



Referees' Education & Development

Personal Performance Principles

Mutual respect is something everyone seeks but is difficult to achieve.

“Players, coaches, spectators and fellow officials take their lead from referees – if you are frustrated, they will be too. If you blow a call and your confidence is falling, their confidence in you will also plummet. But if you maintain your composure, remaining solid and stoic, your game will run smoothly.”

(Source - Referee Magazine – USA Publication)

Your performance as a referee will always be under the spotlight. Everyone connected to the game are observing an officials presence, behaviour, confidence, reactions and emotions. A key element of success in any sporting endeavour is a participant's ability to control and channel their emotions. This is even more significant for an official.

Emotions can, and usually do, run high in a basketball game. Everyone is keyed up to win, to compete. The official is always told “do not become emotionally involved in the game as it will then affect your performance.” However, sometimes this is easier said than done. The emotions of an official should not be ignored, they should be controlled. Just like what you are expected to do on the court if you were a player or coach. Control your emotions and the game will be much easier to control.

Here is a brief “Emotional Dirty Dozen” questionnaire that all levels of officials can try, with the results intended to help you understand your emotions and whether you need to modify your approach to control them. Controlling ones emotions does not come naturally. It is a learned response.

Answer Yes or No to the following statements which represent various emotional states;

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|-----|--|-------|
| 1. | I often have to rush to get to my games. | Y / N |
| 2. | I struggle to forgive myself if I make a mistake. | Y / N |
| 3. | I find myself snapping back at rude players and or coaches. | Y / N |
| 4. | I do not feel that I can admit to anyone that I sometimes get nervous. | Y / N |
| 5. | I sometimes have resentment for some of the players and coaches. | Y / N |
| 6. | I feel like I have to prove myself every time out on the court. | Y / N |
| 7. | I worry about the coaches or players being angry with me. | Y / N |
| 8. | I feel anxious making a call against the home team/agressive coaches. | Y / N |
| 9. | I sometimes start to strategise make-up calls. | Y / N |
| 10. | I find my concentration poor/mind wandering at games lately. | Y / N |
| 11. | I don't feel as enthusiastic as I used to. | Y / N |
| 12. | I sometimes feel bored at events. | Y / N |

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Less than 3 “yes” | You are in control of your emotions. |
| 3 - 4 “yes” | You are possibly heading for trouble. Take a look at your emotions. |
| 5 – 6 “yes” | You are in trouble and it is affecting your game and your performance |
| 7 or more “yes” | Personally and emotionally fouled up. Your officiating emotions are out of control. Consider taking a break and recharging the batteries. |

(Source - Referee Magazine – USA Publication)

The following is a series of key emotional points that all officials should keep in mind when officiating at any level of basketball. Good officials work on these elements to help improve their performance.

- **Be Competitive:** The players give maximum effort, so should a referee. Tell yourself “I’m not going to let this game get away from me. I am better than that.” You are there 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 is boss will do nothing but lead to further tension and hostility.
- **Get into the flow of the game:** Each game is different. Good officials can feel that 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 do not 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 to reduce the pressure. Shouting usually 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, spectators tend to exhibit three characteristics; ignorance of the rules, highly emotional partisanship and delight in antagonising the officials. Accepting that, will help you ignore the fans and concentrate on the job at hand.
- **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 making comments and criticising decisions, interrupt and remind them of the reason for the discussion. Be firm but be relaxed.
- **Choose you words wisely:** Do not obviously threaten a coach or player, if you do, that will put them on the defensive, but more importantly you have placed yourself on the spot. Practice some common responses that you can use that you know will work.
- **Stay cool:** One of your goals is to establish a calm environment for the game. Nervous, edgy officials are easily spotted by fans and coaches and players alike. Displaying a wide range of inappropriate emotions prior to or during the game will make you appear vulnerable to the pressure.

Personal Performance Principles

By factoring in the personal performance principles with other areas officials can instigate self improvement, we can begin to shape and mould ourselves in to much more confident, honest, reflective and professional basketball referees.

Think how the above principles can be a powerful tool toward successful officiating when combined with:

- A professional approach on and off court
- Strong, positive body language
- Appropriate fitness and physical profile
- Excellent rules knowledge
- Technical and tactical awareness
- Commitment to becoming a better official
- Ambition to performing on bigger and better games
- And most important of all, enjoying your officiating.

Refereeing has many benefits within the sport not only for yourself and other participants, but will also help you in other aspects of your career, studies, health and personal development.

The person who will benefit the most is you.

The person who controls how you will benefit is you.



Acknowledgement:



This referee article was written by Bill Mildenhall, Manager, National Referees Development of Basketball Australia. Bill has been a leading referee in the NBL for the past 20 years, and has been awarded the NBL Referee of the Year 16 times.

Mildenhall has also refereed at numerous Olympic and World Championship tournaments throughout an illustrious officiating career.

If you wish to upgrade your current refereeing qualification through the **basketballscotland** referee pathway, referee in the National Leagues and Cups or train to have the possibility to become a FIBA International Basketball Referee, please contact:

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