

## ***Officials Appreciation Week Profile:***

# **Diane Brown**

Diane Brown has always been active in sports, which made a move into officiating a natural next-step after competing as an athlete and then becoming a coach.

She graduated in 1977 from Franklin High School in Sussex County, which later became Wallkill Valley Regional. She went to college at East Stroudsburg in Pennsylvania.

“I played field hockey, basketball and boys tennis in high school,” she said. “While working at a K-8 grade school, I coached soccer for four seasons, then both field hockey and girls basketball for 18 seasons.”

One day, a field hockey official had to leave before the start of a game. She filled in on the fly, and was hooked.

“I took the cadet classes for both field hockey and basketball over 20 years ago,” she said. “Officiating keeps you still involved in the sport without having all the work of a coach.”

In field hockey, she is the Co-President and Cadet Chair of the Northwest 1 Chapter. She officiates in the NJAC, Skylands, Big North, Super Essex and Union County conferences. She’s also officiated numerous county and NJSIAA finals.

### **Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Diane Brown:**

#### ***What do you enjoy most about being an official?***

“Being an official is fun. You get to see some very good high school athletes. It also lets you see how a sport you played in high school or college has changed and evolved over the years.”

#### ***Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?***

“My favorite memory was a Spirit Week game at night between two rival schools. Parents from both teams filled the bleachers. There were cheerleaders during the game. Students were waving flags on the sidelines. The band did a halftime show. Everyone had a really great time.”

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

“Seeing how much pride the student-athletes have in the sport they are participating in. They play because they love the sport.”

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**FALL 2024**



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

“My first game officiating was while I was still coaching at the middle school level. The scheduled official had an emergency after we were already at the school warming up and had to leave. Rather than cancel the game, I stepped on the field and officiated. I thought ‘I like this,’ and decided to take the cadet class and officiate more games.”

***Do you have any funny memories of an interaction between yourself and a player or coach?***

“My funniest memory happened during a JV field hockey game. There was a player who for some reason thought she wouldn’t have playing time after she played a little in the varsity game. When the coach called her name, she got up from the bench, put her mouth guard in and subbed in on the field. But to everyone’s surprise, she forgot to put her shoes on and ran onto the field in flip flops. None of us could believe what we were seeing. We all just started to laugh. I have had that team several times since then and the coach always says ‘We will have our correct shoes on for the game.’”

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

“The biggest misconception about being an official is that we’re only in it for the money. Sure, it’s nice to be paid. But we do it because we like the sport and want to stay involved.”

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

“Becoming an official in any sport takes work. The more games you officiate, the better you will become. You need to start at the lower level and gain experience to learn how to to manage and officiate higher-level games. Also, always remember you are an adult and they are the student-athletes. Treat them and their coach the same way you expect to be treated.”



***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>***