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With shortage of game officials impacting play, NJSIAA launches recruitment initiative

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ (Aug. 1, 2022) – The alarm is being sounded by high school athletic directors and coaches.

A dire shortage of game officials is now forcing postponement, rescheduling, or even cancellation of some high school games. Since 2018, an estimated 50,000 high school referees – roughly 20% of the national total – have resigned, according to the National Federation of High School Sports. And, the National Association of Sports Officials says registration of new officials across the country is down about 30% this year.

NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletics Association), aware of the challenges facing youth sports officials and dedicated to continuing to create a healthy, competitive environment focused on sportsmanship, is helping address this critical situation by launching a recruitment initiative. This program will provide a \$300 rebate to any new official who joins an NJSIAA-recognized officials chapter and successfully completes all NJSIAA requirements for certification. The rebate is available to new officials in any NJSIAA-sanctioned sport and is intended to cover all or almost all start-up costs for a new official, including registration and uniform purchase.

“Officiating is a great way to give back to your community,” says NJSIAA Chief Operating Officer Tony Maselli. “For those who are committed to helping young people, while also being fans of athletics, officiating games is an ideal way to teach sportsmanship and help teenagers learn valuable life lessons.”

Mark Bitar, NJSIAA Officials Recruiting Coordinator adds: “New officials have an opportunity to make a huge, positive difference in the lives of young people. And, beyond providing a significant service to others, officiating offers an opportunity to make extra income, stay in shape, and expand your personal network.”

Detailed information on becoming an official is available by visiting the NJSIAA website, at <https://www.njsiaa.org/officials>.

About NJSIAA

Established in 1918, the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) is a voluntary, non-profit organization of approximately 435 accredited public and non-public high schools. A member of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), the NJSIAA conducts tournaments and crowns champions in 33 sports.

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