

November 2012

“On the Maples.....”

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The 2012-2013 basketball season is now upon us and welcome to year two, of “...on the Maples.” Are you ready for game one? Thursday, November 29th, games begin for many of you. Have you prepared in the off-season for this opportunity?

Believe it or not, some of you will be officiating games this weekend, and, unfortunately you will not be at your best. What happens if you get observed the first weekend? Are you ready for it? Can you leave the gym after consultation with your evaluator feeling as if you gave game one your best effort, even though it is the first game of the year?

Here are a few ideas to help prepare for a solid opening weekend. I truly believe year-round training started for me when officiating became a part of my life. I would encourage all of you to continue running, watching what you eat (and drink), visiting your doctor, and in staying physically healthy, you stay mentally healthy. Times have certainly changed – the scrutiny we as officials are under has no comparison to even ten years ago. YouTube, Facebook, instant messaging, and comment boards are everywhere waiting for anyone to make one small mistake. Your health is a big part of the preparation involved to handle the moments when situations may cause things to go awry.

How many times did you blow your whistle, read your rulebook, or study your preseason guides before the official game one? Summer camps should be a must for your decision to improve as an official. If time is a problem, find one day camps that give you an intense time on the floor, and work on judgment, passing or calling, understanding flow of game, and game management for starters.

Another idea might be to officiate as many local high school scrimmages as possible before the season officially begins, or junior high games that begin in November at some schools. Yes, volunteer to work these scrimmages for no cost and I guarantee you will gain a measure of respect for your willingness to help teams prepare for their season opener. Many great coaches want you there to explain new rules and help interpret old ones. When I would do a preseason scrimmage, I would make up a simple ten question quiz for the teams and their coaches to peruse and answer. It made for stimulating conversation, and, that should be our goal as officials, to help inform and assist.

Last, but not least, please, please spend some time with your rule book and the preseason guides. Points of emphasis on pages 67-69 of your rulebook can assist immensely with decision-making by spending time reading the material and visualizing how you might call each instance if it were to happen to you. The “quick tips” in the preseason guides contain a huge amount of information to help you through rough points in contests. My personal favorite was the tip on page five of the guide that had team-control rule refined on the front page and it said, “Kill the clock if a horn sounds inadvertently...” I lucked out – I always did that, but now it makes even more sense by reading it and to simply make sure all is okay at the table and restart with a throw-in.

Now, go out and start the season like it was district time, and do what you can to energize yourself to make each contest that important. As we have said a “thousand” times before, it is that important to those that participate, and you as an official, are a huge participant as well.

Feel free to call me at 402-649-0408 or email me at rethwischfive@hotmail.com anytime you have questions, ideas, or concerns. I consider assisting you in your endeavors very important to me. Have a great basketball season, a great Christmas and New Year’s and I look forward to seeing you “on the Maples...”

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