

## Interview With...BILL HOPPPES

As an active referee for the last nine years, **Bill Hoppes** has been a cornerstone of LRA. His wife Tanya is an LRA assignor. Both sons (Bill and Sam) are top referees and support Bill the Dad's love of the game and refereeing. He is even a player on a mixed adult team. Bill is currently in his second year as President of the LRA and the focus of this month's interview.



Livermore Referee Association (LRA): What made you take the course years ago?

**BILL:** To learn more about the rules of the game and support my son Bill taking the course also. My instructor was Michelle Kuiee.

LRA: What are some similarities and difference between LRA and officiating then and now?

**BILL:** Well, some of the older, more experienced referees we have now were active then. They have continued to show support of LRA over the years. John Hinton, Duane Rueppel, Ken Mitchell, Earle Ginton, and a few others...all strong contributors even in the last season. This has provided a solid core for LRA. The mentoring process was far less formal and comprehensive than it is today. As we have improved the process, we have generated more high level referees that have moved on to District

and State Referees of the Year.

LRA: What was a memorable match for you?

**BILL:** My first center. It was a U12 House game at the Delta Tournament my son was playing in. I was a coach and a referee at the time. It was exciting and fun.

LRA: We hold monthly meetings. Has it always been that way?

**BILL:** Yes. The key draw for the meetings years ago was still the learning opportunity and camaraderie of fellow referees, but that was also how we got our assignments...on paper. Now we have online assigning. The personal touch and phone calls remain a great way to keep in contact with our referee base and fill in assignment gaps.

LRA: We are in our main recruit cycle until the season begins. What are some challenges to recruiting referees?

**BILL:** Time is precious for everyone. There are a lot of options one has for their valuable free time. We work to make refereeing something one looks forward to doing each week (seeing friends and peers on the field, challenging matches, improving fitness).

LRA: What other enticements are there for being an active referee?

**BILL:** Do at least 10 games, get your registration fee reimbursed. Great mentoring for youth and

adult referees. Year round support of the referee's goals.

LRA: There are currently 97 registered referees. Are all of them active?

**BILL:** Only about 50% are doing games. Many do less than 10 games a year, too many do none.

LRA: What does the future look like for LRA?

**BILL:** Continuing to balance covering matches at all levels and get referees enough games that challenge them as they grow. Most experienced referees will do a lot of the general matches for "one good challenging" match that weekend that will really test their skills. There is no better teacher than experience in refereeing.

LRA: What are some expectations of new and more experienced refs?

**BILL:** We want new refs to have fun. They also need to be patient with their growth. Some referees want to move too quickly on to more challenging games...until they hit a game does not out as planned where experience would have helped them. Experienced refs set the bar for presence on a field and provide constructive feedback (as well as accept it). New or experienced, all referees make errors. Games are where referees practice; each one provides additional skill and confidence.



**Bill Hoppes** and his wife **Tanya** at the LYSL Annual Dinner Dance

**October 2006**

LRA: What should referees do when they want to grow in their skills and experience?

**BILL:** Let us know you are serious about moving up. We watch, but we do not see all. We have a strong mentoring program. Many of the senior referees can provide additional support. Sign up for tournaments in pre-and post-season. Get seen. Let others get a feel for you and your skills. Always ask others for feedback. We can assign them to the appropriate games to prepare for upgrading. For youth, there is an excellent district youth program for recommended individuals.

Remember that the players decide the game. The referee is there to ensure safety, fun, and fair.

**Thank you, Bill! You are a great asset to LRA.**