

The Pulse

Local Association News Nationwide

Longtime Assigner Steps Down

Charles Myers stepped down as the Greater New Orleans Football Officials Association assignment secretary after serving in the position for nearly 40 years. Paul LaRosa, 60, replaces Myers and is responsible for the area's high school football officials' assignments this season.

"It's a huge challenge," LaRosa said. "The guy who has done it for 35 years has done a great job. It set very high expectations in terms of what the next person's going to do."

LaRosa, a former vice president with Entergy, served as a football referee for 35 seasons and officiated the 2010 Class 5A state championship game. To take the assigner position, LaRosa had to come off the field. LaRosa said he will implement several changes to better serve the officials in the area, including installing a web-based assignment system and creating an evaluation system for referees.

Wagoner Inducted Into Hall of Fame

James Wagoner's longtime involvement in officiating earned him a spot in this year's induction class of the Arkansas High School Coaches and Officials Association Hall of Fame. Wagoner was inducted at a banquet in Hot Springs on July 15.

Wagoner officiated for nearly 40 years until 2008. He refereed in more than 100 football playoff games and was also selected to officiate state championship and All-Star games. In addition, Wagoner officiated basketball games at all levels including junior high, high school and college.

"To me, it's quite an honor because there's a lot of coaches and a lot of officials in the state of Arkansas that could be honored, so it's quite an honor really to be recognized with the coaches, and a lot of the past inductees are friends of mine, so that makes it even more important to me," Wagoner said.

Ontario Umpires Association Gives Back

The St. Thomas & District Umpires Association recently participated in Softball Ontario's new initiative (Softball Association Fundamental Excellence Star Rating Program) to promote best practices in softball association management and administration. At the annual Sportsfest in Dutton, Ontario, in July, volunteers were able to promote the work of the umpires association through involvement in various charity activities. The fundraising event featured the umpires beating the Dutton All-Stars, 22-12, in a charity game. The umpires also had a promotional booth, which included softball activity zones with hitting, pitching and throwing activities for the hundreds of young people.

SOURCES: THE TIMES-PICAUNE, THE TIMES-RECORD (FORT SMITH, ARK.), ST. THOMAS TIMES-JOURNAL

Atlanta Summit Draws Big Numbers

About 400 officials and officiating leaders representing a variety of sports, as well as sponsors and exhibitors, attended the 29th NASO Sports Officiating Summit, which took place at the Marriott Renaissance Waverly Hotel in Atlanta July 31 to Aug. 2. They listened to a variety of prominent officiating leaders during general sessions and breakout sessions, took part in panel discussions and lunch workshops all on the topic of "Image in Officiating: The Perception. The Reality. The Focus."

The three-day Summit followed the Officiate Georgia Day, co-sponsored by the Georgia High School Association and the Georgia Athletic Officials Association, which attracted 1,650 officials on July 30 at the Cobb Galleria Centre, adjacent to the Waverly Hotel.

"Georgia Day was absolutely phenomenal with 1,650 officials, the largest gathering of sports officials ever," said NASO board member Don Collins. "They got a lot out of it, a lot of educational and informational material to take back home, although they were already at home."

Summit attendees had the opportunity to attend a number of sessions before the event concluded with the Celebrate Officiating Gala, where more than 300 in attendance saw former FIFA referee and current technical instructor Esse Baharmast receive the Gold Whistle Award. Longtime NASO contributor and sports attorney Alan Goldberger was presented the Mel Napol Medallion Award while 2003 Gold Whistle Award recipient Bob Delaney was honored for his 25-year NBA officiating career.

"This has really been a good Summit," said Collins. "You have to acknowledge Alan Goldberger being honored with the Mel Napol Medallion and, of course, Esse Baharmast as the Gold Whistle Award recipient. Then you've got all the NBA people coming in to honor Bob Delaney, like Steve Javie and Joey Crawford among others. So, everyone who attended not only got a really good educational forum, focusing on image, which was very upbeat. Even more upbeat was the Gala event to celebrate some really good careers. That drove it over the top."

The Summit educational sessions

began with Steve Shaw, former Southeastern Conference (SEC) referee and current SEC coordinator of football officials, talking about how officials are viewed. Shaw also is the incoming chair of the NASO board of directors. In between the opening session and the Officiating Gala, which wrapped up the event, were sessions with panel discussions featuring some of the top officials and

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officiating leaders in the industry, like Jeff Triplette, NFL referee and NASO board member; Patty Broderick, NCAA women's basketball coordinator of multiple conferences; Ron Johnson, NBA vice president of referee operations; and Crawford. Goldberger once again answered questions from attendees on legal issues affecting the industry while leaders of NASO and NFHS gathered during an officiating industry luncheon.

In addition to the regular sessions, there was a special breakfast seminar exclusively for local association leaders. Those leaders heard from Goldberger and Drew Smith, American Specialty Insurance Services vice president.

The Summit included eight sport breakout meetings as well as interactive lunch workshops, including one for local association leaders on "The Nine Core Board Responsibilities." The "Let's Go to the Video" session included 10 leaders of a variety of sports, from football to rodeo. Those leaders presented videos and commented on real calls, no-calls and uniquely handled situations. Super Bowl XLV referee Walt Anderson concluded the sessions with a presentation on "How to Really Reach Officials."

The 30th NASO Sports Officiating Summit is scheduled for July 29-31 at the Marriott City Center in downtown Portland, Ore., and will focus on "Taking Care of Business." For more information, call 262-632-5448. □