

# The Other Side of the Coin

## Match Preparation

So you have a 8:00am match. You arrive at the school at 7:15 or a minimally 30 minutes before match start time. What do you do? Pre-match, particularly for that first match of the first day is very, very busy.

For so many matches we do during the year, we are only one referee per court. Should this be the case, all of these jobs fall to you, but if you have an R2, this is when teamwork is paramount.

Bottom line, you need to be there in enough time to be able to:

- Check net height - of course this is the obvious one that everyone knows and does. Also check the net tension - does a ball rebound off the bottom of the net?
- Check game ball pressure (which may include tracking down the game ball from the host) and once the pressure is confirmed to be correct - Initial the ball. This is particularly important in a multiple court venue to ensure the correct ball gets back to the correct court. If using a 3 ball system, you must check 3 + 1 reserve ball and initial all.
- Insure that the score table has a scoresheet, line up cards and visible flip cards.
- Secure your scorers (often volunteers) and ensure that they are familiar with the score sheet. Unfortunately, you may need to do a 'mini score keepers clinic' if they do not know the sheet. Remind them to communicate to you, (either to the R2 or if you're alone, the scorer needs to look to the R1) for substitutions, time outs or should any issue come up on the sheet.
- Introduce yourself to the coaches. Keep it short. This conversation would differ considerably from event to event, but you should minimally introduce yourself. You may at that time identify who will be the head coach, should there be more than one person at the bench. Secure the head coaches' signature on the score sheet to verify the roster.
- Take a look at the benches - is the coaches 1st chair near the front zone? (the 3 meter line)
- Get up on the referee stand. Are you high enough? Too high? Remember that it must be a proper referee stand!
- Pre-match: where does the bench start? If the coach stands up from his chair, is he in the front zone?
- Take a look at the venue. Is there anything that may be dangerous to the athlete? Can that 'danger' be removed? Or can it be covered? Safety is paramount and any dangerous obstruction must be addressed.
- Is there anything that may limit play that you may need to inform the captains of? For example: limited serving zone or ceiling obstruction.
- Identify your lines judges.
- If you are working with an R2, always take a moment to share your expectations. (for example: sharing responsibility of the net, dealing with benches, etc.)
- Smile and remember we're here to facilitate the game for the athletes!

We do need a few things in our referee "Tool box" to complete the pre-match preparation, such as a ball pressure gauge and also a net chain to measure the net height - come prepared.

We have SO much to do before that first whistle blows.....don't take things for granted when you walk in the door of the gym. Taking care of these details can make your job on the stand so much easier!

Until the next toss of the coin.....