

# COMMISSIONER'S CORNER



## Remembering Our Roots



The New Mexico Officials Association was established in 1953 as a standalone organization under the umbrella of the New Mexico Activities Association. Prior to 1953, the NMOA and the New Mexico High School Coaches Association were a combined group under the name of the New Mexico High School Coaches and Officials Association. The NMHSCA became its own entity in 1953 and the NMOA stayed as an umbrella organization of the NMAA.

During the 67-year history of the NMOA, the Association has most certainly seen changes in terms of its structure, its membership and the sports we sanction. What used to be an association of predominantly baseball, basketball and football officials now boasts over 1700 officials in 10 sports. Over the years, we have seen legends of New Mexico officiating in our various sports and in every corner of the state. With 92 officials in the NMOA Hall of Fame and countless others who laid the foundation for what we are today, we remind our current members about the value of knowing and honoring our roots.

Here are some interesting facts that we know about the NMOA:

- The NMOA has only one official in the National Federation of State High School Association's Hall of Fame – the late Mel Otero.
- We only have one official who worked in the National Basketball Association - the late Gene Agnes.
- We have had three officials who worked in the National Football League – Art Holst, Lloyd McPeters and Land Clark (currently an NFL white hat).
- We have had two umpires who work or have worked in Major League Baseball – Doug Eddings and Mike Everitt.

We have had numerous officials who have worked or are currently working Division I collegiate athletics throughout our history, in addition to countless others who have worked in Division II and lower levels of collegiate sports. We have had baseball, softball, track and field, volleyball and wrestling officials work at various semi-professional, national and international levels of competition. While the numbers of our officials at these levels may be small compared to other states in the country, our officials are mighty and have done a tremendous job of representing the NMOA on the highest of stages.

All of that being said, to be a legendary official in the NMOA, you do not need to have worked beyond high school sports. We have an abundance of officials who have given decades of service to this association, who have served as mentors and role models and whose shoulders we currently rest on as an association. Individuals have given over 30, 40 or 50 years to this Association in some cases and always kept their sights on not only leaving the Association better than what it was when they started but also ensuring there was someone waiting in the wings to take their place. These officials “waiting in the wings” were trained and mentored by the legends and jumped in head-first when the time came.



Why this article? Why now? Well, as I approach nearly a quarter of a century working with the officials in the state, I realize that I came in at a time when many of our Association’s legends were still living and in some cases still working in our state. Our officials were still talking about these legends when I came to the office in 1997 and now the greatness that came before us has gone from a constant conversation among our officials to a dying whisper. The appreciation I have for those who have since hung up their stripes is ever-present, while simultaneously celebrating the officials we have now and their accomplishments. I often realize, however, that many of our current officials do not know the rich history of our association, the legends who came before them and the many trails they blazed.

While I understand that officiating evolves and changes as the game does, I also know the profound importance of honoring our past and remembering our roots. Officials should be aware of who in your groups and regions came before you. You should honor the tradition of being a solid mentor and of making sure that you have someone to take over when your officiating days are over. You should take time to nominate deserving officials for the various NMOA awards available. We can preserve the important history of our Association while still evolving with the games we officiate.

My challenge to each of you is to talk to the veterans in your group about who mentored them and the legends who came before them. Talk about what made them special and use that knowledge to help you work on your craft. Remember this, as stated by Dr. P.S. Jagadeesh Kumar, “If you forget the path traveled, you will forget the path to travel.” Let us never forget the path traveled before us and may we use that journey to guide us into the future of officiating in our state.

Warm Regards,

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT NOTE:** The NMOA would like to update our history as best we can. Please me at [danamarie@nmact.org](mailto:danamarie@nmact.org) with the names of any current or past NMOA officials who have worked professional, semiprofessional, collegiate (any level), national or international athletics. Include the name, sport, years, levels and leagues/conferences each official worked or is working. We would like to showcase this information on the NMOA web site in an effort to preserve our history. Don’t be shy! Send your own information, too!\*\*\*



## Important Dates (November-December, 2020)



### November 2020

- November 16, 2020** – Spirit Officials Exam Closes\*
- November 25-27, 2020**– NMAA Office Closed (Thanksgiving Break)

### December 2020

- December 15, 2020** – Basketball, Swimming & Diving Officials’ Registration Due/Basketball Exams Open\*
- December 18-19, 2020** – NMOA Baseball & Softball State Clinic (Online)
- December 21, 2020** – **January 1, 2021** – NMAA Office Closed (Winter Break)
- December 23, 2020** – NMOA Swimming & Diving Officials Clinic (Online – 5:30 PM)
- December 30, 2020** – NMAA Basketball, Swimming & Diving District Clinics (Online – 5:30 PM & 7:00 PM)

