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RE: Ohio Capital Conference/Official Pay

For the past several years, official pay in Central Ohio was determined through an agreement with the Central Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (COIAAA). This agreement was designed to create consistency within the 32 member schools of the OCC as well as other schools/conferences in Central Ohio.

Last winter, the COIAAA notified its member schools that they would no longer be charged with the assignment of official pay— leaving the individual conferences/schools in Central Ohio to develop their own pay schedules. The OCC sponsors 25 high school sports, and a significant number of those Official Associations requested an immediate increase in pay. The OCC formed a 15-member sub-committee to research and investigate official pay throughout the state of Ohio and develop a plan for the OCC. This committee consisted of building principals, athletic directors, and league assigners for official crews. The first objective of the committee was to establish data on similar pay in Ohio. Pay scales were obtained from the following similar conferences: Greater Miami Conference (GMC/SW Ohio), Greater Catholic League (GCL South Division/SW Ohio), Greater Western Ohio Conference (GWOC/West-Central Ohio), Greater Cleveland Conference (GCC/NE Ohio), and the Three Rivers Athletic Conference (TRAC/NW Ohio). The Committee established the average official pay within those conferences.

The Committee also looked at a formula based on the entry-level tournament pay for Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) officials. For the majority of OCC sports, the formula was set at 95% (varsity), 80% (JV) and 70% (9th/Middle Level). There was a belief on the Committee that conference pay should not exceed the pay for OHSAA tournaments.

Then, a comparison was done of the league average and the percentage formula, and kept the HIGHER of the two numbers as part of the OCC pay schedule. If the OHSAA were to increase tournament pay, the percentage formula would be adjusted. This summer, the OHSAA increased tournament pay in some sports and our formula was immediately increased to represent the higher amounts.

The OCC also included an increase in varsity-level pay for the next three years (‘23-’24, ‘24-’25, ‘25-’26). We will continue to monitor the League Average and the OHSAA Percentage and take the HIGHER of the three figures. However, there will be a standard/minimum increase for the next three years. Other conferences in Central Ohio have adopted similar pay schedules, so there is consistency with official pay.

These increases, which were unanimously approved by the OCC, represent a significant increase in official pay. These increases will total over $700,000 for the 32-member schools of the OCC and are a significant challenge to the individual athletic departments.

While the vast majority of our Official Associations have endorsed the pay increases, there are still some who believe they should be paid more. As an example, official pay in the sport of Lacrosse has benefitted from an increase in pay from $60.00 in 2018 (Varsity level) to the new figure of $85.00 for this coming season. This is an increase of over 41%. In addition, there is now a formula in place that guarantees an increase for the next three years. We have received word from the Lacrosse Association that our pay schedule is simply not enough.

The OCC Athletic Directors have been put in a very difficult situation of balancing budgets or opening Pandora’s Box by simply paying what each Association may request. The OCC feels that the approved increases, along with the establishment of a formula going forward, constitutes a commitment to do what is fair and equitable for all parties. We have worked diligently to keep our student-athletes from being in the center of this issue.

Michael Starner, Principal/Olentangy Liberty and President of the OCC

Steve Glesenkamp, Athletic Director/Delaware Hayes and Chair of the OCC Officials Committee Ken Baker, Commissioner of the OCC