

A young approach to recruiting

by Tammy Skogen

Recruiting! A vital and important part of every official's association. The key to recruiting is to find which methods work and strengthen your association, and which ones don't. Many officials have been tempted to recruit those in the stands who think they know more than those on the floor. One official

even went so far as to stop a game, sit next to an obnoxious fan, and gave his whistle to her. Though we are tempted to use some of these techniques, they aren't necessarily positive approaches to recruiting.

Becky Sneck, president of Flathead Valley Volleyball Officials Association (FVVOA) in Kalispell, Mont., wanted to come up with a positive recruiting

plan that would strengthen the association while adding more officials. The strategy would draw in new officials, yet attract the young people they had been officiating. By recruiting former players, two things are accomplished: The association brings in people who know the sport and they can contribute to the game they have come to enjoy over the years.

The first part of her strategy was to approach former players with the prospect of becoming an official. Members of their association would make a concerted effort to approach high school graduates and ask if they had ever considered officiating. When these officials saw them around town — in banks, restaurants, shopping malls, etc. — they would take the time to visit with them. In the course of the

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Bill introduced to clarify independent contractor status

SAN FRANCISCO — California Assemblyman Thomas Hannigan (D), Fairfield, in late February introduced a bill, AB1655, which will clarify the independent contractor status of sports officials working amateur sports in California.

The bill comes as a result of recent audits of sports officials and their associations throughout the state. Several sports associations were cited and assessed thousands of dollars for back taxes and unemployment insurance premiums. The assessments were made because the state's Employment Development Department (EDD) had determined the groups were behaving in a manner consistent with an employer/employee relationship.

Sports officials' associations have been fearful the costs of insurance,

accounting and any assessments would drastically escalate game fees. Such increases, they fear, could cause further cutbacks of school and recreational sports programs.


As independent contractors the officials would not have to pay for Unemployment or Workers Compensation Insurance.

Sports officials Don Collins, a basketball referee, and Bob Summers, a baseball and softball umpire, are the bill's chief proponents. Both are from San Francisco.

"The community of sports officials of California is extremely grateful to Assemblyman Hannigan for proposing this legislation," said Collins.

Assemblyman Hannigan along with Collins and Summers were

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Legislation affecting officials introduced in Maine

In late March, legislation was introduced in Maine that would prevent officials from working contests if they are related to a player or work for the school district that is competing in the contest. The proposed bill was introduced by State Rep. Douglas Ahearne.

The language of the legislation

states that "an employee, administrator or official of a school administrative unit or the community in which the school is located may not officiate at an interscholastic high school athletic competition in which a school under the jurisdiction of that school administrative unit is a participant." In addition, "an individual may not officiate at an interscholastic high school athletic competition in which a relative of that individual is a participant."

The legislation proposes that a violation of either of the above would result in a "mandatory forfeiture of the athletic event in favor of the opposing team; and a two-year suspension from all officiating by the offending official."

Ahearne's bill would apply to all levels of all sports. "I think it is the best means for having a fair game,"

Ahearne told the Lewiston *Sun-Journal*. "There would be no possible means to be biased in terms of the people officiating the games.... I know the possible implications it may have, but we want to see a fair game. I'm not saying that everyone in every school will be biased, but there is a concern that some people are biased."

Opponents of the legislation point to the fact that many sports officials are from schools within the same district, and that in a good portion of subvarsity games schools depend on their own employees to officiate those events.

The *Sun-Journal* article noted that the impetus of this legislative action was a problem that occurred in a varsity game in Ahearne's hometown where a member of the school administration officiated a game.

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Bill introduced (continued from p. 1) attempting to meet with EDD officials to determine acceptable language for the bill.

In a Feb. 16, 1995, letter to Hannigan, EDD Director Thomas P. Nagle announced a plan that includes: (1) Reexamination of all recently completed cases in the area for consistent application of the law; (2) Temporary suspension of normal audit activity in the area. If EDD must do an audit in the industry for a unique reason, it will be as a sensitive case and centrally reviewed to insure consistency; (3) Development and marketing of employment status guidelines for the amateur sports officials' industry.

Collins, a San Francisco attorney noted that "without some clarification

to existing law by the legislature or new departmental regulations, the EDD has to enforce the law with no regard to the unique needs of the sports officials of this state."

Summers, who is Amateur Softball Association Metro San Francisco umpire-in-chief, added: "It appears EDD may be ready to openly look at possible solutions to this problem. Reasonable people do reasonable things. And nobody wants the enforcement of law to interfere with recreational sports."

It is expected the bill will be heard first by the Assembly Insurance Committee, chaired by David Knowles (R) of Cameron Park.

— Thanks to Bob Summers for filing the above report