

Referees -

I've had a couple of questions in this regard, so I want to clarify for everyone:

It is NOT unsporting conduct for players to yell "ball's up!" (or similar phrases) as their opponent is preparing to serve the ball. Period. LEAVE IT ALONE.

Somewhere along the line, this type of team communication - "balls up!" - has been incorrectly associated with unsporting behavior. It IS NOT unsporting. This seems to have gotten it's bad name in high school volleyball where coaches or spectators are the ones who have a problem with it. They ask the referees to control it, then either those same referees or the parents of high school players come to USAV tournaments and assume that this type of communication is not allowed. THIS IS NOT TRUE.

Having said that, there could surely be something unsporting about shouting when the opponent is serving, but it needs to be something very flagrant or intentional. I'd be hard pressed to say that "balls up!" is intentionally trying to distract the opposing server. This isn't a golf tournament, and neither the spectators nor the teams need to be "quiet" during the serve like they do during a golf putt.

Have you ever been to a collegiate volleyball match? When the opponent is serving, the home team crowd is SCREAMING! What about basketball?! It's not quiet when a free throw is being shot.

So referees, please help get this under control. When a coach or player complains that when they serve, their opponent is saying "something," tell them that it's LEGAL for a team to verbally communicate and it's NOT unsporting.

We need to get the message out there, even at the junior high/high school levels. It's overly-officious to get involved in the game like this. Unsporting behavior is OBVIOUS. We shouldn't look for issues where none exist.

Thank you!

Brian Hemelgarn
OVR Referees' Chair