

Referees – the Ten C's of Officiating

1. Communication:

Communication is being able to effectively convey a message to partners, participants and spectators to ultimately achieve a desired response.

- Communication between officials is essential for a good team performance, selling of calls, maintaining game control and helping to look consistent.
- Communication with players and coaches goes a long way in determining how a game is played and more importantly how the referees are treated.
- Communication with spectators, although not usually done directly but through use of official signals, will also determine the reactions and responses the referees will receive from those watching the game.

Communication involves many aspects of officiating.

2. Confidence:

Confidence is being able to portray a notion of sureness and decisiveness in the calls along with positiveness in the decision making. In officiating whether a referee feels confident or not, it is of paramount importance that he/she portrays themselves as being confident:

- Sureness – an element of cockiness but not too much.
- Decisive in action, but not hasty. No element of hesitation. Everything at the referees' normal calling rhythm.
- Positiveness of decisions once they're made. This helps win acceptance.
- Good voice – conviction, firm but understanding as well.
- Whistle intonation - Loud short whistle blast

Confidence should not be confused nor replaced with arrogance or cockiness.

3. Consistency:

Consistency is the evenness with which officials make decisions irrespective of game situations and other external pressures. A referee needs to clearly establish early the way the game is going to be called, and then must maintain the same interpretations throughout the entire game. Referees need to show consistency in calling the game as well as consistency from one referee to the next and an appearance of adopting the same style throughout. A lack of consistency is the most common criticism levelled at officials, so it is extremely important for referees to pay attention to this aspect of their performance.

4. Commitment:

Commitment is doing the job to the best of your ability; by sacrificing, studying, observing, discussing, and practising all elements of officiating. A referee should be committed to knowing and learning the rules and mechanics, observing games to learn what more experienced officials do and actively seek advice from those willing to offer constructive criticism. A referee needs to practice the art of officiating to become proficient. Practice requires commitment. Commitment comes from you.

5. Conditioning:

Officials are athletes and therefore must be physically and mentally prepared for their craft just like a player. A referee is subjected to great physical and emotional demands that require concentration and quick judgement. It is logical that if a referee is physically fatigued he or she is not mentally sharp and therefore will more than likely not get into the correct position to make correct judgement decisions. A good referee is always in good physical shape, thus looking good as well as being capable of covering every play from the beginning of the game to the end including possible overtime (or from the beginning of the night to the end of the night) .

6. Concentration:

Concentration is the directing attention to things that are critical in making the right decisions throughout the entire contest. The ability to concentrate is a learned skill and generally improves with experience. Basketball is such a unique sport where there are so many distractions and so many changes of focus in a game.

Officials need to work on eliminating all the outside distractions, the reactions of the players, the coach, and the crowd to be able to maintain attention on the critical aspects of a game. During a game these critical aspects will constantly change making it very tough to concentrate on what really matters. e.g. focus attention very narrowly say at the beginning of the dribble, to then focusing on multiple players in crowded rebounding situations.

7. Consideration:

Is having a common sense approach to understanding what the game is about and what the participants are trying to achieve. Common sense is the knack of seeing things as they are and doing things as they ought to be done.

Good referees have a clear understanding of the game and can therefore adapt to the tempo and attain the feel of the game which promotes the respect of the players and coaches. Referees must understand the game belongs to the players and coaches and that they are there to ensure the game is played within the intent of the rules.

8. Conduct:

The way in which an official presents themselves has a great influence on how they are accepted by participants and fans alike. An official is being judged in everything they do. The more professional one appears, the more accepting they will be.

Personal appearance, athletic prowess, composure, consistency and clarity of signals will go a long way to helping an official conduct themselves appropriately.

9. Courage:

Courage is the ability to maintain objectivity and consistency without regard to the game situation or external pressures. Courage is required to make the tough calls. Courage is a subtle thing and should not be flaunted for the sake of showing toughness or bravery. Courage is when the referee exposes his convictions as to how the game will be played in the early moments of a game and then sticks to his definitions throughout.

10. Control:

Control is the ability to make the right decisions at the right time to maintain the respect and acceptance of the participants throughout the entire game. Control is a product of a referee performing all the other "C's" effectively. An out of control game is one where the players basically have lost respect for the guiding rules of the game.

Maintenance of proper sportsmanship during a game is everyone's responsibility and is a basic element of game control. The coach, the players, and the officials all have responsibilities to maintain control of themselves and the game.



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 get involved in refereeing or are looking to improve and develop your skills please get in touch.

Tel: 0131 317 7260
Email: officials@basketball-scotland.com