

# **The Other Side of the Coin**

## **Misconduct and its Sanctions - Part I**

A section of our Rule Book that we really don't like to have to use, but we all need to understand and how to apply; is Rule 21: MISCONDUCT AND ITS SANCTIONS. In my experience, this is an area where most referees really struggle as we repeatedly see a lack of the appropriate use of the sanction scale.

Although it is of utmost important that you read through and understand what our rulebook specifically says on Pages 41 & 42, I have some things that I would like you to further consider:

- Take a look at the wording in the Introduction of our Guidelines that say: "During a match, the referee must be able to distinguish between normal human expressions of feelings made under stress of the match and real conscious unsportsmanlike behavior." It continues further and I encourage you to read it in its entirety
- Making the decision to apply (or not apply) a sanction is an art and does get easier with experience. Is the coach disrupting the game? Does he continue? Each situation is so uniquely different.
- Experience will help you to decide whether a verbal or yellow card would agitate a situation or control a situation. Each circumstance where you find yourself assessing a sanction will better prepare you for the next. Experience is your best teacher!
- Without question, we must control any misconduct early in a match! If we address the minor misconducts that occur at 3-3 in set one, it may avoid a more serious infraction later in the match.
- What if you made a mistake in your match? Although we may take a bit of grief over such a situation, you must still have a limit. Even when you make a mistake, you must keep control of the match and not allow any participants to behave in an unsportsmanlike manner. My line is that "If a participant is obvious enough in their displeasure about my call that grandma in the stands can see it, I must address the with minimally a verbal warning. Don't ignore bad behavior!"
- Be aware of all actions on the court. Seeing the first bad behavior and dealing with it, means being in control of the match.
- Does the score impact your decision to sanction or not? You should always be aware of the score, but there are times where a sanction is warranted even at a critical point in the match. If you had assessed a sanction at 4-4 in the first set and the same thing happens at 12-12 in the 5th set, an appropriate sanction must be administered.
- Good collaboration between R1 & R2 is critical. Working well together ensures that you will be aware of everything that is happening. Prior to the match discuss with your R2 how you would like them to communicate to you that unsportsmanlike behavior is occurring.
- Be in control, but not controlling with your decisions.

Remember, that it's not your fault that a sanction is assessed during a match. This is a decision chosen by the behavior of the participants. The participant choose the behavior, you are just enforcing the rule as written in the Rulebook.

Until the next toss of the coin....