

# **Philosophy of Officiating**

1. Basics of officiating
2. Define your officiating
3. Developing a Philosophy

## **INTRODUCTION:**

### **What's an officiating philosophy? What does this mean?**

*\* 3 parts that we'll discuss: the basics of officiating, "the core or traits of an official"; defining your styles "What is your personality category"; how you go about developing those traits, "What you need to do".*

Our officiating philosophy defines who we are and how we handle situations. Developing a philosophy — a mental approach to officiating — is critical. Though the core officiating beliefs remain the same, good officials adjust their philosophy over time. They never stop listening and learning.

EX: 80/20 theory, mentally/physically; fatigue after a game!!

**What is a philosophy:** Ask Group, thoughts!!!!

Our philosophy is how we do business. We start developing a philosophy when we stop taking everything we hear from other officials as "law" and start making decisions on right vs wrong. It's your perspective on officiating! Ex: When in Rome do as Romans do! EX: BB Camp Teachings; EX: Different Coordinators perspectives

**Who we are:**

The kind of person you are often influences the kind of official you are. If you're a detail-oriented perfectionist, you might be a stickler for the rules and enjoy studying the rule books. If you're a laid-back people person, you're likely to communicate more effectively with players and coaches and less concerned about the rule book. A balanced official, combination of both types, should be your goal. You can handle the rules, yet aren't so consumed by them that the game suffers.

# WHAT ARE THE BASICS OF OFFICIATING?

Every official may have a different philosophy, but there are common traits that we should all possess.

***Ask Group!!!!***

- General expectations of officials:
  - Thorough understanding of the rules
  - Understand and incorporate proper mechanics
  - Be a good communicator on and off the court
  - Have an approachable personality and demeanor
  - Professional appearance including a healthy weight
  
- To develop their philosophy an official will need:
  - Sound judgment
  - Strong character
  - Commitment, dedication, and a desire to improve
  - Overall presence and poise
  - Continuous adaptability
  
- Other factors that may contribute to success are:
  - Background as a former player or coach
  - Experience working with a veteran official
  - Ability to use appropriate game management techniques
  - Capacity to absorb information and learn from mistakes
  - Physical size
  - Desire to get every call right

# Defining Your Officiating

## Three types of officials: *Role Play/Examples*

Officials can be placed into three categories: rulebook lawyers, fly-by-nighters and the adaptable sponge.

The **rulebook lawyers** memorize the rules, quote casebook rulings with ease, and tend to be reactionary. They see something happen, react to it, quickly apply the appropriate rule and mentally move on. They tend to lack communication skills.

The **fly-by-nighters** typically open the rulebook only when they have to. They are constantly talking to people and their mechanics are usually average at best. They tend to work their games with what they believe is common sense.

The **adaptable sponge** combines the positive traits of both officials. They apply the rules wisely and communicate effectively. They have a desire to learn and improve every game. They seek advice from fellow officials as a way to better their mechanics and game management skills.

## How different philosophies can affect others:

One comment officials hear from coaches, players, and fans is "inconsistency." Though often chalked up to whining, consistency within an officiating crew is vitally important. There's nothing that impacts a game more than officials who are not on the same page.

Officiating is an art, not a science, and that creates the opportunity for inconsistency. What might be a foul to one official may not be a foul to another. Rules-makers and supervisors have emphasized philosophy as being the key to crew consistency. *EX: Coordinator scheduling concerns!!!!*

Get involved in your local association and develop an association's philosophy. Work with other groups to ensure everyone has a similar philosophy. The issue is critical and concessions may have to be made to achieve harmony. Remember, the game is the most important thing, not who is right and who is wrong.

**What is accepted:**

When developing your philosophy, learn what is and isn't accepted at your level in your area. The "when in Rome" theory will help you gain acceptance. If the philosophy is unacceptable to you, work to change things in a positive way.

Remember, what is accepted could change from level to level and possibly gender to gender. For example, a foul in a girls' JV game might not be a foul in a boys' varsity game. We must be able to adjust our philosophy to the level we are working. If you can't adjust don't work that level game. You and the game will be better for it.

**Our advice:**

The best officials are often those that let the game come to them. They see what is happening on the court, take in the information, delay their decision just a split second to decide whether a call would positively or negatively impact a play, then make the call or no-call. They know the rules, but don't use them as a crutch. They think about the good of the game above all else. They communicate well, get along with others, and aren't afraid to make the big call (or no-call). They adjust their philosophy according to the game's level and are adaptable. They are balanced in their approach and never stop learning.

# Developing a Philosophy

- Officials should develop a philosophy with respect to:
  - Being their own person
  - Adopting and adapting – not mimicking or imitating
  - Developing solid methods and techniques
  - Remembering why they are officiating
- A sound officiating philosophy should include:
  - Pride in performance
  - Professionalism in approach
  - Enjoyment that officiating brings
- Other factors to consider include:
  - Knowledge and enforcement of the rules
  - Personal appearance and conduct
  - Developing relationships
  - Teamwork
  - Accuracy throughout the game

## Conclusion:

Our officiating philosophy defines who we are and how we handle situations.

*Constantly work on the basics of your officiating*

*Define your styles and observe other officials*

*Learn who you are as an official and where you want to go*

*Develop those traits that will make you successful*

