

## A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

### STATE OF THE SECTION



Each year, the President of the United States delivers the State of the Union message that details where we are now and where we are going in the time ahead. Since the State of the Union was presented a couple of weeks ago to our nation, I thought it would be appropriate to deliver the State of the Section to you now. I begin with these words; the State of the Section is strong!

#### Competitive Equity

**Now** – So far in Year 4, we have continued to see more and more of the two things we expected when we implemented this system in the 2016-2017 school year: closer games in all of our sports, especially in the early rounds, and new schools having opportunities to compete for championships that they have never had before. Not only are our earlier games closer, but our most recent Football Championship Finals resulted in an average margin of victory of 5 points in 11 of our 13 Championship Finals!

**Next** – The evolution of the competitive equity playoff system marches on with the effort to utilize current regular season results in formulating playoff divisions. That concept is now contained in two proposals, one for Football (team sport) and one for Swimming (individual sport), that the CIF Southern Section Council will vote on at their last scheduled meeting of this school year on Tuesday, March 31. Stay tuned for those votes, and if passed, the impact these proposals will have in 2020-2021 and beyond.

#### Transfer Numbers

**Now** – Overall transfer numbers have decreased from the same time last year, especially in the area of valid residence change, which has been reduced by almost 50% from a year ago. This is the second year in a row that overall transfer numbers have gone down and we are seeing the Valid Change of Address Documentation Checklist, that we instituted in 2018-2019, have a major effect on this situation.

**Next** – Along with the Transfer Rules Committee, we will be monitoring the trends that are present today, process that data, and keep this group active in exploring possible options for the future.

#### Financial Matters

**Now** – We have made significant progress in reducing our reliance on playoff revenues and the factors we cannot control, such as matchups, weather, travel, etc., and moving toward a more stable financial structure supported by factors we can control, such as sport fees, marketing, television/ web broadcasting rights, etc. Our long-term financial picture has improved dramatically, and we have also seen increased playoff revenues from our Fall sports this year compared to last year, which has been very encouraging.

**Next** – Our 2020-2021 Proposed Budget contains the second year of a sport fee increase to complete that two-year process. Also, we will be seeking to gain additional revenues from sources where there is increased demand, like television/web broadcast rights and marketing. Finally, we hope to build on the momentum from our Fall sports, in terms of increased attendance numbers, which benefits our member schools through revenue sharing, and our entire organization.

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**Sportsmanship**

**Now** – In an earlier Message from the Commissioner this school year, I challenged our section to examine ejection numbers from the 2018-2019 school year and see if we could work toward less ejections in 2019-2020. From our most recent Fall Sports, this is what we have in total ejections...

Football – 2019 = 194; 2018 = 324 – **Reduced by 40.13%**

Girls Volleyball – 2019 = 4; 2018 = 8 – **Reduced by 50.00%**

Boys Water Polo – 2019 = 169; 2018 = 216 – **Reduced by 27.76%**

**Next** – We are off to an excellent start, and with focus and determination, let us hope that the Winter sports will see the same thing, especially in Soccer. Also, the proposal to adopt a state-wide ejection policy is an Action Item coming up for a vote at the CIF Southern Section Council meeting on March 31, and the CIF Federated Council meeting on April 3. That proposal strengthens the penalties for inappropriate behavior by players and coaches, which will hopefully serve as a deterrent, before engaging in unsportsmanlike conduct.

**Officials Recruitment**

**Now** – In my first Message from the Commissioner for this school year, in August, 2019, I told you we would be launching a campaign to try and recruit new officials to help with the shortage of officials we are experiencing across all sports and all geographic areas of our section. Since that time, we have referred over 400 prospective new officials to officials' associations working within our section and that number climbs every day.

**Next** – All of us: member schools, officials associations, our office, etc., need to make the recruitment of new officials a high priority and build upon the effort we began last August. We have created a link on our website for prospective officials to sign up, <https://cifss.org/officials/officials-recruitment-form/>, so feel free to send those you come in contact with who might be interested in becoming an official to that link and we will do the rest.

Working together, we have taken on important issues, like the ones listed above, and made significant progress in addressing them. There is always more work to be done, and in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration that defines our section, I assure you that we will move forward in doing so.

Thank you very much for your continued help and support, it is truly appreciated.

All the best,

*Rob Wignol*

