

Respect in Sports

www.sportsalliancemn.org

A monthly newsletter for everyone interested in supporting a positive youth sports experience.



The Sports Alliance of Minnesota is a coalition of sports organizations whose mission is to provide tools for creating a positive sports environment.

Random Facts of the Month:

Pittsburgh is the only U.S. city with 3 sports teams that wear the same colors.

A bowling pin only needs to tilt 7.5 degrees to fall down.

More than 1,800 medals are awarded at the Olympics.

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OFFICIALS

Thank a ref!

By Kevin Merkle, Associate Director, MSHSL
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One of my constant messages when speaking to ADs, coaches, parents, or officials is this: *"Without officials, it's only recess!"* While recess was my favorite "class", and while I had a chance to develop my skills (both as a player and as "negotiator") during recess or sandlot games at the local park, I also am one that valued the "real games" when there were officials. In fact I can remember helping to organize a relatively big neighborhood baseball game when I was young. We actually asked someone's older brother to be the umpire. Not sure that it worked very well, but even as a kid we knew that having an umpire elevated the level of that game.

In high school sports and activities, we know that officials and judges play an important role. They are the independent, impartial "arbiter" who allows our games/events to be played fairly and according to the rules and policies that have been established. They are vital in the educational mission of high school activities.

By enforcing the rules, officials teach participants to play by those rules, and that there are consequences when you don't. Participants learn that there are limits on the types of behavior that are allowed, and that sportsmanship, equity, and fairness are all part of high school activity programs. Of course, the real message is that all of items just mentioned are part of our daily lives. Officials and judges teach and enforce some of the most important lessons that are taught through educational activities.

Officials have a difficult job. As stated in a publication from the National Association of Sports Officials titled "You Have to Love it When They Boo": *"Sports officials must be able to bring control to chaos; understand fairness; promote safety and encourage good sportsmanship. A sports official must have the positive characteristics of a police officer, lawyer, judge, accountant, reporter, athlete, and diplomat."*

Officials put themselves on the line every time they go out and work a game. They are paid, but when you figure in their training and preparation, costs of uniforms, equipment and travel, and the time that is involved, they don't make a lot of money. In fact, at times it's hard to justify. But they continue to officiate because they enjoy staying involved, they enjoy giving back to the "games" that they love, and they like to a valued part of this educational process. We can make them feel valued just by showing our appreciation.

To read the complete article, please [click here](#).

Looking for best practices on working with officials?

Get connected to other youth associations by becoming a member of the Sports Alliance of Minnesota! We can all learn from each other and collectively improve the quality of youth sport in our state. More information at www.sportsalliancemn.org

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