

# Top Tips for Referee Evaluation and post match discussion

## Some advice for Referee Delegates

*Based on „The difficult job of a referees observer“  
by Jaime Andreu, published in 28 2007 | **FIBA ASSIST MAGAZINE***

# Tip 1: First Actions



- ⊗ Do not rush to the changing room directly after the match, but take the time to **put your ideas** in order of importance before speaking to the referees
- ⊗ When the game is over, ask yourself the **three** following **questions**:
  - Did the better team on the court win the game?
  - Have the referees directed the game wisely?
  - Did the game take place without major incidents?
- ⊗ **If the answers are:**
  - **“yes”, then there is room for improvement**
  - **“no”, then you must activate the warning lights**

# Tip 2: Positive Actions



- ① Try to **begin** and **end** the debriefing with a **positive message**
  - The two persons who referee at a game deserve our respect and our consideration
- ① The observer should not come to “put down” the referees, by discouraging them
  - The observer's purpose is to build up, not to destroy
  - It is sometimes very difficult to find the right balance, but it does exist

# Tip 3: Overview



- ① **Begin** the debriefing with an **overall evaluation** of performance **before** going into **details**
  - During this phase it is necessary to be honest and not to hide the truth
  - For example, never speak about good performance and then to give a poor written comment or score
  - It is also necessary to find the precise words, which, while being truthful, are not destructive

# Tip 4: How to Communicate



- ④ Leave the **doors open for dialogue**. The observer is **not in possession of all the facts**. Use phrases such as
  - "In my opinion... ", "From my position in the tribune...", "According to my criterion..."
- ④ Let the referees exercise their **right to defend themselves**, perhaps to release any frustrations they may have trapped inside.
- ④ It is important to **keep personal things out of the picture**. Friendships or personal dislikes should not affect the report on the referees' performance.
- ④ **Observers** must be persons with the appropriate **technical training**, teamed with good **communication skills**. They are **dealing with people**, after all, **not with objects or robots**.

# Tip 5: Language



- ④ Use language **appropriate** to your **audience**
- ④ The tone needed when addressing a **junior** or **senior referee** is completely different
  - The “junior referee” needs more affection and information on basic elements
  - The “senior referee” asks for more explanations on the management of the match, more than questions concerning mechanics or signals

# Tip 6: Mechanics



- ⊗ Try to get the referees to **correct the mechanics** used which **improve the management of the match**
  - Referees are not on the court to apply game mechanics just from memory, but to manage a sports game: volleyball or beach volleyball
- ⊗ The observer has therefore to **accept the individual manner and character** of each referee, which affects **their way of moving and of recognising and whistling faults**
- ⊗ It is important to **work with the junior referees** so that they succeed in employing **good mechanics as a reflex**, and as close as possible to the instructions in the Referee's Manual

# Tip 6: Mechanics (cont.)



- ⊗ In contrast, certain **small personal mannerisms** of the **senior referees** are a part of their personality but may become an example for the young referees to follow
- ⊗ Every one of us is the outcome of several actions observed from others
  - We copy, we recycle
- ⊗ In spite of age and experience, we should always try to accept and pass on small details from younger colleagues
  - **In other words, we never stop learning!**

# Tip 7: Breaking Down Barriers



- ⊗ **The best referee** is the one who controls with as few **decisions as possible**
- ⊗ **Each game** requires a **different performance**
- ⊗ There are **no two equal games**, and each one requires its **own approach**
- ⊗ **The quality of the referee** is determined by his:
  - Capacity to **adapt** to the **actual game**
  - Capacity to let it **flow** in a **spontaneous manner**.
- The referee does **not have to create barriers** to prevent the game from **flowing**, but should set up **bridges** by which the game can progress without **problem**

# Tip 7: Breaking Down Barriers (cont)



## Proof the Referee has understood the game

- ① At the end of the game, the **participants** - coaches and players - **shake each other's hands, including the hand of the referees**
  - This proves the teams were satisfied
- ① When a team, or both, end the game **complaining**
  - Something negative happened
- ① The **observer has to check and judge if**
  - the **referees understood the spirit of this match**, rather than an imaginary match

# Tip 8: The critical mistake



- ⊗ **Do not evaluate a performance by counting the number of wrong decisions**
  - This is bad or old practice... The **observer has to judge the overall performance**, and not one specific error
- ⊗ **An excellent performance for 5 sets can be destroyed, if the referee makes a wrong final decision at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> set**
  - **There may have been only one mistake, but it could be the one to decide the game!**

# Tip 8: The critical mistake (cont)



## Use of DVD Evidence

- On the other hand, **despite some specific errors**, a referee can achieve **good**, or even **very good overall performance**, because his or her **style and manner** were **accepted** by the participants

# Tip 8: The critical mistake (cont)



- ⊗ This is also what makes the difference between evaluating a performance recorded on DVD and evaluating one live:
  - A DVD recording makes it possible to appreciate a **special situation**, but this has a tendency to be taken **out of context**
  - By contrast, the same situation viewed on the floor of the arena can be perceived in that **particular context** and **judged in a different way**
- ⊗ DVD images tend to cut short reality, and only a person present in the tribune can get a feeling for what has really taken place on the ground

# Tip 9: Summarising the Performance



- ⊙ Prepare a **final summary** by beginning with actions to be avoided, and actions to be maintained
  - It is important to **conclude** with a **positive message**
- ⊙ A good **debriefing** ends with a summary of the comments, while
  - **beginning** with the **aspects to be avoided** and/or **improved** at subsequent games and it has to
  - **end** with **positive points** to be pursued in the career of the referee

# Tip 9: Summarising the Performance



- ⊗ Each referee has **qualities** which deserve to be **underlined** and **appreciated**. It is also advisable to speak to the referees about
  - **Teamwork** (performance is the result of collaboration, and not of the simple addition of whistles)
  - **Behaviour before and after the match**

# Tip 10: Observer as a Refereeing Coach



- ⊗ Always keep a **positive attitude**
- ⊗ The **observer** has to act more like a **coach**, who **encourages** and **advises**, and **not** like a simple **machine** to **allocate points**
- ⊗ The **observer** has to adopt an **open** and **friendly**, **flexible** but **confident attitude** when the referees use arguments to try to hide or excuse their mistakes - This is **human nature**
- ⊗ After a difficult match, alone on the court, under the pressure of both teams and the spectators, referees need a **friend** and **not** an **executioner**
- ⊗ The observer has to be **sincere & honest** without hiding the truth.
- ⊗ The observer should be able to **tactfully** inform the referee about the **points to be improved**
- ⊗ The **relationship** between observer and referee has to be based on **confidence** in each other

# Tip 10: Observer as a Refereeing Coach



## The Final Word

- ① The **progression** and **improvement** of volleyball and its referees depends very much on the **quality of the work of the observers.**
- ① **Referees** must **accept** that they will be **judged.**
- ① **Observers** have to **watch for the good qualities** of the **referees.**
- ① **And all - referees and observers - have to accept that**
  - Only a very **small number** among them will **arrive at the top ...**
  - This should not prevent **each one** from being able to play an **important role** in volleyball at **whatever level** they happen to be.