

Topeka Officials Association

Basketball Newsletter

January, 2007

Be Prepared: OK, I admit that while I was a kid growing up in Michigan, my Boy Scout experience lasted all of one weekend camp-out during the coldest Winter in Michigan history. Needless to say, the fact that I even made it through the entire weekend should be some testament to my fortitude. However, the lesson of being prepared certainly applies to all of us as we prepare for the start of play next week.

As I get older (and, older and older), getting back into the swing of things after the Holidays gets more and more difficult. Get out – get some exercise – and get prepared for the last two months of the season. Besides being physically fit, get back into the Rules Book – the Case Book, etc. and get your mind prepared, as well.

Getting mentally prepared has been especially important for me this season. As you know I lost my partner of 25+ years, Mike Hayes, to hip problems. If ever there was a partner on whom you could unequivocally depend, it was Mike. It is much different now that I have two different partners every time out. Thorough pre-game conferences are especially important – do not take it for granted that everyone is automatically going to be on "the same page." I will attach mine to the end of this document.

Working the Trail position: In the December edition, I spent a lot of time discussing the Center position. I have been requested to talk about the "T" position this month.

One of the hardest misconceptions to dispose of is the one that suggests that we must work near the mid-court line in order to be able to get back on a fast break. While this is an interesting thought, I find that more times than not it is simply an excuse to not work the "T" position correctly. I have been very disappointed in watching games this season to find the mid-court line to be as deep as many "T's" get.

Where should "T" be located? "T" should be perhaps two to four feet behind the 3-point line with movement being lateral, not vertical - moving from side to side in a small arc usually provides the best looks for "T." For example, about 10 – 12 feet below the center line at Olathe South is a Falcon painted on the floor. My goal when working there is to be

between the mascot and the 3-point line. Pick out a visual point and get there every time.

But, the naysayers will tell you that on a sudden turnover you will not be able to get back to the Lead position. Well, that may be true, but the plays that "T" needs to cover are far more important (in some cases, shots – drives to the basket – rebounds – illegal screens) and far more likely to happen than fast breaks. Do not run away from the "T" position - officiate rebounds, etc. The "T" often has the best look at rebounds.

Also, we have been telling the "T" that they have the drive all the way to the basket – many times this is problematic. Since "L" is on that side of the court, too, and "T" might get blocked, "L" needs to be prepared to make the call on drives from that side of the floor, especially when the foul takes place closer to "L" than "T." When drives to the basket originate from the "C" side, unless, it is something very obvious and "C" doesn't get the call on a drive from that side, "L" should not call fouls across the lane.

Be Prepared by having this discussion during the pre-game conference. It is then critical for you to follow through and make sure the calls come from those who have the **"Open Look!"** Keep the lines of communication open during the game and review any unusual coverage issues at half time. And, just to reemphasize something discussed in December, make sure that at "C," you do not run away from action on your half of the court as the ball progresses up-court!

Best Wishes for a Prosperous and Peaceful New Year! FS