

Game on

John Hampton makes the calls at Division I basketball games

By Debra Gibson Isaacs

The basketball game is on—fans are screaming, a ball is bouncing on the hardwood, sneakers are squeaking. All of the boisterous excitement reverberates through the arena. But then a whistle shrills. Everything stops. All eyes shift to one referee.

On any given night, that referee could very well be John Hampton, an NCAA Division I men's basketball official and a member of Blue Grass Energy.

THE THIRD TEAM

Hampton is a member of the third team on the floor—the referee crew.

Today Hampton drove four hours to referee a Division I battle in Nashville, Tennessee. It's now 9:35 p.m., and Hampton still has a four-hour drive back to Carlisle.

It is a rigorous job. If the location is too far to drive, referees typically are required to take the first flight out on game day, usually a 6 a.m. flight. He is away from home a lot.

He is also under extreme scrutiny. A supervisor grades his performance after each game, and he also hears from the media and, these days, fans armed with social media to air their views.

"You can't make many mistakes and remain a referee," Hampton says.

PLAYER PARALLELS

Preparation for the public part of being a referee is markedly similar to that of the players.

The referees warm up physically and prepare mentally. They have to keep pace with the teenage athletes and focus intensely on every move. As the other two teams are talking

strategy, Hampton and his team do likewise. After the game, he and his fellow refs meet with an official observer to discuss their performance just as the players meet with their coach. Hampton will watch the game tape with the official observer and then complete a form critiquing his own performance.

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John Hampton, a Blue Grass Energy member, referees a college basketball game between the ISU Redbirds and the Lindenwood Lions last fall, at Redbird Arena in Normal, Illinois. Photo: Alan Look

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ENERGY AS A SERVICE TO OUR MEMBERS.

Rachel Settles, Editor



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our powerful community connection

As children, many of us remember picking teams at recess to play a variety of childhood games. These games would often require us to work with each other to form a strategy to defeat our opponent. We knew, together, we could do so much more than playing alone.

Looking back, those simple games taught me a big lesson about our community: connecting with each other makes us stronger.

We know a strong, vibrant cooperative builds bonds that are unbreakable through thick and thin. We use that solidarity to remain focused on members' interests and how we can continue making life better, the cooperative way. We are led by members like you who know the challenges and rewards of living and working in our service area and are attuned to community needs. After all, our business model directs our attention on our local communities.

And true to our cooperative roots, we remain focused on programs and projects that benefit our communities. It's why we sponsor two Honor Flight participants each year. And it's why we support charities like Kentucky Wounded Heroes and the American Cancer Society. It's also the reason co-op employees gladly roll up their sleeves and donate time to local sports leagues and churches.

Whether through providing power or civic engagement, your cooperative has a powerful connection to the communities we serve. It's a bond that assists us in making life better for all our members.

By President/CEO
Michael I. Williams



CONTINUED FROM 30A

SWOOSH

But being a referee is also a thrill, especially for a lifelong athlete who played basketball, football and baseball in high school and then baseball for the University of Kentucky.

“It’s like an extension of my playing days,” Hampton says. “You are still in the game, still on the floor. For a former athlete, refereeing is a way of remaining an athlete.”

For Hampton, the job is also a family affair. Hampton’s father, Doug, was a referee. Younger brother Brent is also a Division I referee. Son Wilson aspires to be a referee.

“As a young boy growing up in Cynthiana during the 1970s and early ’80s, I went to games with my father,” Hampton recalls “I remember driving all over Kentucky with him. This gave us a lot of quality time together. It was really a blessing for a young boy very much into sports. After the game we would discuss how the game went, how the teams played and how

specific players and coaches did.”

Sometimes friends joined them.

“Dad would referee and then take us out to eat. By the time we got back home, dad had lost money,” Hampton laughs.

LIFE LESSONS

Hampton, however, has learned important life lessons along with the finer points of basketball.

“Sportsmanship comes to mind quickly,” Hampton says. “Fairness is another. As a referee, your job is to be neutral and fair.”

As exciting as it is, Hampton says being a referee is like every other job in some ways.

“You strive to be good,” the father of two says. “It is impossible to be perfect in the officiating business, but it’s your job to work hard to get better each game. No matter what kind of game you had, go to the next one trying to be better.”

Hampton arrives home at 2 a.m. The next morning he is at his other job as owner of the GCH Insurance Group.

He loves all of it—the stress, the physicality and especially the game itself.

“I love being on the floor and in the game,” he says. “As a former athlete, it’s like you’re still playing. Still competing.”



Clockwise: John Hampton, on right, along with his father Doug, center, and brother, Brent. Photo: John Hampton; John in the kitchen of his farmhouse. Photo: Rachel Settles; John's home he built five years ago in Carlisle. Photo: John Hampton



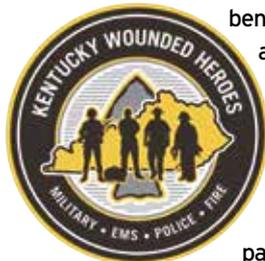
CHARITY PARTNER

KENTUCKY WOUNDED HEROES

Kentucky Wounded Heroes wants to identify more people that can benefit from their programs. They serve military members as well as community first-responders, including police officers, firefighters and EMS personnel.

If you have a relative, friend or neighbor who was wounded in action or has a service-related disability, tell them about the Kentucky Wounded Heroes.

All programs are provided at no cost to the participants. Find more information about them and their events at kentuckywoundedheroes.net or call (502) 235-4262.



One of the Kentucky Wounded Heroes' annual events is a fishing trip to Alaska. Photo: Ian Flannery

Each year, Blue Grass Energy chooses a charity to work with for the year. We partner with a local nonprofit organization that benefits the communities in which we live and serve. Our fundraising efforts for the entire year go to that cause. This year, we are partnering with the Kentucky Wounded Heroes.

From Blue Grass Energy's Bylaws

Members will elect one director from Districts 2, 5 and 6. Each director serves a four-year term. The following, from Article IV, Section 5, of Blue Grass Energy's bylaws, outlines the nomination process.

Article IV, Section 5—

Nominations. It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint, not less than fifty (50) days and not more than one hundred twenty (120) days before the date of a meeting the members at which a report of the election of directors is to be made a committee on nominations consisting of not less than five (5) nor more than ten (10) members who shall be selected so as to give equitable representation on the committee to the geographical areas served or to be served by the Cooperative. No officer or member of the Board of Directors shall be appointed a member of such committee. The committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least forty-five (45) days before the meeting, a list of nominations for Board of Directors.

One-half percent (1/2%) or more of the total number of

consumers shown on the Financial and Statistical Report of RUS Form 7 as of December 31 of the calendar year preceding the election may make other nominations in writing over their original dated signatures, signed within 120 days prior to the annual meeting, together with printed names, telephone numbers, and addresses by filing such nominations not more than ninety (90) days and not less than fifty (50) days prior to the meeting and the Secretary shall post the same at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted, if, after examination of the Provost, it is determined by said Provost that said petitions meet the requirements of the Bylaws, Articles of Consolidation, and the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. In no event shall a member sign more than one petition for the nomination of a director from a district. All nominating petitions shall be submitted on the form of "Nomination Petition" provided by the cooperative. All nominees shall certify their qualifications by signing a "Certification of Candidate

for Director" and completing the "Application for Candidate for Director" form provided by cooperative and file same with the cooperative not less than 50 days before the date of the meeting of the members.

The date of the first working day not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the Annual Meeting shall be established as the certificate date which determines whether a member is in good standing and qualified for the purpose of signing a nominating petition and/or voting.

A member in good standing is any active member who is in compliance with the Bylaws, Rules and Regulations of the Cooperative, and Rules and Regulations of the Public Service Commission as of forty-five (45) days prior to the Annual Membership Meeting. The Secretary shall deliver a list of members in good standing on the certification date to the Provost.

Any member, whose service is disconnected for any reason, will automatically become a nonvoting member until said member is reconnected and receiving electrical current.