

Area coach wants to 'Boost Your Basketball IQ'

By STEVE BARLOW Republican-American December 7, 2023



Former Watertown High basketball coach Jason Calabrese signs a copy of his new book, "Boost Your Basketball IQ," during a recent book launch in Middlebury. (Steve Barlow RA)

Jason Calabrese grew up surrounded by some of the most legendary basketball minds the city of Waterbury ever produced, icons like Tim McDonald and Ed Generali, Bobby Brown and Jack Taglia, Bill Martin and Joe Gilmore, Jim Quinn and Nick Augelli, Marty Sparano and Hank Spellman.

"When you think about the basketball talent and coaches that has come out of this city, it's phenomenal," said Calabrese, who graduated from Holy Cross High in 1989.

The Watertown resident was Spellman's assistant with the Kaynor Tech boys' team from 1993-2003, then took over at Watertown High from 2004-07.

He still coaches recreational teams and at summer camps, where he has seen things that annoy him. While Calabrese, now 52, saw players working on their speed, agility, and basketball skills, he observed a shortage of work on the mental aspect of the game.

Ten years ago, Calabrese, who once wrote a business column, "Smart Sense," for the Republican American, decided to distill the knowledge he acquired from all of his mentors into a book. The result is "Boost Your Basketball IQ: How to Think the Game, Be the Smartest Player on the Court, and Win More."

The book is full of tips about offense, defense, rebounding and shooting, broken down into subjects such as how to check a much taller big man (or guard), key words to call out during a game and the best way to beat a double team.

Just as he was taught as a young player, Calabrese stresses fundamentals, maximum effort and sportsmanship. He also includes advice for coaches on how to run practices, deal with officials and keep parents supportive.

"The whole idea of the book is to give basketball players something they could use to increase their basketball IQ and become better players," said Calabrese.

He recently held a book launch party in Middlebury, where he is operations manager of Ion Solar Pros.

The book is available through Amazon, where, Calabrese said, it recently hit No. 1 in the teen, young adult, college, and university basketball categories.