

CONNECTICUT COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

An Alliance of the:
Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference
Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors
Connecticut High School Coaches Association

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Testimony and Concern for:

H.B 5113 - AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH ATHLETICS AND CONCUSSIONS.

My name is Fred Balsamo and I am a Wallingford resident and manage the coaching education program for the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), Connecticut Association of Athletic directors (CAAD) and the Connecticut High School Coaches Association (CHSCA). I am also the executive director of CAAD, which represents the athletic directors in 188 high school and 150 middle school athletic programs across the state.

I have dedicated most of my career in the development of educational programs for coaches to insure the safety of our student-athletes in Connecticut. While I applaud the committee for taking an interest in student safety I have several serious concerns with the law as written. This legislation is far reaching and was written with the assumption there are currently many problems and little being done to educate coaches parents, students and referees. It implies mistrust in the ability of school districts and the coaches they hire.

Connecticut has the most stringent coaching permit and coaching education requirements in the country. State statute mandates that certified teachers must complete the concussion education course in addition to CPR/First Aid. Non-teachers must complete a 45 clock hour course including concussion education and in addition must maintain current CPR/First Aid. All coaches must take 15 hours of ongoing training in order to renew their permit every year. We have developed the curriculum for those training courses with student safety as a priority as illustrated in the list of courses in the attached brochure.

The Connecticut concussion legislation spearheaded by Senator Looney in 2010 requires the most extensive concussion education course required for coaches in the country. The Connecticut course covers the signs and symptoms of concussions and the chemical cascade effect that occurs in the brain during the concussed state, it covers other brain injuries such as brain bleeds and skull fractures, scalp and neck injuries. The course explains the law, the requirements of removing an athlete from participation and the revocation process for failure to follow all aspects of the law. It thoroughly explains Second Impact Syndrome and Post Concussion Syndrome. It also trains the coach in an extensive "return to play protocol" which is annually reviewed with all coaches.

Testimony for HB 5113 and SB 229

Dear Members of the Children's Committee and Legislative Leaders,
The Connecticut Coaching Education Program and the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors have serious concerns about the language in both of these Bills.

The Connecticut concussion legislation spearheaded by Senator Looney in 2010 requires the most extensive concussion education course required for coaches in the country. The Connecticut course covers the signs and symptoms of concussions and the chemical cascade effect that occurs in the brain during the concussed state, it covers other brain injuries such as brain bleeds and skull fractures, scalp and neck injuries. The course explains the law, the requirements of removing an athlete from participation and the revocation process for failure to follow all aspects of the law. It thoroughly explains Second Impact Syndrome and Post Concussion Syndrome. It also trains the coach in an extensive "return to play protocol" which is annually reviewed with all coaches.

The concussion law, the extensive coaching education requirements and the recent actions and mandates put out by the CIAC requiring concussion education for parents, students & referees and limiting contact in football practice far exceeds what is being done in other states and is more than adequately serving and insuring the safety of our student-athletes in the state of Connecticut

Please see the attached documents pertaining to HB 5113 & SB 229 that I will address in my testimony tomorrow.

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Fred P. Balsamo, CMAA

Executive Director

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For more CAAD and CCEP info:

www.caadinc.org or <http://www.ctcoachinged.org/>

For CT State Department Forms

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2613&q=321402>

Specifically here are my points of concern with H.B 5113:

- **Changing the content of the course “other brain injuries”** - Since the current concussion law was enacted in 2010 over 13,232 school coaches have already taken the course. There is no provision for grandfathering those coaches implying they all have to retake the course. There is no provision to allow us to provide coaches with just the new updated material which was the original intent of the current law and the reason for having only one unified course for coaches.
- **Only one concussion and other brain injury parent/student plan** – It would be nearly impossible to effectively reach every student and parent by using only one plan developed by the State Department of Education. Because of the diversity in school populations and demographics, our schools need the autonomy to develop their own plans and methods of implementation that will allow them to effectively reach every student and parent. Currently the CIAC mandates schools educate parents and students and provides several delivery methods.
- **Consent form** – This form has already been developed using the coaches annual review form previously approved by the SDE, Department of Health, Connecticut Medical Society and Athletic Trainers as the template. It is being used in our schools at the present time.
- **24 hour Notification** – This puts the responsibility on the coach rather than on the school district that employs trained medical professionals. Currently most notifications are occurring almost immediately unless there are delayed signs and symptoms.
- **24 hour Wait period** - Not all students who show signs and symptoms of a concussion actually have a concussion. An athlete feeling woozy may have simply not eaten properly that day. We currently rely on trained medical people to make these assessments and if the signs and symptoms are in fact suspected to be a concussion, students are not allowed to return to play until they have been medically cleared and then they must follow the return to play protocol. The current legislation allows medical clearance to serve as notification that a student may begin the return to “play protocol” and not a clearance to return to full activity. This 24 hour wait period usurps that process and can empower parents to demand their child return to play immediately after the 24 hour wait period.
- **Consent release form** – This step in the process will only serve to empower parents who want their child back to participation sooner than they should be allowed to. We have documented cases where parents have doctor shopped to get a return to play release and then demanded their child be allowed to play. The current law as written prevents this.
- **Regulating Contact in practice** – First, **NO** state in the country has a law that legislates contact in practice. Furthermore, Connecticut has consulted with other states and has taken the initiative to regulate contact time in football practice. The CIAC has developed a stringent program that was approved by the Connecticut Medical Society. The 90 minute restriction as written in HB 5113 would not allow sufficient time for coaches in the preseason to teach the proper techniques of tackling to prevent injury. The 90

minute restriction would force schools to decide whether they want to prepare the team by having a scrimmage or by teaching the necessary skills to compete in that scrimmage. The proposed language has the potential to increase injuries.

- **Requiring referees to take the a course** – Currently all school referees must annually train and review all National Federation of High school rules which include the signs and symptoms of concussions. We rely on referees to assist the coach and athletic trainer in identifying athletes who potentially may have sustained a concussion. Their level of expertise should not go beyond that.
- **Collecting and Reporting Occurrences** – School districts do not have the resources to accomplish this effectively without employing additional staff. Many Athletic Trainers are hired to cover events on an hourly basis and would not have time to complete this task without additional compensation. This would create an unfunded mandate and a burden to our schools.
- **Youth Sports** – There is no statewide governing body for youth sports and many operate as an independent entity. The implementation and regulating of this requirement would be nearly impossible. Furthermore, many park and recreation programs utilize unpaid parents and students to coach and referee their contests. This legislation would deter many from volunteering. Additionally, many youth programs such as AAU act as an independent entity and should not be governed by the State Department of Education. While I can support some level of concussion education for youth coaches, parents and participants, HB 5113 is far too extensive for their needs.

In closing, the concussion law, the extensive coaching education requirements and the recent actions and mandates put out by the CIAC requiring concussion education for parents, students & referees and limiting contact in football practice far exceeds what is being done in other states and is more than adequately serving and insuring the safety of our student-athletes in the state of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Fred Balsamo

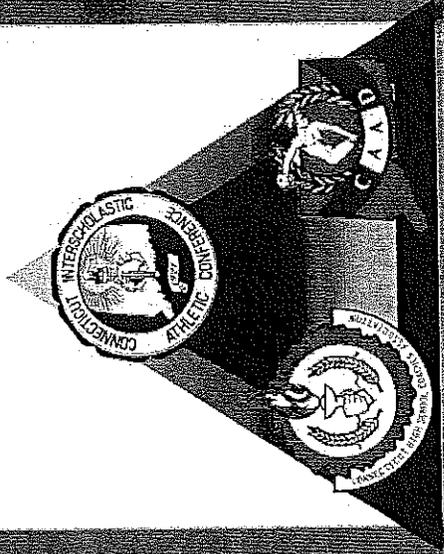
Fred Balsamo, CMAA

Connecticut Coaching Education Program

SDE Approved Module Offerings (3 Hours Each)

Module 1 Revised	Coaching Principles & Practice – Philosophy, Motivation and Character
Module 2	Communication, Public Relations and Organization
Module 3 Revised	Safety Rules, Care & Prevention of Athletic Injuries
Module 4	Legal Aspects of Interscholastic Coaching I – (14 Duties)
Module 5	CIAC Rules and Regulation
Module 6	Legal Aspects of Interscholastic Coaching II – Revocation, Hazing, Harassment
Module 7	CIAC Guide To the Roles and Responsibilities of a Coach
Module 8	Strength & Conditioning Design for Interscholastic Athletic Programs
Module 9	Sport Psychology for Interscholastic Coaches
Module 10	Gender Equity & Diversity Awareness for Coaches
Module 11	Coaching the Female Athlete
Module 12	All-Adult Construct of Coaching
Module 13	Nutrition, Performing Enhancing Supplements
Module 14	Emergency & Critical Incident Response for Interscholastic Athletic Programs
Module 15	Concussion Management

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*Providing Coaches with the
 Necessary Education
 to Obtain Their
 5 Year Renewable
 Coaching Permit
 & 15 Hours of
 Continuing Education*

Module 16	Proper Use of Electronic Media by Coaches
Module 17	Dealing with Parents of Athletes
Module 18	Dealing with the College Bound Athlete
Module 19	The Impact of Ethical Standards on Youth
Module 50	Swimming Pool Safety Training for Swim Coaches and PE Instructors
Module 51	CIAC Safety Training for Football Coaches (under development)
Module 52	CSAC Safety Training for Cheerleading (under development)
Module 78	Coaching at the Middle School Level
Module 101	Fundamentals of Coaching Online - 6 Hours

Online Modules

COEP now offers online modules for your convenience.

More info can be found at www.ctcoachinged.org

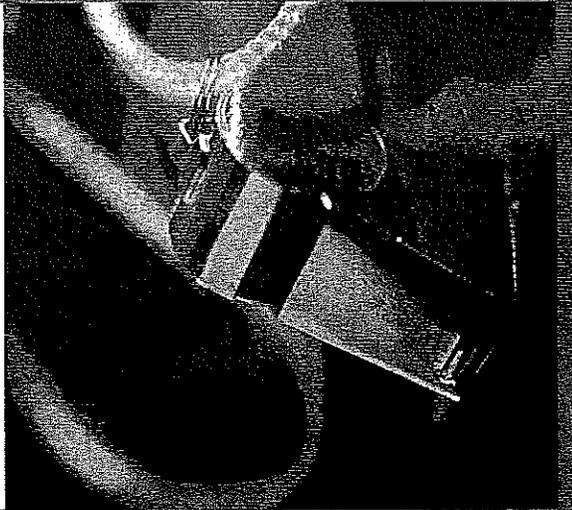
All Module workshops will be conducted at the CIAC building located at 30 Reedy Drive Cheshire, CT 06410.

For specific Module offerings and information go to www.ctcoachinged.org

Coaching Education Made "User Friendly"

The Alliance

In June 2007 an agreement was reached among the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Association (CIAC), the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD), and the Connecticut High School Coaches Association (CHSCA) merging the coaching education efforts of each organization into a unified program. This alliance, now called the Connecticut Coaching Education Program (CCEP), is under the direction of Fred Balsamo. The aims of the program are to provide coaches and school athletic administrators more opportunities to access the 45 hour coaching permit course and other CEU workshops, to assist in the tracking and data entry of coaches, and to dispel confusion for people going through the coaching certification process.



More Offerings

Through the combined efforts of the Alliance, the CCEP will provide coaches and athletic directors increased opportunities to receive relevant and pertinent coaching modules that will enhance the quality of coaching high school athletes and underscore the important role they play in teaching the values inherent in participating in high school athletics.

The 45 hour permit course will continue to be offered each semester on Wednesday evenings at CIAC. Also, additional classes will be designed to better fit the busy schedules of coaches. For example, this past summer the CCEP sponsored a "power" class covering the 45 hours in just 6 days. Based on the positive evaluations received, this class will be offered periodically throughout the year. In addition, "satellite" programs modifying times and days to fit specific situations will be developed in different locations in the state.

All workshops offered in the past by CIAC, CAAD and the CHSCA will now be referred to as "modules" and each assigned a number. This will help coaches better understand what they have completed and prevent duplication. New modules are also being developed in order to meet the needs of schools and their coaches. Current modules as well as those being developed are listed in this brochure.

Data Entry & Tracking

Merging the existing data bases of the three organizations is now completed. The end result is a site with access for coaches and athletic directors. The centralized data base will also be made available to the State Department of Education which will make its auditing efforts of coaches less cumbersome and more accurate. To see what you have taken with the CCEP visit www.ctcoachinged.org/CEU.html, then click on "Search Data Base".

Dispelling Confusion

In addition to generating additional course offerings and merging data, the coaching education office is now available to handle calls to help coaches and member schools with their coaching education questions. Fred Balsamo staffs the office daily and can be contacted directly at (203) 651-3921. Additionally, the CIAC website has been made easier to navigate by the creation of a separate page for the Connecticut Coaching Education Program. This permits online registrations for the 45 hour coaching permit course and other coaching modules.

If you have any questions or suggestions as to how the Connecticut Coaching Education Program can better serve you,

please don't hesitate to call Fred Balsamo (203) 651-3921 or email at fbalsamo@casciac.org.



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, INC.

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

Testimony for:

SB 229 – AN ACT CONCERNING SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST PREVENTION

My name is Fred Balsamo I am Wallingford resident and I manage the coaching education program for the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), Connecticut Association of Athletic directors (CAAD) and the Connecticut High School Coaches Association (CHSCA). I am also the executive director of CAAD, which represents the athletic directors in 188 high school and 150 middle school athletic programs across the state and I am a Certified Red Cross First Aid/CPR Instructor.

I have dedicated most of my career in the development of educational programs for coaches to insure the safety of our student-athletes in Connecticut. We have the most stringent coaching permit and coaching education requirements in the country which among many other things requires all coaches to maintain current first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In addition to cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and rescue breathing CPR courses include signs, symptoms and prevention of heart attacks, causes of heart disease, breathing emergencies such as choking and the proper method for obtaining medical treatment for a student in distress. Also, many courses now include training in the use of an AED machine. Additionally, non-teacher coaches by statute must take a 45 clock hour course which includes 15 hours of instruction on the medical aspects of interscholastic coaching. During those 15 hours our course covers sudden cardiac arrest in great detail. Furthermore, this law places the onus for implementation and notification on the coach rather than the school district that has many more resources to deal with these requirements. This will cause coaches to leave the profession where there is already a shortage of qualified individuals.

Lastly, the wording on lines 87-89 & 108-111 allowing a student to return to play and requiring a parent to be notified within 24 hours if their child has had a sudden cardiac event seems to be language used from HB 5113 (Concussions) and certainly should not be applied here. Students should not be allowed to return to play following a sudden cardiac event and parents should be notified as soon as possible should their child have such an event.

CAAD believes that because of the state laws that already exist that require coaches to have extensive ongoing education and continual first aid & CPR training. The portions of this law that place additional requirements on coaches would seem to create an unnecessary burden.

Sincerely,

Fred Balsamo

Fred Balsamo, CMAA

