

HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA
INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION
SOUTHERN SECTION
(CIFSS)

14TH historical “tidbit.”

THE FIRST BIG LEGAL BATTLE – 1932

COVINA HIGH SCHOOL CASE



The difficulties encountered by the CIFSS to control and direct interscholastic athletics reached a high point in 1932, when the CIFSS ejected Covina High School from membership for failure to refund a certain amount of money (\$1616.00). This money was from play-off games and Covina felt they should keep the money or turn it over to the Community Chest of Covina. Covina High School fought back by addressing the Council in October, 1932, and filing suit (\$25,000) in the Superior Court to compel the Council to reinstate them in the CIFSS. Seth Van Patten retained a lawyer who felt CIFSS could win the case, but the Judge upheld Covina’s complaint and the CIFSS was forced to reinstate them as a bona fide member (they were kept out of the remainder of the 1932 football season.) Many felt that this decision undermined the ability of the CIFSS to regulate interscholastic sports and the CIFSS appealed to the Appellate Court. The case was settled outside court and Covina High School was back in the CIFSS with the understanding that play-off revenues would go to the participating schools and the CIFSS.

Covina High School was often considered to be the “bad boy” of the Southern California high schools. They had played ineligible players and recruited “a couple of fine Indian players” from the Sherman Institute. Even the citizens of Covina were “mad” at the high school and embarrassed by their transgressions. The “Los Angeles Times” of October 14, 1932 stated:

“Shed a tear for Covina. No one will play them. Nobody wants them in their league. Just orphans of the storm.”

West Covina 1930's

