

# **Earning Your Stripes**

## **Some Do's and Don'ts for Better Officiating Skills**

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**All officials must have a good working knowledge of the rules and mechanics, but there is much more to being a top-notch official. Successful and respected officials have an understanding of the human relations aspect of their jobs.**

### **Forget the Fans**

As a group, fans usually exhibit three characteristics: ignorance of the rules, highly emotional partisanship and delight in antagonizing the officials. Accepting this fact will help you ignore the fans, unless they 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 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 player. This will only put them on the defensive. More importantly, you will have placed yourself on the spot. If you feel the situation is serious enough to warrant a threat, then it is serious enough to penalize, without invoking a threat.

### **Stay Cool**

Your purpose is to establish a calm environment for the game. Fans, coaches and players easily spot nervous or edgy officials alike. Avidly chewing gum, pacing around or displaying a wide range of emotions prior to or during a game serves to make you seem vulnerable to the pressure.

### **Confidence, not cockiness, will help you to gain respect as an in-control official. Be Competitive**

The players give the maximum effort and so should you. 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 your striped shirt grants you immunity from having to take a little criticism. It is part of officiating, so plan on it. Successful officials know how much to take. Ask one when you get a chance.

### **Get Into The Flow Of The Game**

Each game is different. Good officials can feel this difference. Concentrate on the reactions of the players and take note if the tempo of the game changes. A ragged game calls for a different style of officiating than a smooth one.

### **Don't Bark**

If you don't like to be shouted at, don't shout at someone else. Be firm but with a normal relaxed voice. The technique will do wonders in helping you to reduce the pressure. Shouting indicates a loss of control - not only of one's self, but also of the game.

### **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.