

Communication at its best

Presented by Eddie Burns

Agenda

1. Background
2. Who do officials communicate with besides coaches?

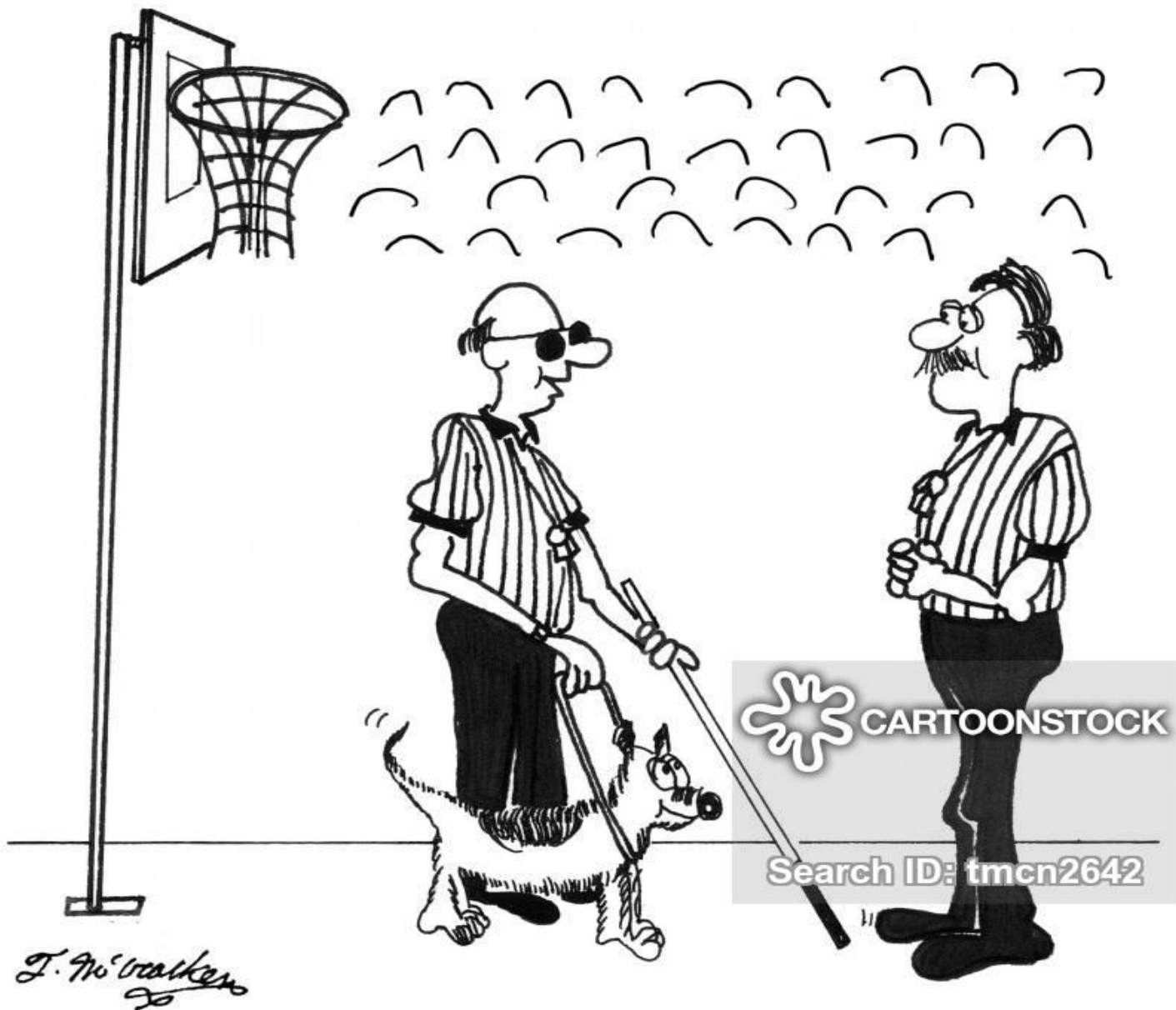
Administrators

Players

Fans

Partners

Assignors



“I'm just living up to the fans' expectations.”

Officiating through the eyes of a reporter

- My background
- How I apply my reporter skills to officiating
 - Communicating and establishing credibility with people



School administrators

In advance of game

- Check and confirm assignment
- Use school website to find out who appropriate athletic department contacts might be from athletic director to assistant athletic director to athletic department secretary and or administrative assistant
- Utilize resources such as <https://il.8to18.com/> to double and triple check assignments, especially lower level games because they get moved, changed, etc.

Day of game

- For lower level contests, arrive 30-45 minutes before scheduled start and check in with school administration and identify who the game administrator and official athletic trainer will be during your game(s) or contest(s)

During game

- Official scorer and timer are part of the officiating team and they need to be reminded as such. When the table looks bad so does the officiating crew. Stress the importance of their role in the game. For some lower level games, these roles might be filled by students, or players, so be mindful of possible distractors such as cell phones, etc. If the scorer or timer needs to be dealt with utilize game administration to handle them.

Five Universal Truths of human interaction

- All people want to be treated with dignity and respect.
- All people want to be asked rather than told to do something.
- All people want to be informed as to why they are being asked or ordered to do something.
- All people want to be given options rather than threats.
- All people want a second chance when they make a mistake.

Book: Verbal Judo: The Gentle Art of Persuasion

By George Thompson and Jerry Jenkins

Player interaction

Start with a strong captains meeting, reminding them of their role as leaders

- Utilize captains and other team leaders to help solve problems

Know when to talk to players

- Never during live ball action, whistle should always be in mouth during a live ball
- Keep it simple: post play, simply say “hands” or “lane”
- Communication should be brief and subtle
- Stay away from words with lots of syllables

Think before you react

The basketball court is an extension of the classroom, it's OK to teach

- Offer an explanation about why a certain call was made
- Block vs. charge
- Offer praise on outstanding efforts when they are doing the right thing

Player interaction

Take advantage of dead ball opportunities to communicate with players

- Free throws, be brief and get to the point

On the opening tip, be proactive, remind players to wait to play the ball until it is on its way down to avoid a potential violation

Proper throw-in administration, know the rules

- On a spot throw-in, if the throw comes from a designated spot do not tell the players that they can't move because they can move backwards.

It's OK to admit that you blew a call, it shows you are human

- Be mindful of how (and how often) you do this

Be honest and have fun

Suggested responses to player situations

“You going to let us play tonight?”

- **DO:** “We are going to call what we must to keep the game safe and fair.”
- **DO:** “Remember, if we let you play, we have to let your opponent play, too.”
- **DO NOT:** “Sure, we’re going to let you two beat the crap out of each other.”

“Come on ref, let us play!”

- **DO:** “We’re going to let you play, but we are not going to let you foul.”
- **DO:** “Players, you have to adjust to how we are calling the game and clean it up.”
- **DO NOT:** “Play? This is just really bad basketball.”

Credit: Referee Magazine

Suggested responses to player situations

“That’s a foul, he or she hit me.”

- **DO:** “There wasn’t enough there to justify a call. When it’s a foul, we will call it.”
- **DO:** “The defensive player did nothing wrong. He or she had legal position.”
- **DO:** “Looked to me like you created the contact and not the defense.”
- **DO NOT:** “You need to shut up and play.”

“Hey ref, please watch No. 22, he or she keeps fouling us.”

- **DO:** “We’ll keep an eye on it.”
- **DO:** “What are they doing so we can watch for it?”
- **DO NOT:** “You need to worry yourself.”

Credit: Referee Magazine

Suggested responses to player situations

- “Your partner(s) won’t call anything?”
 - **DO:** “I trust my partner(s).”
 - **DO:** “Each of us have our own areas on the floor to officiate. If something happens in my area, I will call it.”
 - **DO NOT:** “Yep, I agree. He, she or they are not very good.”
- “You guys suck!”
 - **DO:** Blow your whistle and issue a technical foul.
 - **DO NOT:** “So do you.”

Credit: Referee Magazine

Any other stories and or examples that anyone wants to share?

Fans, fans, fans

- Dealing with spectators is part of our job.
- Don't take what fans say personally.
- Tolerate more from fans at higher levels of play
- Don't engage fans. Never talk back to fans.
- Utilize game management if fans become unruly. They can be a great resource and they can handle ejecting fans.
- If no game management present, stop the game and speak with the home team coach.
- If you have no other choice and it is necessary, suspend the game.
- **Anyone have a fan story that they want to share? If so, describe the situation and you reached a resolution.**

- **What to do if you are attacked**
- Don't fight back to attack the player, coach or fan who assaulted you.
- ASAP secure names, phone numbers and addresses of potential witnesses.
- Write a detailed version of what happened, be specific as possible
- Find out if there was video of game
- Obtain legal counsel to decide if you have a civil or criminal complaint against your attacker

Credit: Referee Magazine

Partners

Before the game

- Confirm your assignment with the school and partner.
- Have you worked together before? If not, learn a little about each other.

Pregame

- Get everyone's mind on officiating the game with a thorough pregame
- Tendencies?
- Discuss philosophies

During the game

- Difficult officials can impact game play, crew consistency and credibility.
- Stay in your area.
- Make eye contact and communicate with your crew

Postgame

- Identify what went right and what worked.
- Identify something that you would change.
- Name something that the crew could have done better.

Qualities great officials possess

- Positive attitude
- Communication skills
- Integrity and teamwork
- Consistency and common sense
- Personable
- Good judgement and patience

Working with assignors

- Joining an association is a good first step.
- Identify where you want to work games and who assigns those schools and or conferences.
- Introduce yourself.
- Utilize camps so you can showcase your skills and ability so the assignor can see for themselves how you look.

Questions or comments?