

Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

Barbara Banks

Barbara Banks has enjoyed track and field, as well as cross country, throughout her entire life.

Because of that love, she turned her participation as a runner into a long officiating career.

“Although I was a mediocre runner during my high school years, I always was an active participant on and off the track,” she said. “Two of my siblings, Kevin and Mary, were stellar runners for whom I had the utmost respect. My days watching them compete led to a life-long commitment to the sport.”

She stayed involved in other ways before becoming an official.

“Before I became a carded official, I had the experience of working at many meets in a timing and recording capacity for my high school coach, Mike Uhrich,” she said. “Once I graduated from college, I immediately took the officiating course and became certified in 1985.”

She also worked as an educator in Bound Brook, teaching Special Education in Grades 4-12 and then as a fourth grade teacher until her retirement in 2020.

“Outside of the classroom, I served as the boys and girls cross country coach and girls track coach in Bound Brook during the 80s and 90s,” she said. “At the time, there was not an indoor track program, so I officiated indoor track. I became very involved as a member of the Shore Track and Field Officials Association, working every meet I could, and learning from the best officials around. There have been many mentors, including Kathy Uhrich, Sandra Gaston, Carl Rickershauser, and Vinny Sprouls, who have encouraged and supported me in becoming accomplished in various capacities on the track.”

Barbara has also been very involved as a track official in behind the scenes roles.

“I have been a member of the State Executive Board since 1988, and have served as the president three times,” she said. “My officiating roles have grown over the years and most often I am the starter, clerk, or referee for the Shore Conference schools, Southern schools, and also on the state level of competition.”

Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Barbara Banks:

What do you enjoy most about being an official?

“What I enjoy the most about being an official is working with the students outside of the classroom. The atmosphere at cross country and track meets is different from most sports as there is a great camaraderie amongst the opposing coaches and athletes. Watching athletes grow from scared neophytes to eventually accomplished competitors brings great joy.”

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APPRECIATION
WEEK

Winter 2024-25



Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?

“There are so many great memories of officiating, but my favorite memory has to be of an athlete who took a special needs athlete under his wing. At his meets, he made sure his teammate was prepared to run, got him to the starting line and was his ardent supporter during his races.”

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

“The people I work with are the best, we are a family! The officials, the coaches, the athletes, and the spectators all come together to bring out the best in each other. The support and encouragement can only lead to growth and success!”

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

“My first meet as an official was at Red Bank Regional High School at an indoor track meet. I was on the finish line as a timer at a two-session meet. The day started at 8:00 in the morning, and we left the facility at 11:30 at night!”

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

“We meet so many athletes who are learning about the sport from meet to meet. One young athlete wanted to try the 400m hurdles, but did not know if she could actually go over 400 hurdles in one race!”

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

“Probably that officials favor the star athletes. We are there for everyone, and particularly love to see the growth of athletes over the years.”

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

“Do it! Become involved and show students that you care about them. Reach out to officials you respect, and watch them do what they do best.”



***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>***