



by Alison Muir

THE OFFICIALS CONFERENCE

Alison Muir is a FIBA Commissioner from England. She has been involved in basketball as a Table Official, Referee and Coach. She holds the positions of Director of Competitions and Commissioner Appointments Officer for England Basketball.

SO WHAT IS A COMMISSIONER?

The role of the Commissioner is many fold, we are the “overseers” of the game, we are the communicator, the vision, the negotiator, the rule book and on occasions the peacemaker before, during and after the game. Most of the time, we have the “Best Seat” in the house, occasionally we all wish we were somewhere else when things do not go according to plan.

One of my many hats in English Basketball is to appoint Commissioners to games in the premier and national leagues. This is done on a monthly basis and in conjunction with the Director of Officiating, who appoints the referees. All premier and Conference men and women’s games are covered, Division one and two men are covered subject to availability. On average we have 25 to 30 games a weekend over England and Wales to cover, all the commissioners are volunteers and are paid expenses only.

OFFICIALS CONFERENCE

At the beginning of each season an Officials conference is held, this normally takes place the first weekend in September prior to the season starting. All officials are expected to attend and non attendance for no specific reason will be penalised by no games in the first batch of appointments. All officials are expected to be licensed and again, no appointments are made until the licence is approved.

The Conference itself contains something for everyone, there are group sessions and separate sessions for Commissioners, Table officials and Referees. The first day begins with a welcome introduction and recap of the previous season from the Director of Officiating, Richard Stokes, International Referee. This is followed by the official’s favourite session of the day the Rules Test, this is taken by everyone present, there is a passmark of 80%! The sound of sighing in the room is like the “El Nino” on a particularly bad day!

All referees will do their fitness test and again must pass the required times or they cannot officiate at National level. The Commissioners in the mean time have another test, regulations, which again is not the most popular exercise of the

day! However both rules and regulations must be known as Commissioners are expected to be well versed when asked questions or make decisions.

A brief recap for commissioners follows and any feedback is given to the group from the previous season, this is generally positive however developmental feedback is also given out as a group. As feedback is a two way street, often lively discussion points come from this and mostly the commissioners do go away with some new ideas and some bad habits are rectified before the new season begins.

The sessions during the day, are presented by power point, topics are discussed and working out situations, last years conference covered:

- ▼ Rules
- ▼ Regulations
- ▼ Feedback
- ▼ Report Writing
- ▼ Commissioner Pathways

REPORT WRITING

Report writing is always the drawback in any organisation and sport is no exception, over the years the importance of writing a report has intensified, with legal implications if the content is not objective or accurate. Below are one or two helpful pointers for your next season:

WHEN AND WHY?

WHEN?

After any incident which involves the following during a game:

- ▼ Disqualification
- ▼ Unreasonable behaviour
- ▼ Standards
- ▼ Disciplinary

WHY?

- ▼ So that the laid down procedure can be adhered to and further incidents may be prevented

CONTENT

- ▼ Incident
- ▼ Factual observations
- ▼ Times and date
- ▼ Names and player numbers
- ▼ Penalties
- ▼ Any other action
- ▼ After the game

DO'S AND DON'TS

DO'S

Report facts
Names
Numbers
Time

Date

TIME SCALE

DOMESTIC

24 hours for normal

- ▼ Reports may be email/faxed
- ▼ Send hard copy by post
- ▼ Retain personal copy

DON'TS

Use general terms
Elaborate
Collude
Discuss until you
have your
written notes
Use total numbers
unless you are sure

INTERNATIONAL

Within 1 hour for
Disqualification,
crowd problems
Otherwise 24 hours

COMMISSIONER'S HANDBOOK

A handy piece of literature, useful for quick reference before, during and even after a game. In England we operate a Premier League, which has differing variations on the regulations and rules and National Basketball League, which adheres to FIBA rules and regulations. Every thing the Commissioner needs to know is in the handbook, from Rule changes, Regulations, Legal Aspects, Report Writing, Standards, actual Duties of the Commissioner, Points of Emphasis and a Directory of Officials.

COMMISSIONER PATHWAYS

Training for Commissioners is an on going process, from the Commissioner who is just starting on the ladder to the Commissioner who is experienced at the highest level. We can all learn something new.

Experience within the game counts a great deal, and experience in dealing with people and personalities counts just as much. The combination of the two makes a well balanced official who will be equipped to deal with just about any situation they may be presented with.

