

Spotlight on Officials

Five years ago one of the recruiting efforts started by the KSHSAA was to ask schools to nominate high school seniors for a potential complimentary registration as an official. After limited success, the KSHSAA expanded the program to include recommendations of potential officials from league commissioners. The scholarship official receives a free registration for up to two sports their first year. Each scholarship official is paired with a “mentor” official who will help them with some of the questions they may have about being a new official. This month Keri Pfrang, a scholarship official from 2015, shares her experience. Keri is currently a student at Kansas State University.

KSHSAA: What made you decide to begin officiating?

Pfrang: *Josh Tanking (Big 7 league commissioner) knew that I was very involved in sports when I was in high school. He approached me about officiating summer basketball and volleyball. Once summer came to an end, I realized officiating sports was a way to keep me involved in the game and it gave me a source of income while I was away at college.*

KSHSAA: Was it the scholarship program that provided you the opportunity or something else?

Pfrang: *The scholarship program was a great benefit financially, and I think it's a great way to get new officials involved to see if officiating is something that they want to continue to do in the future.*

KSHSAA: Have you had a mentor that helped you since you started officiating? How has that helped you?

Pfrang: *I have had so many people assist me in becoming the official that I am today. George Ebert really took me under his wing when I moved to Manhattan. He watched me officiate a few games and decided to take a chance on me. I wouldn't be officiating today if it weren't for him. Josh Tanking was another person who really looked after me and still does today. If I ever was uncertain about something, he could either help me or find someone who could. Having these two men mentor me and believe in me has given me confidence in my ability. I strive to make them proud every time I step on the court.*

KSHSAA: What do you enjoy most about officiating?

Pfrang: *My enjoyment for officiating varies for each level that I officiate. When I'm officiating middle school games, I enjoy watching the players grow and get better as the season goes on. I've had some games at the beginning of the season where players couldn't make a free throw or make a serve over the net. Later in the season, when those same players triumph over their challenges, I love hearing the fans and their teammates go crazy. When I officiate higher levels of sports, I enjoy the competitive spirit as it takes me back to when I was in high school.*

KSHSAA: What keeps you coming back as an official each year?

Pfrang: *Officiating gives me a sense of accomplishment. When a player approaches you and wants you to officiate their game, one can't help but smile. When people tell me that I did a good job or that I'm a good official, it gives me confidence and makes me want to continue to improve.*



KSHSAA: Describe your background in athletics. Did you play sports and if so what did you compete in for your school?

Pfrang: *I have been involved in athletics ever since my first year of middle school (sixth grade). In high school, I played volleyball, basketball and ran track for a year. From the moment I started competing in sports, I knew I had found something that I was passionate for.*

KSHSAA: How did your playing days affect your decision to officiate?

Pfrang: *When I started officiating, it was a challenge. I was used to playing the game, not watching and controlling it. However, having played the sports I now officiate in high school has helped me. Knowing the general concept of the game made learning the rules and the technical side of the game a bit easier.*

KSHSAA: What has been the most challenging aspect of officiating thus far in your career?

Pfrang: *Growing up, I did not like making people mad. Now that I am an official, it is obvious that I can't please everyone. Someone is always unhappy with the call. Every official has an off game or two where they don't call the best of games. I've had a few of those and the crowd let me know it. Dealing with those types of games has proven to be the most challenging for me. After some of those games, I wasn't sure if it was worth officiating any more.*

KSHSAA: What are your goals in officiating?

Pfrang: *My goals are to continue to get better with every game that I do and to eventually officiate at the state level. I am always learning and I never want to stop.*

KSHSAA: What would be your advice for someone who maybe wants to start officiating but hasn't registered yet?

Pfrang: *Take a chance and try it. With the scholarship program, you have nothing to lose. The people you meet and connections that you make through officiating is astounding.*