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# The “C & E” Folks of IAABO

(By Jeff Benedict, Chair, Bd. 67 PA and  
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In the last *Sportorials* issue we explained that the IAABO Foundation was chartered in 1982 as a separate entity whose sole purpose is to perform Charitable and Educational works—so we’re the “C & E Gang” of IAABO. The Charitable works programs include “IAABO Officials for Special Causes,” and “Send a Ref to Camp” while the Educational programs include “Advanced Training for Basketball Officials Seeking Advancement,” “Training the Trainer,” “Promoting Sportsmanship with Coaches, Players & Fans” and “The Best Seat in the House!”

Over the next several issues of *Sportorials* we’ll explain what each of these programs entails, who they’re designed to help, and most importantly, how YOU can help us help others. We’re looking for your ideas, your input and your know-how. After all, it is your Foundation both literally and figuratively. It’s literally your Foundation because you’re a member of IAABO, a nonprofit, member organization. And it’s yours figuratively because the “C & E Gang” exists to build a better foundation for IAABO’s future.

We’ll explain all the IAABO Foundation programs in chronological order, from youngest to . . . hmmm, shall we say “most experienced.” So we’ll start with the newest program designed to attract our youngest members which we believe will build our strongest Foundation. We call it “The Best Seat in the House!” Others may refer to it as the Junior IAABO program.

The basic idea is a 4-step program designed to one, recruit; two, specially train; three, safely put to work; then four, retain 15–18-year-old boys and girls into our ranks of basketball officiating. We’re “recruiting” because we’re going to be selective in the type person we accept in the program. We’re “training” in a whole new way at little to no cost for the participants. It’s a newly developed, not quite yet

finished, special IAABO training approach designed for teenagers. We’re “safely” putting these younger officials to work by insuring that they only work the level of basketball to which they’re suited (ranging from 8-year-old “Rec-ball” all the way to scholastic middle school games) and that they only work with a senior IAABO member who is part of the IAABO Mentor program (“Train the Trainer”). Finally we expect to retain these members by proving that they have the best seat in the house—and that they’re paid for it.

Can you imagine the long-term community impact we can make if we bring this program to inner city kids? Can you imagine if your first paid job wasn’t a minimum wage job that you really didn’t like? Can you imagine if your first paid job was running up and down a basketball court tutored by mentor referees who genuinely cared about your progress? Can you imagine if while you’re learning to referee that you were “protected” from screaming coaches or from out-of-control “fans” until you could handle those situations yourself? We think that you might just want to stick around for a long, long time. We think that you’d want to become an IAABO member when you turn 18 and that you just might be ready to officiate high school basketball.

And we’re not the only ones who think that way. In fact, there’s a whole group of dedicated IAABO members in Maine led by Mark Byron who not only think the same way, they’ve already started their own successful Junior IAABO program upon which much of the “Best Seat in the House” program is being designed.

The “C & E Gang” would like your help; there are 16,000-plus of you and only a few of us. If you’d like to be part of the IAABO Foundation program “The Best Seat in the House” or if you have ideas you’d like to share, please contact the IAABO office.

There’s a Foundation to build—one referee at a time, starting with the youngest. It’s a great IAABO future, come share our vision!