



April 20, 2020

Dear Registered Sports Official:

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide you with some updated information regarding your registration as a PIAA sports official. We do not take your membership lightly and we thank you for being an integral part of the interscholastic sports experience.

First and foremost, we hope that you and your families are safe and healthy from the COVID-19, coronavirus pandemic, which is currently spreading across Pennsylvania and the nation. Aside from your good health, nothing much matters, but when things are good we like to do other things and have avocations, with sports officiating being one of them.

PIAA is a voluntary registry for sports officials and in doing such it provides a registered official with the opportunity to referee interscholastic contests at member schools. As a registered official, you are free to solicit games from schools and provide them with your services. They, in turn, pay you directly as an independent contractor.

Also, as you know, because officials have regular contact with minors at schools, the General Assembly has mandated that you must have three background clearances to work on each school's campus. That would be very difficult for officials if you had to get separate clearances for every school at which you officiate. PIAA, in coordination with the Department of Education, however, became a clearinghouse for schools. This means that schools can confirm on our website that an official is active, up to date on rules and has completed the appropriate state mandated clearances. This information is housed in the Officials' Directory of the PIAA website, which also allows each official to complete their own personal profile and keep their information up to date so schools may contact them and provide information to schools to receive payment or assignments. At the game site, the display of the PIAA Officials' patch on your uniform indicates to all that you are a registered official in good standing.

Many of you have reached out to the PIAA office to see if there will be an extension granted for state mandated clearances which, for many of you, will expire this year. That is something that is beyond our control as it is regulated by state law. We have reached out to the Department of Education to inquire if there will be an extension for these clearances. What we have been told so far is that the clearances need to be updated as required by the law. If that information changes, we will let you know. Again, because the requirement is mandated by law, PIAA does not have the authority to grant any type of waiver or extension regarding these legislatively mandated clearances. Please go to <http://www.piaa.org/officials/become/clearances.aspx> for more information on clearances.

Additionally, we purchase products and publications to assist you in improving your skills as a sports official. Items, such as rules books, case books, simplified and illustrated books, umpire manuals, pre-season bulletins, meeting guides, in-season bulletins, electronic assignment software, chapter meeting software, officials' registration software, online testing credit, online mandatory rules makeup meetings, postage, and administrative costs, are all covered by your registration fees. These items are paid by PIAA well in advance of each sport season and are annual costs to assist you in your education and developing skills as a sports official and to keep your information current for member schools and other officials.

We have learned that NFHS has opened many sport-specific courses to officials at no cost until July 1, 2020. This may be a great time for experienced, newly registered and prospective officials to continue to educate themselves or to initiate study skills in the areas of their sports. The information in these courses may be old news to some and new for others, but the bottom line is that everyone can learn from having more training. These courses, many of which are free, are housed at [www.NFHSLearn.com](http://www.NFHSLearn.com). Please take a look for yourself or suggest to your officiating colleague that they avail themselves of these courses as well.

Finally, decisions regarding the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual PIAA Officials Convention scheduled for August will be made in the coming weeks. The status of businesses and what we can do as citizens of the Commonwealth appear to change daily, so please check in often at [www.piaa.org/officials/convention/default.aspx](http://www.piaa.org/officials/convention/default.aspx).

To the 13,554 men and women that are part of educationally based athletics, we thank you for your service and involvement in the interscholastic athletic experience. It is admired and appreciated.

Sincerely,

*Robert A. Lombardi*  
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Executive Director

*Patrick B. Gebhart*  
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