

## Introduction

From 1976-1980 I had the distinct pleasure of serving as a basketball manager for Coach Bob Knight at Indiana University. We were fortunate to win the NIT Championship in 1979 and Big Ten Championship in 1980; unfortunately for me it was right between the NCAA National Championships in 1976 and 1981. I was also fortunate to have tremendous classmates on the team including Michael Woodson, Glen Grunwald and Butch Carter, and fellow manager classmates Pete Schroeder, Chris Stone and John Levenda. We shared a great four years together and I will cherish those memories forever.

In the summer of 2008, newly appointed Indiana University Basketball Coach Tom Crean, with support from Cook and Company, hosted a reunion of ALL former IU Basketball players, coaches, managers and staff. It was a fabulous gathering at West Baden, Indiana that saw numerous generations of the Indiana University Basketball family come together to re-establish the foundation of Indiana Basketball. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet many of the men that built the tradition of Indiana Basketball.

Of course, it was great to see so many of the players from my years (1976-1980) at Indiana as a basketball manager: Kent Benson, Wayne Radford, Chuck Franz and more. But what made the event invigorating was meeting not only the managers with whom I worked at Indiana, but many of those who held that same position before and after my time. As we all got acquainted, it was fun to recall the good times we had, and how similar some of the stories were for those of us who worked behind the scenes at Assembly Hall with and for Coach Knight.

One thing was evident as I listened to the stories being told, collectively, we were a successful group of men. Many of us had gone on to become educators and coaches, while others were doing well in business, law and

medicine. Across the board we were all successful in our chosen field, and we all looked back on our experiences working for Coach Knight as formative and fun. I was delighted to hear the stories of the lessons we all seemed to have learned from Coach, and how those lessons were still in practice for all of us today.

During Coach Knight's career at Indiana more than 100 young college students served on his staff as managers. The common perception of a basketball manager is that of a "water boy," but our experience was one of responsibility and contribution to our collective success as a team. Our staff worked on the court during drills, put players through shooting drills before and after practice, blew the whistle as referees during scrimmages, managed road trips, filmed practice, edited game film into highlight reels for Coach Knight, and much, much more. And, like the players, we listened, intently, when "the man" spoke; like the players, we carried notebooks and made notes; like the players, we "water boys" learned to compete like elite basketball champions.

While many books have been written about Coach Knight, one story that has not been told is ours, about the managers who worked behind the scenes countless hours at Assembly Hall and beyond, wanting to make our contribution to the success of Indiana Basketball. We had a unique vantage point. We were not recruited to fill a spot on the roster, but we literally had the seat directly behind Coach at home games hearing what the best mind in the game was saying, spent time in the basketball office, in the coaches locker room, escorted visiting teams and game officials, and spent considerable time on the road transporting dignitaries from the sports world to and from Bloomington. From our unique position, we saw and participated in many of the innovations Coach developed to find a new edge in competition, while always abiding by the rules of the game almost religiously faithful to its core values.

Throughout our experiences, enriched by all that proximity, we learned many lessons that we all call upon throughout our personal and professional lives as adults. We are productive citizens. Our graduation rate is as high as the players' (leading all of college basketball). Our contribution to our

families and communities is considerable. This book has been written to share with Coach Knight, and others who may read it, how remarkable we found the education we absorbed behind those curtains and gates that surrounded the court at Assembly Hall. Coach Knight delegated a great deal of responsibility to his managerial staff, and held us to the same high performance standards he set for himself and the team.

This book is organized by the decades that Coach Knight was at Indiana. At the start of each decade is a feature essay written by a member of the IU Basketball community followed by individual essays written by the managers on Coach Knight's staff. Included in each section are memories and favorite moments we experienced, a few pictures also included put faces to the names in the book. The manager essays, short to long, were written with limited guidance to ensure each person told his story his way.

Throughout this book you will find certain phrases repeated and themes emerge as you read this history of Indiana Basketball. It is apparent, that from his first practice at Indiana to his last, Coach Knight set high expectations, and worked hard to achieve them. As our title suggests, "prepare to win" was a mantra for all of us in the basketball program because Coach taught us that while everyone wants to win, it is those who have the will to prepare to win that are victorious. And we were among the elite in preparation in college basketball.

The 1971–2000 Indiana Basketball managers want to collectively thank Coach Knight and Indiana University for our taste of true uniqueness as participants in and beneficiaries of the great sports tradition that is Indiana Basketball.

**Dave Skibinski**  
Altadena, California

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## Foreword by Bob Knight

Our managers were extremely intelligent and hardworking kids during the time I coached. We were very fortunate to have such great managers. Their dedication toward the various demanding and time-consuming jobs, in addition to their classroom work, was actually an inspiration to our players to work as hard as the managers did. We had the same high expectations of our managers as we did of our players, which helped them learn valuable lessons after basketball for the game of life. They were able to translate those lessons into personal and professional success. Many of them went on to coaching at various levels from junior high school to the NBA.

I am equally proud of the success of our managers away from basketball. They have gone on to be successful in their adult lives as doctors, lawyers, educators, public servants, corporate executives and entrepreneurs. They became a part of our program because of their love of basketball and each manager, in his own way, made a tremendous contribution to the success of our teams. I always felt that our managerial staff was a very, very important part of what we did and I am extremely proud of all they have accomplished since graduating.

**Bob Knight**

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## Bob Hammel

Bob Hammel is a legend among sports journalists, and the eyes and ears of Indiana University Sports fans for three decades. He was the Sports Editor and Columnist of the *Bloomington Herald-Times* from 1966-1996. Prior to covering the Hoosiers, he was with newspapers in Huntington, Fort Wayne, Kokomo and Indianapolis. In May of 1995, he received the highest honor given to a basketball writer, the Curt Gowdy Award, from the Naismith Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass. Has been selected the top sportswriter in Indiana 15 times by the National Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association. He is a member of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame and the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame. He has written eight books about Hoosier basketball, including *Beyond the Brink with Indiana* (IUP, 1987) and *A Banner Year* (IUP, 1993); he was also the editor of the *Bob Hammel Indiana Basketball Magazine*. With Bob Knight, he co-authored *Knight: My Story, and The Power of Negative Thinking*.

## The Worker Bees with Notepads ... and Memories

There's a good chance you didn't know that the all-time record for consecutive wins at the start of an NBA coach's career is 13, and it's held by a man whose preparation to be a coach came under Bob Knight at Indiana University.

Not as a player under Bob Knight. Lawrence Frank, who coached the New Jersey Nets to that winning streak—at the time a record for a beginning coach or manager in any American major league sport—was a four-year manager in Knight's Indiana program.

Knight's managers, in his 29-year tenure at Indiana that raised basketball excellence and success to a level unmatched in Big Ten history, comprised a fraternity unlike any other on campus, but no less bonded than anything Greek. There were from 12 to 18 for every team, moving like the players up a stairway of responsibility and expectations during their coinciding academic passage through IU. Senior Manager was the pinnacle, of authority and of responsibility.

What that experience led to in life achievements is the remarkable

consistency of this voluntary “we-should-write-a-book” project. The roles they played were similar, so many of their stories are. But very many of them, too, break off into adventures that left lasting (1) impressions, (2) scars, (3) learning experiences, or a combination of same, or something quite special and unique to a certain few, and to all.

They are memories, and this is a book of them. I read and I picture an IU practice, any of the hundreds I saw over those years: Bob Knight’s classroom, where there are no distractions, where the player concentration is intense, and where a dozen or up young men of varied athletic backgrounds themselves play their own vital roles on-court and off, as inconspicuously—oh, believe me, hopefully, prayerfully inconspicuously—but as efficiently as possible. You’ll read of one’s adventure wearing a puka shell necklace at a game—once, never again. And another’s clear memory of time spent in the 2 a.m. area in a frigid and dark airport with the team, and The Coach, waiting on a mis-sent bus. And the quick thinking in a dark and vacant coach’s office at Ohio State that averted an eight-hour waste. And the one among them who actually suited up and played in 16 games, even scored on a back-door cut that brought a clap—a singular but unbelievably pleasing clap—from The Coach. And ... oh, just read.

Read these gems from men who now are doctors and lawyers and CEOs, and—in highly impressive numbers—NBA or college or high school coaches, benefiting still from those notepads they kept in their pockets while working practices, taking down notes when they could on the singularly effective coaching techniques and tactical thoughts of, in the eyes of many, the best teacher they had on campus.

Brothers all, these Special Fraternity members. Are there Latin symbols for Tutored, Proud and Grateful? With a sprinkle of wit that factors in the fun element of an education like none other.

**Bob Hammel, Basketball Writer**

*Bloomington Herald-Times*

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