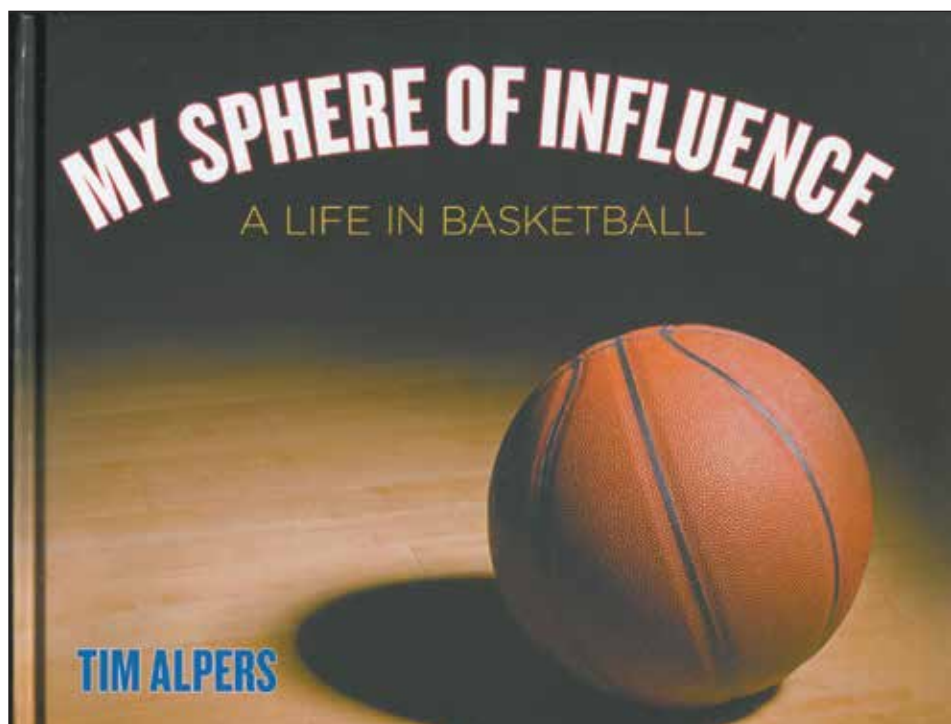


# Tim Alpers and his world in basketball



**Left:** The cover of Tim Alpers' book that was released last week. **Right:** A scan of a page in his book, this one of Mammoth Lakes High School Varsity's basketball team in 1986-87.

## 'My Sphere of Influence' rolls off the presses

By George Shirk  
Times Managing Editor

There are a couple of times a year that Tim Alpers goes all transformational.

One of them is during the spring when the Mono County trout fishing season and the NCAA Basketball Tournament rub up against each other.

The other is in late spring, when the NBA Playoffs get into full swing.

Those are the times when Alpers can sneak away from his duties as a Mono County Supervisor and reigning king of the fisheries and delve into what he really loves the most—basketball.

For those who doubt the love affair, there is now a book to prove it.

"My Sphere of Influence: A Life in Basketball" rolled onto bookshelves last week, courtesy of Companion Press, completing the first of what Alpers says will be a four-book series.

It is a handsome volume, loaded with photographs, memorabilia, logos, cartoons, drawings and plenty of first-person storytelling from Alpers.

From the time he was a small fry in Bishop all the way into his adult life, Alpers and basketball have been inseparable at practically every level of the game.

He played at Bishop; coached at Bishop and Mammoth; ascended to the NCAA at the University of Nevada-Reno, and into the Division I ranks as an assistant coach at Tulsa University under former Lakers and Golden State Warriors player Jim King.

Along the way he befriended the likes of players such as Hall of Famers Nate Thurmond, Al Attles, Jerry West, and Rick Barry, among many others.

At the collegiate level, he was

among the scores of sideline strategists trying to figure out ways to stop such players as Larry Bird at Indiana State; or unbutton Drake coach Maury John's "bellybutton defense" in the tough, competitive world of the Missouri Valley Conference of the late 1970s.

Therefore, during those times in the spring, when basketball takes its place at center stage in the American sports year, Alpers likes to transform himself, find his old basketball buddies and get into such subjects as the intricacies of the Miami Heat's pick-and-roll offense; the collective defensive genius of the Chicago Bulls; the ongoing downward slide of the Los Angeles Lakers and the quiet, behind-the-scenes influence Jerry West has had on the Memphis Grizzlies and the current crop of Warriors in Oakland.

When his book arrived in Mammoth last week, Alpers carried a copy into the newspaper office. It took about an hour before he grudgingly extricated himself from an in-depth discussion of the history of the Missouri Valley, where the Tulsa Golden Hurricane played, and made his way into the bright July afternoon.

Two days later, at the Looney Bean, we ran into Alpers again, this time falling into a dissection of the current state of the Lakers.

Alpers is talkative, analytical and forward thinking.

That's why, in 2008, he said he just about went nuts being sidelined during the first of two hip surgeries. When life-threatening infection set in after the first surgery and he needed another, Alpers said he took time "to reflect deeply on all of my athletic experiences, which sparked my desire to begin working on this project."

With help from his wife, Pam, and the Companion Press editorial team, the book began to take shape until last week when the finished history was a real, tangible thing.

It is, by any measure, a remarkable

feat.

Well written, cleanly edited and handsome both inside and out, the coffee-table-sized book is 125 pages long, split into eight chapters, written in straightforward sequence from Alpers' childhood years through the present day.

Much has happened in those years, but basketball remains largely the same: five players, two hoops 10 feet off the ground, and wild, intersecting

spheres of influence, from people in tiny towns like Bishop and Mammoth to the biggest stars in the largest of pro arenas in the world's biggest cities.

Alpers has been along for much of that ride, and with his book, we're all the better for it.

*Editor's Note: All proceeds from the sale of Alpers' book will benefit school athletic programs in Inyo and Mono Counties.*

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