

Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

Ken Reynolds

If Ken Reynolds states that his association with the sport of volleyball began at the grassroots level, he really means it.

In his case, playing fun backyard games in his neighborhood propelled him into a long and satisfying career playing and officiating the sport.

“Twenty five years ago I was working in the campus recreation department at Rowan University,” he said. “We ran intramurals and I was a founding member of the men’s club volleyball team. But before that, backyard volleyball happened every Sunday in my neighborhood with all the neighbors, young and old. Playing college club volleyball introduced me to the officiating profession since we had to work periodically as a line judge, scorer or down ref. “

His interest in officiating took off from there.

“Nineteen years ago, as a professional working, I got into reffing high school volleyball to make a few extra dollars and get back involved in the sport I love,” he said. “As time went on, I had jobs working in other industries, but I always kept reffing volleyball.

“About five or six years ago, I started working club tournaments and officiating in college and decided to make officiating volleyball be my main profession. I now officiate all levels of volleyball year-round. Youth and adult leagues, AAU, high school, men’s and women’s college. It is the career I never knew I wanted..”

Ken has officiated over 10 NJSIAA girls state championship matches, two girls Tournament of Champions finals, and two boys state championships.

He is a former president of the New Jersey Volleyball Officials Association, and is the organization’s current corresponding secretary, as well as the South Jersey rules interpreter. He is also the current assignor for the NJSIAA tournament.

Ken was also recently honored as the Girls Volleyball Official of the Year by the New Jersey Scholastic Officials Association.

Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Ken Reynolds:

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

“As our local high school rules interpreter, I give updates to my local chapter’s officials on rule changes and help in interpreting anything which may be questionable. Anything from when to blow a whistle for a warmup



period to fixing a mechanic they be doing incorrectly, to reviewing game film and giving suggestions on how to strengthen their game as an official. I also meet with each of the conferences we service and review rule changes with them and offer to review film if a coach has a question on a call which was made.

“As the NJSIAA postseason assignor, I gather the names of interested officials who want to work the postseason. I need to determine their strengths and weaknesses to find which games and positions as officials will work best for them and the schools they will be officiating.”



What do you enjoy most about being an official?

“There are two things. I enjoy being an expert in the game I officiate; working with people of a like mind always striving to get better and learn. I also enjoy giving back to the sport, whether it be explaining a rule to a coach who can’t get a straight answer or walking into the gym and having a coach give a sigh of relief when they see me. That never gets old.”

Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?

“This happened recently but it is one I will never forget. I received a phone call from my local collegiate assigner asking if I was available to assistant score the Penn State versus Stanford match at the Palestra in Philadelphia on the 25th anniversary of 9/11. It was the biggest match I have ever been apart of and I can’t thank him enough for thinking of me.”

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

“The smiles. Whether it be something as simple as the captain waving to me when they are introduced to me at a high school or collegiate match or when I make a joke at a rec league match. I do this because it is supposed to be fun. It stops being fun, I will find something else to do.”

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

“Not my first game, but I do remember being a cadet with my mentor my first year and working a tournament. It was there that my mentor, Jack, told the head coach that I was going to be a good one. From there I was a regular invite to officiate that coach’s tournament. Being invited to Coach Armour’s tournaments lead to invites to many other tournaments. If I was good enough to work there I could work anywhere in a high school gymnasium.”



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

"The biggest misconception is that reffing volleyball is easy. We don't run up and down a court or field and just have to count to 3 so how hard can it be? Well, can you spot a player being out of alignment? Did you see that micro touch at the net? Why is the net moving? Volleyball may not be physically demanding in terms of running but try standing still on a platform for two and half hours if a match goes to five sets. It is mentally draining to have to be on for 140 to 250 plays. As volleyball has been thrust into the national spotlight, more and more people are realizing this."

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

"Have short term memory and don't take things personally. The more you work at your craft the better you will get. This has been the greatest job I have ever had and it is all because I put more into the game than I expect to get out of it but it has given me so much."

***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>***