

# *Understanding Equity in Officiating*



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# *What is Equity?*

**Definition: The quality of being fair and impartial**



**Questions: Why are there rules?  
Is our perception that we are being fair?**

# *What is Bias?*

**Definition:** A prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.



**Action:** First comes perception  
Then comes assumed realization



# *Perception*

**You need to understand that inequity or bias is being perceived when you might think that it is not taking place**



# Tale of Two Coaches

**Our first impression becomes immediate perception on how participants will believe how they will be treated.**



**2:11**

**vs.**

**:08**



# *From Referee Magazine*

**The longer you're in this endeavor, the more familiar you'll become with some coaches. In many cases, you'll have earned their respect and their greeting will convey the confidence they feel knowing the game is in good hands. Don't forget, however, the opposing coach may not know you as well and may look upon that congeniality as a bad sign for his team.**

**"Congratulating coaches or players is not appropriate," the point of emphasis noted, "as it can lead to perceptions of bias."**



# Conflict Resolution



**Goal: Are all of the participants being treated the same way?**





# *They Can't Quote Your Silence*

**Watch what you say.  
Would you say that to the other coach?  
Can you flip the script?  
Is your scale balanced?**





# *Different Coaches: Different Communication*

**If they are not yelling us, are we  
allowing coaches to be treated the same way?**



# *Coach's Box Purpose*

**Adjudication of rules is not a negotiable option**

**The coach's box allows for both coaches to have an equal opportunity to instruct their team**

**Are you keeping the scale balanced?**





# *If we need a group discussion...*

**Make sure that you do it as a group.**

**Don't tell one coach, and not the other.**

**Don't tell one coach first, and the other later.**



# *Familiarity vs. Uncertainty*

**Coaches may be concerned when one of the officials is a new face**

**This isn't a perception of inequity or bias, but just a normal concern.**

**If all participants are treated equally, this concern will go away.**





# *Pre-Conflict Resolution Skills*

**Before your officiating team develops a perception, make sure you practice what you preach:**

- ✓ **Watch what you do**
- ✓ **Be careful what you say**
- ✓ **Keep the scale balanced**
- ✓ **Be a good listener**
- ✓ **Utilize eye-to-eye contact**
- ✓ **Fix your body language**



# *Equity Amongst Officials*

**Unfortunately, the coach-official relationship isn't the only occurrence on equity issues.**

**If you are in a three-person crew, you must interact the same with each of your partners.**

**You cannot afford to subconsciously violate the equity relationship with your partners.**



# *Visual Inequity Between Officials*

**Proximity vs. Newcomers**

**Friends vs. Strangers**

**Experience vs. Inexperience**

**Gender Differences?**

**Race Differences?**



**All of these are bad visuals**



# *How can we improve?*

- 1. Do your pre-game homework. Prepare to be impartial.**
- 2. Understand that your actions and words have an influence on perception before you know it.**
- 3. Recognize that inequities may be visually apparent.**
- 4. Utilize your pre-conflict skills before bad things happen.**
- 5. Treat both coaches the same. Be able to flip the script.**
- 6. Know when the scale starts to tip towards one side.**
- 7. Respect your partners as true equals during the contest.**