



THE CLEVELAND FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

# THE GOALPOST

## THE OFFICIAL'S NEWSLETTER

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JIM LANESE, EDITOR

### COFA Officers, 2018

President: Paul Manfredi

Vice-President: Bobby Morris

Secretary: Tony Bondra

Executive Chm: Jim Demetriu Jr.

Executive: Tim Maddocks

Executive: Jim Rice

Executive: Brian Crummie

Executive: Chuck Sroka

Rules Interpreter: Jim Lanese

Mechanics: Mike Dame

Contact any officer with your questions, comments, or ideas.

### With Sincere Appreciation

I want to express my utmost gratitude to the Executive Board and the Members of CFOA for the honor bestowed upon me at the 2017 banquet in declaring the Man of the Year Award in my name. I was surprised and deeply moved by this recognition with my wife Delia and daughter, Natalie in attendance. The award's significance is still sinking in! It is truly an honor and privilege to be associated in name with all of the men who have received or will receive this annual recognition. The thrill of participating in a game with the caliber, character, and ability of all the men who represent our Association has given me continued pride to be part of a professional and highly skilled team of officials in our community. Thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve the Cleveland Football Officials Association and to maintain the honor of the Association. With Gratitude, Jim



Linesman Will Sumlin focuses on the LOS during the Div. IV State Final Game

Photo Courtesy of Ken Myers

### **CLEVELAND FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION and HALL OF FAME**

#### **2017 BANQUET & BUSINESS MEETING REPORT**

By Jerry Sulecki

Continuing a tradition that began in 1936, the annual banquet and business meeting was held this year at Tizzano's Party Center in Euclid on November 2nd. This was the 81st consecutive time this event was conducted. Close to 200 officials, both active and retired, and their guests seemed to really enjoy themselves at the complimentary bar and the deliciously catered family-style meal.

Honored as the 2017 Men-Of-The-Year and presented with unusual keepsake caricatures of their officiating days were **Bob Morris** and **Mike Hayes**. 2017 inductees into the CFOA Hall-Of-Fame are **Ed Dohanos** and **Ron Ochocki**. Ed had family in attendance and humorously described his +50 year officiating career. Ron presently lives in Fort Myers, Florida, and Mike Joseph accepted his award.

The Man-Of-The-Year award was permanently changed to the **James F. Lanese** Man-Of-The-Year award in honor of all that Jim has contributed to the association over the years. His presence is felt principally as Rules Interpreter and editor of the quarterly Goalpost newsletter but is certainly not limited to those areas. Over the years, he has been involved in many, many of the association's activities and accomplishments. All of the honors are very well deserved.

Many others were awarded length-of-service certificates. Other gifts went to members who presented rules-or-mechanics topics at the meetings.

Paul Manfredi was elected President and presented the outgoing president Jim Demetriu Jr with the customary carved gavel plaque symbolic of his tenure. Jim is now chairman of the Executive Board, Bob Morris was elected Vice President and Tony Bondra will be the Secretary for the 18th consecutive year.

There were 16 CFOA Hall OF Fame members in attendance: Don Brown, Frank Conge, Howard Eckert, Art Guhde, Dave Hicks, Bill Klenoshek, Dale McRitchie, Monty Mlakar, Tim O'Malley, Sam Palumbo, Allen Pintner, Bill Reppa, Doug Roof, Don Schirmer, Jerry Sulecki and Gene Wodzisz. We really would like to see more of CFOA Hall OF Fame members next year; perhaps we Hall-of-Famers could encourage the ones still in the area to attend next year by car-pooling or meeting at an equidistant location.

Sadly the Hall of Fame ranks were thinned since last year when we lost two Officiating Giants in Bobby Brown and Chuck Hill. Both men contributed so much to the association and to officiating in general. The plaque commemorating the CFOA Hall-Of-Famers was prominently displayed and then returned to the Cleveland Public Library for continuous public display.



## Members in the News

Congratulations to these NE Ohio college football officials and CFOA members for being selected to work post season assignments this season. Thanks to Nick Gerogosian for this compilation.

### Division I

Big 10 Umpire - **Mike Pilarski** worked the TaxSlayer Bowl - Louisville vs. Mississippi State. **In the MAC**, Replay Official - **Steve Furjanic** was in the booth for the Independence Bowl - Southern Mississippi vs. Florida State. American Athletic Back Judge – **Jim Sima** was on the crew for the Bahamas Bowl – UAB vs. Ohio University and MEAC Head Linesman – **John Rice** worked the NCAA FCS 1<sup>st</sup> Round Playoffs - Elon at Furman.

### Division II

NCAA D2 National Quarterfinals Harding U (AR) at Ferris St (MI) had a G-MAC Crew with F – **Chuck Sroka** and B – **Nick Gerogosian**. Chuck and Nick also worked the NCAA D2 First Round game, Harding Univ (AR) at Univ of Indianapolis.

NCAA Observer – **Monty Mlakar** was on hand to observe Quaterfinals Harding U (AR) at Ashland and NCAA D2 First Round NW Missouri St at Ashland

### Division III

For the NCAA D3 First Round, Johns Hopkins (MD) at W&J (PA), the **NCAC Crew included R – Danny Potopsky H – Jeff Csank F - Tom Muellauer and B – Anthony Tarone**

OHSAA Final Crew 4 Features CFOA Members Referee Brad Huntley, Linesman Will Sumlin, and Back Judge Paul Manfredi officiated as part of the six-man crew for the Division IV final game in Canton. Steubenville defeated Clarksville Clinton-Massie 50-36. Congratulations to all of CFOA’s 2017 Tournament Officials.



One flag is still in the air while BJ Paul Manfredi is explaining the call! Photo Courtesy of Ken Myers.

## Carrying Inspiration onto the Field

Paul Manfredi always enjoyed meeting Bobby Brown for lunch. Bobby was a special friend and inspiration to Paul on the court and on the field. Naturally their conversations would be about games and experiences in the sports. Bobby always assured Paul that he would have opportunities to work games that he wished! In turn, Paul assured Bobby that if and when that happened; Bobby would be with him at the game. Eight months after Bobby's death in March 2017 Paul stepped onto the field in Tom Benson Stadium to officiate the Ohio Division 4 state final game. He also remembered his friend and mentor with Bobby's mass card in his pocket for the game. Our fraternity of fellow officials spans ages and experiences to share with each other. This is the essence of our skill and professional character.



Referee Brad Huntley is ready for the kickoff in the Div IV State Final Game on December 2. Photo courtesy of Ken Myers.

## Frigid Conditions Prevail

It arrived on Christmas Eve and stuck with us for most days during the next month. Cleveland temperatures lingered below 20 degrees with wintery weather—a reminder of many years in the past, which we haven’t experienced recently. Coincidentally, I read a couple books that brought our weather conditions clearly in focus!

I mentioned in an earlier issue James Sulecki’s book *The Cleveland Rams: the NFL Champs Who Left Too Soon, 1936-1945*. In the book Jim documents the Ram’s march to the NFL championship during the 1945 season. The Rams won the game on December 16, 1945 at Municipal Stadium beating the Washington Redskins 15-14 in frigid conditions on the lakefront.

Six days before the game, north coast temperatures slipped through the 20’s with snow compromising the field. The Rams spread 9000 bails of straw on the field to protect it for game day. Then they hired about 250 men and high school boys to clear the straw and tarp from the field and sweep snow from seats and walkways. At kickoff, the thermometer had “nudged up to an even zero.” The game was played on a frozen turf in windy, snowy conditions in front of just over 32,000 fans—Cleveland’s Ice Bowl Championship! A month later, owner Dan Reeves moved the Rams to Los Angeles. Read Sulecki’s thoroughly detailed account of our first franchise.

Twenty-two years later, the Green Bay Packers and the Dallas Cowboys awoke on December 31 to a 13 below zero temperature that persisted all day. They were scheduled to play the NFL championship game that afternoon in Wisconsin where practice conditions the day before saw temperatures in the 30’s with clear weather. Vince Lombardi spent \$80,000 on a system to warm the field that failed to work that day. Many of the team personnel involved thought the game would be postponed, but Commissioner Rozelle insisted that the game go on. “Old school” coaches Lombardi and Landry refused to let players wear gloves. The field froze solid, as did the band instruments, no halftime show, and the official’s whistles, they yelled to stop the plays. The hard fought game ended with Bart Starr’s end zone plunge with 13 seconds left to beat the Cowboys 21-17. Author/sportswriter Chuck Carlson writes of the game in *Ice Bowl ’67: the Packers, the Cowboys, and the Game that Changed the NFL*. This is another fun read during this post-season action.

**Another off-season edition of The Goalpost will appear soon!**