

# Summer Success at IAABO Camps

By Jeff Benedict, Chairman, Bd. 67 PA, and  
John Powers, Assistant Chairman, Bd.23 MD

“I can’t believe the level of basketball—wow!” “There’s no way I’d see that many games at that level of play in an entire season where I’m from.” “I can’t wait for winter basketball to start.” “I think I got a year’s worth of experience all in one week.” “I’m *definitely* coming back next year and the year after that too!”

Were YOU there? If so, you’d know what we’re talking about—the 2004 IAABO summer camps! Once again, over 200 referees came from 17 states and countries to attend the IAABO camps. Those were some of the comments campers made.

And once again, the “C & E Gang” was there too. As you now know the IAABO Foundation is a separate legal entity whose sole purpose is to perform Charitable and Educational works—we’re the “C & E Gang” of IAABO. We were at every IAABO camp. We were there through the generosity of others who donated money for scholarships given to IAABO members to become better officials. What an honor it was to help.

In our last *Sportorials* article we asked if you were happy or sad that the 2003–04 season had ended and offered IAABO camps as a remedy for those who were sad. We talked about the IAABO Foundation “*Send a Ref to Camp*” program where we hopefully explained three things. First, we dispelled the myth that scholarships were only for the “needy” and explained the truth that IAABO is “needy” because we “need” you to be the best official you can be. Second we explained the differences between teaching camps and camps where you go to “be seen.” IAABO, of course was, is, and always will be a teaching organization with teaching camps. Third we helped you choose the IAABO camp that was right for you based on dates, camp location and level of basketball. Over 200 of you attended camps and were kind enough to allow the “C & E Gang” to help by providing scholarships!

FUN. That’s the only word to describe what goes on at each IAABO camp. Men and women who take the avocation of basketball officiating with a passion for learning being taught and critiqued by long-time high school clinicians, veteran high school officials, collegiate officials, NBA observers and college supervisors, all dedicated IAABO members who come together to become the IAABO Teaching Staff—One rule, One interpretation, One staff. With One attitude, to help those in attendance to improve in a friendly, supportive and encouraging manner, oftentimes with lots of humor! Heck, to be any good at officiating you’ve got to have a sense of humor and you certainly can’t take yourself too seriously.

This was definitely the case when a certain college supervisor (who shall remain nameless) tried to be encouraging while refraining from swearing when he said “You three did a GREAT job for 31 minutes and 30 seconds!” Pointing to the U–1 he said “You’re a banana for not doubling the sideline when the ball was being inbounded” and pointing to the U–2 he said “But you’re a BIGGER banana for putting the ball in play while he/she was out of position! Wazza madda? Nobody ever tell you how to dry the ball on your pants until the other banana gets to the right place?!” How can you NOT learn from that, remember it forever, and then smile every time you do?

Think that IAABO camps are only for the “younger” officials? Think again! There were many, many college officials attending as campers. Why? Because they know that no matter how many years you’ve been officiating you can ALWAYS improve, therefore it is ALWAYS time to make an investment in your officiating career. So as you begin your 2004–05 season, start to think ahead. Start thinking now about how best to invest in YOUR career next summer. Come join us at the IAABO camps. Let the IAABO Foundation invest in you. Together it makes us a bunch of “C & E” Happy Campers!

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!