or the person or group designated to handle issues of this nature. The appropriate individual will contact the athletic director first or the principal, only when necessary. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the school may request that the concern be expressed in writing. The athletic director will look into the matter and follow-up with the appropriate person.

RESOLUTION

The goal is for all parties to be satisfied that the concern was addressed appropriately and in a timely manner. Also, that the matter was handled with professionalism and through proper channels. The expectation is that every effort will be made by all parties to resolve the issues on the local level. If an impasse results related to any of the conditions of any agreement, the matter can be referred to the CIAC Officials Committee for a resolution, only if necessary.

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Appendix II

Sample of Services Provided by the CIAC Officials Association Director

- Handles all matters pertaining to officials from the CIAC member schools, the general public and the leadership of the 50 officials' groups in all sports;
- Serves as a resource person for all officials' groups;
- Conducts background checks for officials and communicates on a regular basis with the background check company, the contact person for each board and other resources; then takes appropriate action in accordance with the CIAC policy, when necessary;
- Establishes and chairs the CIAC Advisory Board, consisting of one rep from each sport, selected by their respective state boards which meets a minimum of 3 times per year;
- Conducts an annual meeting with 2 reps from each of the boards in June to review the year, share best practices and topics of interest;
- Prepares the agenda, meeting packets and meeting minutes for all meetings connected with the CIAC Officials Association;
- Communicates with schools, leagues and officials' groups to develop a list of preseason rules meetings for coaches in all sports provided by rule interpreters to review the new rules;
- Works with officials' board leaders and member schools to enhance the communication protocol that all parties should follow to address issues of mutual concern or to solve problems;
- Is the conduit to forward NFHS information, rule interpretations, rule surveys etc to the appropriate groups;
- Arranges for CT rule interpreters to attend in person rules meetings and participate in on line meetings conducted by the NFHS;
- Is the point person and distribution center for the NFHS recruitment and retention initiative and forwards pertinent information to new candidates and the corresponding boards and contact people;
- Develops a yearly recruitment brochure to be posted on the CIAC Officials Association website and distributed;
- Educates officials groups regarding the CIAC Disqualification / Ejection Rules; reads all ejection reports and follows up when necessary;
- Assists the football tournament director by communicating with the commissioners, white hats and site directors once the assignments are made by the tournament director.
- Does everything possible to enhance the working relationship between the CIAC, the officials groups and the member schools;
- Provides the opportunity for officials to be part of the "CIAC Team" and work in concert with administrators, coaches, athletic directors and the CIAC to better serve high school athletics.

Benefits of Membership in the CIAC Officials Association

- A. Membership cards which entitle officials to free admission to regular season contests in all sports, and CIAC tournament games in the sport(s) in which they are enrolled.
- B. Mailing of National Federation Rule Interpretation "Bulletins" and other pertinent information.
- C. Official representation on all CIAC Sports Committees, the Advisory Board, and the CIAC Board of Control.
- D. Support in the performance of your duties as an official by CIAC, the governing body for high school athletics that enforces the CIAC regulations pertaining to coaches and athletes and has the authority to sanction member schools.
- E. Promote participation in a statewide officials' organization designed to enhance communication, facilitate the sharing of ideas for mutual benefit, and fostering a united front with "one voice" to gain maximum benefit from the fact that "there is strength in numbers."
- F. Provide the opportunity for officials to be part of the "CIAC Team" and work in concert with administrators, coaches, athletic directors and the CIAC to better serve high school athletics in Connecticut.

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Future Benefits the CIAC Officials' Association Wants to Build with Officials Groups

- Utilize advanced technology to communicate with you on a regular basis;
- Continue to customize the CIAC technology network to ensure its compatibility with the assigning program utilized by your particular board;
- Support your efforts to get coaches to attend rules clinics, and be the vehicle through which you can disseminate important messages to coaches, athletic directors, and the schools you serve;
- Support your efforts to encourage and emphasize sportsmanship issues relative to players, coaches, and spectators. We plan to include officials on a newly formed sportsmanship committee, designed to formulate an action plan to address this growing concern;
- ***Support your efforts to enact legislation to further protect sports officials and emphasize to schools the importance of having a plan to ensure the safety of game officials;***
- Support your efforts relative to the recruitment and retention of game officials. We are working on a plan to include a notice on the CIAC website, entitled, "Do you want to become a sports official?" Included will be a list of who should be contacted in each particular sport and other pertinent information;
- Identify, for the National Federation Rules Committee, Connecticut officials in each sport to complete surveys on the rules;
- Investigate the feasibility of a reduced rate for group liability and Board of Directors' insurance;
- Recommend Connecticut officials for NFHS rules committees and recognition awards;
- Provide a CIAC Director of Officials, a staff secretary, and a technology support person to ensure that the CIAC OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION is well organized, productive, and responsive to the needs of all officials and their respective organizations; and
- Perform other functions recommended by you, your fellow officials, or the CIAC Officials' Association Advisory Board, for the betterment of officials and high school sports.

Goals of the CIAC Officials' Association Now and In the Future

- To be an "official friendly" organization, responsive to the needs of officials and their respective organizations.
- To provide a conduit for an improved communication network between officials, the schools you serve, and the CIAC.
- To identify issues common to all officials' groups and develop and implement an action plan to address the concerns.
- To establish an organizational structure that provides officials with the opportunity to have direct input in the governance of CIAC by having representation, with voting privileges, on all sports committees and representation on the CIAC Board of Control.
- To have a representative in all sports on an advisory board whose main purpose will be to provide expert council to CIAC for the betterment of officials and to serve the best interests of high school athletics.
- To provide an opportunity for officials to work collaboratively with school administrators, athletic directors, coaches, and the CIAC staff to better serve athletics in Connecticut.
- To develop a CIAC Officials website that is linked from the CIAC home page.