

Subject: Eight Keys to Communication

Lesson Objective:

The referees will analyze their behavior to determine where they need to upgrade their communication skills in relation to the eight keys to communication.

Equipment and Materials to Teach the Lesson:

Overhead projector, screen, ten transparencies, blank transparencies, and transparency pens.

Approximate Time Needed:

45 minutes.

Learning Set:

Ask the referees to think about a referee who effectively interacted with players, coaches, fans, and fellow officials.

Information, Facts, Concepts, Skills to be Taught:

Source: *Psychology of Officiating*, Weinberg and Richardson, Leisure Press, pp. 27-45.

1. HAVE YOUR HEAD ON RIGHT - Don't think your referee uniform grants you immunity from having to take a little criticism. It's part of officiating. Plan on it. Successful officials know how much to take. Ask one when you get the chance.
2. DON'T BE A TOUGH PERSON - If a coach is on your back but not enough to warrant a confrontation, then stay away from him or her. This is especially true when the ball is out of play and at the half. Standing near an unhappy coach or fan, just to "show him," will only lead to further tension. Some officials develop irritating characteristics. Don't be one of them.
3. DON'T BARK - If you don't like to be shouted at, don't shout at someone else. Be firm, using a normal, relaxed voice. This technique will do wonders in helping you to reduce the tension. Shouting indicates a loss of control, not only of oneself, but also of the game.
4. SHOW CONFIDENCE - Cockiness has absolutely no place in officiating. You want to exude confidence. Your presence should command respect from the participants, coaches, and fans. As in any walk of life, appearance, manner, and voice determine how you are accepted. Try to present the proper image.
5. FORGET THE FANS - As a group, fans usually exhibit highly emotional partisanship and delight in antagonizing the officials. Accepting this fact will help you ignore the fans, unless they interrupt or impact the game or stand in the way of you doing your job.
6. ANSWER REASONABLE QUESTIONS - Treat coaches and players in a courteous way. If they ask you a question reasonably, answer 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.

7. 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 a situation is serious enough to warrant a threat, then it is serious enough to punish the misconduct, without invoking a threat. Obviously some things you say will be a form of threat, but using the proper words can make it subtle.

8. STAY COOL - Your purpose is to establish a calm environment for the game. Nervous or edgy officials are easily spotted by the players, coaches, and fans alike. Avidly chewing gum, pacing around, or displaying a wide range of emotions prior to or during the game will serve to make you seem vulnerable to the pressure.

Strategies to Actively Involve the Participants:

1. Have the referees discuss with their table mates or neighbors. They will produce a list of things that will help a referee develop a positive game environment.
2. Introduce the eight keys to communication by title. Use active participation to flesh out the concepts. Provide information as needed. Use questioning techniques.

Closure:

Check for understanding after each key concept.

At the end, have the referees identify and analyze two key areas for self improvement and share them with their table mates. Choose some to share with the group.