

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

CHAMPIONS FOR CHEER



A year ago, Competitive Cheer became a CIF sport. There were many, many questions related to how that would affect our member schools and our entire organization. From my perspective, I did not see much of a difference between Competitive Cheer and the 24 sports for Boys and Girls that we offer in the CIF Southern Section. I believe that the student-athletes who participated in Competitive Cheer in the past, and the coaches who coached them prior to joining the CIF, were doing exactly what we have been doing, utilizing the high school athletic experience to teach valuable life lessons to young people during the 105 years that the CIF Southern Section has been in existence. To me, it was a natural fit for Competitive Cheer to join us, and so far, we are making progress in having Competitive Cheer becoming a bigger part of the CIF and education-based athletics in the years ahead.

Another aspect of what Competitive Cheer and the CIF have in common is an understanding of the core values of ethics, character and sportsmanship. On Monday, September 24, we will be celebrating our annual Champions for Character Awards. That evening is truly a highlight of our year and something we look forward to very much. In reviewing the nominees for this year's awards, I came across this example that shows Competitive Cheer is fully invested with the CIF Southern Section in exemplifying the very best in ethics, character and sportsmanship. Here is what took place...

On Saturday, February 24, 2018, Rialto High School competed in the 2018 USA Cheer Championships at the Anaheim Convention Center. Rialto High School had an outstanding performance that day and their team was rewarded by winning the Medium School Championship. However, on Sunday morning, Rialto High School Head Cheer Coach Valarie Campa called her Athletic Director, Kevin Gilbreth, to inform him that she had looked at the final official score sheets and discovered that the individual judge's sheets were not properly added up before being transferred over to the final official score sheet. What had happened was a deduction for Rialto High School was missing and that deduction had not been included in the final official score sheet. The final official score sheet on Saturday had Rialto High School as the winner, but Valarie had found the mistake and realized that the final official score sheet was not correct. On Sunday, she called USA Cheer to explain her findings. USA Cheer took a few days to investigate the situation and after Valarie walked them through the error they realized that Rialto High School had not won the championship and that Santa Monica High School was the actual winner of this competition. It was their program that deserved the thrill and proper recognition for being the champion. Next, a phone call was made from Rialto High School to Santa Monica High School's principal, it was explained what had been discovered, and that the entire Rialto High School Cheer Team wanted to come to Santa Monica High School and personally present them with the championship trophy and banner. A bus was chartered, and the Rialto High School Cheer Team and coaches traveled to Santa Monica High School to do just that, present the championship trophy and banner to them. That is what I call Champions for Cheer.

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Thank you, Valarie Campa and Kevin Gilbreth, for who you are and what you stand for. I am grateful to you for being shining examples of doing what is right, not only for Competitive Cheer, but for all coaches and athletic directors who have this wonderful opportunity to serve young people through education-based athletics. Congratulations to you and glad to have you as part of our family. I look forward to seeing you at the Champions for Character Awards Dinner on September 24.

All the best,

Rob Wignol

