

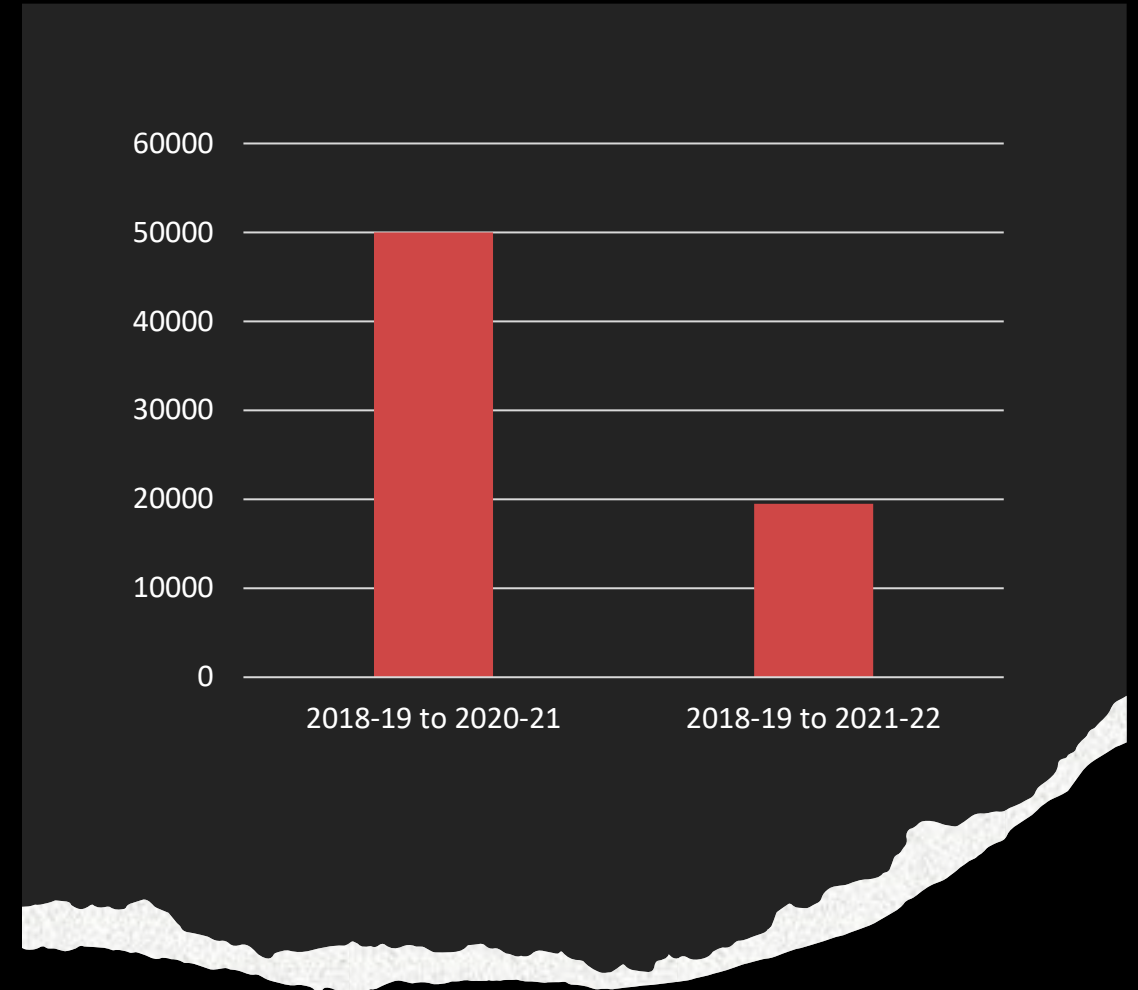
A group of five male referees standing on a football field at night. They are wearing black and white vertically striped shirts, dark pants, and caps. The background shows a football field with goalposts and a scoreboard. The scoreboard displays "1154" and "0".

Engaging New Officials

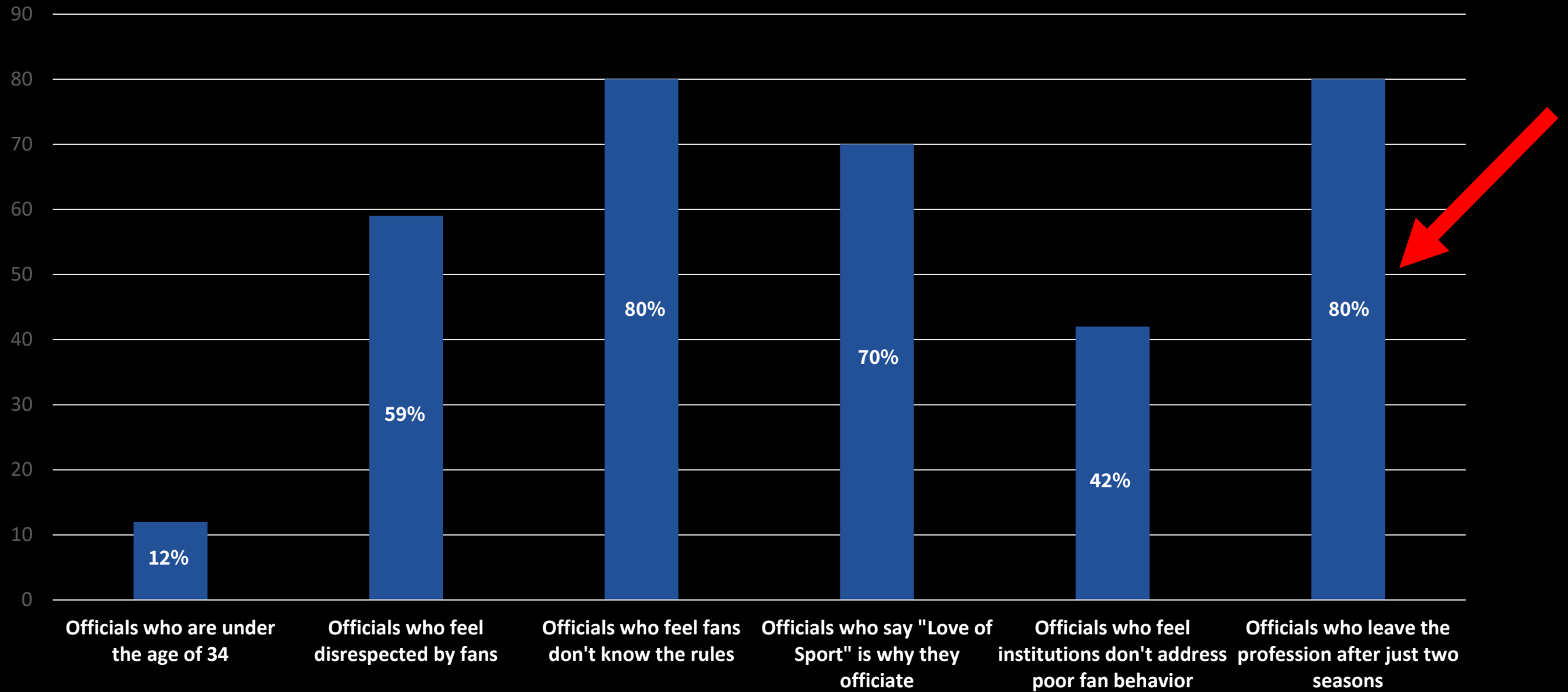
Michael Krueger, Ed.S., CMAA
Commissioner – Colorado High School Activities Association
mkrueger@chsaa.org

Let's Take a Look at the Numbers

- Difference 2018-2019 to 2020-2021:
Known loss of **31,532** officials
 - Largest states of California, New York and Texas do not track officials' registration numbers; estimated loss of officials over 50,000
- Difference 2018-2019 to 2021-2022: Loss of 19,499
- Total number of officials registered in 2022-2023:
212,327 (+5% from 2021-22)



A Look at the Numbers







Why Are Officials Leaving the Profession?

- Treatment from coaches
- Game/event management
- Lack of professional hospitality
- Safety concerns
- Parent, coach and spectator behavior
- Remuneration
- Assigner Politics
- Confusion on how to get started



S.O.S.

State Associations

Offering

Solutions

3-Step Solution

- 1) Recruitment
- 2) Retention
- 3) Education



RECRUITMENT

Recruitment Challenges

- Takes more than just stating the problem
- Prospective pools
- Identifying the barriers to getting involved
 - Costs
 - Requirements (i.e., testing, background checks)
 - Safety concerns
 - Confusion about how to sign up
 - The youth sports dilemma
 - Lack of game management (sportsmanship issues exacerbated)

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment Opportunities

Can we reduce cost barriers?

- Working with Officials Associations to reduce initial membership fees
- Are there ways to reduce other initial entry fees? (e.g., background checks, testing fees)
- Is there a way to provide some type of financial assistance for equipment and apparel needs?





RECRUITMENT

Recruitment Opportunities

Can we increase the prospective pool through incentives?

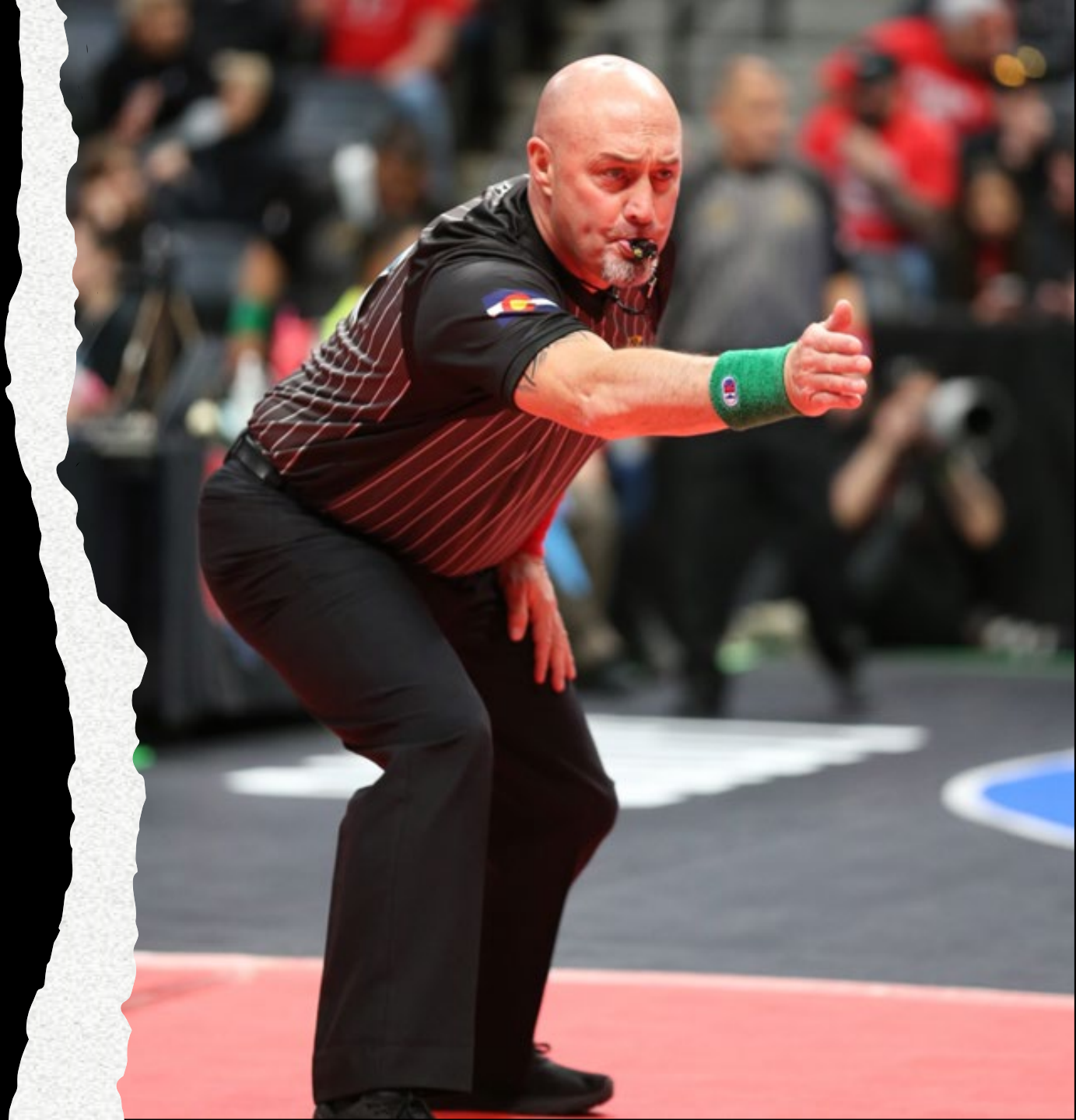
- Training programs being offered at the high school and collegiate level
- Get them started early
- Provide credit
- Great way to earn extra income for a young adult

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment Opportunities

Can we market the opportunity better?

- Great way to stay involved in the sport
- Highlighting officials
- Recognition programs
- Operationalizing social media
- Create an easy call to action
 - Make the process easier!



RECRUITMENT



Recruitment Opportunities - National and State Level Campaigns

- NFHS #Become an Official → <https://highschoolofficials.com/>
- NASO – Say Yes to Officiating → <https://www.sayyestoofficiating.com/become-a-sports-official/>
- COLORADO – You Look Good in Stripes Initiative → https://chsaanow.com/sb_output.aspx?form=128
- NJSIAA – \$300 Rebate Program → <https://www.njsiaa.org/officials>



Once We Get
Them – How Do
We Keep Them?

RETENTION



Why is retention just as important as recruitment?

- Why spend all this effort to recruit officials if we can't retain them?
- A survey by the National Association of Sports Officials reported that 80 percent quit after only two years of officiating
- Retention deserves equal attention and just as much effort as recruitment
- Upstream story

RETENTION

Retention Challenges

Addressing the Causes

- Spectator and Coach behavior
- Where in our society do we allow adults to treat other adults in this manner?
- This is an adult problem – not a student-athlete problem
- We have tools and processes to manage student-athletes



RETENTION

Retention Solutions

Game Management

- Administration's role
- What we allow we condone!

How is sportsmanship defined In your State?

- The primary consideration:
Until we can uniformly define and identify what poor sportsmanship is we will struggle to address it!
- We must hold ourselves and our school communities accountable to the standard we set and expect.





RETENTION

The Hospitality Equation

Low hanging but IMPACTFUL fruit!

- Do not underestimate the value and importance of treating your officials with the care and professionalism deserving of the partners they are

RETENTION

The Hospitality Equation

How do we define “hospitality”
when it comes to officials?



EDUCATION



How Can We As State Association Leaders Educate Our School Leaders?

- Set the standard
- Model the standard
- Be intentional about our efforts

EDUCATION

S.O.S. Take-A-Ways

- Identify and address barriers that keep new officials from signing up
- Create an easy call-to-action
- Utilize and learn from existing programs intended to recruit new officials
- Provide an equal amount of focus and effort on retention efforts
- Be intentional about addressing coach, parent and fan behavior
- Hold ourselves and our school community accountable to the standards we expect
- Do not underestimate the value and importance of treating officials with the care and professionalism deserving of the partners they are



Engaging New Officials



Thank You!

Michael Krueger, Ed.S., CMAA
Commissioner – Colorado High School Activities Association
mkrueger@chsaa.org