

Good morning! December 4! Two days till our first play date!

Are you ready for the season? Are you PHYSICALLY ready? MENTALLY ready? Is your family ready? Have you set a goal or goals for the season? Have you looked in the mirror and been honest with the person you are looking at? Have you thanked your mentor this fall?

Mentors.....ALL successful officials have a mentor or mentors. Some of them are still with us, some are gone. I saw a great post on Twitter last evening from Dereck Wittenburg, '83 NC State NCAA Champs. He said something to this effect to his '83 teammates – 'If we don't make it a point to get together every year, we will only get together at each other's funerals.' Think about that.....SPORTS is the root of this bond he has with his teammates! WE have the same with our fellow officials! Mentors.....mine the reason I am still doing this. They are the reason many of us are still doing this and giving back.

Many of us are getting 'more experienced' and closer to the end of our run than to the beginning. Some days are easier than others! One of my best friends was contemplating retirement from officiating....we worked a scrimmage together last week and during a TO in the first 10:00 period, he walks over and says "I am really glad I did not give this up, now that I am here and working I am having a lot of fun."

With all of this in mind and the FACT that 80% of officials give up officiating within the first three years, make it a point to say that one extra positive to the younger official. Help him/her 'stay in the game'. Isn't that what our mentors did for us? Mine sure did. I want to make my mentor proud as he is sitting in his chair up above watching everything I do. THAT is STILL my motivation.....

Be a positive role model. Contact your partners. Keep your assignor CURRENT on closed dates. If YOU screwed up, figure out how to make it work. Smile more! Be approachable during your games! PRINT your name in the scorebook so they coaches can read you name a month from now. Ask that younger official if he/she has any questions.....maybe an email or text to that effect.....talk WITH the JV officials, not DOWN to them. Keep in mind the three A's.....Availability, Accountability and Ability.....not in any specific order.....make those priorities. Ask valuable questions at meetings, not ones trying to stump the presenter. Good questions help EVERYONE learn!

Please look at all you have been given, control what you can control and again, thank your mentor. Thank your family also.....they usually our rock that allows us to do this!

Hope you have a great scrimmage this evening! If you know anyone working in Hershey for the football finals this weekend, offer your congratulations!

Tim