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WEEK IN REVIEW

HIGH SCHOOLS

Published: Friday, August 10, 2007

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TUESDAY

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MONDAY



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SUNDAY



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SATURDAY



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- Man didn't ram officer on

Whistle blower

During his college days, Dennis Myers was quite a pain for basketball officials. In the early 1960s, Myers was a student in Bellingham at what's now known as Western Washington University. He worked part time in the school's sports information department and could be found at all of Western's basketball games.

One of his closest college buddies, Jim Adams, recently recalled that Myers often got pretty worked up in the stands. Sometimes when things didn't go well for Western, Myers aimed his frustration at basketball officials, Adams said.

In fact, Adams, who went on to coach the Snohomish High School boys basketball team for 18 seasons, said Myers was one of the harshest critics of officials he'd ever seen.

Oh, the irony.

More than four decades later, Myers is set to be honored as one of the state's most successful, influential basketball officials ever. A few years after he regularly razed college officials, Myers began a high school officiating career that ended up spanning 36 years.

For his diverse contributions related to basketball officiating, Myers will be inducted into the Washington Officials Association Hall of Fame Saturday at the Yakima Convention Center. Part of a three-member group of 2007 inductees, Myers will be the first official in any sport from a Snohomish County organization to receive the honor.

Myers said he is extremely humbled, especially considering all the county's great officials who came before him but who haven't been inducted.

"It was a complete shock. I was overwhelmed," said Myers, 67, who is retired and lives in Stanwood. "Obviously, for your peers to recognize you like that is very heartwarming."

The WOA Hall of Fame welcomed its first class of inductees in 2003 and will have 20 members after Saturday's ceremony. The Hall was created to recognize people who helped make prep officiating what it is today, WOA commissioner Todd Stordahl said.

Officials must be nominated by someone to be considered and they are voted in by a special committee. It considers an official's reputation among peers and coaches as well as his or her overall contribution to the game.

Myers began officiating in 1969, worked five state tournaments, was a three-time president of the Snohomish County Basketball Officials Association and wrote the association's constitution and bylaws. He still helps by observing current officials and providing feedback to help them improve.

Myers was an obvious choice for the Hall of Fame, said Snohomish County Basketball Officials Association president Kevin Erickson, who nominated Myers for the honor. The only question, Erickson said, was why it didn't happen sooner.

"Not only as an official but as a person he's given so much back to our association," said Erickson.

Myers graduated in 1958 from Richland High School in southeast Washington. He loved sports and played baseball at Richland. Later, he competed in adult fastpitch softball leagues.

Myers, who taught for 41 years in the Edmonds School District, comes from a family of sports lovers. He is the younger brother of Roger Myers, who coached at Edmonds High and Woodway High. Younger brother Rick Myers officiated hoops for 25 years and Mark Myers, Dennis' son, began officiating basketball in the area in 1992.

Despite all his personal achievements, Dennis Myers said his most memorable sports moment might be when he watched his son officiate a game for the first time.



Dan Bates/The Herald (click to enlarge)

Retired basketball referee Dennis Myers of Stanwood, who officiated for more than 30 years, is being inducted into the state Hall of Fame for officials.

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That's just the way Myers is, said those who worked and coached alongside him. Like any good official, he never craved the spotlight and instead did his best to create a fair, safe and competitive environment.

"He officiated for the kids," said Adams, the former Snohomish High coach. "That's a thing that set him apart. It's not for coaches or officials. It's for the kids, and he kept that in mind."

Myers, who retired from officiating in 1995, continues to lend his skills to the game he loves even though he's no longer on the court.

"He just keeps giving back (with voluntary observation and feedback). Even though he's not actively officiating, he keeps helping. That's what makes him ... Hall of Fame-caliber," Stordahl said.

By developing an unwavering set of officiating philosophies, in addition to absorbing dense, ever-changing rulebooks, Myers earned respect from coaches and officials. One key to success, he said, was never treating a coach as an adversary.

"It was always, 'We are in this together,'" Myers said.

Another simple but effective aspect was being a good listener, he said: "When a coach or a player has something to say to you, listen. Let your brain process it and then decide."

Jeff Schireman quickly noticed those qualities in Myers. Schireman became an SCBOA official in 1988 and has gone on to work hundreds of prep and college games. He attributes his rise to the guidance of Myers.

Myers "took me under his wing and was always there to pat me on the back and give me any instructions he thought I needed," Schireman said. "Seeing his attitude towards officiating really went a long way to molding how I felt about officiating and what importance it played in the (community) and in my life."

Myers seems to be the only person surprised by his Hall of Fame selection. It's probably because he constantly spent time improving his ability instead of pondering his success.

"The game always meant more to Dennis than his accomplishments," Schireman said.

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