



*Established 1994*

[www.SouthernConnecticutConference.org](http://www.SouthernConnecticutConference.org)

**Al Carbone, Commissioner**

My name is Al Carbone and I have served as Commissioner of the Southern Connecticut Conference since 2004, and currently am the longest-tenured Commissioner among the state's high school league leaders. Please accept this letter as support for the positive relationship between the current leadership of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) and the Commissioners of the various leagues in the state.

In my early years as Commissioner, it was a struggle getting information from the CIAC and other entities that athletic directors and coaches were associated with. And more frustrating than the lack of communication, was the inability of leagues to actually weigh in on important topics and issues. As the only Commissioner who is currently not (or has ever been) an athletics administrator at a CIAC-member school, it is imperative that the lines of communication are open at all times to me and more importantly to our member schools.

As leagues, including the SCC, became better organized and got more public attention, there became a desire for better interaction among league commissioners. This interaction was intended to share best practices, and possibly work together with scheduling alliances (such as the SCC's partnership with FCIAAC in football and baseball; and SWC with boys ice hockey and boys volleyball). As a result, the CIAC started to host bi-annual Commissioner meetings.

Flash forward to 2022 and the current leadership of the CIAC (Dr. Glenn Lungarini and Gregg Simon). Both have made it a priority to include Commissioners in their regular communication cadence to stakeholders.

And to appreciate the level of communication is to understand the context.

When I began as SCC Commissioner in 2004, the then-leadership of the CIAC and other entities (unless you paid to be a member) hardly acknowledged the role of "leagues" in the educational-based athletic process, and much less to a degree, included the league Commissioners in any communication.

As an independent Commissioner, I have a unique perspective – one that doesn't first look at the impacts to one school/employer, but rather one who represents an entire league, especially a diverse one such as the SCC – which includes urban, suburban, public and private schools.

This wide-ranging perspective has served me well in my position, but also one I have inevitably struggled with over the years. Fortunately, as "leagues" began to develop and organize, increased their offerings (playoffs, events, etc.) to their student-athletes, and more importantly, started working together on sports scheduling issues, it has been a pleasure to share and communicate with my colleagues and CIAC leadership.

In the last five-plus years under Glenn and Gregg's guidance, and especially prevalent in the COVID-19 era, the level of communication, respect and collaboration between league commissioners and the CIAC has been productive.

Here is an example. The aforementioned bi-annual Commissioner meetings led to the formation of the highly successful Connecticut High School Football Alliance, a group of league commissioners who have addressed the often-contentious way football games were scheduled by matching up teams of like size between different conferences. The Alliance would not have happened without regular communication between Commissioners, but also for the hospitality and support of the CIAC leadership, and their belief that leagues can be an important part of the discussion for improvement, which led to the opportunity for leagues to put forth proposals on various topics to sport committees.

The ability to generate “proposals as leagues” led to a change in “power points” that are a significant factor in determining state football playoff rankings – a significant move that benefitted the Football Alliance, but also strengthened the sport.

Another recent change, which emanated from a “league” proposal, eliminated ties (and co-champions) in state championship soccer games. Even more, league commissioners are continually communicated on new developments and proposals.

As a result, league commissioners, who often have to balance the needs of their own member schools and their individual preferences, are now valuable parts of the “bigger” process to make positive changes to interscholastic athletics.

This partnership that has been made stronger in large part due to the current leadership at the CIAC and their willingness to see the big picture and include all stakeholders who share their vision – providing kids the opportunity to compete for their high school athletic teams.

That being said, the CIAC has a commitment to make their member schools (and leagues) better informed as the high school landscape continues to change – whether it be addressing out-of-season coaching, the impact of Name, Image and Likeness, and the overall health and safety of student athletes. That is why I am encouraged about the creation of the Task Force that was created by the Connecticut General Assembly (PA 22-116) and the involvement of CIAC leadership and various stakeholders.

Al Carbone

Commissioner, Southern Connecticut Conference

(203) 671-4421

[commissioner@southernconnecticutconference.org](mailto:commissioner@southernconnecticutconference.org)





As league Presidents/Commissioners we wanted to share our support of the CIAC and those who are charged with running it. Member schools and their administration are important partners of the CIAC. CIAC staff regularly meet with representatives of its member schools to discuss ways to continue to improve interscholastic athletics in CT. They listen to suggestions, vet them through proper protocols, and, in many instances, adopt changes that are agreed to be in the best interest of student-athletes in our state. All changes in policy whether for a specific sport or in general to encompass all interscholastic offerings are vetted through the membership. Some very recent examples include the expansion of the football playoffs, the adoption of the shot clock for basketball starting in the 2023-24 season, and the improvement of venues for championship contests, along with many others.

We, as the leaders of conferences throughout the state of CT, are very appreciative of the consistent communication with, and the voice that we are afforded by, the CIAC when decisions that impact our student-athletes are being made. It is a partnership that has been strengthened by the combined efforts of the current leadership at the CIAC office and the member schools.

Sincerely,

Mark Berkowitz, Commissioner, South West Conference (SWC)

Michael Santangeli, Commissioner, South West Conference (SWC)

Dave Schulz, Commissioner, Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference (FCIAC)

Jonathan Winer, Commissioner, Capital Region Athletic League (CRAL)

Brian Mariano, President, Naugatuck Valley League (NVL)

Fred Williams, League Coordinator, Berkshire League

John Krot, Commissioner, Connecticut Technical Conference (CTC)

Trish Witkin, Commissioner, Central Connecticut Conference (CCC)

Damian Frassinelli, President, North Central Connecticut Conference, (NCCC)

Lynne Flint, President, Shoreline Athletic Conference

Dave Eustis, President, Southern Connecticut Conference (SCC)





## CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, INC.

30 REALTY DRIVE - CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT 06410 - (203) 651-3921 FAX (203) 250-1345

To: The Task Force Created to Study the Governance Structure and Internal Procedures of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC)

From: The Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD)

Date: September 7, 2022

Re: Position on CIAC Governance

The Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD) has had a long standing relationship with the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) and have welcomed the opportunity to be a part of the current governing process that is in place. CAAD is an organization independent of the CIAC and we have played a major role as a consultant on all CIAC committees including the CIAC Board of Control. Over 65 different athletic directors hold those consultant positions. Our role is to assist and lend direction to the many decisions made by all CIAC Committees. Additionally, we provide a thorough vetting service with all our members to assist in the implementation of change and new CIAC regulations. In our role as consultants we, CAAD, along with the Connecticut High School Coaches Association (CHSCA), consider ourselves as providing oversight to the governance structure of the CIAC. The process currently being used insures a voice by all stakeholders in Connecticut high school sports.

While it may be healthy to revisit the governance structure and internal procedures of the CIAC once in a while, the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors is strongly opposed to any legislative involvement in this review. Politics should never be involved in the governance of high school sports in Connecticut. There is a mechanism already in place to make changes, continually improve the conditions for high school athletes, and to provide oversight. The CIAC is a member school organization and the fate of high school sports in Connecticut should be left in the capable hands of the member schools principals, athletic directors and coaches.

