

Legendary Dr. Ed Hightower Named Big Ten Conference Special Advisor for Basketball Officiating

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ROSEMONT, Ill. – The Big Ten Conference announced that longtime NCAA basketball referee and educator Dr. Ed Hightower has been named Special Advisor for Basketball Officiating, effective immediately. In this role, Hightower will help Big Ten Conference Commissioner Kevin Warren review, assess, and audit the conference's women's and men's basketball officiating programs and provide regular feedback and assessments of those programs to ensure that Big Ten Conference and NCAA officiating standards and expectations are upheld.

“Dr. Hightower has distinguished himself as an exceptional basketball official, educator, and leader during his storied career,” said Warren. “This combination of experiences makes him an ideal candidate to work with the Big Ten Conference to continue to enhance our women's and men's basketball officiating programs while serving as a mentor to both current and future basketball officials.”

Hightower officiated NCAA basketball for 36 years, including 12 Final Four appearances, earning the Naismith Men's College Official of the Year award in 1992. He retired as superintendent of the Edwardsville School district in 2015 following a 19-year tenure leading the district. Hightower received his bachelor's, master's, and specialist's degrees from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and his Doctorate in Education Administration from Saint Louis University.

“I am proud to join the Big Ten Conference to work once again with the strongest basketball conference in the nation,” said Hightower. “I look forward to making an

impact with the talented group of women's and men's basketball officials, student-athletes, coaches and administrators from all across the Big Ten.”

Big Ten Conference (bigten.org) is an association of world-class universities whose member institutions share a common mission of research, graduate, professional and undergraduate teaching and public service. Founded in 1896, Big Ten has sustained a comprehensive set of shared practices and policies that enforce the priority of academics in the lives of students competing in intercollegiate athletics and emphasize the values of integrity, fairness, and competitiveness. The broad-based programs of the 14 Big Ten institutions will provide over \$200 million in direct financial support to more than 9,800 students for more than 11,000 participation opportunities on 350 teams in 42 different sports. Big Ten sponsors 28 official conference sports, 14 for men and 14 for women, including the addition of men's ice hockey and men's and women's lacrosse since 2013.