

Game Changers

Students find employment as

referees of various sports

isabella vaz | staff writer

Passion for athletics, along with paychecks, has led many BV students to explore refereeing as a summer job opportunity.

Soccer was the sport junior **Rehan Malek** was drawn to referee.

“[I decided to ref] because I wanted to make money, and I like the sport and play it,” Malek said. “I felt like getting a job was something I was interested in.”

For senior **Tori Gelles**, volleyball is her sport of choice.

“I’ve been playing volleyball since I was in third grade so I’ve always been around it,” Gelles said. “Refing is really fun, and it’s an easy way to make money.”

Junior **Tyler Reynolds** took to umpiring baseball due to his inside access to the profession.

“It’s a job I could get when I was 14,” Reynolds said. “My baseball coach at the time knew my boss, so that made it really easy — I got to use him as a reference, and I [also] had a friend who worked there.”

With the current shortage of refs and the job’s high demand in almost every sport, referee opportunities are open and encouraged to anyone interested.

“If you’re wanting to ref, do something that you have some experience in and something that you enjoy doing,” Gelles said. “Maybe [find] an age group that you feel comfortable doing because it’s a really great way to make money and it’s really easy.”

Reynolds echoed the same opinion.

“Don’t be scared to apply — it takes maybe an hour or two to apply,” Reynolds said. “You’ll probably get hired in a week — it doesn’t take long.”

The job has allowed many of the athletes to gain a unique perspective from observing both sides of their sport.

“Refing helps me understand the rules more, and obviously when you’re playing, you’re always yelling at the ref,” Malek said. “When you actually ref, you know how it feels and how confusing and hard it can be sometimes, so I feel more empathy for them.”

The job has improved Reynolds’ game as well.

“It helped me get a little bit better at baseball — knowing what’s going on around you and being mindful,” Reynolds said. “Especially as a pitcher, knowing what the [strike] zone looks like and that different umpires are going to have different zones.”

Not many high school students enjoy their summer jobs but these referees said differently.

“My favorite part is watching the kids when they get to work together — they get so excited, especially because they’re young,” Gelles said. “They are just learning how to play, and it’s really fun to watch.”

Reynolds prefers watching the older groups play.

“The kids love the sport,” Reynolds said. “Whenever you have a close game, it’s fun because they’re competitive.”

Malek’s favorite aspect is different from the others.

“Kicking out parents is very fun,” Malek said. “When they curse and stuff, I’ve had to kick them out.”

All three agree the pay for refereeing makes the job well

worth it.

“It depends on the age you’re working and the level [with] how much you’re getting paid, but usually it’s going to be between \$22 and \$30 for an hour and 45 minute game,” Reynolds said. “So it’s a pretty good pay.”

The adjustable hours are also a bonus.

“It’s pretty flexible,” Gelles said. “I usually work on either Saturdays or Sundays and I do about four games at a time so it takes up maybe three hours.”

Soccer scheduling especially provides the unique opportunity to work whenever you choose.

“It’s very self-oriented — whatever you want to do, when-

ever you’re free, you can ask for those days. Whatever days you can’t do, you don’t sign up for,” Malek said. “It’s super self-paced — it’s very flexible for students especially.”

Malek offers a word of advice for those interested in the job.

“Keep your composure and don’t be stressed because in the game, the last thing you want to do is be freaking out — then the players and everyone freaks out and it’s a mess,” Malek said. “Also try to get interest in the sport first because I feel like if you’re a referee that doesn’t watch soccer or play, it’s not going to be as fun to do. If you want to make money it’s a it’s a good job.”



Rehan
Malek, 11
Soccer
Referee



Tori
Gelles, 12
Volleyball
Referee



Tyler
Reynolds, 11
Baseball
Umpire

