

26 Most Important Things

Developed in conjunction with Referee Magazine, and applied to Lacrosse
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1) Avocation

- For all but a few of us, officiating is an avocation, not our profession.
- Recognizing this will help keep your life in better balance.
- Good officials put in long hours of work.
- Don't put officiating ahead of family or work.
- Use the extra energy and time to become a better family person.

2) People person

- Ninety percent of officiating is being a people person.
- Learn how to handle people.
- Listening is a very important skill.
- If you are asked a civil question, answer it!
- Be sure to treat players, coaches, and fans, as you would like to be treated.

3) Fairness

- Officiating is seldom fair.
- Regardless of how much talent you have, you never work the "big" game.
- Officiating is sometimes who you know, not what you know.
- Don't obsess about what you cannot control.
- No matter what level you work, you will always be criticized. Even though you are 100% correct.
- This isn't fair, but it is something you must accept.

4) Safety

- Keep player safety as your number one priority.
- The rules empower and also require you to make the calls.
- Even if a situation is not specifically covered in your rules, an official is responsible to make whatever correction to keep the players safe.
- This covers everything from weather, playing surface, and the conduct of the participants.
- In an age when everyone is suing each other, you should err on the side of safety.
- This is not only a morally correct course, but it is one that may keep you out of court.

5) Excuses

- Don't make excuses.
- Do what you have to do to make the call correct.
- If you make a mistake, admit it.
- You need to learn from your mistakes.
- Work to not make the same mistake again.
- Don't waste time and energy coming up with an excuse.
- Work to rectify the situation within the rules.

6) Ethical Standard

- We have an obligation to hold ourselves to a higher-than-normal ethical standard.
- How you act away from the game is as important as how you act during the game.
- Poor decisions or bad behavior in your life can wash away all the good will and good impressions from your officiating career.
- **Remember:** Integrity is defined by how you act when you think nobody is watching.

7) Criticism

- Expect criticism and learn how to handle it.
- Most comments from players, coaches and fans should go in one ear and out the other.
- Turning a deaf ear is critical to maintaining your focus.
- Constructive criticism should be sought from your peers, supervisor and assignor.
- If you ask for feedback, be ready to hear what is coming.
- It is possible that you may find out that you are not as good as you thought you were.

8) Skills

- Officiating builds skills for a lifetime.
- The qualities that make a great official are also the same qualities that make a great person.
- POSITIVE SKILL WORDS
 - Teamwork
 - Loyalty
 - Sacrifice
 - Decision-making
 - Fair and honest
 - Accountable

9) Emotions

- Never let your signals convey your emotions.
- Don't take a rule infraction personal!
- Don't allow your body language to display your displeasure.
- Your facial expressions and voice should not suggest you're happy or unhappy to be enforcing the rules.

10) Intent of the rules

- Understand the intent of the rules, not just the rule.
- Knowing why the rule is needed will help you understand how to enforce it.
- Some situations the intent is obvious, others are not!
- A rule is intended to ensure that neither team nor athlete is placed at an unfair disadvantage.
- Study the rules, and work on applying them.
- Don't pick out your favorite foul and be sure to call it every game.

11) Your Whistle

- If you are going to blow your whistle, BLOW it hard.
- Most whistles are meant to stop the play, this being the case, use it!
- A strong blast of the whistle conveys the message that you are sure that the play should be stopped!
- A weak toot casts doubt about your confidence and judgment.
- Finger whistles give you the extra pause to be sure of the play.

12) Mistakes

- Understand that you will make mistakes.
- Sometimes the mistakes are very costly, but we must learn to accept them.
- We are called upon to make a multitude of split second decisions.
- Most under stressful conditions.
- To expect perfection is too heavy a burden to carry.
- Ultimately this will take the joy out of your officiating.

13) Criticize

- Don't criticize other officials.
- Never point out another official's inadequacies.
- Never give a negative opinion of another coach or official.
- If asked for a critique by another official, be honest but supportive.
- If your opinion is not sought, don't offer it!

14) Professional

- No matter what the level, dress and act the part.
- Like books, officials are judged by its cover. If the cover is wrinkled and soiled, chances are the impression of the inside is the same.
- Your appearance before and after the game is very important.
- Tuxedos aren't necessary, but a jacket and tie are!
- Check with your Assignor if you are not sure what to wear.

15) Role

- You must know your role.
- You are part of the bigger package – don't showboat.
- It is OK to sell the call if need be.
- Actions designed to draw attention away from the players and onto the officials are unprofessional and unacceptable!
- Use the standard mechanics and signals for the level of play at which you are working.

16) Be prepared

- Plan for the unexpected.
- Don't anticipate the call; anticipate the play!
- Sometimes you can feel the play developing and this allows you to adjust your positioning and focus your attention in the correct area.
- Know where you are in the game, and try to anticipate what is coming next.
- Pre-game also helps in expecting the unexpected.

17) Study

- Continuing study is a requirement.
- Officials should read the rulebook often.
- The more you read it, the more ingrained the information becomes in your mind.
- This is especially important if you work multiple levels.
- Attending camps and clinics allows you to keep current with the changes in philosophies and mechanics.
- "ZLAX Referee Camp" is a perfect atmosphere to learn and grow as an official.

18) Body Language

- Body language will do you in quicker than lack of knowledge.
- Sometimes it is less a matter of what you say than how you say it.
- Body language often speaks louder than words.
- Correct calls can sometimes seem wrong if you are not decisive.

- During dead balls, look sharp. Don't fold your arms or slump your shoulders.
- Don't look bored or give the impression that you would like to be anywhere else.

19) **Gasoline**

- Don't pour gasoline on the fire.
- Coaches, players and fans will say plenty during the game.
- Most of it is to vent frustrations.
- You need to understand which comments merit a response or acknowledgement.
- Yelling back usually adds intensity to the situation.
- More often than not, a verbal response is not needed.
- You may simply nod your head, smile, glance at the person who said it, hold up a stop sign.
- Learn to use your communication tools wisely.

20) **Wins**

- You should not care who wins.
- Impartiality is the foundation of all officiating
- Don't officiate a meaningful game for a family member.
- You must be able to block out things that don't have an impact on the game.
- An official should never use calls to favor either team for any reason.
- Great misconceptions in sports: "Officials tend to favor the home team". We need to guard against this feeling.

21) **Rules**

- You must have a reverence for the rules.
- Before you can understand the spirit of the rules, you must have an appreciation for them.
- This doesn't mean to learn them verbatim
- You need to understand how important it is to properly apply the rules to a given situation.
- The avocation suffers when officials ignore or misapply the rules.

22) **Pre-game**

- Always have a pre-game meeting.
- Officials must prepare themselves before each game just as athletes do.
- You must do this even if you have worked with the same partner before. Things change!

- This time is used for valuable reminders about how to handle difficult situations.
- Involving every crewmember or varying the routine will help prevent monotony from settling in.

23) Game

- Don't carry over feelings to the next game.
- You must treat each game as a new experience.
- If you work a game in which you have had problems with a player or coach, your demeanor must convey that you have forgotten about the past.
- This is true even if **THEY** haven't.
- Even the appearance of punishing a coach or player for something that happened in the past will taint your reputation and perhaps ruin your career.

24) Remember

- Remember where you came from.
- If you have achieved your officiating goals, it is easy to forget what helped you get there.
- Few officials make it on their own.
- More than likely it was a mentor, assignor or your local association that helped you out.
- You can repay this favor by helping out a budding young official.
- If you brag about your success you will more than likely come across as a pompous blowhard.

25) You

- You referee who you are.
- Your officiating personality is driven by your everyday personality.
- Remember that extremes are often unwanted in officiating.
- Be careful not to bring your job to the field.
- Don't treat players, coaches and other officials the way you would treat your employees.
- If you are in sales, you may have to tone down your personality on the field.

26) Credibility

- Carry out your responsibilities in a way that brings credibility to the officiating product.

- Competent, professional and impartial officials deserve acclaim. Especially from other officials.
- Public opinion would improve if officials remembered that they represent the entire profession every time they work a game!