

## ***Officials Appreciation Week Profile:***

# **Bryan Scipio**

Bryan Scipio was an active and successful athlete, culminating with his time as a four-year football starter and track performer at Montclair State.

When those days were over, he was seeking to stay involved, and officiating seemed like a natural way to do it.

“I was looking to do something to stay involved in sports,” he said. “My high school vice principal suggested I give officiating a shot, and lo and behold, here I am today.”

Scipio began officiating basketball in 1995, and has been a very active high school and college official ever since. He’s also officiated football since 2017, and last year his crew worked one of the first NJSIAA Group finals.

He began working CYO, recreation and sub-varsity high school levels in basketball in Essex, Hudson, Middlesex and Union counties in that first season 29 years ago.

He officiated his first varsity games in Middlesex County in 1997, while also receiving additional assignments that year in Union.

“I’ve been an IAABO Board 33 member since 1995, where I had the opportunity to learn officiating and work with many outstanding officials who have gone on to work in many of the biggest arenas around the country,” he said. “Throughout the many years of officiating, I climbed the ranks working the hardwood path that has granted me many opportunities to meet many wonderful people associated with the game of basketball.”

From his start, Bryan continued to work regular season and tournament games in even more areas in Central and North Jersey. And in 1998, he received an acceptance letter to become a member of the College Basketball Officials Association. Upon joining the CBOA, he also added local college games to his schedule.

Throughout the years, he’s worked county tournament finals in Essex, Middlesex, Passaic and Union, and NJSIAA tournament games in all groups, as well as the Tournament of Champions.

In college, his prime assignments have included games in the junior college and NCAA Div. 2 and 3 tournaments, highlighted by the Div. 3 championship game.

Giving back to the basketball community is also important to Bryan, which is why he often works various All-Star games, and other in-season events such as the Coalition to House the Homeless charity showcase.

### **Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Bryan Scipio:**

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

“The biggest enjoyment I get from officiating is the camaraderie with other officials and interacting with



players on the court and field. Giving back to the sports that I love.”

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

“Working my first Tournament of Champions game and the Division III National Championship in Virginia.”

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

“For basketball, it’s tossing the ball to start a game, and being a part of two teams competing for the chance to be a winner, and knowing my partner(s) and I am are important to the game to keep it fair and safe.”

***Do you have any memories from your early days as an official?***

“Memories are vast. Friendships made, having my family in the stands watching big games and them telling me stories about good and bad critics who didn’t know who they were related to me. Being assigned my first varsity game and college game. There are so many memories being an official creates, they are hard to number.”

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

“One day while in a local supermarket, I was looking at some produce, and I noticed someone standing a little too close to me. Well, I decided to move away and the person moved closer to me. I look to my left and the person is an armed officer, and as I looked up at the person, he stood about 6’8.” A very big man. As I backed away, knowing there was no crime at picking apples in the supermarket, the officer said to me ‘Hey you don’t remember me, do you? To which I replied, ‘No!’ He said ‘You officiated my basketball games in college, and we really appreciated the way you treated us like men, you always made the game fun.’

“For me it’s always nice running into former players who recognize me and make a point to say hi. Officiating has great memories, especially when you make an impact on players and they become an official because of the way you impacted the game.”

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

“For me, it is that we don’t care about the game. Some of us put a lot of effort into this craft and constantly look to get better. We spend a lot of time away from our families, and officials at all levels are on a given game because they made themselves available. There is a person wearing that black and white striped shirt and that person has feelings. Good game or bad game, the ride home is almost always alone where the teams leave together, win or lose.”

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

“Be prepared mentally and physically, be prepared to face adversity and look to do your best every time you step on the court or 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>***