

Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

John Wolcott

Football played an important part in John Wolcott's development, and it eventually led to a long and satisfying career officiating the sport.

"I played my high school football in South Jersey at Overbrook High School," he said. "I graduated in 1980. I was accepted at Trenton State College and played three years there for coach Eric Hamilton. After college, I started my Law Enforcement career in my home town of Lindenwold."

An association there led to his becoming an official.

"My Lieutenant, Robby Robbins, was a football official and he would always tell me that I would love it if I got into it. It took me several years, but I agreed to try it. In 1992, I joined the NJFOA South Chapter and I have been there ever since."

Not only that, John became also became a baseball and softball umpire. He's also among those now officiating the newest NJSIAA-sanctioned sport, girls flag football.

John has served various roles within his chapter, including cadet instructor, cadet supervisor and linesman class representative.

He's worked eight state championship contests throughout his career, in games played at Giants Stadium, Met Life Stadium, and Rutgers.

He was also recently honored as Football Official of the Year by the New Jersey Scholastic Officials Association.

Getting to know NJSIAA sports official John Wolcott:

What goes into your role as a Cadet Instructor and Supervisor?

"The main thing you need as a cadet instructor or supervisor is 'PATIENCE.' Most of the cadets either think they know it all, or they know very little about the rules and mechanics of the game of High School football. It is our job to build their knowledge and confidence to be a good on-field official."

What do you enjoy most about being an official?

"The thing I like most about officiating is the pregame - being in the locker room with the crew talking football. I also like to challenge myself to be better than I was last game for myself and my crew."



Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?

"Over 34 years, I can't pick one. There have so many memorable moments I will carry with me."

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

"I love all of it. Looking at the clock while at work, knowing it's time to go to the game, being in the locker room with the crew. Game action, dissecting the game after, watching film. Nothing better!"

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

"I remember being questioned about a clipping call I made by Coach Clyde Folsom. Our Chapter happened to meet at his school on Monday nights. Coach Folsom invited me in to watch the play. The clip was there."

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

"I think that some people think officials care who wins the game. We do not. We call what we see. We don't count fouls or throw make up flags."

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

"If you love the sport and want to be part of it, you will love to officiate it. DO IT."



***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>***