



OFFICIATING DEVELOPMENT SERIES | RESOURCE 07

GAME MANAGEMENT

Lead the Environment Without Becoming the Story

Strong game management protects fairness, communication and control while keeping the focus on the participants.

PREPARE.

PERFORM.

PROGRESS.

THE STORIES BEHIND THE CALLS.



WHAT GAME MANAGEMENT IS

Use this section as a practical conversation guide, self-evaluation tool and next-game plan.

Awareness Recognize rising emotion, repeated behavior and matchups that may escalate.	Prevention Use presence and brief communication before conduct crosses a clear line.
Consistency Apply the same behavioral standard to both teams and throughout the game.	Decisiveness When action is required, act calmly and use the correct rule and procedure.
Restraint Do not create conflict to prove authority.	

Control is the result of clarity—not volume.

REFLECTION: What would a partner, evaluator or assigner see from you today? What single behavior will you make visible in your next game?



THE ESCALATION LADDER

Use this section as a practical conversation guide, self-evaluation tool and next-game plan.

Presence Be visible, attentive and close enough to communicate without hovering.	Brief response Answer a reasonable question with what you saw and the applicable standard.
Boundary State clearly that repeated or unacceptable behavior must stop.	Consequence Use the appropriate warning or penalty when the rule and behavior require it.
Documentation Report required incidents accurately, objectively and promptly.	

Do not threaten a consequence you are unwilling or unable to enforce.

REFLECTION: What would a partner, evaluator or assigner see from you today? What single behavior will you make visible in your next game?

HIGH-EMOTION MOMENTS

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Hard contact Close distance, observe reactions and separate responsibilities across the crew.	Double whistles Pause, communicate and avoid competing signals.
Late game Know timeout, foul, clock and possession status before the pressure arrives.	Injury Protect the player, follow stopping procedures and keep others away as needed.
After controversy Restore the game with clear information and a professional restart.	

The dead ball after a difficult play may require more attention than the whistle itself.

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LANGUAGE THAT WORKS

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To a coach “Coach, I heard you. I saw legal position before the contact.”	To a player “Keep your hands off after the screen. We need space.”
To a partner “I have the foul. Did you have the shot released?”	To the table State the number, infraction and result slowly enough to be recorded.
Avoid Sarcasm, lectures, public debates, absolutes and promises about future calls.	

Professional language is brief, specific and finished.

REFLECTION: What would a partner, evaluator or assigner see from you today? What single behavior will you make visible in your next game?



PUT THIS RESOURCE INTO ACTION

Development accelerates when information becomes a repeatable behavior. Use this page to convert the guide into a personal plan.

MY CURRENT STRENGTH

What can my crew consistently trust me to do well?

MY PRIORITY CORRECTION

What specific behavior—not a vague outcome—needs to change?

MY NEXT-GAME CUE

Write a short phrase you can recall under pressure.

WHO WILL HOLD ME ACCOUNTABLE?

Identify a partner, mentor or evaluator and the evidence you will review.

PREPARE. PERFORM. PROGRESS.

Educational notice: This independent resource is designed for general officiating development. It does not replace any governing body's rules book, case book, mechanics manual, conference directives, state modifications or instructions from an assigner or camp staff. Officials must follow the requirements applicable to their level and jurisdiction.

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