

# Whistling Zebra



**Northern Officials  
Association**

Summer 2020 Edition

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## FROM YOUR GENERAL CHAIRMAN

To say we are living in unique times would be an understatement. As I write this, we are coming off of a spring sports season that didn't exist with no telling what the fall will bring.

With that in mind, we are making some changes to be able to embrace the uncertainty and be prepared for all possible scenarios in the fall. First and foremost, the board has decided to waive membership fees for 2020 only. We came to this decision based on many factors. First, there may be some of our members out of work. Second, the IHSA is not giving us a break on membership fees. Third, there is still uncertainty with the fall schedule. And finally, we did not incur our banquet costs from the spring. All of these factors made it an easy decision to waive

membership fees for 2020. All that we ask is that you register via our website.

The other action we took as a board was to make plans to hold online meetings if necessary. We have no way of knowing what re-opening phase we will be in, and we also don't know if we will be allowed to meet at Tranel Financial. We will make every attempt to offer a professional meeting experience if online meetings are necessary.

Also of note is that the IACO summer new football officials class will still be held but will be delivered online.

Stay safe and let's hope for football in the fall.

**Darrell Schrag**

## 2019/2020 AWARD WINNERS

Announcing the 2019/2020 NOA Award winners! We were very disappointed we were not able to give these out at the banquet. The NOA board congratulates all of these award winners. Once again, the NOA was well represented in state final competition.

### Football

Official of the year – Dan Schuster  
Rookie of the year – Tyler Cowart  
Rising star – John McNicholas  
George Young award – Phil Perna  
State final officials –  
Mike Zuckerman, Phil Perna,  
Darrell Schrag (7A)  
Mike Babicz, Glen Nielsen, Howard Harris (8-man)

### Basketball

Official of the year – Bill McIntee  
Rookie of the year – Victor Rivera Jr.  
Rising star – Jim Berklin  
State Final officials –  
Troy Whalen, Ken Pink (Girls 3A/4A)  
Randy Steen (Boys\*)

Mike Rose award – Jane McNamara (long time New Trier teacher who always took care of officials)

Keith Ryan award (Lake Co. Hall of Fame) – John Widmayer

New Lifetime Members – Peter King, Ron Lorenzo

Congratulations to all!

## IHSA Return to Play Guidelines

On July 5<sup>th</sup>, the IHSA announced that its Stage 4 (to coincide with the states Restore Illinois Plan) Return to Play Guidelines have been approved by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

“Safety remains at the forefront of everything that the IHSA is doing as we move into Phase 4 and beyond” said IHSA Executive Director Craig Anderson. A draft of the guidelines were sent to IHSA member schools on June 15<sup>th</sup> and approved on July 5<sup>th</sup>. However, those guidelines were already amended on July 10<sup>th</sup>. “The modifications place greater restrictions on coaches and student-athletes in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19” according to an email sent to IHSA member schools. Important changes include limiting physical contact and increased usage of masks. The former restricts schools from conducting contests against other schools in most sports, including 7-on-7 in football.





## Football Happenings

*“We regretfully have to cancel this year’s conference, despite the positive steps our state is making in preventing the spread of Covid-19”*

Craig Anderson, IHSA  
Executive Director

### 2020 IHSA Officials Conference Canceled

The IHSA announced it has canceled its 2020 Officials Conference scheduled for July 10-11

The IHSA will offer virtual education opportunities for officials. These videos will be free to all of our licensed officials. More info soon.

Football is under new leadership in 2020 with Dan Schuster taking the football president role being assisted by Dave Butts. While we don't know what type of football season we will have this fall, we are preparing to hold online meetings if necessary and will continue to bring you valuable topics and good speakers. We will make use of Zoom if we need to. Stay tuned.

2019 was a very successful year for the NOA as it was represented in multiple state final games. Mike Zuckerman, Phil Perna and Darrell Schrag worked the 7A final where Mt. Carmel defeated Nazareth 37-13 in a steady drizzle.

Also representing the NOA was Mike Babicz, Glen Nielsen, and Howard Harris officiating the 8-man football state final.

Congratulations to all!





## Basketball Happenings

*“We see this as the passing of the torch from Peoria to Champaign-Urbana”*

Craig Anderson, IHSA  
Executive Director

### **IHSA Boys Basketball State Finals Return to University of Illinois**

The IHSA announced on June 15 that the Boys State Final will return to the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana beginning with the 2021 state tournament.

“IHSA basketball has deep roots and a celebrated history on the University of Illinois campus and within the Champaign-Urbana community” said Craig Anderson.

Basketball continues to be a big strength of the NOA as membership numbers in basketball are very strong. Thanks to the leadership of Jerry Blum and Phil Schmidt, the meetings were well attended with a good number of new officials attending as well.

The NOA was also very well represented in the state tournament. Troy Whalen and Ken Pink both made it downstate in the Girls 3A/4A and Randy Steen was scheduled to go downstate for Boys but

unfortunately didn't happen due to the abrupt season end. Congratulations to them for this honor.

We were all sad that the annual Bob Brown shootout was canceled. It is a great event and fundraiser for the Bob Brown scholarship. We will pick it up again next year and hopefully continue the strong tradition.

Stay tuned to our website for meeting schedule and topics. See you in the fall.



# See you one way or another in the fall

Please check our website often as we get closer to August. We will be updating the football agenda and communicating our plans via the website.

If you plan on becoming a member in 2020, please visit our website and sign up.

Remember, membership is free for 2020 only. All we ask is that you indicate your intention to be a member by filling out the simple form on our website. Let us know if you have any questions.

As always, please reach out to any board member if you have

any questions or concerns. We all hope that these crazy times are over soon and we can get back to normal. Until then we will figure it out.

Lastly, we thought the below message from Barry Mano was worth including.

## Thoughts About On-Duty Sports Officials Demonstrating Personal Beliefs

A personal message from Barry Mano

Sport is very much in the vanguard of addressing injustice and racial prejudice. Sports events have increasingly become gatherings used to showcase personal, political and organizational commitments on behalf of those goals. During recent years I have become aware that, in various instances, sports officials working such events joined in the presentations. So, what we are witnessing today is not new. It is becoming more prevalent.

With the tenor of the times, I am being asked about how sports officials should conduct themselves in the above situations. Obviously, the sport, the level, the dictates handed down, the actions by players and teams – all are factors that will affect what course of action we may or may not take.

Permit me some observations and opinions:

1. Teams will use game-day activities to publicly show their support on behalf of human rights issues. In general, that will be done through various mechanisms, one of which will be the taking of a knee during the national anthem. Some teams will take a knee while others might not. Some players will take a knee, while others might not.
2. When competitors and team personnel show such support, the question becomes: Should officials join in? Can we align ourselves with competitors in favor of a cause and not harm the perception of our impartiality toward those who did not join in, or vice-versa?
3. I think we can. That is the shortest answer I can give. Yet, the force of social pressure and of personal belief about injustices can weigh heavily on my short answer, especially when what we do is on a very public stage. Some will want to believe we are biased one way or the other. But we know what they don't: That we can express a belief and not have that belief affect our officiating decisions. We remain steadfastly impartial to the game. That is our calling.
4. Should we join in? If we want to show support for a cause being advocated by the competitors on hand, then we have the right to do so. Do that though, with an understanding that displaying personal beliefs while on duty is precious capital, not to be squandered.
5. Ideas have consequences! I think we have the opportunity to surmount the above challenges through actions based on the following beliefs:
  - a. To kneel, stand, salute, put hand over heart – these are individual choices made within a free society. Sports officials do not have such choices expropriated from them simply because they are serving as officials.
  - b. An organization should resist mandating how an individual official or crew of officials should or should not act in these pregame public situations. Note: for officials that are employees, their respective collective-bargaining agreements most likely have provisions covering such matters.
  - c. Conduct ourselves in a way that proclaims respect for each official on the assignment with us. Some may choose to show support for a cause by kneeling, for example, while others may choose not to. Supporting the cause of justice and human rights takes many forms. An officiating crew can serve as a microcosm of those forms.
  - d. Respecting each other means having the capacity to accept that not all of us will present our beliefs in the same way. To kneel, stand, salute or put hand over heart during the playing of the national anthem – each such display is to be honored without criticism.
  - e. It is the responsibility of the "crew chief" or leader of the crew to ensure questions about crew cohesion and "optics" are addressed thoughtfully and in a timely manner. Choose a good optic over a bad optic. The crew should have the topic as an agenda item for its pregame meeting.
  - f. It must become accepted practice that the manner in which an official displays a viewpoint while fulfilling officiating duties will not have a negative effect on the opportunities or career path for that official.

In closing, those with topmost authority over the game have the responsibility to describe how they want that game to look and what goals are to be served. If cause-related activities become part and parcel in the game environment in which we officiate, then it will be incumbent upon us to accept that evolving reality.

It is also incumbent upon us to thoughtfully present ourselves as individual officials and as a crew of officials in a manner that does not detract from the core duties we have: To ensure the game is played by the rules, while emphasizing fairness and safety and doing so in a manner that enhances the stature of sports officiating.

Barry Mano  
President, NASO

# Norther Officials Association

## BOARD of DIRECTORS

*General Chairman* – Darrell Schrag

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*Football representative* – Dave Butts

*Basketball president* – Jerry Blum

*Basketball representative* – Phil Schmidt

*Past General Chairman* – Mike Babicz

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[northernofficialsassociation.com](http://northernofficialsassociation.com)

