

Referees,

I provided the following memo to OVR coaches. It's also relevant for you as it includes some clarifications:

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OVR Coaches -

I hope the season has started well. I've had some questions from coaches and referees regarding the OVR policy for electronic devices used by work teams. I'd like to clarify that for you, particularly as it relates to YOU!

First, the policy states that electronic devices (i.e., cell phones, iPods, mp3 players, among other things) may not be used by anyone on the work team at any time while they are performing work team duties. Basically, this starts with the pre-match warm-ups and continues until the end of the match.

The reasoning behind this policy is simple - we don't want the work team distracted while they are performing their duties. Parents and spectators already yell about the score or when they think a line judge has made a mistake. We don't want to add to the work team's stress! It can be hard to keep them focused during a match, and outside distractions don't help matters. The playing teams, referees and spectators want work teams that do their best. This OVR policy helps accomplish that.

There have been recent questions about the work team's coach(es) and the use of electronic devices. We can clarify that pretty easily:

- 1 - If you (a coach) are working as the R2, as any of the scoring crew, or as a line judge, the same rule applies to you - no electronics.
- 2 - If you (a coach) are not working as one of the support crew BUT you are seated/standing directly at the scorer's table to supervise or assist your team, the same rule applies to you - no electronics. It's just as easy for one of the kids to be distracted by your phone as it is by their own.
- 3 - If you are in the vicinity of the score table but not seated/standing at it, the rule does not apply to you. And obviously it doesn't apply if you are seated elsewhere around the court.

Referees have been instructed to offer a reminder ("warning") the first time a work team uses electronic devices. Subsequent occurrences by the same work team at the same tournament are subject to a 10-point penalty. Referees are to report this to the tournament director who assesses the penalty in the first set of the work team's next playing match. (If the team is done for the day, the sanction is a financial penalty imposed on the club by Bob Price.) The referees are encouraged to prevent the need for any penalty or sanction, but sometimes it is necessary.

Remember, the reason for the policy is simply - we don't want the work teams to be distracted! A vast majority of our clubs and teams have no issues during the season, and we appreciate that.

As a side note, we also don't want drinks/food ON THE SCORER'S TABLE. But we realize that sometimes breaks are short and the athletes need time to eat something and to stay hydrated. No problem! They can have food/drinks at the table while working, but their drinks need to stay on the floor (capped, if possible) and food needs to be on the player's lap.

Hope this clarifies for everyone. We aren't trying to make things difficult for you. We want to minimize work team errors, especially with scoring. If you've ever been involved in a scoring issue or protest, you know it can be a difficult process. Let's keep outside distractions out of the equation.

Let me know if you have any questions about this or other rules/officiating topics.

See you on the courts,

Brian Hemelgarn
Junior Officials' Development Director
OVR Referees' Chair