

The NMAA hosted over 40 individuals at their offices to discuss strategies for recruiting and retaining officials into the New Mexico Officials Association. The group looked at the issues in a broad scope and formulated ideas for both recruitment and retention under several categories: *assignments, evaluations, NMAA office responsibilities, NMOA “internal” responsibilities, outreach, relationships, school responsibilities, sportsmanship issues and technology*. Please note that some items fall under multiple categories. Below please find a summary of the ideas by category (**items specific to SCHOOLS are highlighted in yellow**):

Assignments

- Assigning younger officials with veteran officials so they can assess the game management of the newer officials. Place newer officials in situations wherein they can learn and with veterans who are willing to teach/mentor.
- Crew chiefs should provide information to the NMAA and to Coordinators about up-and-coming officials. Crew chiefs should be assigned based upon skill and experience.

Evaluation System

- Must be more cohesive and centralized.
- Improve and encourage instead of demote and discourage.
- Training of Observers
- Rules-based feedback.
- Bridge the generation gap between Observers and new officials.

NMAA Responsibilities

- Group leader training.
- Curriculum and training committee.
- Collect group information for meeting dates/times/sites.
- Setting up training/recruitment/rules sessions with local teams.
- Be relatable.

NMOA “Internal” Responsibilities/Local Association Responsibilities

- Incentives for officials recruiting other officials – sending them to camps, NASO, etc., for top recruiter.
- “Officiating 101” – Communication for newer officials. Business side of officiating.
- Youth leagues – must have veteran officials invest in younger officials.
- Mentoring System
 - Both the mentor and mentee must be accountable.
 - New officials and veterans coming together for the sake of consistency.
 - Bonus points toward advancement in NMOA Constitution for serving as a mentor.
- Exit interview with officials to find out why they are not returning.
- Primary contact within each local group to make face-to-face follow-up with potential officials.
- Curbing negatives, emphasizing positives.
- Veteran officials need to humble themselves and let younger officials question them.
- Positive reinforcement of officials.
- End-of-year banquets – bring new recruits and build camaraderie.
- Clean up officials and have a better product to sell! Accountability.
- Visibility of NMAA staff with local groups.
- Stop talking about shortage; no one wants to board a sinking ship.
- Waive local fees for new officials.
- Establish local traditions to enhance camaraderie.
- Look at other sports for potential new officials for your sport.
- Business cards from NMAA with contact information and who referred you.
- Battlefields to Ballfields – Mike Pereira’s initiative; veterans’ groups.
- More active group leaders addressing the needs of their groups.
- Local association awards.
- Other options for meeting attendance and clinic attendance.

- Officials need to be valued by NMAA/NMOA/schools.
- More film studies
- Include current athletes at meetings and scrimmages.
- Larger groups helping smaller groups – cross-mentoring.
- Challenge officials at the beginning of each year – what are your goals?
- Start-up costs; waiving fees for new officials.
- Survey local groups at the end of each season to find out how it went.
- Camps should be “back to basics” and must include two-man and four-man mechanics.
- Accountability and transparency of assignments and evaluations.

Outreach

- Talking to high school coaches to target athletes who are not playing at the next level. Coaches need to submit names and contact information for prospective officials to the NMAA office.
 - Devise incentives for coaches/schools that assist in recruitment.
 - Director's Cup Points?
 - Giveaways
- College recruitment fairs.
 - College physical education programs.
 - Credit for officiating courses.
- Booths at local career days.
- Summer recruitment camp sponsored by the NMAA.
- Recruitment of “passionate fans.”
- Credit for PE in high schools. There is a curriculum available – Contact the NMAA Office.
- Target like-minded career paths – teachers, police officers, firefighters, athletes, engineers.
- Target underrepresented demographics – women, retirees, ethnic minorities.
- Airtime for community programming; develop recruitment package for all media.
- Public service announcements utilizing local “celebrities” such as in-state collegiate coaches, as well as individuals such as Land Clark.
- Social media - Use cautiously to reach younger generation.

Relationships

- Officials' relationships with all stakeholders. Communication is key.
- Relationship with coaches as a recruiting stakeholder.
- Develop relationships with coaches, schools and counselors. Target kids who are not athletes too.

School Responsibilities

- Enforcement of Compete with Class.
- Hospitality for and the safety of officials must be paramount at schools.
- Set up time for officials to speak to parents at all mandatory pre-season meetings.
- Allowing officials to speak to teams and student groups to recruit potential officials.
- Timely payment of officials.
- Participation of schools/teams in Officials' Appreciation Weeks. The dates for the 2023-2024 school year are as follows:
 - Fall Sports Officials Appreciation Week – October 16-21, 2023
 - Winter Sports Officials Appreciation Week – January 29 - February 3, 2024
 - Spring Sports Officials Appreciation Week – April 15-20, 2024

Sportsmanship Issues

- Fans reflect poor behavior of coaches and of other fans. Schools must do a better job of enforcing the tenets of Compete with Class.
- Zero tolerance must be displayed by officials and then supported by schools and NMAA.

If you have questions or recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact Zac Stevenson (zac@nmact.org) or Carl Vigil (carl@nmact.org) at the NMAA office. Thank you for your support of our interscholastic sports officials!