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Mark Becker Recognized for 25 Years as Referee Official

NOVEMBER 28TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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St. Louis, Missouri - Being a referee can sometimes be difficult. Most fans do not realize the level of commitment or compassion referees have for the game of football. Most of all they get little recognition for their efforts. This past Saturday, Mark Becker, was honored for his efforts of refereeing high school football for 25 years at the Dome during the MSHSAA State Football Championship games.

That's 25 years in a sport he lives, breaths, and loves. One can only imagine being yelled at by football coaches, players, and even fans from the sidelines, but each game he has officiated with a professional attitude and has performed 100% as the best referee in the business. We give little credit to the men in the zebra striped shirts, but they deserve a firm handshake and a thank you. Takes a lot of heart and soul to go out and face two teams battling for a win, perhaps even a championship win, Becker does it with finesse and integrity.

Becker was recognized not just for his 25 years of service, but in recognition of outstanding contributions of leadership, guidance, and integrity on the field. He has not only taken part in high school games, but came out on many Saturdays each season to help with Dexter Parks & Recreation's little league football teams.

He coached the Red Team in the 1980's for Dexter Parks and Recreation and then moved on to refereeing.

Why did he get involved? “In 1990 I started refereeing. Rick Williams encouraged me to get involved and it was a way for me to stay in touch with the game I love. Camaraderie of the crew and just enjoying the football atmosphere is something I enjoy,” Becker said.

“My best memory was refereeing a game between Kirkwood and Webster Groves,” continued Becker. “It was a semifinal football game with over 10,000 people in the stands. That was great!”

Becker’s referee crew includes Rick Williams, Don Backfish, Pat Carda, and Jimmy Smith. They cover games in Southeast Missouri all the way up to St. Louis, Missouri.

“I have had the chance to do some big games over the years,” stated Becker. “A combination of a great crew and having been graded as a solid crew. We have been able to referee more than a dozen quarterfinal football games; six semifinals, and twice now at the Dome in St. Louis for Missouri State High School Athletic Association Football Championship games. It’s been a major honor to be invited to referee these types of championships.”

Mark is married to his lovely wife, Cathy and they have a son and a daughter. “It’s been a sacrifice having games sometimes three nights a week. It’s tough, but you know it’s been a good deal.”

</images/2015 Images/Mark Becker 2.jpg>

He’s also a Bearcat through and through and as the saying goes, “He bleeds Red and Black!” His high school career was from 1971 -1974 and he played mostly as a guard on offense for the Bearcats. He did cover other positions as well especially when people got hurt. He even managed to get some defensive playing time as a defensive end and linebacker.

Becker has been in the game of football for more than 40+ years playing, coaching or being a referee official. He’s seen a lot of changes, new rules, and seen many young men play in this sport. Referees are getting more and more scarce these days. Today’s referee is getting older and the young are not stepping up as much as they did.

“I think young people need to get involved,” stated Becker. “They need to experience the game from a different level. They need to start at the bottom and work their way up then take a test to become an official. It’s a great atmosphere

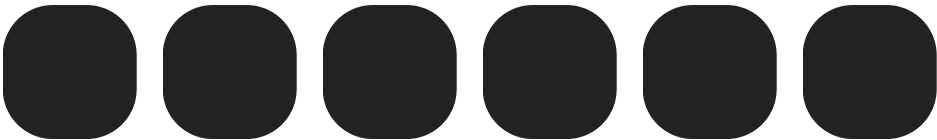
and they would really enjoy it”

Congratulations on Mark Becker’s recognition of 25 years as a referee. Well deserved!!

LAST UPDATED ON NOVEMBER 28TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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