

## **Coach Communication Guidelines**

(Revised October, 2013)

Communication between officials and coaches is extremely important and is an essential element of a properly officiated game. Most coaches identify communication as the single most important attribute of an official. The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the expectations of both coaches and officials for all CFOA-officiated games.

The head coach is entitled to an explanation of all unusual rulings or situations. The explanation will normally be given by the wing official, but as necessary, may be given directly by the referee. The emphasis here is that this communication is with the head coach only. A timeout is not charged for these types of discussions. Official's timeouts to talk to coaches outside of 3-2-5c should seldom be allowed. Officials can talk with coaches during a dead-ball period.

The head coach may request a coach-referee conference per Rule 3-5-2c at any time while the ball is dead. The purpose of the rule is to review a possible misapplication of a rule by the officials, not to question a judgment call, nor to express an opinion on the quality of the calls. Additionally, a head coach may expect to have reasonable and brief questions answered by the wing official. The head coach is entitled to the following information for all fouls: the type of foul, a brief description of the act, the number or position of the offending player, and the enforcement. For example: #62 was called for holding; he pulled down an opponent, it'll be 10 yards from the spot of the foul and second down will be repeated. Referees will announce the number of the fouling player whether they have a microphone or not. This communication is important because it emphasizes the need for accuracy in calling fouls and deters phantom calls.

Assistant coaches and other authorized sideline personnel (AD, chain crew, photographers, ball boys, trainer, security, etc.) are not entitled to any information from the officials. However, the wing official may opt to respond to simple direct questions such as the number of the down or the number of timeouts remaining.

No coach may make any remarks regarding the officials or the officiating. They do not have an expressed or implied right to scream at or berate officials. Brief exclamations such as "Oh, no!" or "That wasn't interference," or requests like "Can you watch for holding on #65" are acceptable, but comments such as "They are holding on every play," "Call it both ways," "This is the worst officiated game I've ever seen," etc. are not acceptable. A warning (not a sideline warning) may be given for the first offense. Any subsequent violations will be treated as unsportsmanlike conduct. Depending on the severity of the offense, an unsportsmanlike foul or an ejection could be appropriate for a first offense. Warnings will not be given for any statement by anyone along the sideline that involves direct criticism of an official or an official's decision. These remarks usually include the word "You." Such statements shall result in an immediate unsportsmanlike conduct foul. Any visual depiction of a foul such as tugging on a shirt is an immediate foul. A team should not be penalized for actions by anyone for whom the head coach is not responsible such as photographers. Simply ask the game administrator to remove the offender from the sideline.

Officials should communicate in a calm manner and should not say anything except to answer a question. There should be no profanity of any kind.

No coach or member of the officiating crew will make negative post game comments about the officiating that are made public via any media including social networks. Violations will be adjudicated by CHSAA.