

The Rant. REPLAY



◀ Rewinding & Writing
The Best Quotes of Episodes
51-100



Episode 51: Michael Mayer

The Rant. Episode: 51



It was only 4 years ago when I met Mike Mayer on the Basketball Court. I noticed that his shoes had dirt. He just came from a baseball game, and I, a Lacrosse game. He convinced me to join baseball. Join baseball I did. In this pod, Mike discusses his love for baseball growing up, his transition officiating a sport with a clock, and everything in between.

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17:00: Ralph the Ref: "When do you think was the moment that you started feeling like you really had your foot down and you really understood everything?"

17:08: Michael: "I have always felt that you can learn, I think that I felt confident in what I was doing, probably around 4 or 5 years I have gotten a call to move up, but because of issues at home I couldn't give what they wanted because you have to give 5 days so if anybody tells you that just accept to move up to Varsity and do what you can. And as you move up the levels you get to do some more games and I really did a ton of games just to work on my strike zone and mechanics and I think that mechanics it has to do with anything in life, I am good at observing so I like to sit back and watch my partner and see how he works behind the plate, if I was behind the plate I would watch and see how that guy work the bases, where he is set up, so I just try to pick some little nuances from everybody, no matter how much time they have been out there. So I am never against learning."

Episode 52: Justin Bailey

The Rant. Episode: 52

I'm happy I never got a chance to play against Justin in a game of Basketball; chances are, I wouldn't stand a chance. He discusses his playing days as a youth, playing for St. Mary's on Long Island, his collegiate career and how it structured him, and his love for officiating and his brand Refs Corner.

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25:20: Ralph the Ref: "Also when it comes to officiating I know that you have started a brand called Refs Corner, how did you get started with that and where do you see it going with that?"

25:30: Justin: "I started off I was fresh out of College and I was refereeing so I needed to buy referee gear and I went out to buy compression shirts, Nike are \$30, Under Armour are \$40 and I can't afford that, so I went to Walmart, I got some starter Walmart shirt but in 2 or 3 games they were ruined and I would have to buy a new one. So I was stuck, I wanted to look good on the court but I couldn't afford it. So I thought about starting a business but I would need money for that so I started saving up for that for about 3 years until last year I thought that I was ready to start it, so I started a better quality clothing brand at affordable prices so officials that can't afford the Nike things can still look good on the court, and most important is the quality that is not Walmart brand that is going to rip off right away. My mission is to make sure that you look good at affordable prices."

27:48: Ralph the Ref: "How do you think that playing at a high level has helped you officiate at a high level, do you think that it has helped you leaps and bound, knowing as a player the nuances of what people is trying to do because some people don't have that feel like you and I, some people that haven't played they don't perceive the information so how do you think that has helped you?"

28:10: Justin: "It has helped me a lot, mostly to have a patience on the court because I want to let the play develop and be static on the floor. When I used to play I had to trust my team mates, if I was driving to the basket I had to know that I would have someone open for a shot on the corner and refereeing you have to trust your partners, something is happening on my partner side I trust that he will have a call, I am not going to try to reach over and question on his judgement I will trust that he will call that and also my coach used to say "last play, next play" if you miss a layup this way, next play don't try to go the next time extra hard because you are going to mess yourself up and officiating if you miss a travel, on the next play down don't make a bad call trying to compensate that because that is when that whole make up calls happens and it is obvious. So all this little things kind of helped me to translate from being a player and now to officiate the higher levels."

Episode 53: Nate Cearley

The Rant. Episode: 53

ky's the limit for one Nate. His potential and ambition are on a collision course with his opportunities. In this pod, we sit with the precocious young man, to discuss his come up as an intramural ref not knowing what to do, to seeking people that do, transitioning all the way to the NBA grassroots program.

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19:25 Ralph the Ref: "We all know in this industry that summer is camp season for Basketball, what are your plans for this summer and if you are going to camps what is your mindset for the camp season?"

19:45: Nate: "Great question. So far this summer I have been to both hiring camps and teaching camps, and I think that there is an important distinction that you have to make between hiring camps and teaching camps so what I mean specifically is that when I am going to teaching camps such as proactive referee from Mark Lindsay in Philadelphia a teaching camp is somewhere that you just go to learn as much information as you can and soak it all in and be a sponge because that person that is running that camp they are not going to give you games, they can't give you 10 dates at 250 dollars a pop for you to make 2,500 dollars during the season, what are doing by going to a teaching camp is that you are willing to go get the best information as you can and soak it all up and come in with a filled note for when you go back home you take all that information that you learned on a teaching camp and apply it to your games in the summer league that you work and on the prep work before the season starts for when the season starts you are working on a higher level as when you stepped on the court the last time and that should be the goal for every referee to be better than you were the previous year, the previous month, the previous game, the previous half or the previous quarter. So teaching camps are just aiming to learn as much as you can and being a sponge and asking as many good question as you can and learn from the people running those camps."

21:30: Nate: "Hiring camps on the flip side, everybody is going for a job, it is capitalism at its best, people who run those are the assignors for those leagues or those conferences and they are looking only for the best product that they can for their games because they are not going to take the 71% when they can take the 95% or the 96% the closest thing to a finished product, the best referee prospect they can so the mindset there is not so much, maybe more individualized me versus we, crew situation, taking as much as you can from those teaching camps and applying those into the hiring camps because there is where you are making money and how you get picked up is to take all that information that you have been taught at teaching camps and show them your performance and how you can maybe fit on their hiring process and potentially giving you games on their league so a hiring game the guys are really more about themselves and they are trying to get notice, so it is a look at me thing. Don't get discouraged too much if people are not as nice too you as they would be on a teaching camp because they are trying to get that same spot than you are so it is much more of a cut throat the hiring camps but if you did the right thing and worked for the right people and you do the right things for the right reasons at the right time you will be successful on both hiring camps and teaching camps."

29:19 Nate: "The final thing I would mention is to be a great listener, I always say that I am not a great referee I am just a great listener because people who are better

than me gave me intangible things to work on and it is on me to implement those things so my big thing with my intramural referees is I am know what you need to do to improve for your next game or your next half, this is what you need to do, here is X,Y,Z of what you have to do so I expect you to implement that so that the next time we talk you can talk about something else to continue to build your foundation deeper instead of continuously talking about the same thing and that is the same thing when I am talking about hiring camp, what have you done at teaching camps to build your foundation to get you to go from step one to step two to step three, because they don't want to talk to you about the same thing, you don't want to hear the same thing at game 1 on the hiring camp and game 4 of the hiring game, because they want you to implement that critique and you should have learned that at the teaching camp. So it is important to be a great listener and listen to the people that are trying to help you get to where you want to be and if you are a great listener and you implement those things that they have given you your development will be extra so you will go higher as fast as you can because you are listening and implements the advice you are being given so listen with intent gives me the opportunity to put me into a position to succeed.”



EPISODE 54

TOM KONCHALSKI

**REFEREE
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HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL
TALENT EVALUATOR

22:00: Ralph the Ref: "How do you think that New York Basketball has changed from the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's, 90's all the way to the present time?"

22:14: Tom: "The game itself has morphed several times on every level, the pro game is not the same game as it was 20 years ago, it is not the same game as on the 70s and obviously not the same thing on the 50s but in terms of New York City Basketball every kid will say that New York was the Mecca and that Madison Square Garden was the stage in which they could step and maybe they would have no influence with R.G. Barret and Kevin Durant, the current kids they say the same, they mount those words, they don't believe us, they don't have the pride in New York Basketball as we used to have because if they did they wouldn't leave top programs in New York City to go to New England prep schools, wouldn't go to St. Patrick's schools or St. Benedicts, they wouldn't do that. They don't have the pride they had. The only city that kids still have a lot a pride with is Philadelphia, kids who were recruited by the Big East schools from Philadelphia they might stay home and go to St. Joes rather than going out of town to major conference schools. New York City kids they lost their pride to play in New York Basketball and that is regrettable.

I believe this could chance if the Knicks or the Nets get it going again, if St. Johns or whatever program really starts winning on a high level then it might restore some pride because it is like the Golden Ages, the Knicks were not winning championships in the 50's but they were in the Finals 3 or 4 times in a row, lost to Minneapolis Lakers and then they weren't good in the 60's but they got good in the late 60s and won the championship in 70' and 73' and those were the Golden Ages."

43:00: Ralph the Ref: "I know that you speak of a time that was a lot different than today, how do you think kids have changed over the years, I struggle as a coach and I told you that I have been coaching the Kellenberg Volleyball team girls for 20 years and I can see that I am having a difficulty of locking them in due to all of the distractions, phones and all that, so how do you think that kids have changed along the years when you are as an evaluator?"

43:30: Tom: "I think that kids are still kids, there are so many more distractions and all the technology is complicating their lives, beyond that the problems that kids have beyond technology is their attention span used to be way bigger than it is now, but other than that I think that parents have changed more than kids, parents cease to be parents and they want to be friends and not to get directions to their kids but they want to be liked by their kids but kids are still kids and I agree that it is harder now because they don't have the ability to listen.

I don't talk a great deal about this but sometimes I talk about the keys to success and the primary signs of intelligence is the ability to listen, conversely someone who is not a good listener simply you are going to tell them in person that if you are not willing to listen you are not going to learn and if you never learn you are not getting any

better best case scenario you will stay the same, usually go back slightly. The ability to listen divides in two parts, number one is the willingness to listen, willingness to go out there and meet people by virtue of age, experience or training possessed by the acknowledgment that you can tap and make you better, secondly you got to develop concentration and firstly if we have short concentration spans we have to try to widen that, secondly you got to set goals and thirdly you got to learn from mistakes, you got to learn to turn failure into lessons.”

Episode 55: Damion Reid

The Rant. Episode: 55



A picture is worth a 1,000 words, and Damion has taken thousands of them. In this pod, he describes his love of photography, his love of sports, and how he combined the two, to make a passionate living.

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15:27: Ralph the Ref: "You said off air that you still use film, and you still develop it, how do you think things has changed that now everything is digital and the world

moves a lot faster, everyone has Instagram where portrait is more famous than landscape, how do you think your business has changed?"

15:49: Damion: "Not to say that it has changed, in the old days newspaper wanted portraits, if it is 2 pages you get one page let's say it is a great touchdown pass, they would put it in one side or in front, but compared to know everything is in HD, the dimension of the portrait are more wild shots but coming from back in the days I was always the film guy, to me I still enjoy film but everything now is digital it is a lot fast and those kids now they can't understand because everything to them is instantaneous, back when I started I would shoot film on an O4 and with an O4 you have to after you shoot the film you had to take the film out and put on a new film and bring it to the developer, get it developed and eventually go to a scanner and scan the film and go to the editor to edit your film but now the thing that changed the game was Instagram, everything is instantaneous. When I do my real work I like to shoot on film but when I do my stuff for the PSAL or whatever, for convenience is digital."

Episode 56: Rob Moses

The Rant. Episode: 56

Rob Moses wears many hats, but they all have one common thread; the game of Basketball. In this pod we discuss his love for said sport, his experience with coaching along side the Legend Ron Naclerio, his own experience officiating NYC, and his give back and thank you to Queens - More Than A Game Inc.

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10:50: Ralph the Ref: "What planted the seed for you to start officiating?"

10:58: Rob: "Roberto Diaz, he started officiating first and he said, "Yo, you should get into it, it will help you to be a better coach, to know the rules a little better" he got into it first, so we took the test at the same time 2012 or 2013, we took the IAABO test, unfortunately I didn't take it seriously I ended up missing a couple of classes and I failed the first year and the instructor was Ernie Rudloff he said on the first day of class "If you miss any day you better of just quitting now because everything that I teach you, you are going to need for the test and every day is important. And you know me, being a knuckle head not really wanting to be a ref I was only doing it because my man Roberto Diaz told me to get into it, I failed the first year. So the second year I did it again, Bob Diaz paid for it, and everything he would say to me would come to be sure so I took it again and this time I went to every class, I think it must have been 10 classes and then I took the test and this time I passed it and I was kind of relieved because I didn't think that I was going to pass."

12:32: Rob: "Coaching and officiating like you said is two different things but you got to know the rule book, we think as the rules as a player but it is totally different, the rule book is a bible, and I thought that I knew it all as a player but it is totally different."

19:40 Ralph the ref: "You are obviously a great ambassador to the game so talk a little bit more about "More than a game basketball" how did you start that?"

19:47 Rob: "More Than a Game" is a non-profit organization that me and my partner Kim Bonces started maybe 2014 or 2015, because I coached around all over the city, in Queens there was no good quality tournaments and they just got rid of Nike Swish which was a big tournament in the city but they got rid of it for whatever reason and I used to have my teams on it, so I told my partner Kim that we should start doing it, there was a park right at the corner that was not being utilized, nice rims, nice park why not try to do something? So the first tournament we did was for little kids and that went really well so we started to elevate it for 14s under and 16s under and eventually we did high school and we felt that maybe high school was a bit of a bigger draw so we started to focus more on high school so we got a sponsorship from Under Armour, they gave us some balls and some gear and they wanted the high school kids so we adapt things for high school, we also do youth clinics, I hire a couple of trainers and they do a bit of training and coaching and they put a nice clinic for us, free clinics for the kids in the neighborhood so we pretty much do local tournaments, leagues and run the clinics and it is going far it is doing well."

Episode 57: Ethan Wong

The Rant. Episode: 57



Ethan discusses two sports that are rarely spoken on the Rant - Volleyball and Hockey. In this pod, we discuss his love of Volleyball and Hockey growing up, what it's like to skate, what Hockey means in Canada, and what the future holds for him.

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4:45: Ralph the Ref: "This is something that I personally always wanted to ask a hockey official. I have a deep interest in officiating hockey but the only thing is, I don't know how to skate and I am in my thirties so I think that that ship has sailed. What are the normal rational of starting to officiate hockey? You probably have to learn how to skate at an early age right?"

5:12: Ethan: "Well, for myself I started when I was about 5 and took skate lessons until I was 9 or 10 and from there just getting into ice hockey was something different, I was never really the best at skating but I always got to where I was going and I ended up taking paramount skating lessons just to increase my abilities and after that course that helped me into officiating very well, I am a fluent skater now. Definitely skating is something that you want to look up into specially for ice hockey, you could start at a older age like at 30 as you were saying and you can definitely get started in hockey officiating just because skating involves a lot of technical abilities and as long as you carry those technical abilities you should be fine."

6:20: Ralph the Ref: "So, you are saying that this is something that you can pick up later in life, you don't have to be like a kid to figure it out, because I am just kind of perceiving how the NHL are on TV and they stop on a dime, they back skate they start on the board and then they back skate and I felt like there was no way I was going to be able to learn any of that stuff."

6:40: Ethan: "That is always something that younger officials look up to, specially Wes McCauley one of the NHL refs, he is one of the best (something) I guess and I think one of the biggest thing is that once you get older you start learning some different tricks with the skate and everything, you start to experience different abilities when you stop at a dime or slide as fast as possible, but it is always so hard to keep up with the players, specially at NHL they are so fast now."

17:12: Ralph the Ref: "If somebody just came to you and they were kind of interested into officiating, what do you thing would be the correct path and what kind of advice would you give them, would you tell them to start with hockey first or with volleyball first, how would you tell them to go about it if they didn't know anything?"

17:31: Ethan: "That is a tough question, if they are excited to learn about a sport I definitely would suggest hockey first because you have to learn your technical abilities like skating and training on that stuff and then you will apply the rules, whereas volleyball is a little bit more laid back and it should be easier for most officials, so like I said, Hockey is one of the toughest sports to get into and it is definitely more demanding so I think this is a great way to start your officiating career, start it early, get it done and then you can kind of branch out to different areas as such as Basketball, baseball and understand the different rulings and you will have a little different sense."

Episode 58: Tim Jinks

The Rant. Episode: 58

Tim and I have been through many a battles together. We once had a game where we witnessed not one jump ball, not 2 - but 76 jump balls. He discusses his humble beginnings in Hempstead, NY, his love of basketball, and where he wants to take all of it in officiating.

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5:40: Ralph the Ref: "How did you even get into officiating?"

5:42: Tim: "Hardship I would say and then just opportunity, I guess when you hit a certain low other doors opened up for me. I was in the mortgage and real estate

business and that was 2006, 2007 the whole industry crashed, I was sitting around contemplating the next move and at that point it was something I didn't like doing, even though it was something that I enjoyed at the time it became tedious for me so I was sitting around one day watching basketball off course a Knicks game, screaming at the TV with something that just came wrong and I saw the referee and it clicked me "THAT'S IT!! I want to be a referee". So my brother was cutting my hair at that time for some reason and I went to another barbershop and I just knew that I had to ask around to anybody that was interested and that knew something about officiating, soon enough the barber had a friend, Sharay from Hempstead, he gave me a book and a shirt, told me to come to a camp at Hofstra where I met Lee Jones an NBA official and some other NBA officials like Jimmy Green and a few other that hosted a basketball tournament at Hofstra, running up and down the court and they had me paired and following another referee. It was weird because I was following another referee on the court and John Coleson from Brooklyn said "You can run kid, why are following this guy?". So he took me under his wing and from that point on I started doing a lot of games in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan all those city games and that was what kind of got me my sneakers sort of speak, how I got started."

10:05 Tim: "I would always work with the kids and show them that there are different aspects to the game, you can take Basketball if you are a Basketball player but there is only much that you can concentrate on if Basketball is not going your way so I would teach the kids that there is refereeing, there is coaching there is camera work, when I first got into it was really gratifying because I love to learn something new and try to master a new skill so it was definitely the concentration on the off-ball and managing the game and the coaches, all of the little things, watching your areas and making sure you are in sync with your partner, blowing your whistle strong, mechanics so this are the things even to this day some of the games are not the greatest game, you can always focus on something about your game, you can always focus on that particular area and I think that one of the most important lessons in life is to stay in the now moment, to me there is no future there is no past, it is only now, now, now. So when you are on the court, if you can manage to stay in the moment, watch your play whatever you are supposed to watch, there is always room for improvement so that is the fun part of the game for me, you always have a chance to work on a part of the game that matters."

Episode 59: Ant Cox

The Rant. Episode: 59

I had the pleasure to meet Anthony Cox at the now defunct Fundamental Sports Training Facility. In this pod, we discuss Ant's late beginning as a high school standout on Long Island, his college career, and what the life is like in the Pro-Am circuit.

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26:22: Anthony: "Last night I had a game at Basketball city and I got 2 guys that they are just getting into College and they are like full speed getting up and down the court and I am like "Bro, slow down, I didn't even had the chance to get up the court before you shoot a three or something, slow down, let me get there.". This kids now they are

humongous, they are super athletes, they jump higher they are stronger, they are bigger, these kids are monstrous now, and all of this kids they all have that demeanor that if you are older than them you are not good, they all fell that if anybody is older than them and they don't know you they come full speed at you. So I have been teaching this kids, like I told you, I am busting some ass and I am telling you, and I am coaching them because no one taught me that. I learned a lot of stuff with this basketball thing, watching, teaching and studying it, because a lot of those things they don't teach you. They don't teach you how to play smart on the court."

31:00: Anthony: "I like to start of the bench because it gives me time to observe the game and then when I get onto the court I know what is going on so it is more guaranteed that I will know what to do. Me starting sometimes you might get the good Ant, sometimes you might get something different. Me coming from the bench now you guaranteed to have the good me because I have seen how the game is moving, I've seen how the game is being played, I watch people's movement. A lot of this dudes don't even know when they guarding someone they don't know if they are left handed or right handed, they don't know if they can shoot or if they can't, they don't know what the other person's moves are, if they like to drive or if they like to pass because they are one of the drive and kick guys or if they are the drive and finish guys or if they are not looking to pass at all. So I got to teach this kids to force them right or force them left, if I see this guy is killing you by going right all the time what should I tell you? Force some left. Basketball is so much easier when you think about it."

The Rant. Episode: 60

I've known Tahree almost 20 years, and it was a shock to see him in a different context, a different arena - one that involved him officiating the game of Basketball. In this pod, we discuss how he got into officiating, his experience in his first year, and what the future holds for him.

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8:55: Tahree: "As a basketball player you think that you know everything that there is to know about basketball. As a coach you think that you know everything that you need to know about the sport. Taking the class I learned that I know very little about basketball and the ruling, it was an eye opener for me, there are so many different

rules and nuances in the rules, there are slot much ambiguity in the rules as well that I was thinking back, it got me intimidated I thought that I was going to go to the class and basically just fly through it and I was a 100% wrong, I had to study and memorize rules that I thought I knew.”

16:05: Tahree: ”Every game has been different, I learnt something new in every game and I thing that in itself is one of the main reasons why I love refereeing at this point in time, you never know what you are going to get and just the fact that every game you can take something and add it to your armor and then apply it on the next game is exciting on itself.”

17:48: Tahree says: ”First I think that you have to make an assessment on the individual you are interacting with to see where and how you are going to apply this information. Secondly as humans we learn periodicity, we learn through experience so first and foremost I am open to any advice, any criticism as a new official and I think that throughout my career I am going to have that same mindset so anything that someone says to me I am going to listen to and try to apply it and if works I am going to put it on my ref bag and it will be coming with be to every game but if it doesn’t I will put it to the bay side so I think that going with this mindset has worked for me, I have picked so many things because I am just open and I know that most of the time with being an official is mostly like a fraternity or a brotherhood, most people have good intentions.”

Episode 61: Steve Wilson

The Rant. Episode: 61



Steve is New England, v through and through. In this pod, he discusses how officiating changed his life, his pursuit to the highest levels of college Basketball, his love of cycling, and his experience assigning the largest conglomerate of schools in Massachusetts.

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15:30: Ralph the Ref: "How do you think that all the experiences that all those people that have touched you so far on your officiating career helped you to speak to younger guys and young women that now aspire to take it serious at the John Gaffney camp?"

15:46: Steve: "It gives me the aspect to speak and talk to any official on any level and to let them know how beautiful the art form of officiating is and how it can change your life, not just monetarily but the people you meet, the places you go and the way that just makes you a better person, I haven't been in this type of shape since high school when I was playing basketball, I haven't been in this type of shape since I had that drive and that animal in my chest saying that I wanted to be better, and I got this from all those different people and I take that information and I bring to my staff, bring to younger officials to say that if you want to be great and you want to work hard and improve and stay humble, the world is yours in officiating."

Episode 62: Joe Cruz

The Rant. Episode: 62

Every summer at Orchard Beach, you can catch Joe Cruz running around like a chicken with his head cut off. He's more than that. He's on - as a basketball official getting his feet wet, and running one of the most respected NYC summer leagues, Hoops in the Sun.

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9:42: Ralph the Ref: "Do you feel that in terms of doing your thing with Hoops in the Sun, when you are here, you start seeing teams having a gripe with the referees you can kind of empathize and understand that and have the ability to control it better?"

9:58: Joe: "Nowadays, if they ask me a question "Joe what is up with that ref? that is a foul, I can't get involved in that no more. Now I am a referee and I am on your side, I got to, no matter what the call was or was missed or was given at that point in time, I have to support it because I am part of a fraternity that is respect and as much as New York City doesn't respect referees as much as they should, it is hard to referee New York City basketball and that is also what makes New York City Basketball unique, you need those controversial games to get you better or to get you out of your nervousness, you made a good decision or a good call or you got respect from a coach that probably didn't respect you in the beginning of the game or prior."

11:31: Joe: "I got a taste of that a couple of years ago when I started to ref, I am like "this isn't the NBA so why are you bugging out?" "This is my NBA". Sometimes, it is for all of us to know that coach and players look for summer basketball to be their only outlet for the next step, the next opportunity and the next scholarship and they are paying for this so in the end of the day we got to respect that but, there is a level of respect that needs to be reciprocated and I think that is the missing piece in terms of how can we continue to move this platform on a much more positive level."

21:59: Ralph the Ref: "Talk a little bit more about your staff, all of the intrinsic part that get put together, I can see first-hand how much you care because you are getting pulled in literally at 15 different directions, getting the money to the referees, there is a situation on court one, somebody just didn't have a uniform but first and foremost how did you get everyone that is involved both on the adult side as well as the school teams, how do you go about finding an MC, how do you go about finding a DJ, the staff that works here as well as what do you look for in referees?"

22:40: Joe: "Well, with Bernard getting the referees and upcoming referees that maybe coaches and players and coaches don't know so they don't feel that it is a conspiracy, for me I tell them that for me the games that I have highlighted if I could get the best referees and then in recruiting the teams some of them reached out to me, I am a loyal dude, I try to stay with the same teams that are committed to me, but I do recruit teams that I would like to play in this venue because it just add to different expectation and plays and opportunity to always get the best talent, my goal is to always get the best talent, whether is the best teams, best coaches, best players, college players, high school players, middle school players. Whatever I got to do I have to have players in this hollow ground so that is how I get them, sometimes they reach out to me, sometimes I reach out to them, I go to games and ask some players to come for the league."

The Rant. Episode: 63



Dezzy is ubiquitous. When I'm leaving a game, he's coming to one. When I'm coming to a game, he's leaving another. Very rarely do we work together, but when we do, it's special. In this pod, we discuss his career at the now legendary defunct Rice High School, his Division 1 College Basketball Career, and his fast trajectory in officiating basketball today.

**REFEREE
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16:38: Desmond: "Ernie, he is the Board 119 interpreter. The first day of classes we are doing the class. First class we are talking about this whole A1, B1 and over the rim and back court and not knowing anything and just being an elite basketball player you think that you know everything so he is saying all this stuff in the class and I am just sitting there and listening and then he goes at the end of the class "If anyone wants their money back, today is the day to do it because after today there is no refunds". After the class I go up to him and I say "listen, it is not going to work for me" and he goes "Why?", my answer "A1, B1 and on top of going to school I still have my own life, your own job and kids, I am not trying to study" so he goes "listen, do 3 classes, and I have never made this exception to anyone, you do 3 classes and if you feel like you still don't get it, I will give you your refund but at least try". Second class was still a little cloudy but for some reason at 3rd class I applied myself and tried and I was really getting that, you just have to break things down and whatever, I actually scored second highest in my class. I am not a book person, I am not saying that I am not smart but I am not a book person."

30:12: Desmond: "I tell people all the time because for some reason people thinks that I wake up, not me but every ref in the world, we wake up, go to work and then we have a AAU game at 8 o'clock at night and we just want to cheat a team on a game and honestly I don't care who wins the game I just want to make sure the kids play the right way and to be safe, it is not like I say "I can't wait to screw this team because I don't like their jerseys they are going to lose today."

Episode 64: Ralph & Ralph Crespo

The Rant. Episode: 64

Ralph the Ref sits down with two other Refs named Ralph, that share the love of the craft - officiating. The Father, a gifted communicator in Lacrosse and Field hockey, and son, a basketball official with a jump shot that will never make me play the game again. They discuss their relationship with the games they officiate, the relationship they have with each other, and how they keep it all in the family.



REFEREE
RANT

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22:15: Ralph the Ref: "I will start with you Sr. What do you think are the attribute that led you to get to where you are in terms of being an official?"

22:27: Ralph Sr: "Definitely, I wanted to become a better official and I just did more games, every game that I did I used to arrive early, I used to open up my rulebook, I used to read one paragraph, maybe one rule before the game, just to get myself in game shape, get myself ready just to go out there and do the best that I could and just as I approached the game I just did that and now I feel way more comfortable with the game."

23:10: Ralph the Ref: "And I remember that you gave me a lot of very good pointed advice when we had that game and you said, don't worry, and one thing that really stuck out with me from something that you said was that you said was "Do you know why you don't need to worry? You just got to do more games, you do more games and even though you don't know anything you just get better from doing it". If you do a 100 Catholic Games you just automatically get better at it because you don't have a choice."

24:00: Ralph Jr: "You got to be a sponge, you have to be able to take criticism, so I am 25 and older guys still give me some constructive criticism, coming up my mechanics were not too great but not being sensitive to people telling me "Hey, you need to work on this, this and this" so just being a sponge and hustling, grinding, you got to get out there and work games, it is the only way you are going to get better."

25:55: Ralph the Ref: "What do you think that people need to do and what is the conversation that you would persuade somebody to stick with it, because obviously we are coming from a place that we are on the outside of the fence, we know that somebody might yell at me today but I am not going to let that ruin my day and I am not going to let that change the way I feel about it, but when you are starting off, think of that like this: If you are a police officer, you got to go to the academy, you get to get properly trained, you graduate, you are still in training so you might shadow somebody for starts, but officiating is much different because the academy is reading the rule book, they never tell you about the infield experience that you are going to have, and training is different because when you are in training mode you can't say "Hey take it easy because I am in training mode" they will look like you have being doing this, and parents, coaches, spectators and players are not going to know that it is your first day. How do we change that dynamic, what do you guys think about persuading people to think that it is an avenue to make decent money as well as retaining people that has had such a vicious tragic experience in the beginning?"

27:14: Ralph Jr: "Going back to what you said about police officers, the only way we are going to coming as police officers is going out there and working to beat yourself, shadowing someone is not really going to prepare you to be a good police officer so

same thing goes for refereeing, you only going to be able to become better at that if you just keep working, there is going to be days that you are going to get yelled at by everybody and their mother, you just got to be able to not ignore it but sometimes you heard something from the crowd that is not necessary, so sometimes you just can't ignore but you just have to keep going forward and just forget about yesterday, if you were playing a game of basketball and you just committed a turnover, just forget about it happened already on to the next play and that is how you have to look to every game, that game happened already on to the next game, that is the way I did."

28:10: Ralph Sr.: "Absolutely, you just have to keep doing the games, you have to keep on top of your game, know the rules as long as you know the rules and you are implementing on your game you are fine, like Ralph said you will find people yelling at you, coaches yelling at you and things of that nature but as long as you know your rules and you are doing the proper mechanics whatever it is, putting it into your game you will become better as you go and you will become a better official."

Episode 65: Bryant Lassiter

The Rant. Episode: 65

Ralph the Ref sits down with two other Refs named Ralph, that share the love of the craft - officiating. The Father, a gifted communicator in Lacrosse and Field hockey, and son, a basketball official with a jump shot that will never make me play The game again. They discuss their relationship with the games they officiate, the relationship they have with each other, and how they keep it all in the family.

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16:00: Ralph the Ref: "So, I think that in the totality of your experience playing and coaching, that probably informed you to segue and transition to start having events. I wanted to discuss the birth and origin of Rivalries Never Die, how did you end up creating that?"

16:16 Bryant: "A good friend of mine who is the other cofounder Alvin, we just spoke and he growing up he played in Bayshore which now are two rivals schools when we were going against each other and we always compete and it was him and one of my friends as well his team mate John Carsia on the same team and then there was me and one of my best friend. Growing up I was always a point guard and big on both teams so growing up we compete against each other and it went until we went to College when he went to Adelphi and I went to NYT and at that time we were both at the same conference so we played against each other, after we graduated and all of that and after I played professionally we just came with the idea that we should have a long night game (some school) versus Bayshore, and that was how it started and we said we should call it Rivalries Never Die because we were always competing on the court, let's try to put it in the sense where we had a long line team that we played and play against each other and show that on the court we still have that competitive nature of competing and playing hard but off the court everything is just friends, family, community and all of that."

18:10: Ralph the Ref: "Also, how long has it been in its existence and where do you see it growing from here, what are your goals with it overtime?"

18:18: Bryant: "We started it in 2015 and it has grown since then, we had at first only one game (some school) versus Bayshore PAAL and then we kind of incorporated the youth aspect of it in the youth games as well so it grew from one game to two games, to have four teams in the long night, same thing with the youth until last year we had eight teams at the long night and this year's we grew to have twelve long night teams in Suffolk County and eight teams on the youth and also incorporating Nassau County as well."

Episode 66: Shanade Bernard

The Rant. Episode: 66



There's a cool, calm, and confident air that surrounds Shanade. In this pod, we pull up at the fabled Lincoln Park in Queens, NY, where she discusses her start in cheerleading, her meaningful mentors that mean everything to her, and her pursuit to conquer all her goals, one whistle at a time.

**REFEREE
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11:20: Shanade: "What a lot of people don't know about being a feminine referee in this male business is sometimes men don't take you seriously or sometimes men may feel like you are just a pretty face and they won't respect you, so what I have learned is, to gain respect, respectfully from men coaches is to make sure you know what you are doing on the court so they can't question you."

27:00: Shanade: "You know what they say that through adversity and mistakes you learn a lot and after breaking down my game from Federations and having Brimmer tell me about my game and what to work on, breaking down my game with Heather on the phone I learned a lot, and it helped me as an official to grow because sometimes that is what you need because film tells it all, so once you break it down and adjust it to next game it is a lot easier, putting it to your repertoire and putting it to your journal, always have a journal because you are not going to remember everything so right down plays, situations that occurred because when you look back at it you won't make that same mistake again."

The Rant. Episode: 67

Mike already knew, at an early age, that keeping the integrity of the game, was important. An official was and is integral in any type of game. In this pod, we discuss his come up, how mentors have helped him get to the top level of the college basketball ranks, how he helps others after him, and his new line, Tek Officials, built for the modern referee.

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Episode 67: Michael Kitts Jr.



15:36: Ralph the Ref: "Just discuss what your mindset is in camp season because I know that when you get to a higher level, normally the work that you do in the

summer is going to dictate the schedule that you will have in winter so just discuss what your mindset is as a division 1 official?"

15:51: Michael: "This past weekend the Consortium had a staff camp in Indianapolis and I was actually surprised that it was one of those I had never refereed the Nike ABL circuit and the town was unbelievable, so when you kind of go to one of those things you want to be in good shape for that, something that I can work on and that I can get better at is at getting a better shape I mean, at this point there are so many good referees and they are in a good shape so getting in shape is one of the list when you go at a camp, you want to try to lose some pounds and look your best. Two is at this point at camp specially a staff camp, when you look around everybody is a good referee so it is really hard to separate yourself to the guy next to you so it is more than getting your plays right because at this point everybody is getting their plays right so it is picking up on the little things so if you have a tough coach and he goes a little sideways and you can calm him down and handle that situation correct that goes a long way, if the clock is screwed up and you can pick up on clock errors that can separate you from the other. When I look at camps I try to be mentally sharp and kind of control those things because at this point if you can't get your plays right you wouldn't be on staff already so it is kind of separating yourself from the other there, you can show clinicians and supervisors that you are really on top of your game."

19:55: Ralph the Ref: "Talking about apparel and clothing, I know that you saw a real need because I think that our shirts haven't evolved over time as opposed to the jerseys in the D1 circuit, a lot of them are Nike's and dry fit and we haven't gotten to that point, so tell us about your product and where do you see it going?"

20:20: Michael: "Since I started refereeing I would take my jersey out of my bag and I would kind of look at it like "man this thing is lame" I know that we could be doing better than what we are doing right now, like you said we go on the court and the jerseys that this kids are wearing right now are pretty cool so I know that we couldn't compete with that but just from a material point it feels like we are wearing a potato bag so I looked in to potentially make some shirts and over the past year I developed this new referee shirt it is a spandex, lightweight material and 2 weeks ago my dad had a camp in Pittsburg and we were able to hand it out to a few referees and I got some good feedback, I am looking to push that product through next season and hopefully the guys will like it and I hope we see where it goes, I am not really sure where it is going to go nut the feedback at this point led me to believe that there is a need for that in pure business. I call it Tek Officials and you can find us on Facebook and Instagram and I actually have them in some meetings."

Episode 68: Blake Redford

The Rant. Episode: 68

Failure is something and I that Blake can relate to - like me, he failed the first time he tried to get certified for Basketball; only the first time I failed, it was the first time he passed, on his second go round. In this pod, he discusses his playing style at Manhasset, his journey as an official, and the stickiest situation that I've ever heard in officiating to date.



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46:37: Ralph the Ref: "What were the attributes that took you to where you are now as a basketball official?"

46:45: Blake: "Repetition, lots of repetition, working on the craft, being in the mirror, I didn't take that serious when my mentors or even other ref, all the vets that I refereed out there, when they told me that I looked sharp but I had to stay in the mirror, that mirror or being outside looking at your shadow, that works and like I said I am doing that more often because I want to stay sharp I want to progress, I want to get to that next level and like I said, the higher I go the more challenges I will have and I am all about challenges, whether is me refereeing or me working out whatever the case may be if a challenge is there I will take it and that is how I do when I am out there working out or if I am on a game officiating, no matter the level and that is something about me, no matter the level, no matter how good or bad the game is I am out there refereeing, I used to be one of those refs that sometimes didn't referee as hard as we should but you never know who is in the crowd, I did one game and it was a kids game and I had an official son's game and after the game I remember he asked if I were board 41 and he said that he liked how I refereed and I was in tune no matter the level, because you never know who is watching."

51:30: Blake: "My stickiest situation refereeing was this year, I had a player control foul, it was at Molloy Highschool freshman, it was Molloy against (other school) it was a good game. The assistant coach from (other school) was going crazy in the first half but after he calmed down, and it wasn't even this crazy but the Molloy coach I had given him a warning early in the game and the good thing is that I gave him a warning because what I am about to tell you was crazy. I had a player control foul on his big man, his big man he is going to be good but I had a player control foul and as I am reporting to the table I hear him yelling and going crazy, I say "Coach, relax" I was trying to calm him down but we wouldn't so I gave him a warning instead of giving him a tech and moved on to shoot free throws. We shot free throws for a player control foul, me and my partner we wouldn't even discuss this at half time, we shot free throws and (other school) hit them both, and after the free throw we knew it was a mistake because we had a time out after the second free throw. And I learned with it, it happened to me and I am happy it happened to me now in this stage of my career than later so I learned in a way that I will never make this mistake again. Going to the locker room, my partner said "Yo, we shot those free throws" I was like "yeah... do you think they knew?" he said "Yes, the Molloy Varsity coach came to me and said "you know you weren't supposed to shoot those free throws". We went out there again and Chris walk to us and said "Do you guys realize that they shot free throws?" I said "We definitely realize that and I am sorry it was a horrible mistake, you have all the right to be upset we shouldn't have shot those free throws." Chris said" No, no, no I wanted

you to give him a tech, I am not upset, coach had the right to be upset at that time but that doesn't give him the right to go crazy on the second half". Fast forwarding to the end of the game, Molloy is up 1, one second left and they were up one, my partner look at me and I know what he is thinking, he knows what I am thinking, we got to referee this game, no shadiness don't do none of that, we got to referee this game so we were sitting there trying to figure out what was going on, they call a time out, Stepinac. Ed calls a time out, Molloy calls a time out so Molloy is inbounding the ball, Molloy inbound the ball guy on Stephen Ed hits the ball back at the kid out of bounds so now it is Stephen Ed ball. My heart was beating and not a second went off that clock, my heart is beating so I am sitting there thinking on how that would play out. Stephen Ed inbound the ball, kid has a clear shot, I am looking at it "my life is over" my life flashing right before my eyes, the ball goes bouncing, bouncing, twirls in the basket and pops out, Molloy wins, partner looked at me "Let's go" so we went to the locker room and we were speaking about it, after a while Chris comes in and says "Wow that was a good game, one point win" he didn't mention anything about the free throws, so me and my partner were like "If Stephen Ed had won that game, he would definitely called Phil". So that was definitely my stickiest situation as an official."

58:22: Ralph the Ref: "I have done almost a 100 episodes of this podcast and that was the stickiest one of I ever heard aside from gunshots and pulled up guns, that was a situational thing that should never happen and I think that it will never happen to anyone listening to this podcast, including yourself."

Episode 69: Christian Rios

The Rant. Episode: 69

Christian never was, or will be, an official. However, he's official in anything he does, whether it be graphic design, photography, or editing The Rant. In this pod, we discuss the partner, that's deafening in his silence, his experience creating Referee Rant, and his reluctance to put a cap on its limit.



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7:44: Ralph the Ref: "how did you develop your love for photography and how would you describe your style?"

7:55 Christian: "I don't know how I would describe my style, I think that I have a lot of styles but I think that in terms of what I put on my Instagram, I like to put photos that are very colorful, very contrasting, very dark but also very light. To go back to how I develop my eye, it is not just about your eye, I think that photography has a lot to do about you kind of taking a risk and this might be very deep into the photography but the way I started, I would go to the city and I would be on a train and I would just walk around and take some photos and see what was up. There was a lot of times that I went to the city and I came back with no photos, zero because I just didn't have the courage to take the camera out, I felt like I was intimidated, it was a certain fear and photography for me didn't get good until I was aware that I had to lose that fear to go to the city and get that shot."

23:00: Ralph the Ref: "I know that we just broke 1000 followers on Instagram which I guess it has been pretty quick, obviously we are not satisfied because I think the most amount of people need to see this, and we have many more people who have to share their story at some point but going forward where do you see this going in a year, 5 years, 10 years?"

23:29: Christian: "I have a certain beef with questions like that because I don't really want to tell you, I don't really want to tell anyone what I see because what I tell you might cause something that might not make it happen so I may not, I love the pace that it is going too, I love the pace that everything is, I love that direction that we are going to and that is just that, so I definitely see success and I know you see that as well."

24:30: Christian: "Everything that people do, everything creatively that someone does is done for a reason, there is a deep feeling in there and with that comes everything."

Episode 70: Leroy Samuel

The Rant. Episode: 70

When initially approaching Leroy to hop on The Rant, I could hear his reluctance. His fears were allayed, soon as we pressed record. On it, he discusses his come up as a young man from Queens, his affinity for being great at everything he does, his first experience blowing the whistle, and how his old soul often competes to catch up with his young body.

REFEREE
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14:40: Leroy: "Ernie, he immediately, I don't know how it was but we gravitated to each other, he took me under his wings, started teaching me those little things and when I got to the actually taking the class I would come in and everything would be so simple to me, things like granting and terminology I would me like "Yo, this is very simple it is just the game of basketball and I know it, it should be very simple to

officiate” and then Ernie said ”don’t say that because you have never been in that position, officiating a real game with real pressure on you”. So he took me to a game in the Bronx, out of all the boros, I am from Queens, I am a Queens guy, from the suburbs nothing crazy. I took a train to this game, it was the loudest place I could be. Ernie was with me but he made me take the train there, he didn’t want to pick me up, he said for me to take the train. Once I took the train and reached there, it was this varsity game, like a scrimmage not a game, he said ”Look, you are going to be with a veteran official and let’s see how you go”.

He let me ref half of the quarter knowing that he said to the coaches to be light on me. I am going and the first thing that happens is this light contact and of course this guy misses the lay-up and come looking at me like ”FOUL, FOUL, FOUL” and I didn’t know what to do, I just kept running down and ignored it, and then Ernie laughed. After that he came to me and asked why I didn’t call a foul on that first play and I said that I didn’t see any contact and then he said ”if you didn’t see any contact then there was no foul” and he said that so peacefully, so relaxed that I asked him ”How are you so calm? They are yelling at you” and he said ”Practice, experience and that is why you can’t just be so cocky with everything”. It got me extremely humbled that day and I started to actually do those exercises. Ernie always says ”Look at yourself in the mirror” he said the microwave exercise, set it to 10 seconds, turn around and do your 10 seconds count.”

53:34: Leroy: ”A lot of officials they try to take out the coach and they say when you ask a question about a call ”Let me do my job, you don’t know the rules” to find out that the coach is a ref and sometimes that humbles the coach but as a referee coaching I am not allowed to do that, as referee coaching I am not allowed to say that to other coaches because one it makes you look obnoxious and rude, two it is just not the right thing to do.”

58:05: Leroy: ”My best moments a trainer was when I had this kid who hated sports, his mother told me that and I was talking to his mum and she wanted his kid to like something, anything related to sports so I asked her what did he son like and she said he liked Mario so because Mario is red and blue I brought my cones that are red and blue colors and let’s try this. His hoop doesn’t go all the way down so it is a little bit high up and he started getting frustrated so I had to spend some time and try something new because that was not working. I had a kick ball so I decided to try kick ball with this kid, simple, all you got to do is kick the ball and run. And for me to be so adaptive in that situation where as a trainer with the parent watching you, there is a lot of pressure, so I felt really accomplished because I was able to train that kid.”

Episode 71: Shay Franklin

The Rant. Episode: 71

There has never been any doubt that Shay has been talented with anything she has done in the game of Basketball. In this pod, she discusses her natural ability when hooping, her love of helping kids have opportunities that she had before them, and the mental challenge that officiating presents.

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21:10: "First thing was mentally and physically prepare myself, in order for me to get a good angle I will have to get up the court, in order for me to get up the court I got to get in shape so that was something that I really took to heart and on top of that Sherry said to me when we were doing the floor test that was like "you run like a

damn gazelle, if I could run like you then I would be refereeing D1 basketball". So I said that if I had the physical and remind you we talked about me never preparing myself or applying myself the way I should to see how far I take this so as an adult I said, what am I waiting for? Doesn't matter if I am on my thirties, people officiate for more 20 years from now, so I am going to take my time now so I don't look back later and say that I should have could have or would have, I am going to apply myself and I really took it to the heart, and I can't take with somebody that is not taking it serious and say that we are not switching, we are not this we are not that but that is their prerogative, I am going to work on what I need to do so I most definitely take it seriously, I would hope and love to grow in the sport with this because I love basketball, I study the sport all day everyday so it is like if I could have the best seat in the house and I am getting paid to do what I love, without all the physical that has when it comes to playing it, I think I would be crazy to say that I am not doing it."

23:48: Shay: "Being an official is one thing, being a female official is a whole different enemy in itself, I don't want to be cuddled, I don't want to be babied, it is just like when I am out there hooping, don't go easy on me because I am a female player, give it to me real but in the same stance, I am the last person in the circuit that you are going to bully and I make that very clear without me raising my voice, without me cursing or disrespecting you, I need you to understand that I demand respect, that I deserve respect and that I am going to get that respect, so it was a situation that happen with a coach that normally gives fever and people don't want to ref his games, I respected Jarred because the coach said one thing, than he said the second and Jarred checked it before he even said a third, which I respected it because this is something that I am learning right now which is game control, not letting the situation get out of hand keeping it professional, I am not going to argue and bicker with you going back and forth, I am going to check it and now this game is under control."

Episode 72: Crunchtime Basketball



The Rant. Episode: 72

Crunch Time Basketball - Moe, Marcus, and Whyte: Creators of Long Island's Premier Pro-Am Basketball League, Showing that Hoopers can Ball in the suburbs, too.

Growing up, Moe, Marcus, and Whyte had an affinity for Hempstead; moreover, an affinity for Long Island. In this pod, they discuss their love for the crib, what Basketball has done for them, the genesis and development of Crunch Time Basketball, and what the future holds. All that and more, my conversation with The Crunch Time team, now.

REFEREE RANT

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5:58: Ralph the Ref: "I learned as an official that most of the games that I have realized that are challenging and I guess for some reason it is something worthwhile for me are the games in the city so we talk about when we are deep in the summer, we got Westford, we got Gersh Park, we got Rucker Park, we got Hoops in the Sun but

Crunch is something that is special and has the same flavor bringing it to Long Island. How did you guys even start and what was the genesis of Crunch Time Basketball?"

6:40: Marcus: "We started off trying to give back to the community where I was at and I had them help me out and it turned out good so after that we started Crunch Time because of what you said the family oriented of how it went. And for us to have that whole day and nothing happening but Basketball and the fun for kids out there it is what we wanted to see and we wanted to make it big and bring that city flavor to Long Island instead of the Long Island dudes and everybody who played Basketball trying to go to Brooklyn, Queens but come out here and see what we have got also."

7:30: Ralph the Ref: "I had Ant Cox on my show recently and I think that something that we all share as Long Islander is that we all have a chip on our shoulder, we always want to prove to ourselves that we are not from the city but we are cool too, we can ball out too, was that also a part of it?"

7:48: Marcus: "I do music as well so in saying as comparison, they get the Long Islander as saying that we are outsiders, we are not part of NY so as you said we are kind of fighting with that same chip on our shoulder basically not to try to fit in but to stamp our place, to let them know that they got ballers but they got to come and see us too, and Basketball and music, any kind of sports event we are trying to show that we are equal."

22:05: Ralph the ref: "Aside from the games, and aside from the MCs, what are the other components that make Crunch Time Basketball some as full of other activities to keep even the younger ones engaged in the whole atmosphere?"

22:20: Whyte: "We have a lot of things, food is the very key, we built a atmosphere of a family based event so we got all ages, all groups, all genders so everybody from 3 years old, people are bringing their kids, it is a family event and we are trying to pivot it in a way that it is a show so you got to be providing food and providing concessions and providing drinks, some gyms allow us to do somethings with that so we just try to fit in a way that when you come here you come to stay a few hours and you are enjoying the show."

Episode 73: Billy Heenan



The Rant. Episode: 73

Billy Heenan - Former Sharp Shooting Shooter, Building Coach at the AAU Level, and Learning His Stripes as an U and Caring Official.

Billy loves Basketball as much as the next man. Surrounded by greatness on his High School Team, he had to work extra hard just to get minutes on the court. These principles he learned guided his work ethic in college, in coaching and officiating. All that and more, my conversation with Billy now.

REFEREE RANT

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42:55: Billy: "Refereeing has made me a better player, definitely made me a better coach, I was telling the story on how I met Terry and the first time he really didn't know me and I complained about a call and I was at that time taking the referee class, I want to stay on the easy side of the refs but you are able to see it from the different perspective, you know me when I coach, being upset at the refs for me is part of the game, as a ref and as a coach, you have as a coach to understand there is a line

obviously but as a ref you have to kind of understand that if the coach is upset about a call it is part of the game. Whatever type of game that you are refereeing, playoff game or kid game or high school game, college game that is part of the game, but that is kind of why I really got into it, I do mostly Island Garden stuff just because of the schedule and being part of that but I do think that would like to kind of lock in and work my way up but that is something that I will have to see to later on.”

47:30: Ralph the Ref: ”Let’s go back to coaching and refereeing, how do you think that coaching has helped you officiating and how do you think that officiating has helped you coach?”

47:38: Billy: ”It has definitely made me look at the game in a different way, I take the backcourt violation and it is like as a player and as a coach when I read the rule and saw everything into it, I have been arguing this call for 15 years and I was completely wrong so somethings like that refereeing has definitely helped me coaching and I think it helped me to be a better player too because when I see a player complaining to the ref for a call or maybe getting a tech after complaining to the ref, I call them up and I ask them if there was a single time in history of officiating that a ref changed his call because someone complained about it? On the flip side refs make mistakes, as coaches make mistakes, I make bad subs, I ask bad time outs sometimes, so it has kind of given me that perspective on how refs look at the game, how I look at the game and how can I teach that, I see a hand check and when I was playing I used to think that hand check was the worst call in basketball but now when I am looking and I am refereeing if you don’t call one a turnover may happen and you don’t realize that when you are coaching or playing but something minor as that can really change the outcome of a play and that is huge for me so refereeing definitely has made me a better coach and coaching makes me to understand that coaches and refs they are not made to be buddy-buddy all the time. I like to have conversations with coaches when I am refereeing and try to explain to them a few things because I like that when I am coaching, I want to tell the coach or ref what I saw.”

Episode 74: Dave Williams

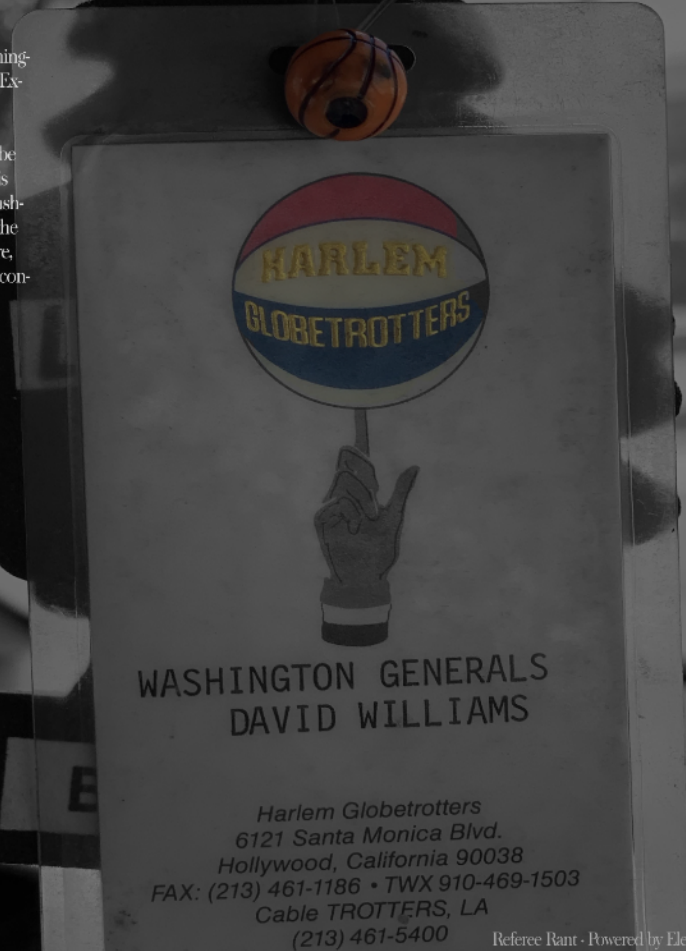
The Rant. Episode: 74



Dave Williams - Former Basketball Standout, Washington General, and Underground Basketball Official Extraordinaire.

I've done so many games with Dave, and surely I'll be doing more in the future. In this pod we discuss his come up playing in New York City, his time as a Washington General, and how officiating has given him the ability to have more than one car. All that and more, my conversation with Dave, nowhat and more, my conversation with Gerla, now.

REFEREE RANT



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WASHINGTON
DAVID WILLIAMS

9:35: Ralph the Ref: "What was your experience taking the board 119 course with Ernie?"

9:43: David: "That was hilarious, because as a student in school you always sit at the back of the class and I was always the sit at the back of the class kind of guy but I told myself that once I did this because the money involved my sister put the money for me to become a basketball referee and it was a 8 week course so I am not going to waste their money, I am not going to waste their time so I sat on the front row and that was how I took it, I wanted to be wrong on all the questions that I asked but when I was taking the test I wanted to be right and that was the humbling part about becoming a referee, when you are a basketball player you think that you know it all once you get to the class you find out that you know nothing."

Episode 75: Chiene Joy Jones

The Rant. Episode: 75

Chiene Joy Jones - All encompassing lover of Basketball - Former Baller, Passionate Coach, Athletic Director, and Up and Coming Basketball Official.

We pulled up to the Gauchos Gym in the BX to sit down with Chiene. In the pod we discuss her come up playing at NYU, her experience coaching kids to their own athletic scholarships, and her new found passion and give back to the game, officiating. All that and more, my conversation with Chiene, now.

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20:20: Ralph the Ref: "I wanted to back track to your experience with Angie in that class, that first couple of times were you like Wow this is a daunting casket with all of this rules that you didn't even where aware and how where you playing all this time and how was you coaching all this time? and one little rule and you see how in depth the game gets."

20:39: Chiene: "Also how I was teaching the game wrong to my girls, I am out in the court and making sure that their footsteps all the way out of bounds on the sidelines and as soon as you get bumped it is an automatic foul, so why am I teaching them that thing? So that is definitely a prime example of the benefits of becoming an official, I also think there is for me at least a responsibility that I have to many of the girls in NYC because I know there aren't many women's coaches to begin with and now all the young girls are starting to see me as an official, as a referee as opposed to a coach and so I think my transition out of the game of coaching has been an interesting one because I am slowly transitioning out but I still have a Saturday program that runs for 5-8 year old girls, that is early exposure to Basketball and a completely free program and I think that will continue to be my dedication to give back.

People ask me not to leave coaching because the girls need me but now I need to be fair to myself and give myself the opportunity to become a better official because the one thing with officiating is that you have to constantly learn and work to get better, it is not something that you can take a month off and come back because you are going to be rusty."

Episode 76: Nicole Robinson

The Rant. Episode: 76



Nicole Robinson. Shooting Star in Basketball Officiating. Unlimited Potential Being Realized by the Day.

It was evident when speaking to Nicole that there was a humble-yet-aggressive demeanor in her style. In this pod she discusses her love of Basketball, how her father has crystallized Officiating as an avenue to stay in the game, and what her future holds. All that and more, my conversation with Nicole, now.

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19:15: Nicole: "Doing men's basketball I see that you have to be way more patient with your whistle, because a lot of contact that would be considered illegal on the women side will be considered marginal or incidental in men's, so you need to have a more patient whistle and let the play start, develop and finish. I got in a lot of trouble when I started with men's basketball because I would call 10 and ones in a game. In women's basketball a lot could be more black and white, hand check it is a foul, two hands it is a foul but with men you have to think if that really reroute the offense, or if the contact affected the shot so you have to think a little more when calling a foul which I a still trying to figure out now but it definitely helped me to have a more patient whistle."

31:50: Nicole: "My biggest goal is to be an NBA official, and from what I know I have to be fluent and really knowledgeable of the rule book, watching film. Film is one of the biggest things that you can do as an official, watching your film, watching other people's film, working out and being prepared physically to run up and down with bigger guys and faster people and put in the work, doing more than other people do and I will probably find out more a little later what it really takes to get to the NBA."

Episode 77: Nyreaf George

The Rant. Episode: 77



Nyreaf George - Multi-sport Official, Single Minded Purpose in Making Refereeing Work For Him.

Nyreaf and I go back to my CYO days in Basketball. I saw him here and there, but we just started having conversation longer than this blurb. In this pod, we discuss his start in officiating, how he balances assigning, as well as being a great official outside of Basketball. All that and more, my conversation with Nyreaf, now.

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7:50: Nyreaf: "John Coleson who was teaching the class, and still teaches the class he give you the opportunity to work on your craft, you will probably hear about John Coleson a lot, people have a lot of good things to say a lot of bad things to say but he give you the opportunity to work on your craft and for me it was never about the money so whatever if I got paid or not it was all about the opportunity to work on my craft, so if he gives you that opportunity that is what you should take advantage from because the money will come later on down the line and I realize it now that the money will come later on down the line."

16:50: Nyreaf: "If I had to chose which is the basketball that I like to referee the most it would be Summer Basketball. Everybody is home from school, everybody wants to team up with players from other boros and that is what makes the beauty of the game of summer basketball, this 4 guys want to go against this 4 guys and it is beautiful, that is what I like about this whole NY vs NY thing it is just beautiful, you get to see the best of each boros going at each other on given nights."

19:53: Nyreaf: "2010, 2011 when I took the Pro Am class I didn't work, I made sure I went to the venues to watch other referees work this venues with the attitudes of the players during that time because when you go from CYO, AAU, Rec league to this adult Pro Am league it is a biggest stage and it is a different type of basketball, and if you are not prepared for this type of basketball they are going to roast you out there and some people don't know how to handle that, you may cry, walk away and not want to referee again so I took the class for 2 years and I went to all this venues and back them Kingdome was the best venue that year so I was going to every Kingdome game, every EBC game, every Soul in the Whole game just watching how the referees blow calls, how was they positioning themselves, who were the assignors and what were the big major tournaments, was I ready to make a impact on my first game on a real big major tournament or was I going to a small tournament first and work my way up?"

27:33: Nyreaf: "I think that I have been successful in my philosophy because I have always been working with a veteran, so when you are working with a veteran he is always going to see where you are lacking at and what you are doing wrong and he is going to coach you at every time out, and every quarter, so hopefully that coaching that veteran is giving you, you are going to apply on that second quarter or to your third quarter or to your after half time, hopefully that conversation will calm your nerves down a little bit and you go there to make your calls."

31:00: Nyreaf: "You have to want to watch a lot of basketball, and I tell this guys that are coming up, when you are home and watching basketball, don't watch the game, watch the officials, when you watch the officials that helps you a lot, better

positioning, better play calling, that helps you with movement, everything that you need to do.”

The Rant. Episode: 78



Katrina Plummer - High Level Multi Sport Athlete, Multi Sport Official In Soccer and Basketball, and Director of Women's Premiere League.

Katrina knows a thing or two about being courted. She was blessed to be gifted at many sports, including Soccer, Lacrosse, and Basketball. In this pod she discusses her playing days, her experience in college, her advice to kids in their own recruitment process, as well as her career as an official and running the Women's Premier League. All that and more, my conversation with Katrina, now.

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6:38: Katrina: "I think that now kids only want to focus on one sport, which I don't know why and I think it is always good to have multiple sports because I see as Lacrosse and Basketball are kind of similar and being similar what I learned in Lacrosse I brought to Basketball and what I learned in Basketball I brought to Lacrosse and I think also that it keeps you in shape playing all year around. But I think that people just get focused in basketball because they want to excel in it. I think that kids should play multiple sports and not just focus in only one thing because having more sports you are going to be able to learn new things that you could probably cross over to other sports and also be in different teams and be with different personalities which helps you to learn life lessons."

8:17: Ralph the Ref: "What advice would you give a young man or woman and they are deciding and getting a lot of D1 looks but sometimes you can't really tell because sometimes you are really the top of the top and that is one of those things that you excel and you probably the chosen one in high school but it kind of evens out when you are on the next level and everyone is the same as you. I had a kid who was getting a lot of D1 looks and I said that he was kind of an a bubble and he would probably have a better experience if he went D2 because he would get to play immediately but the allure of D1, it is hard for parents to think about that, it is kind of the same if you went to play overseas, it sounds great but what is it going to be like to you if you went to Slovenia you have never been there before, it sounds good in theory. What kind of advice would you give and what was that got you to D2, do you think it was the promise of you playing immediately and not getting lost in the shuffle?"

9:16: Katrina: "My advice to women and men out there and I think that you need to make a decision that is best for you and I know that a lot of this young adults they listen to their parents they listen to the hype, you got to put yourself aside and think of what is the best me, I am not just going to UCONN because Katrina is going to UCONN, you got to think of it is best for you, I had a lot of D1 looks on me, I had Princeton looking at me, Hofstra, my parents really wanted me to go to Vermont and I had to sit there and think what is the best fit for me, and the coach saying that you are going to play, the scout say that but you have to know that when you get there it is not like you are going to play immediately so I would say to this young adults that you have to sit there and thing what is best for you, do not listen to the outside noise, that is my best advice for everybody, you just have to make a decision that is best for you."

20:14: Ralph the Ref: "I saw over in Instagram that you started your own Basketball League in Hauppauge it is called Women's Premier League, talk about that, how did you start that and what was your experience organizing it."

20:28: Katrina: "It was an experience, I always wanted to start my women's league and one day I got in contact with the right people to come and help me and it was a long process putting it together and long nights trying to get teams and girls are a little bit harder because some of them have kids, they are hurt or they don't want to play that much. And it was such a process of getting the schedule together, getting the girls together, make sure the games were on time, making sure I get the referees, it was a big thing and I didn't expected for it to be that hard but I got through and I am really proud of myself for doing that. I would like to thank Mary for helping me, I love her to death.

I am looking forward to have more seasons, once this seasons started more people reached out to me saying they wanted to play for the next season and I am happy for the girls because usually we just have Island Garden and LI Hoops but LI Hoops is not there anymore so I just want to put something together for women because there are so many men's league, why not have more leagues for women, the major leagues are in the city but we don't have enough leagues for our girls in Long Island."

Episode 79: AJ Hemmingway

The Rant. Episode: 79

AJ Hemmingway - Balancing Work, Life, and Officiating, all in Pursuit of the Highest Level of Men's College Basketball.

AJ played ball as early as he can remember. In this pod he discusses his travels in the AAU circuit as a kid, how he played at a high level at Brooklyn College, and his new passion that he unexpectedly took on as an official. He discusses how officiating balances with the rest of his life and activities. All that and more, my conversation with AJ, now.

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26:55: Ralph the Ref: "I know that even before the summer you probably had a crop of camps that you went to, just discuss your experience and what your mindset is when you are attending this camps, what type of mindset would you have as an already concurrent existing College Official going to this camps."

27:15: A.J: "Camps situations is tough especially when you start going to Division 1 camps, you are paying 500 dollars and in my case flying out to Kansas City in Missouri to try and pick up a contract and you got a roster of 75 guys perhaps 15 are already on staff the other refs are Division 1 officials already in other conferences, everyone is in good shape, everyone is good, everybody probably can work that conference so for me it is breaking it back down to basics which is running to the spots, hustling, mechanics, play calls. And that is the thing with camps that I think that a lot of guys misinterpret, I am not too sure that assignors are looking at play calling, it is more for me the way you look, you got to be in shape, you got to have the mechanics and work in the little things, partnership, that is a big thing, you get in a game sometimes that you have the situation of coaches going crazy or you have a double whistle or something like that and your partner is looking for help or maybe a play to the basket that ended up in a crash, maybe he was in the circle maybe he wasn't, you partner may have gotten it wrong, are you going to come up and bring him that information? And I think that that was one of the things that I learned even on that most recent camp that I went, be a good partner, observers can see that, assignors can pick up on that, they don't want you to throw your partner under the bus or leave him out to dry because we are all a team on the court and that is what makes a good referee, the ability to know that if I am working with a guy who is less experienced, I am not going to leave him out to dry, maybe he does make some mistakes during the game, let's bring him along and try to put confidence in him so he can move this game along and get out of there good. Because there will be a winner and a loser but the officiating team is always going to win. I think that when you go to those camps those are the kind of things that you should put your mind towards to be a good partner and communicating, having a loud voice, being verbal and mechanics, the mechanics is everything, if you have good mechanics and you have the posture and you have the build, I think that is 90% of the battle honestly, walking in, that first impression when you walk into the room for your first orientation for the camp, that is it."

Episode 80: Niya Khan

The Rant. Episode: 80



Niya Khan - High School Official, Daughter of Officiating Royalty, and Advocate in the Fight Against Cancer.

Niya has had Officiating in her blood. She is the daughter of Rachelle Jones, a Women's Final Four Basketball Official. In this pod she discusses her own come up, her mothers impact on her as well as the officiating community and raising awareness through her brand Conquer Cancer. All that and more, my conversation with Niya, now.

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2:45: Ralph the Ref: "I had my own interaction with Rachel Jones at a camp about 3 years ago and before I speak to you I just want to tell how much of an inspiration she has been to the officiating community specially on the women's basketball side, I just remember my only interaction with her at camp, she kind of gave me a side eye, I don't know what I was doing, I was kind of afraid because everyone were saying that Rachel was here and she was going to destroy everyone. She had a lot of pointed advice but I hope that she is looking down from Heaven at me knowing that the advice she gave me at that particular camp I applied and I have gotten better as an official and I am taking as serious as she does and hopefully this podcast will be something that inspires other people and remember her for all time."

17:00: Niya:" One of my mentors, Heather Brown she was a good friend of my mum and so personally and refereeing wise she definitely were there for me and she is one of the people that I would go to when I started refereeing. I don't know why but some people kind of shied away from mentoring me because of who my mother was because they thought I didn't need ca mentor as I had my mum."

18:33: Ralph the Ref: "I wanted you to discuss briefly about your brand conquer cancer, what the inspiration was, what the development is and where do you envision it going for the future?"

19:53: Niya: "I started it when I was a Sophomore in College and it started with just a (hat or something) I was just sitting in my dorm and I just wanted to do something for my mum in honor of my mum even though she was still here I just wanted to honor as I saw how strong she was and the pain that she was going through, so I started with hats and more recently I did some T-shirts and hoodies and I also have long sleeves and the inspiration was obviously for my mum but also for anybody who has felt any hurt from this horrible disease because it takes lives. We have a Instagram page called conquer.cancer."

Episode 81: Cara Castruonova

The Rant. Episode: 81

Cara Castruonova - 2x Gold Glove Champ, Former Biggest Loser Trainer, & Future Heavyweight Boxing Official.

Cara's father is old school; so much so, she got trained in the archaic methods of boxing that you would only see in the movies. In this pod, we spar on the mic and discuss her affinity for the sport, her road to become a golden glove champion, how she helped people lose weight on her watch, and her pursuit to become a high level official on the ring. Along with my special co-host Cassio Machado, my conversation with Cara now.



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11:11: Cara: "The number one thing they say that is our job and I think is probably unique to all the different refs out there is the safety of the boxer, keeping the boxer alive, that is the number one job of the refs, everything else is secondary, points don't matter, time doesn't matter none of that stuff matter, the number one thing is to keep the boxer safe. You have to be so open to watch the boxers and see if they got stunned or if they look like they are going to get knocked out and that is the one thing you have to pay attention the most. I know that when I am watching that it makes time to feel stopped, first time I wasn't so conscious if I were doing it right but once I started paying attention to the boxers safety and it becoming concerned that if I was seeing a boxer getting hurt all of a sudden I was not worrying about anything, it almost the same feeling as when you are a boxer, you are in the zone and it feels like time disappears and when I am refereeing sometimes I am so concerned about the safety of the boxer that I am staring at the boxer and watching them back and forth so for me time just disappears because I am so in the moment."

17:00: Cassio: "How does it feel for you being a female official in a male dominated world, how do you feel when you are refereeing?"

17:13: Cara: "Since boxing is a male dominated world I got used to it through the years, at first I felt weird because I was the only female around in the gym anywhere but through the years you just get used to it, now as an official when the guys are weighting I have to leave the room but it is the same thing with girls."

28:25: Ralph the Ref: "What do you think it is going to take to get you where you want to go and ultimately where do you want to go in officiating boxing?"

28:30: Cara: "I think it really is going to take tick skin not because as I get older I get softer but because when I was younger I really had a tick skin. I have to be persistent, I have to be aggressive and IK think more aggressive than a male referee would have to be, what I feel as a female boxer is that you have to prove yourself even more because you are a female whereas a guy boxers is a showcase every time so I think that even as a referee a lot of time the referees they just show up but if you are a female and you are just ok everybody notices it but if you are a male and you are not good people just say "yeah, yeah he sucks" but if you are a girls people are like "Oh, my god she is terrible never put her again" people look at you way more closely so you can't mess up, there is always more pressure on you so you have to live with a higher standard so understanding that I will get more criticized than a male."

Episode 82: Keith Willis

The Rant. Episode: 82

Former Baller; From Getting Buckets to Transitioning to an Elite PSAL Basketball Official.

Coming From Brooklyn and Coming to Queens, Keith is comfortable officiating in the Belly of the Beast, the Public School Athletic League, in New York. In this pod, we discuss how he played at a high level, how he discovered officiating, and breaking it down on how he's getting to his highest level in officiating. All that and more, my conversation with Keith, now.



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25:50: Keith: "I got guys who are my peers and we push each other like, Jalal, like Jay, we are constantly pushing each other about rules and different interpretations within the rule and we try all to have one rule, one interpretation instead of having one rule with several different interpretations. Whatever says in the book, that is the rule, instead of paraphrasing what is a rule, if he steps over the line that is a violation. That is the way that we have been on and we have been pushing each other to be better than we were on our last game, because your last game is over, you can only get better, you don't want to go backwards and you don't really want to level out either so when you feel like you are leveling out you need to find something that motivates you within the referee business."

26:33: Keith: "I just try to pass on information that was given to me, information that I retained because you know that you get a lot of information and some you retain and some is just blah, blah,blah, so are Jewels so whatever that I had that I found it was a jewel, if I am working with somebody and I that are just starting and are trying to earn their stripes, I give them the jewel.

And sometimes you have to show them and remind them of a play that was similar to that play there and see if they can remember because that is like muscle memory, when you first start refereeing you don't remember plays. And that is something about Heather Brown, when she is talking to you about plays, you better remember when that play happened, but when you first start out you are not thinking like that but you got to start thinking during the game and once you start thinking the game through you become a better ref."

Episode 83: Gerda Gatlin

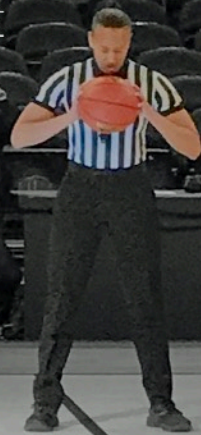
The Rant. Episode: 83



Gerda Gatlin: One of NYC's Top Basketball Officials: From Balling in the DMV, Securing Space at Stoney Brook, and Traveling in Between, all in Pursuit of Officiating Full-Time.

The Rant pulled up to Brooklyn to speak to Gerda. In this pod we discuss why she's forever indebted to John Coleson, how she got thrown in the fire, how she leveled up in officiating doing crazy games in New York City, and how she became a staple in the Women's Basketball College Circuit. All that and more, my conversation with Gerda, now.

REFEREE RANT



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18:45: Ralph the Ref: "Do you feel that you got more of embodying after those experiences of getting thrown in the fire?"

18:50: Gerda: "I think that there is only so much preparation that you can do so you can prepare up to a level and then you got to be thrown into the fire and then this how you kind of level up, now I know that if I say this to a coach or if I am too late to step down to a shot at this type of game, I am dead, so if you are not used to the fire your growth get stunned or stagnated in my personal opinion so by John Coleson currently throwing people to the fire early, it helps to propel their growth even faster instead of going through the other traditional ways that people may go about it."

20:09: Ralph the Ref: "What was that moment when you started feeling like, you started seeing people ahead of you and you see then so pristine with the mechanics and they understand the rules and you go "I want to take this as serious as I can so I get to the point where I can do those games" when was that moment for you?"

20:24: Gerda: "I know you mentioned Shanade Bernard earlier on the podcast opening but when I first started refereeing I went to Brownsville somewhere with my friend at the time, I was just watching or something like that and I saw Shanade work and I was like "Damn, her shit is tight" and then I was thinking that I had some work to do, it was as like she had an air of confidence and everything was very tight and kind of very inspiring because we are all at the same age and I felt that I just had to put the work in and I could get to that point, and I came to think that there is more to this than calling a travel and you have to have some kind of swagger to you like the way she officiates that really stood out to me on that day, I can vividly remember that day."

36:55: Ralph the Ref: "When you think of a good mark of characteristic of a New York official is someone who does men's women's and pros, out of those what do you think about just in terms of differentiating the rules and doing different things in different nights, what do you prefer and what are the challenges to just doing all three?"

37:20: Gerda: "The challenges are like if you were able to speak French, Italian and Spanish, they all have similarities but they are not the same language, so you can kind of translate by just kind of knowing different things from each language but if you mix them all together no one is going to understand what you are saying so when you are doing those various types of basketball, everybody has to go through that, you are not just going to be able to get by just doing girls basketball or women's College basketball or the WNBA, you are going to have to do some boys games and I think to

work on all that you just kind of have to go inside your head before going into the arena or park or somewhere and kind of say the differences in your head. It really helps me to have a self-talk about the rules so I remember what is going on and I always let my partners know that I am not acting as if they didn't know the rules but it is just more so that I can remember what I am going to do on the court and don't ruin the game."

Episode 84: Warren "Jug" Davis

The Rant. Episode: 84

Warren Davis, AKA Jug, AKA Jug Head, also known as Rule Master.

We sat down with Jug not too far from his house, at Jurassic Park, to discuss his automatic Jumpshot, his experience doing high level officiating in NYC, and how he mastered the rules of Basketball, one section at a time. Be sure to look out at the end of the pod for our new segment, dropping weekly and daily, Monday through Friday, Jug's Jewels. All that and more, my conversation with Jug now.



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8:55: Ralph the Ref: "When was that moment when you started taking the rule book seriously?"

09:00: Jug: " Right after I passed, because once you pass there is not enough studying everyday to keep up to it. Just because I passed it didn't mean to put the book down. Rules change every year, the game changes every game you take so you have to understand that you are going to come across a lot of situations to be able to explain and get out of them safely helps you to be a good official."

10:05: Ralph the Ref: "What do you think are the best practices to start pacing out the book and kind of gain that armor of learning those foundations brick by brick?"

10:20: Jug: "That rulebook your Bible, carry it with you at all times whether you do men's, women's, college or pros, carry it with you at all times, have it close by and those breaks you get at work, those times that you get to relax, pick up and read a chapter it will help you and you will come across things every time you read something."

19:55: Ralph the Ref: "In term of mechanics and in terms of rules, I know that this is a tough question and very subjective but do you prefer High School, College, Pro-am rules and what do you prefer also, High School, College or Pro am mechanics? And how do you distinguish each set of rules so easily?"

20:18: Jug: "pretty tricky question because all of them you should be training and be the best at them, period. But you have to prepare yourself, pregame yourself and know that you are doing High School boys, you have to prepare yourself when you are doing High School women, women's use NCAA so their mechanics is more Pro like style."

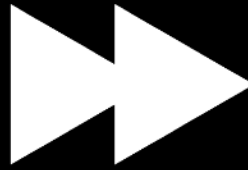
27:45: Ralph the Ref: "How do you go about in terms of strategy about how to talk to a coach when he is on the ledge and now you have to explain him the rule, do you tell him verbalized what the rules says or do you kind of say it in a way as well as copped with the rule language for him to understand and for him to look it up later on?"

28:05: Jug: "What we do in officiating starts on our pregame so whenever you have a partner or partners our discussion is "did you have this trams before? What about the coaches? How are we going to handle the coaches?" Everyone has a different personality so your 2 partners might not be on the same page as you are, their answer might be totally different as my answer might be, my answer is from strictly being intelligent and professional so I know how to answer him quickly and don't let him

disrespect the game or me or my partners and then to treat him with respect even when he might give me something that is out of character in basketball still to respect him and know how to verbalize and answer back correctly without being mad, it will help you be a better official, don't be a technical foul official you might put you in situations, the less you say the better to official the game is when you do have to say what you say, do as quickly as you can do it when time permits and get back to the game, stay focused.”

Episode 85 - The Rant Replay

The Rant. REPLAY



The Rant. Episode: 85

◀ Rewinding & Writing
The Best Quotes of Episodes
1-50

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Episode: 82 THE RANT

1-20
The Best Quotes of Episodes
◀ Rewinding & Writing

5:55: Cassio: "All the guests they have a story, every guest has something to contribute to a person's growth, so sometimes I may have listened to podcasts that I didn't take much from but I know that the things that were said would work for someone else, so when you gave the idea I wanted to make it work, and it was a good way for me to practice my English because I was listening to all this people talking, all this different accents, and also I had the chance to listen to the episodes again being inserted to the New York reality and things make more sense to me now."

13:30: Cassio: "If you are the type of person who say you don't have time to listen to the episode, just read the book and that is going to make you want to listen to the episodes, because after reading a part of it you will want to know the story of the person behind the quotes."

19:00: Ralph the Ref: "I think that it is crazy, I think that the craziest thing in all is that not only this is going benefit to the referee community, it is going to be a thank you to everyone who has contributed to from episodes 1 through 50, on top of all of the other referees who will gain knowledge from that is that it is helping you to learn English, that means a lot to me. I am really excited to this project and I hope everyone enjoys it, as I said it is going to be a big thank you that everyone can see that in a published work in words."

Episode 86: Craig "Speedy" Claxton

The Rant. Episode: 86

Speedy Claxton: Former Christ the King Standout, Hofstra Basketball King, NBA Champion, and Current Assistant Coach for the Hofstra Pride Men's Basketball Team.

We pulled up at my alma mater, Hofstra University, to record with Coach Claxton to talk to his exploits on the Basketball court. We discuss his journey that took him from Corona Queens, to the NCAA Tournament, his travels in the NBA, and what led him back home. All that and more, my conversation with Speedy, now.

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25:22: Ralph the Ref: "What did you learn being a pro? What was your experience playing with professionals like Dikembe Mutombo, Arron Mick, Eric Snow and obviously Allen Iverson?"

25:29: Speedy: "Work Ethics, I got to witness how much work they actually put in on their craft so I thought that if I were going to be a pro I had to follow those guys steps."

25:40: Ralph the Ref: "Talk about your experience at the NBA Finals, I remember game 1 so vividly, I had a 27" Sony TV and I just remember that if you watched game 1 now you can't imagine how good Kobe Bryant is, because at the time I was so busy hating on him that I couldn't appreciate how good they were, and then you see Shaq, it is crazy it just seem that he has a marble on his hand and he is doing whatever he wants to do. I think that Iverson went all for that game, I think that he dropped 48."

26:18: Speedy: "That guy is for real, to have his stature at the highest level and being one of the best players in the world, that is unreal, I mean, here we are going up against Kobe and Shaq two of the greatest players of all time and he handle them, he was single handed beat them and I thought that was crazy, we were going to win the Championship on our first year, that is unreal. But they came and beat us on the next 4 games. Game 2 was close, I were going to bring the game home then and I remember the city was going nuts and I was a part of that, everywhere you looked at you would see Sixers flags out on everybody car, everybody is going for the Sixers."

28:20 Ralph the Ref: "After that you subsequently were traded for the San Antonio Spurs, talk about that experience of playing with future Hall of Famers."

28:28 Speedy: "That was another great experience that I had in the NBA, at the time I was still a little sad because I felt that the Sixers were home at the time and I was closer to home too, I was a 2-hour drive away so my family would always come to Philly to see me or I would go down to New York and then I got traded to San Antonio, and this was going to be the first time that I was really going to be far away from home. I didn't know what to expect when I went to San Antonio but I had a great year."

Episode 87: Herving Armand

The Rant. Episode: 87



Episode 87, The Rant: Herving Armand: Motor-Cycle Riding, Deep-Thinking 2nd Year Official Mastering Basketball, Soccer, and Baseball, one Sport at a Time.

Herv has always been involved in sports. From growing up in Queens and playing at the Collegiate level, he wanted to continue with sports after. Enter officiating; in this pod we discuss all that, his experience juggling multiple sports, his experience trying to master said sports, and what the future holds. All that and more, my conversation with Herv, now.

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25:25: Ralph the Ref: "The other thing that I would like to talk about is your experience getting certified in the girls basketball, because I think that I told you that this was another good avenue but it is completely different because the instructors are a little bit more cut throat when it comes to protecting the women's game and protecting the girls mechanics so talk about your first year being certified in the Nassau Board for women's."

25:57: Herving: "Big difference with the rules, big difference with the mechanics, the only thing that I kind of brought into the girls was that I had the play calling that I had from the boys side that gave me the confidence to actually do the girls side because I know that going into the girls was not like the pressure doing the boys test, because with girls I knew something whereas the boys I knew nothing, I was a ball player trying to be a ref, so now I am a ref just trying to be a different type of ref so it made it easier to transition to the girls side and just focus on the mechanics and focus on the rules and knowing the difference between the two."

26:52 Ralph the Ref: "How hard was it to unlearn Federation mechanics that you learned one year before and now going to girls mechanics and just does little subtle nuances that make a world of difference in the game?"

27:05: Herving: "Hard, I could say, because what makes it hard is the fact that you are trying to focus to do women's mechanics but then you actually see yourself still trying to do boys, when the ball goes out of bounds you put your hand up and point, with the women you just point, so you just get caught in the middle of "what I am supposed to be doing,?" especially when you are doing boys games all the time and now you take the girls class, so it made it tough at that time."

27:55: Ralph the Ref: "What advice would you give somebody if you could do it all over again would you go and do the girls first and then take the boys class or do you thing that you would do it the same way that you already did?"

28:08: Herving: "It is tough to say, for me I think that if I were to start over I think that I would take the girls side, only because you start seeing everyone is using the women's mechanics, pro city, NBA, you start seeing the women's mechanics more than you see the men, so I would say to do women's so just you have a bigger understanding when you watch the games, so when I watched pro city tonight it made me look at things totally different because I knew the women mechanics and I was watching them in the light of a women's official, their play calling, their control of the game, that is a referee nonetheless of women's mechanics or men's mechanics it is a

referee, so that is where it kind of helped me to say that if I would do it again I would start with the women's."

Episode 88: Coach Dagan Nelson

The Rant. Episode: 88

Dagan Nelson, NYU Men's Basketball Head Coach,
Master Communicator & Motivator

It's been 2 decades since I've seen or spoken to Coach Nelson. He took some time out of his busy recruiting and pre-season schedule to talk to the Rant about his amazing journey in coaching that started with coaching a JV team on Long Island, his travels, his mentors that helped him along the way, and what he sees for NYU this season and beyond. All that and more, my conversation with Coach Nelson, now.

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7:38: Coach Nelson: "I think that the first thing that we have to recognize as coaches is why are we doing it and what are we looking to accomplish, who are we looking to help and who are we looking to serve. I think that when I was a young coach, 23, 24 years old, the guys who I was coaching, you in particular, were 15, 16, 17 year-old's that wasn't a huge difference in age but I think that the biggest thing to me in regards on why I got into it was to serve others and to try and leave a legacy. My dad always told me to try to make your vacation your vocation and that has always been very strong for me, that is really why I got into coaching and why I do what I do."

9:12: Coach Nelson: "You are going to learn a lot about yourself doing Varsity and you are going to learn a lot about your team when they struggle, and to your point to really get their adult run. I think that kids need to go through shared adversity and I think that shared adversity and failure are really good things and I think that sometimes society that we live in today doesn't allow them, it tries to show that failure is a bad thing but in reality failure is a good thing because it teaches you so many good life lessons."

10:25: Coach Nelson: " My philosophy of coaching personally is to try and create an environment where young people can become a better version of themselves, and to try to put them in a position where they can showcase their strengths, accentuate their strengths and improve on their weaknesses. I think we have a collective responsibility and a shared responsibility when you build a program regardless of it being school, high school or college, the best programs are not just coach led but also internally led by the student athletes that you coach, and it has to be shared. The philosophy is creating an environment but also a shared practice and a shared vision on what you want to accomplish and that is really important in any single level."

27:10: Coach Nelson: "I think that we learn more from our losses than we learn from our wins and I think that when you lose you have a great opportunity to teach, I think that you can learn more from a loss than you can learn from a win."

Episode 89: Orrin Barfield (Sr.)

The Rant. Episode: 89

Orrin Barfield, Elite Collegiate & High School Basketball Official, Mentor to Many, and Still Improving.

We pulled up at the Rivalries Never Die earlier in the summer to get Orrin to discuss his journey in officiating. In it, he discusses how he stumbled upon yelling when he took it serious, and how he stays sharp after all these years. All that and more, my conversation with Orrin, now.



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12:54: Ralph the Ref: "What is the best advice that you would give somebody that is now breaking into the Varsity level on all the respected leagues they are being assigned to and they are trying to take the next step into College?"

12:05: Orrin: "The biggest thing that makes you a good official is your PCA, you got to know what is your primary coverage area, once you have that down, you have the row that you should be looking the play calling I believe comes easy so I don't know if it is surprising for me to say that but I will say, that is the biggest thing, know where you are responsible for looking at and make your decisions based off that. As far as moving up the ranks, just know that this business is a small business we want to be honest and to keep it at 100%, because assignors talk."

16:42: Orrin: "On the local level on my board, board 119 IAABO in Queens we implemented a mentoring program and pretty much the interpreter Ernie Rudloff, it was his idea and he selected the mentors, not everyone was able to be a mentor and he identified the new cadets that had just finished up and he paired them off and he set a few parameters to try to force the communication and them being pushed along, and a couple of items are: communicating with each other every so often once a month, sharing each other schedules and make attempts to go with my mentee to watch me officiating and maybe pick up some points, sitting on a pre-game and vice versa, me attending his game or her game and just watching. I prefer to sneak in and then sit and critique, make notes for the purpose of that person getting better."

Episode 90: Orrin Barfield (Jr.)

The Rant. Episode: 90

Episode 90, The Rant: Orrin Barfield Jr. - First Year Certified Official, Former Arch Bishop Molloy Stand-out, and Collegiate Player for John Jay University.

After the alpha comes the omega, enter Orrin Jr - son of Basketball officiating greatness, we picked Episode 90 for him to honor his father for his own start in officiating which started in 1990. In this pod junior discusses his come up, watching his father officiate, working hard to belong on a high level high school team, how he got into refelling, and putting it on pause to play in college. All that and more, my conversation with Orrin Jr. featuring Sr., now.

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9:15: Orrin Jr.: "My perception of refs I always had respect for refs, no matter how bad the call was, I never complained ever and that was not into my style and I think that helped a lot because I see a lot of guys, young kids and even when I am refereeing they want to take out on the refs their first instinct is to automatically take out on the ref, instead of maybe backtracking 5 seconds to think what have I done to put myself in that situation or put the ref in the situation that now he has to make a call he doesn't want to make because it looks horrible or whatever, I get a lot of that and it always bother me so much because I haven't been raised like that at all, it is just (something), you see parents out in Long Island they are always screaming at the refs and that is what they give for it, no respect for the refs, but I always was raised with a lot of respect for authority and referees a like."

The Rant. Episode: 91

Karleena Tobin - Division I Women's Basketball Official, WNBA Official, CEO of ElevenOne Officiating

Unbeknownst to Karleena, Basketball was a passion turned full-time gig. From playing at a high level in Maryland, to playing collegiately at the University of Delaware, she found her footing, full time, in staying in the game in officiating. She discusses all of this, including her ElevenOne officiating initiative, to show that anyone willing to put in the work, can achieve anything they want in this game. All that and more, my conversation with Karleena, now.



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9:22: Ralph the Ref: "What advice would you give somebody who is trying to figure out what route is best for you, because sometimes people don't have a clearer route and I think that you had a lot of fortuitous breaks that went your way and you were just kind of ready for the moment but some people aren't as fortunate to be exposed early on with those certain breaks."

9:45: Karleena: "I would say, first control what you can control, a lot of us as referees we try to get into everything that we can get into and we want to get admitted to that league, men's league, women's and then all of a sudden 10 years later you find yourself in that same moment. Only control what you can control, everything will fall into place for you. To decide between men's and women's basketball, whatever makes you feel comfortable, whatever gets your gears going, gets your intensity up, definitely my advice would be to just control what you can control and don't get caught up on what he says she says kind of thing."

12:58... Ralph the Ref: "You are a mentor to many and you started the Eleven One officiating down in Baltimore, just talk about your experience on how you started it, how you developed it and how you see with it in the future?"

13:13: Karleena: " I always wanted to do mentoring and I kind of had this vision for a program and I have been sitting on it and this summer I had the opportunity to (something) for a training camp. So I was able to get a group of 15 officials together, we went over to George Town and we had a great time. Al Batista came out and helped, he is a great friend and helped a lot. Just to be able to give quality information and feedback to the officials and from there I just want to stay in contact with them and in the near future I really hope to continue to run more camps, I have created my own website www.elevenoneofficiating.com where it is kind of a forum for discussion where the officials can create a membership or a free membership and we will keep in contact, it is going to grow into sharing plays and discussing plays and thing of that nature.

On the other side we been looking up to student athletes who have no idea what officiating is and whether they are Junior or Seniors in Highschool or athletes in Junior or Senior year in College and just try to educate them on what officiating is because a lot of people don't know that this can be a full time career. Just get those specially students athletes in high school who hasnt gotten a scholarship to College or may not be going to College and try to get them and steering them towards the path of officiating, so that is the next step."

19:43: Ralph the Ref: " I find refereeing much more fulfilling than playing than I ever had, I think that I love refereeing much more than playing, do you feel the same way?"

19:53 Karleena: ” Absolutely I do, it is a whole different adrenaline rush, playing of course you are involved in the game because you are playing, but a few people asked me a couple of weeks ago and I said, refereeing you are in the game the entire time, you are never on the bench, you don’t have a sub, you are the game, you are in the game. I don’t know if you are the game but you are part of the game the entire time so what we do has a great impact on the game and just having that hack to me makes me feel amazingly blessed and humbled to do that, versus when you are a player you are in and out, the coach might take you out and somethings like that.”

Episode 92: Coach Richard Curtin

The Rant. Episode: 92



Coach Richard Curtin - Proud Father, Prouder Grandfather, Eternal Basketball Coach, and Seasoned Wise Soul.

Some 20 years ago, Coach Curtin and I were at the confines of the Kellenberg Memorial High School Gym. Not only was he my coach, he informed my own coaching career, and always encouraged me to stay the game. Not to mention his perplexing philosophies the are translucent, now. On the eve of his 60th birthday, we discuss his life, his coaching career, and what life has taught him. All that and more, my conversation with Coach Curtin, now.

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20:40: Coach Curtin: "Athletics was always a big part of my life, I have learned a lot of lessons from that and maybe put too much weight on it at times because it can be disappointing, losing is tough, nobody likes to lose but I think that there is some merit to getting through disappointment and adversity in your life, and you learn this lesson in Athletics, you almost cannot not learn it because there are very few undefeated teams throughout your whole childhood so you learn perspective, you learn how to function when things don't go your way and more importantly, if you were taught well and you are honest and open the first thing you look at is what can I do different? And instead of blaming the umpire, blaming the fans or blaming the ride or blaming the field or the coach, we got to say to ourselves what do we need to do? And many times I didn't do things that I should have done and you learn that later in life too because it is all a metaphor of life, as we live each year I am still learning."

34:27: Coach Curtin: "Each and every time you coach at a particular level, you refine your skills on that. In that time I went to four or five clinics, with UB Brown, clinics at Hofstra, G Wright had a clinic. I also bought a lot of film that you can watch to and has very good tunes. I am watching Mike (last name) stuff and I was always a great College Basketball fan as well I watched that my entire life but implementing that for kids, you quickly learn what works and what doesn't work, you can come in to coaching and teach them some plays but as soon as they do the play once, after that the other team knows what they are doing so you have to teach them how to play and not just plays, not just that quick hitters and strategy that are important for situations but you got to find a way to instill a philosophy to what it is that you are doing, the more you educate yourself as to what successful philosophies are, the more you have the ability because coaching is about strategy, it is also about philosophy, it is also on how you approach, you got to read your kids, some kids you can yell at and some kids you can't say anything to because they could shut down and it is a difficult test."

57:37: Coach Curtin: "If you give to the players, the players will give it to you. If you are truthful to your heart or honorable in your assessment or in your ability or your effort, they may pick up on that, if they feel that you are not genuine or you are phony in any way you won't be successful because they are not going to believe you and if they don't believe you they are not going to do the things that you want them to do."

73:19: Coach Curtin; "I have a friend of mine, dear friend of mine and we kind of like speak back and forth and he says to me "Richie, good is good and bad is good" and I look at him like "What are you talking about?" and he says "good is good, when things happen and it is good it is good, when bad things happen it is good too" and I said "wait a second, explain that to me" and in a short sentence he said to me "when

bad things happen, immediately defines for you what you don't want, not standing tragedy I get that but even that, there are gifts that come out of that". Metaphorically if you get cut from something, you have to realize that I either need to do something to not get cut again or I have to have the realization that I am not talented enough to be at that level so I have to do something else, and that is really what that is, good is good, bad is good because it defines for you what you don't want."

Episode 93: Coach Tamar Adams

The Rant. Episode: 93

Tamar Adams - Certified Basketball Junkie: player, coach, CEO of Perfect Your Skills 24/7.

I've had so many interactions with Coach T over the years. He imbues his passion for the game when he teaches his kids, when he's point guard on the floor, and when coaching his teams to victory. Practice makes permanent, and in this pod he discusses how his come up, how he developed Perfect Your Skills, and his new coaching position at Island Trees High School. All that and more, my conversation with Coach T, now.



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7:25: Coach T: "I always had good grades, and that is one thing that I try to give my kids as well, that is the only way you can make yourself value, make yourself more recruitable."

21:08: Coach T: "The biggest thing with me is relationships, I have a personal relationship with all of my clients so a lot of things that I am posting are really personal, it is not to really showcase a drill or whatever, if I go this kid and I am working with this kid I want to show the growth on this kid. I had him when he first came to me, developing or lacking on certain things, now a couple of months later I track his progress and this is how he is looking a couple of months in or maybe a year of just consistent training, so that is the biggest thing for me in regards of social media and how I use it, obviously it is a business so you can use it in regards of attracting more clients or whatever the case may be."

23:40: Ralph the Ref: "I have been coaching at Kellenberg for 20 years the girls volleyball team but I am completely devoid of training when I don't have them so sometimes when they ask questions and my program is Elite, we build it up to a point that we have had so many lean years, so many middle of the pack year that for the last 10 years we are always top 10 in the State we are always contending for the championship, we have won multiple titles but the thing is, sometimes a kid won't know a fundamental thing and I am disappointed because they are at the Varsity level and they haven't asked that question, and on top of that you could do all the training in the world but when the chips are down and it is 18 to 14 and you are about to lose, all of those skill sets get thrown out of the window, and this were the things we were talking about, unlearning those things and having the pose because it is great that you have the skill but when it comes to the time to execute, it is difficult so one question that I wanted to ask you as a trainer was what is your specific philosophy, what do you tell the kids and how do you think it informs the way that you treat them because I think you do the right amount of push and pull and as a referee I have always been very keen to that because I come from a era when you just kind of bark and you can get the results but girls are a little bit different because they need to have a little bit of a softer touch because sometimes they cant get that stinging advice so what is your philosophy and how do you really impart that to the kids that you have?"

25:30: Coach T: "Every kid is different on how they learn, some take time, some may get it instantly so everybody has their own learning curve, so the biggest thing that a lot of this kids have is just effort, just relentless effort and will. So for the girls as you said, you got to be a lot more softer and have a lot of patience with them and with boys, but not every boy though you have to understand what are they dealing with and their personality, because I may scream at a kid but a lot of kids might hear my

tonality but not hear the message behind what I just said so they might think "He is just yelling at me" and some of them might break down and get in their shell so they don't unpack exactly what I just said, and everything that I am saying is to benefit them and to better them. Maybe my tone and for me maybe that is to only way that I can reach you in that moment by raising my voice or getting in your say, but some kids they already have that so you have to go with a smooth voice, the message could still be the same but a lot of the approach to them would be to lead by example. I think that a lot of the kids take a like to what I say because they have a lot of respect and they know that I have good intentions. And everyone her their different learning curve and that is why I don't train everyone the same way, the drills have to be tailored for each individual."

Episode 94: Mic Larry

The Rant. Episode: 94

Mic Larry - From the Congregation to the Court, his Mic, his Voice Coming Through Your Speakers.

Mic Larry always had an affinity for words. Mix that with a crowd, he keeps an audience entertained from a wedding, to a basketball game. In this pod we discuss his come up in Basketball, his affinity for announcing, and where he sees his future through his voice. All that and more, my conversation with Mic Larry, now.



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10:09: Ralph the Ref: "I don't know if this is a judgmental thing but I feel that when I am at a wedding and I see the best man and he pulls out some loose-leaf I think "that is what you need to do? You can't speak from the heart? That is you man". I understand you might be inebriated but if you don't know by now and he is your best man I mean, you need to think about a different best man and that is how I feel."

10:33: Mic Larry: "You are right, it should come naturally, everything should come naturally, I was always that type I want things to be naturally, when somebody always say "Oh, you are going to be speak tomorrow about Ralph, I want you to give me some attributes on him" I would say great, and when I get there they would ask "What do you got on him?" and I say that I will know when I get up there because I wants things to be natural because sometimes when they are scripted it don't seem genuine, I want things to be genuine, I want people, whether it is a wedding or a sweet 16 or basketball, I had to MC a baby shower this past weekend and because I don't script anything people were like "This was the best baby shower I ever been a part of" and I get this out of almost every event, and I am always like "I did, at least a hundred of this by now and this is the best one to you? I don't think that I did too great" but because it is genuine and it is because of the love of what I do, it doesn't seem scripted at all."

31:50: Ralph the Ref: " Is it very difficult to being an announcer when, there is like a 40 points blowout and it is already decided within the first couple of minutes? Walk through on what you are doing on that situation."

32:13: Mic Larry: "The way I deal with a blow out game is, I then start announcing the other game that is going on inside the game, so whenever there is a blow out game there is always 3 games that an announcer should be announcing, the current basketball game between the players, the game on the stands because the crowd is a game and the game outside your arena, because anything that happen on the outside could affect the inside, if there is a brawl on the outside of the gate some people may leave the game that is going on inside to go outside and see what is going on, so you want to make sure that everything is ok out there so talk to your personnel out there. So whenever there is a blowout I always take it to stands, find someone and crack a joke on someone, find someone who understand what I am doing and love what I am doing and give me that same energy and I stay right there, interact with the game again and go back to the crowd, find a love one that want a dance, DJ drops a song for me have them dance, I even go to the crowd and announce the game from the stands and entertain then from there because the last thing I want to do, it is not about calling the game with a thousand people in the park but it is about what you are

going to do to keep the thousand in the park and that is my thing, I want to be able to keep you there.”

Episode 95: Andre “DrePool” Vanterpool

The Rant. Episode: 95

Andre Vanderpool - Former Manhasset & Rice High School Standout, Stony Brook Big, Turned Coach, Turned Alum, JV Basketball Coach at Manhasset, and Setting the Mood Right with Pictures and Videos, one Event at a Time.

As much as his style is impeccable, Andre is unique, and enthralling. In this pod, we discuss his Basketball Career: from finishing alley-oops at Manhasset High School, to experiencing the Division 1 College Basketball Level, Coaching at an Early Age, and making art through his eyes. All that and more, my conversation with Drepool, now.



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13:35: DrePool: "Everybody says they want to go to College, you talk to kids and they say that they want to go, but when you talk about on what does it take to play on the next level, you dont even know, a lot of kids has never been to a College practice, they have never been to a College campus, they haven't talk to a coach, they don't even know what are they aspiring to do, they don't know how it looks like, they are just working really hard and going of the images that they see on the outside but I didn't know that we did have 2 a day practices, I didn't know what individual workout were, until I got to College and then I started understanding how it looks like as a player and then I realize that what I was doing wasn't actually giving me the maximum results to increase my game, my example is, I used to go to the park like we all did and play hours of pick up, you play all day and you think "I have played ball all day" in those 4 hours you might have taken 30 shots, maybe, depending who you are playing with, if you are playing with the old guys and you are young you are just going on them and winning, you won 6 games today but you only took 30 shots, I went to College and in the individual workouts I took 600 shots in 2 hours, and you are like "Oh, this is why my middle range jump shot is on point know" because I just made 600 shots and now I am doing it 3 times a week. How long would it take for you to make 600 shots playing pick up at the park? I didn't know that, and now I just start implementing those things, I don't have a left hand and I just played on the park and on the team, coaches are not worried about you getting your left hand better, the team practices is about getting the defense going, the way to make your left hand increase you got to do it on your own, I didn't know that that was the formula when you got to College. So when I got to College I was at the gym after practices, we turn the music on and we are on the shooting machine for 2 hours, 3 hours with the music going, every day we made 1000 shots, you don't understand that is the thing, because this is the thing you could be doing with your friends, you could go to the park get your workout, get your shots up and then go play. If knew that formula I would have done it, but we just come and played and we thought that that was increasing our game but it was not."

20:51: Ralph the Ref: "How do you segue going from a Division 1 assistant coach and ultimately ending up as JV level at Manhasset, how much of a change was that?"

21:02: Drepool: "Now you start understanding that it is more about the fun of the game, the love of the game because all the guys that you get they are not trying to get to that level, they are just trying to have the best time with their friends. It is a great time to teach about life and understand yourself as a coach too, which is more important, then actually learning the game. I am not really concerned, even though I have been fortunate enough to have winning seasons, but if you ask my players what do I say every season, I don't care about winning meaning, the winning is not more

important than you learning about life and the game, so I am not going just to... I had games where my starting 5 were just not performing so fine, I am going to go with the last 5 guys of the team and we are going to play and if we lose we lose because this is not that level, this is just for me, this is not College that you have that dream and you are going to make. I got guys who are already signed for Lacrosse scholarships who are on my team, this is not their sport, so me understanding that I push them to level of bringing those drills and those concepts of the game that I know we will discuss and have team goals, I will make them watch the Varsity games to see the next level, I put it in perspective for them because that College experience to me showed that this is really serious, there are millions of guys who wants that opportunity but it starts here at JV level, even at school they take 9th to 12th grade, it is not only 12th grade they got to take all the 4 years which is going to prepare them for the next level.”

41:09: Drepool: ”When I am shooting (taking pictures) I am in a different world, the game, good or bad I am capturing how a player looks, his emotions in the game, the refs, people in the stands, it is a totally different experience when you are in your creative space as opposed to when you are watching the game. A blow out and a close game to be they are the same of me capturing it, I am challenging myself to tell the story of the game regardless of what the story is and how people look, some guys get big afros and mohawks, some guys have beard, some guys are muscular some guys are short and doing their thing, everybody has an art, everybody has a look to them and you are just trying to capture it on your own way.”

47:26: Drepool: ”My design is to help others, I was brought up in a soup kitchen with my grandmother and I was taught to give back and work hard and I devoted my life to be a social worker and that is all about sacrificing and helping others but I got to a point of time where I had to realize that I had to invest this things in myself so my whole realization was me feeling like I was on a boat and looking into the water and watching people drown, and I am looking at them and I am jumping into the water to try to save people, so I jump in the water, I bring somebody back into the boat, I come into the boat and tell them to wait then I jump back in the water and as I am bringing the second person to the boat I see that the first one just jumped back into the water. Meaning that, I am helping people who don't want to be helped, so now I have to change my perspective of now I am look into the same water but I am only going to help people who want to be helped, so this has eliminated 95% of the people in the water.”

Episode 96: Cal Griffin

The Rant. Episode: 96

Cal Griffin - Creator and Founder of All Things Hoops, the E-Magazine for the Basketball Junkie.

Basketball has always been an obsession for Cal. In this pod, he discusses how he got addicted, his trials and tribulations in high school and in college, and how he started his brand, All Things Hoops. All that and more, my conversation with Cal, now.



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3:40: Cal: "This All Things Hoops I started is pretty much a basketball journey through my eyes. I get a lot of DMs and a lot of people reaching out to me "hey, can you post this guy, can you post that guy" it would be ingenuine if I did that, this thing is a basketball journey through my eyes and my eyes only so it is a little bit biased in terms of New York Basketball but it is pretty much my story whether that be New York Basketball or things that I have seen from my plain days or player that I research that may live in Baltimore or California, again this is my story and this is the way I would like to see it."

5:00: Cal: "My page is All Things Hoops, so I am not something hoops or little hoops here and little hoops there it is all things hoops so it comes with the full spectrum of what basketball is and I like to have different angles with that and in respect to what you are doing, that is another angle that people aren't kind on tune right now, people always think about the players, the teams and whatnot, the referee aspect that is brand new to me, I have never seen anybody covering from that perspective, I thought it was unique, I thought it was kind of a breath of fresh air and I like to interact with people that are creative, I like to get some work done with people who are not doing what people expect them to do."

38:16: Ralph the Ref: "Now that you are a member of the media, how do you think it has changed with the rise of social media and the internet and how do you think that All Things Hoops has changed over the past 3 years?"

38:33: Cal: "In terms of how All Things Hoops has kind of involved sort of speak I think that when I started it was more like a blog situation and I noticed that a lot of venues they were starting to turn you away because they didn't accept blogs, they didn't want that associated with their event for some reason and so I had to kind of reinvent myself a few times actually and I started branding myself as an E-magazine and with that said, just doing different articles in this events and with the players, it was the same as a magazine but it was electronic so with the invention of social media being so prevalent now in people's life and a lot of people they want to do things for likes, they want to do the stream just to get likes and that is not much my forte, I want to tell a story that only I know and so where that journey will lead me I may have to reinvent myself again a few times before it actually takes me to where I want to be so with that said I love it, I embraced this journey and this is truly a passion of mine, everything that encompasses basketball, I wake up thinking about basketball, when I was in JV I would go to the newspaper and see what was Magic Johnson's shooting percentage, how many free throws did he shoot, how many turnover did they have today, how did that contribute for they winning or losing so with that said, that helps me now with what I am doing because obviously when I am cracking a story about a

game or event I want to tell the story on how a particular team turnovers were the direct cause of them losing the game, or this team out rebounding this other team, clearly was the X factor of them being victorious and that was something that I kind of put into my toolbox and gain I will just probably have to reinvent myself a few times before I actually have a comfortable place where I want to be.”

Episode 97: Anthony Leo

The Rant. Episode: 97

Anthony Leo - Lifetime Fitness' Ultimate Hoops League Coordinator for the Northeast Region, League Assignor, and Media Pointman.

More often than not, you can catch Anthony Leo at Lifetime running the Ultimate Hoops. In this pod, he discusses his sports career growing up in Syosset, how he got involved with Ultimate Hoops, and what's it like servicing a league where players will #neverretire. All that and more, my conversation with Anthony, now.



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17:55: Leo: "The league is only as good as the league coordinator and only as good as the refs. If the refs are terrible, people are going to tell you that they are paying all this money and the quality is not as good so once I got on my perception was on how do I get the best quality possible and I think that we tried to do that, hired people that we could get on that had experience and then we would be good so we have tried to get the close to Division 1, 2 and 3 whatever the case is to referee and overtime I think that we got some better guys here than what we had in the past, when I first got here we just had the typical rec league refs and the league was doing well but we had the same guys every night so we were getting complaints that we needed to have some other eyes too and I definitely did that so now we have around 20 refs that were hired."

25:10: Ralph the Ref:: "I wanted to talk about just stats and how much does that mean to the players when you put out those stats?"

25:17: Leo: "So, stats are everything, this league is more than your typical rec league. When you come here you are going to get photos taken, videos done from you, videos we are going to put on Instagram, Facebook group, our Facebook group has over 600+ members now, it is constantly growing, our stats goes online so you can go to our website where you can follow your full career profile so like Jay Harris is on our vet league and he has been playing for almost 500 games, he has a full 500 games career that he has built and he has got 15 championships out of it. The banners are on the walls we literally have no room left on the wall to put the banners on so I am shifting over to the next wall because I am putting out 2 banners every season plus a third one in Garden City now so the biggest thing that I think for the guys is when they are members here and they can walk to the gym and see the banner and see that they won that and it is still there from 2014. With the stats everyone is different some care more and some care less and then the cool thing about it is that it is not just you, you can compare yourself with guys from all over the country there is a PPR ranking there is a PRA ranking, you can track from who is scoring the most points, who is averaging this or who is averaging that so guys will come up to us after the game and make sure everything is correct, so we try to make sure that people who are doing the score is doing it the best way possible."

Episode 98: Al Johnson

The Rant. Episode: 98

Aloysius Johnson - One of Nassau County's Elite Basketball Official, President, Chairperson, and Mentor to All.

Al is more than a peer, mentor. He is a man of integrity that will tell it to you, straight. In this pod he discusses his exploits as a player, how he discovered officiating, and what motivates him after all these years. All that and more, my conversation with Al Johnson, now.

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19:22: Al: "John Mccrink taught myself a lot of what to do and what not to do, who to talk to and who not to talk to and even when he said who not to talk to he would say for you to talk to them and find out by yourself who this person was. You learn a lot about basketball even more when you are in this positions or when you are an assignor, you get called up out of the blue, people that would never call you before. John Mccrink is missed in this association on the girls side, good man."

20:03: Ralph the Ref: "I will share my story with John Mccrink, I remember I am taking the class my first time and the dude was no nonsense, he set the tone early and I don't what was like before he took over but I just knew it was like a gauntlet, you have to take the class for 2 years, you have to run half a mile, unfortunately my first year I failed by one answer and I am thinking that I was going to email John, I think that I had a good rapport with him, he know that I can blow the whistle and he told me straight up that he couldn't do it, he said he liked me as an official but if I wanted to do it I would have to give him 250\$ next year and see how serious I was. I was hurt at the time, I was disappointed at myself because I failed the boys class too. And this is a pro tip for someone who is juggling at taking the girls class doing boys games, you are so used of putting your hand up and blowing your whistle, and you got to unlearn that because you got people so high up that re such guardians of the game that will think that as an automatic fail and it is really hard to unlearn that. So when I failed I spent 365 days not caring if it was a boys game, I am doing girls mechanics because there is no way I was not passing."

28:58: Ralph the Ref: "Over your tutelage on how long you have been officiating, can you recall your successful mentees and what do you think that you learned when mentoring younger officials, about yourself?"

29:17: Al: "My thing with young officials, what I like them to do is listen to everybody, put it in the basket, if you don't like what they said toss it out because you are not going to agree with everybody, you just not. So old officials will help you, some old officials won't help you, some young officials will help and some young officials won't even help you but you just got to keep one chip at them, you look serious and you act serious, you ask the correct questions on what to do and what not to do, people will help you. You would be surprised on how many people would help you on either side, girls and boys."

Episode 99: Keith Keough

The Rant. Episode: 99

Keith Keough, Grover Cleveland High School's Proudest Basketball & Baseball Alumni, Basketball Assistant Coach, and Board 119 Official.

Keith beat the odds, and is reaping the benefits and values now. In this pod, he discusses his adverse come up at Cleveland High School, his officiating and coaching career, and what 1999 meant to both of us respectfully. All that and more, my conversation with Keith, now.



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35:35: Keith: "When you ref, you are not going to be perfect, let's be honest you are not going to be perfect so you got to make the call and move on."

35:48: Ralph the Ref: "What was your experience taking the class with Ernie Rudloff and being certified under Board 119?"

35:56: Keith: "It is funny because Ernie he used to ref my games when I was in Grove Cleveland and I remember coach Rocstein screaming at Ernie "Ernie, come on you got to be better" and Ernie would just run up and down the court like he didn't hear it."

36:20: Ralph the Ref: "Did you know that he is a Women's official in Nassau County and he is one of the best?"

36:25: Keith: "I know that he has being doing it for a long time."

36:28: Ralph the Ref: "A lot of people don't know that he has been part of the Women's Association in Nassau County and he kills. I just hope that when we become 74 years old and we are capable to still do that."

36:38: Keith: "Ernie is 74?! Wow.

36:45: Keith: "I started refereeing in 2012 and it was tough because when you come out of class you don't know nobody, you might work with the right people, you might work with the wrong people, the best advice I could say that when you start working and you see that you are not getting paid you should move on to the next person because when you get certified you should get paid, doesn't matter what kind of experience you are on, freebies shouldn't be free no more. When you are learning it is cool to be free but once you get certified you know it is."

42:10: Keith: "I learned a lot during the years, high school was where I grew up, I was a man when I was at my senior year, taking care of myself, waking up in the morning on my own, normally kids have their parents to wake their up I was there waking up on my own. I didn't do great in school but I went to school, there was a lot of things going on at once. And that is what I regret, I wish I could have done better in school. The only way I could do better at school is by going back and coaching and helping this kids to do better at school so they can move on and maybe later go back and help, that is what I want."

43:20: Keith: " I remember that I had a game at the Barclays Centre against John Bauman and Francis Lewis and my son woke up in the morning and he goes "Dad, I know you are refereeing in the Barclays Centre. Don't worry about it, if they say you suck or if they bully you, don't worry about it I still love you, alright?" That was the way of starting my day off my son telling me that if I suck or whatever it is just keep on going and that was one of my special moments refereeing because one I was refereeing at the Barclays, and two my family they surprised me, they came to the game and I didn't know they were coming."

Episode 100: Tommy Caramella



The Rant. Episode: 100

Tommy Caramella - Kindred Spirit, Friend, Mentor.
Elite Boy's & Girl's Nassau Basketball Official.

As stubborn as it sounds, we reserved Episode 100 for this special guest. In this pod, we discuss our eerie similarities, what Basketball meant to him, how he loathed refs, and became one of them, to become one of the most respected of them all. Episode 100, my conversation with Tommy, now.

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28:14: Ralph the Ref: "There is this switch that happens when eventually instead of you just doing it for the love you do it because you want to get better at it, kind of like you don't think of it in terms of Basketball but for me it is like my revenge of getting good at something, at least one thing over and over again and you get better over the time and as a reward you do better games, when was the moment that the flip happened for you?"

28:45: Tommy: "You got to remember that I took the boys class first, so I was a boys official, moving up in Nassau County was always a goal, an aspiration, I wanted to and for years I saw myself as a JV ref. Then I was refereeing over at Island Garden, I probably was refereeing with Sherry who now is the rules interpreter for the Girls Association, and she said "You know, you got come and take the girls class" and I said all right, once again it was a financial decision because CYO wouldn't let you if you were a boys official you weren't get assigned to girls games unless they are really desperate, so I thought that I could pick up some more games, I told you about the financial aspect, I was the biggest referee where there was, I was brokering games, that was how I got into it, on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, there are people who would testify to this, if I did not do a minimum of 18 games on those 2 and a half days they would ask me what was wrong and people would call me up, now CYO does it over the website and it is posted but back then you would call up and they would say that I would have games on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, soon as I got away from the phone with CYO I would call other people and check what did they have, I had a big calendar and I was writing down everybody's schedule, if someone took 3 games here but they really can only do 2 at a different time I would get their 3 games and find someone else 2 games, I started brokering it back and forth and I filled my schedule and I think that I satisfied a lot of people because they knew they could call me. Like I said, Island Garden, I was refereeing with sherry so I took the girls class, once I took the girls class ad in the girls association you have to take it for 2 years, after I passed the first year I was doing low level catholic games for Coz Delillo and Dan Miller who was a boys and girls referee told me that I had to contact Coz and tell him that I was girls certified. I emailed Coz and told him that I was a girls official too, didn't tell him that I just passed, and Coz a man of few words sent me an email back saying "Ok". Next thing I know I am getting arbiter, got some games and I was figuring that I got JV games, next thing you know I was getting St. Johns the Baptist vs St. Anthony's, then I was getting St. Mary's against St. Anthony's and that was number 1 against number 2 and now I was getting nervous, and I was working with great officials and that was when I kind of turned the corner for me, now I really after those games, even though they were girls games, they were high level, high competition, every basket meant something and that is when it turned the corner for me and I wanted to see where I

could take that for me. Coz Delillo is the man who changed everything for me, to this day when that man calls me I am there for him.”

47:15: Ralph the Ref: ”What do you think are the attributes for a successful mentee and what do you think that you learned about yourself being a respected mentor?”

47:28: Tommy: ”I just try to keep it simple when I am talking to young officials, but I will tell them that Basketball by far, if you can referee Basketball you can referee any other sport, it is the toughest sport to officiate, the split second decision making, when you are doing Baseball and I did Baseball for a little bit, the ball comes in, you get a second or two and they are waiting for you to say if it is a ball or you can come with a late strike. But for officiating Basketball you are seeing the play, and you got to react to that play, so you are blowing your whistle and now you are blowing your whistle and simultaneously you are putting your hand up, open palm for a violation and a fist for a foul, you got to make a split second decisions and that is what I try to tell younger officials, try to slow down, don’t react, let the game come to you. I can see in referees like what I saw in yourself, someone that wants to learn , and I can see other referees who are in there for the money and I get it, I was there but I hope that at some point you turn the corner and you see what true value you can be to the game, and as it says ”respect the game, respect the players, respect yourself” I can’t force anybody but try to get in shape for the season, try to hustle, try to be in position that is respecting the game and respecting yourself, do a disservice to the players. I see it, I cringe sometimes but I get it, people are out there and they want to make a buck but then you can see like I could see in yourself people who want to improve, who wants to get there, wants to reach a certain level and you are there, you still got ways to go, you are going to be climbing Ralph.”

76:14: Tommy: ”You can’t go into games with preconceived notions. Listen, coaches have reputations, players have reputations, referees have reputations, you can’t bring that baggage back to every game, every game is a reset, whatever that coach is known about and how they act it is a new game, let’s hope they don’t act that way, let’s hope that the player doesn’t act that way, let’s hope the referee put that aside and move on. What is the best game that is refereed? The best game that is refereed is a game that they don’t realize you are there, the game has a flow, you make a foul call, you make your violations call, you do whatever but you don’t want to be part of the game, I don’t want to make myself part of the game, I am there to adjudicate the rules and move on, and if I can get through a game a coach says to me that didn’t know I was there, I did my job and that is what refereeing is about, I don’t want to make it about me, I just want to go and do my job.”

87:12: Cassio Machado: "What sort of advice could you give to someone like myself who is taking the girls class soon to be successful because the thing is, I won't have time to fail so I got to go there and be successful and pass the class."

88:25: Tommy: "The whole thing is, submerge yourself into the rulebook, don't be afraid to ask questions, no question is a bad question because you never know what is going to be asked on the test, you just never know and you want to learn and that is the main thing, you want to learn, and by you asking the question, trust me there are other people in that class that are afraid to ask the question and by asking you are going to help somebody else. Once you get that rule book, submerge yourself into it and study it, read it, take the questions that Sherry is going to give you and you will be fine."

