

Referees,

I know I've been pushing folks to work on these weekends when we're short on referee resources to cover tournaments. And I thank you for stepping in/stepping up to help out. We want and need our referees to be working, BUT...

I also know that life, and our busy schedules, catch up with us. Sometimes the result is that we get sick -- cold, flu, stomach ailments. And for some of us, we have an existing condition that gets aggravated by our schedules -- heart, diabetes, and knees/hips/shoulders that take a beating when we work.

The result is that sometimes we need a break to allow ourselves to heal, and that means an assignment has to be canceled, sometimes on short notice.

So, I want to encourage all of you to pay attention to your bodies and take care of yourselves! Volleyball -- actually ALL sports -- needs referees who are physically and mentally ready, and who portray a healthy image. Coaches, players, tournament staff, and spectators notice when we aren't well. If we struggle to get on the stand, have to sit down during warm-ups to catch our breath, or have a hard time signaling because our shoulders and elbows are aching, we need to think about what we're doing.

Yes, the money we earn is nice, but are we really doing a service to the teams who pay big bucks to participate? Are we really "earning" that money, or are we just trying to get through the day?

Right now, we have active OVR referees who have heart conditions, diabetes, kidney disease, rotator cuff, cold/flu, worn-out knees, and the list goes on... it doesn't matter the age or gender. So I want to encourage all of you to... #1 think about YOUR health, #2 remember that our work is about the ATHLETES, and #3 think about how you're representing the officiating profession.

Make good decisions for YOU. If you aren't feeling well, notify tournament directors early. Find a replacement. Don't put a short-notice burden on the tournament when you know you haven't been feeling well.

Our work is important, but so is our health. It's not just about the pay check -- it's much bigger than that. Do some introspection to make sure the tournaments, the teams, your fellow referees and YOU are getting your best effort.

Take care, literally!

Brian