



# Sound like anyone you know?

**[www.CliffKeenOfficials.com](http://www.CliffKeenOfficials.com)**

No American game reflects the work ethic and burning desire to succeed that drove the formation of the United States better than football.

A football game is the culmination of an entire week's worth of practice, preparation and a healthy dose of pomp and circumstance, too. It's the one game that brings together marching bands and booster clubs, cheerleaders and student sections. Bumps and bruises fade on game day. A football team doesn't just show up for a game -- they thunder into a stadium accompanied by canon shots and fight songs. Football is unlike any other sport. You play once a week and that one day means everything, emboldening the famous Vince Lombardi quote, "Winning isn't everything; It's the only thing."

Because of all this and more, accepting a football assignment is always more than a workday or a paycheck when you're a football official. A good official already knows this. A new official gains a keen understanding of this quickly. Football is the one game where there's one chance to get it right -- on game day.

Football officials don't play a single down but never take a play off, either. The football official has seen almost every snap in three different centuries of gridiron battles. Unlike every other game that utilizes independent officiating, football's coaches, broadcasters, players and fans openly admit there's a penalty to call on every play. Yet it's the seasoned judgment of the football officiating crew (of as few as two and

as many as seven) that ultimately decides the verification of each play.

That's not to say the football official is the king of kings among arbiters, but it does mean other sports officials don't encounter a possible infraction or foul on every play as is the case with football. The baseball umpire? He can call a strike down the middle and the ball in the dirt with his eyes closed, and most plays around the bases are easy enough. It's the few pitches per game or the swipe tag at the plate that could be called either way that earns him his money. The basketball referee? A bit more subjective than baseball but certainly plenty of uncontested shots mixed in with 20-30 contact plays that create a decision. Most often the decision is fairly obvious and therefore, usually correct.

The football official works with as many as six other officials, and each decision to pass on a potential penalty or flag a play for a foul comes with literally dozens of different outcomes. Pass on a potential foul and the play could go for a score. Flag a penalty and

potentially take a score away. It's never an easy decision. Yet the football official puts his good name on the line each and every time they take the field.

Cliff Keen Athletic knows the football official is not only alone on an island among the sea of participants and fans but also an integral part of a crew that must work together. Being part of the team requires individual preparation and faith among each official to ensure success. It's that dedication to all things officiating that draws Cliff Keen to officials, and the officials we serve to Cliff Keen.

We're attentive to detail. We're structured and regimented. We never stop pushing for the new, the improved and the outstanding. We've never strayed from what got us to over 50 years of service to the officiating community. It's our professional, business-like attention to detail and our burning desire to be the best that built us and will sustain us.

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