

The Other Side of the Coin

Working as a Second Referee

For much of our refereeing career, unfortunately we work alone. As we enter playoff season, we will find that we have more opportunity to work as a 2nd referee, as well as work with an a 2nd referee. It's a tricky adjustment and typically takes a few points to get used to.

What we need to remember when working as a 2nd referee:

- Your arrival time courtside is the same as it would be as R1.
- When you're assigned as R2, you do follow the direction of R1, but you work closely as a team. R1 should discuss with you prior to the match how he/she want to see discreet help should they be screened from the play. These discreet situations may include; 4 hits or determining who touched the ball last before it landed out of bounds. Where would the R1 want to see a discrete signal should it be required? Chest high? Below the chest?
- R1 should explain what their expectation is of the R2's area of responsibility.
- A discussion should also occur pre-match in regard to how sanctions will be requested by R2 to R1 should they be needed. Will the R2 show a signal to R1? Communication is a vital part of refereeing!
- The R2 works together with the scorer to ensure that the score sheet is completed correctly. Communicating with scorer is particularly important when there is any confusion on the court. Confusion in the eyes of the scorer may include a referee's unclear signal, a replay or a sanction. Don't take for granted that the scorer is aware of what occurred on the court.
- The R2 supervises the bench, the warm-up area and must ensure that the free zone is clear of obstacles.
- Prior to the start of each set and also at the court change in the deciding set, the R2 checks that the lineups recorded on the score sheet matches the actual positions of the players on the court.
- The R2 controls the game ball at the beginning of the match, during time outs and during set intervals.
- Before each serve, the R2 focuses on the formation of the receiving team to ensure they are in the proper position. Keep the line up cards in your pocket, but avoid constantly checking them as that gives the participants a lack of confidence in your performance.
- Of course, during the play, one of the main jobs as R2 is net and centerline faults.
- o As play develops, there's no need to pay attention to the net and centerline until the ball enters that vicinity.
- o As the attack unfolds, watch the play, not the net. Once the attacker is identified and foot placement in relation to the attack line is observed, shift your eyes to the net and centerline. Position yourself on the blocking side of the play and watch for net contact.
- o Focus on the blockers without ignoring the offensive players. Sometimes it's necessary to look through the net directly at the playing action.
- o Don't follow the ball as it crosses beyond the blockers. Keep your eyes at the net until no player is in a position to commit a fault. When all is clear, track down the ball quickly while transitioning sideways to the blockers' side.
- o Your transition should be done in a quick, fluid movement, with a side or a crossover step. One foot should be slightly in front of the other, to allow you to easily move front to back if necessary.
- Movement as R2, should be in a 'W' pattern during play – moving back from the post when the ball is close to the R2 side and moving in closer to the sideline when the ball is on the R1 side. Also, when the ball is out of play, the R2, should move back from the net, so the benches are visible in your peripheral vision – allowing you to see Time-outs or Substitutions coming from the benches. When you hear the whistle of the R1, step toward the court and adjust your focus to the receiving team.
- Second referees should be on their toes to assist the first referee with calls. Take in everything occurring on the court. Help the R1 with 4 hits – whether he/she is screened, or simply loses count. ☺ Again, this is just good communication!
- Should you hear or see any unsportsmanlike gestures or words, you must inform the R1.
- As an R2, your whistle blows and you initiate the signal sequence for:
 - o T-Outs
 - o Substitutions (if there is no horn at the scorer table)
 - o Net Faults or Center line faults
 - o Ball passing outside the antennae on R2's side
 - o Ball down, should the R1 not be in a position to see it.
 - o Positional faults on the receiving team.
 - o Illegal blocker or Illegal back line hit (discuss this with R1 prior to the beginning of the match)
- Signals as R2:
 - o Complete your movement into position on the receiving side of the court before starting your signal sequence
 - o Mimic, don't mirror the signals of R1, so there is a slight delay in your signal compared to the signal of R1.
 - o Fault signals are always shown on the side where the fault was committed.
 - o An R2 will raise both of his/her hands to the first referee to indicate that all is in order at the end of a Time out, after the completion of a substitution or once the players have been checked to be in their correct positions at the beginning of the set. This indicates that you're ready to go.
- If you do whistle a fault as an R2, the sequence is: Whistle, Signal fault, pause, and then follow the R1's signal for side to serve. Just a note: the R1 does not repeat the fault signal of the R2, only the side out signal.
- When dealing with the bench, never engage a coach, but do support the decisions of the R1.
- Protocol for time-outs as R2:
 - o Accept the signal from the coach or floor captain and blow your whistle. Give the Time out signal
 - o Begin timer (On a wrist watch – not on a cell phone!!!)
 - o Retrieve ball
 - o Check in with scorer and ensure they correctly record the time out.
 - o Turn to R1 to check in with them, as well as let them know how many T-outs have been used.
 - o Then take your position at the post, facing the score table to be in position to control benches.
 - o Blow your whistle to indicate the end of the time-out.
 - o Give the ball to the serving team, check that the scorer is ready and then signal to R1 with both arms up that you are ready.
- Supervising substitutions:
 - o Remember, that our protocol is for a 'Quick Sub', so it should be without delay, but it is most important that you ensure the scorer has accurately recorded the substitution.
 - o The R2, with the assistance of the scorer, informs the R1 and the coach that a team has reached their 5th and then 6th and final substitution.
 - End of the match – walk across the court and join the R1 and the team of lines judges under the referee stand for the handshake. The final job of R2 is to check and sign the score sheet.

As you can see, the word 'communication' is used again and again in this Weekly. Without good communication, the effectiveness of the refereeing team you cannot perform effectively as an R2.

Bottom line – take every opportunity to practice the skill of R2. Let experience be your teacher.

Until the next toss of the coin....