

SAN DIEGO COUNTY  
**SPORTS**  
**OFFICIALS**  
**HALL OF FAME**

2025 Hall of Fame Inductees

SEPTEMBER 23, 2025



**WELCOME**

**WELCOME**

Bob Chandler  
Master of Ceremonies

**INVOCATION**

**DINNER**

**PAST INDUCTEES**

Bob Chandler

**OPENING COMMENTS**

Lee Bjornson  
President, Officials Hall of Fame  
Advisory Committee

**2025  
HALL OF FAME  
INDUCTIONS**

Bob Chandler

## 2025 INDUCTEE BIOGRAPHIES



**RICH COTA**  
**TRACK AND FIELD**

Rich Cota is a native San Diegan who graduated from St. Augustine High School, 1964. Rich went on to attend San Diego Mesa College and San Diego State University.

While at Saints, he lettered in cross-country and track, earning the runner-up medal for excellence in athletics given at graduation, the first ever distance runner at Saints to do so. He was inducted into the Saints Hall of Fame in 1999.

At Mesa College, he ran on the first ever California State Junior College Championship team in 1964. He was selected to the All-State team.

Rich earned a scholarship to San Diego State University and was part of the 1966 and 1967 NCAA College Division National Championship cross-country teams. He was named to the All-Conference CCAA team in 1966.

Graduating with a B.A. in Social Sciences with a P.E. minor, Rich started teaching in 1970.

He became the head cross-country and track coach in 1973 at Kearny High School. He was named Western and Eastern League coach of the year in 1975, 1976 and 1977 for cross-country. He was inducted into the Kearny High Hall of Fame in 2016.

While still teaching at Kearny, Rich moved over to Mesa College and served as head cross-country and assistant track coach from 1978 to 1984.

From the years 1985 to 2002, Rich assumed the position of Head Cross Country Coach at the University of San Diego, where he earned West Coast Conference honors as Coach of the Year in 1994, 1997 and 2002.

He has been a member of the San Diego Track Starters Association from 1982 to the present. During that tenure, Rich has also served as the Association's President. Rich is a certified USATF Master Level Starter and Official in track and field and has served as a Meet Director for the World Police and Fire Games in track and field.

Rich, at the high school level, has been, for multiple years, a distinguished head starter and referee for both CIF Cross Country and Track and Field.

Collegiately, Rich has held the position of head starter for the the California Collegiate Athletic Association, Western Athletic Association, Pacific West Conference, West Coast Conference Track and/or Cross-Country finals, and the USATF Nationals in Cross-Country.

Rich and his wife Mary have been married for 52 years. They have a daughter, Miriam, son-in-law Ben and two young grandchildren, Theresa and Patrick.

## 2025 INDUCTEE BIOGRAPHIES



### **KIARASH "KIA" DEHPANAH** **SOCCER**

Kiarash "Kia" Dehpanah was born on May 27, 1960, in Tehran, Iran. Before coming to the United States, he played basketball and ping pong on his school teams. At age 16, he immigrated to the U.S. and attended La Jolla Country Day School, where he excelled in athletics – advancing to the CIF tournament in tennis and earning All-Southern League honors in soccer in 1978. During college, Kia continued playing intramural soccer at SDSU and the University of San Diego. He also competed in the San Diego Soccer League's Premier Division for more than 15 years, extending his playing career at the amateur level.

Kia's path into officiating began when he was introduced to refereeing through local recreational leagues. What started as filling in for indoor games soon developed into a distinguished 30-year refereeing career.

At the collegiate level, Kia refereed for nearly two decades across the Pac-12, Mountain West, West Coast Conference, Big West and WAC.

On the professional indoor circuit, he worked in the Continental indoor Soccer League, Major Indoor Soccer League, Professional Arena Soccer

League and most recently, the Major Arena Soccer League, where he was selected for numerous post-season and Championship Series matches.

Kia served in Major League Soccer and the USL A-League. He has officiated matches featuring U.S. National Teams, international squads, and top clubs from neighboring countries, earning National and International recognition.

At the high school level, Kia has officiated more than 10 championship games and numerous state competitions.

Kia has been a United States Soccer Federation National Referee Coach for more than a decade. He is President of the San Diego Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association and serves as Director of the Mentor Program for the San Diego County Soccer Referees' Association. Mentoring has become one of his greatest passions – particularly working with youth referees and aspiring Division I officials-helping them build confidence, develop their skills, and foster a lifelong love for the game.

Kia resides in San Diego County and is the proud father of Evva, his 21-year-old daughter who also shares his love for soccer, having played Division I college soccer and continuing the family's connection to the sport.

## 2025 INDUCTEE BIOGRAPHIES



**STEVE ESPINOZA**  
**BASKETBALL**

Born in 1962, Steve was raised in Whittier, CA, the middle child of five. Steve attended Pioneer High School in 1976, where he earned 5 varsity letters in football, basketball and track. Steve attended and graduated from UC San Diego.

Steve started his officiating career in softball and baseball in 1990 with the Margarita Officials Association. Leading to a six year stint, including CIF Softball Playoff Assignments.

He began his basketball officiating career in 1990 with the North County Basketball Association NCBOA. During his 17 year NCBOA career, Steve officiated five CIF Sectional Finals, three So Cal Regional Finals and the 1997 and 2004 CIF State Championships. Steve was a member of the Instructional Staff, serving as NCBOA's Instructional Chairman for the final three years of his high school Officiating career.

Dennis Ackerman (HOF), gave him his first college officiating contract in 1993. Steve received his first DI contract in 2005 with the West Coast Conference. In 2009, he joined the Big West Conference. Steve officiated Division I basketball for 16 years until a health issue forced the difficult decision to retire after the 2020/21 season.



Steve officiated for 31 years; 14 years of High School Officiating, 28 College Seasons, including 16 NCAA Men's Division I Basketball and 28 consecutive years of postseason assignments.

Steve has always given back to the basketball officiating community. Along with instructing and mentoring, Steve started the SD Rising Officials Camp in San Diego (2007 – 2019). The camp focused on greater San Diego area officials and earned a reputation for having great learning environment with exceptional instruction provided by officiating's icons. The SDROC was widely recognized and respected as the premier San Diego Basketball Officiating Camp.

In March 2015, the NCBOA established, "The Steve Espinoza Integrity in Officiating Award" with Steve being the inaugural recipient. It was almost a posthumous award. During the 2014 season, Steve encountered a life-threatening heart health issue. In January 2015, Steve underwent sextuple heart bypass surgery. Steve's rehabilitation program had him ready to return to a full basketball schedule in 2015.

In 2017, Steve was inducted as a NCBOA Honorary Lifetime Member acknowledging his dedication to the game of basketball overall, along with his commitment to helping and serving those in the officiating community. Following his retirement from the On Court at the conclusion of the 2021-22 season, Steve continued to serve as a college and high school observer and mentor.

After 31 years, Steve retired as interim Head of Library Technology Initiatives and Development from CSU San Marcos in 2024. He has been married to JoAnn, his High School sweetheart, since 1987 and they have two wonderful children, Matthew (wife Ara) and Marisa (fiancé Austin), and grandson Ever. Steve and JoAnn live in Temecula, CA.



## 2025 INDUCTEE BIOGRAPHIES



**JACK GARNER**  
**FOOTBALL**

Jack Garner was born on February 16, 1922, in Onida, South Dakota, the fourth of five children of the late Robert Lee Garner and Carrie Elser Garner. His early life was shaped by strong family roots and pioneer heritage. In 1924, the Garner family relocated to Southern California.

Jack's lifelong passion for football began in high school where he was a starting Running Back, at Gardena High. He also served as co-editor of the high school newspaper. After graduating in 1941, Jack attended the University of Denver, later joining Kappa Sigma fraternity. In 1942, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy, attending Missouri Valley College and then midshipman's school at Columbia University. He served as a Navy Quartermaster in the Philippines during WWII, receiving an honorable discharge in 1946. Jack then completed his degree in physical education at Whittier College.

Jack's career as an educator, coach, and official began in 1949. He taught at La Mesa Junior High School and officiated San Diego County football games, earning the respect of colleagues and athletes alike.

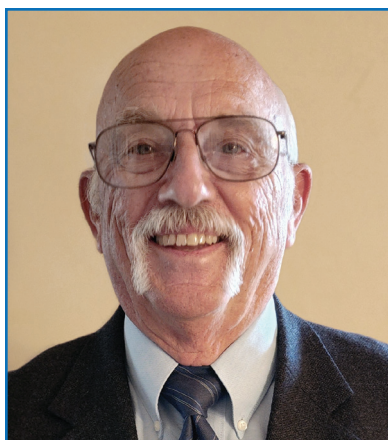
In 1957, he led his La Mesa Pony League team to the World Series in Pennsylvania, where the team finished as the runners-up in the Championship.

In 2009, he received the George A. Schutte Memorial Award from the San Diego County Football Officials Association for his exceptional service and integrity.

Jack was a die-hard fan of the San Diego Chargers and Padres, supporting them faithfully from their founding seasons. For decades, he served on the on-field “chain gang” crew at Chargers home games and worked three Super Bowls.

Above all, Jack will be remembered as a consummate family man, Teacher and Coach. His love for sports was rivaled only by the love he gave so freely to his family, students, players and fellow Officials.

## 2025 INDUCTEE BIOGRAPHIES



**BRUCE HELSING**  
**SOFTBALL**

Bruce Helsing was born and raised about 20 miles north of Pittsburgh Pa. He attended Youngstown University, worked for US Steel and joined the Navy in 1968, completing Aviation A School in Memphis Tennessee before being stationed at Miramar with Fighter Squadrons VF121 and VF 96.

After leaving the Navy in 1972, Bruce worked for Naval Air Systems Command at North Island, retiring in 2006 with 37 years of Federal Service.

Bruce started officiating quite by accident when he volunteered to manage a Little League team. He met Shelly White (HOF) and Joe Harris (HOF). He ultimately served as for the Lemon Grove Little League, Umpire In Charge.

After years of coaching his son and daughter's Rec Travel, and High School Fast Pitch Softball teams he returned to Umpiring in 1988.

He joined the San Diego Officials Association and began officiating fast pitch Softball at the recreational level. That experience led to joining ASA Softball, and the South County High School Softball Umpires Association, Community College Softball and upper division College Softball.

Bruce has Officiated USA Softball National Tournaments, SDCIF High School Finals, Community College Regionals, Super Regionals, NAIA regionals.

He is a member of the Big West, Mountain West, and West Coast Conference Softball Officiating Staffs.

He has served in South County High School Softball Umpires Association, The Pacific Coast Athletic Conference and the Inland Empire Athletic Conference of the California Community College Athletic Conference.

Bruce completed his thirty-seven year officiating career as an Observer for the Mountain West, West Coast, and Big West Conferences of the NCAA.

## 2025 INDUCTEE BIOGRAPHIES



**JOHN PEDERSON**  
**VOLLEYBALL**

John was born in Salt Lake City, Utah and permanently moved to San Diego County in September 1993 while serving as a drill instructor in the United States Marine Corps at MCRD San Diego. He is married to his beautiful wife of 35 years, Emie, and they have one daughter, Ashley, who referees volleyball as well.

John began officiating volleyball while serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, as a Personnel Officer. He began officiating with the Margarita Officials Association working matches at Camp Pendleton and the Escondido Boys and Girls Club, following his retirement from the Marine Corps in 2003.

He began officiating Juniors Club Volleyball with the Southern California Volleyball Association (SCVA), serving as SCVA Site Director for San Diego Tournaments. As an official in the San Diego Federation Volleyball Officials Association. John has officiated many SDCIF Section Volleyball Championships, CIF Regionals and State Finals.

John began officiating Collegiate Volleyball after joining the Professional Association of Volleyball Officials, officiating Junior College, and NAIA collegiate volleyball. He officiated NCAA Division I and Division II Volleyball. In 2007, John was selected for the USA Volleyball Junior National Referee Program, where he Officiated across the country.

He was elected to the Board of Directors and served as the Instructional Chair. He is a member of the USA Volleyball National Referee Program, working premier, Adult and Junior Championships all over the country.

John began officiating Division I Volleyball with the Big West, officiating Men's Volleyball, Mountain West and West Coast Conference Women's Volleyball and the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation in September, 2020.

John has served as Head Referee for National Qualifying and Regional End-of-Season tournaments for the past 11 years. He is certified to endorse Referees seeking National and Junior National ratings.

John was instrumental in developing a rating and evaluation system for San Diego Volleyball Officials. He participates in pre-season instruction to train and development San Diego Volleyball Officials.

## 2025 INDUCTEE BIOGRAPHIES



**SCOTT REILLY**  
**FOOTBALL**

Scott Reilly, from a young age, loved playing tackle football. He did this for 13 years – finishing his career on the field as a wide receiver at the University of San Diego in 1986. A few years after graduating from USD, it was a fellow football player and close friend that introduced him to officiating. From the first Pop Warner football game assigned to him, Reilly knew it was going to be his passion.

He began officiating football in 1989 as a member of the San Diego County Football Officials Association (SDCFOA) and he remains a member today. He attributes his fundamental training to the SDCFOA and is grateful for all the friendships, experiences, stories, meetings, and fun times. He spent 10 years as a high school crew chief/referee and several years as a classroom instructor and Board Member for the organization. He loves to attend the local San Diego Officials' meetings, to give back, mentor and share his thoughts and experiences.

In 2022, Reilly was presented the Official of the Year award by the National Football Foundation, Walter J. Zable/San Diego Chapter.



Reilly is in the midst of his 37th year of officiating at the time of his 2025 HOF Induction. He will work his tenth season as a Line Judge in the Big XII Division 1A Conference. Before this, he officiated in the Mountain West Conference for 10 years, officiated several high school San Diego Section playoff and championship games and has worked junior college, indoor football, Division III and Division 1AA football games.

Reilly has officiated many Division 1 Bowl Games including the Gator Bowl, GMAC, Humanitarian, Boca Raton, Red Box, Military, St. Petersburg and Sun Bowl (A). Reilly has also officiated three Kickoff Classic matchups between highly ranked teams to start a season. Reilly is or has been a member of the Southern California Collegiate Football Officials Association, Arena 2 League, the Western Collegiate Football Officials Association, CFO West and Big XII Alliance.

Scott grew up a dependent of a Marine Corp officer and a career-working mother, living in Southern and Northern California, Virginia and Berlin Germany, along with his older brother Jim and sister Karen. For the last 40 years he has lived in the San Diego area. Scott is a proud Dad to his 13 year old daughter Makenna, who has had the opportunity to enjoy traveling to a few of his football games over the years.

Scott is the owner of Reilly Construction Management, Inc., representing cities and municipalities as an Owner's Representative on heavy civil infrastructure projects.

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## 2025 INDUCTEE BIOGRAPHIES



### **ROBERT "BOB" WEISHAN** **BASEBALL**

Robert "Bob" Weishan was born on May 8, 1930, in Los Angeles, California. He attended Cathedral Catholic High School, where he lettered in both baseball and football. He graduated high school in 1948 and joined the United States Marine Corps in 1949. He was deployed to Korea on September 15, 1950, and landed at Inchon. After several battles, his company made its way up to the Chosin Reservoir, and was part of "The Frozen Chosin", one of the USMC's signature battles. After coming home, he was signed by the Chicago Cubs as a third baseman. An arm injury ended his career.

in 1984 he founded and was President of the San Diego Chapter of The Chosin Few, an International Organization of survivors of the Battle at the Chosin Reservoir. The surviving members, although well into their 90's, still keep in touch.

He married Nadine Fitzgerald, whom he met in 4th grade, in 1952. Bob coached Little League baseball in Temple City, CA from 1954 until 1964, and Pop Warner Football from 1960-1963.

In 1966, Bob and the family moved to San Diego, where Bob joined both the San Diego County Baseball Umpires Association and the San Diego County Football Officials Association. Bob coached Grossmont Pop Warner in 1973 and 1974, and he coached at Singing Hills Little League in 1976 and 1977.

From 1970 to 1983, he was on the NCAA list of baseball umpires. He worked many San Diego State Aztec games over that time, as well as high school and youth leagues. He served as President of the SDCBUA from 1978 to 1980, and in 1995, served as the Association's Secretary. In 1979, Bob worked Major League Spring Training games in Mesa, Arizona. He continued to umpire baseball until 1996.

He officiated football with the SDCFOA from 1966 until 1994, a 29 year career. He officiated many CIF Finals, including Marcus Allen's breakout game for Lincoln in 1977.

In 1985, Bob joined the chain crew for the San Diego Chargers. He was in charge of the down marker for 23 years, including 3 Super Bowls, and was the Chain Crew Captain for his last 10 years.

Bob was also very active with the San Diego Open golf tournament, starting as a Marshall in 1969. He became the hole captain at the 18th hole the next year, and Director of Marshalls in 1980. He worked for the tournament for 45 years.

Bob's beloved wife of 72 years, Nadine, passed in 2024. Bob has 4 children, 13 grandchildren, 15 great grandchildren, and 5 great-great grandchildren.

## PAST INDUCTEES

<b>2006</b>	Debby Ahrenstein – <i>Softball</i> Bob Duggan – <i>Lacrosse</i> David Gonzalez – <i>Baseball</i> Phil Gutierrez – <i>Softball</i> Doug Harvey – <i>Baseball</i> Ellie Minor – <i>Field Hockey</i>	Ed Runge – <i>Baseball</i> Frank Rustich – <i>Football/Boxing</i> George Schutte – <i>Football</i> Jack Taylor – <i>Basketball/Baseball</i> Shelley White – <i>Youth Baseball</i>
<b>2007</b>	David Alberstein – <i>Water Polo</i> Ed Cain – <i>Basketball</i> Don Clarkson – <i>Football</i> Ken Flaherty – <i>Football</i> Manny Gomes – <i>Basketball</i>	Joe Harris – <i>Youth Baseball</i> Michael McDonald – <i>Baseball</i> Paul Runge – <i>Baseball</i> Cindi Lou Villa – <i>Field Hockey</i>
<b>2008</b>	Michael Carey – <i>Football</i> Steve Coover – <i>Football</i> Cal Evans – <i>Football/Basketball</i> James Gilchrist – <i>Basketball</i> Bob Kauffman – <i>Softball</i>	Hans Kramm – <i>Soccer</i> Patricia Malta – <i>Volleyball</i> Linda Powell – <i>Volleyball</i> Jim Sibbet – <i>Football</i> Bill Tellous – <i>Football/Basketball</i>
<b>2009</b>	Mike Basalo – <i>Basketball/Baseball</i> Paul Bruce – <i>Swimming</i> Fred Carbone – <i>Basketball</i> Tom Desaulniers – <i>Youth Baseball</i> Jim Gibilisco – <i>Softball</i>	David Libbey – <i>Basketball</i> John Paulette – <i>Softball</i> Lee Popejoy – <i>Soccer</i> Mike Saltzstein – <i>Swimming</i> Patty Vitale – <i>Gymnastics</i>
<b>2010</b>	Don Carey – <i>Football</i> Ken Holly – <i>Track and Field</i> Terry McIntyre – <i>Basketball</i>	John Oakley – <i>Football</i> Dan Pederson – <i>Baseball</i> Dal Williams – <i>Basketball</i>
<b>2011</b>	Tom Ables – <i>Football</i> Garth DeFelice – <i>Football</i> Dan Dierdorff – <i>Wrestling</i> Christina Drumm – <i>Softball</i> Ron Filson – <i>Basketball</i>	Jim Garman – <i>Baseball</i> Carl Goff – <i>Basketball</i> Nolan Harvey – <i>Basketball</i> Steven Rotsart – <i>Water Polo</i>
<b>2012</b>	Mark Bernstein – <i>Baseball</i> Andrew Castagnola – <i>Football</i> Patrick Russell – <i>Boxing</i>	Mike Winters – <i>Baseball</i> Tom Wood – <i>Basketball</i>
<b>2013</b>	Dennis Ackerman – <i>Basketball</i> Robert Bahne – <i>Football</i> Larry Cote – <i>Volleyball</i>	Bruce Morehouse – <i>Water Polo</i> Ignacio (Nacho) Torres III – <i>Baseball</i>

<b>2014</b>	Ron Bennett – <i>Tennis</i> Dick Brockett – <i>Football</i> Tim Fillmore – <i>Baseball</i>	Lou Furrer – <i>Football</i> Jesse Thompson – <i>Football/ Basketball</i>
<b>2015</b>	Frank Alfano – <i>Football/Baseball</i> Brad Griffith – <i>Basketball</i> Connie Perkins – <i>Basketball</i>	Rusty Riner – <i>Basketball</i> Ed Zapolski – <i>Football</i>
<b>2016</b>	Richard Draz – <i>Swimming/ Water Polo</i> Bob Hood – <i>Football</i>	Michael Morrow – <i>Basketball</i> David Tiffany – <i>Water Polo/Soccer</i> Mike Weseloh – <i>Football</i>
<b>2017</b>	Mike Allen - <i>Baseball/Football</i> Tim Bonner – <i>Volleyball</i> Al Dandridge - <i>Track and Field</i>	Kelly Mock - <i>Soccer</i> Michael Mothershed - <i>Football</i> Kathryn Moulder - <i>Field Hockey</i>
<b>2018</b>	Rob Bryson – <i>Basketball</i> Deanna Hanford – <i>Gymnastics</i> Mike Hart – <i>Baseball</i>	Bob O'Regan – <i>Youth Sports, Baseball</i> Tim Podraza – <i>Football</i> John Siscon – <i>Wrestling</i>
<b>2019</b>	Lee Bjornson - <i>Ice Hockey, Field Hockey</i> Alex Cremidan - <i>Baseball</i> Mark Dexter - <i>Wrestling, Water Polo</i> Robert Eisele - <i>Swimming, Diving</i>	David Hardage - <i>Softball/Football/ Basketball</i> Rosalie Kramm - <i>Soccer</i> Frank Wilhelm - <i>Basketball, Softball</i>
<b>2020</b>	Dennis Bates - <i>Volleyball</i> John "Biz" Bistowski - <i>Lacrosse</i> Danielle Dabbaghian - <i>Water Polo</i> John Ferguson - <i>Football</i>	Sal Gambino - <i>Baseball</i> Merlyn "Chip" Holmes - <i>Track</i> Gregory McAlpine - <i>Ice Hockey</i>
<b>2021</b>	Bob Byrd - <i>Basketball</i> Bob Christianson - <i>Tennis</i>	Randy Hartman - <i>Wrestling</i> Richard "Rick" Hausvik - <i>Softball</i>
<b>2022</b>	Jamie Huntley-Park – <i>Ice Hockey</i>	
<b>2023</b>	Dr. Peter Aufsesser - <i>Soccer</i> Pete Davis - <i>Softball</i> Tony Guerrero - <i>Wrestling</i> Chuck Guy - <i>Football</i> Frank Mannen - <i>Football</i>	Jesse Martinez - <i>Volleyball</i> David Melton - <i>Baseball/Football/ Basketball</i> George Milke - <i>Basketball</i> Nathan Thernes - <i>Baseball/Football</i>

SAN DIEGO COUNTY  
**SPORTS**  
**OFFICIALS**  
HALL OF FAME

**MISSION STATEMENT**

To promote positive public awareness of Officials and their value to sports by recognizing and honoring San Diego County Sports Officials who have demonstrated the highest level of achievement, character, leadership and skill.

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY SPORTS OFFICIALS  
HALL OF FAME ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**2025 COMMITTEE**

PRESIDENT/CHAIRMAN – Lee Bjornson

VICE PRESIDENT – Tom Miles

SECRETARY – Ed Zapolski

TREASURER – Steve Coover

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Don Carey

Tim Fillmore

Bob Hood

George Milke

Mike Morrow

Don Parker

Art Warren

Brian Wilbur

Tom Wood

FOUNDING MEMBER & BOARD MEMBER, EMERITUS – Mike McDonald



## **BOB BREITBARD**

The founder of the San Diego Hall of Champions Sports Museum passed away at the age of 91 on May 17, 2010. Mr. "B" was involved in San Diego's local sports scene for more than 50 years as a player, coach, team owner, builder and benefactor of institutions and organizations that helped put San Diego on the map as a professional sports town.

At the same time, he was instrumental in preserving the city's rich sports history and honoring its great sportsmen, women, coaches and officials from high school to professional levels.

### **SPECIAL THANKS**

Bob Chandler – Master of Ceremonies  
Jon Cima – Video Production  
Chelle Cobb – Graphic Design  
Dave Garza – Web Design  
Carole Lynn Photography  
Sal Magallanez – Videographer  
John McShane of John D. McShane & Associates  
Admiral Baker Recreation Center  
Lauren Smeenge - Event Planner

### **CONTRIBUTORS**

Pacific Baseball Umpires Association  
North County Basketball Officials Association  
San Diego County Football Officials Association





*"Dedicated to the  
men and women who  
officiate all sports  
in San Diego County."*

## **CONTRIBUTORS**

Pacific Baseball Umpires Association

North County Basketball Officials Association

San Diego County Football Officials Association

San Diego County Sports Officials Hall of Fame

A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Foundation

[www.SanDiegoSportsOfficialsHOF.com](http://www.SanDiegoSportsOfficialsHOF.com)