

The Topeka Official's Association

February "Basketball Newsletter"

February – A Most Exciting and Challenging Time: The end of the regular season is coming upon us quickly. And, it is usually a time that can create a great deal of stress – and a time that require our best efforts. Some have heard the following from me before, but as I get closer to my 35th year of officiating, the universal truth of the following is extremely evident, at least in the vast majority of cases: The kids have figured out that the season will be over before they are ready for it to end – although there is always hope in the KSHSAA playoff system, many realize that they are probably not going to be part of a State Championship team this season – is there any reason, however, for them to not try their best to be as good as possible? Many coaches have come to that conclusion as well. Will they just "toss in the towel" and go through the motions of coaching? Will they grip and whine? Or, will they find promise in the "new" season and work to "over achieve?" Parents, too, have finally come to the conclusion that their sons or daughters are not going to become the "meal tickets" they had hoped. Will parents be supportive or will they look for a "villain" to blame? Officials, too, are tired, their legs hurt, they are tired of the way some kids act – some coaches act – some parents act – some administrator act. It is so important for the officials to lead the way with a healthy dose of positiveness – lead the way in stressing the positive aspects of co-curricular activities!

When their prodigy were born, it seemed to their parents that there was no way they could not become brilliant mathematicians, brilliant scientists, or at least brilliant athletes. Our goal, as officials, is to be as physically and mentally prepared as possible to give our very best effort and attitude to the kids we serve. Let's concentrate on that this February!

Retirement: I was reading the weekly posting from Michael Josephson (Character Counts) when I was for some reason attracted to a a side-bar advertisement for a private school in California. It seems I have a little more time in my retirement to do such things. Of course I immediately went to the "Athletics" tab to see what kind of programs they had and to see if they would publish their philosophy concerning their programs. Imagine my surprise to read the following: *Coaching is simply a method of the general umbrella term for teaching... "Winning" is important, but only as a positive reinforcement for the following positive principles: That is, coaches would rather have everything done the right way, the positive way, and the classy way, than to promote the "win at all costs" mentality. The coaches want to leave young people the impression that poise, self-confidence, positive attitude, preparation and teamwork are the important things one needs in athletics in specific and life in general.* Pretty Good Stuff!

February – II: With the retirement from officiating of my long time partner, Mike Hayes, I find myself basically working with two new partners every time I step on the floor. While this could be somewhat intimidating, I found early in the season that the answer to becoming comfortable with your partners is an excellent pre-game conference. Some have been extremely receptive – others, quite frankly, don't seem to embrace the importance of a thorough discussion of what is important to the officiating of the game.

As you know, I have the opportunity to sit in on pre-game conferences in the Big XII Conference for football and basketball. Football pre-games can be over two hours in length at the game site and another couple of hours for the film review the previous

evening. In basketball, the size of the staff is much larger and there are no set crews – most of the review is actually done on their own as they go to their website to view plays and comment on them. In addition, the supervisor has tapes at the sites for the crews to review the most recent plays. And, they view plays of the game they just finished following each game. All of this is to say, use the tools you have to watch what you do. And, make sure you have an excellent pre-game (even in February).

Mechanics: Finally, I was watching a girl's varsity game last week and I saw the official at C head deeper towards the baseline as the girl dribbled in that direction – improper mechanics:

Think of the C position as an off-ball position. That is to say, when C has a competitive match-up, C should NOT move towards the baseline which in effect leaves us with two L's. But rather C should take a step or two towards mid-court – in effect, forcing a switch. L should be prepared to slide over to that side of the court with T slipping into the C position. Finally, don't think of that once you have "flexed" during a possession that your "work" is done. Flex as many time as it takes to get good looks at the play. Do not be lazy!

Finally, I have often printed this piece and although it seems to have originally been penned by a former Big 8 football supervisor, I hope you don't mind if I credit it to the person from whom I first heard it, Phil Laurie. Then I took the football version and adapted it for basketball:

Basketball is an Imperfect Game

Played by Imperfect Players

Coached by Imperfect Coaches and

Officiated by Imperfect Officials.

Therefore, the Only thing that really matters is

That the men and women officiating the game are

People of Integrity!!