

RIIAAA NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

HOPE — Helping Other People Everyday

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear RIIAAA Members,

I hope everyone has had a successful start to the 2026–27 school year and fall athletic season. September is always one of the busiest times of the year for athletic administrators. Between schedules, transportation, officials, facilities, eligibility, coaches, parents, and the everyday challenges that come with running an athletic department, there is certainly no shortage of work.

During these busy times, I think it is important to remember that we have an entire association of colleagues who understand the challenges of this profession.

One of my priorities as RIIAAA President is to continue strengthening communication among our Athletic Directors. We have tremendous knowledge and experience throughout our membership, and we should continue using that experience to support one another and improve education-based athletics throughout Rhode Island.

As we move through the fall season, please continue to stay connected, share ideas, ask questions, and bring forward the issues affecting your schools and athletic programs.

Our association is strongest when we communicate, collaborate, and work together.

— Justin Erickson, CMAA
President, RIIAAA

MEMBER VOICE

EBoard Concerns & Discussion

The RIIAAA Executive Board wants to hear from our membership. If there is an issue or concern affecting your athletic department that you believe deserves discussion, please bring it forward.

Topics may include policies and procedures, scheduling, officials, transportation, facilities, sport-specific concerns, middle school athletics, high school athletics, or other issues impacting our Athletic Directors and student-athletes.

Many times, a challenge facing one school is also affecting several other schools throughout the state. Hearing directly from our membership allows the EBoard to identify common concerns, have productive discussions, and determine how RIIAAA can best advocate for and support our Athletic Directors.

HAVE AN ISSUE FOR THE EBOARD?

Justin Erickson
jerickson@johnstonschools.org

Your voice matters.

SAVE THE DATES

Important Upcoming Events

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
OCTOBER 7	LTC 501 & LTC 502	Classical High School • Presented by Bobby Palazzo
OCTOBER 13	LTC 503	Classical High School • Presented by Bobby Palazzo
OCTOBER 15	LTC 700 & LTC 701	Classical High School • Presented by Bobby Palazzo
NOVEMBER 10	RIIL Winter Coaches Meeting	Please make sure your winter coaches are aware of this important meeting.
NOVEMBER 13	Athletic Director Workshop	Professional development, discussion, and collaboration.
NOVEMBER 30	First Day of Winter Sports	High School & Middle School

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Leadership Training Opportunities

Professional development remains an important part of our growth as athletic administrators. Bobby Palazzo will be offering several Leadership Training Courses at Classical High School during October:

October 7 — LTC 501 & 502

October 13 — LTC 503

October 15 — LTC 700 & 701

I encourage our members to take advantage of these opportunities. Whether you are pursuing professional certification or simply looking to continue developing as an athletic administrator, these courses provide valuable opportunities to learn, collaborate, and grow.

The stronger we become as Athletic Directors, the stronger our programs become.

RHODE ISLAND INJURY FUND

Fall Season Reminder

As we continue through the fall athletic season, please remember the changes regarding Injury Fund contests. Injury Fund contests are being played in a modified or shortened format based on the sport.

Traditional timed contests are played as half-regulation games. Baseball and softball use speed-up game formats, while volleyball plays best two-out-of-three sets, with the third set played to 15 points when necessary.

As a result, game officials are compensated at one-half of the standard game fee.

Please remember that participation in an Injury Fund game is required for Injury Fund coverage. Schools that do not participate in an Injury Fund game under the established guidelines will not have their coaches and players covered by the Injury Fund.

Please continue communicating this information with your coaches and make sure all Injury Fund games are properly scheduled and played.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

2026 National Athletic Directors Conference

December 11-15, 2026 • Phoenix, Arizona

The 2026 National Athletic Directors Conference, co-hosted by the NIAAA and NFHS, will bring Athletic Directors from across the country together for professional development, networking, Leadership Training Institute courses, workshops, educational sessions, and collaboration.

The National Conference is an outstanding opportunity to learn from colleagues from across the country and bring new ideas, resources, and best practices back to our schools. I hope we will have a strong group of Rhode Island Athletic Directors representing RIIAAA in Phoenix this December.

FIRST-TIME ATTENDEE SCHOLARSHIP

A scholarship opportunity is available to help offset the cost for a first-time attendee. If you have never attended the National Athletic Directors Conference, I strongly encourage you to consider taking advantage of this opportunity.

SEPTEMBER DISCUSSION

Communication & Collaboration

One thing I have learned throughout my time as an Athletic Director is that very few of the challenges we face are unique to one school. If you are dealing with something, chances are another Athletic Director has dealt with it before—or is dealing with the same issue right now.

Pick up the phone. Send the text. Ask the question.

We should not have Athletic Directors throughout Rhode Island trying to solve the same problems independently. Our association gives us the opportunity to share information, discuss challenges, exchange ideas, and help one another find solutions.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What is one issue you are dealing with right now that other Athletic Directors across Rhode Island may also be experiencing?

Bring it forward. Let's talk about it.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

As we continue through the fall season, there will undoubtedly be challenges, last-minute changes, and situations that test us as athletic administrators. There will also be incredible moments.

We will watch student-athletes accomplish things they did not think were possible. We will see coaches positively impact young people's lives. We will watch our schools and communities come together to support their teams.

Those moments are why we do what we do.

Continue supporting your fellow Athletic Directors. Share ideas. Ask questions. Mentor someone new to the profession. And never hesitate to reach out when you need help.

We are all on the same team.

HOPE

Helping Other People Everyday

Thank you for everything you continue to do for education-based athletics and the student-athletes of Rhode Island. Have a great remainder of the fall season!

Sincerely,
Justin Erickson, CMAA
President
Rhode Island Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association
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