

Officials' Appreciation Week Profile:

Keith Glock



There are many ways for people to become involved in high school sports. In the case of Keith Glock, one path led into another.

His early background in the sport of lacrosse came at St. Peter's Prep in Jersey City, where he graduated in 1999. While there, he played on the school's first lacrosse team. He then played on the club team at The College of New Jersey.

While at TCNJ, he got a job as a sports writer with The Trenton Times. While covering a game for the paper, he happened to meet Bob Nuse, the state assignor of lacrosse officials.

"He single-handedly convinced me to officiate," Keith said.

From that meeting, a stellar officiating career was underway.

"I began reffing the spring of my sophomore year in college," he said. "I have been officiating for 23 years. I was elected to our Executive Committee in 2009 and then became the Rules Interpreter in 2018."

He currently sits on the national high school rules committee for USA Lacrosse as well World Lacrosse's Sixes Rules Committee. He's officiated two NJSIAA Tournament of Champions finals, and many Group finals and TOC quarterfinals and semifinals.

He was also substitution box official for the 2019 NCAA National Championship, and has worked NCAA Division I, II and III post-season games, three world championships (including this summer's edition in San Diego) and the Sixes gold medal game at the World Games in Alabama in 2022.

What do you do in your job as rules interpreter?

As the state rules interpreter, it is my job to explain any changes and additions to the rulebook to all NJ boys' lacrosse officials (over 500) at the beginning of each season. I also meet with all the coaches every preseason to explain those same things and answer their questions. Additionally, I construct and lead five meetings/trainings throughout the season, highlighting trends, tricky situations, and provide continuing education.

I also help officials and coaches daily, walking them through situations that have occurred, reviewing film, and helping everyone get better.



What have you enjoyed most about being an official?

The thing that I enjoy most about officiating is being able to utilize all the tools at my disposal in any game and have a fair outcome. Mentally, to apply a complex set of rules to a given situation, then communicate it to everyone and to accomplish that in a very small amount of time with each call is - to me - so much fun. When you combine that with the physical toll of running between four or five miles during the course of a game, it is the ultimate combination of mental and physical fortitude.

Do you have any favorite memories from officiating a game?

My two favorite memories of officiating high school lacrosse are the Tournament of Champions final in 2011 between Summit and Bridgewater, and the Non-Public 'A' final in 2014 between Delbarton and Bergen Catholic.

The TOC final in 2011 was the last one that was ever played at Rutgers, and was the first one I ever worked. Bridgewater beat Summit, 7-6, and Summit was on the verge of winning its third-straight TOC, all while going undefeated.

There were about 6,000 people there, and the game was simply amazing. I remember coming out of a timeout with about a minute to go, Summit had the ball down a goal and the whole crowd got to its feet pretty much at once. It was bananas!

In 2014, Delbarton beat Bergen Catholic in double overtime to win Non-Public 'A' at Livingston, and again the crowd was huge. There were so many high-level players and high-level plays made in that game, and I was really proud of the job we did as an officiating crew that night.



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

The best part about any given day of officiating is the interaction we have with the coaches and players. If you go out there and work hard as an official, communicate with everyone and do what's right even in really hard situations, things can be really fun. You can create such long lasting relationships with all those folks. I am so thankful for the friendships that have come out of officiating, not only with other officials, but also players who turn into coaches and officials, and some of the coaches who have been around for the entire time I have been an official.

Do you have a particularly funny memory of an interaction between yourself and a player or coach?

A funny memory that I have is, and I cannot remember the year, but it was the Tournament of Champions quarterfinals at Bridgewater, and there was a play about halfway through the game where a player made a hard charge toward the goal, so I was sprinting pretty hard to get to where I needed to be. All of a sudden the player made a quick cut towards me, so I put on the brakes. The problem is that the turf and my shoes didn't cooperate, so I slipped, and my feet came out from under me, and I fell on my rear end. Needless to say that was the loudest cheer of the day from the crowd!

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

The biggest misconception that I think people have about officials is that they think we want to be a big part of the game when we make calls. I would love nothing more than to only blow the whistle when the ball goes in the goal, or the ball goes out of bounds. But that's just not reality. Making a really difficult call late in the game is about being fair. I think you hear all the time about, "the officials cost us that game because they made that call at the end of the game," to which I have always said, "what about the player who was disadvantaged on that play?"

When it is late in the game or a really hard call, a lot of people just want the officials to do nothing. I always think about it as, what if you were the player who was fouled? What if you were the parent of the player who was fouled? Do you want the officials to still stay out of it? Of course not. Officiating is not easy, but the best ones are willing to make that tough call to make sure that the outcome is fair.

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

To anyone that is considering becoming an official, you should run - not walk - but run and sign up to do it. Officiating has been the thing in my life outside of my family that has been the most rewarding for me. The sport of lacrosse and officiating have given so many things to me: friendships, life experiences, fitness, mental agility and ingenuity - just to name a few. If you'd like having the best seat in the house, and you like using your brain, then you should become an official.

***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>***