



Angry Coach: 5 Steps at Least 2 Too Many

Author: Paul Krome

November 7, 2014

As a basketball official, I read with intrigue, and later a degree of amazement, Gordon Corsetti's "5 Steps to Keeping an Angry Lacrosse Coach in Check" blog from yesterday, which likewise appears as a column in the Your Edge/Officials educational section of the November issue of *Lacrosse Magazine*.

Four steps, some with flexibility, before finally ejecting a coach as the *fifth* step after he or she, among other violations of coaching tenants, repeatedly berates and disrespects an official, models abhorrent behavior in front of players and elevates himself or herself above the game?

Certainly nothing personal toward Mr. Corsetti, an accomplished collegiate official that has risen from the youth level through no shortage of passion, hard work, rules study and mechanics practice, but is this the norm in lacrosse?

While, as noted, lacrosse officials can jump to step 4 immediately for extreme cases, such tolerance fuels lacrosse's significant problem, characterized mildly, of unsporting behavior by coaches on sidelines, often captured by television cameras and still photographers and rarely challenged by announcers. Scholastic and recreational sports represent extensions of the educational setting, and that invective flies in the face of any semblance of honoring the Creator's Game that we purportedly teach young athletes in the sport.

I would submit lacrosse officials need to penalize such behavior with more speed and significance than current protocols seem to intimate in yesterday's blog. Quite simply, five steps represents at least two too many.

On the hardwood, I have no problem with a head coach questioning one of my calls when circumstances allow for a conversation. If the coach's behavior jumps outside of a dialogue to include shouting, antics or repeated officiating from the bench, a verbal warning would be acceptable, but by no means required. Did the coach warn you before he or she started acting like a fool?

Generally, assistant coaches should not address officials.

Following a single warning to the bench, lacrosse would benefit in the long run if its officials would penalize a second transgression with something more equivalent to basketball's technical foul, which gives the opposing team two free throws and possession. Lacrosse players serving time in the penalty box sends an immediate, clear message that the misguided coach is accountable for putting his or her team at a significant disadvantage on the field.



If the coach does not learn from that penalty that such behavior is grossly inappropriate, officials must respond to his or her next (third) venture “over the line” by ejecting the coach from the visual confines of the venue, accomplished in basketball via a second technical foul. There is no place in amateur sports for a coach who by choice or by lack of ability abdicates the roles of leader and educator by repeatedly losing perspective on calls and attacking officials as a result.

As a former player at least, I can attest to the quick learning a significant penalty incites. I earned a technical by mouthing off during a game in high school. The free two points helped our opponents to a close win. I felt terrible. Never said a word after that.

I would like to see lacrosse rules writers and officiating instructors put an end to extended leniency regarding unsportsmanlike conduct from the bench. I agree with the concept of escalating penalties; the escalation just needs to happen faster. Three strikes and you’re out would serve this sport much better.