

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

A PREVIEW OF THE 2022 – 2023 SCHOOL YEAR



The 2021-2022 school year was tremendously successful in every way possible. The ability to have full regular seasons, conduct CIF Southern Section Championships in every sport, along with CIF Southern Regional Championships and CIF State Championships, for the first time since 2018-2019, was an incredible accomplishment that we can all be proud of. The financial successes we enjoyed through our partnership resulted in being able to refund member schools the entire amount of Sport Fees paid last year. Now, the challenge ahead is to continue to build upon the successes of 2021-2022 and that is exactly what we are going to do! Here is a preview for 2022-2023...

Financial Matters – In my last Message from the Commissioner in June, I informed you that the CIF had received a grant from the California Department of Education to assist the CIF State Office and all 10 Sections with operating expenses over the next two years. The first application of these funds for our member schools was to forgive Sport Fees for the 2022-2023 school year, which will save our membership a total of approximately \$750,000. I mentioned that there will be more to come regarding the utilization of these grant monies, and I am proud to announce that the next implementation of this grant will be to waive the registration fees and parking fees for our Athletic Administrators Summit on Monday, October 3, at the Sheraton Fairplex Hotel and Conference Center in Pomona. Registration is now open, so be sure to visit cifss.org to sign up. Stay tuned as we continue to do all we can to support our mission and our member schools.

June/July/August and Beyond – CIFSSHome 2.0 – In June, we launched an improved and updated version of our CIFSSHome system that we are referring to as CIFSSHome 2.0. Speed, efficiency, and a more user-friendly platform are all benefits that you will enjoy this year. Thank you to Wes Carty and Lindsay Warkentin of Carty Web Strategies for creating this new opportunity and to Wes, Lindsay and our dedicated staff for their excellent work in helping you become familiar with it. CIFSSHome 2.0 Training will continue at our upcoming Fall Eligibility Workshops.

September – Girls Flag Football – On September 29, 2022, at the first CIF Southern Section Council meeting of the year, there will be a vote on the proposal to add Girls Flag Football to the list of CIF-approved sports. If it is passed by the Southern Section Council, the proposal will be forwarded to the CIF Federated Council for a first reading at their initial meeting of the year on October 7, 2022, with a vote by that body on February 3, 2023 for implementation as a Fall sport in the 2023-2024 school year. Be sure to monitor the progress of this proposal through our legislative process in the months ahead.

October – The Athletic Administrators Summit/Athletic Trainers Track – On Monday, October 3, 2022, we will return to the Sheraton Fairplex Hotel and Conference Center in Pomona, to host the CIF Southern Section Athletic Administrators Summit. This year, we are launching an Athletic Trainers Track for the first time, setting up specific sessions for our trainers to participate and engage in. Be sure to get that date on your calendars as we are currently developing the program for athletic directors/administrators, as well as our Leadership Track for Principals/Superintendents/Private School Heads of Schools. More information will be coming soon on the program for the day.

November – Rose Bowl – For the first time since 1944, the CIF Southern Section will play a football championship game at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. In conjunction with the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Rose Bowl and the opening of the California High School Football Hall of Fame that will be housed there, we are excited to bring the very best in high school football to that iconic venue. We hope all high school football fans will join us for what promises to be a memorable evening on Friday, November 25.

Late April/Early May – Beach Volleyball Championships – As we enter Year 2 of Beach Volleyball as a CIF-approved sport, we are looking forward to conducting our inaugural CIF Southern Section Beach Volleyball Team Championships and Individual Pairs Tournament Championship in late April/early May. As we prepare for these history-making events, I want to encourage leagues who have not adopted Beach Volleyball as a sport to continue to work toward adding it to your sports offerings and schools who are from leagues who do not offer Beach Volleyball to pursue forming leagues of your own. Teams and pairs will be qualifying for our championships through league play, so the effort to form as many leagues as possible will be extremely beneficial in getting our Beach Volleyball Championships established.

Points of Emphasis – As we begin the new school year, there are a couple of very important areas that we will be focusing on...

- **Spectator/Fan Behavior** – Once we emerged from the shutdown of high school sports, we have seen a disturbing trend related to the behavior of spectators/fans/students who attend athletic contests, which has included physical assaults on sports officials. These incidents have no place in education-based athletics, in any athletic arena, or at any place or any time. Therefore, a major point of emphasis for our member schools is to ensure that there is proactive work done prior to athletic contests in clearly communicating expectations of all spectators in attendance in advance, while actively supervising those spectators at all times. The CIF State Office has developed a toolkit for schools to utilize and will be distributing that information very soon. In June, CIF Executive Director Ron Nocetti, with CIF Executive Committee approval, added a provision into CIF Bylaw 210, that applies to anyone who physically assaults a game official before, during or after an athletic contest being banned from attending any CIF athletic contest in California for life. We must all resolve to make every effort we can to remind all stakeholders of what education-based athletics is about and create a safe and positive environment on our campuses. Which leads us to...

- **Officiating** – We continue to struggle with declining numbers of officials across all sports within our section. The CIF Southern Section Council last April passed a brand-new official's fee structure sending a clear message that our member schools value our officials and want to make sure they are compensated fairly. However, the evidence is clear that a primary reason that officials no longer choose to work is related to the way they are treated at our schools. Coaches, Athletic Directors, Principals, Athletic Administrators, Students, Parents, Fans, and yes Officials, all play a role in trying to turn this trend in the other direction. We need everyone's total commitment toward making that happen.

Final Thought – 11 years ago today, I began my tenure as the ninth Commissioner of Athletics for the CIF Southern Section. It has been the opportunity of a lifetime to have served in this role and I am so very grateful for these past 11 years, as well as the previous 11 years, when I served as an Assistant Commissioner for our organization. With that in mind, I want to let you know that this year will be my final year in this position, as I will be retiring on August 1, 2023. There will be time for reflection and good-byes later as we have lots of work to do this year first!

Those are just a few of the many things to expect in 2022-2023. I look forward to continuing to partner with you and build upon the momentum we have been able to create from 2021-2022.

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

All the best,

Rob Wignel

