

Winter trips mean 'official' work for Bosone

By MARK STEWART
Of the Emerald

There's a man who travels quite frequently on winter weekends up and down the West Coast and occasionally visits the Oregon campus. And while he's here, he always takes in a basketball game at Mac Court.

About 10,500 might remember this gentleman, who wears a black and white striped shirt, as the one who tried to keep Oregon State's Rickey Lee and Oregon's Mike Clark apart in a late game scuffle one afternoon in January past. Most recently, they have seen him running among Ducks and Huskies.

He's Frank Bosone, Pac-8 basketball official.

According to Frank McIntyre, the supervisor of Pac-8 officials, Bosone is one of the best officials in the Pac-8. In October, Bosone was hand-picked to represent the Pac-8 in a series of clinics given for Air Force officials in Hawaii, Japan and Korea.

Bosone got started in officiating at a young age. In fact, he started at a younger age than most. Today at 37, Bosone has had more officiating experience than nearly all officials his age.

"I started two years after college," said Bosone. "That's unusual. Most don't get started that young. Most want to continue playing for five or six years."

After his playing days at the University of Portland, Bosone coached high school in Bellevue, Washington. It was while he was coaching there he got started.

"This ex-high school official I knew asked me to officiate," said Bosone of his start. "I started with recreational games, then high school. I was always seeking a better caliber of game."

Bosone has officiated seven years at the varsity level in the Pac-8 after spending two years in the junior varsity ranks. He said he officiates about 25 to 30 games per year with most being Pac-8 games. He also calls games in the Big Sky and West Coast Athletic conferences.

Most officials don't officiate in the college ranks without having 10-15 years of previous experience, Bosone added.

On game days, Bosone said he likes to arrive at the game site several hours before tip-off for some relaxation, a light meal and a pre-game conference with his partner. He said items that are discussed are court conditions,

unusual situations that have happened in the last few weeks and court coverage on the press.

The charge-blocking call is the hardest for an official to make, Bosone said.

"The problem is that it is often dramatic in terms of contact. Usually it is in the middle of the court. It's an emotional call. No matter which way it goes it's a 50-50 call, only half the people are happy with the call."

"It depends on angles — I must have a good angle to make a correct judgment," Bosone went on. "We hope that we are in good position to make a good call a good percentage of the time."

Officials — as well as players and coaches — have times when they aren't performing up to par.

"Being human," said Bosone, "officials have peaks and valleys emotionally. Certain games you are not as high emotionally. Like coaches and players, officials rise to the occasion and have their best games when emotionally prepared."

He gave an example of two small schools, whose teams are having a poor season and are being watched by a poor crowd.

"It's tough at times to get jacked up emotionally for a game."

Officials are rated in the Pac-8, and Bosone sees that as a big plus for the games and officiating.

"We have a peer evaluation program as well as an observers program," Bosone said. "This league is interested in investing time and money for observers. We have people who have a background in officiating or coaching. Constructive criticism or reinforcement on how we're doing is essential."

Bosone said other leagues have "token" efforts, but the Pac-8 program is best.

"My experience is that officials want feedback, but objective. It's the same things kids want. Students don't want lip service, they're interested in improving themselves."

Some might say if officials are interested in improving themselves, why not use video-tape replays?

"Instant replays have done more to reinforce our judgment on tough calls," said Bosone. But he doesn't favor using replays during the game on contested calls.

"It would take a lot away from the game," he said. "Time taken to stop the game would be a detriment."

Instead of replays, Bosone

favors the three-official concept.

"There's no question that with two more eyes, there will be better coverage, with as fast as the game has gotten," Bosone said. "Now, the problem is finances. We can't sense what the mood of the athletic departments is."

Pac-8 officials are paid \$125 per game, transportation and \$35 per diem expenses. It seems that officials are worth every penny they make.

Bosone said that the game of basketball is not getting more violent, but the game is different than it used to be.

"The game has changed," said Bosone. "Basketball is more physical. The players are larger and more skilled and are on the same size court as 20 years ago. It's bound to cause more contact."

"The style of coaching and play have advanced. There's more skill in coaching; more passing. Nobody likes to fight, everybody loses and nobody wins. With a problem like a fight we need help of other folks, the two men in stripes can't do everything."

When he's not officiating, Bosone is the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid at Bellevue Community College, east of Seattle, or can be found coaching youth soccer or little league. He also likes to fish and hunt when time allows.

"One thing I have learned, and I hope I'm a disciple," said Bosone, "it's positive, positive, positive, to reinforce the little kids. I have a rule on my little league team, and that's nobody argues with the ump. Not the coach, not the players, not the parents, or else they're not on the team."

Bosone said he does have a problem when he goes to watch one of the professional teams in Seattle.

"I find myself trying to stay neutral. I have a hard time being a fan, especially with my kids. I have a hard time rooting."

That's probably because officials are supposed to be impartial. And Bosone enjoys being an official at the college level.

"I enjoyed playing and I enjoy officiating. It puts me in a competitive situation which I like. I like the challenge and doing a good job. I really admire the men involved. I feel strongly about the integrity of men participating in the various sports."

"I feel fortunate to be officiating. I enjoy the challenge. When I quit enjoying it, I will quit."

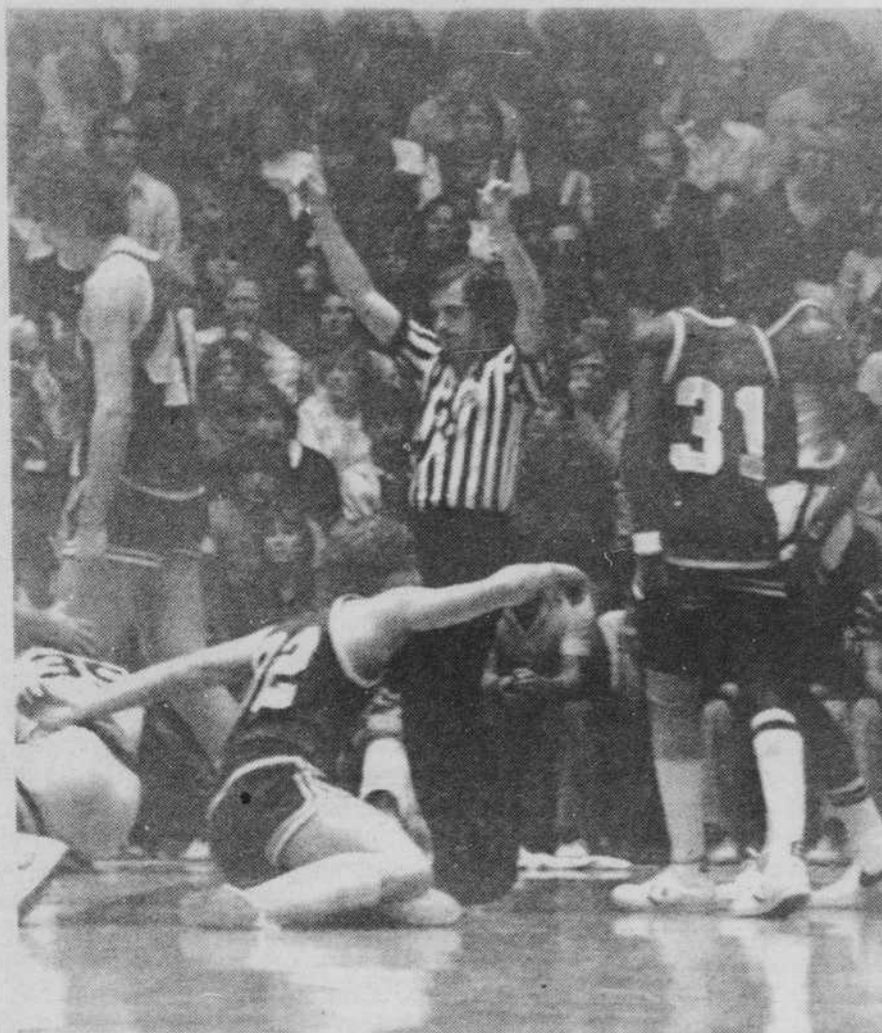


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Frank Bosone has been officiating in the Pacific-8 conference for seven years and the head supervisor of Pac-8 officials thinks Bosone is one of the best around.



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