

Refman's Blog: "It's not all work!"

Fred Feeney - OhioWrestling.Net

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Gather two or more wrestling officials together and they will talk about one of three things.

First it might be, "what do you think about this call?"

Secondly, "you can't believe what this coach said!"

Or thirdly, "guess how we pranked this official!"

I am going to write about #3 today - the pranks and other assorted things other officials have done to their fellow brethren.

Now, to those who have never been a part of any type of a fraternity - whether it is a group of referees, or teachers, policemen, or whatever - there is always a kinsmanship amongst the group. It is a sort of "all is fair" type of a situation. Nothing is ever done with malice or hatred, but actually out of some misguided form of love.

Rookies working their first varsity matches tend to get it the worst. It is then followed by the, "I can out do this prank" mentality.

Here are ten of the best pranks I have been involved in or have known about.

No names mentioned to protect the... guilty!

1. The stealing (or was it misplaced?) of the car of a state tournament referee and his phone call to the supposed police department to try and get help to find it.
2. The near arrest of an underage official for "conspiracy to buy beer", when he tried to bribe a senior official because the "exponent fee" was not paid on time.
3. The hiding of "foodstuff" in ones gym bag that wouldn't be found until the next season.
4. Officials' jackets being twisted into knots over and over and over, as it hangs on the back of a chair
5. The official's whistle being glued shut so it can't make a sound when air is blown through.
6. Assorted "lingerie" placed inside a referee's gym bag, only to be found by that official's wife when she went to do laundry.

7. A referee's striped bikini briefs wrapped around the bopper's towel when it's thrown out to end a period.
8. Letters being written by, supposedly, the OHSAA concerning a call or behavior of certain officials.
9. All a referees clothes being taken when he is in the shower, only to be left with gym shorts and it's 10 degrees out and everyone has left.
10. A young basketball official who thinks the referee dressing with him is his evaluator, when in fact it is a wrestling official, who explains, "I will sit in the stands the first half and watch, if I don't come to you after, that means you didn't pass the evaluation and you better quit referring basketball and go into another sport like wrestling."

I wonder if that kid ever did go into another sport when the referee actually was off doing his dual meet...

This is a very small sampling of the hijinks that occurs at tournaments around the country.

Now I am sure there are some that think some of these above mentioned things are cruel and unusual. Believe me, the guys doing the stunt are very unusual - but never cruel.

I have sat and laughed so hard hearing and retelling some of the greatest pranks going. I am sure referees from every sport have their own stories as well.

The other night before a dual, I spoke to a well-known, long time Ohio high school coach who is now a collegiate assistant coach. He had me laughing so hard as he was retelling numerous pranks that coaches pull on fellow coaches. Referees have been known to prank coaches and AD's as well.

It is all done with a smile and a wink of the eye.

Someone asked me what I will miss most when I retire from officiating. It didn't take me long at all to come up with the answer - the friends I have made in this sport and the fun we have all had. Sure we work hard at our craft, but we also enjoy the camaraderie. I think it makes us whole.

"It is great cleverness to know how to conceal our cleverness."



About the author, Fredrick Feeney: Fred, a long time Ohio wrestling official, is a member of the CDWOA, the CWOA and the NWOA, and is a moderator on

several popular wrestling discussion forum. Fred's in-depth experience encompasses both scholastic and collegiate levels, having culminated with numerous assignments at the OHSAA State Tournament and NCAA Division II and III Championship finals. Fred and his wife reside in Dublin, Ohio.

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