

# SPORTORIALS

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**PUTTING  
PEOPLE  
FIRST**

**DONNIE  
EPPLEY:  
JOURNEY TO IAABO  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



**IS EXPANDING!**

**CREATING  
A SUMMER PLAN**

**FROM DESERT STORM  
TO THE COURT  
COLONEL FRANK  
HANCOCK'S STORY**

**DEAD OR  
ALIVE:  
WHERE'S  
YOUR FOCUS?**

**SPOTLIGHT ON INTERPRETERS**

**FATHER/SON DYNAMIC DUO**

**LEE AND MIKE PAVLOT**



"As he prepares to step into the Executive Director role, Eppley aims to build on the legacy of his predecessors, with a focus on education and membership growth."

Donnie Eppley, page 7



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The International Association of Approved Basketball Officials, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of basketball officiating, through the proper training of applicants by visual and written aids; constant supervision by board proctors and dissemination of rule changes and interpretations.

On the cover: LaTasha Pearson, Board 6, Connecticut



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# DIRECTOR'S COURT

## THE IAABO CREW

**A**s this report represents the thirty-fourth and final for this Executive Director, credit must be given where credit is due. In July 2019, I was contracted to succeed Tom Lopes as IAABO Executive Director. Tom had served for eleven years and demonstrated outstanding leadership while developing a first-class team. In my inaugural report, I wrote how I perceived myself as the referee in a three-person crew with the inherited staff as the U-1 and U-2. For approximately nine months, I observed from the trail position to see how the operations flowed. Just as we were all settling in and adjusting, the country and the world were hit by the COVID 19 pandemic. Numerous adjustments needed to be made both to operations and the delivery of our educational materials. Shortly thereafter, we were no longer able to reproduce the Rules and Case Books in our Handbook. This was something that all members had been used to for a very long time. It was at this time the team shifted into high gear. Within one hundred and twenty days, the Team released its first edition of the **IAABO Rules Guide** proving that with every obstacle, there comes opportunity. This publication has led to many new developments in education, training, development, and continuous instruction for our members and prospects.

With the newly established roles of Director of Membership and Technology and Director of Learning and Development, membership growth and educational materials blossomed. The Team was operating at levels never seen before in IAABO's one-hundred-year history. Never has so much been accomplished by so few. I have spent the last eighteen months preparing IAABO and the Team for this day. I would like to thank the Officers and Executive Committee who have served during the last six years. Thanks to co-coordinators Dan Shepardson, David Smith, and Layne Drexel for your contributions to the educational materials. Thanks to Joe Gabriel, Julie Goupille, and Julie Bradstreet for tireless support in the areas of technology and program production. Thank you, TJ Halliday, for developing and leading the educational team to heights never imagined. Thank you, Donnie Eppley, for twenty-five years of dedicated service as a true IAABO soldier and more importantly my dear friend.

The time has come, and the baton is being passed to a well-deserving Executive Director, Donnie Eppley.

The people are in place, the membership is growing, and the educational materials are the best in the world. My job is complete, and that's the way it should be!

Stay IAABO, for the best is yet to come.

Sincerely,

*Felix Addeo*



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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**I** was scrolling through some social media sites the other day contemplating what my next President's message would be about, when I came across a valedictorian speech given by a young gentleman named Kyle Martin at The King's Academy. I have no idea what made me stop and listen, however after hearing and seeing the message at the end, there was an invitation to share with others. I decided that his message is very relatable to our avocation.

The theme of his message was, "Have no regrets in the 16th second."

It doesn't sound like it is related to officiating, but let me explain. His speech is about how euphoric it is when you achieve your life goal. It would be similar to when you first hear that you got that gold medal game assignment, or appointment to the next higher level of competition. It's the pride you feel in that moment in time, for approximately 15 seconds.

Kyle goes on to explain that there must come the 16th second when you say, "That's it?" "What just happened?" "Why am I not feeling anything else?"

Working hard to achieve your goals is good, but it should not be done for the sole purpose of achieving a goal at the expense of relationships with others.

Take a moment to self-reflect specifically about a goal that you are striving to reach—something that was the, "end all, be all." Is it the path you chose over your partner in life, or even money you pursued at the detriment of your family? Instead of that Instagram-worthy picture, was it striving to be famous at the expense of your loyal friends because you are self-absorbed?

A lesson learned should be a lesson shared, so here is Kevin's lesson:

"Have no regrets in the 16th second. Nothing is more important than your healthy relationships. Not your goals, not your successes, and here is why: relationships are where we get to influence, impact and change people's lives. Your life cannot be meaningful without them. Focus on what matters. Do not fear failure, but be terrified of regret. Giving up is the birth of regret."

I could not say any of this better myself

*Don Thorne*



# CONTRIBUTORS



**Al Battista** is a member of IAABO Board No.12, District of Columbia and has been an IAABO member since 1978. He is the Board Interpreter and is also a Regional Scout for the NBA.

**Joe Maurer** Odenton, MD, has been officiating since 1994. He serves on the IAABO Education and Development Committee and is the current assigner of Board 23 in Central Maryland.



**David Futey** is a member of IAABO Colorado Board 4, Area 6 and IAABO Board 801, the Women's Collegiate Basketball Officials Organization (WCBOO) Education Team. He resides in Colorado Springs.

**Jody Mrakovich, PA-C**, has been a physician assistant since 1993. At Bashline Family Practice (MDVIP model), she treats root causes of disease and empowers patients through nutrition, lifestyle, and preventive care, guided by the principles of proactive medicine.



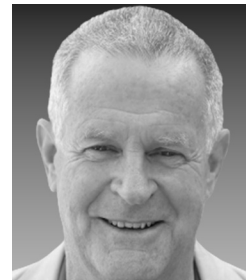
**T.J. Halliday** has been an IAABO member since 1985. He is also a Life Member and serves as the Director of Learning and Development for IAABO, Inc. He has presented at the IAABO Fall seminar every year since 2008.

**Charlene Shepherd**, Bd. 6, CT has been a member of IAABO since 2006. She serves as the Interpreter for Board 6. Charlene was inducted into Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016.



**Bill Gerencer** has been a member of IAABO Board 21 since 2014 and brings a wealth of experience from his 20-year career as a corporate trainer for the New England Working Waterfront.

**Dan Shepardson** is one of IAABO Inc.'s four Co-coordinators and is the Board Interpreter for Bd. 105 VT. He has officiated for nearly 40 years, and is the former Activities Director at Champlain Valley Union HS in Hinesburg, VT.



**Alan Goldberger** is a sports law attorney and recognized legal authority for game officials. He is a member of IAABO Board No. 33, New Jersey and is the IAABO Parliamentarian and the author of Sports Officiating – A Legal Guide.



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# DONNIE EPPLEY: A JOURNEY TO BECOMING IAABO'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by Joe Maurer

Anyone familiar with the International Association of Approved Basketball Officials, Inc. (IAABO) recognizes the name Donnie Eppley. It appears in nearly every email, publication, and educational resource distributed to IAABO's approximately 17,000 members across 200 local boards in 38 U.S. states and several countries. Next month, Eppley will ascend to the pinnacle of IAABO leadership as he assumes the role of Executive Director, succeeding Felix Addeo, who has served with distinction since 2019.

The Executive Director of IAABO holds a pivotal leadership position, overseeing the organization's operations, strategic direction, and mission to advance basketball officiating worldwide. Responsibilities include managing training programs like IAABO University, supporting global membership, and promoting fair play and sportsmanship. The role also entails financial oversight, member engagement, and collaboration with basketball organizations to uphold IAABO's standards of excellence.

## Humble Beginnings

Donnie Eppley grew up in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, as one of five siblings—sisters Debbie, Margi, and Barbara, and brother Mike. A standout athlete, Donnie excelled in multiple sports during his youth, particularly football, where he starred as a quarterback at Susquenita and Carlisle High Schools. Despite receiving several college scholarship offers, he made the mature decision to forgo a football career and enlist in the Army, prioritizing financial stability to build his future.

Eppley's military career began at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, but a pivotal moment came during his assignment at Sullivan Barracks in Mannheim, Germany. While playing flag football, he learned about opportunities to officiate sports. The Army needed capable individuals to manage games, and the pay was attractive. Eppley embraced the role, officiating flag football, basketball, soccer, and softball. Basketball, in particular, captured his interest. Combining his personable demeanor, work ethic, and organizational skills with his love for sports, he quickly made an impact across Germany.

Eppley credits the Army's officiating clinics, led by IAABO legends like Paul "Frosty" Francis, Danny Doss, and Hank Nichols, for shaping his early career. These mentors provided invaluable guidance, fostering his passion for officiating. As he trained more in basketball, he expanded his network and was open to traveling beyond the local area.

A two-and-a-half-year return to Carlisle had Eppley continue to work for the Army and referee high school



Donnie tips off the 2007 PA 6A Boys Championship Game

basketball. Another overseas assignment brought him and his family to Patton Barracks in Heidelberg, Germany. There, his officiating career flourished. His leadership, attention to detail, and interpersonal skills caught the attention of prominent officials, who encouraged him to take on administrative roles, such as organizing training

**Donnie Eppley's journey from a small-town athlete to a global leader in basketball officiating reflects his unwavering commitment to the sport and its community.**

camps and recruiting officials. Eppley traveled across Europe, officiating games and leading clinics while building lasting connections.

In a 2014 Army.mil article, Ganesa Robinson quoted Bob Vogt, deputy director of Soldier and Community Recreation, IMCOM G9, who praised Eppley's impact: "Don worked for me in Europe as the Senior Officiating Coordinator from 1993 to 1999. Besides being an incredible Soldier, he's an amazing referee. His leadership skills were obvious as he dealt with Soldier-athletes on the court."

## Joining IAABO

After retiring from a 20-year Army career in 2001, Eppley returned to the U.S. and continued officiating high school basketball, eventually advancing to the collegiate level. His leadership and dedication were quickly recognized, leading to an opportunity to join IAABO's international office.

At a basketball tournament in central Pennsylvania, Eppley met Scott Young, a young official from the Philadelphia area. The two formed an immediate bond. Young recalls, "Donnie had a way of being both a friend and a mentor. He helped me grow not only as an official but as a person."

Their relationship grew through years of working high school and NCAA Division I games together. Young remains impressed by Eppley's relentless drive and care for others, noting, "There's no off switch with him—it's 24/7. Donnie is always looking to position officials for success, helping them improve and find opportunities. No one gives back more."

Eppley's reputation as a mentor extends to his family. His daughter, Stephanie Eppley Shepherd, fondly remembers growing up in Germany and watching her father progress through the ranks of officiating. "Dad always enjoyed working with others and meeting new people," she said. "Athletics were a big part of his life, and he always took time to mentor others." She especially noted a highlight in their Army careers: "We overlapped for a couple of years, and as a matter of fact, he was able to pin me sergeant in a ceremony in Carlisle."

Young describes Eppley's humility as his defining trait: "He doesn't seek the limelight. He's accomplished so much in officiating, but many of his contributions go unnoticed."

Story continues on the next page



# DONNIE EPPLEY (CONT'D)



*Richard Pitino explaining his point of view*

expanded as he became an assigner, starting with recreational and high school games in the Mid-Penn Conference for the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA). He later became a Division III assigner. Demonstrating his passion for developing officials, Eppley partnered with Mike Chesney to form the Eastern Basketball Officiating Alliance (EBOA), a collaborative organization dedicated to standardizing training and education for small college officials. The EBOA, encompassing six Division III conferences and two Division II conferences, emphasizes consistent officiating to foster career development.

***“There’s no off switch with him—it’s 24/7. Donnie is always looking to position officials for success, helping them improve and find opportunities.”***

College Officiating Consortium (COC), which includes the Big Ten, Mountain West, Mid-American (MAC), Summit, and Horizon Leagues. These conferences share a unified staff and consistent officiating standards.

Within IAABO, Eppley’s career progressed from staff associate in 2001 to Associate Executive Director in 2009, and then to Director of Membership and Technology in 2019. His upcoming role as Executive Director marks the culmination of decades of dedication.

Eppley credits IAABO pioneers Peter Carroll, Tom Lopes, and Felix Addeo for shaping the organization. “Without these dedicated men, there is no IAABO,” he said. Reflecting on their leadership, he noted how Carroll laid the foundation, Lopes elevated the organization, and Addeo took it to new heights.



## Rise to Leadership

After completing their tour in Heidelberg, the Eppley family returned to Carlisle, where Donnie spent his final two years of military service at the United States Army War College at Carlisle Barracks. Following his retirement, he continued officiating high school and collegiate basketball while embracing a full-time role with IAABO. Under the mentorship of Board 12 officiating luminaries Paul “Jacky” Loube and Leonard “Spike” Bauroth, he honed his skills in referee development and organizational leadership, commuting over 160 miles daily to IAABO’s Germantown, MD office.

Eppley’s officiating career

Today, Eppley serves as the Coordinator of Men’s Basketball Officials for the Horizon League, part of the

## Vision for IAABO

As he prepares to step into the Executive Director role, Eppley aims to build on the legacy of his predecessors, with a focus on education and membership growth. “We want to see IAABO expand to all 50 states,” he said. He views his leadership position as a platform to promote IAABO’s importance to the officiating community and hopes to forge partnerships, such as with the NBA and international basketball, to position IAABO as a cornerstone of basketball officiating.

Outside of his professional life, Eppley cherishes time with his family. His wife of over 40 years, Terrie, has been a steadfast supporter since his Army days. In recent years, he built a home office with space for Terrie, allowing them to spend more time together. His children, Jason, and Stephanie, live nearby, and he delights in visits with his grandchildren: Christian (19), Ava (13), Blake (12), Cameron (11), and Audrey (8). He especially loves sharing stories about their academic achievements and their prowess on the sports fields.

Donnie Eppley’s journey from a small-town athlete to a global leader in basketball officiating reflects his unwavering commitment to the sport and its

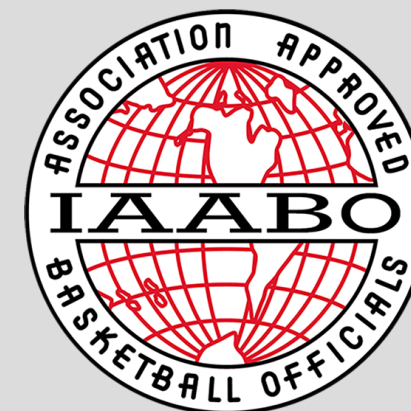


*Roger MacTavish and Donnie, 2019*

community. As he takes the helm of IAABO, his humility, leadership, and passion will undoubtedly guide the organization to new heights.



*Donnie and Tom Lopes, 2019*





# DEAD OR ALIVE: WHERE'S YOUR FOCUS?

by Charlene Shepard



There is nothing better than watching an exciting, fast-paced basketball game. Whether it is two ranked opponents or cross-town rivals, the excitement level seems to intensify during these contests. But now that I think about it, I lied. There is something much better than watching...being assigned to and officiating this kind of game is even more exhilarating; but I digress.

I've officiated some of my best games while sitting on the couch and watching the game on TV. I see EVERYTHING that happens and often wonder why those officials don't see what I do. The best thing about being a "spectator" is that, besides yelling at the TV (and having no worries about getting tossed from the game), I get to watch the ball no matter where it is on the court.

Everyone likes the action that occurs during a live ball...passing, screening, scoring, great defense. It is what takes a game from good to great. Unfortunately, when we are on the court and officiating a game, we don't always get to see everything that is taking place during a live ball (unless you're ball-watching, and I would *not* recommend that). However, what happens during a dead ball is just as important in maintaining the integrity of the game.

Have you ever heard the phrase, **"When the ball is dead, we must become alive"**? As veteran officials, we tend to repeat things to younger officials without necessarily putting them into context.

*What exactly are we looking for when the ball becomes dead? What type of fouls, if any, can be assessed? Where do I need to stand during a time-out? How and where are we resuming play?* The answers to these and many other questions are critical in ensuring the game resumes properly. More importantly, if we are thinking about what we need to do next, then we remain in a live state of mind, even when the ball is dead.

This is where the IAABO Rules Guide (Chapter 6) and the IAABO Crew of Two and Crew of Three manuals come in to play. These publications provide officials with all the information they need to know how to stay "alive" when the ball is dead.

Whenever we sound the whistle, the clock should stop—but do we always check to make sure that happened? We should be checking to ensure that the game clock (and shot clock, if used), have properly stopped. *Did I make eye contact with my partner? If I'm the ruling official, can they tell from my signals why the stoppage is occurring (foul, violation, or time-out)? Do we need to switch? Is the ball going in the opposite direction? Will a throw-in need to be administered?*

*If a time-out has been requested, is the team that is requesting the time-out in control of the ball before I sound my whistle? Is a player on that team or the head coach requesting the time-out? If the ball was already dead, can either team request or be granted a time-out? (Yes, they can.) Once the time-out has been granted, have I allowed the players to return to the bench area before reporting the time-out to the scorer's table?*

*Where should officials stand during 30-second time-out?* (One official stands on the division line, in front of the center circle, and the other at the throw-in spot, using the proper ball-placement mechanic.) What about a 60-second time-out? (One official stands on the division line, behind the center circle, and the other at the throw-in spot.) (For the record, there is no such thing as a FULL time-out! Teams get a FULL 30 seconds or a FULL 60 seconds.) *Am I aware of how many time-outs remain for each team? Better yet, who is entitled to the next alternating-possession throw-in?*

*If the whistle has been sounded to assess a foul, who is the foul against: the offense or the defense? If the foul is assessed to the offense, can we shoot free throws? If the foul has been assessed on the defense, is it a shooting foul? Do we have continuous motion and the potential for an "and-1"? Have I informed my partner if the ball went into the basket? How many free throws will be attempted? If the foul was assessed on a teammate of the shooter, when does the ball become dead? (Immediately.) What happens when illegal contact occurs after the whistle has been blown? What type of foul is this? (If the contact is intentional, it's either a technical or a flagrant foul; if the contact is incidental, it is ignored.)*

*When the quarter ends, when does the ball become dead? What if there is a try as the horn sounds? (The quarter ends when a try is successful or when it is evident the try will not be successful.) What if the shooter is fouled just before time expires? (The offended player shoots the free throws with the lane spaces cleared, and the quarter ends following the last free throw.)*

As you can see, there's a lot of activity and thinking that should take place when the ball is dead. Think I'm kidding? Even Bon Jovi, who sings "Wanted: Dead or Alive" understands the significance of both these states. The next time you happen to be officiating, pay attention to what you and your partner(s) are or should be doing during a dead ball. The live ball has the action everyone pays to see, but as officials, we must remain **ALIVE** and **ALERT** during dead balls because they can have a significant impact on the game if we lose focus.

**I been everywhere, oh yeah  
Still I'm standing tall  
I've seen a million faces  
And I've rocked them all.**





# SPOTLIGHT ON INTERPRETERS

## LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON: A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP IN BASKETBALL OFFICIATING

by Joe Maurer



**LEE PAVLOT**  
Board 51, New York

**F**ather-son duo Lee and Mike Pavlot are making their mark in high school basketball officiating in New York State. IAABO Life Member (2015) Lee Pavlot, the elder statesman, was born in Bridgewater, NY, a small town about

20 miles south of Utica. He has been an IAABO member for over 60 years, beginning his basketball legacy in 1965 with Utica Board 51. Professionally, it is no surprise that a rule-follower like Lee would have full-time employment as a New York State Trooper and Investigator for the Bureau of Criminal Investigations. Twenty-five years into his officiating career, he became the Board Interpreter in 1990, a role he has cherished for over 35 years.

Using his local board role as a springboard, Lee was appointed the top rules Interpreter for the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) in 2006, an honorable distinction. One could say Lee has forgotten more about basketball than most officials will ever know.

Lee has been married to his wife, Doris, for 62 years. They have two children, Michelle and Michael, as well as six grandchildren. Off the court, Lee spent 45 years in Little League Baseball as a coach and umpire, including 40 years as league president. He is also a 40-year charter member of the Utica-East Optimist International Club, where he has served as secretary for several years.

His son, Mike, has carried the family torch as a rules Interpreter for Watertown Board 59. He became IAABO-certified in 1991, around the time his father became interpreter for Board 51. Mike is currently a financial planner and partner at Ford English Financial Group, specializing in the needs of educators. A former teacher and coach in the Thousand Islands Central School District, Mike transitioned to financial planning to support teachers in planning their futures. He continues his educational career by guiding

educators and emphasizing basketball rules to officials in New York State.

Mike is married to Suzanne and has three children: twins Ryan and Jenna (19) and Tyler (18). A self-proclaimed basketball junkie, Mike loves discussing rules and shares his

father's passion for doing things the "right way." During playoff season, he's glued to the game. "Last year, from Tuesday to Sunday, I watched 26 games between the ACC Men's Tournament and the NYS High School Tournament. That was a great week!" he remarks.

**Sportorials:** Can you describe the innovative approach you've taken with IAABO tools and what inspired it?

**Lee Pavlot:** I've attended IAABO conferences semi-annually, and now annually, for as long as I can remember. They provide valuable information and creative ways to present rule interpretations and proper mechanics. The use of videos has been invaluable.

**Mike Pavlot:** As a former teacher, I'm amazed by what IAABO has designed and implemented. I love the goal of ensuring every candidate learns consistently. IAABO has invested significant time and resources into developing an effective curriculum and a turnkey resource for interpreters. We've fully integrated online courses with in-person classes to give every candidate—new and seasoned—the opportunity to participate and understand correct rulings. My biggest inspiration comes from attending the Fall Seminar, where IAABO's resources are on full display. I encourage everyone—not just Interpreters—to attend, as it provides the drive and motivation to use these incredible tools to make your Board and its members the best they can be.

**S:** How has your use of IAABO tools improved your work as an interpreter?

**LP:** After attending conference presentations, I've used



**MIKE PAVLOT**  
Board 59, New York

them as examples for my own IAABO board. The new IAABO handbook, particularly its detailed mechanics section, is another valuable tool.

**MP:** The ability to access courses year-round is a game-changer. It allows us to recruit and certify members anytime, unlike in the past when they had to wait for specific windows. This lets new officials gain experience in the off-season before the "real" season begins. Videos and plays from IAABO and RQ+ provide a significant edge in teaching officiating techniques. If we identify a weakness in rule interpretation, we can easily provide multiple video examples to align our members.

**S:** What challenges have you faced when implementing these tools, and how did you overcome them?

**LP:** I haven't faced many challenges with the tools. If anything, the challenge is getting veteran officials to adopt updated mechanics.

**MP:** Our biggest challenge is finding a local meeting space with proper technology to utilize IAABO's tools. Since COVID, venues are scarce and often lack audio-visual equipment. As a small board, we lack the resources to purchase and store our own equipment, so we rely on members loaning projectors and screens. We've tried to identify suitable facilities, but scheduling conflicts often arise.

**S:** Can you share a specific success story or achievement that resulted from your approach?

**LP:** Younger officials are often easier to train as they're eager to advance. While I don't have a specific example, several younger officials have quickly climbed the ranks through training.

**MP:** We've had excellent young officials advance faster than in years past. Off-season game opportunities and mentorship from members have been critical to their success. Video training is invaluable—it shows that missed calls often stem from poor positioning rather than errors in judgment. A different angle can make all the difference. Hearing coaches request younger officials for high-level playoff games is the ultimate success.

**S:** How do you engage with members to ensure they benefit from the IAABO tools you're using?

**LP:** I engage members by observing games and suggesting improvements, often focusing on proper mechanics, such as moving to get better angles or maintaining eye contact with partners.

**MP:** During in-person meetings, we encourage members to use the local website, which links seamlessly to the IAABO site. We urge them to watch plays and submit answers on RQ+. Our secretary/treasurer, Shane Wisner, does an outstanding job keeping the website updated, which is vital for communication and utilizing IAABO tools.

**S:** Are there any IAABO tools or features you believe are underutilized but could make a big impact?

**LP:** I don't believe any tools are underutilized. The resources provided for Interpreters and members are highly effective.

**MP:** I've underutilized the Game Simulator and would love to incorporate it more. Our challenge is finding a venue suitable for multimedia displays for 50 members. I wish members could see the effort behind these tools. We owe a debt of gratitude to IAABO and leaders like Felix Addeo,

Donnie Eppley, TJ Halliday, Layne Drexel, Dan Shepardson, Dave Smith, Julie Goupille, and others. Attending a seminar reveals the inner workings, and we're incredibly fortunate.

**S:** What advice would you give to other Interpreters/Secretaries who want to make better use of IAABO tools?

**LP:** Attend the IAABO conference—it's a valuable resource for Interpreters. The presentations break down rules and mechanics thoroughly, ensuring a clear understanding.

**MP:** Get to the seminar, no matter the cost or location. It's essential. Use IAABO's tools to teach consistency at our level—our game differs from college or professional basketball. Stick to our manual and rulebook, which are second to none. As Interpreters, we're the "keepers of the game." We must combat misinformation, like incorrect rule interpretations from game announcers, by using these tools to stay true to the game. No official is above it. Spend time on the IAABO website and connect with those who developed these resources—they always make time for us.

**S:** How do you stay current with the latest features and updates of IAABO resources?

**LP:** The IAABO website and emailed videos are valuable tools. Being able to contact our designated Co-coordinator of Interpreters directly with questions is also incredibly helpful.

**MP:** Regularly reviewing the website and staying attuned to IAABO correspondence keeps me current. Their communication, especially with Interpreters, is excellent, and conference calls help us stay in the loop.

**S:** What feedback have you received from your peers or members about your innovative practices?

**LP:** Members appreciate my presentations at monthly meetings and often call to clarify rule interpretations. IAABO's video library makes my presentations easier.

**MP:** Members enjoy being involved; they love watching and discussing videos. Small-group test reviews are a hit, as members open up more than in large groups or in front of the Interpreter.

**S:** What future plans do you have to continue innovating or improving how you use IAABO tools?

**LP:** I'll continue attending IAABO conferences for their valuable insights and bring that knowledge back to my local board and others across New York State.

**MP:** In officiating, the goal is always to improve. With so many resources, the challenge is finding time to implement them all. My biggest goal is to recruit and develop young officials.

In closing, Mike credits his father for his love and passion for the game. "Watching and learning from him has been the best experience anyone could have; I couldn't be luckier," he says. He still calls his father after every game, even after 30 years.

"My father embodies the IAABO motto, 'One rule, one interpretation.' He's what an IAABO official is all about: doing things the right way. I'm proud to have learned this from him and strive to teach officials the same way."

IAABO is fortunate to have Lee and Mike Pavlot as officials and Interpreters. They are truly stewards of the game.





## 2025 ALL-AMERICAN ALL-STAR GAMES



Congratulations to the IAABO members selected to officiate the prestigious McDonald's All-American Games! Left to right, Jordan Gasaway, Board 134, Carlene Hightower, Board 193 NJ and Tenisha Chase, Board 134 MD, took the court to officiate one of the nation's premier girls high school basketball events.



Selected to officiate the boys game were, left to right, Darnell Cudjoe, Board 37 NY, Dwight Stargell (Non IAABO), Tony Meeks, Board 134 MD and Shawn Holder, Board 37 NY. IAABO is proud of the excellence and professionalism these officials brought to this high-profile event.

## LIFE MEMBERSHIP CLASS OF 2025



IAABO proudly extends heartfelt congratulations to the Life Membership Class of 2025, an extraordinary group of individuals whose dedication, passion, and service have left an enduring mark on the officiating community. Receiving Life Membership, IAABO's highest honor, is a testament to decades of unwavering commitment to the advancement of basketball officiating, the mentorship of fellow officials, and the betterment of the game itself.

**This year's distinguished honorees are:**



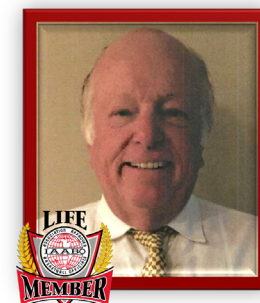
**Tom Bennett**  
Board 4, CO



**Dan Bryant**  
Board 130, MA



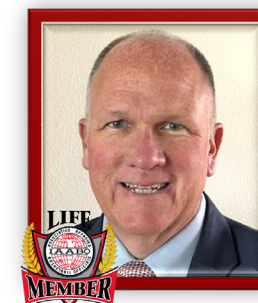
**Ken Jordan**  
Board 37, NY



**Ed McCloskey**



**Jim Moran**



**Paul Webber**



**Craig Zysk**

These outstanding individuals have exemplified the values of leadership, integrity, and excellence that define IAABO's mission. Their contributions have strengthened local boards, elevated the standards of officiating, and inspired countless officials across generations.

They will be formally honored at the Life Membership Banquet on September 13, 2025, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Congratulations once again to the Class of 2025, we thank you for your exceptional service and celebrate this well-deserved recognition!



# YOUR OFFICIATING RESUME

by David Futey

A resume that highlights your officiating development process, accomplishments and advancement should be part of your officiating toolbox. Whether you are seeking to maintain or advance in ranking and assignments within your association or desire to pursue a higher level of officiating, a well-crafted resume that differentiates you will assist with attaining those goals.

You should first consider your intended audience and objectives before beginning to develop your officiating resume. This might result in creating separate resumes to address those specific audiences and objectives. They might include:

1. Yourself: consider this resume a curriculum vitae (CV), a detailed document that tracks ALL your officiating experience and accomplishments. This can then be used to create refined and content-focused resumes.
2. Your association: have a resume available if your association requires information for its ranking process or other purposes.
3. Current assignor(s) and coordinator(s): create a version of your resume to keep your assignor(s) and coordinator(s) informed annually of recent season and off-season activities such as recognition received, camps attended, mentoring conducted, and other related basketball officiating involvement.
4. Prospective assignors and coordinators: create a resume that provides an introduction and is specific to the objective such as being hired at a higher level. This resume would also be useful when changing associations due to job change or other circumstances.

When thinking about your officiating experience to highlight in a resume, think about what makes your officiating background unique and differentiates you. As we participate in an officiating crew, we each bring our own strengths to enable the crew to successfully manage and fairly administrate the game before us. What strengths have you developed through your officiating activities to highlight? This will help you in creating an objective statement and identify what you want to incorporate in your various resumes.

The following are suggestions to consider as you develop your officiating resume.

**Resume Format and Content Suggestions**

1. Keep it to one page and have one-inch margins.
2. Keep it visually pleasing, do not overcrowd the page, leave some blank spaces.
3. Font size (12 pt), a professional font, with consistent formatting.
4. If you decide to use color, bold or italics, use them purposefully.
5. Use a heading for each section.

**Heading**

In the resume heading, provide your name, contact information and a professional photograph. The latter is particularly important when considering college-level attainment and advancement or if transferring from one association to another. It is suggested to be dressed professionally in the photo, not in your officiating uniform.

**Objective**

If you use an objective section, keep it to one to two sentences that state your short- and long-term officiating goals.

**Education**

List your college degree(s) you have earned.

**Officiating Experience**

In this section, provide information such as the highest level officiated, conference(s) worked if college, past high school officiating experience if a transfer, post-season tournaments officiated and other related experience. List assignors and conference supervisors and ensure to use the correct person and contact information.

**Officiating Development**

List of camps and clinics you have attended along with online and other officiating education.

**References**

List two to three mentors or references that have assisted in your officiating development. Consider using assignors, mentors, veteran officials you have worked with, and camp directors. Be sure to ask the references for permission to use them and confirm their correct contact information prior to listing them.

**Optional**

**Professional Experience**

Consider providing your present employer. This offers your potential assignor insight into your availability.

**Other Officiating Experience**

Provide information on other sports you officiate as this provides additional background on your officiating experience and commitment to officiating.

In conclusion, you might consider having multiple resumes if officiating at the high school level and pursuing or having already attained the college level, similar to how you may craft a professional resume for each specific job application. Do not exaggerate your abilities. If your resume identifies a certain level of abilities but your on-court demonstrates lesser abilities, this might cause an unnecessary negative evaluation.

Once you have completed a draft, have someone—preferably one familiar with your officiating background—proofread the resume for appearance, content and readability. Save the finalized resume in PDF and Word formats to support your future officiating career.



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# COMMUNICATION

by Bill Gerencer

**Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. said, “Speak clearly, if you speak at all.”**

As basketball officials we are always communicating. From the moment we walk into the gym, throughout the pregame, game, and until we approve the final score, we communicate.

Walking into the gym sends a message: Did we get there at the appropriate time? What message are we sending with our attire? By arriving at the appropriate time—early, and dressed professionally—we indicate to game management that we take their event seriously and are prepared, by virtue of our training and professionalism, to give them their money’s worth.

Conducting our pregame duties speaks to everyone in the gym. How we interact as a crew of officials with game management, coaches, table personnel, players, and fans sends a message. Let’s make sure it is the right one (e.g., being too “chummy” with one of the coaches is a bad look, being unfriendly is worse).

**During the game we communicate in multiple ways. It doesn’t matter what level we are officiating, using rules-based language and signals appropriate for that level is critical. Like speaking any language, if we do it poorly, it can lead to confusion. Confusion can cause emotions to rise; good communication tends to calm things down.**

Of course, our primary function is adherence to the rules of the game. Even when we aren’t blowing our whistle, we are saying the rules are being followed.

During the game we communicate in multiple ways. It doesn’t matter what level we are officiating, using rules-based language and signals appropriate for that level is critical. Like speaking any language, if we do it poorly, it can lead to confusion. Confusion can cause emotions to rise; good communication tends to calm things down. That is why using the correct signals required by each level is so important. Signals are sign-language for all those in attendance. Getting the message right matters! Remember: adding emotion to our signals or being overly demonstrative draws attention to oneself, sending the wrong message.

For high school officials, all signals are illustrated in the IAABO manual and the NFHS Rules Book. It is a great idea to review and practice them in a mirror, including the sequence of signals used at the site: signal to stop the clock, freeze to make eye contact with partners, signal the violation or foul, count/disallow the goal, state color/number of offending player, state/signal foul type or signal violation, signal direction, indicate throw-in location, or number of free throws. Then hustle to the table to communicate with the scorer: count/disallow the goal, state color and state/signal number of offending player, state/signal type of foul, indicate throw-in spot or number of free throws. Practice makes permanent—speak and signal clearly!

Some situations do not include a stop-the-clock signal: five-

and ten-second counts, three-point tries and goals, or a tipped ball into the backcourt. All of these can be found in the IAABO manual.

It is a lot to remember when you are learning how to do this. One suggested tip to accompany most signals is to (softly) lock the knees as the signal is being given. This pushes the feet into the floor and keeps the body still. It is easier to understand a stationary official.

Getting the plays right is key, but we are also required to communicate with game management, table personnel, coaches, and players:

- Eye contact is important. Whether it is a partner, coach, table, or player, look them in the eye whenever it is appropriate.
- Body language is important. You are sending a message with every move you make.
- Remain poised when interacting with coaches and players. Calmly allow them to have a brief say, and answer in rules-based language—the shorter, the better. Let them have the last word and get back to work.

It is also important to differentiate when a coach is coaching or when they start “officiating.” If a coach starts to officiate, this could lead to game disruption. Take advantage of the next stoppage of play and address the situation in a professional manner. Of course, if this does not appease the situation, we have excellent rules-based communication tools: a warning or a technical foul (IAABO Rules Guide 18:3:C – Trying to influence an officials’ ruling). Remember, we are not specifically punishing, we are communicating through a ruling. Yes, a technical foul comes with consequences, but remember, it’s just another ruling. Keep your voice calm, keep your body language professional and remember to communicate with the table, coach, and your partners.

Finally, stay in character throughout the entire game. Never slack off no matter the score or situation. As the game end nears, use a stoppage in play to come together as a crew and quickly review scenarios such as fouling, or a coach requesting time-outs after a made basket or trapped ball handler. In a blowout, remember that every minute of the game is important to someone. Send the right message for the full contest.

If you are going to speak at all, speak clearly!



# THE SHOT CLOCK: EVOLUTION, USE, AND RULES IN HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

by Dan Shepardson

The shot clock, a staple in collegiate and professional basketball, is gradually finding its place in high school basketball across the United States. This timing device, designed to increase the pace of play and discourage stalling tactics, has been adopted by various state associations over the years. According to the NFHS, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) implemented the shot clock in 1996 for both boys’ and girls’ varsity basketball. California was the first state association to mandate a 35-second shot clock, aligning with NCAA men’s rules at that time. When the NFHS added the shot-clock rule by state adoption for the 2022-2023 season, eight more states (Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, and Washington) and the District of Columbia followed suit. States have varying reasons for adopting the shot clock, but for most, the move aims to align high school play more closely with higher levels of basketball and enhance the flow of the game.

In 2021, the NFHS Basketball Rules Committee voted to allow the use of the shot clock by “state association adoption,” which meant that the decision to implement the shot clock would be made individually by each state. This was a significant change since prior to this rule adoption, states that used the shot clock were considered to be non-compliant with NFHS rules and thus had to forfeit the opportunity for someone from their state to serve on the NFHS Basketball Rules Committee.

When the NFHS approved the 35-second shot clock for use in high school basketball effective for the 2022-23 season, it only mandated TWO items in the rule:

1. There **must be** two visible shot clocks.
2. The shot-clock period **must be** 35-seconds.

This second requirement, that the shot clock be 35 seconds, was made so that consistent data could be collected (e.g., scoring, possessions per game, etc.). That way, if and when a proposal is made to have the shot clock become a national rule, there will be data to make a more-informed decision.

The NFHS’ decision to allow the use of the shot clock by state association adoption has spurred a wave of implementation across the country. By the 2023-24 season, 21 state associations had implemented it, with additional states conducting trial runs. According to the NFHS, by the 2026-27 basketball season, 31 states will be using the shot clock in some capacity. Some states have adopted its use across all divisions, while some have adopted it only for their larger divisions.

Lastly, it is important to note that ALL decisions related to the use of the shot clock, e.g., partial resets on offensive rebounds or violations, or whether the shot clock is used to determine 10 seconds in the backcourt, are left to the state association’s discretion. The only mandates from the NFHS are there must be two visible clocks, and the shot clock period must be 35 seconds.

Will the shot clock become a national rule? With 31 states scheduled to be using it in some capacity by the 2026-27 season, it seems likely that a rule change will eventually be presented to make it a national rule. Will such a proposal pass, and the shot clock become required? Only time will tell!





# NATURAL SOLUTIONS

## FOR REFEREE ACHES AND PAINS: A FOCUS ON BACK, HIPS, AND KNEES

by Jody Mrakovich, PA-C

**A**s an official, you are no stranger to the physical demands of the job. Long hours on your feet, constant movement, and even the stress of travel can take a toll on your joints, especially your back, hips, and knees. Whether you are running up and down the court or spending hours in a car or plane, these activities can lead to stiffness, discomfort, and pain. Fortunately, there are natural ways to support your body, reduce inflammation, and improve recovery. Let's explore how a few simple diet and lifestyle changes can keep you performing at your best.

### The Impact of Travel on Joint Health

Frequent travel, whether by car or plane, can be tough on your body. Hours spent sitting in a cramped space reduce blood circulation and put added pressure on your lower back and hips. This can lead to tight muscles, joint discomfort, and a feeling of stiffness when you finally step onto the court.

**Pro Tip:** When traveling, try to take short breaks every 30-45 minutes to stretch and walk around. If flying, stand up and walk in the aisle or do gentle stretches in your seat to keep your blood flowing. Stretching your legs, hips, and back while seated can also help maintain circulation during long travel days.

### The Impact of Running on the Court

Officiating requires quick movements, constant pivoting, and frequent sprints—all of which place a significant strain on your joints. Over time, this can lead to inflammation, especially in weight-bearing areas like the knees, hips, and lower back. Keeping your body in balance through proper alignment and strengthening exercises can help reduce the risk of injury and manage aches and pains.

### Key Areas to Focus on for Joint Health

**1. Back:** A strong, flexible back is crucial for officials. The constant lateral movements and quick turns put stress on your spine and the surrounding muscles. Stretching your lower back regularly and strengthening your core can help relieve tension and prevent back pain.

**Back-friendly stretches:** Try gentle back stretches like the cat-cow stretch or child's pose to alleviate tightness. A strong core, including exercises like planks and bird-dogs, can stabilize the spine and protect against injury.

**2. Hips:** Long periods of sitting, whether in a car or plane, contribute to tight hip flexors. Over time, this can lead to hip pain or even lower back issues. Incorporating hip stretches and mobility exercises can help maintain flexibility and reduce pain.

**Hip stretches:** The pigeon pose, lunges, and seated forward bends can all open up tight hips. Pair them with hip-strengthening exercises like bridges to help stabilize the pelvic area and keep your hips in proper alignment.

**3. Knees:** Knees are especially vulnerable due to the constant running and jumping involved in officiating. Tight quadriceps, hamstrings, and calves can increase pressure on the knee joint, leading to discomfort or inflammation.

**Knee-friendly exercises:** Focus on strengthening the muscles around the knee with exercises like squats, lunges, and leg raises. Stretching the quads, hamstrings, and calves regularly will also help keep the knee joint mobile and reduce strain.

### Natural Anti-Inflammatory Foods for Joint Health

The foods you eat play a significant role in how your body responds to physical stress. If you are eating processed foods or refined sugars, you're promoting inflammation, which can make your joint pain worse.

On the other hand, whole, nutrient-dense foods can help reduce inflammation and support recovery.

- **Turmeric:** This golden spice contains curcumin, a compound with powerful anti-inflammatory properties. Add it to soups, smoothies, or teas for an easy way to fight inflammation.

- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** Found in fatty fish like salmon, sardines, and mackerel, omega-3s help reduce inflammation and support joint health. If you don't eat fish regularly, consider supplementing it with high-quality fish oil or plant-based options like flaxseeds and chia seeds.

- **Berries:** Blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries are rich in antioxidants, which can help protect your joints from oxidative stress and inflammation. Snack on them or add them to smoothies to get a burst of anti-inflammatory power.

- **Leafy Greens:** Spinach, kale, and other dark leafy greens are packed with vitamins and minerals that help reduce inflammation and support overall joint health.

- **Ginger:** Like turmeric, ginger has natural anti-inflammatory properties. Incorporate it into your diet by adding fresh ginger to teas or smoothies or use dried ginger in cooking.

### Hydration: The Key to Flexible Joints

You have probably heard it before, but staying hydrated is essential for joint health. Water helps keep your joints lubricated, allowing them to move smoothly without friction. Dehydration, on the other hand, can cause your joints to feel stiff and more prone to pain. When you are well-hydrated, your body's cells are better able to absorb nutrients and repair tissues, reducing soreness and promoting recovery.

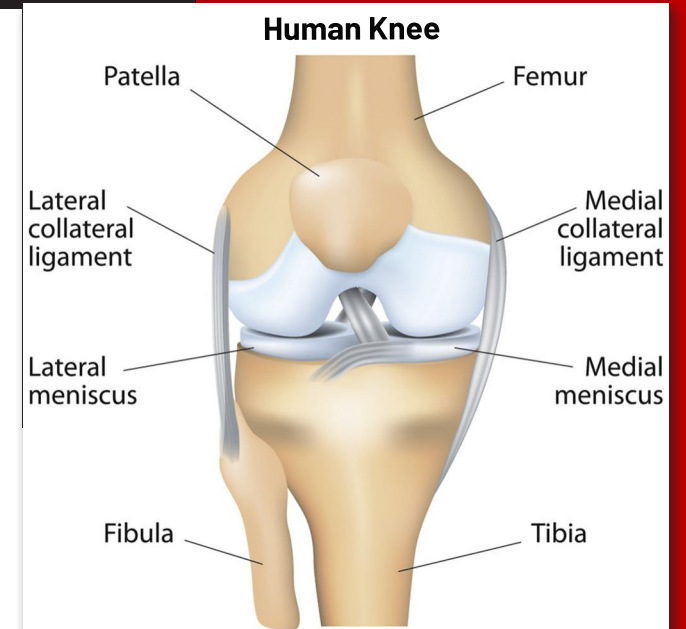
**Pro Tip:** Aim to drink water throughout the day and focus on staying hydrated before and after your games. Consider adding electrolytes (like a pinch of sea salt or a splash of coconut water) to your water to maintain balance and support muscle function.

### Avoiding Inflammatory, Processed Foods

When you are on the go, it can be tempting to grab a quick snack from a gas station or airport kiosk. Unfortunately, many processed foods are high in refined sugars, unhealthy fats, and preservatives—all of which can promote inflammation in the body.

### Final Thoughts

By incorporating these natural remedies into your lifestyle, you can better manage the aches and pains that come with officiating, aging, and life in general. Focus on anti-inflammatory foods, staying hydrated, and maintaining mobility through regular stretching and exercise. Your body will thank you, and you will be able to continue performing at your best on and off the court.

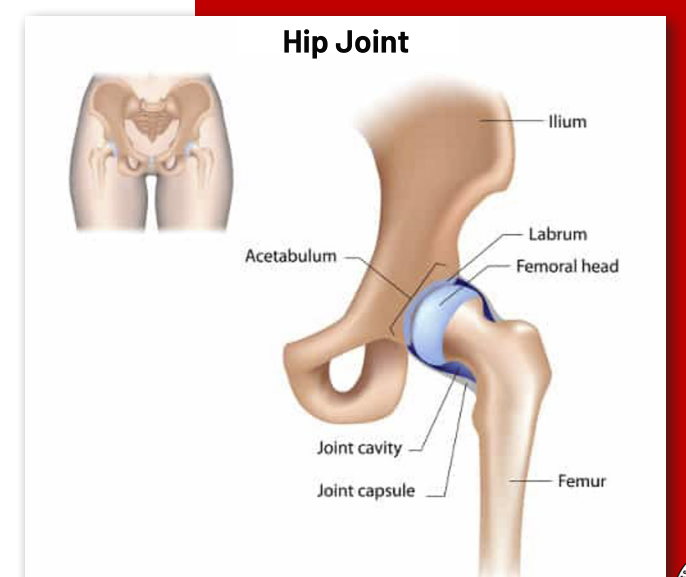


### WHAT TO AVOID:

- Sugary snacks and drinks
- Refined carbohydrates like white bread and pastries
- Fried foods and processed meats

### WHAT TO FOCUS ON:

- Whole grains (quinoa, oats, brown rice)
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Lean proteins (chicken, turkey, legumes)
- Healthy fats (avocados, olive oil, nuts, and seeds)





# FROM DESERT STORM TO THE COURT: COLONEL FRANK HANCOCK'S STORY

by Joe Maurer

## COLONEL HANCOCK'S THREE KEY LESSONS

**1. Think independently:** "Have the courage to analyze and trust your judgment. God gave you a brain, use it."

**2. Listen to others:** "Your crew or subordinates often have valuable insights you might overlook."

**3. Speak up:** "Don't fear making waves. If you believe in your call, stand by it with conviction."



**LTC Hancock on the right and his operation officer Major Dempsey on the left. In the background 344 Iraqi prisoners being searched.**

AABO Board 70 official Col. Frank Hancock (Ret.) is a 1972 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he launched a 30-year Army career. As commander of the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) during Operation Desert Storm, he led one of nine air assault infantry battalions in the Iraqi operation. Now a seasoned basketball official, Hancock draws striking parallels between battlefield leadership and officiating.

Hancock authored *Operation Desert Storm*, a book detailing his battalion's attack, where he relied on young leaders' insights to revise a risky plan. Defying convention, his troops' terrain analysis uncovered a hidden trench filled with troops that were overlooked in the original strategy, averting disaster.

Colonel Hancock sees striking similarities between preparing for combat and officiating basketball. "No matter how much you prepare," he says, "you can't predict what happens on the battlefield or on the court. Unforeseen factors always arise." As a leader, whether commanding troops or serving as crew chief, Hancock emphasizes knowing the rules inside out. "Master the rules, and you can use judgment to adapt as situations unfold," he explains, noting that experience builds on this foundation to manage challenges effectively.

Leading 700 soldiers requires intimate knowledge of your unit—personalities, equipment, and even potential unknowns. Similarly, officiating demands mastery of the rules, your partners' strengths, and the game's dynamics, from rivalries to key players. Thorough preparation for the "battle" on the court mirrors military readiness.

Trusting your crew's judgment—veteran or rookie—can be a game-saver, as Hancock's Desert Storm story illustrates. Understanding their strengths and the consequences of on-court decisions is equally critical. Hancock stresses that studying war history, video reviews, or the rulebook builds a strong foundation. "In combat or basketball, arriving unprepared is like landing in a fortified position—you're in for a tough fight," he warns. Experience, gained through repetition, breeds confidence. Hancock honed his skills over 1,200 recreational and youth games before officiating junior varsity high school basketball.

Beyond rules and experience, Hancock insists that character defines a great official. "You need backbone to stand up for what's right, even when it's unpopular," he says. This principle guided him in Desert Storm, when young leaders Captain Jose Delgado and Sergeant Jesus Gonzalez, both in their 20s, identified flaws in the planned landing zone. Their research revealed a hidden trench, prompting Col. Hancock to trust their judgment and propose a change to the brigade commander. Initially skeptical, the commander relented after reflection, a decision that saved lives, led to the enemy's surrender, and earned the Valorous Unit Award.

Col. Hancock offers three key lessons:

1. Think independently: "Have the courage to analyze and trust your judgment. God gave you a brain, use it."
2. Listen to others: "Your crew or subordinates often have valuable insights you might overlook."
3. Speak up: "Don't fear making waves. If you believe in your call, stand by it with conviction."

Unlike combat, officiating isn't life-or-death, but preparation and split-second decisions carry weight. "Knowledge, experience, and hard work boost your odds of getting calls right," Hancock says. His West Point training taught him to embrace failure: "You won't nail every call but always be ready for the next one."

Hancock believes every official has value. "If you lack experience, bring rules knowledge and hustle," he advises. "When tough calls arise, speak up with courage." He respects all partners, regardless of age, recalling how young soldiers Delgado and Gonzalez saved lives in Desert Storm. "Encourage young officials," he urges. "They thrive when you show faith in them."

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, West Point boasted sports legends like basketball coach Bob Knight and captain Mike Krzyzewski, freshman football coach Bill Parcells, and tennis coach Arthur Ashe. Amid these giants, Frank Hancock forged his own legacy.

Now a "renaissance man," Hancock shares his story through diverse roles: officiating high school basketball in Central Pennsylvania for 22 years, teaching history with Time Travelers Trunk, serving as adjunct faculty at Dickinson College, instructing ballroom dance (with over 25,000 students taught), and mentoring leaders at Leadership Cumberland. His journey from Desert Storm to the court inspires officials to lead with courage, preparation, and heart.

Colonel Hancock's book, *Operation Desert Storm* will be released Fall 2025. [To pre-order, please click here.](#)



**(l to r) Christie Twentier, Frank Hancock and Brett Kinney prior to a District 3 championship game, 2/25/2025. Also pictured is Craig Bradley, PIAA District III Girl's Playoff Assigner and Rules Interpreter.**



# OFFICIATING OFF-SEASON BASKETBALL IN 2025

by Alan Goldberger

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**B**asketball, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, is the most popular team sport in the United States. The Association for Canadian Studies reports that basketball ranks only behind soccer in participation by Canadian athletes in the 18-24 age range. In short, for many IAABO officials, the close of the high school season does not mean the end of officiating assignments. Given the appeal of our sport to athletes of all ages, it's no surprise that IAABO officials often find themselves working with diverse sets of playing rule variations promulgated by governing bodies, local recreational facilities, and related organizations offering opportunities to compete or train. These rules variations can be attributed to a variety of factors, including modifications to account for differences in age, skill levels, the presence of disabilities and special needs of participants, and for other reasons related to organizations sponsoring basketball competition.

IAABO officials need to be able to rely on their local board's guidance as well as their foundational knowledge of the rules, approved mechanics, and protocols to meet the challenges of officiating basketball under a wide variety of age and experience-appropriate rules and regulations.

In this environment, the omnipresence of recreation programs, travel teams, business entities, and other organizations conducting competition leaves no doubt that basketball is a year-round sport. Year-round basketball requires year-round officials.

In addition to organizational challenges, IAABO officials need to remain aware of the increasing influence of government regulation affecting our game. State laws impact officiating in numerous ways—from accommodations for medical and special needs to concussion protocols to laws specifically authorizing players to modify their uniforms and attire based on individual preferences. In the face of these factors, IAABO officials need to recognize that the “rules” commonly in place for the game at hand are not always tonight's rules!

In short, for many IAABO officials, the close of the high school season does not mean the end of officiating assignments. For this and other reasons, officials who assume they can “relax” the rules that were designed for more organized levels of play run the risk of a rude awakening, as are officials who are content to take a pass on specific NFHS rules that impact player safety. Officials who have been reluctant to enforce safety-related rules in lower-level competition have sometimes found out that independent basketball—regardless of the age or skill-level of the players—is the last place in the world that officials should be hesitant to enforce rules relating to player safety. These rules can be found in several flavors, depending on geography and organization involvement.

For example, in recent years, USA Basketball has worked with the NBA to develop rules and data driven “playing standards” based the participants' ages. These standards address four key areas: (1.) equipment and court dimensions; (2.) length of game, scoring and timeouts; (3.) tactics, such as zone defenses, pressing, equal playing time; and (4.) shot clock substitutions. And—wait for it—even FIBA has adopted special rules for grades 9-12!

What does all this mean to us as officials? Simply this: while all the rules and mechanics applicable to the high school game may not be in force in recreation or privatized basketball, officials need to manage risk by maintaining their focus on the welfare of the athletes at all times—regardless of the level of play. And, although different rules may apply in your area, the NFHS Rules Book and IAABO Rules Guide provide valuable insight into participant safety.

**SEE NO EVIL.** You and your partner may be the only humans on the court who have any working knowledge of the rules that impact player safety; or facility-related hazards. Without the staffing, control or organization of high school setting, officials need to “step up” to enforce the rules and take note of the condition of the court and surrounding areas that may present hazards or otherwise compromise player safety.

**VOLUNTEERISM.** “Rec” basketball is often coached and administered by volunteers who may not have sufficient knowledge or awareness of safety concerns associated with competitive sports. The same goes for coaches at this level. As a result, securing assistance with any safety or game control challenges is problematic at best. Therefore, officials should not assume that anyone associated

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

with the administration and coaching of youth or recreation league basketball will have even a basic knowledge of the safety-related aspect of playing rules—or of standards established by state law.

**COURTING TROUBLE.** Recreation and “independent” basketball are often played on non-regulation courts, in non-conforming facilities where safety hazards not generally present in high school and college venues may be encountered. In addition, organizations may modify playing rules to account for differences in age, skill levels, the presence of disabilities or special needs of participants—and for other reasons related to organizations sponsoring basketball competition.

**PRIVATIZATION PITFALLS.** On the other end of the independent basketball spectrum, some competition is sponsored by proprietary businesses whose management is not necessarily above sacrificing safety and good sense in favor of encouraging trash talk, displays of glitzy jewelry worn by players, disallowing technical fouls, and other potentially hazardous modes of behavior and dress. Such ill-advised and reckless “modifications” increase the risk to participants, regardless of age or skill level. For example, consider the following game situations that can present challenges to officials both before the game and during play.

**HEADS UP AND HAIRY ISSUES: “WHAT RULE?” “WHAT LAW?”** “Heads Up.” Potential concussion situations can develop in any game, at any level. While every state has laws regarding traumatic brain injury in sports, some states and state associations do not allow same day “return-to-play” after a substitution under Rules 2-8-5 and 3-3-8. Officials working non-scholastic basketball will need to know the policy of the sponsoring organization and the relevant state or local law, if any.

In some cases—especially where an organization has the use of a school gym—the NFHS rule will be in effect. In all cases, officials must determine before the game the applicable rules code and governing body regulations, if any. Officials should not expect any coach or other adult serving at the venue to have any clue as to the specifics of any rule, or protocol involved.

As to “hairy issues,” officials also need to be aware that nearly all IAABO states prohibit discrimination based on hairstyles. For this reason, officials should avoid commenting on a player's hair or adornments, except to advise the coach—not the player—should an adornment contain any hard items that are not securely fastened to the head or otherwise present an increased risk to players.

### CONCLUSION—ENFORCING THE RULES IS NEVER “OUT OF SEASON”

In the “off-season” officiating environment, IAABO officials need to keep in mind that the officials may be the only adults in the building with the knowledge and the skills necessary to make the game safe. This brings into question the wisdom of the usual shrug of the shoulders and thought that, “It's only a rec league game.” Scary thoughts, these. For the well-informed official, a heightened awareness that players of any age may be depending on officials to conduct the game safely. IAABO officials need to rise to the challenge to make the game safe and fair—at all levels—by enforcing the rules and regulations in effect without fear or favor.

**NOTE: THESE MATERIALS ARE FOR GENERAL INFORMATION AND DO NOT CONSTITUTE, NOR ARE THEY A SUBSTITUTE FOR LEGAL ADVICE. IF LEGAL ADVICE OR OTHER EXPERT ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL SHOULD BE SOUGHT.**





## IAABO EXPANDS BEYOND THE EAST COAST: A NATIONWIDE AND GLOBAL PRESENCE

**F**or years, IAABO has been primarily associated with basketball officiating on the east coast. However, what many in the officiating community may not realize is that IAABO has long had members and boards spanning coast to coast - and even internationally.

Thanks to the power of digital connectivity and the dedication of our leadership team, IAABO's footprint continues to grow. Over the past year alone, TWELVE (12!) new boards have joined the IAABO family, with more on the horizon. The organization is expanding across the United States like never before.

So, why this surge in growth? Donnie Eppley, IAABO's Director of Membership and Technology, attributes it to the organization's commitment to excellence in basketball officiating education.

"The training and education materials developed by T.J. Halliday, Director of Learning and Development, and his team are second to none," Eppley explains. "I'm not a salesman - these materials stand on their own and speak for themselves."

Over the last five years, IAABO has developed industry-leading training resources that set the standard for basketball officiating education. And the momentum doesn't stop there - even more innovative training materials are set to be released later this year, promising exciting new opportunities for IAABO members.

Recently, T.J. Halliday, IAABO's Director of Learning and Development, traveled to Des Moines, Iowa to welcome IAABO's newest addition - Board 295. He met with board members to discuss the many benefits of IAABO membership, including access to the industry-leading educational tools, a comprehensive insurance program, and a strong support network. The attendees were enthusiastic about joining IAABO and look forward to a successful affiliation.

With its unwavering commitment to training excellence and a growing presence across the nation and beyond, IAABO is redefining the landscape of officiating education. The future is bright, and the best is yet to come.

Join us in welcoming the newest Boards in the IAABO family!

### WELCOME!!

**Board 2, Gulfcoast BOA  
Florida**

**Board 3, Central Valley BOA  
California**

**Board 14, South Gulf BOA  
Florida**

**Board 24, West LA  
California**

**Board 65, Philadelphia  
Pennsylvania**

**Board 124, Northeast  
Alabama**

**Board 240, Bull Run  
Virginia**

**Board 295, Des Moines OA  
Iowa**

**Board 330, All-Star  
Georgia**

**Board 401, District 1  
South Carolina**

**Board 410, District 10  
South Carolina**

**Board 411, District 11  
South Carolina**

# NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Letters of Nomination for the IAABO Executive Committee should be submitted to the Committee Chair, Sal Capitummino, 33C Fairway Drive, Mechanicville, NY 12118. The information may also be emailed to: [scapitum@nycap.rr.com](mailto:scapitum@nycap.rr.com). The nomination must be postmarked no later than Wednesday, May 31, 2025. This is also the last date that the nominations may be emailed. Attention and consideration will be given only to those nominations that meet these practices and procedures.



Sal Capitummino,  
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# OFFICIATING IS A LIFESTYLE— NOT A SEASON



Let's clear something up right away: refereeing is not a seasonal hobby you dust off like a pair of old cleats. It's a full-throttle, year-round lifestyle.

The games don't stop. And honestly? Neither should your training.

Gone are the days when you could ease into the season with a couple of slow jogs and a prayer. That "I'll use the first few games to get in shape" strategy? It's outdated—and honestly, a one-way ticket to Strainville. Population: your hamstrings. And let's not forget the bonus round of tendinitis that tags along when your body isn't game-day ready.

Today's athletes are faster, the pace is relentless, and the stakes are way higher. Every game demands precision, hustle, and durability from you—not just the players.

We get it though. You're busy. You've got a full-time job, a family that occasionally needs feeding, fourteen games this week, and a car that only seems to run when caffeinated. Life is hectic. That's why your training plan has to be smarter—not longer.

## Here's Your 3-Cycle Referee Fitness Game Plan:

### ● Off-Season: Build the Foundation

This is your chance to make real gains. Split your training days between strength work, conditioning, and dedicated mobility/injury prevention work. Build strength. Build stamina. Fix what's tight. Future You will thank you.

### ● In-Season: Maintain the Machine

Time is tight, so your sessions should be efficient and focused. Prioritize total-body strength training—movements that give you the biggest bang for your buck. You don't need long workouts, just smart ones. Think 30-minute sessions that keep you quick, stable, and out of the trainer's room.

### ● Post-Season: Recover Like a Pro

Your body's been through the wringer. It's time to hit the brakes—strategically. Light cardio on low-impact machines (hello, air bikes and stair steppers), bodyweight strength moves, and machines instead of barbells give your joints a much-needed break. Recovery isn't slacking—it's an investment in your next season.

Whether you're chasing your first varsity assignment or eyeing a playoff crew, it all starts with how **you care for the only piece of equipment you bring to every game—your body.**

**Train smarter. Recover wiser. Officiate longer.**

**Because this isn't just a side gig.**

**It's your lifestyle.**

## GET TO RUNNIN'



**TRAIN. LEARN. ELEVATE.**

📅 Session 1: June 27-29, 2025

📅 Session 2: July 25-27, 2025

Whether you're a seasoned official or just starting your journey, IAABO Schools provide individualized instruction to help you grow. With a strong emphasis on rules knowledge, mechanics, signaling techniques, and professionalism, attendees receive top-tier instruction both on the court and in the classroom from some of IAABO's most respected clinicians.

What makes IAABO Schools stand out?

- ✓ Hands-on instruction with immediate feedback – including video analysis
- ✓ In-depth classroom sessions featuring lectures, workshops, and testing
- ✓ A certificate of completion that recognizes your commitment to improvement

If you have at least one year of officiating experience, this is your opportunity to fine-tune your skills and take your officiating to the next level. Don't miss out—these sessions will fill up fast!



## YOU KNOW THE RULES, BUT DO YOU KNOW THE TOOLS?

**IAABO isn't just about knowing the rules—it's about mastering the craft of officiating. That's why we offer IAABO Officials' Schools, an invaluable tool for officials looking to refine their skills and elevate their game.**

**FOR MORE DETAILS  
AND REGISTRATION  
INFORMATION  
CLICK  
HERE**



# WHAT A GREAT FIND: 1954-1955 IAABO Rules Book

by Joe Maurer

On a usual day at the end of April, I received a lead from the IAABO Board 23 website (www.iaabo23.org). Typically, these leads stem from those interested in becoming an IAABO certified basketball official and normally come in the late summer or early fall.

Still recovering from another grueling, yet exciting season, I was surprised to learn that this message did not come from someone that was interested in officiating. It was from Barbara Curd of Wake Forest, NC. She was preparing to move to a new home and came across a 1954-1955 IAABO Rules Book that her husband had owned and cherished. Mr. Houston "Hugh" G. Curd, Jr., of Timonium, officiated basketball for 27 years. Mrs. Curd wanted to get this rules book to someone who would appreciate the nostalgia, especially since he'd worked games in the Baltimore area.

Getting a chance to look at this book allowed me to notice the similarities and differences in the rules from 70 years ago. It also attracted me to learn more about the life of Hugh Curd, his career as a professional, and his love for officiating basketball.

## Similarities

Surprisingly, there were plenty of similarities with the rules books. Some of the ones that stuck out were that there are still ten rules. Of course, as the physicality and speed of the game has evolved over the years, there are many more instances of clarity in today's book.

Incidental personal contact has remained remarkably similar. It is quoted in the old rules book, "...when ten players are moving rapidly in a limited area, some contact is certain to occur."

Continuous motion or "in the act of trying for a goal" is cited as "a player is in the act of trying for goal when he has the ball and, in the judgment of the Official, is throwing, or attempting to throw, for goal."

## Differences

For the major differences, it is a much smaller and thinner book; with only thirty-one pages, and no case

book or other manuals are included. There were many board numbers in 1954 (some that do not exist anymore), and the ability for members to be "individual members," not affiliated with a specific board.

Also, the Executive Committee consisted of twenty-three members and there were six subcommittees. One of the Executive Committee members was Henry Iba, the famous coach of Oklahoma State (then Oklahoma A & M), after whom the Cowboys' home court in Stillwater is named.

One of the best quotes from the book is in the section titled, "The Spirit of the Game" by Oswald Tower that describes sportsmanship and how the game should be played. It quotes an article from 40 years prior (in 1914):

"It should be the object of every player to see that the spirit and not merely the letter of the rules is rigidly enforced. THE PLAYERS ARE NOT ENEMIES; IT IS NOT WAR; IT IS A SPORT."

At the end of the rules book there are even two pages with blank lines to write down your assignments!



1954-1955 IAABO Rules Book



Houston "Hugh" G. Curd, Jr.

## Hugh Curd

As for the original owner of the rules book, Houston G. Curd, Jr. was born in Baltimore, MD in 1931 and attended Wake Forest College, in the last class to graduate before it became Wake Forest University. There he competed on the basketball team and was a member of the Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity. During his time in college, he took a break to serve in the US Navy in the Korean War.

Hugh worked for 36 years in marketing at Esso, the predecessor for the Exxon Corporation, in Baltimore, while officiating at the high school and collegiate levels. He was a proud member of IAABO Board 23. His wife mentioned that he loved officiating, especially because of the great friendships that were made. She spoke highly of his circle and that, over the years, the group often met on Friday nights after games at the Pine Ridge Golf Course in Timonium, MD to discuss the week's basketball games and to enjoy each other's company.

Hugh was also highly active in youth sports. He coached championship teams in three sports, including winning two summer league championships in the famed Baltimore Neighborhood Basketball League (BNBL). He also was proud to have coached two players who made it to the NBA.

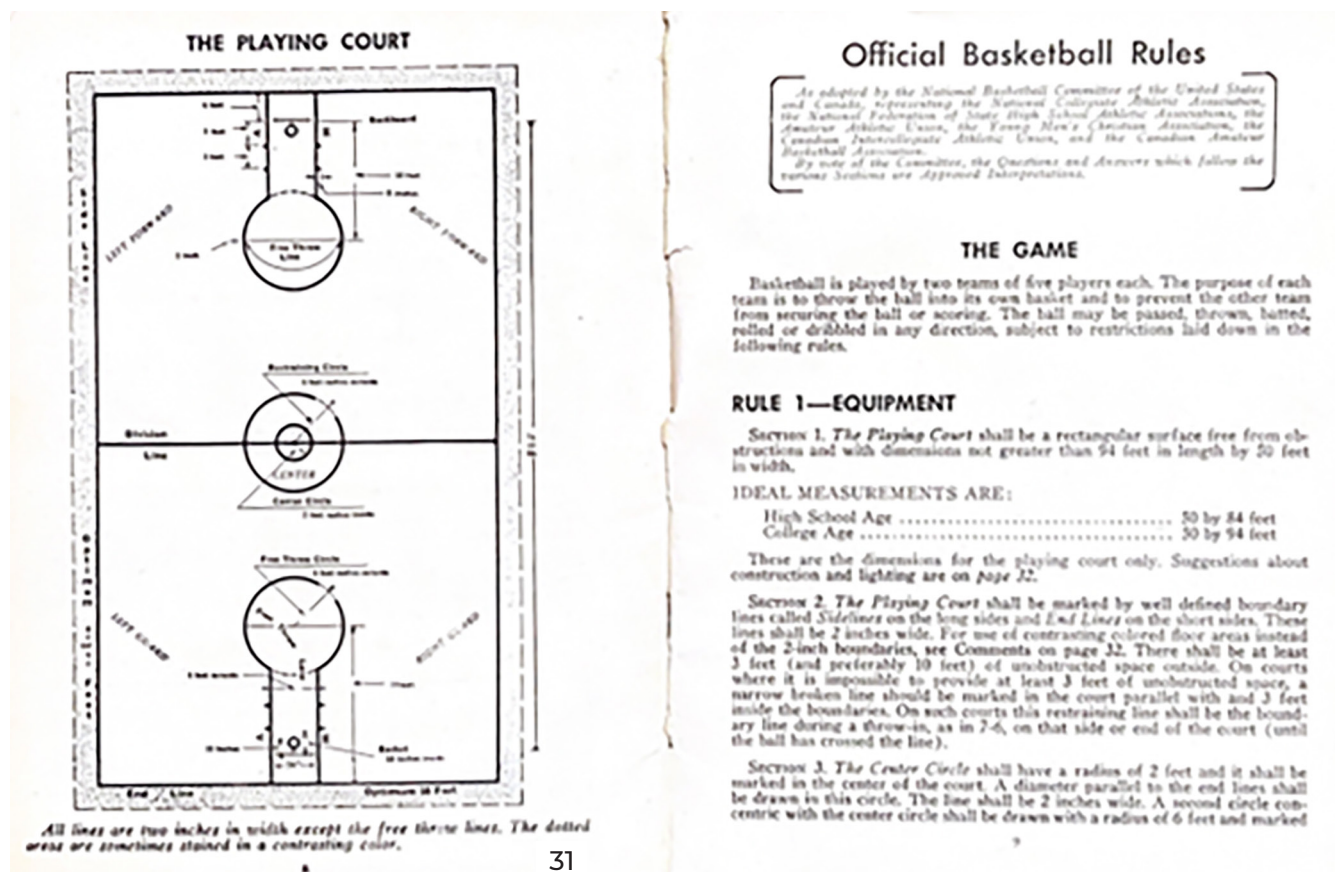
Mr. Curd did suffer a few setbacks in his career; Barbara remarked that he had six detached retinas in his lifetime and had to undergo major surgery each time to repair these injuries. His failing eyesight eventually made him hang up his whistle. The Curds then retired to Bonita Beach and Tennis Club in Bonita Springs, FL, where he loved living and even served on the board of directors.

Among the many other hobbies that Hugh enjoyed were playing tennis, traveling, and horse racing. His children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren are proud of every aspect of his life. He was married to Barbara for 68 years!

Hugh passed away in October 2019 and is now officiating great basketball games in heaven.

A special thanks goes to Mrs. Curd for seeking me out to send this vintage rules book and for the many communications via special letters and emails.

What a great addition to the archives!







# CREATING A PLAN FOR THE SUMMER

by Al Battista

**“Summer isn’t about staying active -  
it is about getting better. A plan turns activity into progress.”**

**F**or many officials, summer means signing up for a camp or calling games at local summer leagues. While those are helpful activities, they are not a comprehensive plan for growth. If you are serious about elevating your performance, a structured summer plan is essential. Here is a blueprint to help guide your development in four key areas: **rules study, group practice, video review, and game application.**

## RULES STUDY

Summer is the perfect time to strengthen your rules knowledge. Make it a daily routine with these simple strategies:

- Daily Focus: Take one rule section or topic per day—like “Substitutions”—and dive deep.
- Case Book Plays: Read five plays per day, mixing topics or focusing on one.
- Quiz Yourself: Create short quizzes (True/False, Yes/No, or Multiple Choice) based on your study.
- Write Your Own: Draft original case plays to challenge your understanding.

## GROUP PRACTICE (COURT/GYM WORK)

Sharpen your mechanics and judgment with others. You will need a few fellow officials, a phone camera, props, game/shot clocks, and even playing cards to simulate situations.

Try these drills:

- Signal Reps: Practice your signals and foul reports until they are second nature.
- Clock Awareness: Use cards or clocks to simulate time-sensitive scenarios.
- 70/30 Drills: Work on balancing focus between defense (70%) and offense (30%) while dribbling, and vice versa for travels.
- Screen/Line/Defender & Rebounding: Simulate plays and evaluate your sequencing and reactions.
- Trail to Lead Transitions: Run the floor, check clocks, and locate threats.
- Officiating Improv: Pick a topic and role-play through it in five rounds.
- Conditioning: Shuttle runs with stops for push-ups or sit-ups simulate in-game fatigue



## VIDEO PRACTICE

Watching yourself is one of the most powerful tools for improvement. Use video review to build awareness and create targeted drills for future practice.

Focus on:

- Identifying good habits to reinforce—and bad habits to erase.
- Clock management on every whistle or change of possession.
- Point of contact, screen coverage, rebounding responsibilities.
- Officiating from the Lead position: defender-to-defender angles.
- Evaluating your dead-ball demeanor, foul reporting, and non-verbal communication.

Use these insights to shape your next group or individual practice session.

## SPRING AND SUMMER GAMES

Yes, working games are part of the plan—but keep it focused.

- Limit yourself to three games per day max.
- Pick two or three areas to work on each game. Stay intentional.
- Ask yourself: Am I running the game?
- Practice self-talk to stay mentally sharp and reset quickly.
- Evaluate crew dynamics: Are we connected? Are we effective?

***This summer, don't just “stay in shape.” Build your officiating IQ, sharpen your mechanics, and come into next season better than ever. A plan does not need to be complicated, just consistent.***

## PAUL JOHNSON ELECTED TO **NASO** BOARD OF DIRECTORS

IAABO is proud to announce that Paul Johnson, the Region 9 Representative on the IAABO Executive Committee, has been elected to the NASO Board of Directors. Johnson, who also serves as Toronto's City Manager, brings decades of officiating experience and leadership to the national stage.

With more than 35 years as a basketball referee, trainer, and executive emeritus for IAABO Board 106 in Hamilton, Ontario, Johnson has long been a champion for officials' education, development, and advocacy. His election to NASO's Board of Directors affirms his commitment to elevating the officiating profession across all levels of sport.

Johnson joins three other newly elected NASO board members: Scott Goodheart, Director of Officials for the Kansas State High School Activities Association; Yuya Kiuchi, Assistant Professor at Michigan State University and leader in soccer officiating development; and Suzanne Lowry, veteran volleyball referee and former T-Mobile executive. The new board members replace outgoing directors Dean Blandino, Paul LaRosa, Dana Pappas, and Sandra Serafini.

“Each of them has unique professional and officiating experiences that will benefit our Board of Directors and the entire NASO community,” said NASO President Bill Topp.

The new terms will take effect following the conclusion of the 2025 NASO Sports Officiating Summit, to be held July 27-29 in Montgomery, Alabama. IAABO congratulates Paul Johnson on this well-deserved honor and looks forward to his continued leadership in the officiating community.



Paul Johnson, Board 106, ON



IAABO, Inc. and IAABO Board 4 Colorado are excited to host the 2025 Fall Seminar in Colorado Springs, CO, September 10 – 14, 2025.

Hotel Accommodations

The meeting is scheduled to be held at The Antlers, a Wyndham Hotel, in Colorado Springs, CO. [Click here to register for the hotel](#) or call the front desk directly at 719-955-5600.

Attendee Registration

All attendees must be registered with the IAABO office via the IAABO website. Attendees who do not register on the website may not receive a name badge and lanyard. [Click here to register for the seminar.](#)

Meeting Program Ad Book

IAABO, Inc., is requesting your assistance to offset some of the costs involved with hosting the IAABO Annual Fall Seminar. [Click here to submit your advertisement.](#)

2025 IAABO Golf Tournament

The 2025 IAABO Golf Tournament will take place on Thursday, September 11, 2025, at the Eisenhower Golf Club-Silver Course located on the United States Air Force Academy. Shotgun start is scheduled for 8:30 AM with registration beginning at 7:00 AM. The cost for the event is \$150.00. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. An awards ceremony will follow at the conclusion of play with a pay as you go bar.

The Eisenhower Golf Club Silver course first opened for play in 1975. The course was designed by Frank Hummel, who designed over 20 outstanding courses in the mountain west states. Widely regarded as the more scenic course of the two, the silver is a demanding golf course with a premium placed on accuracy rather than length. The course measures 6,519 yards from the championship tees and 5,215 from the forward tee.

You will use every club in your bag on this great course. The Silver course provides golfers great views of the Rockies as well as the famed Air Force Academy where each year, up to a thousand young men and women graduate to become officers in the United States Air Force. The greens are where your score is made or lost, each hole has gravity defying putts, but the birdies are out there if you play it smart. Risk reward best defines Silver. In 2021, the Silver played host to its first ever Division 1 collegiate tournament.

Your experience will be unique; between the beauty and the courses, you can't go wrong.

[Click here for a golf registration form.](#)

Spouse/Guest Breakfast

On Friday morning, September 12th, will be the annual IAABO Spouse and Guest Breakfast for your significant other. Breakfast will begin at 9:00 a.m. and there is no charge for one guest who pre-registers prior to Friday, August 29, 2025. Additional guests may register at a cost of \$25.99 per person. [Click here to register and make payment.](#)

Life Membership Ceremony

On Saturday evening, September 13th, the annual Life Membership ceremony will take place. You will not want to miss this special event. The cost per person is \$52.00. [Click here to register and to make payment.](#)

For more information on the 2025 IAABO Fall Seminar, please feel free to contact Donnie Eppley at [deppey@iaabo.org](mailto:deppey@iaabo.org).



Wyndham Hotel, Colorado Springs

AGENDA

Thursday, September 11

- 3:00 PM Constitution Committee
- 3:20 PM Membership Committee
- 3:40 PM Life Membership Committee
- 4:00 PM Women's Coordinating Committee
- 4:20 PM Officials' Education and Development Committee
- 4:40 PM Rules Examination Committee

Friday, September 12

- 8:30 AM The IAABO "EDGE" – Felix Addeo (IAABO, Inc.)
- 9:00 AM Primary and Secondary Coverages – Dan Shepardson (Bd. 105, VT)
- 9:30 AM Block/Charge – Derek Easdon (Bd. 4, CO)
- 10:00 AM Break
- 10:15 AM Keynote Speaker – David Walker
- 11:15 AM Lunch Break
- 1:00 PM Interpreters' Roundtable – TJ Halliday (IAABO, Inc.)
- 2:00 PM Break
- 2:15 PM Help!! – Layne Drexel (Bd. 11, DE)
- 2:45 PM Loose and Held Ball Situations – Charlene Shepard (Bd. 6, CT)
- 3:15 PM Eye Discipline – Andy O'Brien (Bd. 65, PA)
- 4:00 PM Nominating Committee Meeting

Saturday, September 13

- 8:30 AM The Game. The Whole Game. And Nothing But The Game. – Alan Goldberger (Bd. 33, NJ)
- 9:00 AM Plays that Make You Go, "Hmmm" – Kelly Callahan (Bd. 11, DE)
- 9:30 AM Backcourt Rule – John Rafferty (Bd. 95, MA)
- 10:00 AM Break
- 10:15 AM Contact on the Shooter and Continuous Motion – Jeff Jewett (Bd. 71, AZ)
- 11:00 AM Traveling – Dick Hecker (Bd. 33, NJ)
- 11:30 AM Lunch Break
- 1:00 PM End-of-Game Situations – David Smith (Bd. 4, CO)
- 1:30 PM Screening – Derek Ferguson (Bd. 54, MA)
- 2:00 PM Break
- 2:15 PM Developing Future R's – Billy Martin (Bd. 196, NJ)
- 2:45 PM Basket Interference and Goaltending – Eric Cota (Bd. 38, NY)
- 3:15 PM You Make the Ruling (Interactive) – TJ Halliday (IAABO, Inc.)
- 6:15 PM LIFE MEMBERSHIP BANQUET

Sunday, September 14

- 8:30 AM NFHS Rules Changes
- 9:30 AM General Assembly Meeting (Elections and Awards)





# BOARD 114 NEW YORK



Board 114 hosted its 11th Annual Officials vs. Cancer Tournament on February 2nd at Dutchess Community College, showcasing five exciting games in the Hudson Valley while providing valuable three-person officiating experience.

The event raised an impressive \$12,679 for the American Cancer Society, bringing the board's 11-year fundraising total to over \$119,000.

Board 114 continues to demonstrate its commitment both on and off the court, and they are already looking forward to year twelve.



**IN OUR** *Family* **NO ONE**  
*Fights* **ALONE**

**CLICK HERE TO  
DONATE TODAY!**



# PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST:

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS IN OFFICIATING

by TJ Halliday

In the world of basketball officiating, knowledge of the rules and physical fitness are essential, but they are only part of the equation. One often overlooked key to success in this avocation is the ability to build strong, respectful relationships with your fellow officials.

Whether you are working a youth league game or a varsity rivalry, trust and chemistry among the crew are non-negotiables. Officials who communicate clearly, support one another, and treat each other with mutual respect are more effective and more likely to succeed in this avocation. As the adage goes: the game comes first, your partners second, and yourself last.

Unfortunately, ego can sometimes get in the way. Arrogance, condescension, and being overly sensitive to feedback or in-game situations can create friction and erode trust. Nobody wants to go to battle with someone who seems more concerned about looking right than doing what is right. On the court, it is not about who has the loudest voice, it's about collaboration, humility, and professionalism.

Officials must understand that how they carry themselves before, during, and after a game leaves a lasting impression. Body language, tone of voice, and even facial expressions can impact how partners perceive you. Your credibility is not built solely on your judgment with the whistle; it's also built on how well you work with others. Partners notice how you manage adversity, how you respond to mistakes, and whether you are consistent in your communication.

When it comes to officiating, poise is a superpower. No matter what happens on or off the court, if you can stay poised and interact rationally with people, you will earn their respect.

So how can you improve your interpersonal skills as an official? Here are a few simple but powerful tips:

- 1. Start with respect.** Greet your partners before the game. Ask how they are doing. Show genuine interest.
- 2. Communicate with clarity and humility.** Speak up when needed but avoid a combative or know-it-all tone.
- 3. Be coachable.** Accept feedback without defensiveness and offer your own in a constructive way.
- 4. Check your ego at the door.** The crew's success is contingent on proper communication and teamwork and is just as important as making accurate rulings.
- 5. Reflect post-game.** Take time to ask your partners how things went and listen carefully to their perspectives.
- 6. Be consistent.** Treat every game and every partner with the same level of respect and professionalism, regardless of the level of play.

Officials should make a commitment to be the kind of official others want to work with. It starts with how you treat people. The better your interpersonal skills, the stronger your crew and the further you will go in this avocation.

The game will always demand your best, but so will your partners. Invest in those relationships just as you invest in your rules knowledge and mechanics. It's what separates good officials from great ones!



## OUR CONDOLENCES TO...

### Board 119, NY:

- The entire Board, on the passing of our member, John Bush

### Board 41, NY:

- The entire Board, on the passing of our member, Victor Ferrulli



Continuous Innovation &amp; Technology

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