

Observing Tips

General Criteria:

- Fitness: If officials are unfit, they may not be in position to make a call. The following may happen:
 - Calls can be missed
 - Situations can get out of hand
 - Players could get possibly hurt

Maintain Enthusiasm:

- Anyone who has officiated knows the toll it can take if he lets it
- Look at whether officials handle situations better than others.
- Understand if an official is frustrated or is working with an inexperienced crew
- Qualified competent officials breed enthusiasm and calm down the coaches, players and fans

Key Advice:

- Do not discuss the game or officials with anyone in either the press box or in the stands (depending on where you are sitting).
- Look for the officials to operate in a professional manner throughout the game.

Before the Game:

- Contact the host institution's athletic office prior to game day and let them know you are coming. This would be a good time to ask permission to use the press box.
- Contact the game referee several days prior to the game to confirm the game time. Instruct him to contact you if the game is cancelled or the time has changed.
- Ask the referee if he is comfortable with you attending the pre-game conference. If he is uncomfortable with this, then do not attend.

During the Game:

- Look for the following:
 - Professionalism throughout the game, for example, when the pre-game on the field is conducted. Watch how the referee speaks with the table, the umpire and the field judge making themselves available to players, etc.
 - Observe proper field mechanics throughout the game
 - Make notes for each official for the post-game conference.

After the Game:

- The post-game conference is a must!
- During this time, first address general comments that apply to the game without specifically addressing the official.
- In a positive way, be honest and frank.
 - Start with the referee and explain what you have observed.
 - Do the same with the Umpire and Field Judge.
 - If there is concern about anything, allow the officials to explain and if you accept the explanations do not put it in the report.
- Remember, the focus is centered on feedback and teaching.
- Your comments are the primary element and not the numerical rating.
 - Do not share your ratings with the officials.
 - A good thing to do is to send each official his observation without the rating, so that he can see, remember and put into use the information on the report.
 - Your comments should reflect the rating.
 - Do not tell the officials they did a good job and then send a lengthy observation to the contrary.