

## 9 Cs of Soccer Officiating

When I look for some guiding principles of soccer officiating, these 9 C's stand out as being mandatory for referees at all levels. Do a self-analysis on your own refereeing style and abilities, and see which ones you need to work on. The Maryland assessment program is available to help you if you initiate the action by requesting an assessment.

**Conditioning** – an absolute necessity! It has become more predominant than in the past and is increasingly more important. Athletes have developed dramatically in size, strength, mobility and skill. You have to be able to keep up with play on the field and be close to play and in a position to “sell” all of your decisions. It also refers to mental conditioning because of the pressures and stresses of being a referee.

**Communication** – You have to know how to handle people. You are a referee until you blow the first whistle. Then you become a salesperson and a man manager. Your success completely depends on how effectively you communicate with the players, coaches, spectators, and other members of your referee team.

**Composure** – A lot of problems arise and difficult situations occur throughout all soccer games. If you become flustered, nervous, or emotional, you won't be successful. Composure is dependent on a thorough knowledge of the Laws.

**Confidence** – You gain confidence with a thorough knowledge of the Laws. However, you need a realistic application of the laws and how to apply them in each individual circumstance. Also you need to know how the laws apply to different age levels and skill levels, otherwise each game would deteriorate to a succession of free kicks, and no one would get any pleasure from it.

**Concentration** – You must block out all of the distractions, which may come from coaches, fans, or players trying gamesmanship tactics. Everyone knows that referees are blind. The best referees are also deaf to anything that breaks their concentration.

**Courage** – Being a soccer referee is no job for a coward. You have to have the courage to make the critical call and recognize that “Moment of Truth” or you will not be a successful referee. Have the courage to give the appropriate Caution or Send Off to keep the game from disrepute.

**Character** – The players and coaches must feel that you are approachable. Not to the extent that there is familiarity, but that you are not “above” them or the game. Deal with injuries correctly and recognize the difference between injuries and gamesmanship.

**Consistency** – Call the same type of fouls throughout the game from the first whistle to the end, no matter where the fouls occur and make sure that they are applied equally to both teams. Be prompt with your decisions and give them firmly. Recognize what advantage is and know when and where to apply it.

**Control** – You must assert authority firmly. Recognize the first foul and not merely retaliation. Know what constitutes persistent infringement, time wasting, and encroachment and deal with these attempts to undermine your authority and control of the game.

