



CHESAPEAKE REGION VOLLEYBALL ASSOCIATION

REFEREE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



Are You Ready For Prime Time?

Corny Galdones, March 2005

Anyone with a general idea of the sport and knowledge of the rules can blow a whistle and claim to be a volleyball referee. Upper echelon referees have to do better. Much better. The following assessment will give an aspiring referee a good gauge of being ready to move up the ladder. This technical checklist, which may be useful to all, isn't inclusive. Performance standards of local jurisdictions aren't covered.

- Can you cite chapter and verse of every rule? Do your common sense and "spirit of the rule" prevail over "going by the book"?
- Do you know the game? Are you familiar with every current player technique and skill? Can you explain today's defensive and offensive team strategies and alignments?
- Are you really professional? Do you give back? Do you know what causes conflicts of interest and wrong perceptions? Can you be relied upon to do the right thing? Do assignments recruit you and not the other way around? Are you faithful to your commitments? Are you forthright when a better offer comes up? Are your uniform and appearance spic and span? Do you treat everyone with respect and courtesy? Do you converse with coaches and players only on matters pertinent to conducting the match? Do you take care of every logistical and administrative detail of your matches? Are you an ambassador of your organization and our profession, and not a maverick?
- Are you punctual? Do you show up at courtside prepared for your matches by the report time? Do you end warm-ups in the period allotted? If the preceding match ends on time, is your first service beckon no later than the scheduled match time?
- Do you have a commanding presence that sells your calls? Are your signals not only mechanically correct, but also strong and crisp? Is your whistle prompt and authoritative in sound? Do you project a dignified, "I know what I'm doing" body language that's not overbearing?
- Are you a facilitator and not a rules dictator? Do you make your matches a pleasant experience for all involved?
- Are you battle tested? Are you court wise? Have you made tons of mistakes and been yelled at countless times by players and coaches to know how to handle any situation under fire quickly and properly in a calm manner?
- Are you at ease officiating at the highest competition level? Can you keep up with the action? Do you act by instinct and reflex instead of thinking about it?
- Is your ball handling judgment correct? Are you comfortable with your standard? Is it consistent throughout a match? Have you officiated innumerable matches to tell instantly between an ugly or weird but legal set and a pretty but illegal set? Do you no longer draw questioning looks and negative reactions from the teams on ball handling?

- Are you catching all violations besides ball handling violations?
- Are you invisible? Are your errors few and far between, and not same ones as before?
- Are you approachable to explain calls? Are these talks short and sweet? Do you think fast and placate the different but common questions that may be asked? Do you cut off ongoing conversations? Do you do it with tact and finality?
- Do you take preventive control measures? Do you recognize the difference between venting of frustrations and abusive behavior? Do your matches rarely get out of hand? If they ever do, do you regain control at once? Can you do it without sanction cards?
- Are you a team player and communicator and not a Lone Ranger? Do you coordinate duties with your R1/R2 partner and line judges before the match, have them do their jobs and solicit their input with eye contact throughout the match? Do you treat them plus the scorekeeper as your equal?
- As an R1 and R2, do you know all the places to look and what to look for before a serve? During a rally? At the end of a play? During warm-ups? Before start of a game? Are you seeing and not just glancing?
- As an R2, do you know where to be positioned and are you getting there in time before a serve? During a rally? At the end of a play? For bench requests? Do you minimize damage from coaches disputing calls and protect the R1? Do you resolve scorekeeping problems promptly if the scorekeeper needs help?
- As an R1 and R2, do you know what hand (and maybe whistle) signals to make and how to display them for specific situations during a rally? For a violation? At the end of a play? For sanctions? For match interruptions? For bench requests?
- Can you track player rotations and quickly detect an overlap no matter what formations the teams are in?
- Do you keep your matches moving at a lively pace regardless of playing caliber? Have you stopped from causing match delays?
- Do you continue to learn and grow? Do you accept criticism without having to defend or explain yourself? Are you listening and not just hearing? Do you implement suggestions and advice right away and not get messed up?

This isn't a pass/fail questionnaire. It might not be a bad idea to consult a candid, learned colleague. Your skills must be developed so that every answer is "yes" to these criteria similar to the formal evaluation process. Here's the bottom line. Would each and every referee be confident and willing to have you as a partner for any given match, including the big one?

You can fool yourself, but not the expert raters who will determine your fate in being promoted to the next officiating certification level. Why take chances? Scrutinize yourself. Where are you now? What ideals must you still strive for? Be honest and realistic for the good of one person. You.