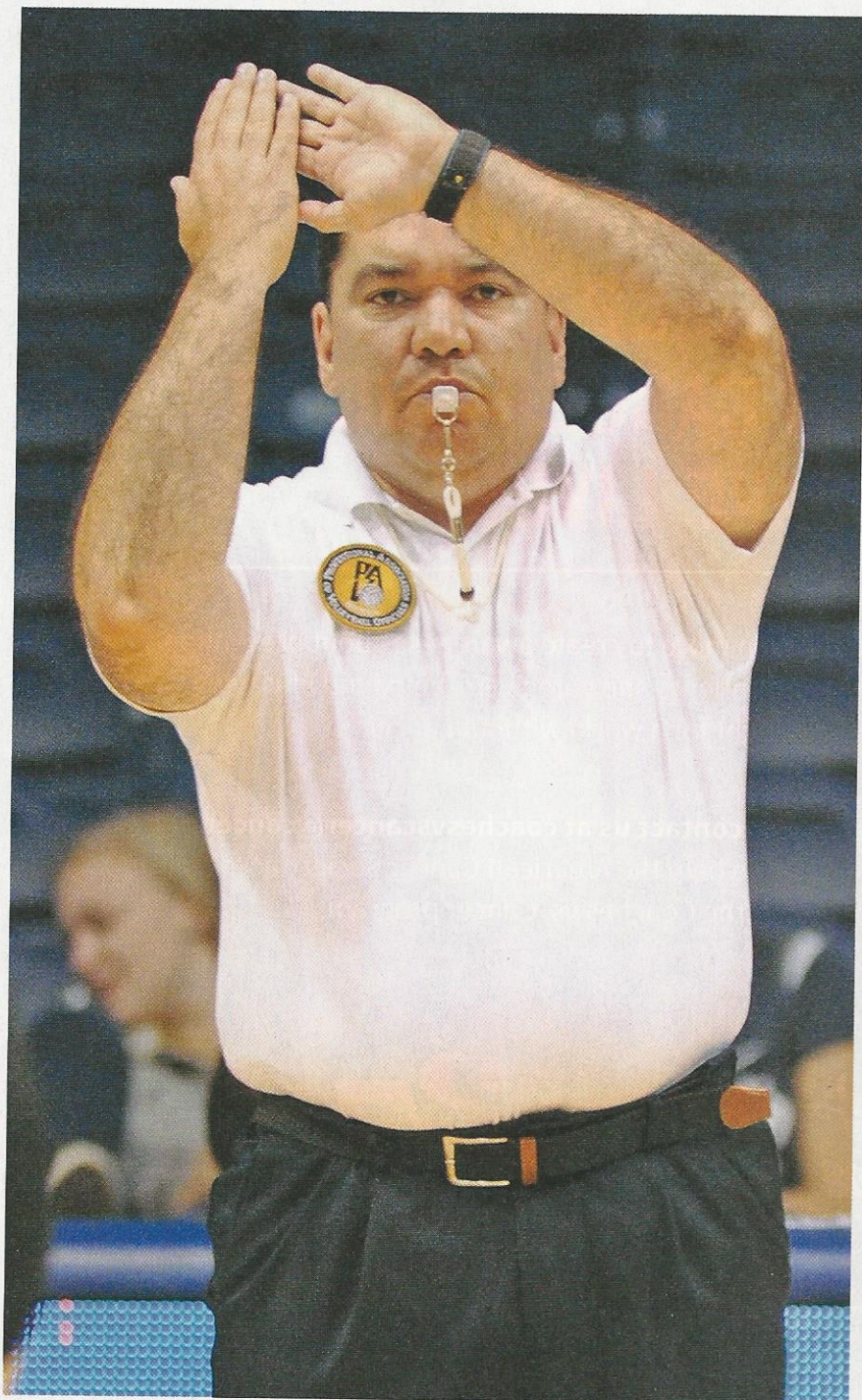


ET TU, R2?

Second Referees Need Training, Too



Second referee Felix Madera, Champaign, Ill., shows confidence signaling his ruling. Developing good second referees is crucial to growing the sport and ensuring well officiated matches.

By Patsy Burke

Very early in my officiating career, I received a call to officiate a local collegiate match. My partner was someone I had not worked with previously. While I thought I was very well trained, nothing had prepared me for what I call my worst nightmare as an official. It almost made me give up officiating altogether.

The things that I remember most about that match are insignificant when I think about them today. However, I'm sure I will never forget how awful I felt after the match and especially after the postmatch conference. I particularly will never forget the last summons of the first referee, when I was told to tell the home coach, "If she doesn't take control of the fans, I am going to clear the gym and only the players and coaches will be left." And later the coach saying that the first referee "will never officiate a match at this college again!"

It was a thoroughly unpleasant experience, one for which I felt some of the responsibility — without really knowing why.

Granted, that match happened many years ago, but it helps set the stage for this article, raising the question about our training of officials today. There are many articles and training videos that emphasize the first referee regarding control of the match. We stress the first referee's responsibility for ball handling consistency, professionalism and much more. However, what about the referee across the court? Are we adequately preparing our second referees to handle that position? Are they effectively trained to deal with not just the routine duties, but the unexpected?

Past second referee training has focused on watching the net

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