

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR REFEREES

Popularity is not the aim, but a fair and just game!

Referees should aim to gain the respect and maintain integrity through communicating with players, coaches and spectators.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Remain Calm

Adrenaline amongst players and coaches is running high before and during a game. Frustration and aggression may be evident with each referees call. Referees must remain calm and keep an objective view of the game.

Be Respectful

Your role contributes to a fluid and fair game, and must maintain the player and coach's integrity. Begin the referee does not entitle you to dominate the game. Referee attitude "I'm the REF", what I say goes", will only serve to alienate you from the game. Avoid sarcasm. Sarcasm is the lowest form of wit and has no place in refereeing a game. It is unprofessional and unethical.

Positive Body Language

Effective referees are self-confident, and use nonverbal cues that indicate respect for others. A nod, smile, thumbs up, actively responding to game, positive upright posture, clear hand signals help create a positive atmosphere and do not intimidate or threaten anyone.

Active Listening

Effective referees listen to the words of individuals, especially at the height of the conflict. All player coach aggression is not an expression against the referee's call. It may be just "letting off steam" of the player's/coach's/spectator frustration and just by listening the referee can gain respect instead of alienation.

Be prepared to explain your decision.

You don't have to explain all your calls, but players and coaches may at times ask or demand the reason for your call. A quick, simple explanation will be appreciated especially if a particular player repeats the call. They may be able to use your call explanation to work on their game.

Do not embarrass others

Players, coaches and spectators do not come to the game to watch the referee perform. Referee calls should be clear, simple and directed at the scorer. No one benefits from player, team, and coach targeting.

Criticise behavior, not character

Confine critical feedback to the actions of the player, the coach and spectators NOT the person.

“I called jump ball, you idiot, get over here don’t you know how to play the game!”

You should also expect the same from them.

“Coach, I’ll explain the call, but I will technical foul you if you use abusive language towards me again.....”

Selectively, ignore comments

Sometimes the best response is no response at all. Emotions can run high and generalised statements, comments are often made but they have no impact on the game unless you let them. If they are not directed at you or disruption the game, ignore them.

Do not try to have the last word

Nothing is achieved by having the last word; it usually just prolongs the incident and holds up the game. The last word is the scoreboard.

Don’t avoid conflict by not calling

When a referee lacks the confidence to call, it contributes to player/coach frustration; result in an inconsistent game and may promote more aggressive play and player injury. Players need a referee for their protection.

Have confidence in your call and stand behind your decision