

Help me help you by passing along ideas, suggestions

The surest sign that it's time for another college basketball season isn't the start of practice. It's not Kentucky fans howling and pacing over the latest recruiting news. It's not even the arrival in the mail of another book by Dick Vitale.

Nope.

It's the e-mail I received from Basketball Times editor John Akers that it's time for my Tip-Off column.

So rather than risk starting my administration with a bad record on deadline, I've decided to make deadline by enlisting your help. It might be my column. But it's your organization.

So I'm asking for your thoughts and ideas on the most pressing issues facing writers today. I'll even get you started by coming up with the first three – then you can send your ideas to me at bozichra@aol.com.

That way I'll have a head start on next month's column – and keep John Akers happy.

1. Schools charging for parking passes, meals and other items.

That appears to be the trend, folks. And I don't have a problem with it – as long as the charges are outlined in advance and applicable to all media members, including the fan rags that seem to be crowding more and more press rooms.

In early October, I covered the Indiana-Michigan State football game at East Lansing. MSU charges for press parking and it charged \$6.50 to eat the pre-game meal (hot dogs, sloppy Joes, chips, soft drinks and the world-famous MSU ice cream.)

Meet your new USBWA president

Rick Bozich, a sports columnist with the Louisville Courier-Journal, has worked at Louisville newspapers for 25 years. A 1975 graduate of Indiana University, Bozich worked for papers in Anderson (Ind.) and Bloomington before joining the Courier-Journal as a copy editor in 1978.

He replaced Dick Fenlon as the sports columnist of the Louisville Times in 1981 and became a sports columnist at the C-J in 1986. He has covered 22 of the last 23 NCAA Final Fours. He missed the 1982 Final Four in New Orleans while awaiting the birth of his son, Alex.

A two-time first-place winner in the Associated Press Sports Editor writing competition, Bozich is also a college basketball correspondent for Sports Illustrated. He has won eight Red Smith Awards for stories about the Kentucky Derby and 17 awards in USBWA competition.

Bozich lives in New Albany, Ind. Besides his son, who will be a senior at Indiana University-Southeast, Bozich also has a daughter, Maggie, who is a sophomore at Indiana University-Bloomington.

President's Column

By RICK
BOZICH

Louisville Courier Journal



That's the way it's been at a number of major-league baseball parks for years. The University of Kentucky has charged for Rupp Arena parking passes for many years. No problem. I don't expect freebies. The makers of anti-cholesterol medication sponsor most press box food. It helps increase their sales. I try to bring my own food – or eat before I go to the game.

All I ask for are an electrical outlet, a spot on press row, a place to work away from the taunts of fans and access to the players and coaches I need to interview for my column.

Of course, the next question is: When are schools going to start charging for press passes?

2. Wireless Internet Access.

One benefit of being the parent of two college students is they're able to teach me computer tricks I'd never learn on my own.

Today, I not only have a wireless router at home, I also have the proper hardware to be wireless with my laptop. In

fact, I used it to get on-line at the Starbucks adjacent to campus at Syracuse when I was there for the Louisville-Syracuse game.

Felt pretty cutting-edge – except for the \$9.99 daily charge.

I've heard – but not seen – that several press facilities around the country are set up for wireless Internet access. I believe several of the schools in Mississippi have wireless capability for hoops. (Please advise if that is so.)

My questions, especially for the sports information folks who are members of our organization, are: Is this going to be the trend? Are more schools installing wireless in press rooms? Will we see it at NCAA Tournament sites?

I hope so. Makes Internet access a snap. Simplifies filing. And eliminates the need to have a telephone installed.

3. Who are your picks for the Final Four?

Had to talk a little hoops, you know. Enjoy the 2003-04 season and march toward San Antonio.

USBWA picks Connecticut in pre-season hoops poll

Connecticut, which returns All-America candidates Emeka Okafor and Ben Gordon among five starters, has been named USBWA's pre-season No. 1 team.

The Huskies, coming off a 23-10 season and Sweet 16 appearance, also picked up highly recruited freshman forward Charlie Villanueva.

Duke, which returns all but Dahntay Jones from a starting lineup that went 27-6, nailed down the No. 2 spot.

Missouri, which counts standouts Arthur Johnson and Rickey Paulding among four returning starters from a 22-11 season, is ranked third.

A young and talented Michigan State squad, which reached the Elite Eight during a 22-13 season, is expected to join the Huskies, Blue Devils and Tigers in the Final Four.

Kansas, Kentucky, Syracuse, North Carolina, Florida and Gonzaga round out the Top 10.

The second 10 consists of Arizona, Wisconsin, Texas, Illinois, Oklahoma, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Notre Dame, Louisville and Saint Joseph's.

Rounding out the Top 25: Wake Forest, Stanford, North Carolina State, Marquette and Oklahoma State.

1. Connecticut
2. Duke
3. Missouri
4. Michigan State
5. Kansas
6. Kentucky
7. Syracuse
8. North Carolina
9. Florida
10. Gonzaga
11. Arizona
12. Wisconsin
13. Texas
14. Illinois
15. Oklahoma
16. Cincinnati
17. Pittsburgh
18. Notre Dame
19. Louisville
20. Saint Joseph's
21. Wake Forest
22. Stanford
23. North Carolina State
24. Marquette
25. Oklahoma State

USBWA looking for a few good award nominees

Welcome to another year with the U. S. Basketball Writers Association!

This marks the association's 48th year since it was formed in 1956 at the urging of then-NCAA Executive Director Walter Byers. Today, the USBWA stands strong with nearly 800 members representing sports journalists here and abroad who cover college basketball. The USBWA was founded to benefit basketball writers and to promote the best interests of the sport.

During the last five decades, the USBWA has promoted basketball and served the interests of its membership through cooperative efforts with the NABC, the Basketball Hall of Fame, the NCAA, other writers' and journalism organizations and journalism educational institutions.

The USBWA has strived to improve press services and facilities not only at the local level but also at NCAA tournaments. Many of the services now being provided for the media at the NCAA Final Four, regionals and first/second round games, are the result of efforts by the USBWA.

An important objective by the USBWA each year is to

Executive Director

BY JOE MITCH
MVC



encourage and recognize outstanding achievements in sportsmanship, play, coaching, sports writing and other fields contributing to the advancement of the college game.

To prepare you for the coming season and get you thinking about people to nominate and others who might be potential candidates, here is a capsule summary of the various awards the USBWA will present this year:

Oscar Robertson Trophy. Goes to the men's player of the year, named in honor of the former Cincinnati All-American and the USBWA's first-ever player of the year.

Henry Iba Trophy. Awarded to the men's coach of the year and named after the legendary Olympic and two-time national championship coach at Oklahoma A&M.

All-American Teams. First and second five-person squads are selected for both men and women. The USBWA also selects a women's player and coach of the year.

Most Courageous Award. Given annually to a person in amateur basketball – whether it's a player, coach, game official or administrator – who demonstrate extraordinary courage in life. Past award winners include coach and TV commentator Jim Valvano for his courageous battle with cancer; coach Nolan Richardson for the racial prejudice he faced as a child and an adult; and the Oklahoma State basketball program and coach Eddie Sutton following the

tragic plane crash that killed 10 members of the team.

Katha Quinn Award. Presented annually in memory of Katha Quinn, a former St. John's sports information director who died following a courageous battle with cancer. The award honors SIDs who have excelled serving the media and others who provide an inspiration to those in sports journalism. Past winners include Roger Valdiserri of Notre Dame; Rick Brewer of North Carolina; Bill Hancock of the NCAA; Skeeter Francis of the ACC; Mark Asher of the Washington Post, who continued working while battling serious health problems; and last year's recipient, Jack Watkins of the Missouri Valley Conference, who with wife Genny cared for a disabled daughter – and eventually saw her pass away – while serving as SID for the conference and media coordinator for several NCAA tournaments.

Hall of Fame. The USBWA honors members – both past and present – who have made significant contributions to the organization and are recognized for their achievements in sports journalism. To be eligible for consideration, an individual must have 20 years of service in the profession. The USBWA has inducted 44 individuals into its Hall of Fame since it was first established in 1988.

Nominations for any of the above awards can be submitted via email to my attention at mitch@mvc.org.

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USBWA Application Form

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

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

Title _____

Newspaper/Publication/ College _____

Address _____

City _____ STATE _____ Zip _____

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There's a time to ask questions, and to expect answers

Roy Williams has returned to Chapel Hill and Ben Howland is in Westwood, and as we take one last backward glance at the hirings at two of college basketball's most storied programs, it brings to mind the issue of how questions should be asked-and answered.

At ease in his Smith Center office, Williams isn't teased as much as you might think about his stunning "I don't give a (starts with s and rhymes with bit) about Carolina right now," remark to CBS reporter Bonnie Bernstein after Kansas lost to Syracuse in the NCAA title game.

(It did, however, throw North Carolina forward Sean May for a loop: "I didn't think it would be coach Williams after what he said about he didn't care about Carolina," May said a few days before the opening of practice.)

"It's almost surprising that hasn't been brought up too much," Williams said. "If I could do that over again, I would say exactly the same thing except I would change that word. I would say darn."

It was fair enough for Bernstein to ask once. It was an obligatory question, with a tacit understanding Williams wouldn't announce he was going to North Carolina on his way to the locker room. The persistence needled Williams.

"She told me off the air she was going to ask me that. I said, 'You don't need to ask that. You can tell those people I am not going to answer that. I haven't thought about that. We're talking about dealing with human beings. That's not very nice.'

"So she asked me, and I gave her a pancake answer. She asked me the second time, and I still dealt with it. But when

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By **ROBYN NORWOOD**
LOS ANGELES TIMES



she asked me the third time, I'd like to say I was in complete control, but I just lost it."

In Howland's case, he got it right after the cat was well out of the bag, acknowledging his talks with UCLA and issuing a statement that said in part,

"I have a tremendous situation at the University of Pittsburgh. We are building something very special here, and it would take an extraordinary set of circumstances for me to leave."

Earlier comments that "I have no plans to leave" and that he planned to fulfill his contract – perhaps technically true until the details were worked out with UCLA – were misleading not only to gullible reporters but to Pittsburgh.

Calling UCLA his "dream job" was most honest of all.

There is a way to ask, and a way to answer, and a certain understanding between reporter and subject when it relates to hirings and firings. Bernstein's doggedness with Williams

rings more of false toughness than a real pursuit of an answer. After all, this was a coaching search, no more.

The kind of persistent questioning we should admire is the work done by papers covering the Baylor program in the wake of Patrick Dennehy's murder.

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram didn't keep asking Bliss if his program was clean but turned elsewhere to uncover misdeeds, ultimately acquiring tapes made by an assistant in which Bliss directed players to depict Dennehy as a drug dealer in an attempt to cover up improper tuition payments.

That's serious stuff.

Pressing Williams to reveal the answer to a question he had hardly begun to wrestle with as he walked off after losing the national title is not. Williams is still a little sheepish that he didn't choose one of his typical dad-gums on national TV, but it's all behind him now. Almost, that is.

"My guess is I'll hear about it in Durham," he said.

It's a new ballgame at Georgia under Felton

Lee Corso once told me about his one universal truth when it comes to replacing coaches.

"The next guy is always-always-going to be the opposite kind of guy than the one they are getting rid of," he said. "It's the only way a school can justify making a change."

Exhibit A of Corso's Universal Truth is on display at Georgia, where Dennis Felton is holding what we in the South call a "Come To Jesus Meeting" with his players.

Felton, who came from Western Kentucky last April, took over a basketball program that had been rocked by scandal and shaken to its very core. He has made it clear that he is going to clean it up. He has also made it clear that some folks might get left behind in the process.

But first, some background. Jim Harrick, who won a national title at UCLA in 1995, had come to Georgia by way of Rhode Island. In a relatively short time, he built the Bulldogs into a consistent winner. The 2003 team, led by Jarvis Hayes, was good enough to go to the Final Four.

Last March, he and the university paid a terrible cost for that success. Former player Tony Cole went public on an ESPN interview, charging Harrick and his son, assistant coach Jim Harrick, Jr., with various NCAA violations ranging from academic fraud to extra benefits. When the smoke had cleared, Georgia's team had been pulled from the post-season by athletics director Vince Dooley. Harrick was eventually forced to resign.

Into this mess stepped Felton, 40, who won 100 games in five seasons at Western Kentucky. In his introductory press conference, Felton promised that Georgia players would be disciplined, both on and off the court. He promised that they would graduate. He promised they would represent the university in the best possible way.

Let's just say that, to date, the transition hasn't been completely smooth. Felton didn't expect it to be.

Harrick was a laid-back guy with very few rules. You do your job and he pretty much left you alone. As a result

his players, for the most part, were fiercely loyal to him.

Welcome to Camp Felton, fellas. Players living off-campus were forced to move back into dormitories. There is a mandatory team breakfast at 7:30. There is no "gaudy" jewelry, as he calls it, and no facial hair below the lip (he has a mustache). Players must wear coats and ties when traveling, and there will be no headphones. If any player breaks a rule, then EVERYBODY gets up for running at 6 a.m.

"You've got to put things in place that are conditional to success for the long haul," said Felton. "I'm talking about work ethic, discipline, and a mature, serious approach to the team-simple things that go into any successful team."

There have already been casualties. Steve Thomas, the team's leading rebounder last season, wouldn't conform. He was quickly shown the gate. Jonas Hayes, brother of Jarvis (who elected to turn pro), is on shaky ground.

"He's kind of shown an apprehension about being inconvenienced," said Felton.

How tough have these opening days with Felton been? Dooley, a Hall of Fame football coach, has been surprised with his discipline, and he was as disciplined as they come.

"I didn't know he was as demanding as he is," said Dooley. "But that's OK. In no way do I disagree with what he is saying."

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By **TONY BARNHART**
Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Dooley and the other Georgia folks had better be patient while Felton tries to reshape the program in his own image. It might be a little painful to watch for a while.

On the first day of practice, Georgia had 10 players, or at least that's how many they had at bed check. Some could still sneak out in the middle of the night rather than make another 7:30 a.m. breakfast. Felton will bring in enough walk-ons to at least hold a scrimmage.

The talent level is thin. Rashad Wright is one of the SEC's best point guards. Chris Daniels (9.8 ppg, 7.1 rpg) has a bad shoulder. Damien Wilkins and Jonas Hayes played well in spots. And that's it. The rest are newcomers.

In short, this will not be a pretty season at Georgia as they butt heads with Florida, Kentucky, and Tennessee in the SEC East. But Felton is in this thing for the long haul. He figures it will take at least two years to reshape the program and to get his kind of players on board. Until then, there will a lot of meetings and lot of laps at 6 a.m.

And here's the good news for the Georgia players. They ain't seen nothing yet.

"We're working the guys hard but the truth of the matter is they'll be working so much harder a year to a year and a half from now," said Felton.

"They'll know how to work then."

Feinstein, Teel dominate Best Writing contest



John Feinstein

John Feinstein of the Washington Post and David Teel of the Newport News Daily Press added to their collection of USBWA writing contest plaques, each picking up a first and third place finish in this year's competition.

Feinstein finished first in column writing for a March 11 piece about the scandals that kept three major colleges – Georgia, Fresno State and St. Bonaventure – from competing in post-season play. Feinstein also finished third in spot news/game stories with a Feb. 27 story about American University's thousand-mile bus trip that was a saga worthy of Patriot League record books.

Teel's winning entry in investigative/enterprise writing, which ran from Feb. 7-10, chronicled his dream road trip to classic college arenas such as Philadelphia's Palestra, Kansas' Allen Fieldhouse, UCLA's Pauley Pavilion and Duke's Cameron Indoor Stadium. Teel also



David Teel

finished third with an April 2 column about how Matt Doherty's resignation capped a months-long saga that turned a sports institution into a public laughingstock.

Other first-place finishers included Grant Wahl of Sports Illustrated in magazine-length features, Phil Chardis of the Journal Inquirer (Manchester, Conn.) in moderate-length features and Randy Holtz of the Rocky Mountain News in spot news/game stories.

Wahl wrote in the Feb. 17 issue of SI about the intricate ballet of the Princeton offense that was hatched in New Jersey decades ago by the irascible genius Pete Carril and is suddenly the height of hoop fashion, winning games and converts from the sixth grade to the NBA.

Chardis won with a Christmas Day entry about a UConn assistant who juggles

his job and single parenthood.

Holtz wrote on April 5 about a Final Four that, with Marquette's Dwyane Wade, Kansas' Nick Collison, Syracuse's Carmelo Anthony and Texas' T.J. Ford parading onto the Superdome, was as good as it gets.

Rick Bozich of the Louisville Courier-Journal was the only writer to place in three categories, with third-place finishes in magazine-length and moderate-length features and a fifth in columns. Bozich placed with a Sept. 8 magazine-length feature on Kenny Davis, the Kentucky Olympian and his teammates who still feel the injustice of the 1972 loss to the Russians, and with a Feb. 27 moderate-length feature on Trey Schwab, a Marquette assistant in need of a transfer. Bozich also finished fifth with a Dec. 22 column about how Kentucky brought out the worst in an Indiana coach – again.

Curry Kirkpatrick of ESPN.com, Dan Wetzel of CBS Sportsline and Adrian Wojnarowski of The Record of Hackensack, N.J., also were multiple winners, each picking up second- and fourth-place finishes.

Kirkpatrick finished second with a column about how UCLA coach Steve Lavin was amused by his own death watch and with a fourth-place finish with a Jan. 20 spot news/game story on how Maryland – bewitched, bothered and bewildered – rallied for a big victory over Duke.

Wetzel finished second with a Jan. 30 magazine-length feature on Bob Knight's journey from a 24-year-old rookie head coach at Army to a Hall of Fame, three-time national champion cultural icon, and with a fourth-place finish for a Jan. 31 column that stated there were plenty of choices if one wanted to pass out blame for the LeBron James debacle.

Wojnarowski had a second-place finish in spot news/game stories for a March 31 piece on the trust Jim Boeheim place in Syracuse freshman Carmelo Anthony and a fourth in magazine-length features for a Sept. 11 story on the legacy of Tim Finnerty, a coach who lost his life in the World Trade Center Tower collapse on Sept. 11, 2002.

Other place-winners in investigative/enterprise reporting included second-place Zack McMillin of the (Memphis) Commercial Appeal; third-place Mike Harrington of the Buffalo News; fourth-place Billy Reed of Basketball Times; and fifth-place Eric Prisbell of the Fresno Bee.

In moderate features, the winners included second-place Bud Withers of the Seattle Times; fourth-place Chris Tomasson of the Rocky Mountain News; and fifth-place Mike Waters of the Post-Standard of Syracuse, N.Y..

Also, John Akers of Basketball Times finished fifth in magazine-length features, and Steve Henson of the Los Angeles Times was fifth in spot news/game stories..

Enterprise/Investigative

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|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. David Teel | Newport Daily News | "Basketball Pilgrimage" |
| 2. Zack McMillin | Commercial Appeal | "Memphis' '73 title game" |
| 3. Mike Harrington | Buffalo News | "St. Bonaventure's demise" |
| 4. Billy Reed | Basketball Times | "The 800 Club" |
| 5. Eric Prisbell | Fresno Bee | "Bulldog academic fraud alleged" |

Columns

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|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. John Feinstein | Washington Post | "A March Into Madness" |
| 2. Curry Kirkpatrick | ESPN.com | "Steve Lavin" |
| 3. David Teel | Newport Daily News | "Doherty's Exit Cause for Pity" |
| 4. Dan Wetzel | CBS Sportsline | "LeBron James debacle" |
| 5. Rick Bozich | Louisville Courier-Journal | "Game soiled by Mike Davis" |

Magazine length feature

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Grant Wahl | Sports Illustrated | "Princeton offense" |
| 2. Dan Wetzel | CBS Sportsline | "Knight's journey to 800 wins" |
| 3. Rick Bozich | Louisville Courier-Journal | "Kenny Davis and '72 Olympians" |
| 4. Adrian Wojnarowski | Record (Hackensack, N.J.) | "Touched by an Angel" |
| 5. John Akers | Basketball Times | "Uniontown, Ala." |

Moderate length feature

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|-------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Phil Chardis | Journal Inquirer | "Bachelor Father" |
| 2. Bud Withers | Seattle Times | "Three Pointers" |
| 3. Rick Bozich | Louisville Courier-Journal | "Marquette's inspiration on bench" |
| 4. Chris Tomasson | Rocky Mountain News | "Sky-high schooler" |
| 5. Mike Waters | Post-Standard (Syracuse) | "Out of Africa" |

Game story/Spot news

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Randy Holtz | Rocky Mountain News | "Brightest Stars on Display" |
| 2. Adrian Wojnarowski | Record (Hackensack, N.J.) | "Old coach, young star" |
| 3. John Feinstein | Washington Post | "American U's long, strange trip" |
| 4. Curry Kirkpatrick | ESPN.com | "Duke brings out Maryland's best" |
| 5. Steve Henson | Los Angeles Times | "He'll Take Fall for Bruin Decline" |