

HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA
INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION
SOUTHERN SECTION
(CIFSS)



This will be the first short list of “historical tidbits” which will help the membership better understand the colorful history of the CIF Southern Section. This information is gleaned from the early minutes, a master’s dissertation written by Maurice Sandy, notes from S.F. Van Patten and interviews with prominent members of the Southern Section.

Enjoy,
John S. Dahlem, Ph.D.
1st historical “tidbit.”

- The first organized interscholastic sports in Southern California started around the mid 1890’s with no formalized organization or rules. The first leagues were created to play football and baseball. These first leagues were:
 - Citrus Belt...Chaffey High School, Redlands High School, Riverside High School, San Bernardino High School
 - Channel League...Oxnard High School, Santa Barbara High School, Santa Paula High School, Ventura High School
 - Los Angeles League...Los Angeles High School, Los Angeles Poly High School, Long Beach High School, Santa Monica High School, Pasadena High School
 - Orange County League...Anaheim High School, Fullerton High School, Santa Ana High School
- High School Administrators took “no” part in these contests and anyone could play. Some of the players did not even attend the school and it was said that, “Town bums were at times the coaches.”
- Track and Field was the first sponsored event run by the High School Athletic Association of Southern California in 1904.



- The 1906 Track and Field Championships, held in Ventura, was rained out because the racehorse track, where the meet was to be held, (Ventura Fair Grounds) was flooded.
- The Academic Athletic Union tried to organize high school sports in the early 1900's, but was unsuccessful.
- Track was the sport that got CIFSS started as complaints against the local YMCA and the colleges, who ran the annual meet, increased.
- May 15, 1913 is often given as the founding date of the CIF Southern Section although it is tough to document because notes were not taken at the first meetings. The State CIF was founded a year later on June 1, 1914.
- The first rules were fairly simple:
 - a boy (no girls mentioned) must pass at least 15 hours of work per week
 - participation in contests above the secondary school level was forbidden
 - only four years of competition were permitted...no post-graduate competition
 - a boy could not be over 21 years of age and be eligible

The first official sports in the CIFSS were track and field, football, baseball, basketball, aquatics, and tennis. Only one team represented each school in a sport. "Scrub teams" were created to give smaller boys a chance to play. The first attempt at size classifying of athletes started in the 1920's. There was the unlimited class, the 130 pound class, 110 pound class and 90 pound class.

.....smile about this:

During the World War I years, when the Track and Field Championships were held, the hand grenade throw was substituted for the javelin throw. This was eliminated in 1920.

