

Tony Haley - 73rd President of IAABO

The journey to here started 40 years ago on a Sunday morning in March of 1971 in Penacook, NH. There were two things that happened that morning that are as fresh in my mind today as if they happened this morning. That is when I received my patch along with 37 other new officials. I couldn't wait to get home and get the patch on my shirt as I had an important CYO Playoff game the next night and I just knew I would get more respect now that I was "patched". If booing louder and longer is more respect then I got plenty the next night. The second happened shortly after we got our patches. The board president announced the game fees for the next three years. At that time we had four classes of teams in the state. L, I, M & S and each class had a different fee. \$19 in L - \$17 in I - \$15 in M & \$13 in S and we got \$0.06 a mile for travel. In Classes M & S you also had to work the JV game with no additional compensation. That struck me as wrong. So the next March I ran for the liaison committee. They were responsible for negotiating fees and working conditions for the board. My mistake was running against a fellow who was not only a past president of the board but also a sitting State Senator. I still have the marks on my back from the whipping I took that day. I was back the next year and found a less formidable opponent to run against and started my political career with IAABO. Eventually I became the chair of that committee, and negotiated with the NHIAA to get one fee no matter where you worked and you only had to work one game a night.

The next year I ran for and got elected to the state executive committee. I was asked to co-chair the IAABO Fall Seminar scheduled the next year in Manchester. They decided that the chairs should attend an IAABO meeting and so they sent us to the 1975 spring meeting, my first one and isn't it funny how things work in circles. That meeting 36 years ago was held right here in Virginal Beach. Who would have thought all those years ago that one day I would become the 73rd President of IAABO - certainly not me. So much for me, now let's talk where IAABO is today and where we can take it in the future.

Thanks to the courage and leadership of some recent Past Presidents, we put a new leadership team in charge of IAABO. Thanks to Tom Lopes and Donnie Eppley deciding that they could work with a virtual office, and adding some new contracts that are providing

additional royalties, IAABO is now in decent financial shape and we are approaching having the reserve funds that we need according to today's accounting standards. Add to that the affiliation that we now have with NASO (National Association of Sports Officials) we have increased our visibility in parts of the country where we have no boards and we hope that we may be able to add boards as our visibility continues to grow.

Leadership can only do so much - the membership also has a responsibility to help grow both the image and numbers of IAABO. We have all heard that any group is only as strong as its weakest link. That a single thread is easily broken, but many strands woven together is much stronger and cannot be easily broken. So woven together we can accomplish so much more than over 100 boards acting on their own.

Together we can grow our membership by encouraging new people to join IAABO and when they do we must nurture and mentor them to give them a chance to succeed. We must get away from the idea that we have enough officials to cover our games and encourage new members so that there is competition for the games as that will make us all work harder to improve and keep the good schedules which is good for the game. Now let me ask all of you, how many of you have personally recruited a person to join your board. We can get more people to sign up for the cadet classes by asking people to join than just by putting a notice in the newspaper. If we all recruited one person to replace us, our membership would grow in the boards we already have. Together we can.

Together we can encourage more women to join IAABO and be role models for the female players. Once we have recruited them we have to find ways to help them improve the officiating skills. We also have to find innovative ways to retain them once they have passed the tests. We took the first step in that direction last year by having the first ever women's only IAABO school in New Haven, CT. We will have that school again this year. We found that having women observers made the attendees more comfortable and open to asking questions. Please encourage your newer women officials to consider this opportunity this year. Unlike male officials, women have babies and when they do, they need time off. Maybe we could develop a plan for maternity leave for new mothers that would allow the official to be away from the game for a couple of years and then return without having to start all over. Together we can.

Together we can have a great effect on those



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less fortunate than ourselves, specifically the Special Olympians. By volunteering our services we provide quality officiating and a sense among those watching the games that the game will be played in such a manner that both teams will have an equal chance to win under the rules. When players have quality officiating their games improve as they learn to play by the rules. It is a great opportunity for young or new officials to work on their games as things tend to happen a bit slower, giving people a better chance to recognize what is happening. I have to tell you that I got hooked on Special Olympics in the very first game that I ever worked for them. A young player made a basket and was so excited that he just had to hug somebody and as I was the closest person to him it was me. It brought tears to my eyes and I worked their games every year after that. I ask all boards to consider making Special Olympics a board event and ask their members to make themselves available to officiate the games in their area. Together we can.

And finally, together we can support "officials versus cancer" and have a great impact on cancer research. I was blown away by the amount of money IAABO was able to give to the American Cancer Society this year, in excess of \$100,000.00. But when you break down where the money came from we find that a lot more could be done if we could get all the boards involved and all the officials on those boards involved. We all have had a family member or somebody we know struck down by cancer. There is a belief in the Jewish Tradition that anybody who saves one life saves the world. Wouldn't it be great if all 16,000 members of IAABO helped to save a life by contributing to the "officials versus cancer" campaign. What a great feeling that would be, what a better world that would be. Together we can, will we?