

happening at different levels and connecting different sports.”

It's that sort of interaction that has kept Alan Zarrow of Brooklyn, N.Y., coming back year after year.

“By my count, I have attended 28 conventions and Summits, not counting the remote Summits,” he said. “My first one was the 1990

convention in Washington, D.C.”

Among Zarrow's favorite aspects of the Summit are “the opening reception where you can catch up with old friends and make new connections.”

His favorite memories include rodeo officials presenting a cowboy hat to Fox Sports rules analyst Mike Pereira, former

MLB umpire Jerry Crawford surprising his brother Joey the day the NBA referee was to receive the Gold Whistle Award and the get well card he received from the NASO staff after his first knee surgery.

The 2023 Summit is scheduled for July 30-Aug. 1, 2023, in Riverside, Calif. ■

NASO CONVENTION/SUMMIT HISTORY

1981 Chicago	1991 Las Vegas	2003 Portland, Ore.	2013 Grand Rapids, Mich.
1982 Philadelphia	1992 New Orleans	2004 Washington, D.C.	2014 Albuquerque, N.M.
1983 Dallas	1993 Orlando, Fla.	2005 Salt Lake City	2015 St. Louis
1984 Las Vegas	1994 San Diego	2006 Memphis, Tenn.	2016 San Antonio
1985 Orlando, Fla.	1995 Washington, D.C.	2007 Denver	2017 Louisville, Ky.
1986 St. Louis	1997 Keystone, Colo.	2008 Cleveland	2018 New Orleans
1987 San Francisco	1998 Indianapolis	2009 Tucson, Ariz.	2019 Spokane, Wash.
1988 Boston	2000 Colorado Springs	2010 Minneapolis	2020-21 Summit at Home
1989 San Antonio	2001 Norfolk, Va.	2011 Atlanta	2022 Denver
1990 Washington, D.C.	2002 Albuquerque, N.M.	2012 Portland, Ore.	<i>No events: 1996 or 1999</i>

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The mission of NASO is to:

- Serve members by providing benefits and services.
- Improve officiating performance through educational programs.
- Advocate opportunities for officials and engage in programs to recruit and retain officials.
- Create alliances with organizations that benefit from healthy officiating programs.
- Enhance the image of officials.

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4 WAYS OFFICIALS GET THEMSELVES IN LEGAL TROUBLE

By Donald C. Collins

Officials can get themselves in legal trouble without even realizing it. From actions that seem like they have nothing to do with officiating to inaction on officiating matters that seem benign until they aren't, trouble can lurk. Here are four ways that legal trouble can sneak up on an official.

1 OFFICIALS WITH LOOSE LIPS.

Some officials are professionals on the court, but in their off-court conversations they lay the foundation for future legal problems.

These officials engage in bawdy, off-color conversations,

and make comments or jokes that cut close to racial and ethnic lines. These types of comments have been used against officials, their local associations, and even their state governing bodies in lawsuits ranging from gender bias in assignments to uniform and hair rules violations.

Even worse, athletes who have assaulted officials have alleged they were reacting to negative comments from officials. Few believe these athletes, but it's easier to rebut these claims if the officials involved cultivate solid reputations for professionalism. Yes, loose lips can create major legal problems.

2 OFFICIALS WHO DON'T MAKE THE MID-GAME CHECK.

Officials are constantly told to do a pregame facilities and equipment check. There are times when this is not enough.

Officials have to be ready to adjust if the pregame checks don't work. The biggest tip that a pregame check didn't work is the dreaded near miss.

We've seen it. A player slips on a wet spot near the gym entrance on a rainy night during basketball season. Somehow, the hot bat gets used in a baseball or softball game. In track, the discus hits the netting and then somehow slides down into a space on the other side of the net.

In all these cases, there's a safety failure, but no harm has occurred. The game is flowing, and some officials may be inclined to keep things moving. Don't do it. This is when the official needs to take a brief pause for safety. Address the wet spot – don't leave it up to the ticket taker. Enforce the illegal bat rules. Get some zip ties, and secure that netting right. Make the mid-game safety fix. Officials who don't make that fix leave some pretty big evidence they did not fully address safety.

3 OFFICIALS WHO DON'T TAKE FILE NOTES.

Officials need to get in the habit of documenting their games. Officials should file notes from games when there are injuries, fights, ejections and unusual occurrences. These notes may help officials refresh their memories should they be sued down the road. Quite frankly, officials should take notes even when nothing occurred during a game. After all, officials only find out

about some injuries, problems and complaints well after the game, and someday it may be important to recall what occurred during the game.

4 OFFICIALS WHO DON'T LET THEIR PARTNER BE THEIR WITNESS.

Officiating mechanics don't account for witnesses. This normally doesn't matter since the whole gym or ballpark can see an official's calls. However, the whole gym and ballpark can't hear an official tell somebody that their uniform is illegal, their jewelry has to come off, or they've breached some other technical rule. The only people who hear the official are often the coach, and some of his players. Occasionally, the opposing coach will hear – but he or she may not care about enforcing the rule.

Officials are not good at finding a way to make sure their partners can find a balance between covering the court or field while being in the visual vicinity of an official's instructions on uniform and jewelry rules. One can hardly fault officials for this flaw, though. In truth, some mechanics will eventually need to be adjusted so officials can protect their legal interests.

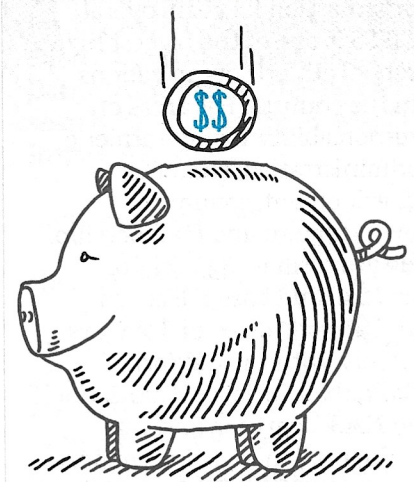
Of course, there are many other ways to get into legal trouble, but officials can get a start protecting themselves by addressing these four ways of staying out of trouble.

Donald C. Collins recently retired as commissioner of the San Francisco Section of the California Interscholastic Federation. He is a longtime basketball official and lawyer. This article is for informational purposes and is not legal advice. ■



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