

June 22, 2010

TO: OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATIONS
FROM: LARRY L. WHITE
RE: MATTERS OF INTEREST

Foregoing the formalities, I will get right down to the matter at hand. There are several major items that must be shared with all associations.

First, I know that you have heard from me that online testing was coming for the past several years. The NFHS has been trying to develop an online system for testing purposes but for whatever reasons, they were not capable of pulling it all together. That is no longer the case. Now, with their partnership with ArbiterSports as their Officials' Education Tech organization, the people out in Utah will create a central hub for any state to utilize and through this hub officials can go online through their Arbiter account number and access the refresher test that will be customized for New Jersey officials in that sport. **What does that mean?** It means that NJSIAA with input from the officials' associations (although not a common practice) can determine how many questions are on the test, multiple choice or true/false questions, randomize the questions or randomize the answers or both, when the test will open and close, how many sittings an official may have before he/she hits the submit/send tab, etc.

Why are we going to this system? The NFHS has been stating for the past several years that they want to get out of the paper test business. It is not cost effective, and there are much better ways to test than 100 true/false questions. It is they that are driving this change, not NJSIAA. However, NJSIAA still will ask for and purchase Part 2 Exams for all sports that use these tests for their cadet certification. Also, the last print copy of the Officials' Quarterly was this summer's edition. The fall edition will be accessible online at the NFHS website. This highlights the NFHS move to go "paperless."

Will there be a cost for this to the membership? With this new system from the NFHS, as is stated in Mary Struckhoff's Summer Officials' Quarterly article on page 3, state associations will be charged an additional \$5.00. In the past NJSIAA has defrayed costs of this kind to the dues of the officials, a year later per the Affiliated Agreement. Now, since NJSIAA would need to no longer order patches, NJSIAA would not need to defray the entire \$5.00 additional costs for the NFHS. The dues would only increase \$3.00 (\$45 to \$48) beginning on July 1, 2011.

When will this go into effect? NJSIAA is looking to implement this new testing service for the winter sports of 2010-2011.

Why then? One, the fall sport associations are probably very close, if not already, doing their testing, and, for some, have already paid a fee for an online testing service that they use. We did not want to "waste" that money. Two, this will give us ample time to talk with the winter sport associations and ask them how many questions should it be, multiple choice or t/f, any specific new rules questions that we want on it, etc. Also, IAABO will need to be contacted to see if they wish to become a part of this testing system.

Who will get the results? The system is designed so that the individual official can see his/her results in terms of his/her score immediately and there is a functionality that will allow an official to see what questions he/she got wrong (also a rules reference that will be coming along later). This feature would take affect after the close out date for testing. NJSIAA and the Arbiter will determine how to get the results to the local associations.

If we chose, we can just use the 100 T/F questions that NFHS has in the paper model now and it will be online in the same format.

I hope that you can see that NJSIAA is moving in a direction that will truly benefit you, the local associations and the individual officials, when it comes to testing. As the world goes paperless, we, too, are looking to save a tree or two, and still provide a quality testing mechanism that will actually make it easier for the men and women officials to pass their testing requirements.

The second major item to address is the uniform issue that is swirling around that needs to be clarified.

First, the NJSIAA, as with all of its corporate sponsors, renews the contracts on a 2, 3, or longer term basis, depending on the length of the contract. Our contract with Ray Perone, Honig's of New Jersey, was up and our director of corporate sponsorships spoke to Ray about an increase in revenue for NJSIAA, especially in light of the fact that NJSIAA has lost over \$500,000.00 in ticket price revenue from last year's total due to the bill that Assemblyman John Burzichelli enacted and became law in January of this year. In order to stem the receding tide of revenue, NJSIAA is looking to increase sponsorship money, which is basically the only revenue source that this law does not specifically limit NJSIAA. Ray was amenable to the idea but felt that if he was going to increase his sponsorship (which some of that will go to our Student Athlete Scholarships), he would need to see an increase in the sales of his materials. As a result of those talks, the deal was formulated as such:

- There will be a new NJSIAA officials' uniform logo.
- It will be embroidered on shirts, hats, jackets and ball bags to start.
- Ray Perone/Honig's of NJ is the exclusive provider of the new emblem (it is not under review).
- The new program takes effect for the 2010-2011 NJSIAA tournament games for football, soccer and volleyball for the fall, basketball and wrestling in the winter, and baseball, softball, lacrosse and volleyball (same officials) in the spring. All officials, all rounds of the tournament, must be properly attired.
- Starting in 2011 the above officiated sports are affected for the regular season (varsity and all sub-varsity levels).
- NJSIAA tourneys for tennis, fencing, swimming, field and ice hockey are effective 2011-12; regular season starting 2012-13 (see above)
- Schools **must** now use only NJSIAA registered officials on all high school contests (varsity and all sub-varsity levels).
- Scholarships have been established for dependents of NJSIAA registered officials.

Furthermore, Honig's of NJ is willing to work with other suppliers so that officials have a choice of supplier(s). Anyone wanting to use this emblem simply needs to contact Ray Perone and enter into a licensing agreement with him.

The new logo will be embroidered on **existing** shirts, hats, jackets and/or ball bags to minimize the expense to the officials.

Discounts as appropriate with associations registered with NJSIAA will continue.

Officials are responsible for removing the existing patches. By doing such, it will provide additional savings to the officials.

Please be aware and understand that NJSIAA realizes the economic climate that exists for all parties involved in this matter. NJSIAA receives no profits from this deal, only increased corporate sponsorship money. NJSIAA has fashioned this agreement so that there is a graduated timeline for the majority of the officials as it pertains to getting the new logo embroidered on their apparel. This should spread this cost over a period of two years. NJSIAA also understands that this type of licensing, exclusivity agreement is in place in a number of states and has accomplished a major goal: **uniformity of officials' dress and attire for tournament and regular season contests.** (e.g. PIAA & IHSAA)

Lastly, the NFHS Concussion Policy as revised for the 2010-2011 year is not exactly what the NJSIAA has decided in terms of officials' responsibilities and duties. NJSIAA has determined that game officials, upon recognizing that a player is injured due to a direct or indirect blow to the head, will call time, beckon the coach/athletic trainer/ or medical personnel onto the playing surface, and it is one of these trained people that will determine if the player is exhibiting signs that are consistent with that of a concussion. If the player is deemed to be showing such signs/symptoms, the NJSIAA Concussion Identification, Management and Return-To-Play policy goes into effect immediately. NJSIAA recommends that official associations provide training to all of their members on this policy. The NFHS provides on its website a 20 minute course on such, free of charge.

NJSIAA is proud of the terrific job that the associations and its members do for the student athletes of New Jersey. We feel that we have made great strides forward in terms of the assigning, registering and now the testing component for the associations. We know change is tough but it will be for the best. And, we worked hard to take officials out of the liability loop when it comes to concussions. Our phones and emails are always open to you.

Yours in officiating,

Larry L. White
Assistant Director Officials' Liaison