

# Random Midseason Points of Emphasis

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Are you interested in moving up, working the “better” matches or getting a nomination for state semifinal or final matches? The following are assorted topics that are often handled incorrectly. You might need to work on some to up your game.

One of the most common coaching complaints centers on consistency. While it's most likely impossible to gain across the board, consistency on in-match judgement is your goal. Non-judgement aspects of the game are, for the most part, simple and well-documented (often in the Casebook/Officials Manual). As a professional cadre we should all be more consistent when it comes to mechanics and techniques. Here are some common issues. Pick one and focus on fixing it until it becomes a habit.

Warm-up times vary from county to county. A typical example is exclusive court/net use at 13:00 (home) and 7:00 (away). A **double whistle** warning (toot, toot) is given at 13:15, 7:15 and 1:15. The **horn** is sounded at 13:00, 7:00, 1:00 and 0:00. Alternative times in other counties are 12:00, 6:00, and 0:00. Sometimes the serving team has first use of the court/net rather than the home team. Bottom line: Know the warmup protocol for where you are working (contact your assignor if you aren't sure). Agree to the protocol at your pre-match conference/coin toss. Have the horn sounded when the exclusive use of the court/net period begins and ends for each team. Ensure a warning whistle is blown 15 seconds before each horn is sounded

If there is a National Anthem or player introduction, all four officials should take their positions on the sideline next to the referee stand. (LJ1, R1, NET, R2, LJ2). If your line judges are student managers running around preparing for the match, invite, but don't insist on their participation.

The R2 keeps the ball on the table while checking line-ups. A good practice is to check the receiving team followed by the serving team. Identify the captain and authorize the libero to enter for each team. The R2 should NOT go onto the court to check line-ups. Stay on the sideline between the centerline and attack line of the team you're checking. Then return the lineups to the score table, get the ball and roll/toss it to the server.

Once the lineup check is complete, the R2, **with whistle in mouth**, moves to the receiving team side of the net, gives one last look to each bench followed by the READY signal to the R1. The READY signal means that everyone involved is ready to play. The ready signal is given with the hand on the receiving side of the court.

Beckon for serve is a **two-step process**; first a whistle, **followed by** a horizontal arm sweep across the body to the opposite shoulder. The whistle and arm sweep should not be done at the same time.

Ending the play as the R1 is a **three-step process**. **Immediately** whistle when the ball is dead. Next award the point and then specify the fault. There should be **THREE SLOW STEPS** that are distinctly separate. Think of it as a slow waltz. You are telling the story of the previous play with your arms and hands.

The R1 **does not** repeat whistles and fault signals made by the R2. The R1 only awards the point based on the R2's fault signal. The exception is a net fault where the R1 provides the number of the player in the net after awarding the point. Don't put your hands directly in front of your face when providing this number.

The signal sequence for a call made by the R2 is to whistle, move to the fault side, signal the **fault**, then **mimic** the point from the R1. This means the R2 point signal should not come before the R1 point signal. A net fault is handled by the R2 showing the fault, then showing the player number. The player number is not shown for a center line violation.

During play, the R2 is primarily responsible and should whistle to end the rally for four faults: net faults, centerline faults, alignment faults on the receiving team, and balls out on the antenna on the R2's side of the court. To the maximum extent possible, the R1 should allow the R2 to whistle and signal these faults. More sophisticated coaches, players, and fans know that these faults are the R2's responsibility. If the R1 routinely makes these calls, the impression is that the R1 does not trust the R2 as a partner in calling the match. R2 credibility is diminished and that will not help you later in the match. Additionally, calling one of the R2 faults likely means the R1 was not completely focused on his/her primary responsibility. Eventually, that will come back to bite you.

The R2 does not need to move to administer subs. Less movement is better and more efficient. There is also no need to hold subs at the sideline unless your scorer is not proficient. Get their numbers, send them in and double check with the table.

The R2 should recognize a T/O request with a **double whistle** (two distinct tweets), show the team requesting the T/O and show the R1 the number of T/O's taken for both teams at chest level. During the time out signal, your arm should be vertical on the side of the team taking the time out. Then you point with the hand that was vertical to the center of the court for the team taking the time out. The R1 repeats the T/O signal but not the number of time outs taken.

The R2 should end every T/O with a 15-second warning **double whistle** (two distinct tweets). The horn needs to sound when the clock hits 0:00. The process is similar if the teams are ready to play earlier. Blow a warning whistle (Tweet, tweet) look to make sure everyone is truly ready to play. Then stop the clock and sound the horn. **THERE IS NO NEED TO RUSH THE END OF THE TIME OUT!!!** If a coach is still talking to the team or the players are still talking to each other, they are entitled to the entire time out period. This leads to the next item...

When the teams, LJ's and everyone else participating in the match are ready to play and the horn has sounded, the R2 signals the T/O's used and gives the ready signal with the **hand on**

**the side of the receiving team.** The R1 mimics displaying the number of T/O's used. **The ready signal is not used just because the R2 is ready to proceed.** The ready signal is used when the LJ's get back to their positions, the scorer is ready, and everyone is set to proceed. Again, DO NOT rush this process!

R1's have the right to expect LJ's to be trained by the host school and make correct calls. But, the awesome two-minute review class you give to the LJ's is not going to make much of a difference if your LJ's are kids or parents that have never worked a match before. Your goal is then to have an opinion on EVERY call from the stand on the off chance your LJ's make a mistake. Hesitation can easily lead to chaos. If the R1 is sure the line judge is incorrect, an overrule is allowed. Taking the QUICK lead by making the call as the R1 can save the day. Make the call and own it! A good technique when overruling a LJ is to put your hand on your chest and whistle. This lets everyone know that you saw the LJ's call, but you are overruling, not simply making a mistake. If no one in the officiating team saw the in/out result, a replay is allowed. If a line judge is not performing properly (not paying attention, not making signals, routinely making incorrect calls) the R1 has the authority to replace the line judge.

R2's should not move while making their signals. Get to your spot and then make the signals. Do not hide behind the pole. The R1 must see you.

R2's do not follow the flight of the ball. Stay on the net and centerline while players are near the net then find the ball once players are clear. The R2 should never see a hard driven ball hit near the endline or deep sideline. Stay on the net where your primary responsibilities are located.

Coaches are NOT allowed to go to the score table to ask questions. The R2's "office" is the space between the attack lines. Do NOT allow coaches into your office. If you are working alone as the R1, brief your table that they are not to answer questions from the coach. In addition, cover this at the coin toss. "Coaches. Do not approach the table. If you have a question, please send your captain over to ask me."

Do NOT address people in the crowd. If you need something handled talk to the host manager. This may mean you have to climb down from the ladder until the issue is addressed. Do NOT "discuss" calls from the stand to the bench. Use the captain.

Do NOT be afraid to use sanctions. A yellow card is simply a warning. In many cases, bad behavior can escalate quickly if it's not immediately addressed. Be calm, be professional! With that being said, **please** make sure you know the correct technique and procedure associated with each sanction.

Don't be the official that is unwilling to admit to making a mistake. Own them and fix them - immediately! A replay is allowed if a whistle was blown incorrectly. Be open to quick discussions. Be polite, be professional and most of all, be approachable! Please don't make up rules and please don't make up signals.

If you're not providing/receiving critical feedback from your partner before and after each match, you're not making the most out of the time on the court. Be sure to hold a pre-match briefing and a post-match "hot wash up."

Finally, on the business side, remember to work with your assignors. Accept your matches promptly. Keep your calendars up to date. Avoid turnbacks except for emergencies. Communicate. Assignors greatly appreciate officials they can call at the last minute when emergencies arise. Keeping a uniform in your car is a great idea.