

Lets Talk Philosophy

Basic to any philosophy

All philosophies presume that the official has a thorough understanding of the game and is well versed in the basics such as:

- *Knowledge of the rules*
- *Good mechanics, techniques, and procedures*
- *Physical condition and appearance*
- *Consistency*
- *Character*
- *Sound judgment*
- *Dedication (feeling for the game)*

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The assumption that all officials equally possess these characteristics is erroneous. Officials bring many differences to the game. Other factors that may contribute to their success are:

- Background as player/coach***
- Personality/demeanor***
- Physical size***
- Experience***
- Working with veteran official***
- Field presence/poise***
- Adaptability***
- Game control***

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Developing a philosophy

Officials should work hard to develop a realistic and functional philosophy of officiating at whatever level they work. Consideration should be given to:

- Being their own person***
- Adopting and adapting– not mimicking or imitating***
- Developing solid methods and techniques***
- Remembering why they are officiating***

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A sound soccer officiating philosophy should include pride in performance, professional in approach, and an enjoyment that participation brings. Other factors to consider include:

- **Knowledge of Rules**—*It is necessary to have a perfect knowledge of soccer rules, and the ability to interpret them accurately and intelligently.*
- **Enforcement of Rules**—*Officials must, at all times, maintain unchallenged control of the game and unqualified discipline of its players, coaches, and benches.*

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- **Personal Appearance and Conduct**—Officials should strive for neatness in appearance. Uniforms should be cleaned and pressed. It is important that officials look professional and wear similar gear.
- **General Conduct**— Officials should be able to conduct themselves in a dignified manner at all times and be business like through each and every game.
- **Public Relations**—Officials should not discuss with a coach the play or players of an opponents team in a game in which they will be officiating. The coach should not help officiate and officials should not help coach.
- **Teamwork**—Officials should strive to work together from the start of the game to its finish. Partners live and die together on a field.
- **Consistency**—Officials should take pride in making certain that calls are consistent throughout the entire game. The first minute is just as important as the last minute.

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Use of Preventative Officiating (Philosophically)

Knowing the rules and mechanics of officiating are vitally important because it helps officials make decisions and calls quickly and with an air of confidence. However, many knowledgeable rule book oriented officials fail to succeed and advance to a higher level of officiating because of their failure to adapt a sound philosophy of officiating. Philosophy deals with the intent and purpose of the rules together with a common sense approach when applying rules to a foul or violation. Use preventative officiating techniques whenever possible. Be helpful to players and prevent problems with good communication such as talking to players at the appropriate time.

Players and coaches alike, appreciate officials who are helpful and allow the game to proceed with minimum disruption. Good rapport and respect is gained through preventative officiating

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Soccer Is a Contact Sport (Philosophically)

A good official realizes that contact must be looked at in terms of the effect it creates on the opponent. If there is no apparent disadvantage to an opponent, then, realistically, no rule violation has occurred. The official must use discretion in applying all rules. All contact is not a foul. Good officials will have many “no calls” during the game.

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Addressing Bench Decorum (Philosophically)

It is extremely important that officials deal with this aspect of developing a philosophy by first understanding that high school coaches have different constraints placed on them than a college or club coach. Dealing with high school coaches should be an easier task for officials since a cleaner and more well defined set of standards have been developed.

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The High School Game : For the most part, high school coaches are hired as teachers and coaching is an extracurricular assignment. Sportsmanship is a priority as is serving as a role model. Administration generally supervises the games and expects proper behavior from coaches. Acting appropriately, officials need to have the “courage to address inappropriate behavior when it occurs”. Game assignments are not lost due to “taking care of business”. A ten foot box is available to stand and coach. Coaches should correct their players, not the officials.

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A Goal for the Ideal Official (Wouldn't it be nice to say)

- *He/she notices everything but is seldom noticed himself.*
- *He/she has resourcefulness and initiative.*
- *He/she has dignity of voice and manner but with no suggestion of pompousness.*
- *He/she is considerate and courteous without sacrificing firmness.*
- *He/she can control the players effectively and understandingly.*
- *He/she cooperates fully with fellow officials.*
- *He/she is physically able to be and is in the right place at the right time.*
- *He/she knows what the rules say and what the rules mean.*

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Things to Think About (Philosophically)

- *The game should be won or lost by the players, not the official.*
- *Game control is a must, do what you have to do.*
- *Be consistent, this is the single most important aspect of the game.*
- *The courage to make appropriate calls.*
- *Establish good rapport with players and coaches.*
- *Use common sense if you get into trouble.*
- *A no-call is sometimes your best call*
- *Use preventative officiating techniques, help players when appropriate.*
- *Understand the role of the coach and the officials role in dealing with them.*

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Factors that officials should consider and incorporate with their philosophy are:

- *Do both officials call the same way at both ends of the field? (Consistency)*
- *Are decisions decisive? Are decisions firm, clear, and controlled?*
- *Is the game under control with coaches, players, and bench personnel? Game control most important aspect of game!*
- *How do officials react under pressure? Do officials make the tough call with the game on the line? (Players win/lose games—not officials)*
- *What is the officials mode of conduct? Friendly, poised, courteous, and alert when dealing with players and coaches? (Rapport very important with both players and coaches)*

If the answer is YES to these questions, the official should rest assured that he/she will receive a top rating by any reasonable coach or school administrator.

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