

Officials Appreciation Week Profile:

Eva Kushner

Eva Kushner is an example of how it's never too late to become an official.

She attended Carteret High School in the early 1970s, when Title IX was just signed into law and in its earliest stages.

The only sport available for her to play was tennis, but other sports were offered in her physical education classes.

One of those offerings was track and field, which she enjoyed.

She wound up becoming a teacher and tennis coach for more than three decades at Carteret. When her daughter reached high school and became a track athlete, her interest in the sport was rekindled.

"I coached tennis for over 30 years," Eva said. "As a 1973 graduate, the only sport available for girls was tennis. I loved doing track and field in gym class, and when my daughter was in high school, she ran for four years and all three seasons. Suddenly I was a track mom."

It was at that point she was offered a suggestion by her athletic director at Carteret, Walter "Moe" Gasior.

"When he said I should become an official, I laughed," she recalled of that conversion more than twenty years ago. "The rest was history."

Eva not only officiates, she works as an assignor as well.

Getting to know NJSIAA sports official Eva Kushner:

What do you do in your job as an assignor?

"The schools that I assign for are in Middlesex County. Depending upon the number of officials that the school request, I attempt to find the best mix of officials who work well together as a team and provide the student-athletes an enjoyable and learning experience in their competition."

What do you enjoy most about being an official?

"As an educator, I always loved teaching my students new concepts. I believe that also carried over in my officiating. I enjoy working with the student-athletes at various levels of competition. Another aspect of officiating focuses upon the new things that I, myself learn each and time I officiate. New rules, techniques, and a variety of competitive venues make officiating totally enjoyable."



Do you have a favorite memory from officiating an event?

“I became an official in 2005, so that really covers a huge amount of time. However, I think that the most rewarding or favorite memory that I have is when several athletes approached me at a sectional meet and thanked me for officiating this meet. For me, that was the highest form of respect.”

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

“I believe it’s knowing that I am giving 100% in my assignment and that I am truly trying to make it a fair and worthwhile experience for the student-athlete.”

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

“It was my first attempt at starting a cross country meet with a borrowed starter pistol. I had everyone lined up, gave the commands, and went to shoot the gun and it didn’t fire. Needless to say, I was mortified especially since one of the coaches was Bill Milone, a fellow track official who stated, ‘Way to go Annie Oakley.’ I don’t think I’ve picked up a starter pistol to this day.”

Do you have a special memory of an interaction between yourself and an athlete or coach?

“Perhaps the most humbling experience that I have had as an official was being part of a Unified track meet. The athletes are amazing and courageous and they have the best outlook and team spirit. They have the most amazing coaches and fans that support them and I am proud to work alongside them as an official.”

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

“Probably the biggest misconception about being an official is that the job is easy, and that you get paid for a short amount of time. This job needs patience, understanding, structure, preparation, and discipline. These concepts need to be carried out no matter what event you are assigned to do. You not only deal with student-athletes but you also deal with coaches, parents, and fans. It’s a mixed bag, but if you are conscientious and focused, you will love doing it.”

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

“If you love the sport and working with athletes, this is where you belong.”

***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>***