

Avoid the Attack

By Donald C. Collins

Develop a Battery Plan for Your Association

Officials have been very successful in passing legislation criminalizing batteries committed on our officiating brethren. However, not every state has battery legislation, and some officials, prosecutors, police and athletic leagues don't know that their state has passed battery legislation. Worse, sometimes the legislation isn't used when a battery occurs. Clearly, we can't rely exclusively on battery legislation as a cure-all solution when an official is attacked. Advance planning is needed.

Every officials association can and should develop a plan for handling batteries committed against its members. An ideal battery plan should focus on facilities and site administration, league discipline, as well as public and government relations efforts.

Safe Havens: Locker Rooms and Site Administrators

In interscholastic competition, an

association should only contract with leagues that require their teams to provide a secure locker room for officials.



Neither players, fans nor coaches should have access to the officials' locker room. A school must have a site administrator who should escort the officials to their locker room at halftime and after the game. The escort should be required to remain in the vicinity of the locker room (not inside — just near) at halftime and after the game.

If an interscholastic league does not require its teams to provide proper facilities and site administration, an association should work with the league to ensure that they add such a requirement. If gentle persuasion doesn't work, an association can add a clause to its contract with the league requiring proper facilities and site administration.

Those requirements should be adjusted to meet existing realities. For example, you should adjust it for recreational youth and adult play in which an official may not be using a locker room. In recreational play, requiring or verifying that a municipal or recreational league provides an on-site supervisor may be adequate. Another alternative is simply to require a league to provide a person who has no coaching role and is not a parent to serve as an administrator for the site or game. Obviously, an association should verify that the on-site supervisor will take steps to protect officials where necessary.

Guarantee Discipline

An association can and should ensure that leagues have adequate disciplinary rules, requiring the league to discipline any participant, coach or administrator who commits an assault or a battery

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Money Matters:

Two (or Three or Four ...) Sets of Eyes Are Better Than One

By Joe Koszarek

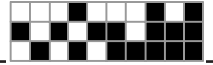


In the age of computers, it isn't very hard to keep your association's accounts straight. In fact, weekly printouts take about 10 minutes to prepare if your treasurer is using a computer program such as Quicken or

Microsoft Money. Treasurers should always request that another board member (or two or three ...) double-check the association's accounts.

With the new computer programs available these days, your treasurer can make a copy of his records and put it on a

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Start 'em Right: New Member Orientation

By Steven Ellinger

- Why should I pay dues to the state association?
- How many meetings must I attend?
- You mean I don't get paid for pre-season scrimmages?
- How many years must I be a member before I am eligible for varsity games?

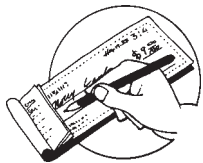
Have you heard any of those before? Ask a board member or training class instructor and you will find that those questions are not unusual. Many new members do not realize what is expected of them when they become members of a local officials association. New members should feel comfortable and know who can answer their questions and address

their concerns. It is the association's responsibility to deal with new members and make them feel a part of the organization from the start.

Many people who join officiating associations don't know what it takes to be a successful official and move up the ladder. Often they're not aware of the

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Money Matters (Continued from page 1)



floppy disk for members of your board to take home and verify on their computers. That's a

very simple process that anyone slightly computer literate with a minimum knowledge of finances can handle.

You need to check for a few items — like dues received, checks paid out and tournament or funds received, and then double-check the basic math, which can be performed by your computer.

Next, you should double-check the little things, such as verifying that the right amounts were entered into the computer, because most "computer errors" are made by erroneous human input. I like to call those errors "fat finger entries" when I hit two keys instead of just the one I was trying to hit. That can really throw a balance off, but those mistakes are usually easy to find with a simple verification of the amounts.

If you are responsible for paying your members for the games they officiate in a tournament, you have to perform a computation of how many games at what price. That is where you will have to actually do some math. Take my advice: Be smart and use a calculator — and always check your numbers twice. Fat finger entries can happen there as well as in the program.

You'll also need to verify that the money being spent is supported by what your local constitution or bylaws

authorize. In most cases the money spent is directly for association needs, but here are two instances that may not be legitimate expenses: If your association pays the secretary, sometimes the cost of stamps and other similar clerical items are covered by the bylaws — but sometimes they're not. You need to make sure one way or the other. Travel and meal expenses for trips to state or national meetings are covered for some board members, and sometimes only portions are covered. You need to be absolutely sure what your bylaws state in regard to the association's money.

Most of the time there isn't any thought to defraud the association; those situations and others like them may have been common practice in the past. Maybe they were an oversight in the bylaws. In those cases you may want to have a meeting to change the bylaws. But until that can be done, the board should hold a special meeting to authorize or curtail current spending practices.

How important some of the previous considerations are to an association is directly reflected in the amount of money involved. In my softball chapter there is normally less than \$200 in our account. The only time there is more than that is when we get money for a tournament or when dues are collected. The money for the dues ends up going to the state, with a minimal amount staying behind for essentials to run the association. Tournament money normally comes in

one day and goes out the next, as most umpires are ready to receive that paycheck immediately. Usually if the members only pay \$15-25 a year for local dues, they won't worry about where the money is going.

Of course, it's always a good idea to have your account double-checked by at least one other person. That way, if someone in the association is concerned about where the funds are going, at least one board member other than the treasurer is fully aware. There was an incident a few years ago in my area in which a local association had a hefty operating fund and some money was skimmed from the account by the president and his wife, who was the treasurer. Although it's not a bad idea to have spouses together on a board, someone outside the family should probably be the one to double-check accounts. If you have a large membership and a hefty operating fund, then you might want to consider having an accounting firm or someone with professional abilities do the audit.

Even if the board members are well-liked and trustworthy, it's always a good idea to have the funds checked at least every two years. That's in the best interest of the treasurer as well as the members at large.

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