

Bill Ridinger

Topeka Officials Association

Hall of Fame Inductee 2007

I am very honored to receive this award. As I look back on my years of officiating, I want to tell you to enjoy your time as an official because it will go by very fast.

I first joined the TOA in 1969. That was a very good year with Phil Laurie, Randy Gregg, Ken Epperson, John Deedrick and Larry Brinker all beginning at the same time.

I worked Football for 18 year and basketball for 19 years, working approximately 2700 basketball games at the junior high, high school and college levels.

Worked 12 State Basketball Tournaments including 3 Championship games. Officiated games involving Tommy Meier, Mark Turgeon, Danny Manning, Steve Woodberry, Buster Douglas (FT Scott FB/Heavyweight Boxer) and Mel Grey (Ft Scott FB/St Louis Cardinals).

4 years TOA Secretary Treasurer. 4 years TOA President. Recipient of the Custenborder award 1984-1985.

Worked on the 4 R's Football crew for many years: Rod (McMaster), (Jerry) Reichert, Randy (Gregg) and myself. Teamed with Rod McMaster in Basketball and had many memorable games with this great official.

My Mentors: Alex Grieves, Tom Lutz, Jim "Papa" Bell, Ed Custenborder and Don Brentlinger. Worked my last 4 years of basketball with Mike Custenborder. Enjoyed working with this great ref.

My "war" stories:

First big break in football came in my first year when someone got sick. I filled in on Alex Grieves crew in a 3A games at Wamego. Took the field and found out I forgot my whistle. GREAT START!!

Worked a Northern Hills Junior High 7th grade Basketball game. Jump Ball rule was still in effect. I looked down before tossing up the ball and there was what I thought was a "milk dud" candy on the floor. Guess what, it wasn't a milk dud when I tried to kick it off the gym floor. Larry Brinker was working the game with me.

A Thursday night sophomore game at Washburn Rural. Game was over and Dick Weller and I were undressing in the coaches office. I told Dick I would get the towels which were just outside the coaches office in the main locker room. It was the loudest click I have ever heard as the door closed and LOCKED behind me. Washburn Rural coach Bill Hefley forgot to inform us it was the last home game and they invite the parents, grandparents and other family members into the locker room for ice cream and cake.....Standing there in my birthday suit, I received a standing ovation.

In closing, I want you to take a few seconds to stop and look around the room. You will see some of the best people and friends you will ever know in your life.

And again, thank you for inducting me into the TOA Hall of Fame.