

Scrimmages are complete and we are only days away from the season opener for most of us. I have been looking for some words to share with everyone. For some of us this will be our first official game since 2019. Emotions and adrenaline will be at its peak. For some coaches and players, this will be a full restart. It will be time for parents and fellow classmates to cheer for their teams. Let's make sure that we remind all involved about good sportsmanship. This reminded of an article that I read in Referee Magazine a few years ago and I want to share some of that with you.

True Blue Crew Will

Pull Through With No Miscues

We are the third team on the field. That's an apt description if we're fundamentally functioning as a team, which is a group of people working together to achieve a common goal. Sometimes that doesn't happen. We can get so locked in on our initial key (player we're supposed to be watch) that we stay on him when he's no longer part of the play and don't shift our focus elsewhere. We can be ball-watchers who watch the runner, not what's going on around him. Or we may just think it's safer to stay in our own lane at all times.

Yes, we can go overboard and working outside our area of responsibility, but if we don't help our crewmates when we can, and when it's proper, the odds that we'll achieve our goal of working a great game will diminish greatly.

Take the umpire. He can be a very vital cog in pass-play machinery by making trap catch calls on passes over the middle when wing and deep officials get screened off because they receiver turns his back to them, or a defender gets in the way. To do that, you must have the quarterback in focus as he watches the line play and spins around when it passes thrown. Holding can no longer affect the play, so why look for it? The referee can clean up as a play moves downfield.

Say a sweep goes to the law judge's sideline, forcing him/her to back up so the runner can pass him/her. With the commotion he/she can end up yards behind the dead ball spot while the runner is driven back, so progress is an issue. Using cross-field mechanics the line judge can, as he/she moves downfield, glance at the head linesman for help on spotting the ball. The head linesman glides down, cleaning up by watching for fouls behind the play, and stops at the proper spot. He/she may not be dead on accurate, but it will be close enough to be useful.

Tight sideline catches can be difficult. If there is a wing official and a deep sideline official, they can communicate, non-verbally or verbally if needed, about whether to receiver got a body part down inbounds and kept control throughout the catcher process. In a four or five official crew, the wing must piece everything together on his/her own. But an alert back judge who has shifted his/her focus with the pass can help if they see a bobble or the ball come loose. Go to the calling official get away from the players tell him/her what you saw, any make the final ruling.

A great example of working together is if, instead of relaxing as a play moves away, officials keep their heads on a swivel to pick up off ball trash that may go undetected by the officials working the end of the play. If we do that, we will fulfill one of the commandments of great

officiating: be great dead-ball officials everyone can help the referee by being calm, clear, concise, and complete in reporting files.

There is a myriad of other ways crew members can help each other. The point is that a crew can't achieve its goal of working a great game unless each person does that when necessary.

Have a great season and most of all “Have Fun”.

Respect



The Game