

## Longtime ringette referee given his due (by Marc Hulet)

### Warren Gethke recognized by provincial organization

**Mitchell Advocate** — Mitchell ringette referee Warren Gethke is the Ontario Ringette Association's Regional Official of the Year.

Gethke, who was presented with the award in September, has been involved with the Mitchell Ringette Association for 24 years.

Gethke was shocked to hear his name called when the award was presented.

"They were bringing out all these awards and the next thing you know they came out and called my name," he said. "It meant a lot. I've put a lot of years in and it was really surprising."

Originally Gethke got involved with ringette because Darryl Seigner asked him to help coach.

"A couple years later all our guys who were refereeing went to college so Darryl asked me to do it," Gethke explained. "I was enjoying coaching so I figured why not. It's worked out well."

Aside from normal refereeing duties, Gethke is also a member of the Mitchell Ringette Association executive and he serves as the referee-in-chief. His duties include scheduling referees for Mitchell home games and tournaments, dealing with referee issues and attending executive meetings.

Mitchell Ringette Association President Dan McCulligh says people like Gethke are often under-appreciated for the amount of work and effort they put forward.

"I don't know if we've ever stopped to imagine what it would be like not to have Warren as a member of our association," McCulligh said. "We couldn't put a price tag on him. Without Warren there would be a big hole to fill. He makes my job a lot easier."

Along with his duties in Mitchell, Gethke is also the referee-in-chief for the Huron-Perth ringette league.

Gethke said the most difficult part of being a ringette referee is putting up with the criticism from coaches, players and parents.

"Some nights you get coaches on your case, but it's not too bad," he said, adding that some parents take their children's sports a little too seriously. "Some parents think they know all the rules.

"There are two of us out there, but we can't see everything - We do our best."

As for his favourite part of refereeing, Gethke said it's working with the younger officials.

"As referee-in-chief I try to help the new refs and keep their confidence up," he said. "A lot of them only last two years."

He also enjoys meeting other referees and having a chance to chat with them.

During the off-season Gethke, who works at R.J. Dungey & Sons Ltd., umpires baseball and likes to spend time with his family.

As a ringette referee, he's also constantly learning and training to keep his abilities sharp.

He takes a referee clinic every three years and he is evaluated every year to keep his credentials.

As a level two ringette referee he can also evaluate level one referees.

Gethke said referees can go up as high as level five, which one needs to referee world ringette championships, but he's happy being a level two referee.

"If I went any higher, I'd never be home on the weekends," he said. "There are tournaments every weekend."



**RECOGNITION** Long-serving Mitchell-based ringette referee Warren Gethke recently received an award by the Ontario Ringette Association.  
Marc Hulet Photo