

# The Commissioner's Corner

## Important Dates:

### September 2:

NMAA Office Closed (Labor Day)

### September 3:

Spirit, Swimming, & Wrestling Officials Registrations Due

### September 15:

Football, Soccer & Volleyball Tests Due

### October 1:

Baseball & Softball Umpires Registrations Due

### October 7-11:

Fall Sports Coaches' Appreciation Week

### October 11:

NMAA Office Closed (Fall Break)

### October 14-18:

Fall Sports Officials' Appreciation Week

### October 25-26:

NMOA Wrestling State Clinic

### October 29:

NMOA Basketball & Wrestling Alternate State Clinics (Online)

## The First Day Strikes Again

Apparently, the first day of school has hit communities across New Mexico once again. Every time I open Facebook or Instagram, I am greeted by photos of children holding up signs that indicate their first day of whichever grade of school they are entering. On July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, I had actually considered posting a picture of myself that said, “*First day of my 23<sup>rd</sup> year at the NMAA,*” since I do not have children and cannot share these happy photo occasions. Then, I decided I would just celebrate the start of a new school year for MY “children” – the men and women of the New Mexico Officials Association.

While I do not have the excitement and/or stress of purchasing school supplies (one of my favorite things to do as a child) or braving the stores on the tax-free holidays for school clothes, there is still something special about a new school year for me. Each year, I get to be reunited with returning officials across the state. I get to meet new members of the NMOA family, who are coming into the ranks to start their service to the student-athletes in New Mexico. I look forward to attending games throughout the year, cheering on “my kids” as they work as officials in 10 different sports.

Much like a parent, I swell with pride when officials have an outstanding game and try to counsel them through games that were not so good. Each year, I have the opportunity to witness the first time an official puts air in a whistle, the first time an official works a varsity contest and the first time an official is selected for the state tournament. I get to be

the “officials’ groupie,” often waiting outside of locker rooms just to give the crew a high five or a hug, to let them know they are supported and have at least one fan in the stands when I am at their games.

My favorite thing to do during contests is to take pictures of officials while they work. While all of the other cameras in the stands or bleachers are focused on the athletes, mine is always turned toward the guardians of fair play – the officials. When people ask me who I am there supporting, I always tell them I am there to cheer for “my kids.” When I further explain that my kids are the officials, I am met with a variety of reactions, from nervous laughter, to genuine gratitude to an awkward silence, followed by their sudden departure from my proximity.

You are who makes me proud, year in and year out. While I may not post “first day” pictures of you, I do celebrate your contributions, your accomplishments and your service as often as I can. You all have given me the honor of being a group of people of whom I can be proud. This year, we are asking officials to submit “Officials’ Firsts” and “Officials’ Milestones” to our office so that we can celebrate those moments in your officiating careers. Moreover, when people start pulling out pictures of their children and telling me all of the great things about them, it gives me the perfect opportunity to do the same, by celebrating all of you.

I hope you have the best 2019-2020 season possible. Thank you for all that you do and for giving me that “proud mom” feeling more often than you could possibly know.

Warmest regards,

*Dana Mappas*

