

## A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER



### LEADERSHIP

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word leader as follows, “One that leads or guides. One in charge or in command of others.”

I believe that in our nation today it has become more and more difficult for people of all ages to become leaders. Individuals are reluctant to take a stand on issues because of the instant scrutiny that comes from our media driven environment, coupled with the strong emphasis our society has placed on the concept of political correctness.

As leadership relates to high school student-athletes, peer pressure can be very difficult for them to overcome and prevents them from seeking leadership roles in their schools and on their teams. Another factor that can discourage young people from wanting to be leaders is seeing the way our leaders are treated by those who disagree with the decisions that they make.

As the Commissioner of Athletics for the CIF Southern Section, in concert with our Executive Committee and our member schools, I believe that we all have a responsibility to lead in three very important ways.

- 1) We must try to set the vision for the future in the hope of improving what we do. In accomplishing that task, there may be times when our decisions will not be universally applauded or accepted. However, we must understand and acknowledge that our decisions must be guided by trying to do what is in the best interest of as many people as possible. That is the fundamental principle applied to those decisions. In that way, we set the course for moving forward and make every effort to follow through in getting that vision to become a reality.
- 2) We must try to set an example for the young people we have the opportunity to work with and make an impact on. Principals, Athletic Directors and coaches must all embrace what being a leader means. The student-athletes that depend on us to show to them the way must see us as strong leaders willing to set the right example for them to emulate. Remember, while they are listening to our words, they are always watching our actions, which makes the most lasting impression upon them.
- 3) We must teach leadership, encourage it and make it a vital part of the team culture we are trying to establish and instill in our young people. We must make a commitment to develop leaders so that we can give our student-athletes the vital skills they will need to succeed beyond their high school years. Being comfortable in a leadership role can only enhance their ability to achieve their career goals.

I have said many times that our primary mission as an organization is to utilize the high school athletic experience as an educational tool to help young people prepare for a better future. In working on building the leaders of tomorrow we have an obligation to provide them with the necessary tools, knowledge and experience to make sure they are prepared to carry the torch we will pass on. Let us all partner together to get the job done.

All the best,

*Robert Wigod*

Rob Wigod  
Commissioner of Athletics

