

## Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

# Kathy Hunter

Kathy Hunter's association with track and field has deep roots, and it continues to this day as a NJSIAA meet official. It's something that's brought her great enjoyment every step of the way.

"I was part of the first girls track team at Haddon Township High School in 1976, thanks to Title IX," she said. "Prior to that, we just ran with the boys team."

"I played basketball at East Stroudsburg State College and then after graduation was hired at Haddon Heights High School, in February 1981, as the girls varsity track coach," she said. "A month later, I was offered a teaching position. I coached the girls until 1990 and took off two years to spend time with my children. I returned as an assistant coach with the boys team and then retired from coaching in 2008 so that I could watch my son run his senior year. His love of track came from being at practices all the time and he ran for a youth team, so track was a huge part of my life."

It was soon after that Kathy became an official.

"One of my former co-workers was a track official and had been recruiting me for several years," she said. "I took the cadet class the following winter after my son graduated, and started officiating in the spring of 2010. My daughter also took the class with me. She wasn't a runner, but fell in love with track from watching me coach for so many years."

From that start, Kathy's involvement with officiating has deepened.

"I have served on the Executive Board of the Southern Chapter since 2016," she said. "Thanks to the best mentors ever in Carl Rickershauser and Ed Colona, I am now a meet director for cross country and track and field for the South Sectionals. They were such an inspiration for me and their encouragement and support are greatly appreciated."

### Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Kathy Hunter:

#### *What do you enjoy most about being an official?*

"The camaraderie among officials and seeing many former students/athletes now coaching. Watching athletes improve and having success. Seeing the joy on their faces when they PR. I try to always treat the athletes with respect and make them all feel important while participating."

#### *Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?*

"It was an indoor meet at the bubble and a young man was going for a record in the high jump. I just remember the crowd of athletes that circled the entire high jump area cheering him on. It was incredible! That's what it's all about. You don't always see that in other sports."



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

"The athletes. I say it all the time, but track and field athletes are the best! They are respectful and their sportsmanship is incredible. Though they compete against each other, there is always a hand shake or a 'Good job' after their event. I have had the opportunity to do the high jump for many indoor meets. You certainly get to know the jumpers since you see them every meet. I always felt that it was important to develop a positive relationship with my students. It's the same when officiating. We have to remember that they are just kids and to treat them with respect. I have had the pleasure to have former runners/jumpers come to meets and stop by to say hello and fill me in on their current activities. It means a lot to know that you were a positive influence on them."

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

"Even though I coached track for many years, it's different being on the other side. I was nervous for my first meet, but once I finished, I knew it would be fun. But then I was recruited to be a starter and I was the most nervous before that meet. Now I love being a starter."

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

"That officials are not respected."

***What would you say to anyone thinking of becoming an official?***

"That officiating is a lot of fun. It keeps you involved with sports. I would highly recommend it. I truly enjoy officiating track and field. You have to find the sports you enjoy and then just do it. I would definitely recruit them for track and field."

***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>***