

# Open locker rooms are good for coaching legends

Coaching is very often a copycat business.

A coach wins a Super Bowl with a 3-4 defense, every coach in the NFL is switching to a 3-4 defense the following year.

A baseball manager discovers that a shift is effective, and the next season every team in the majors has three players on the right side of the infield.

In college basketball, Mike Krzyzewski, Roy Williams, Tom Izzo and Jim Boeheim have combined for

10 national championships. Krzyzewski, Boeheim and Williams rank one, two and three for career wins among active coaches. All four are in the Hall of Fame.

And each opens up his locker room to the media after games.

So my question is: Why don't more coaches copy the practices of these four coaching legends?

Think about it. If you're looking for commonality between Coach K, Roy, Boeheim and Izzo, there isn't much there. Krzyzewski believes in man-to-man, slap-the-floor defense. Boeheim is synonymous with the 2-3 zone. Williams has an "aw, shucks" persona. Izzo is the personification of intensity.

## Mike Waters Syracuse Post-Standard President



The one thing they all share is an open locker room.

And outside of those four, you'd be hard-pressed to find more than one or two open locker rooms in any major conference in the country.

As a writer who covers Boeheim's Syracuse teams, I have first-hand knowledge of how an open locker room works and I'm here to tell you the open locker room is a good thing.

A reminder that the USBWA membership isn't just a collection of sport writers. A large number of our members are sports information directors. As such, this isn't meant as a bitch session among writers. The writers already agree with me.

This column is directed toward those in our membership who might have a coach's ear and can relay a few thoughts. I want you to think about the open locker room not for how it can help a writer on deadline, but how it can help you and your coach develop a better team atmosphere and even help a team do better in the post-season.

End the star system: A closed locker room usually means that one or two players are brought into an interview room. That promotes a star system.

Only the players who had the best game get interviewed. What about the reserve who came in and provided key minutes, but didn't score 18 points? A good reporter wants to talk to that player, too.

An open locker room gives the reporter an opportunity to go around and talk to more players. The reporter can observe interactions between players or go back and ask a follow-up.

A year ago, I happened upon a story about a walk-on whose family had to vacate their home in California due to the wildfires after a brief post-game conversation with the player.

And I've found that when a reporter talks to a role

*CONTINUED on Page 2*

# First O'Connell Award goes to Terry Hutchens

By Bill Benner

When I first encountered him in the mid-'80s, Terry Hutchens was gangly (at least when we first met), goofy (always) but he also was from California, and that was enough for this native Hoosier to approach him with a measure of caution.

I first became aware of Hutch when he landed a job at the Fort Wayne News Sentinel.

But not long thereafter, he was hired by the "B Team," which was the afternoon Indianapolis News. I, of course, labored for the self-proclaimed A Team, the morning Indianapolis Star, and back then – though our paychecks were all signed by the Pulliam family – we enjoyed a friendly rivalry. So while we could enjoy a pre-game press feed and possibly a post-game brew together, we wanted to beat them on stories, and they wanted to beat us.

In short, the tall, goofy B-teamer Terry Hutchens from California would have to win us over.

My, did he ever.

"Hutch" to everyone, he made his way up through the sports writing ranks like you're supposed to, from



Terry Hutchens

high school to amateur sports and finally to his big break, assigned by The News to the Colts in 1991.

Six years later, The News went the way of many afternoon papers, the staffs merged and Terry took over the prestigious (basketball in particular) and challenging (hello, Bob Knight) Indiana University beat.

I was The Star's columnist at the time. Hutch, my former friendly rival, was now my colleague, so now I had to endure – on a regular basis – road trips, press box adjoining seats and most of all, Hutch's non-stop efforts to poke fun, make fun, wise crack and wise ass.

As both a practical and impractical joker, he was really, really good at it. And no one – no one – could escape.

He always called me "Billy" and he was always trying to set me up, offering up some preposterous take with such I-swear-it's-true honesty that eventually I'd fall for the ruse ... and then he'd let me know much to his delight and laughter that he'd won another one.

"Billy, got you again."

Damn you, Hutch.

But when he wasn't joking, he was working. Hutch wrote and reported his butt off.

And he was good: Indiana's sportswriter of the year five times.

His dedication to the craft extended to books. For a guy like me who labored to extend an essay beyond the column length of 800 words or so, I marveled at Hutch's ability as the full-fledged author of no fewer than 11 books. They ranged from light-hearted children's tomes to a heart-wrenching capture of the life and career of Indiana football coach Terry Hooppner, who succumbed to brain cancer just when it seemed he'd turned around the long-struggling IU football program.

Hutch also shared his journalistic talents with young wanna-be scribes, serving as an adjunct sports journalism professor at the IU School of Journalism at IUPUI in Indianapolis.

After I left The Star in 2001, our journalistic interactions diminished.

Yet I had the good fortune to keep up with his writings because, of course, everyone read Hutch's work in The Star and later for Scout.com.

But I also kept contact personally. Hutch and I both attended the same Catholic church in suburban

*CONTINUED on Page 2*

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# Waters

*CONTINUED from Page 1*

player, a substitute or even a walk-on, his teammates are happy.

**Responsibility:** A few years ago, Syracuse suffered a tough loss on the road. When the media was let into the locker room after the game, Jonny Flynn, the starting point guard, was nowhere to be found.

When Boeheim heard that Flynn was not at his locker, he found the guard hiding out in the shower area. Boeheim told Flynn that all of his teammates were talking to the media and he should be, too.

I believe it taught Flynn a lesson in responsibility and it also showed that no player was entitled to special treatment. Flynn wound up becoming a team leader.

**Maturation:** An open locker after a loss is an interesting place. You see which players know how to handle adversity. They're at their lockers, fielding questions.

In a closed locker room, a younger player who didn't get into the game doesn't see that happening. But in an open locker room, the freshman can watch how a senior comports himself in front of the media after a loss. It's observational learning and, believe

me, I've seen many a younger player begin to take on the habits of a team veteran.

**Post-season preparation:** In the NCAA tournament, as well as most conference tournaments, locker rooms are required to be open to the media.

Short of laying down black carpet and putting up blue curtains, coaches will do anything to prepare their teams for NCAA tournament play.

Is it not a possibility that Krzyzewski, Williams, Boeheim and Izzo are getting their players accustomed to the post-season environment by opening up their locker rooms during the season?

There are many more reasons in favor of an open locker room.

But most of those are from the writers' point of view. Better interviews. Better stories. Better relationships.

But this was an attempt to get SIDs and coaches thinking about their post-game practices in a different way.

Oh, I almost forgot. Rick Pitino also had an open locker room policy. Seven Final Fours. Two national titles.

# Hutchens

*CONTINUED from Page 1*

Indianapolis, where he was a faithful (pun intended) baritone presence in the 11 a.m. choir.

Yep, Hutch could sing, too, both in the choir and in the annual nativity enactment and in church plays. And his voice was a forum for his strong faith, along with his dedication as a coach to the church's CYO program.

Hutch had a huge heart. Presented a \$5,000 check for winning a writing contest sponsored by the Big Ten Network, Hutch didn't splurge it on himself. Instead, he in turn presented it to the local ALS Association in memory of his father, who died of ALS.

On another occasion, a youngster showed up at one of his book signings. Hutch struck up a conversation with the lad and then said, how'd you like to be a character in my next book? And sure enough, in his next children's book, there was a character based on the boy.

Former IU basketball player Todd Leary knew

first-hand of Hutch's compassion. Leary went from doing color commentary on the IU radio network to being sentenced to a one-year prison term for misappropriation of funds. Hutch vowed to be with Leary through his darkest days and religiously visited Leary every two weeks until his release. He didn't do it for a story. He did it to be a friend.

Finally, Hutch was an amazing husband to his beloved Susan and a proud father to sons Kevin and Bryan.

We lost him suddenly, tragically last December. The tributes poured in. The church was filled for his service. The reception following the funeral Mass was filled with person after person taking the stage to recount story after story about Hutch's skills, wit, compassion, heart, service.

That he is the recipient of the USBWA's Jim O'Connell Award for Excellence in Beat Reporting is a tribute to both Terry and Oc.

And all of us Hoosiers sure miss that gangly, goofy, and most notably, EX-Californian.

# Greenberg inducted into seventh Hall of Fame

Mel Greenberg was honored with his induction into his seventh hall of fame, this time by his alma mater with a Temple University Lew Klein Alumni in the Media Hall of Fame award, for his pioneering work in women's basketball coverage. Greenberg entered the USBWA's Hall of Fame in 2002.

Several past USBWA board members changed jobs. Jeff Greer, Louisville beat writer for the Courier-Journal and The Athletic the past six years, is taking a break from college hoops this season to travel through Europe for the year with his wife and freelance while there. Former Burlington Hawk Eye sports editor John Bohnenkamp will run Sports Illustrated's Iowa Hawkeye Maven and serve as the sports-writing coach for the University of Iowa student newspaper, the Daily Iowan. Matt Vautour, the UMass beat writer for 20 years at the Daily Hampshire Gazette, was

named a sports columnist for MassLive in May. After covering Florida for 15 years at the Gainesville Sun, Kevin Brockway will cover Indiana and Purdue for CNHI, which serves 11 state-wide newspapers within Indiana.

Andy Staples was one of several college writers to leave Sports Illustrated, to cover college football at The Athletic. Tim Layden resigned after 25 years as a staff writer at SI and has signed an agreement to work for NBC Sports Group. Dan Greene and Joan Niesen were among more than 40 employees to lose their jobs in layoffs there in October. Greene had worked there for nine years and Niesen for six.

Sam Blum moved from the Auburn beat at AL.com to cover SMU football and basketball at the Dallas Morning News.

## Lodge Notes

# Yahoo team a back-to-back best-writing contest winner

Yahoo's investigative team of Pete Thamel, Pat Forde and Dan Wetzel was a first-place winner for the second year in row in the USBWA's best-writing contest.

Luke DeCock of the Raleigh News & Observer and Chris Heady of the Omaha World-Herald were first-place winners and among six contestants to place in two categories. Dan Greene of Sports Illustrated and David Woods of the Indianapolis Star also were first-place winners.

Thamel, Forde and Wetzel continued to lead the way in investigative/enterprise category for a series of stories about the FBI's investigation in college basketball, and in particular one that included a "strong-ass" lead:

"A 2017 phone conversation intercepted by the FBI between LSU coach Will Wade and basketball middleman Christian Dawkins features Wade speaking freely about a 'strong-ass offer' he made in the recruitment of a prospect, Yahoo Sports has learned."

DeCock took fourth place for moderate-length features and won in spot news/game coverage for a story about Zion Williamson's damaged sneaker that spoke volumes about college basketball's relationship with shoe companies. DeCock wrote:

"A delegation from Nike flew in Thursday evening to meet with Duke officials, underscoring how the role Zion Williamson's shoe failure played in his knee injury has become a billion-dollar concern."

Heady took fourth in spot news/game coverage and first in column writing for his memories of his first season as Nebraska's beat writer. Heady recalled when Huskers coach Tim Miles asked him if his breath smelled. He wrote:

"That is what covering this Nebraska basketball season was like. It made no sense. It entertained, it confused, it confounded, challenged, concerned and compelled."

Greene won the magazine-length features category by also writing about shoes – those worn by Memphis coach Penny Hardaway.

"The shoe is cool," Greene wrote. "This, since being hired as the coach of Memphis in March, has been a big part of Hardaway's job: being cool. Or, more specifically, making Memphis basketball cool, in a way it hasn't been for some time."

Woods won the moderate-length features category for his story on the life-and-death struggle faced by Butler's Sean McDermott. Woods wrote:

"Sean McDermott wanted to live. Not just live. Live like he once did. Five years later, he is doing so. It has taken that long to recover from a staph infection that left him unable to walk, that could have killed him."

Other multiple winners included John Feinstein of the Washington Post (second in spot news/game coverage; third in moderate-length features); Patrick Borzi of the New York Times (second in moderate-length features; fourth in column writing); John Akers of Basketball Times (third in enterprise/investigative writing; fifth in column writing); and freelancer Mitchell Northam (fourth in magazine-length features; fifth in spot news/game coverage).

## Best-Writing Contest

### Moderate Length feature

1. David Woods, Indianapolis Star. Five years after a staph infection threatened his life, Butler's Seth McDermott continues his long road back with his mother, who faced her own challenge.
2. Patrick Borzi, New York Times. Marquette's Markus Howard changes the picture of mental health counseling.
3. John Feinstein, Washington Post. Sixteen years after he retired, Jim Phelan is 90 and still living in rural MD and the Basketball Hall of Fame still hasn't come calling.
4. Luke DeCock, Raleigh News & Observer. Inside the Zion Williamson tornado.
5. Mike DeCourcy, The Sporting News. Duke owes Zion Williamson. Williamson also owes Duke.



Woods

### Column Writing

1. Chris Heady, Omaha World-Herald. "Memories from a Nebraska basketball writer's first season on the job."
2. Paul Woody, Richmond Times-Dispatch. Virginia's Kyle Guy made three free throws, under unbelievable pressure, to send his team to the national title game.
3. Patrick Borzi, New York Times. "Is it still OK for coaches to scream at kids?" When Michigan State coach Tom Izzo went after one of his players publically, it became a national conversation.
4. David Teel, Newport News Daily Press. Virginia's run to the national championship was the direct opposite of chill. Their journey was one of terror, chest pains and considerable bourbon consumption.
5. John Akers, Basketball Times. His ratings performance index lasted four decades, and came under waves of criticism. Jim Van Valkenburg only intended to get the discussion started.



Heady

### Spot News/Game Coverage

1. Luke DeCock, Raleigh News & Observer. "If the shoe splits, repair it." Zion Williamson's sneaker came apart. And it became an event that revealed how money, basketball, colleges and sneakers are all tied together.
2. John Feinstein, Washington Post. "How extraordinary was Virginia's title run?"
3. Jesse Newell, Kansas City Star. Kansas' streak of 14-straight Big 12 championships came to an end in an unlikely way.
4. Chris Heady, Omaha World-Herald. Nebraska hits rock bottom.
5. Mitchell Northam, NCAA.com. Freshman Nalyssa Smith comes off the bench to help Baylor win the championship.



DeCock



Greene



Forde



Thamel



Wetzel

### Magazine length

1. Dan Greene, Sports Illustrated. "It had to be Penny." Penny Hardaway became the head coach at University of Memphis and the fan base went wild. What happens next? The story of Hardaway and Memphis is complicated. This story unties the knot.
2. Mike Waters, Syracuse Post-Standard. "Syracuse's Howard Washington reveals a chilling story. The writer is here, but makes the wise choice to remain offstage.
3. Rob Dauster, NBC Sports. "It's OK to not be OK." The under-reported subject of mental wellness in college basketball.
4. Mitchell Northam, SB Nation/Mid-Major Madness. "Campbell is one of the most fun shows..." What's happening at Campbell, where the Camels, led by Chris Clemons, are fun to watch.
5. Ryan McGee, ESPN.com. "Requiem for the Old School ACC tournament." A warm look back to the days when classes were stopped to watch the ACC tournament.

### Enterprise/investigative

1. Pete Thamel, Pat Forde and Dan Wetzel, Yahoo Sports. "Wiretap reveals LSU coach Will Wade discussed recruiting offer with hoops scandal middleman." Selections from extensive coverage of the federal investigations that impacted college athletics.
2. Chris Tomasson, St. Paul Pioneer-Press. "View from Final Four's worst seats." An interesting look at the fans who choose the nosebleed seats.
3. John Akers, Basketball Times. "A look at the 1968-69 season." Was the season as special as we remember?
4. Andrea Adelson, ESPN.com. "From coaching women to coaching men." A women's coach makes the rare move to the men's game.
5. Steve Wiseman, Raleigh News & Observer. "Marvin Bagley III zigzagged his way to Duke..." A look at the complex relationships that can cloud the college game.

## Nominations being taken for USBWA awards

Nominations are being accepted through Nov. 15 for the following USBWA awards to be presented next April.

**HALL OF FAME.** Established in 1988, the USBWA honors past and current members for their contributions to the organization and for their achievements in sports journalism. To be eligible, an individual must have a minimum of 20 years experience as a sports writer or college athletics administrator dealing with basketball. Send nominations to USBWA Executive Director Malcolm Moran at malcolm@usbwa.com.

**KATHA QUINN AND MARY JO HAVER-**

**BECK.** Both awards recognize individuals in men's and women's basketball for their service to the media and for the inspiration they provide to those in the sports journalism profession. The awards are presented in honor of two former sports information directors who have passed away -- Quinn (St. John's) and Haverbeck (Penn State). Send nominations for the Quinn Award in men's basketball to past president Malcolm Moran at malcolm@usbwa.com and Shannon Ryan, USBWA second vice president, at sryan@chicagotribune.com, and to Mel Greenberg at poll@att.net for the Haverbeck Award in women's basketball.

**MOST COURAGEOUS.** The USBWA honors a player, coach, official or administrator who demonstrates extraordinary courage while facing adversity in life. First presented in 1978, it is the USBWA's oldest award. Send men's nominations to Luke DeCock, USBWA third vice president, at ldecock@newsobserver.com, and women's nominations to Greenberg.

**RISING STAR.** The USBWA honors a member who is under 30 and shows outstanding promise as a journalist covering college basketball. Send nominations to past president John Akers at johna19081@gmail.com.

# McKillop is worthy Dean Smith Award winner

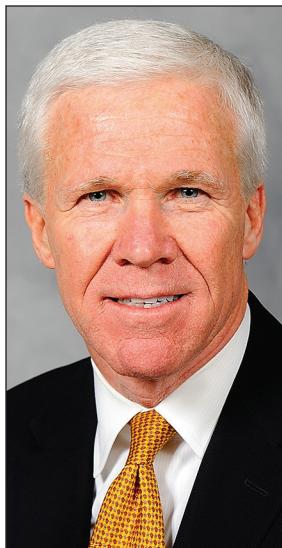
While nearly every coach at least preaches the importance of academics, none has backed up that talk quite like the latest winner of the USBWA's Dean Smith Award.

Bob McKillop proved that two summers ago, when Davidson was eligible to take its quadrennial foreign tour and get in those 10 extra practices that every coach craves. McKillop instead took the Wildcats on a 48-hour tour of the Auschwitz/Birkenau concentration camp in Poland, with a Holocaust survivor as their guide, never touching a basketball during the entire trip.

That certainly wasn't a one-time thing for McKillop, entering his 31st season as Davidson's head coach. Every one of his seniors at Davidson has graduated. His teams have had a perfect Academic Progress Rate of 1,000 each year since the NCAA began tracking it in 2003.

"He's always been seen as a hidden gem," said Davidson athletic director Chris Clunie, a former walk-on who played for McKillop from 2002-05. "This award speaks to a long period of success and doing things the right way."

McKillop said he was humbled to be joining a list of past winners that includes John Thompson, Tom Izzo, Don Donoher and Fran Dunphy. The Dean Smith Award honors an individual in college basketball who embodies the spirit and values of Coach Smith, the long-time Hall of Fame coach at North Carolina.



*Bob McKillop*

"This is special because there's tremendous history in it," McKillop said. "The people who have won it are icons in the world of basketball. And the people who have been long-term members of the (USBWA) are some of the most outstanding journalists in this country. We see how journalism is changing, but those guys are the bedrock, the foundation of what is truly great journalism."

Youngsters might be surprised to learn that Davidson enjoyed basketball success before the arrival of future two-time NBA MVP Steph Curry. McKillop's teams won eight Southern Conference division or tournament titles before Curry's arrival, from 1996-2006. McKillop's 230 SoCon victories are the most of any coach in the history of the nation's oldest conference.

Curry's presence, of course, lifted the Wildcats to another level, coming within a 3-pointer of beating Kansas and reaching the 2008 Final Four that was won by the Jayhawks.

Seven seasons later, Davidson made the move from the SoCon to the Atlantic 10 Conference, a leap matched in recent seasons only by Butler's two-part move from the Horizon League to the A-10 to the Big East Conference.

The Wildcats were picked to finish 12th among 14 teams in that first 2014-15 season, seemingly for good reason. Instead, they finished first.

McKillop has built a global program at Davidson, recruiting 41 players from 23 countries, including Iceland native and returning A-10 player of the year Jon Axel Gudmundsson. The current roster includes six players from outside the United States.

"There's no more of a diverse group of guys than at Davidson," McKillop said at the team's media day. "This country could learn something from Davidson basketball."

Beyond Curry, Davidson's many successful basketball alums include Bryant Barr, president of Curry's SC30 Inc.; Jouni Eho, mayor of the Finnish town of Pyhtää; Andrew Lovedale, founder of the non-profit organization Access to Success; and Clunie, who at 35 among the nation's youngest ADs.

"We want to be examples of what can be good in this world," McKillop has said. "I'm convinced that we can change the world. I'm absolutely convinced."

McKillop lives right across the street from the Wildcats' Belk Arena, and it is his tradition to walk to and from each of Davidson's home games. He goes to work each day at the \$13.3 million Harry L. Vance Athletic Center, which opened in 2015.

"I've seen the growth," McKillop said. "I walk into the building each day and say, 'My goodness.'"

McKillop survived some lean years – going 4-24, 10-19 and 11-17 in his first three seasons at Davidson – while building a culture and a program.

"What I think is really neat about Bob: His dream job was at Davidson," said Tennessee coach Rick Barnes, McKillop's close friend. "He truly fell in love with the North Carolina, Davidson area, and that's where he wanted to be."

## Catchings lends name to freshman award

By Mel Greenberg

Approached on WNBA opening night last spring after Indiana edged New York on the road in the final seconds, visiting Fever executive Tamika Catchings was asked how she would feel about her name becoming associated with the annual USBWA women's freshman of the year award.

The former Tennessee star was at the top of the list at the time as one of several being considered by the women's side to submit to the WNBA board for approval to add to the existing list of honors already accorded to some of the sport's greats.

"Oh, wow," she replied. "That would really be cool."

The board in its first teleconference meeting of the year easily agreed and earlier this month in Birmingham, Ala., at Southeastern Conference media day, Catchings, who is Indiana's vice president of basketball of operations, was formally announced with her name becoming part of the award.

"You don't go into the game to gather awards," said Catchings, a daughter of former NBA star Harvey Catchings. "You go into the game to leave a presence."

In the 1997-98 season when Catchings was a member of the famed Fab Five Lady Volunteers newcomers that teamed with then-junior Chamique Holdsclaw to go unbeaten at 39-0 and lead Tennes-



*Tamika Catchings*

see to a third-straight NCAA title, she was the consensus national freshman of the year, averaging 18.2 points per game.

That season, she was named to the All-Final Four team in Kansas City after setting program records for most points with 711, including a 35-point game against DePaul.

Catchings went on to become a three-time USBWA All-American and the association's national player of the year as a junior in the 1999-2000 season. She finished as a senior in 2001 with 2,133 career points and 1,004 career rebounds.

Recruited by the legendary Pat Summitt, Catchings led Tennessee to dominate the Southeastern Conference, sweeping all four potential titles while

compiling a 134-10 record overall, including a 54-2 mark in conference competition.

Several years ago, when Catchings was finishing an outstanding 15-year pro career with Indiana in the WNBA, an official at the time involved with event schedules in Thompson-Boling Arena, the Lady Vols' home venue, noted, "I've seen them all come through here and there have been a lot of great ones."

"But no question, Tamika was by far the greatest of them all."

Catchings' international career saw her participate on Olympic gold-medal winning teams in 2004, '08, '12 and '16.

While the focus involving naming USBWA women's awards is on the collegiate game, it is still worthy to cite Catchings' WNBA achievements that include a Fever title in 2012 and earning the finals MVP following a regular season MVP in 2011.

Adding to those honors, her four Olympic gold medals, five WNBA defensive player of the year and rookie of the year (2002) awards makes her one of only 11 women to excel in all four categories.

Drafted third overall in 2001 but sidelined by an injury that summer, Catchings, who turned 40 in July, went on to lead the league in steals eight times and earn 10 WNBA All-Star nods as well as 12 each all-WNBA and all-WNBA defensive team selections.

She has a master's degree in Sports Studies from Tennessee. Her Catch The Stars Foundation helps disadvantaged youth achieve their dreams by promoting fitness, literacy and youth development.

"There is no better example, mentor and role model for gifted freshmen than Tamika," said Malcolm Moran, USBWA executive director and director of the Sports Capital Journalism Program at IUPUI. "Her commitment to community service and her move into management are also an inspiration for the next generation. She is an ideal choice."

The Tamika Catchings Award becomes the fourth named award for women's college basketball by the USBWA. It joins the Ann Meyers Drysdale Award for National Player of the Year, the Pat Summitt Most Courageous Award, which was named after Catchings' Hall of Fame coach at Tennessee, and the Mary Jo Haverbeck Award for service to the USBWA.