

Personal Performance Principles

Here's a series of key points to keep in mind when officiating any sport at any level. All officials should have a good working knowledge of the rules and mechanics. In addition to this you will find your games more enjoyable by remembering the following principles:

- **BE COMPETITIVE.**

The players give maximum effort; so should you — every game. Tell yourself “I’m not going to let this game get away from me. I am better than that.” You are hired to make the calls that control the game — Make them!

- **HAVE YOUR HEAD ON RIGHT.**

Don't think or act as if your uniform grants you immunity from having to take a little criticism, which goes with the territory. Plan on it. Effective officials know how much to take before responding. Knowing where to draw the line is critical.

- **DON'T SET UP A SHOWDOWN.**

If a coach is on your back but not enough to warrant a penalty, stay away from him. This is especially true during timeouts and other breaks in the action. Standing near an unhappy coach, just to show him who's boss will do nothing but lead to further tension and acrimony. Some officials develop irritating habits. Don't be one of them.

- **GET INTO THE FLOW OF THE GAME.**

Each game is different. Good officials can feel the difference. Take note if the tempo of the game changes. A ragged game calls for a different style of officiating from a smooth one.

- **NEVER BARK.**

You don't like to be shouted at, so apply the same philosophy when dealing with others. Be firm when necessary, but use a normal relaxed voice. That approach works wonders in helping you to reduce the pressure.

Shouting indicates a loss of control of both yourself and the game you're working.

- **SHOW CONFIDENCE.**

Cockiness has absolutely no place in officiating. You want to exude confidence. Your presence should command respect from the participants. As in any walk of life, appearance, manner, and voice determine how you are accepted. Try to present the proper image.

- **FORGET THE FANS.**

As a group, fans tend to exhibit three characteristics:

- Ignorance of the rules,
- Highly emotional partisanship
- Delight in antagonizing the officials.

Accepting that will help you to ignore the fans and concentrate on the job at hand (unless fans interrupt the game or stand in the way of you doing your job).

- **ANSWER REASONABLE QUESTIONS.**

Treat coaches and players in a courteous way. If they ask you a question reasonably, answer them in a polite way. If they get your ear by saying “Hey ref I want to ask you something,” and then start telling you off, interrupt and remind them of the reason for the discussion. Be firm, but relaxed.

- **CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY.**

Don’t obviously threaten a coach or a player; if you do, that will put them on the defensive. More importantly, if you threaten, you will have placed yourself on the spot. If you judge that a situation is serious enough to warrant a threat, then it’s serious enough to penalize without invoking a threat.

- **STAY COOL.**

One of your goals is to establish a calm environment for the game. Nervous, edgy officials are easily spotted by fans, coaches and players alike. Avidly chewing gum, pacing around or displaying a wide range of inappropriate emotions prior to or during a contest will make you appear to be vulnerable to the pressure.

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