

Local high schools having trouble finding officials

TOLEDO, OH (WTOL) - It is about halfway through the high school fall sports season, and local athletic departments are already having a hard time finding officials to officiate games.

Right now, the average age of a high school official in Ohio is 52 years old.

As the population of officials continues to age, there aren't as many new options coming in to replace them.

This is making those who are doing it now even more vital to the game.

"Officials are starting to work more games and injuries are starting to happen, they are starting to get tired, I think their tolerance becomes a little bit less so as we progress, I am worried that here in the next few weeks we may have to talk about postponing and canceling games," said Northern Lakes League Commissioner, Richard Browne.

A big part of many officials deciding to walk away from the game is the way they are treated by parents according to Browne.

Officials are paid around \$60 to \$75 a game in northwest Ohio. Anyone interested can follow the steps [here](#).

Recently, the Northern Lakes League had a veteran official consider walking away from the game because of parent behavior.

Its unfortunate to have to mention we lost another soccer official this week. This veteran official decided to walk away (mid season) from officiating because of the constant verbal harassment from players, coaches and spectators. The culture needs to change!

— NorthernLakesLeague (@NLL_Sports) [4:32 PM - Sep 6, 2018](#)

Browne said since the social media post, he has reconsidered, but he said this is just one example.

"It is a hobby for most of them, they do it for the love of the game, nobody likes to get yelled at, there is no workplace I can go into today, and start yelling at somebody without ramifications, sports is no different," said Browne.

Browne believes this is a dynamic problem, without just one solution.

They are looking at paying officials more, but that could mean you are paying more to go to your son or daughter's game.

Browne said it comes down to respecting those who are working your kids games.

"We sometimes live in a culture where we don't want to call people out, and we don't want to hold people accountable for their actions. But, in this case we have to, because it is having a negative impact on what we are doing," said Browne.

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