



OFFICIATING DEVELOPMENT SERIES | RESOURCE 08

WORKING WITH COACHES

Listen, Respond, Set Boundaries and Move On

Communication with coaches should clarify the game—not turn every disagreement into a negotiation.

PREPARE.

PERFORM.

PROGRESS.

THE STORIES BEHIND THE CALLS.

LISTEN FOR THE REAL QUESTION

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

Information "What did you have?" can usually be answered with one clear sentence.	Pattern A coach may be describing repeated contact; listen, then observe the next matchup objectively.
Emotion Some comments seek release rather than information. You do not have to answer every statement.	Influence Do not let lobbying change a rule-based standard or create a makeup call.

Hearing a coach is not the same as agreeing with a coach.

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



THE BRIEF RESPONSE MODEL

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

Acknowledge Use eye contact or a short phrase: "I hear you, Coach."	Answer State what you saw: legal position, displacement, verticality, timing or coverage.
Boundary If behavior repeats, state what must stop without a lecture.	Exit Return attention to the court and the next responsibility.
Follow through If a line is crossed, use the proper procedure consistently.	

One complete answer is stronger than five defensive explanations.

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DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

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You missed it If certain, say: "I did not have the best angle. I'll work to adjust." Do not invent a defense.	Partner's call Do not publicly judge a partner. Direct the coach appropriately or share information privately.
Repeated questions "Coach, I've answered that. We need to move on."	Personal comments Set a firm boundary. Personal, profane or threatening conduct may require a penalty.
Timeout conversations Remain professional, keep the crew informed and avoid becoming isolated in a long debate.	

Honesty builds credibility when it is paired with composure.

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COMMUNICATION SELF-CHECK

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

Timing Was the ball dead, and could I listen without missing live action?	Distance Was I close enough for a private exchange, not a performance for the gym?
Tone Was I calm, neutral and respectful?	Content Did I answer with what I saw rather than defend my character?
Ending Did I clearly return to officiating the game?	

You can be approachable without becoming available for constant debate.

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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