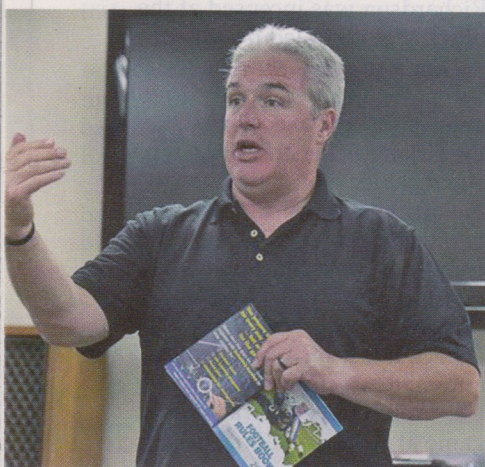


# Rocky Mountain Recruiting

By Tom Conroy

The nationwide shortage of officials has been a much-discussed topic across the country, and youth and high school associations have been implementing recruiting and retention strategies to combat this issue. Longtime football referee Doug Ross knows this problem all too well in his home state of Colorado.



As a director of officiating in his area, Doug Ross has looked to increase the number of football officials in Colorado.

Ross has been working as a high school football referee for the last 25 years. He also currently serves as the Colorado Football Officials Association's director of high school football officiating for the Boulder-Longmont area. His quarter century of experience and current vantage point as a director have allowed him to see the officiating shortage issue firsthand.

According to a memo published last year by the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA), the state of Colorado saw a 10 percent drop overall in the total number of high school officials, with sports like baseball seeing the percentage drop as high as 20 percent.

"There are a number of issues

ranging from time commitment to upfront costs. I think that in recent years it's been an issue about how people feel about the sport. Most officials are people that want to stay connected to the sport, and we're not attracting those people as often."

According to Ross, the areas that have been affected the most by the shortage of football officials have been junior varsity, C-team and freshman-level games, as varsity football games typically receive priority for assignments.

"It's getting pretty close to a crisis point. We have to run some of these sub-varsity games with two-person crews, especially when they get scheduled on the same days as varsity games," said Ross. "We try to work with coaches and the league to improve scheduling, but there's only so much that can be done."

In his area of jurisdiction in Boulder and Longmont, Ross has seen an increase in referees retiring or moving on to other opportunities, while the number of new officials decreases and fails to fill the void. In order to attract newer and younger officials, he and his crews held training meetings this past summer before the start of the season.

"We put together marketing brochures that our officials distributed in their communities to get the word out about the meetings," said Ross. "At the meetings, we teach new officials about the basics and help them understand NFHS rules."

During these meetings, Ross let newcomers know about the rewards of officiating like the friendship and camaraderie between officials. However, he also made them well aware of the challenges.

"We're looking for people with thick skin who can handle the job," Ross explained. "Most importantly, we're looking for people with a passion for football and working with and supporting young athletes."

Tom Conroy is Referee's assistant editor. □

## Battling Back to Basketball



Fred Scheub  
Age: 63  
Merrillville, Ind.

In September 2016, Fred Scheub thought his officiating career was over when he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. He tried to keep officiating through his treatment, but the chemotherapy was taking a toll on his strength.

After almost a year of treatment, Scheub's cancer went into remission. When he stepped back on the basketball court at Hebron High School this past November, he couldn't have been happier to return to officiating.

"It was so wonderful having people at the Hebron girls' game asking how I was feeling," said Scheub. "Just to be out there doing what I love to do, it was great, especially after everything I'd been through."

SOURCE: NWTIMES.COM

## A Chance Officiating Opportunity



Johnathan Morrison  
Age: 44  
Saint Paul, Minn.

Johnathan Morrison was sitting at home nursing a broken cheekbone from a hockey puck to the face when he received the phone call in 2005. It was from the International Paralympic Committee, which wanted Morrison, an AHL referee, to officiate sled hockey at the Paralympic games the following year. This past February, Morrison officiated his final sled hockey games at the Paralympics in South Korea.

"I never expected to do one, let alone four Paralympics," said Morrison. "There's now other people we have ready to get involved in the U.S. at this level, so I can say with a lot of confidence that this will be my last Paralympics as an on-ice official."

SOURCE: USAHOCKEY.COM

Do you know a person or group who should be profiled?

Send info to us at  
[profiles@referee.com](mailto:profiles@referee.com)