

**A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER**

**CALL THE QUESTION**



I have been asked this question more than a few times and it might be one you have in your head as well... “How does Mike West plan to follow someone like Rob Wigod as the Commissioner of the Southern Section?” Trust me, it is something that I have more than just randomly pondered. Ultimately, I feel that my priority is to stay the course that Rob put us on and make sure the few unfinished business items such as same year playoff division placement in most sports is followed through to completion.

As I develop my own vision and consider ideas for improvement, I want to keep the “Maximization of the Student Experience” as a focus. I feel to maximize a student’s experience in education-based athletics, there are five elements that need to be maintained as a priority:

Coaching – Discovering avenues to find, train and maintain the best coaches possible for all high school athletes.

Officials – Recruiting, training, and retaining high quality officials for all sports and all levels of play.

Medical Care – Developing resources and providing information for schools and districts that will assist in hiring and retaining full-time certified athletic trainers to care for our student athletes.

Championship Experience – Provide the best possible experience for student athletes as they compete in playoff competitions and make our championship events as memorable as possible for all the competitors.

Sportsmanship – Between teams, athletes, coaches and from the stands; sportsmanship needs to be a top priority for all involved in high school athletics.

As the days pass, I continue to feel more and more comfortable in this seat. I want to thank all of you who I have met in the last few months for your kindness and well wishes. It has helped my transition to be a positive and comfortable experience which I truly appreciate.

**Section Goals**

One of the Section goals we have for the year is to enhance the Competitive Equity Playoff model by using same year data to create our playoff groupings. This system has proven to be successful in Football in the last few years and we are excited about the possibility of rolling out similar systems for all sports where such a system makes sense. The Executive Committee will be considering proposed language to change the bylaws which, if approved, would allow the new system to begin in the 2024 – 2025 school year.

We are also very excited to implement Girls Flag Football as an official CIF sanctioned sport this year. We have quite a few schools offering this new sport as an option for their student athletes, and it has gotten off to a great start. We hope to have had enough participation by the end of the season to allow for a CIF Southern Section sanctioned championship tournament to take place in the fall of 2024.

**COMMISSIONERS MESSAGE NO. 2**  
**2-2-2**

**New Addition**

On July 17, 2023, our newest Assistant Commissioner, Jerry De Fabiis entered the section office for his first day on the job. Jerry joined the Southern Section after having been the Colony High School Athletic Director for four years and their Head Boys Basketball Coach since the school opened in 2002. He has been a tremendously successful basketball coach having amassed over 500 wins in his Head Coaching Career at both Colony and Ontario High Schools. His teams have been CIF finalists three times, CIF Champions three times, and State Regional Champions once. What has helped his acclimation into our office is that he has been a member of the Southern Section Basketball Advisory Committee for 15 years and the State Basketball Advisory Committee for 10. He has helped host many Section and State Basketball and Cheer Championship events at Colony High School over the last 15 years as well.

Jerry has quickly become an instrumental figure in our office. He has worked very hard to learn the systems we have in place and to apply the rules as needed for student eligibility. He has been a significant contributor during our eligibility workshops and is quickly becoming a strong resource for questions related to all CIF matters. If you have the time, please take the opportunity to introduce yourself to Jerry and welcome him to the Southern Section family.



I hope everyone's school year is off to a great start. Thank you for your continued support of Education Based Athletics.

Sincerely,



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