

Officials' Appreciation Week Profile:

Allison Munch

Much of Allison Munch's life has been devoted to softball, and in particular, umpiring the sport.

"I have played organized softball since I was 10 years old," she said. "I started umpiring youth softball when I was 16 years old. I was playing in the 16-18 year division and was asked if I would like to umpire in the lower age groups because they needed officials. We received \$5 a game."

She has a degree from Glassboro State College in Health and Physical Education. She has been involved with officiating softball for the NJSIAA through West Chapter #5 for 50 years and has been NJSIAA State Softball Interpreter and Assignor for 35 years. Among many honors, she has been inducted into the South Jersey High School Hall of Fame and NJSCA Hall of Fame.

"I also had the privilege of training a special needs young man umpiring for the Special Olympics," she noted.

Allison has also served on the NFHS Executive Rules Committee from 1990-92 and has been cadet trainer chapter interpreter for West Chapter #5 softball umpires for 35 years. In addition to high school, she's officiated college ball, having four NCAA finals with three of them behind the plate. She's also been the Umpire-in-Chief for the Softball Carpenter Cup, sponsored by the Philadelphia Phillies, for over 15 years.

In addition to her softball work, Allison has officiated and served as assignor for West Chapter #5 Field Hockey, officiated basketball for West Chapter #5 and officiated and assigned tennis for NJHSTOA.

What do you do in your job as a NJSIAA rules interpreter and assignor?

As the interpreter, make sure that all of our Chapters are aware of any new rules for the season and also any State modifications, administer and make additions and deletions to the NJSIAA Softball Test and any lower-level conference modifications. As the State Assignor, I assign the softball state tournament games from the sectionals up to and including the finals.

What have you enjoyed most about being an official?

Making and keeping good friends through the years.

Do you have a favorite memory from umpiring a game?

While officiating a state semifinal one year, my partner made a questionable call at second base. The coach on defense appealed the play, in which I told the official what my call would have been. He



changed his call, only to have the coach come out again on the field and appeal to have the call be reversed back. The offense coach was getting very angry, so I went up to him and told him to take a walk down the third base line with me. I told him “Look, right now you are winning this game, if you yell at my partner, he is going to toss you, and if you win, you will not be coaching the state final game, so you can yell at me if you want and get it off your chest.” He took one deep breath and said, “You didn’t do anything wrong, I can’t yell at you.” He went and sat down, and his team eventually won.

What’s the best part about any given day of officiating?

At the end of the game with no complaints.

Do you have any memories from your first game as an official?

High school - Getting \$15.00 for the game.

Do you have any particular funny memories of an interaction between yourself and a player or coach?

Yes, I call it “then there were the ferrets.” I was in the process of officiating a game when I noticed a girl coming towards the field with two ferrets on expandable leashes. Although unusual, I didn’t think about it too much as I was concentrating on the game. The next thing I hear is an ear-piercing scream right near the backstop. I called time and turned around, and apparently one of the ferrets got into a batter’s helmet and curled up into it. The on-deck batter apparently wasn’t paying attention and picked up the helmet, and as she tried to put it on her head, the ferret fell out on her head. The ferret was running one way and the batter was running the other way. I said, “That’s it, the ferrets have got to go!” You can’t make this stuff up!

What’s the biggest misconception about the job of being an official?

The biggest misconception is that we do it for the money. I have had one leg reconstruction, two knee replacements and one hip replacement. Obviously, it wasn’t for the money.

What would you say to anyone thinking about becoming an official?

DO IT!

***Think you might be interested in becoming a high school sports official?
Check out this link to learn more: <https://www.njsiaa.org/officials/become-official>***