

A message meant for a few

President's Column

By STEVE
RICHARDSON



I want to thank you all for your comments, e-mails and phone calls about the recent column I wrote regarding the concerns of some writers about the services SOME SIDs are providing. And I want to underscore the word some SIDs.

A few, but not the majority of callers or e-mailers, believed I was commenting about all SIDS. That was never the case. And it was never intended to be the case.

Basically, when you identify some members of a group, there tends to be a pack mentality apparently.

I assume that if in CoSIDA Digest an SID listed 10 things which bug him about writers, there might be some writers who would be offended. I wouldn't be one of them. I would try and see what, if anything, I did on the list. Many SIDS who called or wrote me took it this way. Others didn't. Basically, there wasn't anything new on the list of concerns. It all has been discussed at CoSIDA before. And I assume many of the points will be discussed again.

The basic purpose of the column was to help point out some SIDs have less and less control over their own

domains as athletic directors cut corners and budgets. As a result, the flow of information from SOME offices and the ability to cover SOME teams has dwindled.

It's a case if the shoe fits, wear it. If it doesn't, don't.

The USBWA Board is extremely happy that the NCAA has tabbed Bill Hancock as its director of media services for the Division I Men's Basketball Tournament.

The USBWA officers were particularly concerned who would replace Jim Marchiony. Marchiony, who has been a long-standing proponent of the print media and has fought to keep the media on the floor of the arena covering the Final Four, took a post in the Connecticut athletic department after the 2002 Final Four in Atlanta.

Fortunately, Hancock has the same priorities and has a print media background, although he has been on the other side of the fence administrating the tournament for awhile.

Actually, the media will have the best of both worlds. Hancock knows more about the bracketing procedures than probably anyone. And he will be very available to

the media to answer questions.

Bill is working out of his home in Kansas City during most of December. But he will be in Indianapolis full-time after the first year and leading into the NCAA Tournament.

One of the more interesting media ventures this season is going on at the St. Petersburg Times. The paper has adopted the Southern Illinois University Salukis as its team. First and second round NCAA Tournament games will be held at the Ice Palace Arena in nearby Tampa.

Before the season, the paper ran a big story on the Salukis. And the parents of SIU guard Kent Williams received a copy of the story from relatives. Williams' relatives were surprised when they opened up the paper before the college basketball season and greeting them was a picture of Williams and a large story about the Salukis.

Each time the Salukis play, the paper runs an account of the game.

Well-intended grievance aired on wrong platform

To the Members of the USBWA,

Please accept my heartiest holiday wishes from the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the column written by Steve Richardson, the President of the United States Basketball Writers Association.

The column titled "A Cold Shoulder" dealt more with the relationship between sports information directors (SIDs) and sportswriters, and it appeared in the USBWA newsletter. Many members of the organization are SIDs.

The case presented was the basketball press row situation at Providence where the media has been moved off of press row to provide more room for "big donors". Many of the playing arenas are community-owned and the athletic departments are tenants. Discussions on press row seating can get heated between the owner of the building and the tenants.

My particular basketball SID battled for press row

seating at a neutral site and he was successful to a certain extent. Did he get everything he requested, no, but he battled on behalf of the media.

Battling and communication are my major points of emphasis. The SIDs are the people battling for members of the media. Steve correctly points out the SIDs are in the middle and even admits there are those in a no-win situation.

After speaking with Steve on the phone, he explained he was only trying to assist the SID who would battle arena personnel and other athletic administrators. With a copy of his column, quite possibly a particular school would not move press row. His purpose was not to make broad generalizations, but "if the shoe fits for some SIDs, maybe a little constructive criticism is warranted."

I do feel like his heart was in the right place, but he chose the wrong platform to air the grievance. Indeed, if there are those SIDs who fail to return phone calls, who do not try and work with the media, then by all means get in

touch with SIDs who work with those "chilly" SIDs and explain your situation. Sometimes a little one-on-one communication from your peers is helpful, and if not, the next stop should be an athletic director.

SIDs are trying to balance a number of things, including whether members of the media prefer a hard copy of a spring prospectus, or if they prefer an electronic version. Hopefully, a skilled SID can achieve that balance between assisting the media and keeping his job within the athletic department and making sure everyone stays on the same page as far as communication is concerned.

Many thanks for the time and space in your publication. CoSIDA and the USBWA are two excellent organizations who will continue to work together.

Sincerely,
Alan Cannon, Texas A&M University
CoSIDA President

Katha Quinn, Hall of Fame nominees are needed

Nominations are now being accepted for two USBWA awards given annually to recognize individuals for their service to the organization and achievements in the sports journalism profession.

The first is the Katha Quinn Award, which was established in 1991 by past USBWA president Malcolm Moran in memory of Katha Quinn, the former sports information director at St. John's University who passed away a year earlier following a courageous battle with cancer.

The award has two criteria: Nominees must either 1) have rendered a special service to the USBWA and sports writers who cover college basketball or 2) like Katha provide an inspiration to sports journalists.

Last year's recipient, Mark Asher of the Washington Post, was the first person to meet both criteria. Asher long has been known for his superb columns and stories with the Post but few knew that he continues to write and cover

major sporting events while battling serious health problems, something he's done for close to 20 years.

Asher suffers from diabetes and has had kidney and pancreas transplants.

But he has managed to overcome those problems with a remarkable spirit and will that fellow writer and friend Ken Denlinger spoke about so eloquently when he introduced Asher at last year's USBWA awards ceremony in Atlanta.

Prior to Asher the award was presented primarily to sports information directors, who also like Katha were passionate about their careers and devoted to servicing the media.

Among them were Marvin "Skeeter" Francis, ACC and Wake Forest; Roger Valdiserri, Notre Dame; Rick Brewer, North Carolina; Craig Miller and Amy Early, USA Basketball; Al Shrier, Temple; Tim Tolokan, Connecticut; Bill Hancock, NCAA and the Big Eight Conference; and Mike Tranghese, a former SID who now is Big East Conference Commissioner

The second USBWA award is the organization's Hall of Fame, which was established in 1988 and now numbers 42 members. To be eligible for the Hall of Fame, individuals must be nominated by a member of the organization, have 20 years of service in the business and have either made a significant contribution to the USBWA or are recognized for their achievements in the sports journalism profession. Current USBWA board members and officers and selected members of the USBWA Hall of Fame make up the selection committee. Individuals must receive 75 percent of the votes to be elected. Induction ceremonies will be held at this year's USBWA meeting at the NCAA Final Four in New Orleans. Past members include some of the greats in the organization's history and writers who are recognized nationally for their work.

Last year the USBWA inducted four new members – women's basketball guru Mel Greenberg (Philadelphia Inquirer) and past presidents Bill Millsaps (Richmond Times-Dispatch), Jim O'Connell (Associated Press) and Alex Wolff (Sports Illustrated).

This year's ballot will include writers who were previously nominated and are eligible for election again. They are:

Axthelm, Pete (Newsweek, ESPN) – Actively wrote about college basketball for many years as sports editor of Newsweek and also authored "City Game," the first book to seriously explore college basketball recruiting.

Bilovsky, Frank (Rochester Democrat) – Remembered as the top reporter during the hey-days of the Big Five in Philadelphia. Spent 25 years chronicling that group.

Boggs, Frank (Oklahoma and Colorado) – Past president of the USBWA (1981-82). Former sports editor/columnist of the Colorado Springs Sun and columnist for the Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman. Past recipient of the Jake Wade Award presented by CoSIDA.

Chortkoff, Mitch (Los Angeles) – Worked for several daily newspapers in Los Angeles area and regularly covered Southern California and UCLA. Also was West Coast correspondent for many years for Basketball Weekly.

Collett, Ritter (Dayton Daily News) – Reporter and columnist who spent entire career for Dayton Journal-

Executive Director

BY JOE MITCH
MVC



Herald and the Daily News covering Dayton Flyers, Mid-American Conference and Big Ten. Now retired.

Connors, Bill (Tulsa World) – Late columnist and sports editor for the Tulsa World. Regularly covered the Big Eight, old SWC and Missouri Valley Conference and was a frequent contributor to several preseason college basketball magazines. Passed away two years ago after a long and distinguished career with the Tulsa World.

Furfari, Mickey (West Virginia) – Has covered West Virginia sports for 50 years, through the eras of Hot Rod Hundley, Jerry West, Rod Thorn, and Fred Schaus. He retired after 40 year as a daily writer for the Morgantown Dominion Post but is still active as a columnist for a syndicate of seven West Virginia newspapers. He was voted West Virginia sportswriter of the year five times and is considered dean of sports writing in the state.

Hochman, Stan (Philadelphia Daily News) – Covered college basketball in Philadelphia in the 1960s and 1970s for the Daily News. Later became a columnist with that newspaper.

Jauss, Bill (Chicago Tribune) – Long-time college basketball writer for the Chicago Tribune and the old Chicago Daily News, covering Notre Dame, the Big 10 and Chicago-area teams. Still active for the Tribune.

Logan, Bob (Arlington Heights, Ill., Daily Herald) – Spent last 13 years at Daily Herald and 28 years prior to that at the Chicago Tribune. Began his career at the Philadelphia Inquirer in 1953 and later moved to the Springfield (Ill.) State Journal before joining the Tribune where he first covered NBA and later college basketball.

O'Brien, Jim (Street & Smith Yearbook) – Spent more than a decade as editor of the Street & Smith Basketball Yearbook, the oldest basketball annual in the country. Also covered college basketball during newspaper stints in New York and Pittsburgh.

Radding, Jerry (Springfield Union) – Was reporter and columnist in Springfield, Mass., and covered 26 consecutive Final Fours and this year will be attending his 37th. Now retired. A former president of the USBWA (1973-74) and was the first New England writer to hold that position. First publicity director of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. Still covers college basketball as a free-lance writer for the Associated Press.

Spander, Art (Oakland Tribune) – Began career in 1960 with UPI in LA. Worked for the Santa Monica Evening Outlook, San Francisco Chronicle and San Francisco Examiner, where he was a columnist from 1979-96. Now writes column for the Oakland Tribune/Alameda Newspaper Group. Won numerous writing awards for San Francisco Press Club and was named writer of the year for California by the National Sportswriters and Sportscasters Assn. Longtime columnist for The Sporting News.

Any new nominations for the USBWA Hall of Fame and Katha Quinn Award should be submitted to Joe Mitch at: mitch@mvc.org.

This year's award recipients will be announced in the March issue of *Tipoff*.

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It's our job to educate the next generation

I know Vanderbilt University is a splendid academic institution. I've met talented Vandy grads in press boxes across the country. But even the best and the brightest places can benefit from some remedial Journalism 101.

My story begins at courtside, Assembly Hall, Bloomington, Ind. Dec. 9, 2002. Vanderbilt vs. Indiana.

Joe Biddle, my friend from *The Tennessean* in Nashville, and I were there to write columns on the IU-Vandy game. Seated to Joe's left was Mike Organ, Vandy beat writer for *The Tennessean*. Seated to my right were three students allegedly representing the Vandy student paper.

I say allegedly for a reason. Only one of the three was packing a notebook, the first clue of the excitement to follow.

Indiana jumped to an early lead. Vandy had no answer – or defender – for Bracey Wright's IU's marvelous freshman. But just when you wondered if Indiana was going to win by 40, Vandy surged back into the game. And when they did, one of the students sitting to my right, screamed some encouragement toward the Vandy team and yelled something about taking the ball inside against IU.

Huh?

I let it go. Maybe the kid let the adrenaline rush of covering his first game at Assembly Hall take control of his emotions. But why wasn't he taking any notes?

Sure enough, the next time Vandy scored, another cheer, followed by a pump of the fist.

Enough. I advised the group that this was press row. Cheering was OK, but I'd appreciate it if they moved into the bleachers if that is why they had made the trip. The kid looked at me as if I was trying to take his wallet. But he said

he wouldn't cheer.

Right. A couple of possessions later, Vandy scored again. Another pump of the fist.

This time I didn't say a word. I simply took a walk to IU sports information director Jeff Fanter and asked him if he would check the credentials on these guys and give them a little talk.

Indeed. Fanter advised them that cheering was not a press row activity. And he wondered why only one student had an open notebook. One guy was asked to leave. The other two were advised to stop cheering. Fanter handled the problem with poise and professionalism. I thanked him for that.

About 30 seconds after Fanter departed, one of the students turned to me and asked, "Why did you have to do that? We told you we'd stop cheering."

Indeed, they had. But I consider fist pumping on press row over the line. And I was just as perturbed by two guys sitting near center court with absolutely no interest in taking a single note.

Vice President By RICK BOZICH Louisville Courier Journal



"Fellas," I said, "people sit here to work, not cheer. We're not going to have cheering. If you want to cheer, buy a ticket."

"But we have just as much right to be here as you do."

"Yes, you do. But not if you're going to cheer."

Did I enjoy playing the heavy? Not really. But over the years, I've noticed a disturbing decline in behavior along press row. Cheering is one of the worst offenses. Too often writers sit quietly without enforcing the code of expected behavior. To me, that equates with endorsing the problem.

I believe it's the responsibility of basketball writers, not just SIDs, to enforce the rules and educate young writers that press row and the press room are places to work, not to play and root, root, root for the home team.

Writers are already being squeezed from many directions. Courtside seats are disappearing at more arenas. Having folks use those premium spots to cheer for their favorite teams is an abuse of privilege that we shouldn't accept or tolerate. And if Journalism professors aren't going to teach that, those of us along press row should.

Most Courageous Award nominees lift our spirits

Sometimes there are so many things to vote for that choosing another All-American team or Top 25 doesn't seem like the honor it should.

Finding the candidates for the USBWA's Most Courageous Award is a different endeavor – a chance to get away from our jaded selves and remember how many people in sports inspire us not only with their ability but with their spirits.

Here are a few early nominees for the 2003 award that will be presented at the Final Four luncheon, with the winner featured in a CBS profile. Along with the award, the USBWA presents a \$1,000 check to a charity of scholarship fund chosen by the recipient.

As you go through the season, remember we need your eyes and ears around the country to identify candidates for this special award.

Please e-mail me at Robyn.Norwood@latimes.com with your suggestions, and we'll add them to the group below.

Delvar Barrett, Ohio – Many times the winner of this award has shown courage after being struck by an illness or physical disability beyond their control. What's remarkable about Barrett, a 6-foot-8, 275-pound starter for Ohio, is that he chose to accept his burden as the caregiver for his disabled mother, almost blind from complications of diabetes and frail enough to require a wheelchair.

When Barrett left Detroit to move to Athens, Ohio, as a junior college transfer last summer, he brought his mother, Vivian, to live with him in a two-bedroom apartment.

In a piece that appeared on ESPN.com, Wayne Drehs wrote about how Barrett, cooks, cleans, shops and oversees his mother's medical care while keeping up with school and basketball. Without his support, she probably would have to move to a nursing home.

"That woman has a heart of gold," Barrett told Drehs. "My entire life, she did everything she could to raise me and my two sisters. So I'd do anything for her."

Senque Carey, New Mexico – The collision looked innocuous enough, just another block-charge call. But Carey, the defender, didn't get up after landing on his backside Nov. 25, his neck snapping back with such force it injured his spinal cord and left him partially paralyzed.

For more than a week, Carey had no movement in his legs. Then, incredibly, a couple of weeks after the fall, he regained feeling in his toes and soon began walking close to normally, though he had not yet been cleared to attempt to run.

Carey talks about returning to the team – he stunned teammates by rising from his wheelchair to take perhaps a dozen steps and shoot some 3-pointers – but doctors are uncertain of his prognosis.

Carey isn't uncertain at all.

"I still have the desire to play basketball and help the team out in any way that I can," he said. "I'm still positive I will be back to 100 percent. I don't have any doubts about

that. It's only a matter of time."

Rayna DuBose, Virginia Tech – A couple of days after Virginia Tech's season ended with a loss in the WNIT semifinals last spring, DuBose posed for a team picture despite feeling ill.

Within days, she was hospitalized with meningococcal meningitis, a life-threatening disease that left her in a coma for three weeks and resulted in the amputation of parts of all four limbs last May.

The road back is arduous – she is not expected to return to school until next summer – but DuBose is making strong progress. In October, she rose from a golf cart to stand on the field and acknowledge the cheers of a crowd of more than 60,000 at a Virginia Tech football game.

DuBose is undergoing intensive rehabilitation and re-learning such tasks as how to feed and dress herself and move up and down stairs on her own.

Eager to be part of the team, she already has joined her teammates on the bench for a couple of early season games.

Vice President By ROBYN NORWOOD LOS ANGELES TIMES



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Teleconference information set

Details of the NCAA's Final Four teleconferences have been set, according to Bill Hancock of the NCAA.

The call-in number for the teleconferences is (913) 981-5507. The number for replays is (402) 280-9026, plus the box number below.

The following are the dates and times of the news conference. The first two dates are traditional pre-selection calls. The third is the Selection Sunday call.

- Wednesday, Feb. 26, 3 p.m. EST, Jim Livengood, pass code 706234, replay box 1.
- Wednesday, March 12, 3 p.m. EST, Jim Livengood, pass code 656903, replay box 2.
- Sunday, March 16, 6:30 p.m. EST, Jim Livengood, pass code 682709, replay box 3.
- Wednesday, April 2, 1 p.m. EST, Final Four coaches, pass code 744832, replay box 4.

In a teleconference with the USBWA Board of Directors, Hancock expressed concern about reporters tying up telephones for Internet use. Telephones designated for "Internet research" will be set off on separate tables.

Reporters raised concerns to Hancock that hospitality rooms were being shut down before their posted hours at many preliminary-round sites. Hancock said the hosts of preliminary rounds have been instructed to keep hospitality rooms open on game days until 1 a.m. or three hours after the conclusion of the final game, whichever is later.

Pre-season No. 1 Arizona lands two player of year nominees

Arizona, Kansas, Oklahoma and Oregon placed two players apiece among the U.S. Basketball Writers Association's finalists for national player of the year.

Jason Gardner and Luke Walton received nominations for Arizona, the USBWA's pre-season No. 1 team. Nick Collison and Kirk Hinrich of Kansas and Oklahoma's Hollis Price and Ebi Ere also received nominations coming off Final Four seasons. Oregon's Luke Ridnour and Luke Jackson also were nominated.

The nominees also included Alabama's Erwin Dudley, the Southeastern Conference player of the year last season; Pittsburgh's Brandin Knight, the Big East player of the year; Creighton's Kyle Korver, the Missouri Valley player of the year; and David West of Xavier, a two-time Atlantic 10 player of the year.

Freshmen Carmelo Anthony of Syracuse and Rashad McCants of North Carolina also were nominated. Other nominees include: Mario Austin of Mississippi State; Tom Coverdale of Indiana; Chris Duhon of Duke; T.J. Ford of Texas; David Harrison of Colorado; Jameer Nelson of Saint Joseph's; Emeka Okafor of Connecticut; Mike Sweetney of Georgetown; Chris Thomas of Notre Dame; Dwayne Wade of Marquette.

Duke's Jason Williams was the USBWA national player of the year last season.

The Nominees

Carmelo Anthony, F, freshman, Syracuse
Mario Austin, F, junior, Mississippi State
Nick Collison, F, senior, Kansas
Tom Coverdale, G, senior, Indiana
Erwin Dudley, F, senior, Alabama
Chris Duhon, G, junior, Duke
Ebi Ere, F, senior, Oklahoma
T.J. Ford, G, sophomore, Texas
Jason Gardner, G, senior, Arizona
David Harrison, C, sophomore, Colorado
Kirk Hinrich, G, senior, Kansas
Luke Jackson, G, junior, Oregon
Brandin Knight, G, senior, Pittsburgh
Kyle Korver, F, senior, Creighton
Rashad McCants, G, freshman, North Carolina
Jameer Nelson, G, junior, Saint Joseph's
Emeka Okafor, C, sophomore, Connecticut
Hollis Price, G, senior, Oklahoma
Rick Rickert, F, sophomore, Minnesota
Luke Ridnour, G, junior, Oregon
Mike Sweetney, F, junior, Georgetown
Chris Thomas, G, sophomore, Notre Dame
Dwyane Wade, G, junior, Marquette
Luke Walton, F, senior, Arizona
David West, F, senior, Xavier

USBWA Application form

If you have not yet renewed your membership to the U.S. Basketball Writers Association now is the time to act. For your \$35 membership fee you will receive the most complete directory in college basketball and you will also get all 12 issues of *Basketball Times* and, as well, you will be eligible to enter our Best Writing Contest.

Send a check for \$35 and let the USBWA make your job of covering college basketball easier.

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Newspaper/Publication/ College _____

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City _____ STATE _____ Zip _____

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Norwood

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Her doctors even say she someday will be able to return to the court wearing prosthetic limbs that will allow her to shoot and dribble again – not at the college level, probably, but able to play the game.

"My spirits are high," she told Angela Watts of the *Washington Post*. "I really don't think my goals have changed. Everything is still the same about me. I want to come back to school and graduate and play basketball, hopefully."

Bob Huggins, Cincinnati – The news was terrible, but it wasn't completely unexpected. Huggins and most of his close friends knew he inherited a predisposition for heart trouble from his father, and his go-go coaching lifestyle wasn't helping.

The people closest to him knew something else, too. Despite a near-fatal heart attack Sept. 28 at age 49 while on a recruiting trip to Pittsburgh, Huggins would be back on the bench this season.

Back on the sidelines for the first practice two weeks later? That was a little surprising.

"People don't believe it, but I'm doing OK," said Huggins, who has undertaken lifestyle changes, adding exercise and healthy eating to a routine that had included too many late nights and fast food.

He insists he isn't in denial about how close he came to dying.

"If I was on the plane, I probably wouldn't have made it," Huggins said.

"It was very serious. I don't mean to say it wasn't. I'm going to have to take pretty good care of myself. My heart took a pretty good shock ... All I can do is do the things they tell me."