

= Ed Hochuli =

Edward G. Hochuli (/ ˈhɔːkjʊli / ; born December 25 , 1950) is an attorney for the firm of Jones , Skelton & Hochuli , P.L.C. since 1983 , and has been an American football official in the National Football League (NFL) since the 1990 NFL season . His uniform number is 85 . Prior to his officiating career , he played college football for four seasons at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) .

Hochuli has worked numerous playoff games , including two Super Bowls . He is best known for his athletic / muscular physique and for explaining on @-@ field rulings in a manner that is comprehensive yet also clear and concise . In a poll conducted by ESPN in 2008 , Hochuli tied fellow referee Mike Carey for " best referee " votes (eight each) among NFL head coaches . Completing his 26th season in the league and 24th as referee (crew chief) with the 2015 NFL season , Hochuli 's officiating crew for 2015 consisted of umpire Clay Martin , head linesman Pat Turner , line judge Rusty Baynes , field judge Adrian Hill , side judge Greg Meyer , and back judge Scott Helverson .

With the retirement of Gerald Austin and Larry Nemmers following the 2007 season , Hochuli became the NFL 's longest @-@ tenured referee .

= = Personal = =

= = = Early life = = =

Hochuli was born on December 25 , 1950 , in Milwaukee , Wisconsin , and lived there until age eight before his family moved to Tucson , Arizona . He was the second child of six . He attended and later graduated from Canyon del Oro High School in the Tucson suburb of Oro Valley , Arizona in 1969 . During his high school years , he participated in football (earning all @-@ state honors twice) , basketball , wrestling , and track . He attributes his competitive nature to having an older brother , Chip Hochuli . Ed Hochuli told Referee in a 2004 interview , " I was somebody who wanted to be good and I wanted my brother to be proud of me , and I wanted my parents to be proud of me . " Following high school , he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree with honors from UTEP in 1972 . While at UTEP , Hochuli played linebacker on the school 's football team from 1969 to 1972 . As a football player , he earned All @-@ Western Athletic Conference academic honors in 1972 . His father , Walter Hochuli , was involved with law as a wills and estate planner , which influenced Ed Hochuli to pursue a career in law . He earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Arizona Law School in 1976 . While in law school , Hochuli served as a law clerk for two years under United States District Judge Carl Muecke . Upon completion of his education , Hochuli was admitted to the State Bar of Arizona .

= = = Family = = =

Hochuli resides in the Phoenix metropolitan area with his wife Cathie . They have six children and 10 grandchildren . Of the six , Shawn Hochuli played college football at Pitzer College and is following his father 's profession as an official , working his first NFL season in 2014 as a side judge . Arena Football League , and arenafootball2 games . On August 13 , 2011 , a day after his father refereed a preseason game between the New England Patriots and Jacksonville Jaguars , Shawn was head referee for ArenaBowl XXIV between the Jacksonville Sharks and Arizona Rattlers . Scott Hochuli owns Hochuli Design & Remodeling Team . , a company that specializes in residential design and construction in the Phoenix area . His brother , Daniel Hochuli , is the town attorney for Sahuarita , Arizona , and his brother Peter Hochuli is a judge at the Pima County Juvenile Court in Tucson , Arizona .

= = = Attorney = = =

Hochuli is a trial lawyer and a partner in the Arizona law firm of Jones , Skelton and Hochuli , P.L.C. since it was founded in 1983 . The firm started with five partners and seven associates , and has expanded to over 80 attorneys . Hochuli specializes in civil litigation in the areas of Bad Faith and Extra @-@ Contractual Liability , Complex Litigation , Insurance Coverage and Fraud , Legal Malpractice and Professional Liability , Product Liability Defense , Trucking and Transportation Industry Defense , and Wrongful Death and Personal Injury Defense , and claims to be involved in 200 cases at any time . Hochuli finds interest in trying cases , calling it an " adrenaline rush " and adding , " You love that challenge -- the competition , if you will -- of it . It 's a game . It 's obviously a very important game to people , and I don 't mean to diminish the importance of it You have to follow these rules , and there 's a win @-@ or @-@ lose outcome . You 're on a stage . "

He is admitted to practice in Arizona state and federal courts and the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit . His recognition as an attorney includes being named Best Lawyers in America since 2003 and Southwest Super Lawyers in 2007 . Super Lawyers includes only the top five percent of lawyers in a state based on point totals , as chosen by peers and through independent research by Law & Politics .

Comparing his law and officiating professions , he says " A trial is nothing , pressure @-@ wise , compared to the NFL . ? I have that long [snaps his fingers] to make a decision with a million people watching and second @-@ guessing (by video) in slow @-@ motion . You 've got to be right or wrong . I love the satisfaction when you are right ? and the agony when you are wrong . " Hochuli finds similarities between the football field and courtroom saying , " On the football field , people like that I 'm in charge and know what I 'm doing , but a lot of the time , it 's just appearance . I 'm going to sell you on my decision . It 's the same in the courtroom . You don 't stand in front of a jury and say , ' I think my client is innocent . ' You say , ' We 're right ! ' "

= = Officiating career = =

= = = Early years = = =

Hochuli began officiating Pop Warner football games as a law student to earn additional income , which was suggested by one of his former high school coaches as " a way to stay in touch with the game " . His interest in officiating carried over into baseball , where he was a Little League Baseball umpire from 1970 to 1973 . Progressing to the high school level in 1973 , he focused on football , and officiated games in the Tucson area until 1985 . In addition to high school officiating , he worked college football games for the Big Sky Conference and Pacific @-@ 10 Conference as a line judge during the 1980s .

= = = NFL career = = =

= = = = Rise to refereedom = = = =

Hochuli was hired by the NFL in 1990 as a back judge (now field judge) after applying to the league before the 1989 NFL season . His first game in the league was on August 11 , 1990 , at Lambeau Field in Green Bay , Wisconsin . During his first two years in the league , he was assigned to the officiating crew headed by referee Howard Roe . To gain additional experience as a back judge and eventually a referee , Hochuli participated in the NFL 's partnership with the World League of American Football (WLAF) , a spring developmental league , in 1991 and 1992 . Using his experience in the WLAF , as well as the organization , precision , and analytical skills he learned while working under Roe 's guidance , Hochuli desired to become a crew chief in the NFL . He was promoted to referee in 1992 when longtime referee Stan Kemp was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig 's Disease and forced to retire . Hochuli had worked a pre @-@ season game that year in Tokyo ,

Japan , as a back judge when he received a telephone call following the game from then @-@ Senior Director of Officiating , Jerry Seeman . Seeman asked Hochuli to work as referee for the first time when the Denver Broncos hosted the Cincinnati Bengals in a pre @-@ season game .

Since becoming a referee , Hochuli headed the officiating crews for Super Bowl XXXII and Super Bowl XXXVIII , and he was selected as an alternate for Super Bowl XXXI , Super Bowl XXXVII , and Super Bowl XXXIX . In addition to working two Super Bowls , he has officiated five conference championship games as of the start of the 2007 NFL season . Every officiating game performance is graded by the league each week . These grades determine which officials are assigned playoff games , as well as the Super Bowl . Hochuli credits his mentor , Jerry Markbreit , a four @-@ time Super Bowl referee , as the greatest influence on his career .

== == 2001 officials ' strike == ==

Hochuli has served as the head of the NFL Referees Association , the union which represents NFL game officials . The union was responsible for negotiating a new contract for the officials prior to the 2001 NFL season . At the time , salaries ranged from a first @-@ year official earning US \$ 1 @,@ 431 a game to a veteran official with twenty years of experience making \$ 4 @,@ 330 a game . Officials were looking for a 400 percent increase in salary while the league was offering just 40 percent . During the negotiations , Hochuli believed the issue in finding a resolution was to convince the league that officials are full @-@ time employees .

At the start of the season , officials had rejected a league offer of a 60 percent immediate increase in salary , followed by an 85 percent salary increase in 2002 , and a 100 percent increase in 2003 . For the first time in league history , replacement officials were used during the regular season . Hochuli had distributed an e @-@ mail to 1 @,@ 200 potential replacement officials warning them that " Working as a scab will actually hurt and likely kill any chances you would have of ever getting into the NFL . " He later regretted sending the letter to college football officials across the United States . The stalemate between the union and the league ended on September 19 , 2001 , when officials agreed to a six @-@ year deal from the league with an immediate increase in salary of 50 percent with a raise each year . Officials had been locked out since the final week of pre @-@ season games that year and returned to work on September 23 , 2001 , when the league resumed games following the September 11 , 2001 attacks .

== == Notable games == ==

Hochuli has worked memorable games throughout his career . In his second year as referee , he worked the 1993 Thanksgiving Day game between the Dallas Cowboys and Miami Dolphins in Irving , Texas . During the final moments of the game , Miami placekicker Pete Stoyanovich had a field goal attempt blocked . The Cowboys ' Leon Lett inadvertently touched the loose ball before the Dolphins ' Jeff Dellenbach pounced on it . At the time , Hochuli had " no idea " what happened during the play and had to confer with three other officials to piece together the sequence of events . With the information gathered from the officials , he ruled that Miami retained possession of the football . Stoyanovich booted the ensuing winning field goal for the Miami win .

Hochuli was referee for 1995 's meeting between the Cowboys and the Eagles at Veteran 's Stadium ; the game saw the Cowboys try a 4th down conversion on their own 30 @-@ yard line ; the play was stopped but Hochuli blew the play dead saying the two @-@ minute warning had hit ; replay , though , indicated the play got off before the whistle blew . The Cowboys got another shot , tried another 4th down conversion , and it was stopped again . The Eagles kicked the winning field goal for the 20 @-@ 17 win .

Hochuli was referee for a November 1998 Monday Night Football meeting between the New England Patriots and the Miami Dolphins . A last @-@ second pass from Dan Marino was caught at midfield ; Jimmy Johnson claimed one second was left on the game clock but Hochuli ruled the clock had expired and the game was thus over .

Hochuli was referee for the 1999 AFC Divisional Playoff between the Miami Dolphins and

Jacksonville Jaguars ; it was the final game in the careers of Dan Marino and Jimmy Johnson as the Jaguars won 62 @-@ 7 .

Hochuli was referee in the 2003 Divisional Playoffs between the Packers and the Eagles .

On October 2 , 2005 , he officiated the first regular @-@ season NFL game played outside the United States when the Arizona Cardinals played the San Francisco 49ers in Mexico City , Mexico as part of the league 's " Fútbol Americano " marketing campaign . On the first penalty announcement of the game , Hochuli gave the explanation in Spanish to pay respect to the host city and country .

Hochuli officiated the first regular season game at University of Phoenix Stadium on September 10 , 2006 , when the Cardinals hosted the 49ers .

He was the referee for the game between the Detroit Lions and Green Bay Packers , played December 17 , 2006 , that included Green Bay quarterback Brett Favre becoming the all @-@ time leader for pass completions among quarterbacks in the NFL . Favre was unaware that his 4 @,@ 968 pass completions were a record until he was informed during the game by Hochuli . Hochuli was the referee again for another Favre record @-@ breaking moment when Favre threw his 421st touchdown pass of his career on September 30 , 2007 at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome in Minneapolis , Minnesota to break the record previously held by Dan Marino . He also reffed the Week 17 game in 2008 in which the Lions became the first , and as of today , the only team in the NFL to finish 0 @-@ 16 .

One of Hochuli 's notable explanations came during a 2007 regular season game between the San Diego Chargers and New England Patriots . While nullifying a holding infraction , he announced through his microphone , " There was no foul on the play . It was not a hold . The defender was just overpowered . "

= = = Controversial calls = = =

On September 14 , 2008 , Hochuli officiated a now @-@ infamous game between the San Diego Chargers and the Denver Broncos , which became notable for a highly controversial call near the end of regulation play . The call came with 1 : 17 left in the game , while Denver was in possession of the ball at the San Diego one @-@ yard line , trailing the Chargers by seven points . On a second @-@ down play , Denver quarterback Jay Cutler fumbled the ball , and it was recovered by San Diego linebacker Tim Dobbins . Ed Hochuli blew his whistle during the play , signaling that the play was dead and ruling an incomplete pass . Hochuli admitted his mistake and spotted the ball at the point of the fumble , but could not award possession to San Diego , and the play was not reviewable under then @-@ current instant replay rules . Chargers head coach Norv Turner later said after the game , " Ed came over to me and said he blew it . And that to me is not acceptable . " Hochuli responded to the situation , writing , " Affecting the outcome of a game is a devastating feeling . Officials strive for perfection ? I failed miserably . " Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones was even fined \$ 25 @,@ 000 for publicly criticizing Hochuli . The NFL passed a rule the following offseason allowing such plays to be reviewable under the instant replay rule for the 2009 NFL season . Speaking to Referee in November 2009 , Hochuli told the magazine , " It was really an easy play . I ? ve thought many times why I did what I did . The best explanation is it was almost like dyslexia . I realized it was a fumble and did the wrong thing . I realized I was wrong but there was nothing I could do about it . "

= = Celebrity = =

Hochuli 's presence on the football field has created a cult following . His rise in popularity is believed to have been started by Phil Simms , a former NFL quarterback and current color commentator for the NFL on CBS , who made reference to the size of Hochuli 's arms during a telecast . On the Internet , websites that sell Hochuli merchandise as well as blogs with his namesake exist . He is often affectionately referred to as " Hochules " , a combination of his last name and " Hercules " , in homage to his large biceps . While he is aware of his celebrity status ,

Hochuli does not understand it . He said in a USA Today interview , " I get a kick out of the notoriety , because I 'm just a referee . I 'm not the players . The players are the game . They 're what this is all about . I get notoriety because I explain things , and I get notoriety because I have a decent physique , which is funny because I 'm a shrimp , a peewee compared to those players . Neither one of those things has anything to do with whether I 'm a good referee . " His recognition extends to the streets , in airports , and in the courtroom . He has been approached by notable athletes such as former National Basketball Association (NBA) player Charles Barkley at the airport . " It never ceases to amaze me , " Hochuli told the Arizona Daily Star . " The number of people that will just come up to me and recognize me . " He appreciates the attention , saying , " I enjoy the fact that there are people who like me as a referee . I hear from a lot of people and I enjoy that . Like anybody , I like praise . Probably because of my personality , I thrive on that more than other people . "

Hochuli 's career as an NFL official has been chronicled on the NFL Network 's Six Days to Sunday in 2005 . The half @-@ hour television program detailed the game preparations that Hochuli goes through from Monday to Saturday during the season . This preparation work includes fifteen hours of video tape game review , a " couple hours " completing administrative tasks for the NFL , reading the rulebook , taking a weekly written exam on rules , and communicating with league supervisors .

Hochuli 's celebrity status off the field includes being mentioned on the " Top Ten List " during the January 29 , 2002 edition of the Late Show with David Letterman . His likeness appears in the Madden NFL video game franchise starting with Madden NFL 06 .

Hochuli appeared on the cover of the October 8 , 2012 issue of Sports Illustrated .