

## TIPS ON GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Officials work hard on knowing the rules of the game and on being able to perform the mechanics correctly. Probably the most important thing that will help officials reach the top level is being able to communicate with players, coaches, partners and administrators.

Communication is most effective when conducted professionally in a business-like fashion. Listening skills are the foundation of good communication. Be sure to listen to what a player or coach has to say without making the player feel like they are totally wrong and do not know what is going on. At the same time if the player or coach is not asking or speaking respectfully, then action must be taken to maintain discipline. It is also important that listening to the player or coach does not take you away from the game itself. Handling this situation so the player or coach feel you are approachable is difficult if the question is being asked as the game is going on. Making the player or coach understand that you will answer or listen when you can, without making them feel you are just ignoring them because the game is going on is an art that must be mastered.

Knowledge of the rules is basic. However, the ability to respond to the ten players, and the two head coaches in a professional manner is the mark of a good official. Keep your poise at all times. Do not initiate conversation with fans, coaches or players. Remember... legitimate questions MAY require a brief response, but statements need not be answered.

It is important that officials understand how to deal with administrators at games. Do not discuss something that happened on the court or in the locker room in front of a game administrator. What happens in the locker room and on the court between officials needs to stay there. Something you say in passing to a partner may be misconstrued by the game administrator. This can cause a great deal of grief for all involved.

Lastly, the way an official carries themselves and presents themselves is a form of communication. Show confidence without showing egotism. The impression you leave with your posture is a very important part of communication.