

Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

Jim Conte

When you see Jim Conte working a football game, you know you are getting one of the most accomplished game officials in the state.

Conte is in his 29th season on the gridiron, and has also officiated basketball for 35 years.

Adding football was a great move for Conte, who is currently Executive Secretary of the NJFOA-North, as well as a past President of the chapter.

“I have been a basketball official for 35 years now, and worked high school, as well as NCAA women’s Div. 2 and 3 for 18 years,” he said. “I retired from college, but back in my early years, I was approached by several football officials, and was asked if I wanted to get into football.”

He gave it try, and has been on the job ever since.

“It was the best decision I made in my officiating career, and maybe life in general,” he said.

Conte was recognized in 2018 as the recipient of the James V. Rosatti Award, which is one of the highest accomplishments within the NJFOA-North.

He was also recognized last month as the Football Official of the Year by the New Jersey Scholastic Officials Association.

He’s also involved in the game on other ways. He’s the assigner for the Meadowlands Youth Football League, where he’s responsible for assigning 20 to 25 officials each week.

Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Jim Conte:

What do you enjoy most about being an official?

“The camaraderie of working with the same officials every week. I’ve ended up with some really close relationships over 28 years.”

Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?

“Working at Giants Stadium several times.”

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

“Being focused just on football and athletes for three hours.”



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

“It was a long time ago, but I was nervous about when to throw the flag for the first time.”

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

“There are many memories, especially with the kids. They just want to play ball. We try to lighten up the game as best we can unless we have a situation that needs attention with a player getting out of hand.”

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

“That we pick a side. I always say that if you are a coach, parent or player, you only see things in your team color jersey. We don’t care who wins or loses. It is our job to officiate to the best of our ability and have a fair outcome.”

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

“If you have a passion for the game, it is an easy way to be up close and personal with the game of football. You won’t make a lot of money, but you will have a sense of accomplishment in the end.”



***Think you might be interested in becoming a high school sports official?
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