

NO LIMITS ON FIELD



DARIN EPPERLY PHOTOS, FLATWATER FREE PRESS

From left, referees Sam Roberts, Mike Hagge, Matt Hagge, Joshua Adams and J.D. Koerner talk during halftime of a football game on Aug. 28 in Laurel. At the age of 20, Roberts is believed to be the youngest full-time varsity high school football official in Nebraska

Faith, preparation guide Nebraska ref

GREG ECHLIN
Flatwater Free Press

The way Sam Roberts sees it, every game he refs is a big game.

Whether it's the eight-man football season opener in Laurel or a high-stakes contest involving Class D2 defending state champ Wynot in its game in Beemer, Roberts said, "You treat every game like it's the biggest game of your life."

Roberts studies game video, physically prepares himself to be in tip-top shape and is fully aware he's accountable if he screws up. At the age of 20, Roberts is believed to be the youngest full-time varsity high school football official in Nebraska.

"It feels, honestly to me, a lot like being a professional athlete with the standards that you are held to and the constant pursuit of excellence," he said.

Judging by the end zone chirping from the Guardian

Angels Central Catholic (West Point) fans watching a losing effort against Wynot on Sept. 18, Roberts is indeed judged like an official on any level.

"He (Roberts) was standing right there," one Guardian Angels fan said to another, wondering why an offensive pass interference call wasn't made in a critical moment against Wynot. "How did he not see that?"

This is Roberts' first season as a high school varsity football official and his first as a back judge at any level. But Roberts already has developed the thick skin needed to wear the black-and-white stripes for each game.

"I think that some people can be born with those traits more naturally," Roberts said, "but it is something

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After football season, Roberts will make the transition to refing high school wrestling, then to baseball in the spring and summer.

PENTAGON

Vance unsure about livestream execution

Vice president says he doesn't know if it'll proceed

PHIL STEWART AND BO ERICKSON
Reuters

WASHINGTON — Vice President JD Vance said Friday he doesn't know whether the Pentagon will carry out its plan to livestream the execution by firing squad of the former Army psychiatrist convicted in the deadly 2009 Fort Hood shooting, a plan that drew broad condemnation.

As the controversy over the plan championed by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth grew, former officials said a livestream of the execution would hand terrorists a recruiting tool, while a top US Catholic bishop called

the plan "barbaric."

"I don't know that that's actually going to happen," Vance told reporters in Cincinnati, referring to a livestream.

Vance said if a livestream of the execution scheduled for Dec. 3 occurs, "I'm not going to be watching it."

His comments raise questions about the extent of opposition within President Donald Trump's administration to the Pentagon's plans to livestream the execution of Nidal Hasan, who was found guilty in a military trial of killing 13 people at Fort Hood in Texas.

Trump said Friday at a White House event that Hasan deserves the death penalty by

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SAMUEL CORUM, POOL

Vice President JD Vance speaks Friday during a rally at the Allen County Regional Airport in Lima, Ohio.