



Post Play Express

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OLD DOGS AND NEW TRICKS

By Bill Carr, Supervisor of Alberta

In December of 2015, I was invited to participate as one of the Assignors/Evaluators (AEs) at the 2016 CCAA Men's Basketball (MBB) Championships in March. This year, they were being held in Fort McMurray. Needless to say, I gladly accepted and was delighted to learn that my AE partners were Nancy Éthier from Quebec and Warren Poncsak from Saskatchewan.

I first met Nancy at CABO's inaugural camp held in Montreal in 1998, almost 18 years ago. And Warren, commonly referred to as Ponz, being from a neighbouring province, has often visited Alberta in a variety of capacities including as an On-Floor Official, as a Guest Clinician and as an Assigned CABO AE.

I had developed a great deal of respect for both these officials and was really looking forward to sharing the AE experience with them. In Warren's case, I always liked the way he simplified the messaging to his audience in a clinic setting. I was confident he'd apply that same technique in a post game discussion at a national tournament. And as for Nancy, I'd heard from several people about her use of video technology to clip plays and her thoroughness in using those clips in the post game debriefing with the officials. Because this was new to me, and because of the many positive comments I'd heard about this technique, I was really looking forward to getting my first experience with that type of educational aid.

When we arrived at Fort McMurray, our first order of business was preparing for and attending the coaches meeting. The following morning, we met with our crew of officials and conveyed to them what had been discussed at the coaches meeting. Then, we were off to the gym to further prepare for the first day's games. As I learned, a critical part was to have an access point that gave us full view of the court for the video recording. The CCAA MBB Convenor, Jeff Harris, and the Keyano College Host School's Associate Athletic Director, Jonathan Lambert, were extremely cooperative and we found an ideal location on the running track above the playing surface right at centre court.

Now it's confession time. Though I've viewed various video clips of game situations for several years now, both in a class room setting as well as those sent to me from local Calgary or Alberta officials, from other Educators or Assignors and from the CWUAA Supervisor, I've been quite concerned about taking an approximate 12 - 20 second clip or segment of time from a single game and drawing from that conclusions about the overall performance of an official. In that very brief period of time, without a sense of game context and often without sound, I believe incorrect conclusions can be formed.

However, I did learn very quickly how valuable those 12 - 20 second clips can be in a post game debriefing which to me is very akin to a true educational setting. In a post game debriefing, the AEs can both SHOW and TELL. There is the opportunity for dialogue and that to me is what makes the use of video in this setting so advantageous. A few examples follow:

1. What may have been said about positioning on a play can be demonstrated with the video clip. For example, you can clearly show an official who is in L position in the half court what you mean by the often used generic phrase "missed rotations". Simply being told doesn't have the same impact as being told and SHOWN.
2. It's also much easier to illustrate where improvements can be made with respect to dead ball efficiencies such as after calling a foul. Officials are actually very surprised and perhaps even "shocked" when they SEE themselves in a slow saunter when moving to clear the players in order to report the foul.
3. With video clips, it's much easier to SHOW where positioning can be improved. For example, during play in transition, any one or more of the officials may be out of position; a new L perhaps has outrun the play, a new T is perhaps too wide and too far away from the players and ball in his/her primary, and a new C who is not totally focused on his/her primary and instead is looking back to the play around the ball. Transition play is quite often where missed calls, including fouls, occur, as none of the 3 officials had a good look. The video clips are extremely useful in helping to DEMONSTRATE this.
4. And here's one that comes as a bit of a surprise for some - when you can actually SHOW officials how they present themselves following a double whistle. Here you'll get the entire continuum of perfect eye contact and teamwork and foul call reporting at the one extreme all the way to the "deer in the headlights" look where it takes a few seconds for each official to process what he or she should be doing next at the other. Those few seconds can be critical in how players, coaches and fans perceive you as an official, particularly if it appears you have lost your composure. It's often in those few seconds where the teamwork of the crew is called into question. This may sound a bit like a broken record but how the crew will handle double whistles MUST be a major talking point of the pregame officials' conference. Enough said!

So, what were some of the take-aways or lessons learned about utilizing video clips in a post game debriefing?

1. Based on the crew of officials we had at Fort McMurray, in my opinion, officials love it! By Days 2 and 3 of the tournament, once each official had experienced a debriefing with the use of video clips, some would often arrive following their next assignment asking if we'd "clipped" a specific play as they wanted a second look. Thankfully, most often we had.
2. For each clip, there MUST be a message or learning opportunity for the officials. To put this in context, we were essentially recording a complete game. Nancy would SAVE those clips of several seconds that had value and whenever time permitted, she would delete whatever else had been recorded. For any one game, we may have had

anywhere from 3-4 plays clipped upwards to say 8-10. This generally worked out to about 1 - 2 minutes of an entire 40 minute game.

3. It is my view that this type of technology has a definite place at national tournaments. However, this is definitely not a one-person job and I would suggest that the person doing the recording must have a sound appreciation for officiating or be in near enough proximity to someone such as an AE who can provide some direction as to what should be clipped and saved and what can be deleted.

4. Having had the experience with a crew of 3 AEs, I'd suggest this might be optimum. Ponz and I positioned ourselves on either side of Nancy and when we wanted something clipped, we'd simply ask her to do so. It was that easy. On many occasions, we'd hear back from her "Already got it!" reinforcing that she saw the same and that it was something with value for the officials. Yes, we both took a turn at operating the video recorder, but it is something that will take some practice. I found myself watching the screen rather than the game and my eyes didn't take kindly to that after a while. Another learning experience for sure.

Thanks again to my AE partners in Fort McMurray. It was an enjoyable experience for me and I believe this Old Dog did learn a few new tricks.

RETENTION OF OFFICIALS : PART 1

By Bill Redden, Member GVBOA

The two most important considerations in maintaining an adequate supply of basketball officials to serve growing demands are recruitment and retention. Retention, defined here as successfully retaining the services of officials from one season to the next, is the topic of this article. The approach here will be based on a three component model recommended for local association programing. The components are: INSTRUCTION (I), OPPORTUNITY (O), RECOGNITION (R) as a philosophy and value system. Part 1 briefly describes each of the I.O.R. Model components, provides two prominent reasons why officials terminate their officiating careers and makes suggestions that are appropriate for the application of the INSTRUCTIONAL component to Retention. Part 2, in a future edition of Post Play, will delve into more of the Model by adding to the Instruction and Opportunity components and then focusing on Recognition in relation to retention.

Instruction provides a knowledge base for the rules, mechanics and communication skills, all of which are most effectively delivered by teaching methods which transfer easily into game situations. Opportunity affords a good possibility of success based upon favorable circumstances. This involves two aspects - Practice and Game experience. Off-court physical and mental practice opportunities need to be fostered by officials at all levels for three purposes: new skill(s) learning, review, and remediation. Game assignments, as much as possible, should match each official's experience, level of knowledge, and physical fitness to the level of the game assigned. Recognition for service and achievement as an individual and as a member of an officials association, gives officials a feeling of being valued and appreciated. It is important to note that people have a variety of reasons for initially

getting involved with officiating and that these reasons do not generally include recognition. However, without adequate opportunities and subsequent recognition most people will not enjoy the officiating experience and will not stay involved.

There are several reasons why officials at all levels discontinue their participation. Two of the most prevalent reasons that are under the control of local associations, and that are mentioned by respondents who have left the officiating ranks, are overall performance – fear of failure, and poor sportsmanship (abuse) by coaches and spectators. Good instruction with accompanying feedback has the potential to optimize overall performance and reduce the stress of fear of failure and the possible official dropout effects of poor sportsmanship by coaches and spectators.

INSTRUCTION: Associations use or encourage many different avenues of instruction including: officials entry level comprehensive courses, early season clinics of varying lengths, education sessions within regularly held business meetings before and during the season, mentorship/assessment programs, individual official assessments for the purpose of certification or reclassification, game feedback from an officiating partner(s) or an informal request for a more detailed game performance critique from a more experienced officiating colleague who observes from off the court.

Local associations can assist retention through the Instruction component of the I.O.R. model by:

1. Providing information to members and prospective members re the basic details and updates on the current status of each instructional avenue, so that all participants are informed of the educational support available at both local and provincial levels.
2. Promoting a culture and atmosphere within the association where rules knowledge and mechanics as well as off-court physical and mental practice sessions are emphasized and valued.
3. Conducting education sessions within regular association meetings to discuss the topic of providing and requesting officiating performance feedback. Such discussions could also include suggestions for learning and performance strategies for learning and remediation purposes. These suggestions could be based on established strategies and techniques but also should be based on information made available to the membership by those members who present their own original learning and performance strategies, techniques, or tips.
4. Developing a Mentorship and/or an Assessment Program to provide individual evaluations for all levels of officials. If enough experienced VOLUNTEERS are not available to support such a program, increase membership fees, fund raise, or find a sponsor to pay for qualified officials or recently retired officials to perform this service.
5. Providing at least one three-hour preseason training session a year exclusively for Mentors/Assessors as well as conduct a formal evaluation session of the Program at season's end.
6. Following the Theory of identical elements in providing and encouraging learning, review, and remedial experiences that closely relate to game situations as much as possible. For example, physical skill instruction involving movement in full and half court floor coverage, putting the ball in play, and infraction reporting should be presented and practiced through active drills based on game scenarios in a gym setting or a suitable off-court location.

EVALUATING COVERAGE BY THE TRAIL OFFICIAL (TWO-PERSON SYSTEM)

By Gerard Brien, Interpreter of Newfoundland/Labrador

As a longtime evaluator of basketball officials, I am always surprised by how poorly our officials cover the floor from the trail position in the two-person officiating system. Consequently, I will endeavour to highlight some principles which may help improve the mechanics of trail officiating.

Sometimes, officials think that the term «mechanics» refers to signals. While signals are an important component of communication, mechanics essentially refers to MOVEMENT. As my good friend Paul Deshaies has emphasized for many years, GO WHERE YOU NEED TO GO TO SEE WHAT YOU NEED TO SEE !!!! Try to obtain the best possible position to judge the play. Try to maintain a wide view.

Trail officials should always follow these basic principles:

- 1. You should always move when the ball moves.**
- 2. Get to a position where you can see the spaces between players.**
- 3. Box-in: Keep the players between you and the lead official.**
- 4. Area 3 is your primary. Go as far as necessary to cover the play in this area, and return to the normal trail position as soon as the situation permits it. You cannot properly referee Area 3 from Area 1.**
- 5. Penetrate to approximately the free-throw line extended when the ball penetrates toward the basket or endline on a pass, dribble or field goal attempt. This will help you to better find spaces between players. It is essential that you be in the best possible position to help your partner in the dual-coverage area, especially for fouls on the drive to the basket, travelling and fouls during any rebounding activity.**
- 6. You are responsible for coverage in Areas 1-3 and 5-6. In these areas, you are primarily responsible for play around the ball, in particular for the player dribbling, shooting or passing the ball and the defensive player(s) guarding him.**
- 7. In Area 4, you are primarily responsible for off-ball coverage, particularly the low post on the weak side, illegal screens (especially at the elbows) and over-the-back weak side rebounding.**
- 8. In Areas 1-3 and 5-6, you are responsible for 2-point and 3-point field goal attempts. Pay particular attention to the feet of the shooter, especially when they are close to the 3-point line. Do not leave the shooter too soon !**
- 9. You are responsible for deciding whether the shot was taken before time expires on the game clock or the 24-second shot clock.**
- 10. You are responsible for the flight of the ball, goaltending and basket interference, for out-of-bounds calls at your nearest sideline, for backcourt violations.**

While I could probably devote an entire clinic to trail officiating and its proper mechanics, I feel that if you adhere to these basic principles, your game as a trail official will improve greatly.