



Basketball Officials of Younger Grades



Key in your role as an official is to remember the 3 main functions of a referee:

1. Make sure the game is SAFE – either by blowing your whistle or by proactive officiating, players will respond to the level of play you encourage from them;
2. TEACH the game – you often can have more impact on the players on the court than the coaches at the younger levels – understand the game and know the rules;
3. Ensure that the game is FUN – your enthusiasm and an eye toward encouraging all of the players will allow the players to have fun;

7 steps to a successful game:

1. Introduce yourself to both coaches and clarify any special rules so that everyone is on the same page from the beginning. Check in with them throughout the game to see how they are doing but don't get in to long discussions about specific calls. Listen. Hear them out. Clarify anything. Move on.
2. Talk to the players proactively throughout the game to avoid calling fouls or violations while still reinforcing expectations and proper play: "Hands off on defense", "slide your feet", "in and out of the key", "back on defense".
3. Weigh advantage-disadvantage. For example, when a mistake is not caused by the other team, consider letting it go (i.e. throw in or traveling violation in backcourt with no defense vs. traveling on the way to a layup). Depending on the situation, you may still want to stop the game, take a brief moment to educate the player(s) as to what they did wrong and keep the game moving.
4. When you do have to make calls, remember many of these players are in their first exposure to the game. Get to where you don't have to yell for them to hear you, bend over to get at their eye level and explain to them in simple terms and/or demonstration what they did wrong and what they need to do differently next time.
5. Use the breaks at the quarters and halftime to reinforce certain messages to the players. Gather both teams at the scorer's table before those that are entering the game take the floor. Quick. Concise. Positive. The players will understand what you expect and the coaches and fans watching will appreciate your efforts to communicate with the players and them.
6. Encourage both teams equally and often. Particularly in the 4th grade, as a "home team" ref, but in all occasions, make sure you verbally support and congratulate both teams for a fine effort, nice play or good hustle – you can do this while play is happening just like proactive officiating. No need to shout it from the mountaintops.
7. Smile. Have fun. Enjoy the experience. Remind everyone that a good time is being had by all.

For more information, please visit our website at <http://seattleoyyam.org/programs/cyo-athletics> , email us at athletics@seattlearch.org or call our office at 206.654.4643.