



**FIBA**

We Are Basketball

# OFFICIATING NCAA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL



by Marcy Weston  
and Sally Bell

**Marcy Weston is the Senior Associate Director of Athletics at Central Michigan University. She is also Chair of Boards of Directors of NASO (National Association of Sports Officials), and National Coordinator of the NCAA Basketball Officiating. An inductee to the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, she refereed Women's NCAA Championship game in 1982 and 1984.**

**Sally Bell officiated at every level and the top basketball events. He refereed four NCAA Final Four, and all the top FIBA events since 1983 to 2002: Olympic Qualification, Olympic Games, World Senior and Junior Championships, University and Goodwill Games. She received in 1991 the prestigious Naismith Award as the Women's Official of the Year.**

## MANAGING YOUR OFFICIATING CAREER

The opportunities presented in sports officiating in general, and basketball specifically, are unlimited. The interaction with players, coaches, administrators and fans offers some of the most rewarding opportunities and successes you will ever encounter. However, like everything else in life, successes do not come without hard work, dedication, and an innate drive to be the best.

It is important to understand that we are all unique personalities who will handle success and failure in different ways. No matter what, our successes and failures must be handled professionally. Professionalism is the key to becoming a successful official. It is true you must know the rules, be in shape, communicate well, and use proper mechanics, but none of these are more important than being a professional on and off the court.

## GETTING STARTED (HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE)

- ▼ Attend a local game and talk to the officials about their organization or association that assigns the games.

- ▼ Meet the recreation director in your local area about their program.
- ▼ Meet an athletic director or coach at a local elementary or high school about how they recruit officials.
- ▼ Check with the local authorities about local, state or national agencies that handle sports officiating.
- ▼ Attend all required meetings and training sessions.
- ▼ Find a mentor you believe in and attach yourself to him/her.
- ▼ Officiate as many games as possible.
- ▼ Attend summer camps designed for college officials.
- ▼ Make the commitment and make yourself available.
- ▼ Find a college mentor you believe in.
- ▼ Be respected for your professionalism.
- ▼ Be a mentor.

1. Be humble and respectful.
2. Be available.
3. Be supportive and encouraging.
4. Be patient.
5. Be a friend.
6. Most importantly, be honest with your assessments. Be patient. It is better to get there too late than too soon! Everyone wants to move up to the Finals, Conference Tournaments, and NCAA Tournaments. So how do you get them?

- ▼ Be professional at all times.
- ▼ Don't politic for games. Assignors and committee members know who the good officials are.
- ▼ Fulfill every assignment you take. Don't play games with supervisors or assignors.
- ▼ Be realistic in what your schedule and advancement should be. Make sure you under

stand where you fit into the big picture. Are there more experienced officials available for that big game? Are there geographic considerations in the assignment? And most importantly, do you really deserve that big game assignment? There are only so many officials needed on any given night.

- ▼ Give the assignor reasons to pick you! Be a good official on and off the floor. Be a good partner. Don't flatter yourself into thinking you are the only one qualified to do the big game.
- ▼ Believe in yourself. You must exude confidence without being arrogant. Know you are assigned for the right reason.
- ▼ Know the rules and mechanics. When you consistently and accurately apply the rules, coaches and players gain confidence in your judgments. The more confidence they have in you, the more you will have in yourself which will lead to more and better assignments.
- ▼ With success should come some humility. Will Rogers said, "Let someone else blow your horn and the sound will travel twice as far." Don't confuse success with arrogance!

The final "secret" to moving up and improving your schedule is simple:  
**GET THE CALLS RIGHT!**

#### MENTAL TRAINING

- ▼ Rules knowledge: It is not good enough to "know" the rules; you must understand the intent and purpose of the rule.
- ▼ Mechanics knowledge: Study the mechanics manual. This is your road map that allows you to be in the best possible position to make good, accurate and consistent judgments.
- ▼ Game knowledge: It will be very difficult to advance if you don't understand the game. Know terminology, strategies, and fundamentals of the game.
- ▼ People knowledge: Officiating is a communications business and the best communicators will advance.

#### PHYSICAL TRAINING

- ▼ Get in shape.
- ▼ Stay in shape.

#### REQUIREMENTS TO REFEREE IN THE NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

- ▼ Register and complete one of the regional officiating clinics held annually in October in the United States cities of Chicago, Dallas, Philadelphia, Atlanta and either Los Angeles or San Francisco.
- ▼ It is necessary to submit a signed release form allowing a background check to be conducted. Individuals convicted of a felony will not be eligible for selection to the tournament.
- ▼ Referee a minimum of twenty Division I women's

basketball games during the regular season preceding the tournament.

- ▼ Be recommended to the NCAA by the coordinator of officials in the conferences the official works.

#### OFFICIALS SELECTED TO THE NCAA DIVISION I TOURNAMENT

- ▼ The National Coordinator receives the names of approximately 200 officials who have been recommended from their conference coordinators.
- ▼ The National Coordinator and the officiating sub-committee of the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Committee review the nominees and select the 112 officials who will work the NCAA tournament. Selection to the tournament is based on regular season rankings, conference tournament experience and positive evaluations from games officiated in previous NCAA tournament games.
- ▼ 96 working officials and sixteen stand-by officials are assigned to first- and second-round games. 36 officials and four stand-by officials advance to the regional semi's and finals with 9 officials with one stand-by move on to the Women's Final Four.
- ▼ Officials are evaluated at each round of the tournament. The evaluations are used to assist the committee in making assignments for the current year. These evaluations also become a part of the cumulative evaluation record for that official's consideration for future tournaments.

#### CONTINUING EDUCATION

- ▼ Once an official is added to a Division I conference women's basketball officiating roster, she/he must take steps to continue their growth as a referee. The following steps are suggested.
- ▼ Review videotape evaluation of their game performance.
- ▼ Review written and/or verbal critiques of game performances completed by the coordinator of officials or a trained observer in their respective conference(s).
- ▼ Study the rules, interpretations of playing rules, points of emphasis, mechanics of officiating and game management strategies.
- ▼ Become a mentor and continue to be mentored.
- ▼ Serve as a mentor to a less experienced official and you will experience personal growth as an official.
- ▼ Continue to work with the person who mentored you. Growth occurs at every level of experience. One must continue to learn to see improvement.

We are hopeful that the information presented in this article will give prospective officials and fans of women's basketball insight into what it takes to be an NCAA women's basketball official.

Officiating is a rewarding vocation. Take it seriously and work to be the best referee possible.