

**Topeka Officials Association
Football Newsletter
Week 5**

Unbelievable: Does it seem possible that the regular season is more than half over? Due to some interesting scheduling our crew still has seven games remaining on our schedule. And, of our first four games, I was only able to work two. I have had two games at OU – one at ISU (can anyone believe that ISA actually beat Iowa?) and one at KU.

Nonetheless, no matter how many games are on your schedule, it is important that you properly prepare for each game. Since it has been two weeks since I have worked with our crew, it is especially important that I get back into the Rules Book and work on my mechanics. Additionally, it is important that I review the “little things” – pre-game responsibilities – contributions to the pre-game conference – communicating with my crew mates and making sure I am prepared for the kicking game. We have so few opportunities to work high school football games – we must take advantage of any opportunities we have to be better officials.

Our Heritage: Over the past couple of years, I have had the opportunity to comment on the new members of the TOA Hall of Fame. I am not sure who came up with that idea, but honoring those who have contributed so much to officiating is truly meaningful to all of us.

Here are the names of three more men with significant ties to officiating in Kansas – I am sure you will recognize this name: **Dr. Bob Frederick**. Maybe some of you have heard the names of **Dr. James Moeser** and **Dolph Simons, Jr.** So, who are these people?

James Moeser is a former Dean of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Kansas and University Organist – he also is a former Chancellor of the University of Nebraska and the current Chancellor of the University of North Carolina (yes, he was the Chancellor at UNC when Roy Williams left KU).

Dolph Simons, Jr. is the Chairman of the World Company in Lawrence, publishers of the “*Journal-World*” and several other area newspapers, as well as Sunflower Broadband and other ventures in NE Kansas and several surrounding states.

So, where is the common thread when it comes to officiating?

All three were original signers of a Michael Josephson project called, “Pursuing Victory with Honor.” This program emphasizes sportsmanship (by all participants) as much as winning or losing. However, Josephson wants more – especially from officials.

“There’s no question that sports is not meeting its full potential as a character building activity. There are too many situations where sports are becoming an

amplified version of the worst in society. Sports officials are like judges. They have to be responsible for the integrity of the game – it's their courtroom."

"Too many officials are not doing enough to encourage proper behavior."

Why are officials not doing their job in this most important area? For fear of retaliation by coaches and schools!

But, read the following carefully: The Arizona Interscholastic Association and the California Interscholastic Federation have noted some amazing results:

The CIF rewards good behavior and recognizes a "Pursuing Victory with Honor" award to players in the basketball state finals. "The program has led to an emphasis on standards and practices that coaches, players and schools need to follow."

Not only has Arizona noticed the same positive results but at least one other benefit has been noted over the past five years: The number of registered officials in Arizona has **increased by 26%!** At the same time, ejections have **decreased by 43%!** The AIA commissioner says, "We just seem to have a better climate as it relates to sportsmanship, a better relationship.

Here is the key comment: **"Because there is no blackball of officials at any level, officials aren't worried about losing assignments because they enforced the rules!"**

The AIA also noted that no program is successful unless the people involved accept the parameters. "The officials are in charge of the game and they are to articulate the standards to the coaches and players – they set the table early and with our backing!"

Bob Frederick, Jim Moeser, and Dolph Simons had it right when they helped create, endorse and sign on to the Pursuing Victory with Honor program. Is there any reason the KSHSAA should not sign on to this program? Wouldn't this program be a great solution to the declining numbers of officials? Wouldn't this program be a great solution to declining sportsmanship?

Kansas had more leaders signing on to this program than any other state. Don't you think KSHSAA could learn something from the success of this program? Wouldn't it be nice to have 26% more registered officials coupled with a 43% decline in ejections?

What needs to happen before the KSHSAA embraces this program and the co-curricular nature of school activities?

Want To Get Better? Ten Ways to Get Better: 1) Do your homework and study the Rules Book, the Case Book, and the Mechanics Manual; 2) Talk about Football on the trip to the game and on the way home; 3) Count your players every time; 4) Have a Ritual and use it every time; 5) Keep the ball off the ground; 6) Make sure

that every player who goes out of bounds and into the team box of his opponent is escorted back to the field of play by an official; 7) Be honest and truthful with coaches; 8) As for coaches, "don't go often and don't stay long;" 9) Get every "easy" call correct; and 10) Error on the side of safety!

Covering the Goal Line: Not to sound like Martha Stewart, but covering the goal line depends a lot on your presentation skills. Here is what I mean: Many crews use different yard lines as the "break-off" point for who is responsible for covering the goal line. On our crew, scrimmage plays that start inside the ten yard line have L and H covering the goal line. Outside that magic line, it is B who has that responsibility. Example: 1st and goal from the 8: It is very important that H and L get to the goal line before the runner. This will require them to sometimes "go back" to the spot where the run ends if that spot is the 3 or 4 yard line. We must adhere to the basic rule that an official cannot rule on a touchdown unless they are on the goal line. Do Not be five yards behind the play and signal a touchdown when the runner crosses the goal line – if you do get beat to the goal line, get to the goal line and then signal the touchdown. If you rule that the run is ended short of the goal line, make sure that you are standing well in the field of play when marking the spot. Don't be in the end zone and then come out in marking such a play.