

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

26 MILES ACROSS THE SEA...



As the Commissioner of Athletics for the CIF Southern Section, I have the incredible opportunity to travel the length and breadth of our section. When I do, the appreciation I have for so many great people involved in education-based athletics, who are doing tremendous work in service to our student-athletes, only grows and grows. I am often asked about what I enjoy most as Commissioner. I can honestly say that the number of people I have had the chance to meet from far and wide who share the same unwavering commitment to the important work we do is at the top of my list.

One of the very special places within our section is Avalon High School on Catalina Island. Having an athletics program for the students at Avalon High School is fraught with challenges, most significantly, the time, effort and expense involved with travelling to and from the island for regular season, league and playoff competition. The student-athletes, coaches and administrators from Avalon make many sacrifices so they can participate in the various sports programs offered by the school. I admire their resolve very much and they personify how vital it is for their school and community to be able to be part of high school athletics.

Which brings me to Saturday, November 9, 2019. On this day, Avalon High School hosted a CIF Southern Section Championship Final for the very first time. The Division 9 Girls Volleyball Championship between Cornerstone Christian High School of Wildomar and Avalon High School took place 26 miles across the sea in the Lancer's gymnasium. It was a day that I will never forget.

My wife Kelly and I boarded a boat in Long Beach at 8:15 am, landed in Avalon an hour later, got to the Pancake Cottage for our pre-game meal and walked up the hill to the school. The pride that the Avalon community had for their team was clearly on display from start to finish. The gym was filled with a supportive crowd for Avalon and a passionate group of Cornerstone Christian parents, students and fans who made the trip to cheer on their team. The entire experience was a celebration of all that is good about what we do and who we do it for. The memories that all of us who were there will take away from our day together will last a lifetime.

As Kelly and I headed back to the mainland on the 2:15 pm boat, we were not finished. We landed back in Long Beach, went home to change clothes and then headed for Cerritos College to attend the last two Volleyball Championship Finals to be played there. It was quite a contrast to what we saw earlier in the day as in the era of competitive equity playoffs Division 1 and Division 9 are at different levels, as they should be, but they do share many commonalities that further reminded me of what a unique and meaningful journey that we are all on. There may be geographic distances between us, but no matter where we are, the chance to compete, the will to win, the maximum effort put forth to get the job done are all the same. I am continually inspired by what I see and look forward to what comes next.

As always, I thank you very much for your continued help and support, it is truly appreciated.

All the best to you and yours for a joyous Thanksgiving Holiday,

Rob Weigal

