

Professionalism Is Paramount

Cornelio Galdones, Feb 2022

These days with rampant social media and increased vigilance on sexual, moral and civil misconduct, be conscientious of what you do. Someone somewhere is always observing you in public. You seldom will go unscathed with even the slightest perceived wrong. You might figure no harm, no foul. Don't kid yourself. You've harmed one person. You! There goes your reputation. It's now foul. Whether you're at the playing venue or away from it, it's prudent to think right, act right, look right, dress right and do right at all times. Strive to be professional in every regard.

Think right. "What were you thinking?" was a dreaded question to hear in our youth for messing up. This applies more than ever to us as adults. Before acting on your own, think of the ramifications. Will the effect of this personal activity carry over to hamper or degrade your role as an official? For example, will partying the night before worsen your performance or be obvious? Is it wise or stupid? Good or bad? Ethical or evil? Acceptable or offensive? Constructive or destructive? Safe or risky? Reasonable or ridiculous? Give measured thought to questions like these to avoid the one you don't want to hear. Plus, think of the welfare and benefit not only of yourself but your organization and others as well. Think. It doesn't cost you anything and will prevent you from paying the price later.

Act right. Character counts. No status of yours is beneath you. Though you may feel you should be higher in rank or receive better assignments, stop pushing and complaining. Prove your merit and your time will come. Maintain a work ethic, excel in all you do, be a solution not a problem and keep your nose clean and mouth shut. Furthermore, no advice or criticism is beneath you. Those telling you like it is are looking after you. Be receptive and listen. You'll be better for it. Upon advancing, thank all who helped you and give forward by mentoring others. In addition, no task or assignment is beneath you. Each and every one is important to someone. Perform as such. Moreover, no payment for your efforts is beneath you. If you're in it for the money, you're in it for the wrong reason. Also, nobody is beneath you. Regardless of your stature, treat everyone with respect, courtesy and consideration. When in society, no law is beneath you. Take the law unto yourself and sooner or later the long arm of the law will get hold of you. Basically, nothing should be beneath you. Rise above all except for the law. In lieu of being a character, show you have character.

Look right. How you're seen influences how people will judge you and react to you. Put your best foot forward. Ascertain your grooming is neat and clean, not wild. If able and willing, do something about being overweight to be viewed in a better light. To get the job done, bring just the gear you need because the negative impression created by extraneous paraphernalia such as backpacks could detract from the positive results you produce. On site, sustain a dignified posture by standing at your tallest. As you carry on sticking to business on hand, move and gesture in smooth, sturdy manner. Looking assured and in control, pay attention to details to leave no doubt you're focused and in charge. Make an appearance appealing right off the bat. By projecting a serious, composed and commanding presence, you're with "it."

Dress right. Don't dress to kill or be killed by how you dress. Instead, dress in style without being stylish. Jewelry is okay provided it's easy on the eyes. It mustn't assault or attract attention. Nor should your uniform. A critical eye will detect if any of it is not according to code, unfit for your body type or unkempt. If you wonder whether or not an

item of your attire will pass muster, assume it won't. Regardless of how old it is, your uniform should look brand new and when worn, sharp and immaculate. Dress like you mean business.

Do right. Nailing all calls is the essence of what you must do as an official. Don't just be at the game, get into it. Knowing the rules by heart isn't enough. Bone up on the latest techniques and strategies on how the game is played to gain valuable insight from the perspective of players and coaches on what they expect from your service. Thing is, officiating is full of gray areas. A correct call according to the rulebook may not be the right call in the spirit of the game. Understand what to call as well as what not to call. Render all without bias or hesitance, including tough decisions raising hackles. Staying cool, calm and collected, hear out with an open mind any frustration or dissenting comments and keep the situation short and sweet. Displaying empathy and dispensing consistent, competent calls go a long way in building trust and credibility. Any wrong is certain to stand out. Be invisible. When you're not remembered at all, that's the ultimate. You've done it right.

Make professionalism a habit in every aspect. If you're noticed, ensure it's not for the wrong reasons. By being the best you can be in everything you do, you'll soon become a model official. That's right.