

Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

Carol Harrison

Carol Harrison grew up participating in sports, which carried into adulthood. It also became something which has extended into a fulfilling career officiating track and field.

She grew up in Ocean County, graduating from Toms River High School in the days before it split into multiple high schools. She earned collegiate degrees from Ocean County College, Kean University and Cal Poly.

"I played field hockey and basketball in high school, as well as track and field," she said. "I also coached all three sports after I graduated."

She still competed after high school, which served as her pathway to officiating.

"I threw hammer for sport in USATF," she said. "I heard that the Shore area was looking for new officials. Coaching for me was slowing down, so I took up officiating, and have loved it."

Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Carol Harrison:

What roles do you perform in addition to your meet work?

"I am the President of the Shore Chapter and their cadet instructor for many years, having the honor of working with many new officials that now are seasoned and doing well."

What do you enjoy most about being an official?

"Seeing the faces of the athletes when they clear the bar in the pole vault or make their personal best. Also, when athletes come back to see me after they graduated high school and tell me how well they are doing in high school and give me a thank you."

Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?

"One of my favorite memories was in the pole vault. There were two girls from different schools. Both started out at 6 feet, and missed making and moving up the standards. They seemed to be at most meets together, competing, making and missing. Senior year, just before the Meet of Chsmptons, they tied for first place. After the rule was explained, they talked it out and kept the tie. There were hugs and handshakes, and it was a great ending."



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

“Connecting with the athletes and the coaches. Connecting with the athletes when checking them in for the pole vault, and asking them about their day, hearing about what might be going on after the meet is over. The enjoyment their faces show when getting ready for their event, and hearing about the colleges they hope to go to.”

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

“My first meet as an official was a boys meet between two teams. I was working with very seasoned officials, who told me they had never worked with a cadet before. They didn't make me feel warm and welcome at first, but it all worked out in the end.”

Do you have any funny memories of interactions between yourself and an athlete or coach?

“As I started my officiating roles, after a few years the throws became my home area. Working with wonderful officials and meeting many great throwers, I was moved to the pole vault. The throwers would come by and remind me that they wanted me at throws, but being assigned pole vault, I've stayed there. I still see the throwers come back after college and are now coaching, and they tell me how much fun they had when I was working their events. But the pole vaulters remind me that they need me there!”

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

“If someone asked about becoming an official, I'd say ‘Yes.’ Take the class and join a chapter. The fun is ready to start. Rain or shine, hot or cold, the meets are fun.”



***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>***