

If You Look Around, You Will Spot Lou Bello

There are a million and one faceless guys in the world. They deliver you mail, write your ticket at the airport, pull time in the army. Yes, they are even basketball referees.

Out of uniform, you would never recognize them. They just methodically do their jobs and try to attract as little attention as possible. Not only does nobody know their names, no one remembers their faces.

But then there's Lou Bello. Lou Bello, as most anyone who has ever seen a college basketball game east of the Mississippi knows, is a referee. He calls all three major sports, but the crowds don't get a good look at him except on the basketball court.

They sometimes froth at him, as they do all officials, and some even call him dirty names.

It there's one sure truism in life, it is that the referee always loses.

Despite all this, Lou Bello is distinctive in his trade. He has a line for every situation, and when a game



Heel Prints...

By Owen Davis

gets embarrassingly one-sided, there's Bello turning on his funnyman antics as the country's most recognized court jester.

You could tell Lou Bello stories for hours. He has been called "John Barrymore Bello" by a newspaper columnist, national magazines have done stories on him, and now, he says, a book is being compiled about him.

"Yeah, Marvin West in Knoxville is writing the Lou Bello Story," he said Wednesday night after the Carolina-South Carolina game.

In Columbia, Bello was back in his familiar position. It was a crucial game, and since only the best officiate those, he was a courtside natural.

He was also on the road, where he spends most of his time.

-Bello Needed Ride

Afterwards Bello wanted a ride back to Raleigh, his home. There weren't any connecting planes, and the train didn't leave until 1:30.

And so off we went.

There were a hundred questions, all which he has answered a thousand times. But they were patiently answered.

USC Coach Frank McGuire had criticized him and George Conley, the other game official. But Bello replied, "You've never seen a referee shoot a basket, dribble the ball, make a free throw."

The meaning was clear.

Before long we arrived in McBee, S.C., a crossroads town with a truck stop.

In the restaurant, Bello approached two fellows sitting at the counter.

"Heard any basketball scores?" he asked.

"Yeah, North Carolina beat South Carolina," replied one. "The referees were for North Carolina. They called a charging foul on Roche, and he didn't do it. McGuire was mad as hell at them refs afterwards."

"That so?" he smiled and figured it best to discontinue that conversation.

You want to dig into the background of man like this, and you don't have to pry hard to get something from Lou Bello.

"I'm from Ossining, N.Y.," he said, "you know, right near Sing-Sing. I graduated from Duke. My school nurse in high school was a close friend, and her son went to Duke. She loved the place, so I went there."

-"It Don't Mean Nothing"

He was president of the student body at Duke, which he says "don't mean nothing." He did have one job at Duke, however, which mushroomed into a lifetime profession.

"I was in a self-help program, and my job was to take care of the gym. That meant I refereed a lot of games, you know, intramurals and all that stuff."

"Then the downtown YMCA league needed a ref who didn't know the players, so they called out to Duke and got me. Footsie Knight, who is now the supervisor of officials in the ACC, was then head of the refs in the YMCA's. He must have liked something and..."

He waved his hand as if to say, you know the rest kid.

Two soft-scrambled eggs later, it was off again.

He had a cold and was getting hoarse.

"I'm not answering anything but pertinent questions now. The rule book says I only have to answer pertinent questions."

He pulled out a cigar. "Want one? Hey, John Lacey, the Carolina trainer, told me he would give me some antihistamines after the game. He musta forgot or something."

"Tonight you saw a well-officiated game. People don't believe it, but when I'm on the court, I only see the blues and the whites. I don't know any Dick Grubar or John Roche, or Carolina-South Carolina, it's just the blues and the whites."

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The Carolina swimming team began splashing in the Atlantic Coast Conference meet Thursday night in Winston-Salem. For results to UNC's action, see Saturday's DTH.

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USC's McGuire Blew His Cool

By ART CHANSKY
DTH Asst. Sports Editor
Frank McGuire blew his cool Wednesday night at the fuming Carolina Coliseum in Columbia.

In a complete turnabout from his attitude of ten days before in Charlotte, the South Carolina coach was anything but humble after his Gamecocks had gone down to 68-62 defeat at the hands of North Carolina.

"This is a NBA team we played tonight," he said. "Charlie Scott made the Olympic team, Rusty Clark is seven feet and Lee Dedmon is 6-10. We've got a bunch of kids. They beat us in height but not in spirit."

McGuire was burned up, and he said so. Much of his anger stemmed from the officiating.

Referees Lou Bello and George Conley took McGuire's bread and butter off the court with 55 seconds left in the ball game and the Gamecocks trailing by only two.

USC's John Roche, chief ball handler, playmaker and shooter, was called for his fifth foul when he charged into Bill Bunting with less than a minute to play. Conley made the call, and the Gamecocks died with it. Everyone in the spanking new field house knew it, too.

As Roche left the game, McGuire called Conley over and, pointing a finger to his

chest, shouted a one word exclamation of disbelief. After the game, McGuire talked in more printable terms.

"The turning point of the game was that call on Roche," he said. "We were only two back at the time, and I think we would have won the game if the call had gone the other way."

McGuire was asked if he thought the Carolina press was more effective than it had been in Charlotte, and the Gamecock coach really laid it to Bello and Conley.

"The press only works when the officials allow slapping, grabbing and holding. Any press can be broken if they call fouls. They (UNC) were slapping and holding in the first half and nothing was called. But late in the game when we pressed, they called everything."

With that, McGuire let the cat out of the bag. He had been preaching all along that the Tar Heels were vastly superior to his own team, that he would be pleased just to be "in the game."

The point is that the officiating wasn't bad only towards South Carolina—it was bad all around. His Gamecocks were simply outplayed. Roche would have never fouled out if he hadn't committed two needless infractions earlier

while reaching in on Dick Grubar.

McGuire abandoned his psyche tactics and laid it right on the line. He thought his Gamecocks could have and should have won.

Actually, it was Dean Smith, McGuire's pupil, who outfoxed the old master once again. Smith had the Tar Heels mentally prepared to play their toughest game of the season.

"We really had the adrenalin flowing," the Carolina mentor said Thursday. "We were much more mentally ready to play this game than we were in Charlotte."

It took a masterful coaching job both before and during the game to produce a team effort needed to give South Carolina its first loss in the new Coliseum.

The Tar Heels were aggressive off the boards, played piercing defense in the first half and went after loose balls all over the place.

"Grubar did a good job on Roche in the first half," Smith praised. "Dick held him to three for 11, and two of those shots were made over our zone."

The zone that Smith introduced in the Maryland game was used to

"complement our regular bread and butter press." Grubar, Charlie Scott and Eddie Fogler forced numerous steals by pressuring the Gamecocks with their ball hawking tactics.

But other than praising the play of all nine Tar Heels used, Smith preferred to look forward to Saturday's regular season finale at Duke rather than looking on the South Carolina victory.

"Duke has fine personnel," he warned. "They have some outstanding seniors that are playing their final home game, plus it's also Coach Bubas' last game in the Indoor Stadium."

But Smith knows he may be seeing South Carolina again. McGuire knows, too, although he let his irritation get the best of him Wednesday night.

"I hope I never see them (Carolina) again," he fumed. "And the same goes for those two fellows who were officiating tonight."

"How'd you think I called it?" Someone mentioned a foul called against UNC which was questionable. "I tend to agree. That might not have been."

Then he propped his hat against the window and quickly fell asleep.

And there was Lou Bello, basketball official, riding four hours over the country roads of the Piedmont to get back home.

The UNC team plane was going back to Raleigh, but it was against conference rules for him to ride on it.

The ref is a loner, too.

But then there's Lou Bello. He has friends at every stop, knows everybody it seems and remembers them all.

They remember him, too, for Lou Bello stands above the crowd.

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