



C A B O

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THE INFLUENCE OF ONE MAN

Submitted by Bruce Weicker on behalf of the Salmon Arm Basketball Referees' Association

Salmon Arm, British Columbia, a small community of about 30,000, has been a bastion of basketball for decades. Recently the community and in particular the basketball world lost one of its stalwart heroes. In January, at the age of 58 years young, Barry Dearing succumbed to a long and brave battle with cancer. His influence in the game as a coach in elementary schools and a renowned referee has been a fixture in our community and the province for 35 years. His passion for the game further influenced players, coaches, parents/spectators and countless referees.

Barry was widely known across the province as a referee, being called upon to be of service to playoff games at all levels including some college games, and in many communities beyond Salmon Arm. His willingness to instruct other referees in smaller communities beyond his own was always appreciated. Some of us remember Barry inviting us to come along and help officiate a tournament in Clearwater or Revelstoke and while we were there we would put on a clinic for their referees. Barry always shared his passion and knowledge for basketball freely and without hesitation.

Barry's dedication to and philosophy of officiating was his belief that the gym was a classroom, just bigger. Expected behavior in the gym, especially by players and coaches, should be what is expected of students and teachers. Swearing and disrespectful conduct were never tolerated.

Barry was a teacher, and he adapted his game to the level and skill of the kids playing. At the Grade 8 level, he was far more instructive and took the time to explain and help. But even with senior boys, he talked and "coached" and humored them along. He always worked with younger officials to be similar in manner and approach. His booming voice on the court was a trademark. During basketball games, Barry was always direct, always firm and terribly fair. He was the same with his referee colleagues. Some of our "lessons" or "tips" when it comes to officiating basketball resulted from conversations - and a couple were pretty direct - with Barry. Like all of us, the worst insult for Barry? Call him a homer!

Ask Barry anything about basketball and you could be there for an hour. Barry would present at summer basketball camps for players, put on clinics for minor table officials – you ask and Barry responds!

Traditionally in Salmon Arm, from late October to the end of February, everyone's calendar marked Monday nights as meeting nights. These were times when the referees would meet to share game experiences, talk about rules, receive instruction on mechanics, game protocol or a host of other topics. When situations were presented, Barry as a true teacher, always asked "What do you think?" If you were lucky enough to be correct, an M & M candy would slide across the table. We all remember his well used court board – a framed piece of white magnetic board complete with tape for court markings. Barry would use colored magnets or white board markers to diagram situations so that everyone would have the same picture in their minds. He was an instructor extra-ordinaire! Barry had his tips for new officials:

1. There are three teams in every basketball game: the home team – the visiting team and the officials (referees and table officials). Support your partner like he/she is your only friend, because on some nights, he or she will be your only friend.
2. Own your calls. Sell every call like it is your best call – even if it is a bad call.
3. Never referee out of your area.
4. A referee never cares who wins.
5. Always wait until after the game to change your mind.
6. The most important basketball game of your career is the one you are officiating. The second most important game is the next one on your schedule. Be ready for it.
7. If you have both coaches and most of the fans calling for your head at the final buzzer you know that you have probably done a good job and played no favourites.

Well Barry, the last buzzer has sounded. Good game!

PLEASE MAINTAIN PROFESSIONALISM!

Submitted by Rob Connell, Interpreter of Prince Edward Island

By the time this article is read by the CABO membership, I will have completed my first year as the Prince Edward Island interpreter. To be very honest, I was reluctant to accept this position. I decided I would fill the position for one year and then re-evaluate at the end of the season. I have found the experience both rewarding and at times frustrating. Our previous interpreter filled the position for quite some time, so it is taking time for our membership to get used to someone new. I will be patient as change takes time. I am pleased to say the rewards have outweighed the frustrations and I plan to fill the second year of my term.

I have always enjoyed and taken great pride in being involved with the organization, but as interpreter, I quickly realized I had to step up my leadership role. I am 44 years old and in my 7th year of officiating. As you can see, I was a late starter. I am mentoring less experienced officials, but I continue to learn and grow myself as an official. I have never minded being mentored by our more experienced officials and I continue to value their knowledge and experience. I hope the same holds true for myself. It is at times difficult telling a man or woman of my age or older suggestions or discussing errors they may have made, but I quickly realized that it is important to the growth of basketball and of our association. We are professionals and it is expected from coaches and fans that we work at improving as an officiating body. This year has taught me that regardless of how many years of officiating one has, one needs to be willing to listen to advice from one's peers and not allow one's ego to get in the way. I have also spent time this year recruiting new officials. If we are going to have a successful future, we need to mentor new and young officials.

As an educator, I value the support I get from fellow teachers. As officials, we also need to see the importance of supporting each other. We all strive to have that perfect game, but in reality there is no such thing. There is always room for growth and improvement. We all can have a "bad" game and sometimes walk off the court feeling lousy about our performance. We need to recognize this in each other and offer support. I imagine that, in most provinces, there is an issue with recruiting and retaining officials. Not supporting each other will not help this cause. We need to look after each other. Point out what we did right and where we need to improve, get right back out on the court and work at it. Your officiating body should be treated like family, and treat each other accordingly.

As a teacher, I also realize that no matter where I am in the community, I am a teacher. I need to remember this with everything I say and every action I complete. As officials, we also need to remember that no matter where we are in terms of the basketball community, we are officials. When we speak of each other to people of the basketball community, we must support our fellow officials the same way we support each other on the court. Not supporting each other can cause tension in your own organization. Tension from within will inevitably show its face on the court. We need to support each other and treat each other with respect the same way we would want any player, coach or fan to treat us.

We are providing a valuable professional service. We need to behave as professionals both on and off the court. Maintain the professionalism.

THE GREATER VANCOUVER BASKETBALL OFFICIALS (GVBOA) PROSPECT OFFICIALS TRAINING PROGRAM

By Bill Redden, GVBOA Member

The GVBOA Novice (Prospect) Officials Training Program contains an Instructional Course and Game Experiences. The Course is conducted yearly (Oct - Nov) and is 16 hours in duration over a 4-week period - each week for two hours on two different evenings, one evening for Rules (classroom) and another for Mechanics (gymnasium). Accompanying and immediately following the Course, mentored opportunities for officiating at minor levels are provided. There are no registration or participation fees for the Training Program.

On site, prior to the first Course session (Rules), Prospects are provided with a Resources Manual. Among the documents included in the Manual are: Rule Book, Rules Interpretations Book, "30 Mechanics Drills", and "How to Practice Off Court". A head and shoulders photograph is taken of each Prospect and placed in an album available to Instructors. Name tags (first name only) are provided to Prospects and instructors.

Rules Sessions

A guide document is provided to each Prospect that describes Rules presentation order. The style of these sessions is "lecture" with accompanying visual aids and opportunities for questions. Cases and examples of rule application are described and clarified. The first topics presented are clock start/stop, live ball/dead ball, and team control. Prospect are encouraged to read ahead of the classroom presentations according to the guide document.

Gymnasium Sessions

A Fox 40 whistle and lanyard (smitty) is provided to each Prospect. The "30 Mechanics Drills" document provides the format for learning. Prospects learn mechanics/skills like players learn game skills in team practices. A lead instructor provides a description/demonstration of the required mechanics and the drill that allows for organized practice. Prospects then practice within the drill. Assistant instructors provide individual or small group feedback. The lead instructor makes any drill corrections/adjustments and "general" mechanics corrections that apply to the entire group. Each drill gets progressively more difficult and game-like. For example: JUMP BALL – without a ball, with a ball, with one jumper, add a jumper opponent. When a player(s) is required for a drill, a member(s) of the class assumes that role. The GOAL of the gym sessions is to insure that the mechanics (i.e. movement(s), positioning, signals, and voice) become automatic so that, in games, the focus can be "infraction recognition".

Prospects apply the rules by focusing on the different roles of officiating: Referee/Umpire, Administering /Non-administering; Lead /Trail, On-Ball/Off-Ball, and Calling/Non-Calling. The focus is on teamwork required by the floor officials and minor officials. Each drill performed has a game-like scenario that is described by the lead instructor. For example: "I AM the referee for the jump ball". Or in a much more complex situation: "I AM the calling official" - #14 Blue commits a holding foul on #8 Red in the act of shooting, the ball goes in the basket and when I go to the table to report the foul, subs from both teams have requested entry into the game, and the coach of the red team has requested a time out."

In order to help achieve the mastery/automatic skill level, practising off court is strongly recommended and encouraged. Thus, 10 minutes is allocated at the beginning of each gym session in a defined area on the floor

("learning squares") for each Prospect to practice their own "I AM" scenarios in a progressive fashion: performing by talking to themselves or by mouthing the words without sound; performing by talking normally out loud; and finally performing by expressing themselves as they would in a game situation - louder and confidently.

Note that during the gymnasium sessions, all whistles, except those of the instructors, are muted by taping over the holes so that only air escapes when sounding the whistle. At the end of each gym session, each Prospect's individual unmuted "whistle work" is evaluated. Muted "whistle work" is recommended in off- court practice.

Evaluation is an integral part of the Instructional Course. A 12-page Evaluation Form is made available to all Prospects following the Course. They are also asked to complete an unsigned Exit Slip after selected Sessions, listing 3 things they liked and 3 things they did not like about the session. Course instructor "debriefs" are also held.

(For more information on the Prospect Officials Training Program, please contact Bill Redden at the following address : billrdad@yahoo.com)

OFFICIATING LEADERSHIP GOING FORWARD

Submitted by Morgan Munroe, Interpreter of Alberta

In my current position as a high school administrator, I have had to adapt to significant changes in the methods of curriculum delivery as a result of the necessity of educating "modern" students in the current world in which we find ourselves. Teachers and administrators have had to rethink how they deliver instruction to this generation. As well, we have been forced to reevaluate how we inform our stakeholders (parents and the general public) about these changes and how education will look "different" in the years to come. What has this got to do with basketball officiating? Well, I think there is a parallel between education and the governance that accompanies everything, from our local officiating boards, through our provincial organizations right up to our national body. What I'm about to discuss isn't intended to be an indictment of those currently in the offices throughout the country, but hopefully to start a mature rational dialogue that may spark some discussions amongst the various stakeholders in the Canadian officiating world.

Initially, one of the greatest challenges I faced in my daytime job was participating in the formulation of a plan for the next three years that would identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school at which I'm employed. Obviously, it requires some time and effort to sit down and honestly articulate both the positives and negatives of your place of employment, especially when you have to be respectful and professional regarding your colleagues. But with the right approach, it can be done. On the basketball side of things, what's stopping our national, provincial and local boards from doing the same type of exercise? What is the vision for the upcoming years ahead for these groups? Locally, is it recruitment and retention of officials? Or is it improved evaluation to build a stronger local unit that will handle the games throughout the city or region? What's preventing the local board from identifying the strengths of their own membership as well as the challenges on the horizon? In the local board I officiate, nearly 50% of our college level officials have left in the past two years. This has created significant challenges for our entire membership. As a result, we've begun the time consuming but very necessary discussions with the local high school leagues to prepare them for the certainty that both league and tournament games will need to be carefully

scheduled to allow our smaller membership to cover as many games as possible. Is this ideal? Of course not, and if we'd been a bit more proactive, we might be facing a different reality, but for now, this is the situation on the ground and we have to work with our partners to arrive at the best solution possible.

Provincially, the challenges are different, but equally demanding. In Alberta, we work with two major partners. Specifically, they are the provincial college conference (ACAC) and the high school athletic association (ASAA). In both cases, we were able to get out front of some of the issues that could have significantly impaired our ability to service their games and potentially could have caused equal unease and frustration for our members. In each case, discussing and eventually signing multi-year agreements has given all parties a sense of trust that has improved the dialogue for future challenges that are sure to crop up as we move forward. This isn't to say that we have no challenges right now. The need to review and revise policies to insure that they are compliant with current government acts and court rulings is a major focus of the current executive. As well, we've recently begun to try and improve the officiating experience of our rural members by affording them education and evaluation opportunities more reflective of the reality that they operate in. This has involved an increase in general membership fees so there is a resulting accountability that needs to be answered for. Improving things for our rural members will not be something that occurs overnight, but rather will be a gradual process that will surely come with its own unique challenges.

Going back to my current professional position, one of the obvious changes that has hit education head on is the need to be accountable for the program and the expenditures that result from delivering a 21st century education to our students. Every 60 days, our principal meets with the superintendent to review our school plan. I've sat in on these meetings and I can tell you, while initially intimidating, they are exactly what needs to happen to insure that programs are being delivered as best as they possibility can be. In basketball, the national body should consider a similar exercise. We currently have no website, so I think it would be advisable for the current executive to send out a document highlighting the plan for their current term. As initiatives are completed, these could be reported to the provinces via the national council. If plans weren't quite as successful as intended, explaining what happened, why things may not have gone as planned, and what, if any, changes are contemplated for the future, is only going to increase good will amongst all involved.

Nationally there are lots of issues that are simply not going to go away. As well, trying to solve them at the AGM is not the answer given the number of potential speakers and the limited time available. Some of the issues that seem to provoke discussion both at meetings and on an informal basis, include the need to review national championship assignments, how these assignments are allocated, the exam format and delivery, website content, CABO camp, and the need to develop common language and expectations amongst national evaluators. These are just some of the common topics one often hears.

As I stated in the opening paragraph, my intention is not to point fingers at specific individuals, but rather to hopefully open up some rational mature dialogue that will inform our members of the plans the various officiating bodies have. Currently we have some tremendous leaders. We need to insure that the next generation both benefits from the efforts of the current group, and is also ready to accept the mantle of leadership when they are called upon. This will happen more consistently and smoothly, if the current leaders provide some specifics about what they are doing and what goals they have going forward.