

LockerRoom



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Question of the Month

Because of which of the following have you considered retirement from officiating?

(Please select only one)

- Age.
- Sportsmanship issues.
- Money.
- Time.
- Job commitments.
- I haven't considered retirement yet.

[Click here to fill out survey](#)

Poll Results

If you had the power to do away with one of the following, which would you choose?

- 44%** Coaches who consistently whine about calls during a game.
- 26%** Coaches who don't know the rules.
- 17%** Coaches who can't control their players.
- 7%** Coaches who blast officials in the media after the game.
- 6%** Coaches who ignore requests to rate officials.

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There's No 'I' in Crew

"Perception is reality." When it comes to officiating team sports, that's often the absolute truth. It doesn't matter what sport you're officiating, crew cohesion is a must if your crew is to be perceived positively. Another absolute truth is that when everyone isn't on the same page, it doesn't take players, coaches and fans long to recognize that "tonight's officials are struggling."

The best officiating crews take the field or floor as one official. They know that the only philosophy that matters is the crew's philosophy. They've invested time together away from the sport. They know each other, respect each other's judgment and approach the game with confidence. Because there is no room for "the individual," they've worked hard to create a team approach.

No crew establishes a quality reputation quickly. It takes time. Only after working many games together, suffering through mistakes and sharing the highs and lows of several seasons, can a crew establish itself as one that can be counted upon to work the big games consistently.

We've all seen the football crews that have one official who throws many more flags than his partners. His definition of fouls is different from that of the other officials. Then there's the basketball ref who calls a close game while her partners "let them play." The perception those officials are sending is that not only are they not on the same page, they haven't even entered the library together. It's a recipe for disaster.

If you're not in that situation and never have been, don't get cocky because it's only a replacement official away! As you work toward cohesion, thorough pregame sessions are essential. But even with plenty of game preparation and years of experience, every crew and official eventually runs into a situation in which there is disagreement. It's how

YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE
NASO MEMBERSHIP DRIVE
Over 946 officials were nominated by YOU!
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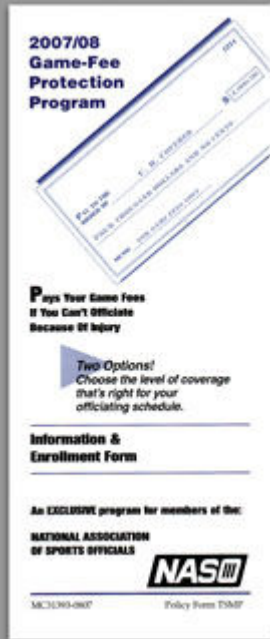


The 2008 NASO *You Make the Difference* Membership Drive is now on. NASO active members will receive a FREE NASO Polo Shirt with *every* nominee that joins NASO. Nominate one, two or *more* officials you feel shares the same commitment to officiating as 16,000 NASO members.



It's simple — just [click here](#) to submit your nominee online or call toll free, NASO at 1.800.733.6100. Don't delay! *The higher the numbers — the stronger the voice!* If every member sends one, two or more official's names, think of what your association — NASO — can continue to do

Did You Know?



NASO provides coverage for certain expenses and loss of game fees resulting from injuries suffered when an official is the victim of an assault and/or battery by a spectator, fan or participant while the official is performing officiating duties or as a direct result of performing officiating duties at an organized sporting event. NASO puts you in contact with appropriate legal counsel and provides up to \$3,000 reimbursement of attorney fees incurred by the member in bringing a claim against the perpetrator. Reimbursement will be made based on attorney invoice and will be made on a 60/40 percent co-pay basis with the member paying 40 percent. Expenses are shared on a 60/40 percent basis until the insurance has paid \$3,000. Further expenses incurred are the sole responsibility of the member. Additionally, NASO's Assault Protection benefit pays up to \$100 for each game lost within 21 days after the

the team handles it that makes the difference. If you disagree with a call a crewmember makes during the game, discuss it at halftime or after the game. Let each member of the crew weigh in.

Confrontation leads to expression and allows officials to develop a closer understanding of each other's priorities — get a better idea of what makes each other tick. Knowing how and why your fellow officials may react to situations allows you to relate to each other instinctively. Any psychiatrist will tell you that understanding others is key to effective communication! Even if you don't build a campfire and sing Kumbaya together, those situations can serve as defining moments in the development of your crew's ability to relate to one another more effectively.

It's important to know that the other officials on the field or court are with you in every sense of the word. It's not enough to just wear the same clothes, you've got to take the time and make sure everything fits! Your performance and your crew's reputation will benefit from the extra effort.

Written by John Jay Stone, a high school football official from Swanton, Ohio. A 13-year veteran, he works as a nursing home administrator. This article originally appeared in the 2/04 issue of Referee.

A Fast and Effective Way to Understand and Retain Football Rules



The NFHS 2008 *High School Football Rules Simplified & Illustrated* and NFHS 2008 *Football Rules By Topic* publications will be available soon.

2008 *High School Football Rules Simplified & Illustrated* continues to be a critical resource for veteran and new officials alike providing a different approach to learning the rules and implementation through the use of *Referee's* exclusive PlayPic and MechaniGram illustrations. Includes: 2008 rule changes, updated points of emphasis and clear definition of challenging rules.

2008 *Football Rules By Topic* is designed to complement the NFHS rule book and organizes the rules by category. Definitions, penalties and references are linked by topic and found in one location — perfect for rules study and open-book exams. Includes: rules, related caseplays, rationales behind the rules, fundamentals, breaking down complex rules into simple terms, historical tidbits on rule foundation and rule fact from fiction.

The 2008 *High School Football Rules Simplified & Illustrated* and 2008 *High School Football Rules By Topic* will be available in late May for \$7.95 each. To order call 1.800.733.6100 or [click here](#). For details on bulk discounts available to your association, please contact Jodi Schmidt at 1.800.733.6100 or jschmidt@naso.org.

Real Life Officiating ...

It's your chance to weigh in about your avocation. NASO wants to hear about your stories, your advice and your experiences. Please share your views on the following topics. Let your voice be heard.

for you and all officials.

During 2008 dedicated NASO members will receive requests from time to time asking for additional names of fellow officials to nominate. Members can submit as many names throughout the course of the year.

Each nominee will receive a special NASO Invitation Kit sent from NASO in your name. Each kit contains information about NASO and how to join. Invitations are only sent to officials that are recommended by current NASO members.

And when each of your nominees joins, we'll send you a very special gift. A free NASO polo shirt featuring an embroidered NASO logo on the front chest. This black short-sleeve polo shirt is 100 percent ringspun Egyptian pique cotton with double-needle stitching and ribbed cuffs.

Each month we'll continue to update you on the progress you are making to grow NASO. You'll find attached to your May 2008 issue and inserted in your NASO renewal notices several ways to nominate your crew, association or a fellow official.

Don't delay! Nominate today!

[Click here](#)

injury with a maximum total of \$500.

Archived Issues



To view previous issues of NASO LockerRoom

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Baseball

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Game Irritants

What gets under your skin as an official? Maybe it's locker room or lack of locker room facilities, disrespect for the national anthem, not getting updated on contract changes, obnoxious fans or something else. What is your biggest irritant as an official?

Here's What I've Learned ...

Advice for newer officials is important. There are many things rookie officials just aren't going to learn by reading a book. What tips or suggestions would you give a new official who is just starting out?

Quality of Officiating

What attribute is most important for officials to have? Maybe it's integrity, toughness, humility or fearlessness. What trait can officials not live without?

NAME

EMAIL

Pull Up a Chair ...

Everyone who's ever stepped onto a field, court or rink to officiate a game has a story to tell. Here's a story about how one umpire learned why there is a mercy rule. We know you have a story to tell. Write it down and e-mail to lastcall@referee.com.

Mercy, Mercy

By Doug Lindt

Sometimes doing the wrong thing is absolutely right.

In 1999, I was umpiring a fast-pitch girls' softball 10-and-under tournament that drew teams from all over the Midwest. During one early round match-up, one team was experienced and the players were very good. In fact, it's not giving anything away to say that team eventually went on to win the tournament. The other team was from a nearby town just a few miles away. The coach told me he just grabbed a bunch of girls and entered the tournament to have some fun. In effect, it was a pickup team with no travel experience.

In the tourney, the mercy rule was 15 runs after three innings or one-and-a-half hours, whichever came first. There was nothing in the rules regarding a winning spread, nor total number of runs scored. It was open. In the first inning, the experienced team scored 23 runs, including lot of home runs and, of course, a lot of errors by the defense. And don't forget the infamous "infield home run," with errors at first, second and third resulting in the batter-runner scoring in what would normally be an out at first. I felt sorry for the inexperienced team, but what could I do? I had to let the girls play.

In the first inning it was three up, three down for the pickup team with mostly swinging strikes. They looked a little lost, and certainly out of their league. I knew I was in for a long afternoon, glad we had the mercy rule in effect. I just didn't know how long until I could invoke it.

Second inning, the experienced team scored about 20 runs from pitching that was basically batting practice. And then it was three up, three down again for the other team.

The coach for the experienced team stopped stealing and would hold up his girls whenever possible. Nothing helped. They just kept scoring. Finally, we went through much of the top of the third inning with the experienced team batting. There were two outs and I recognized the next batter. She had already gone eight for eight — all home runs! The first pitch came in like a basketball alley-oop. The batter set up; you could see the fire in her eyes. She reached back and whack! — a 100-foot foul ball by just inches, down the right-field line. There were a lot of oohs and aahs from both sides of the field.

The pitcher, knowing what the batter liked (actually, anything within reach of the bat, the batter liked), got ready for the second pitch. She was determined not to serve up a home run. The pitch came in but the ball went about 20 feet, hit the dirt and finally dribbled over the plate on the ground. I seized my opportunity, and with all the composure and authority I could muster, yelled out, "Strike two!" The batter snapped her head toward me with a surprised look.

Now it was two outs, two strikes. The pitcher wound up but the ball slipped as she threw, sailing about 40 feet in the air. At home, the batter could only look up, as the ball was about 15 feet over her head. I watched as the catcher finally grabbed the ball. And in honor of great umpires everywhere, I screamed at the top of my voice, "Strike three, batter is out!"

The batter looked at me wide-eyed, mouth agape. As she was standing in the batter's box, her coach yelled from the dugout, "Good call, blue!" The batter whipped her head toward the coach, dropped the bat and screamed in a very high tone, "Ahhhhhh!" Her coach raced out, put his arm around her and talked softly in her ear. Everyone in the stands was applauding. We had to finish the inning, but as you would expect, it was three up, three down. Final score was 52-0, third inning, game over.

Doug Lindt, Elk Grove Village, Ill., has umpired softball since 1988,

working high school and some college. He also works high school volleyball. This originally appeared in the 5/05 issue of Referee.
