

Send a Ref to Camp

*(By Jeff Benedict, Chair, Bd. 67 PA and
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Answer quickly—The 2003–04 season is over, are you happy, sad, or don't care? If you answered "happy" or "don't care" then this article isn't for you. If you answered "sad," read on and let the "C & E Gang" help change your future! As you now know the IAABO Foundation is a separate entity whose sole purpose is to perform Charitable and Educational works—we're the "C & E Gang" of IAABO, and we're here to help.

In the last *Sportorials* we explained the "*Best Seat in the House*" (Junior IAABO) program. In this issue we want you to know all about "Send a Ref to Camp." To do that we must first—dispel a myth, second—explain Ref Camps in general, then third—help you choose a camp that's right for you.

Which of the following statements is true; (a) Referees are only in it for the money, or (b) Most referees are crazy? Well that's easy to answer. Statement (b) is true because you've got to be crazy to do what we do for what amounts to very little net pay! No, we're definitely not in it for the money which is why 99 percent of us have "real" jobs. But 99 percent of us aren't rich either! Which is a bit of a problem because the best way to become a better basketball official is to go to Ref Camps. Unfortunately camps are expensive in terms of tuition, time off from your real job, and travel costs. Myth: "Send a Ref to Camp" is only for the "needy"! Fact: IAABO "needs" you to be the best Ref you can be! So let's dispel a myth—the program exists to help the working official (you and me) get better, period. We're working people who are sad the season is over, crazy for doing what we do, and we want to improve. The "C & E Gang" can help.

In general, there are two types of referee camps; teaching and advertising. Go to an advertising camp when you want to "be seen" and your primary objective is to be added to a collegiate officiating staff. Go to a teaching camp if you want to learn and improve. In the teaching camps you'll go to morning lectures, attend afternoon classes, work at least two games per day and learn to evaluate your performance on VCR or, only at IAABO, on DVD! All IAABO camps are teaching camps, college supervisors aren't there to hire you, they're there to help you improve! At an IAABO Camp you're going to get at

least a year's worth of improvement, if not more, all in 1 week!

So which IAABO camp is right for you? There are three factors to consider; the week the camp is held, the geographic location, and your current officiating level. First and foremost, pick a week that best fits your schedule, camps run from June 16 through August 8. Some officials bring the family and combine camp with vacation (Boston, Myrtle Beach, and Orlando). Next, decide how far you want to travel, camps are in RI, MA, PA, MD, SC and FL. Finally, combine the camp's level of basketball to your current officiating level. Some camps are for officials with less than 4 years of experience (University of Rhode Island and Mount Saint Mary's). Other camps have basketball games to accommodate all officiating levels and include 2- and 3-person crews (Coastal Carolina, Kutztown University). At Orlando we officiate the AAU National Championship games, so July 25 campers (17-and-under games) should have at least a year's boy's varsity experience plus have worked some 3-person games, and the July 31 campers (14-and-under games) should have some boy's varsity experience. I know, I know, each of us is ready to be the "R" in the NCAA final . . . in our minds! However, do yourself a favor; slow down, don't get in over your head. If you're unsure about which camp is right for you, call the IAABO office, they can help you decide.

Now that we've dispelled a myth, talked about the two types of Ref Camps, and you have decided which IAABO camp is best for you, it's time to talk money. The "C & E Gang" is here to help! Your local Board Secretary has the Foundation Committee "Scholarship Application." Fill it out and mail it, along with a letter from the Board Secretary supporting your application, before April 30. Scholarships can cover up to one-half of your tuition.

No matter how many years you've been officiating, it's time for you to make an investment in your officiating career. After all, we're willing to invest in you because we need you to be the best, you're an IAABO official! There's a Foundation to build—one referee at a time, starting with you and me! It's a great IAABO future, come share our vision!