

Earlier this season, I shared a message called “Table Talk;” the kinds of things you should cover as part of your pre-game with the table personnel. Now as the season ends, now that our playoffs begin tomorrow, I wish to address a subject, we rarely hear about...what I call the importance of “Self-Talk.” I don’t care how experienced you are, the script inside your head, the things you say to yourself are just as important as the things you observe on the field of play. Below are my top ten suggestions to keep in mind as we head to playoffs:

- 1.) I wouldn’t be officiating today’s game, unless the assigner and fellow officials thought I was capable.
- 2.) As Rich Tamberrino would suggest, try officiating the game in smaller segments. In other words, can you break down a quarter in 3 segments of 4 minutes and promise yourself to maintain maximum focus for that segment before you concern yourself with what is to follow. Success in small segments will lead to success as a whole.
- 3.) Mentally and physically prepare beforehand. I like to begin with preparing my uniform, shinning my shoes, etc. the night before, which begins my mental preparation.
- 4.) Night before the game is a good time to survey the new rule changes and “BIG” stuff. In the constant flow of the game, we are liable to miss the smaller pushes, but it’s the big illegal stuff we want to get.
- 5.) I don’t have to prove myself to the coaches, fellow officials or even to myself.
- 6.) I may make mistakes, but in the end give it your best!
- 7.) Take deep breaths and say to yourself, “I can handle this.”
- 8.) The night before VISUALIZE yourself on the field, making calls.
- 9.) Get a good night sleep, get to game site early so you can stretch and be involved in a good “pre-game.”
- 10.) MY philosophy is “You are only as good as your fourth quarter, because that is what they remember.”

Final Note: I always remember what one student said as we got to the playoffs, “Now we get the really good refs.’ Scott Frederick used to say, no matter whether youth, high school college or club, it is always a privilege to do a championship. Those opportunities don’t come too often, so enjoy while you can.

Best to you in the playoffs and give it your best and you will have a memory for a lifetime!

Jim Bateman 5. True-4-12-2-c.