



Post Play Express

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CABO SECRETARY/TREASURER'S NOTES

Submitted by Markku Peuhkurinen

Greetings again to all and I'm happy to announce that the CABO membership has once again topped the 4000-member mark. It is encouraging to note that at the local and provincial levels, we are meeting the challenges of recruitment, training and retention of new officials. This is a challenge that the leaders within the provinces and the local associations must address on an on-going basis.

I will be attending the Ontario Local Board Presidents' meeting in early May and this topic will certainly receive some attention. At the local levels, there are high expectations placed on the novice official. Coaches on one hand are asking for new faces, but then expect these recruits to perform at levels not easily attainable at that stage in their careers. This, I believe, is the main reason for not being able to retain a good portion of these new recruits. As local organizations, we must provide comprehensive training plans and opportunities to assure success. Also, as veterans, we must be prepared to act as role models and mentors to assure that these rookies will survive the sometimes confrontational environment on the floor. It is our responsibility to step in when problems arise. We must encourage officials to attend camps early in their careers. This gives them an opportunity to be fully immersed in basketball officiating for a few days and to feed off the instructors and fellow campers. Also at camps, officials will develop long term friendships with other campers. These types of activities will help in strengthening the long term commitment of the young official.

Unfortunately there will not be a CABO Camp in 2014, but there are many other camps operating in Canada. As local boards, provincial associations, and CABO, we must be prepared to assist financially to make camp attendance possible and affordable. Each fiscal year, CABO allocates \$500.00 to each province to assist officials with the costs

of attending camps. Unfortunately, most years, most of this money is not utilized. Let's encourage our officials to engage in these types of worthwhile endeavours.

As officiating is over for me personally for the next while, the planning for the AGM in Charlottetown, on September 19-21, is well on its way. Rick MacKinnon and Rob Connell from PEI assisted in searching for a suitable venue to host the CABO AGM. Rodd Royalty Hotel in Charlottetown is the contracted host. Rick has since stepped down as the Provincial Supervisor for PEI and Gerard MacDonald has been elected to that post. Thanks Rick for all your help with the AGM planning and thanks for all your efforts on behalf of your province and CABO. Personally I'm looking forward to the great island hospitality.

This is a special gathering for CABO as it marks the 40th Anniversary of the organization. During those forty years, CABO has developed from a fledgling organization, dependent on the government for about two thirds of its funding, to a self-sufficient body enjoying a status equal to the provinces in the Canada Basketball hierarchy. We have come a long way and who knows the great future ahead. Also, this year, PEI celebrates its sesquicentennial or the 150 year anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference. Many special events are planned during the year and we are part of that celebration.

During the second weekend in March, I had the opportunity to work with Bruce Covert and Roger Caulfield as one of the A/Es at the CIS Men's Championships in Ottawa. This was the second consecutive hosting of this event by Carleton University. In 2015, the tournament will be hosted by Ryerson University at the former Maple Leaf Gardens location in Toronto. Historic place indeed. In 2016, the host will be UBC. During the tournament, we had an opportunity to work with some veterans of the tournament and some who were there for the first time. How exciting especially for the rookies. Two individuals worked their first final. It is very encouraging to note the results our organization has achieved during its 40 year tenure. With the greatest of ease, we are all able to comfortably officiate with our partners from all parts of the country. As our pool of officials working at this level increases, our strength as an organization also reaches a higher level.

On a final note, I will make a few comments on the National Officials Certification Program (NOCP). The establishment of NOCP was one of the greater achievements of CABO. Jim Cervo was the committee chair and the driving force behind the completion and the program's implementation. There were other committee members who also deserve a lot of credit. Now that we have progressed through the initial stages of 'grand-fathering' and implementation, it is important that the provinces start to tap into the CABO funds to upgrade officials to Level 4. The past few years, the budgetary funds for this purpose have not been utilized to any great extent. There are officials in every province that deserve an opportunity to advance to the next level. We can provide them with that opportunity.

Enjoy the summer!

PREPARING TO WORK A PROVINCIAL OR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Submitted by Bruce Covert, Supervisor of Ontario

At some point in your officiating career, you may have the opportunity to work your first provincial tournament. A positive performance there may lead to other provincials and eventually even a national appointment. How do you optimize the experience? Here are a few tips from officials that attended their first national, or provincial tournament this March:

Listen and apply whatever feedback/ suggestions the Evaluators give you and attempt to implement them during your next game. Evaluators notice this and see that you are trying to get better and are willing to listen. Often times, they will reward you for this and, even better, you will become a more competent official.

Enjoy the company and conversations with your fellow officials. A lot can be learned from each other!

Be professional all the time. You're on a national or provincial stage. Before, during and after your games.

Enjoy the experience and let your talent take over.

Always work hard regardless of level of play. You never know who is watching. You could become a role model and not even know it.

Referee as best YOU can - don't try to referee as if you were someone else. You got yourself there. Work as you normally would.

The most important game is the one you are on. Officiate to the best of your ability and who knows what might happen.

Here are few tips from an A/E's perspective:

Review the rule and case book. Spend some time on it each day if possible. Come to the tournament confident in your rules knowledge. During a game, if you "kick" a rule, you will have no acceptable excuse for your A/Es in the post game.

Work on your physical condition. At most provincials and nationals now, everyone is in very good to excellent condition. You won't see too many "bellies". Be in the best shape of your life.

Check out your uniform. Do you have the proper CABO jacket? Does your shirt fit properly? Do you have multiple shirts (especially for the summer tournaments)? Are your pants too short? Too long? Are your shoes in excellent condition? Your uniform is critical. When you walk out on the floor, part of people's first impression of you will be based on your uniform. Make it a great one!

Read any email you get from your A/E very carefully. Make sure you follow any instructions provided.

Confirm your travel plans. If you are flying in, make sure you confirm flight times. Make sure you are aware of the pick up procedures at the airport and that you have a contact number. Hopefully, your travel will be uneventful, but there are times when flights are late, missed, etc. It's a terrible feeling when this happens and you realize you don't have the number of an A/E or local contact to alert them of your late arrival.

Pay attention in the pre-tournament meeting. Bring a paper and pen, or a mobile device to take notes. The A/Es will outline their expectations. They may discuss a point of emphasis, or a mechanic. If you take notes, you can review these later, especially before your game.

Dress appropriately. In Ontario, the dress code for the officials at provincial tournaments is business attire. (Shirt and tie, sports jackets, suits, etc.). The same holds true for CCAA and CIS nationals. Canada Basketball summer nationals are typically more casual. Usually, golf shirts, dress slacks, sometimes shorts. Please do not show up for your first meeting in flip flops, cut off shorts and a muscle shirt! (It has happened!).

In the post game, don't start to undress before the A/Es come in, or while they are talking. Be attentive, even if they are talking to your partner(s). Make eye contact with them. If they ask you about a play, give them an honest answer. Do not give them excuses. Do not argue with them. You may not agree with everything they tell you, but they are there to help you. Most importantly, go out your next game and try to work on their suggestions. A/Es do not expect you to immediately change your game. They do appreciate it when they see you working on their suggestions. Every piece of advice they give you may not work for you, but if you don't try it you won't know.

We often joke that, at the end of the tournament, only one person will truly be happy. The referee on the gold medal game. At some point in our careers, we have all been disappointed when we did not get the assignment we hoped for, believed we deserved. If this happens to you, handle it with grace. Congratulate those that did advance. Do not "bad mouth" other officials, or the A/Es. If you feel the need to "vent", do it in private with a trusted friend, or significant other. Better yet, keep it to yourself.

Finally enjoy the experience. Watch your fellow officials work and be supportive of them. Spend time with the crew outside the gym. Twenty years from now, you may not remember the tournament or the games you did, but, if you are lucky, you will come out of the tournament with new life long friends.

Good luck!

REFEREEING BASKETBALL IN RURAL MANITOBA

By Nick Martin, Winnipeg Free Press

CARMAN -- A brilliant full moon and a gazillion stars gaze down on Wayne Banfield and Stewart McKenzie as they lug their gym bags and dinners of Gatorade and Granola bars into Carman Collegiate.

It's an hour after they finished their day jobs in Portage la Prairie and scrambled to make the drive down frigid two-lane country highways -- curse that freight train near Elm Creek! -- and still five hours or more until they see their homes for the first time since early morning.

Yell 'Hey, ref!' and both their heads will turn in unison.

It's a pretty glamorous life, officiating high school basketball. The tiny phys-ed teacher's office they've been assigned as their dressing room has about enough room for two big men to dress, as long as only one at a time pulls up his socks. Eighty minutes of varsity basketball -- girls and then boys, Gretna's Mennonite Collegiate Institute Blues against the Carman Collegiate Cougars -- lie ahead, with the refs not knowing how the games will go; whether the players will be respectful; whether a coach will prove obstreperous; whether the spectators, if any, will be behaved; whether there's room along the sideline to avoid bashing a hip or elbow on the wall; whether the clock will work or the scorekeeping crew needs to be educated; whether the game ball is up to snuff. And when they come back to the car, whether they can still see the highway.

Grey shirt, black pants, black shoes. These guys love it. They've been refereeing since they graduated from Portage Collegiate more than 20 years ago, Banfield two years ahead of McKenzie. "We go down to Winkler, Gretna, Morden; we go to Treherne, Glenboro, St. Laurent, MacGregor, Gladstone... Ste. Rose du Lac, we do that too," said Banfield, this night taking his car after scooping up McKenzie outside his office. Banfield is a lift operator, McKenzie a provincial civil servant who's also reffed out of both Brandon and Dauphin regions over the years. "I played at Portage Collegiate for two years. Grade 11 we went to the provincials, and in Grade 12 we won it all. I was the MVP of the tournament, which was kind of nice," Banfield reminisced. "Wayne was the first guy I refereed with," said McKenzie.

There are 25 refs operating out of Portage, including one woman, and there are no set pairs: A lot depends on who can get off work in time, or on the quality of the competition. They get a princely \$38 a game each, and 40 cents a kilometre for the driver. Most rural games start at 6 p.m. It's a bonus, of course, if Portage Collegiate is playing at home. "I have used holiday and bank time if they really, really need me," noted McKenzie.

Basketball is big time, up there with volleyball for pretty much every high school, and on the same scale as hockey and football for those schools that have them. And basketball comes with the worst weather and road conditions and earliest sundowns of any school sport. Just the week before, they'd had games cancelled by the deep-freeze, but the rule of thumb is if the schools haven't cancelled and the visiting team makes it, the refs should make it, too. This night there's only blowing snow on bare highways, and the full moon provides plenty of light. One time, said Banfield, "I went to Carman to ref, coming back, we just straddled the centre line because you couldn't see the road at all."

McKenzie laughed that at tournaments, once a ref makes it to the town on Friday, he might be there for the weekend, in case he can't make the drive back Saturday morning or other referees can't get through the storms. He's stayed in Glenboro at the coach's house throughout tournaments: "They open up their house, they feed you."

The chatting comes easily to these two old buddies. On the court, grinning amiably during stops in play, moving easily with the play, McKenzie is much louder than Banfield, both completely in control without getting all-attitude about it. McKenzie's 'and-one call' is a flourishing piece of artistry as he signals the basket and foul shot.

Banfield reckons they do about 100 games each during the basketball season, which runs barely three months, but gets seriously intense. Varsity two nights a week, junior varsity the other two nights, tournaments galore Fridays and Saturdays, all craving certified referees. Like most high school sports sanctioned by the Manitoba High School Athletics Association, basketball could use more officials, especially younger ones. Distances between schools and the ability to get off work in time are huge: it's 196 kilometres each way from Portage to Ste. Rose du Lac, 160 km each way to Gretna, only a few kilometres less to Altona. Many of the smaller communities don't have their own officials living in town. "Winkler hasn't had anyone to cover for a long time," said Banfield. "I do Winkler a lot. (Two days hence) I'm down in Winkler, I'm back Friday and Saturday for a tournament." The sidelines might be tight in Carman Collegiate's gym, but it is "one of the good ones," Banfield said.

They both love doing games at Winkler's Garden Valley Collegiate -- the gym there is enormous. No need for players to worry about going splat on a gym mat pegged to the wall half a step after putting up a layup. "They made it good for basketball. A bit of running, but lots of room on the sides," Banfield pointed out. On the other hand, "Elm Creek is a very, very small gym." They have to be nimble at times, said McKenzie. "Sometimes, the scorer's table is on the court, woo-hoo, you do a little side step." Low ceilings aren't quite as detrimental to basketball as they are to volleyball, but, still, you need to get an arc on a shot... "PCI, the old gym, that was pretty bad for throwing three-pointers," Banfield pointed out, to which McKenzie chipped in: "You pretty much had to shoot them through the rafters."

Speaking of three-point lines and keys, international rules are in effect these days, but sometimes gyms still have the NBA configurations, depending on how much money school trustees can afford to budget for painting new lines. Sometimes, if the gyms are really small, there are ground rules, McKenzie said. Once a team has brought the ball over centre, it may be allowed to take it back into the other side over 'a floating centre' a certain distance without incurring an over-and-back call. "It's one of those nuances as a referee." He remembered a crucial turnover in Swan Valley because there were so many multicoloured lines marked on the floor, one team got confused about which lines ruled that game -- the blue, black, red, brown, yellow, green, white lines, the ones for volleyball, badminton, floor hockey, wall-to-wall cross-court basketball.

Being seen often by one school isn't a drawback, said Banfield: "Players and coaches get to know how you call a game." And they remember players. McKenzie refereed Tammy Mahon from Treherne, a real treat for him to see up close, one of the best student athletes Manitoba has ever produced and the MHSAA female athlete of the half-century. "It's very nice to referee kids like that who go on," Banfield said, as McKenzie recalled, "One time, (Brandon high school) Neelin's starting five went on to college."

They cherish being assigned to officiate Habs and Leafs, Red Sox and Yankees. Huh? "They'll put us in Treherne-Glenboro, which are tough games. There's some good battles," Banfield said. "They have good programs, good coaching," so they always have good teams, McKenzie said. "You go to Glenboro and Treherne in the playoffs, go early" to get a seat. "They bring garbage-can lids and cutoff hockey sticks (to bang) -- I love reffing then. It becomes

a sea of green, a sea of blue." McKenzie remembered one coach up in the Dauphin and Swan River area who acted so badly that eventually he got kicked out of high school sports. But the refs don't get hassled a lot and can always turn to a teacher for help -- each school is required to have at least one teacher at a game, who's usually a coach. If it is a volunteer coach from outside the school, a teacher must be present on the bench.

This night in Carman, a mother starts giving them grief 22 seconds after opening tip-off of the girls' game and doesn't let up until the final buzzer. While the mom directs most of her loud invective into pointing out the shortcomings of other people's daughters on the Carman team, she reserves some for the guys with the whistles.

After 22 seconds: "So far I've seen three fouls." "Oh, foul! Come on!" "Double dribble!" "Fouled! Good grief!" "Oh come on, let's get some fouls out here, ref." At halftime, the refs laugh. Yeah, they can hear her; they're not impressed by her knowledge of the rules, and if it gets too bad, they can always ask the home team coach to deal with her. Banfield chortled: "You always get fans who go, 'In the key!' " over and over and over again. The doubleheader goes smoothly, Carman dominating both ends, everyone behaving on the court. There's one moment when the clock stops during play, but that's quickly rectified.

All things considered, it's a decent time to get back home in Portage la Prairie, about 10:30 p.m. Banfield and McKenzie are the experts in which places to eat in rural Manitoba that are still open late in the evening, though, alas, the list is short. They talked briefly about one fellow who stopped reffing because it took him away from home too much. "It takes a toll. Your home life suffers," said Banfield, but his family is supportive. And with a big laugh, "I enjoy reffing basketball; it makes the winter go faster."