

Folliard Deserving of Call to Oregon Hall

By Greg Waxberg

Thirty-three years as a football official in the Pac-10/12 Conference, including the final 12 seasons as referee, helped Jack Folliard reach the pinnacle of athletics achievement in his home state of Oregon: induction last November into the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame.

During those 33 years, he was

him involved; football proved to be schedule-friendly because weekday basketball games conflicted with his legal job.

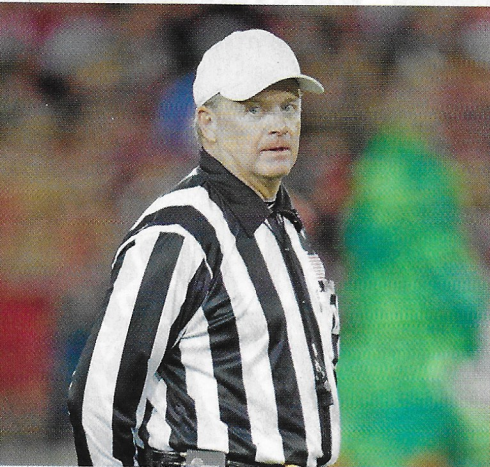
He worked his way up to high school and college before applying to the Pac-10. After joining the conference in 1982, Folliard worked four positions — side judge, field judge, line judge and back judge — before his appointment to crew chief by Verle Sorgen, conference coordinator, in 2003.

“Jack consistently exhibited outstanding mechanics and exceptional judgment,” Sorgen said. “More importantly, he had a presence on and off the field, a demeanor that did not demand respect, but drew respect. If something unusual happens on the field or a coach gets out of line, the crew expects the referee to handle it. With his always-calm demeanor and ability to analyze and work out a solution, Jack could and did do that.”

Since a typical crew includes veteran and younger officials, Folliard mentored his crewmates and learned how to read their personalities. Instructing officials how to deal with coaches, Folliard has always advised, “Avoid arguing because the coach will never give up, and you’ve got a game to officiate. But you have to listen to coaches and give them a chance to vent.”

Folliard retired from onfield officiating after the 2014 season and was then appointed to be a Pac-12 position supervisor, working with field judges. He continues as a high school basketball official and as executive director of the 3,000-member OAOA, working closely with the Oregon School Activities Association, the governing body for high school athletics. He created OAOA’s motto, “One Rule, One Mechanic, One Interpretation,” to unify how the state’s officials interpret the rules of their sports.

Greg Waxberg is a writer from Basking Ridge, N.J. □



Jack Folliard, a recent inductee into the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame, officiated 17 NCAA bowl games during his career.

assigned to 17 NCAA bowl games and two NCAA All-Star games. Folliard was crew chief for the 2007 BCS National Championship Game, the high point of his career. He also founded two organizations — the National Association of Collegiate Football Officials and the Oregon Athletic Officials Association (OAOA), the latter to advance high school officiating in Oregon.

Folliard juggled officiating with his full-time job as a trial lawyer (defending doctors and hospitals in malpractice cases), from which he retired in 2002. He began officiating basketball his senior year at Lewis & Clark College. Later, while attending law school, Folliard added football when fellow referees got

After 60 Years, Umpire Hangs up Mask



James Gunter
Age: 77
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

James Gunter has retired from umpiring softball in the Tuscaloosa, Ala., area after more than 60 years behind the plate and in the field. The Tuscaloosa County Parks and Recreation Authority recently honored him by naming Sokol Park’s Field A after him.

“I’m going to miss the kids,” Gunter said. “I’m going to miss the game.”

Gunter says he has umpired about 41,000 games during his career — more than 600 games a year. He has been inducted into the West Alabama Softball Hall of Fame and the Marengo County Sports Hall of Fame.

Aside from umpiring softball for 50 years, he officiated basketball for 29 years, baseball for 20 years and football for nine years.

State Honors Official With Senate Resolution



Don Murdzia
Age: 76
Bellingham, Wash.

Longtime official and umpire Don Murdzia was honored last February by Washington State legislators with Senate Resolution 8707 that recognized him “for his tremendous passion, dedication and devotion toward the sports which continue to shape and inspire our youth in Washington State.”

Murdzia began umpiring in 1959 and expanded his officiating career to football and basketball in 1963.

Murdzia still serves as a baseball umpire and plans to return to officiating football this fall after hip revision surgery in September, though he did retire from basketball after 53 years.

SOURCE: THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

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