

Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

Scott Scragg

Scott Scragg has always been involved in organized sports dating back to his days playing Little League and youth basketball in his hometown of Oaklyn.

He played basketball and baseball in junior high, then basketball, baseball and football at Collingswood High School, and then basketball and baseball in college at Stevens Institute of Technology. Beyond that, he continued to play basketball in rec leagues, and baseball turned into rec softball.

“In 1979, I met my wife, Dee,” he said. “And it was only fitting that I met her while I was playing softball with her sister’s husband. Dee introduced me to what was then known as power volleyball. Who knew there were actual rules for volleyball? My only experience with volleyball was from gym class and barbecues. Dee played club volleyball and refereed the Fraternity Volleyball Championship at Rutgers University in New Brunswick. She taught me how to play and we began playing together in local recreational leagues. We also played Friday night open gym volleyball, which often lasted until 2 or 3 in the morning. In 1987, Joe Haas, who ran the volleyball leagues, asked me to ref a men’s league, and that started my career as a volleyball official.”



Haas was also a driving force in getting high schools in South Jersey to begin playing volleyball.

“In 1992, he asked me to come to a meeting with the Athletic Directors of the Olympic Conference,” Scott recalled. “At this meeting, the ADs decided the schools would begin offering volleyball as a varsity sport. Joe had guaranteed that he would be able to provide 50 qualified officials from his rec leagues and thus the New Jersey Volleyball Officials Association - South was formed. High School volleyball had finally come to South Jersey. Dee and I were two of the original members of NJVBOA-South. I am now the last member of those original 50 officials, as Dee has retired after 45 years of officiating.”

During his time with NJVBOA-South, Scott has served as Co-Assigner, Cadet Supervisor, Mentor, Evaluator, Treasurer and Rules Interpreter. He’s also officiated multiple state championship and Tournament of Champions matches for both boys and girls.

Several years after beginning to officiate high school matches, he also began work men’s and women’s college volleyball, USAV (club) and AVP (beach) matches. In 2005, Scott obtained certification as a national official, which meant he was certified to officiate any Division 1 college match in the country. For 15 years, he also taught and certified officials in New Jersey as line judges and scorekeepers for college matches.

“Dee and I also traveled around the state to teach and certify junior players as second referees and scorekeepers,” he said. “For the last 15 years, I have also been on the Executive Board for New Jersey college officials as the Rules Interpreter.”

He has received numerous honors throughout his career, including the 2024 Boys Volleyball Official of the Year from the New Jersey Scholastic Officials Association.



Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Scott Scragg:

What do you enjoy most about being an official?

“Besides getting to see some very competitive volleyball, I enjoy the camaraderie with other officials. We would work a match or an all-day tournament and then four or five of us would go out for dinner. I have developed some very strong friendships through volleyball.”

Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?

“This has happened several times throughout my career: Long after a match, sometimes a year or two later, I would run into a former player or coach who would tell me about a big match that they had played. I would tell them that I had officiated that match. I would take it as a compliment that they did not remember me working the match. This meant they played the match without me messing up and interfering with their playing.”

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

“Watching the players enjoying themselves playing. Also, the players often amaze me as to their athletic abilities.”

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

“I can still see the court and gym in my memory. I also remember thinking there is a lot more to officiating than I thought.”

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

“It was actually with a parent about 10 years ago. I worked a state playoff match and the visiting team was from a distant part of the state. The visiting team’s fans were not happy with my officiating. After the match, a parent walked by me and said ‘You better not quit your day job.’ I didn’t say anything, but thought to myself, ‘I have been officiating the highest level of college matches for the last 15 years. I think I’ll be alright continuing to ref.’”

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

“As volleyball officials, it doesn’t look like we do very much, so everyone thinks it must be easy. What people don’t realize is how much thinking and judging we are doing during play. We have officials come from other sports and are amazed that we have to make a decision every time someone touches the ball.”

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

“Go for it. Every sport is short officials, but be ready to work learning the rules and the game. You may have played the sport, but when you officiate, you need to learn all of the finer points of the sport.”



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