

## Interview With...THE CLARK FAMILY

*Meet the Clark family. They are three active Livermore referees and the focus of this month's interview.*

**Cheryl hails from Illinois. She and her husband came to California fifteen years ago. Since then, Garrett and Jessica were born (in Modesto and Pleasanton, respectively). Lucky for us, they are actively refereeing for Livermore.**



Livermore Referee Association (LRA): Since your family is a natural crew of three, how often do you referee together?

**Garrett:** Only a few times actually. Mom and Jessica focus on the house games as Jessica is learning. They also have more time during the weekdays. I have more homework as a junior in high school. Having more experience, I tend to do more high comp and older games.

LRA: Why did each of you get into refereeing?

**Cheryl:** I originally took the course to learn the Laws of The Game. Since I was not planning to referee at the time, I did not take the test. When Garrett took the course and got his badge, so did I. When Jessica took her course last year, I attended a third time.

**Garrett:** I took the course about four years ago. I started for the money originally...a little adult pressure was also applied, I have to admit.

**Cheryl:** It is called bonding, Garrett.

LRA: What are some referee goals you have?

**Garrett:** Getting my Grade 7 in the next year. Refereeing at regionals, the ability to higher level games is important to me.

**Cheryl:** My goal is to referee until my knees give out. I like the exercise and the community service to the players. Even after my kids have moved on, I will continue to referee.

LRA: Has being a referee impacted your life in other ways?

**Jessica:** I get recognized at school as a referee sometimes.

**Cheryl:** The players remember me both as a referee of their games and a worker at their school. They are always positive. I have noticed that I am sometimes treated differently on and off the field by adults. There is often less respect when I am officiating a game then when they need something at school.

**Garrett:** My leadership skills have improved in general.

LRA: Do you get a different perspective of the game as a referee versus as a player?

**Garrett:** The player has one perspective of the game; the referee has another. Refereeing gives me a better appreciation for the game from wider vantage point. It has changed how I position myself as a goalkeeper on occasion.

LRA: We are heavily recruiting people to referee at this time of year. Any advice or encouragement you can offer?

**Cheryl:** Take the plunge. It looks easy from the sideline, but it does take learning and practice. Adults say they do not have time, but we make our own schedule. The kids make you laugh.

**Garrett:** Refereeing is like learning to drive a car. You can read the book. You can take the instruction course. But the real learning is when you get in the car and drive (or take the field and referee).

**Jessica:** Give it a shot. You will like the money and the leadership experience.



Jessica, Garrett, Cheryl Clark

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*"My goal is to referee until my knees give out."*

*"Helping the kids let's them pursue their dreams."*

## cont...THE CLARKS

**LRA:** Any reminders for the rest of us that have already started to referee?

**Garrett:** Re-read the procedures and the Laws regularly. Know them before you are required to perform them on the field.

**Jessica:** I was nervous at first, even though I had mom and Garrett ahead of me. The 2<sup>nd</sup> game was nice. Helping the kids let's them pursue their dreams. Take advantage of the many mentors available. There are there to help, not tear you down.

**LRA:** When you are not performing your referee functions, what keeps you busy?

**Cheryl:** PTA, Secretary of the Band Boosters, wife and mother.

**Jessica:** Playing soccer since U5. I am 4<sup>th</sup> chair trumpet in my school.

**Garrett:** Lead trumpet in Jazz band, 1<sup>st</sup> chair in band, even traveling with a group to play in New Year City at Carnegie Hall. Soccer player since U7, playing for LYSL and my high school.

**LRA:** What is it like being a woman referee?

**Cheryl:** The challenge was having kids that I have to watch all day. When they got older and could take more care of themselves (and stay put during a game), I was able to referee more. While I am on the field, I get to avoid housework. Unfortunately, it is still there when I get home.

**LRA:** What about when the referee has her parent "hat" on?

**Cheryl:** As a parent on the sideline, I give the referee the benefit of the doubt. It is hard to be the referee. I understand all the different perspectives there are.

**LRA:** How are the coaches during games?

**Jessica:** High Comp coaches are the loudest and more negative about referee calls. The House coaches tend to accept the calls and focus more on the players.

**Garrett:** Coaches are getting better, probably due to the pressure of being told what is expected of them. The referees influence the situation also. Stay professional. Come on the field together, be in uniform.

**LRA:** What do you appreciate as a referee?

**Garrett:** A sincere handshake from the players and coaches that honestly says thank you.

**Jessica:** Other referees at tournament are helpful.

**Cheryl:** A simple thank you.

*Thank you to the Clarks for their time for this interview, but more importantly for all the time they spend on the fields for the kids of our league.*



Cheryl Clark



Garrett Clark



Jessica Clark



Bob Evans is a soccer referee guru. A writer, an instructor, and a top producer of referee instruction material, he has contributed to the development of a vast number of referees.

Bob has a blog at :

[www.fortheintegrityofsoccer.blogs.com/artandscienceofrefereeing/](http://www.fortheintegrityofsoccer.blogs.com/artandscienceofrefereeing/).

He also writes for a local paper. His columns are available on at <http://www.ibabuzz.com/soccer/>.