



& COLLEGE HALL OF FAME, INC.

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **MICHAEL ORLICH AND VERLE SORGEN NAMED 2005 OUTSTANDING FOOTBALL OFFICIAL AWARDEES**

*MORRISTOWN, N.J., May 3, 2005* – **Jon F. Hanson**, Chairman of The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame (NFF), announced that Michael Orlich and Verle Sorgen have been selected to receive 2005 Outstanding Football Official Awards.

Presented annually, this prestigious award honors an outstanding collegiate official for his officiating abilities, demonstrated in intercollegiate competition, and sportsmanship, integrity, character, and contribution to the sport of amateur football throughout his career.

“The Foundation is pleased to acknowledge the essential role the official plays in the game of amateur football,” said Hanson. “Michael and Verle have demonstrated an exceptional skill of officiating college football games for many decades. They are most deserving of this award.”

As a teacher, coach, athletics director, official, and commissioner for 59 years, Michael Orlich touched the lives of more than 39,000 student-athletes. For more than 45 years, he served as supervisor, assigner and evaluator for the Northern California College Officials’ Association, while he officiated at the high school and Division I college levels the entire time. In addition, he served as league commissioner in Northern California for nearly three decades. Orlich died in 2003. His widow, Dorothy will accept the award on his behalf.

A veteran of 49 years on the football field and other officiating venues, Verle Sorgen retired from active officiating in 1994. During his 20 years as a Pac-10 football official, he officiated in four bowl games, including the 1981 Rose Bowl, as well as side trips to work in the USFL, Arena Football League and the World Football League. His dedication and diverse career has sent him on officiating assignments in five foreign countries. Recently he entered his 20<sup>th</sup> year as the coordinator of Pac-10 football officiating.

The awards presentation will be made at the Foundation’s Annual Awards Luncheon at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on Tuesday, December 6, 2005. The Luncheon will also feature the presentation of the NFF National High School Scholar-Athlete Awards, the Outstanding Contribution to Amateur Football Award, the John L. Toner Award and NFF Chapter Leadership Awards.

## **OUTSTANDING FOOTBALL OFFICIAL AWARD**

*Given annually, this prestigious award honors an outstanding official who has demonstrated sportsmanship, integrity, character, and contribution to the sport of amateur football throughout his career.*

### **MICHAEL ORLICH** *2005 Recipient*

As a teacher, coach, athletic director, official, and commissioner for 59 years, Michael Orlich touched the lives of more than 39,000 students. Two of his students include John Madden and John Robinson and countless others who have officiated at the Division I level and in the NFL.

For more than 45 years, he served as the supervisor of the Northern California College Football Official's Association evaluating and overseeing the association's operations, while officiating at the high school and Division I college levels the entire time. In addition, he served as league commissioner in Northern California for nearly three decades. During his officiating career, he worked a grand total of 715 games while mentoring more than 105 NFL officials.

- 1944-88: Officiated 440 games at the high school, junior colleges and Division II levels
- 1951-66: Officiated 165 games at the Division II and junior high schools levels
- 1967-79: Officiated 110 games for Division I teams in the Pacific Coast Athletic Conference and Big Sky Conference

After receiving his undergraduate degree from Union University, Orlich went to school at Stanford where he received his teaching credential and master's degree. He played football in 1943 for the San Francisco Clippers in the Pacific Coast Football league and went on to become business manager for the Oakland Hornets.

From 1944-65, he officiated, taught and coached in the San Francisco Bay area. From 1965-96, he served as an official, observer, evaluator, and assigner for the Pacific Coast Conference and Big West Conference.

In addition to football, he officiated World Tennis when Chris Everett and Jimmy Connors dominated the courts and basketball for the Boston Celtics and NBA All-Star Games.

Away from the field, he worked as the recreation chairman, advisor for the City Police Athletic Leagues, administrator of the Red Cross Swim Program for 17 years and regional director of the Parent Teachers Association. A tireless member of the community, he played active roles with Rotary, Kiwanis, Sirs, PT, and Booster Clubs.

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### **VERLE SORGEN** ***2005 Recipient***

A standout in the officiating community, Verle Sorgen established himself as one of the finest on the West Coast, and he continues to make an impact as the current coordinator of football officials for the Pac-10 Conference.

Sorgen became a sports standout at the University of Southern California, lettering in basketball, baseball and track. A 1953 All-America in track, he was named USC's Most Outstanding Graduate of his senior year.

Following two seasons of minor league baseball and two more serving in the United States Air Force, Sorgen began officiating in 1957.

In the early stages of his officiating career, Sorgen officiated baseball, softball, volleyball, track meets and professional tennis for 10 years in addition to football. In an on-field officiating career that spanned more than 30 years, he worked games on the Pop Warner, high school, junior college and university levels.

For 20 years, Sorgen officiated in the Pac-10 Conference. During this time, he refereed three East-West Shrine Games, two Mirage Bowls in Japan and the 1985 Rose Bowl. Sorgen also officiated in the United States Football League for two years and worked seven playoff games, including the league's championship game both years.

In 1986, Sorgen assumed his current role as Pac-10 coordinator of football officials, but he continued to referee professionally, with stints in the Arena Football League and World League of American Football.

Sorgen has officiated football in five foreign countries, and for the last 10 years, he has traveled to conduct football officiating clinics in Japan.

A natural leader, Sorgen taught mathematics and was a counselor at Drake High School in San Anselmo, Calif. for 32 years before retiring in 1988.

Married for 27 years to his wife, Marny, Sorgen has three grown children and two grandchildren.

*With 119 chapters and over 12,000 members nationwide, The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame, a non-profit educational organization, runs programs designed to use the power of amateur football in developing scholarship, citizenship and athletic achievement in America's young people. NFF programs include the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Ind., Play It Smart, The NFF Center for Youth Development Through Sport at Springfield College (Mass.), the NFL-NFF Coaching Academy, and annual scholarships of nearly \$1 million for college and high school scholar-athletes.*