

WHAT'S INSIDE

A Technology Primer for Local Association Leaders.....	2	The Pulse.....	5
Association Database	3	ON Your Side.....	6
Now ONBoard.....	3	Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities.....	8
Ready to Train.....	4		

The Problem of Paying Game Fees

By Donald C. Collins

Officials associations and individual assigners have to figure out the best way to pay their officials. There aren't that many ways to make those payments. Problems can result, though, from choosing the wrong way. Remember, what's right for you may be wrong for someone else.

Officials can get paid directly by a school or team — either at the game site or at some specified future time. They may also be paid directly by a league, sponsoring organization or governing body. Those entities generally pay at a specified time after the game. Officials can also get their payment from either their association or an individual assigner where their association acts as a clearinghouse and receives lump sum payments for its members from schools, teams and leagues.

There are some negatives where associations pay their officials. Officials associations that make direct payments

to their officials bear an increased risk of being assessed employment taxes. If you live in one of the states that have enacted independent contractor legislation, your association will likely be safe from that problem. If you live in other states, your officials will probably be ruled independent contractors but on some occasions you may have to spend lots of money and time in court on that issue.

You should also note that officials associations that make direct payments to their officials bear an increased risk of liability for injuries to participants. If an association is making a direct payment to its officials, then juries and lower courts may be more inclined to believe that the association employed the official and should pay for an official's negligent act.

On the other hand, there are some good business reasons for an association to pay the officials. Some leagues and

schools that make direct payments to officials are unreliable. They might not pay your officials, or they might pay them late. Also, some officials are so sloppy that they think they didn't get paid even though they did; if the association didn't cut the check, it's hard to trace that problem. If you have those problems too often, you'll either have a lawsuit from an official or you'll strain your relations with some of your client leagues.

Your association may also lose some leagues if you make them pay the officials directly. The leagues will go to other associations or they'll directly assign your officials and bypass the association. Since associations exist in one way to prevent the hometown coach from grabbing his or her own

(See "Game Fees" p.3)

Expand Your Association's Resource Library

One of the many benefits of NASO-ON membership is the accessibility to books and educational materials. Through the Free Publications Program, every member association receives one free copy of each new publication produced by Referee/NASO. With more than 50 publications produced each year, members receive more than \$150 in reference materials at no charge! Here are a few samples of publications previously offered to associations:

- *Basketball Officials Guidebook Crew of Three: High School Mechanics 2005-07*
- *High School Umpires Guidebook*
- *Working the Lead, Working the Trail, Working the Center*
- *Judgment Calls: A Football Officiating Philosophy*
- *All NFHS preseason guides*

How You Work With Rookies Impacts Whether (or Not) They Stay

By Joe Koszarek

Every organization has and continues to go through the problem of getting and keeping new members. Keeping new officials is a common problem. Without some solutions and help, you may be losing too many of what could become quality officials. Here are some ways to help those new officials to become quality, seasoned veterans that hopefully will be in your organization for years to come.

Of all of the ideas out there, my preferred method is the mentor program. I think that idea has the most merit and has been proven to be very

successful. The key to the success of the mentoring program is to make sure the seasoned veteran you assign to the new official is a dedicated member who fully supports the organization and wants to be a mentor. Your senior leadership may have to sell potential mentors on the program and with the benefits of having or keeping more members and increasing the organization, it shouldn't be too hard of a sell. However, every organization has some members who just aren't suitable to be mentors. Leadership in your organization is very critical in

(See "Rookies" p.6)

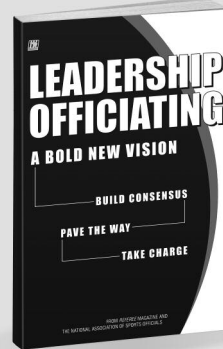
Association Database

Leadership Officiating: A Bold New Vision

At a time when leadership is needed in so many fields, the same holds true within the officiating industry. Based on the content of the 2005 NASO Sports Officiating Summit, a brand new resource provides officials with the foundation to develop those leadership skills — *Leadership Officiating*.

In addition to defining the various roles of the officiating community, *Leadership Officiating* teaches officials how to take the lead, be effective and make a difference. Whether on the court or within your own association, you'll hear advice and comments from some of the most renowned officials in sports today. From high school to college to professional, a collection of great officials put their heads together to discuss officiating leadership for both individual officials and for officiating organizations.

The book retails for \$12.95 each and bulk order discounts are available. For details or to order, go to www.referee.com/magads/bl0 or call 800/733-6100.



Have you run across a useful source of information that other organizations should know about? Send your ideas to editor@NASO-ON.org.

Now ONBoard

NASO-ON currently has more than 900 members. In all, those groups represent more than 100,000 individual officials. We welcome our newest NASO-ON member associations, listed below along with their home cities and contact persons:

California: San Diego Federation Volleyball Association, San Diego (Terry Jordan).

Illinois: Capitol Area Officials Association, Chatham (Joe Meyer).

New York: Back to Our Roots LLOC, Brooklyn (Wayne T. Lesane).

Washington: Snohomish County Baseball Umpires Association, Everett (Dean Strong); Spokane Softball Umpires Association, Spokane (Charles Latimer).

Game Fees

Continued from page 1

official, that cuts against the grain — especially in an interscholastic league.

Here are some simple suggestions for individual assigners and associations:

1. If you're an individual assigner, never pay the officials yourself. You don't have an association to back you up. You don't want officials asking you to guarantee errors; you don't want to be sued; you don't need the potential tax battles.

2. If you're an individual assigner and you're dealing with games run by individuals, you should require them to pay the officials at the game site. However, if you're dealing with a structured organization, like a school, an interscholastic league or a YMCA, give them a list of officials and have them mail out payments. Those organizations are more stable than an individual. Having them mail out payments guarantees that you won't have disputes about forfeits when the gym director forgets to bring a check to the game — that's just bad business. The YMCA and your schools and leagues will have the money.

3. If you're representing an association and you're dealing with a reliable, well-organized school or league, have them make payment off of a paysheet that you submit. Have them

send you a copy of the payroll so you'll know when payment was made.

4. If you're representing an association and you're dealing with unreliable recreation departments, schools or an unreliable school district, then you should have the association collect from the schools or district and then make payment to the officials. The simple fact is that the country is full of schools and school districts that either pay slowly, unreliably, or have to go through a lot of bureaucratic tiers to cut a check. It's easier for those entities to make one lump sum payment to an association than hundreds of small payments to individual officials. It's also easier for you to wage one battle for the group instead of lots of battles for individual officials who didn't get a check from the school or school district.

You should also note that a public school or a municipal recreation department is often just another school district or city agency. They often must follow a district or citywide model that farms work out to contractors who bring in and pay their own subcontractors. Schools and recreation departments' contracts and policies often reflect that model, and staffers generally uphold the model.

If an association wants to assign and then have the public entity directly pay the officials, they either need to find an incredibly amenable school athletic director or recreation director, or they need to try to work with the athletic director or recreation director to cut a deal with the agency's lawyer. That could be a tough deal to cut. There's a risk that the school district or public recreation department could more easily solve the issue by taking all of the assigning in house — as is already done in some cities.

Finally, if you're in an area where there are a lot of officials associations, the association might best be served by taking a lump sum payment from the school or league and then make the individual payments to the officials. That makes things easier for the schools, school districts or leagues, and makes it harder for a competitor to displace your association.

If you follow the guidelines set out above and purchase good insurance, you can minimize your legal problems and business problems and ensure that your officials get paid swiftly and accurately. Donald C. Collins is the executive director of the San Francisco Section of the California Interscholastic Federation. He is a longtime basketball official and lawyer. □