

Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

Scott O'Brien

Scott O'Brien's softball umpiring career began in a very simple way - as an offshoot of coaching a youth team.

In the years since, it has developed into a very enjoyable part of his life.

"My journey as an official began when I started coaching my daughters' softball team as a way to connect with them, and it has since grown into a lifelong passion for the game," he said. "By training as an official alongside coaching, I gained a comprehensive understanding of the sport from every angle. This dual perspective greatly strengthened my coaching ability, allowing me to teach the fundamentals and strategies of softball more effectively."

Soon, he realized he was actually doing even more.

"Eventually, I realized I wasn't just teaching softball, it's about teaching life lessons. Looking back, I wouldn't change a thing. The relationships built and the growth I witnessed have made the entire journey incredibly rewarding."

Scott began umpiring in 2007 with ASA Junior Olympic Softball, and in 2023 he was appointed District 8 Softball Commissioner for Warren/Hunterdon County under USA Softball of New Jersey.

On the high school level, he is a member of the Raritan Valley Umpires Association, and currently serves as the chapter Softball Rules and Mechanics Interpreter.

He's worked many big games, including having the plate assignment for the 2024 Group 3 state final.



Scott was also honored for his work last September by being named a Softball Official of the Year by the New Jersey Scholastic Officials Association.

Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Scott O'Brien:

What do you do in your job as an interpreter and assignor?

"As an assignor, you have to bridge the communication between schools, coaches, and officials. As an interpreter, you must be able to read the game and the dynamics of the team, putting yourself in a position to best support the players."



What do you enjoy most about being an official?

“I enjoy the challenge of the game. By challenge, I mean the lifelong learning that is required to show up for the kids and share my love for the game.”

Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?

“Working the Make-A-Wish Foundation event at TD Bank Ballpark. The park, the stands, and the people... It’s a great memory!”

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

“Seeing the players develop and watching them achieve goals over the years. I love watching the kids do well, seeing them pick themselves up, and being a part of those plays and moments.”

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

“It was a Phillipsburg 10U game. We were behind the school; I was feeling nervous and realized I didn’t have all the answers yet. That experience is what drove me to start learning in-depth knowledge about the game so I could best support the coaches and kids.”

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

“There are far too many to remember just one!”

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

“In my opinion, the biggest misconception is that you are under a microscope and have to be perfect. No one is perfect. As an official, you are really an extension of the game; you’re there to support the kids and allow them to have fun. You control the vibe of the game, and you can bring a positivity that creates a safe place for them to play and learn.”

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

“I would say to take the time to get trained by someone who has a true passion for the game. It is physically demanding, so it’s something you’ll want to get in shape for. Ultimately, the relationships you build with the coaches and the kids are incredibly rewarding. It’s just fun and hope I can do this for a long time!”

***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>***