

For Adelanto man, calling NBA game Sunday a slam dunk to end the year



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“You’re here in Staples Center, L.A. Clippers. This is what it is, so show me what you got.”

For two decades, Huisha Bush has called games as a public address announcer, beginning first in women’s high school basketball, his longest-tenured role, and then maneuvering up the ranks to the professional women’s league for the sport.

The 44-year-old Adelanto resident and Los Angeles County probation officer, who recently finished his fifth season as the PA announcer for the WNBA's L.A. Sparks, describes his style as neither histrionic nor colorless.

"I would actually consider myself to be in the middle. I'm kind of from the — I don't know if it's old school — but we've always learned to be clear, concise and correct," Bush said. "I wouldn't consider myself self-gimmicky or a yeller or anything like that, but exciting plays do deserve I think fairly exciting calls."

Adherence to his own form and those three basic rules have served him well and imbued his rise from high school basketball — which he has called since 1998 through this year — to the WNBA and to the NBA's developmental G League, where he accepted the PA announcer job this year for the expansion Agua Caliente Clippers, whose season does not conflict with the Sparks, thus allowing him to do both.

"They've been happy, I'm assuming, with what I do as 'me,'" he said of his employers.

And while he dismissed the idea that his voice was anything special, instead suggesting his commitment, dedication and loyalty to the profession has been more advantageous, it's increasingly clear that those heart-and-hustle qualities have at least put him in opportune positions.

The culmination to this point in his career will come New Year's Eve, with Bush's first-ever gig for an NBA game when the L.A. Clippers host the Charlotte Hornets at Staples Center.

Eric Smith, the Clippers' regular in-arena announcer, will be calling the San Diego Chargers-Oakland Raiders game Sunday, leaving a spot open.

"Eric couldn't do it, so they called me up," Bush said, matter-of-factly.

The question to Bush was simple: Are you available that day? And the answer, despite a previous engagement, was unequivocally affirmative.

"The NBA is the NBA," he said. "So I would have to consider it kind of a move up and, you know, it's been a nice step."

Less than a week before the game, Bush traveled to shadow Smith at Staples Center, where he has trekked from the Victor Valley to call Sparks games. He'd have to learn scripts, timing for in-game entertainment and other nuances, but his familiarity with the venue, scorer's table and statistics personnel is likely to ease the transition.

"It's just a matter of seeing him do it, because I don't want to depart too far away (from convention)," Bush said. "But I have to be me. And being me is OK. I guess that's the reason that they called me."

As a PA announcer, Bush said it's most important — besides actual game action — to communicate what the referees are doing, adding that he tries to remain respectful to the opposing team as well.

He said this week he hoped the sheer number of attendees wouldn't make him more nervous than usual, acknowledging that each game, in general, has always felt like an audition. This one would be no different.

"You're here in Staples Center, L.A. Clippers. This is what it is, so show me what you got," he said describing the tenor.

But Bush, who began his career as a PA announcer for Duarte High School girls varsity basketball team in 1998, was also clear that women's basketball has grown into a passion which he "honors and respects" and views as no second fiddle.

As for friends and family in the High Desert, he described them as "supportive" and "excited" for his coming opportunity and his career overall. Some will even be at the game.

An added bonus is that Bush turned 44 on Thursday, making his NBA debut not only an ideal way to ring in the New Year but a birthday gift of sorts.

"Definitely, you want to have a good game and you hope that they win," he said about expectations. "For some reason, I feel a win makes everything OK."

Because a loss, he joked, feels like: "Maybe it was you, buddy."

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