



**Central Connecticut
Association of Football Officials, LLC**

May 16, 2016

Dear Brother Official,

Hope all is well and you are enjoying the start of summer.

The football season opens on September 9. Please complete your 2016 Official's Availability Form and 2016 Availability Calendar by the deadline, June 30. Scheduling starts 7/1. For those who have been members before 2014, only a name is required on the Official's Availability Form.

The forms will be available from three sources: 1) attachments as part of this email from the Commissioner (click on link); 2) CCAFO.org website; 3) Arbiter forms section. These are fill able forms. Please open, save the form, complete, save the completed form and email back to me or, if you choose, open, print, complete, copy and mail back.

For new members, transfers and existing members, this is a firm deadline. If you close dates directly through Arbiter by June 30, **you also need to notify me directly.** Officials who mail their **availability sheet after June 30 will be eligible only for games that other officials turn back; officials who turn back or turn down games for open dates after August 31 are subject to a \$10 fine** paid to the board for each game. Be specific on Friday & Monday afternoon times. If you need to close a date that was previously open during the season, notify me ASAP before you are assigned an extra game. ECOs should be specific as to what schools you cannot go to: stairs, open bleachers, standing on sideline, etc.

Our meetings will be held at Sports Science Academy (280 Huyshope Ave., Hartford, CT 06106).

A quick review of important items:

1. Eric Mangini, former New York Jet and Cleveland Brown head coach, former San Francisco assistant coach and former ESPN NFL analyst will hold his 15th annual football mini-camp on Saturday, June 4 at Bulkeley High School. Lunch starts at 12:00. Game times are from 1:20 p.m. to 3:35 p.m. Over 800 kids from 5 states have come to Hartford in the past. **We are asked to supply 64 officials, two on each 50 yard field, but for the third straight painful year we fell short last year.** This is a very worthy event that we should enthusiastically support with over 100 officials. I am told it is one of only 5 of its kind in the country and the absolute best by far. It is the only two hours we work all year without compensation. Also a rare opportunity for the younger officials to practice judgment on pass interference calls. I am aware of some individuals who have to work their main job that day, will be coaching or participating with their sons, are recovering from surgery and there is no question but that they are unable to help us on that particular day. But a look at the statistics in general for the last 4 years tells a disturbing story and trend for our board:

12% of our officials have been there each year

21% have been there 3 of 4 years

10% have been there 2 of 4

21% have been there 1 of 4

36% of our officials have not come in the last four years

We cannot sustain our participation forever on such a small dedicated base. We need help, at least occasionally. I know some individually cannot participate on a single specified Saturday this year. Most of us have busy lives. But when I look at the statistics collectively it tells me that over one-third of the board has not participated in the last 4 years and some of those have never participated in the entire 15 years. It is from this group that we need to bolster those that come through every year for our organization.

Just matching participation once every 7-10 years, depending on how much we are hurting, would satisfy the shortage. For those who are there virtually every year you have my and the Mangini Camp's gratitude for your strong support. We would be lost without you. With 180 members it should be a breeze to at least fill the other 10 spots. This event is well known long in advance; the Saturday after Memorial Day weekend and it is mentioned a couple of times during the year. If you really want to be there and it is possible you will make it a point to be there. The date next year is June 3,

you have a one year advance notice. Excluding competition as a factor, the signs of a good organization turning sour and sliding downhill involve apathy, complacency, laziness, poor management or money.

2. Spring scrimmages continue to about June 17. Board policy is that all spring scrimmages as well as the normal fall scrimmages will be assigned by the Commissioner (spring scrimmages no longer assigned by JV coordinator). The rate is a JV fee (\$60.10). A change proposed by the Budget Committee two years ago and accepted by the members is that all scrimmage fees from the schools be paid directly to the board to support training programs. Members cannot work scrimmages for free and violation will result in penalties. While extra officials may participate in the scrimmage, the schools will compensate the board only for the officials assigned to the scrimmage. Fall scrimmages start August 20. Check Arbiter announcements starting in mid August and email me what are your preferences.

3. The scrimmage pricing structure is as follows:
 - a. 2 Teams 4 officials \$ JV fee
 - b. 3 Teams 5 officials \$ JV fee
 - c. 4 Teams 8 officials \$ JV fee
 - d. Game Conditions 5 officials \$ JV fee

4. Situations not identified above will be negotiated. Schools will be responsible to notify the officials directly if there is a change. I need to be notified if the school brings in additional unannounced teams or the last scrimmage is played under game conditions with only four officials.

5. To my knowledge most outstanding payments have been resolved. Please notify me if your payment is still outstanding.

6. CCAFO officials selected for the Connecticut Football Officials Hall of Fame were Rick Kureczka and Al Santostefano; outstanding officials & selections. Vin Reilly award winner was longtime standout Marino Silvestri, a dedicated gem many of you never had the chance to work with. No CCAFO CIAC Hall of Honor award winner for 2016.

7. Delinquent members should make restitution with Treasurer Andy Sanzaro ASAP. He can be reached at 559-8852. No varsity assignments in July for those that owe the board any dues, assessments or fines.
8. The CT Hall of Fame Classic All-Star Football Game is scheduled for Rentschler Field on Saturday, June 25 at 6:00 pm between most of the top 100 players in Connecticut. The Coaches Association again requested CCAFO officials for the game but the State Board will likely object.
9. Congrats to the following 2015 playoff officials for a job well done.

CIAC Quarter-Final game, Morgan vs. Trinity Catholic: TJ Calabrese, Mike Civitello, Jeff Hulme, Wilson Tirado, Craig Vincelette and Larry Tracey.

CIAC Quarter-Final game, Staples vs. Darien: Rob Thibault, Mike Sanzaro, Jack Botti, Bob Lemanski, Adam Avallone and Dave Friend.

CIAC Quarter-Final Game, West Haven vs. Shelton: Greg Pac, Greg Habzda, Steve Licitra, Chris Rodriguez, Dana Turnquest and Wayne Tracey.

CIAC Semi-Final Game, Trinity Catholic vs. Ansonia: Andy Sanzaro, Luke Collins, Chris Lemay, Tom Zaylor, Bill Greider and Pete Stecko.

CIAC Semi-Final Game, Ledyard vs. New Fairfield: Terry Mock, Brian Roth, Matt Brewer, Dave Milvae, Matt Williams and Jim Dumais.

From all of us, thanks.

10. The CIAC has changed the playoff schedule in 2016 to the familiar schedule with quarter-final games, four champions instead of 8 and games played the Tuesday after Thanksgiving (11/29), the following Sunday & Monday (12/4 & 12/5) and the final Saturday (12/10). One conference from another board has canceled all Thanksgiving Day games except the conference championship.

11. Meetings dates & times: All @ 7:00 p.m. Interpretation is on Wed.
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|----------|----------------------|-----|---------|---------|-----|
| Aug. 31 | Interpretation (WED) | SSA | Oct. 04 | Regular | SSA |
| Sept. 6 | Regular | SSA | Oct. 18 | Regular | SSA |
| Sept. 13 | Regular | SSA | Nov. 01 | Regular | SSA |
| Sept. 20 | Regular | SSA | Nov. 15 | Annual | SSA |

Members must attend one interpretation meeting before working a varsity game. If Aug. 31 is bad for you, contact Greg Habzda for other statewide dates/sites.

Banquet is set for December 1, 6:15 p.m. @ the Aqua Turf in Southington.

12. JV/FR coordinator this fall is Andy Sanzaro. You can help by updating Arbiter with your availability times during the week. Keep a packed equipment bag in the car. No need to call or email me that you are available for varsity games.
- 13. No dues, no availability sheet, no CIAC background consent authorization--no schedule. No fall scrimmages, no Interpretation meeting, no exam, no confirmed schedule--no varsity games.**
14. I believe the regional exam review sessions prior to the start of the season will be continued. More details on sites, coordinators and dates later. Again we urge a better turnout, especially among the younger members. All members are encouraged to attend and participate at a session of your choice. 100% credit on the exam score is provided to all those who take the test before and attend a work session.
15. Committee assignments are available on the web site, www.ccafo.org. Books will be delivered/mailed/available as soon as they become available. For on line access this year; notify Greg Habzda.
16. The maximum number of games per school for 2016 is 10.
17. CCAFO policy is that we do not get involved in minimum medical support needed to conduct a game. The current CIAC/School position is

that the HOME TEAM determines the appropriate medical support needed to start a game.

18. Ratings were mailed earlier.

19. 2016 game fees: To be voted on.

Varsity

JV/FR

ECO

Thanksgiving/Post Season

ECO TD/Post Season

Chain Crew Playoffs

Thanksgiving Day fees are used for all games played during that week including Wednesday and Friday if necessary.

20. We had another strong turnout of 40 officials for the annual flag football game on Super Bowl Sunday, 12:00 pm, at Colt's Park. A great time was had by all.

21. The issue of JV/FR games at 12 minute quarters was not discussed last year. The CCAFO only does 10 minute quarters.

22. CCAFO officials participating as a fan, commentator, observer or coach should never openly criticize the calls of another official working a game. We should maintain our professionalism at all times. We have all made mistakes on the field.

23. We are approaching the time to get physically and mentally prepared for the season.

24. Perhaps a CCAFO directory will be available this year. For contact, payment and CIAC purposes, please contact Greg Habzda (216-8639), Andy Sanzaro (559-8852) or me (mark change box on availability sheet) with changes prior to July 1.

25. ECOs must attend a minimum of three meetings a year to be considered for the playoffs.
26. Arbiter was designed so that officials could change their personal data. Please do not email me to change your data. A new Arbiter company policy change effective May, 2015 (not from your Commissioner) - unless the question involves Ref Pay, all Arbiter questions must go to the Board Commissioner to be resolved.
27. There are ample opportunities for rapid growth in the CCAFO. For several years there have been hundreds of assignments to officials in their first five years. We have taken chances on some very promising officials and been rewarded handsomely. Young officials need to be prepared, and be willing to take advantage when the chance occurs (especially due to rainouts/heavy closed dates/injuries/college assignments). Remember Walt Akerley's (our second commissioner at a time where you waited 4-5 years for your first game) 3 recommendations: 1) Work as many games as possible. 2) Watch as many games as possible, especially of good officials at your position. 3) Never say no to the commissioner (that was actually one of his principles!). I would add a 4th - view yourself on tape. You may be surprised at some of what you see. Some additional points: Have your equipment packed or together and check it twice, know the rules, know what the wing position is looking for and try your best to be available if asked to work. Get to pre-game conferences and listen intently. Know the difference between what the rulebooks say and how a game is actually called (preventative officiating, point of attack, 10 great calls rather than 30 high flying yellow flags). You should try hard to be perfect, but you will fall short, as is true of all the others around you. At a lower level, give them an honest clock until the game is decided or weather is a problem. Ask questions and then more questions. On the field we are one united team. It is our job to get things right, so speak up in the huddle when necessary to question a possible mistake (they are not so rare). Don't be intimidated by the veteran official or wait until the end of the half. Make your point but also recognize when it is time to pursue and when to back off. We all make mistakes, even the veterans and playoff crews. Hustle, but stay under control. Communicate. Be consistent. Recognize a forward pass vs. a backward pass. Be courteous and professional to the coaches

(per Jay K, treat them with kindness) and know when to draw the line and punish unsportsmanlike conduct. Act confidently. Get the spot of forward progress. Remind the referee of the down (L) and status of the clock (BJ/J) especially after a delay in the game. Don't ever miss on the number of the next down. Count the players for which you are responsible. A slightly delayed whistle is vastly superior to an inadvertent whistle. Know the enforcement spot and where the ball should end up. If unsure, lean on the veteran official to help out first. Leave the field together. Protect your Brother official. Accept criticism, but throw out any attitude. Evaluate the crew you are with and if speed and hustle are your best attributes, look for situations to help a veteran official who is no longer so gifted. If it's a rule change you recently studied, help there. If a calm demeanor or uplifting communications are needed, employ your skills in that direction. Enjoy the experience.

28. Veterans, avoid trashing another official among others. Pull him aside and explain a better way. Make him a better official. Improve the CCAFO. Act professionally. Keep the pressure from the coach off the young official. Probe for information from officials to get the call right. In a blowout (especially the 50 point rule), find opportunities to move the clock, the sideline run is usually in bounds, the questionable fumble recovery inside the 20 is by the team losing by 40 and the delay of game foul against the losing team stretches forever. Look for possible fight situations when the game indicates. Recognize when attitudes are getting out of control and tighten up. Record numbers of players who commit unsportsmanlike fouls. Get together before an ejection and then give the signal. Leave the field together. We need many good officials who work well together. Currently we have our share of top officials but we have a huge group of good officials who need to get to the top level. And we need them to get better as fast as possible.
29. We picked up the short session Capital Prep & Windsor Summer Passing Leagues (one completed, one starts at the end of June). Please contact me by email if you are interested.
30. Some fall scrimmages change at lightening speed. Thanks to all who made it a great success last year. I suggest you check Arbiter and your

emails before you leave home or work prior to a scrimmage in case it was changed that day. My gratitude to those officials who make my life so much easier for games & scrimmages with their acceptance to go anywhere, any time and at the last minute.

31. A reminder to all officials that smoking or drinking while on school grounds is not permitted.
32. Each year officials have a lot of turn backs the day after the schedules are released prior to the interpretation meeting because they didn't block all their closed dates. Again last year a large number of games were turned back for several days after the schedules were released. Please update your closed dates before schedules are released.
33. The City of Hartford informed the city schools that Dillon Stadium would no longer be available for football games in 2015 as they were attempting to obtain a pro soccer franchise; games were to be played at school sites or an open field at the University of Hartford without locker room facilities. The soccer situation changed and limited games were played there last year.
34. The Northern Connecticut Chapter of the National Football Foundation honored Vance Harris on May 15th as its Outstanding Official for the year during their scholar-athlete dinner. A superb choice. Vance was an outstanding Referee and Judge during his two tenures on the CCAFO with the ability to think and perform under pressure. He was smart, decisive and courageous. He was elected to the CFOA Hall of Fame. He also enjoyed a long career as a top Referee during his college career. Congrats Vance.
35. The State Clinic this year will likely be held on Saturday, August 20, 9:00 am at a location still to be determined. A return to Maloney is still a possibility. For years when it was held at Maloney High School we dominated the attendance. Now it is much tougher. But groups of 4-5 can still car pool and make the event. It does qualify your attendance requirement at an Interpretation Meeting as the opening segment will cover the new rules for 2016. The topics each of the 6 boards will cover will be identified at the next State Board meeting and I will advise you by email.

At last year's clinic the idea of a separate section just for newer officials was well received and may be implemented in 2016. Let's make sure we are not falling behind the other boards in the state just because we may have to drive an extra 30 minutes. Commit to excellence.

36. The CIAC requirement is that if you are arrested you must notify the CIAC background representative on your board, presumably the assignor. Our representative is Larry DuPont. All information is strictly confidential. To date this program has vastly exceeded my concerns and has been handled most fairly by the CIAC. That is all that needs to be conveyed.

Have a good summer,

Larry DuPont,
Commissioner