

Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

Cedric Smith

Cedric Smith has no trouble admitting to a truth.

At one time, he was one of those people in the stands who give basketball officials a hard time.

“My son played at Winslow Township High School,” he said. “He was a Division 1 prospect, and I was jerk of a parent, screaming at officials. And I was totally wrong.”

The more he thought about it, the worse that he felt. And Cedric, who never played high school basketball, but did participate in various men’s leagues, decided to do something about it. He signed up for a class, and became an official.

He’s now been doing it for years, and has become an in-demand ref in South Jersey. He’s even worked state championship games.

He’s thoroughly enjoyed the experience on all levels, from the excitement of being involved to the many friendships that he’s made along the way.

Aside from the activity that comes with working a game, there’s also the bonds created with fellow officials which make the job very worthwhile.

“I would be doing a disservice if I forgot to mention the family/brotherhood that exists,” he said. “When any board member has a family crisis, we are there to support them and the family. If there is a hospitalization or death, we attend the funeral and offer financial aid. I love my basketball family.”

Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Cedric Smith:

What do you enjoy most about being an official?

“Being able to help young men and women understand the game and watch their growth from youth basketball to seeing post high school accomplishments.”

Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?

“My first state final at Rutgers. Linden vs. Shawnee. The environment was great and my family members were able to see why I sacrificed so much.”

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

“Being able to help young people grow in the sport and having them thank you for doing their games.”



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

“First game was like standing in rush hour traffic on I-95. As a parent, I ridiculed officials, and got paid back.”

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

“Haddonfield vs. Haddon Heights, I ran a player over during a throw in pass in a tight game and the ball went out of bounds. I in turn gave the ball to the other team. The coach of the kid I ran into bumped into my partner official and received a tech. I learned from Al Battista about Rule 2.3. I should have returned the ball back to the players team because I initially made contact causing the ball to go out of bounds.”

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

“That we care about who wins. We would love not to be a part of the game, but we must manage the game.”

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

“If you want to learn the science behind the game of basketball, while gaining cardiovascular exercise, please come out and become an official. You will meet a wonderful group of young people, get compensated for something you enjoy doing, and if you are professional and show these individuals respect, 99% of the time you will get it back.”

***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>***