

10,000 In, \$10,000 Out

By Tom Conroy

Ten-thousand games officiated is a major accomplishment for any veteran official and the feat could be honored in a number of ways. For Randy Vogt, a longtime soccer referee from Long Island, N.Y., this career milestone warranted a different honor, one that would benefit others in the sport that he loved. In honor of his 10,000th game, Vogt donated \$10,000 to the U.S. Soccer Foundation, a donation that he hopes will spark more generosity from others.



Randy Vogt (center), with assistants Zvi Aizenstain (left) and David Altadonna before a game earlier last season. Vogt officiated his 10,000th game on Aug. 8.

"Just as a person running a 5K or 10K race is looking for sponsors, I'm looking for soccer fans to help out, and see this more as a team effort," said Vogt. "After all, my 10K was nearly four decades in the making and it's a 10K for soccer fans."

When he first started officiating in 1978 at the age of 16, he would make sure to introduce himself before every game in order to make a personal connection with players and coaches. After every game, Vogt would write a short note about the game, a practice that lent itself to his future writings on officiating.

"I didn't think much of the notes at the time," said Vogt. "I'm just a little obsessive about detail."

His attention to detail and

commitment to observation served Vogt well when he wrote his book, *Preventive Officiating*, a guide for officials to gain a better understanding of the rules and how they apply to the division and skill level being played in order to reduce onfield issues.

Vogt advanced to professional indoor leagues in the 1980s, but moved back down when the leagues folded. Juggling a position at a Manhattan advertising agency, Vogt felt content officiating youth, adult and college games.

"Going to work every day and doing well became my own personal World Cup and it still is in many ways," he said.

Despite his humble goals in officiating, Vogt was thrilled when he was nominated by a friend and chosen as a torchbearer for the 1996 Summer Olympics, running a 15-minute leg through New Rochelle, N.Y.

As his 10,000th game approached, Vogt playfully thought of different ways to make the game special.

"I decided that this milestone game would simply be whatever I am assigned and I would treat this game like any other and not do anything special," he said.

However, Vogt wants to make sure that giving back to the community doesn't end with his 10,000th game. He set up a fundraising page for others to help raise another \$10,000 for the U.S. Soccer Foundation, a non-profit organization that supports programs and field-building projects that provide youth in impoverished communities with soccer programs that promote education, healthy lifestyles and leadership. Vogt doesn't have another career milestone in mind for the future, except to keep officiating soccer.

"I'm 55, I'm in good health and I'm going to keep going until it's not fun."

Tom Conroy is Referee's assistant editor. □

A Hilltop Hero

A rider collapsed on the Tulsa Tough Cry Baby Hill criterium course in June and was resuscitated by Tulsa police officer Don Holloway.

A cyclist with the Bixby Bicycle Works team had just climbed the toughest lap of the day. Teammate Dan Henderson said the man started to feel ill, so he pulled out of the race.

"He's pulled off to the side of the road; we were having a conversation — he obviously didn't feel good," said Henderson. "We were speaking for about five minutes, and then he just fell over on his face and went into cardiac arrest."

That's when Officer Holloway jumped into action.

"Started giving him chest compressions while EMSA got all their equipment ready," Holloway said. "They were able to get the pads on him and give him a couple of shocks and were able to get him back."

Teammates say the man was alert and talking when he was taken to the hospital. Holloway, who also umpires softball, said he was just doing his job, but others are already calling him the "Hero of Cry Baby Hill."

SOURCE: TULSA WORLD

See a Ref, Thank a Ref

The Minnesota State High School League invited schools in the league to participate in the "Thank a Ref" campaign.

In September, the league sent promotional materials to schools to encourage teams, coaches and players to offer words of thanks and acts of appreciation for officials in the league.

"This campaign is a great way to accentuate the outstanding benefits and joy that we get out of officiating at the high school level," said Jason Nickleby, the MSHSL's coordinator of officials. "Our member schools are very appreciative of the 6,300 contest officials and judges that work tirelessly on behalf of kids. We look forward to seeing the creative and exciting things that our schools and teams are doing for MSHSL officials."

Have you heard an inspirational or motivational officiating story?

Send your ideas to
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