



From the Referees' Chair

Brian Hemelgarn

Well, another season is upon us! Hard to believe! I'm beginning to get comfortable as your new Referees' Chair, but I'm stilling learning the ropes. As always, offer me suggestions and feedback because I appreciate our interaction. Now, on to the season!

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We hosted three successful clinics in December, and I owe a big "thanks" to the crew who helped organize and present them in my absence! Their willingness and support allowed me the opportunity to work the NCAA Division I tournament, and that was an awesome experience—one that I hope many of you have the chance to enjoy during your careers! Our clinics welcomed nearly 70 prospective officials who are now completing the evaluation process.

With no significant rule changes this year, we should work on refining and polishing our mechanics, rule knowledge, and professionalism! One of my goals for this year—and hopefully yours too!—is to exhibit the highest level of professionalism at each and every match, on and off the court. We need to be beyond reproach in our behavior! Remember, "perception is reality," and despite our intentions, others may not always view our actions in the way we intended. Hence,

act in a way that won't call your integrity into question! And by the way, your uniform should be impeccable! That's part of our professionalism too.

As officials, we're in a unique position: when players, coaches, or spectators see us, they think OVR. Consequently, to them, we *are* the OVR, and we end up being the first line of defense when it comes to dealing with the issues and concerns of our constituents. Thus, we need to act accordingly. In fact, *Act as if!* Act as if... you're representing the board of directors! Act as if... you're an extension of me! Act as if... you're being evaluated every time you're on the stand. Act as if... you're working the Olympics... hey, you are... Junior Olympics! Act as if... you're a National referee. By "acting as if," I'm sure you'll do the right thing.

Finally, the 2003 season will bring some changes, some challenges and some excellent opportunities. Columbus plays host to the NIRSA Collegiate Club Volleyball Championships; our Bid tournaments will be held under one roof in Columbus, April 12-13, along with our Adult Championships; our Junior Championships continue to break participation records; and we have the largest cadre of officials in the country! It will be busy, but it will be *fun*, and I'm looking forward to what lies ahead!

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