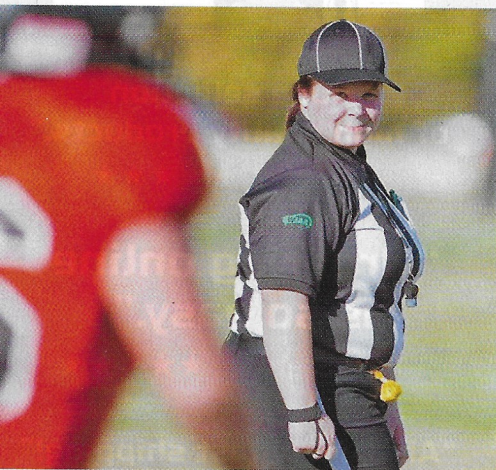


Field Goals: Cardinale Breaks Barrier

By Greg Waxberg

For those who are wondering about the next generation of officials, Izzy Cardinale is a great example.

A 2017 graduate of Squalicum High School in Bellingham, Wash., and a lifelong football fan, Cardinale made history on Sept. 16, 2016, as a member of the Whatcom Skagit Island Football Officials Association



Izzy Cardinale looks toward the sideline while officiating a middle school game last fall.

(WSIFOA): She became the first female to officiate a high school varsity game in that region.

Her achievement is notable because new WSIFOA officials usually start with middle school or high school JV games to reduce the pressure, but there's a shortage of officials. Though it was a varsity game with the inherent excitement of media exposure and a huge crowd, Cardinale wasn't fazed. "I studied, read the rulebook, and did as best I could," she says. She says that the coaches gave her encouragement.

For Cardinale, there is no place she would rather be than on a football field or in the stands. "I grew up with (football). My father has been a Seahawks season ticket holder for

nearly 21 years and has officiated football. I learned to love it, and I love going out on a Friday night, hearing the national anthem and watching those boys, out there under the stars. It's all I've ever really known."

Her father, Joe, an official for WSIFOA for the past dozen years, is largely to thank for what Cardinale is doing now. After she played football in seventh grade at Shuksan Middle School, the boys outgrew her, so Joe suggested that she officiate for the Boys & Girls Clubs (WSIFOA, which serves a younger age group, capping off with high school varsity games, came a year later). "I thought she'd be good at it because of her temperament," he says. "She sticks to her guns, whether she's right, wrong or indifferent. It was also a good way for her to earn some extra money and stay involved with football."

Joe and his colleagues have helped train Cardinale by watching and analyzing games — particularly the actions of the officials — and discussing philosophies, mechanics and positioning. Although Cardinale has stepped outside of her comfort zone, partly as a female in a male-dominated field, she loves her new role and says the players seem to respect her and the calls she makes.

"We're a pretty small community," she says, "so I'm now an authority figure to the coaches and the players who already knew me ... and when I'm watching games, the students sitting near me look at me to ask about the calls. Being out there on the field was always something I wanted to do, but I never knew *how* I wanted to be on the field."

Cardinale has been a head linesman and line judge and hopes to work more varsity games. She says that she may officiate in college, and she is doing her part, via Facebook, to try to get more young people interested in officiating.

Greg Waxberg is a writer and magazine editor from Branchburg, N.J. □

Family Ties



KC Crall and Jeff Crall
Ages: 20, 73
Beloit, Wis.

Jeff Crall and his granddaughter, KC Crall, have partnered up to work youth league basketball games and JV games since shortly after KC graduated from high school in 2015.

Jeff Crall, who began officiating in 1982, recalls fondly the first time he worked with KC, whose father, Mike, recently picked up the part-time avocation again as well.

KC's uncle Jim is another longtime referee, and that's where KC got her start in December 2015. A student at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, KC was looking to make some extra cash when her family influenced her decision.

"I talked to my uncle about it and he said I should do it," KC said. "He said it was something I could do on the weekends and it was fun, so I gave it a shot."

SOURCE: BELOIT (WI) DAILY NEWS

My Three Sons



The Gants: Kenny, Haydon, Marshall, Robert
Ages: 52, 20, 19, 17
Lexington, Ky.

Kenny Gant, second from right, and sons Haydon, left; Marshall, second from left; and Robert, right.

Kenny Gant started officiating basketball and baseball games 36 years ago when he was 16, and now his three sons are following in his footsteps.

Marshall, 20, Robert, 19, and Haydon, 17, have taken up basketball officiating. Marshall and Robert are in their first full season of Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) officiating. Haydon is gaining experience in church league settings, where his dad and brothers also officiated.

Kenny has officiated two KHSAA boys' Sweet Sixteens.

SOURCE: LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER

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