

Referees Who Are Also Coaches – March 28, 2019

It has come time to again address an important topic amongst our cadre: referees who are also coaches, or vice versa.

First, let me say there's a good article that was just published by *Referee* magazine about this subject. Please read it, especially if you fall into the referee-coach category:

<https://www.referee.com/officials-who-coach/>

Second, it's worth reminding everyone, particularly referees who coach, that the standards for your conduct ARE different; they are higher. How can a coach, who is also a referee, belittle or berate a fellow referee? Unfortunately, it happens too often.

Among all coaches, those of you who are referees know what it's like to be on the court with a whistle around your neck. You know what it's like when you don't have the strongest work team. You've kicked a call or two yourself, and you know what it's like to beat yourself up over that missed call. You've been blocked at the last second by a player in the back row and you didn't see where the ball landed. You've felt the net shake and you've looked across the court to see your second referee following the ball.

STOP with the criticism. More is expected of you... because you understand what it's like to be a referee.

Please don't use your rules knowledge -- assuming it's current and correct -- to "one up" a fellow referee. Don't use your Provisional, Regional or national-level certification to imply you're better than the referee(s) working your match. And please don't start a conversation with a referee by saying, "I'm a certified (OVR) referee too," because then you're setting an expectation. Just remember that the expectation is on YOU. That you will behave better than most coaches. That you will understand that calls are missed. That you will portray a positive image for your players and the spectators by accepting referee decisions with few questions and little disdain.

Some referee-coaches are well-intended and want to share some feedback or knowledge with a referee after a match. That's not your job. Join your team and help them prepare for their next match. You don't have any obligation or right to "help" a referee prepare for their next match. If there's truly a legitimate concern with an OVR referee, you know how to get in touch with me, AFTER the tournament. I don't want calls and text messages while you're at a tournament. I am glad to address concerns and help a fellow referee learn. There's a time and place for that, and it's not courtside after a match you just won or lost.

You never know who our referees are or what their backgrounds might be. We have at least half a dozen referees who coach at the women's Division I, II or III level. Follow the example they set. When they switch from coach to referee, you'll find them taking "our" profession as referees seriously. They want to do the job right. But have you ever had one of them criticize your coaching decisions? Probably not, because they know the role they're playing that day. Take after them -- when you switch from referee to coach, be professional about it, always.

One of the best examples you can set is to shake the hand of the referees after a match. Teach your players this. And you don't have to say "good job," but you should at least thank them for spending the day with you. They could be doing something else on their weekends.

Last thing, this one for referees: if you work for a coach, who is also an OVR referee, and that coach's behavior is less than professional and appropriate, let me know... 😊

We're all in this sport for the same reason - we love it! Let's respect one another's jobs and set great examples for the young athletes who will be filling our shoes in the future.

Thanks all!

Brian