

So I'm sitting on the plane reading Referee Magazine. Yes, I subscribe. Yes, I read it faithfully. The articles are actually pretty good except when they try to take the refs against the world, everybody hates us, perspective. I digress.

So, the pages are turning quickly. It's riveting. I get to an article on one of the leagues long time fixtures, Joey Crawford.

In this article about Joey, he admits he has anger management issues. That he has a hard time accepting that players, coaches and fans aren't yelling at him they are yelling at the uniform. He makes the point very clearly that he can not stand when people disrespect his profession. Suggesting that technicals are issued because of that disrespect.

This isn't anything new to anyone who has watched his games, but it is an admission that league policy is not the basis for what he does. That's not good. Joey certainly does not have a grasp on the bigger picture of what is going on in the game, the league and the impact of those technicals. To him a tech is a way to handle a perceived slight of his profession. That's personal. That's not business. The two shouldn't mix. The game is not about Joey and his issues. It's about the teams on the court and the rules in the book.

He also admits that tossing Nellie and Del out of our playoff game in our series against the Spurs last year was a mistake. That the league didn't like it, his employment was at risk, and the league explained to him that they need to be the ones to take control of an issue when a coach, or player doesn't exhibit appropriate behavior. Joey agreed with this assessment saying he now understands the leagues perspective. It will be interesting to see which Joey shows up in the playoffs this year. The Joey that understands, or the Joey who can't handle the disrespect he perceives he is receiving.

The good news is that he is honest about it and he says he is working to correct it. That would be a huge plus for the entire league. Skills wise, Joey is one of the best. The bad news is that if he does get all of this under control, he won't feel the need to do his famous "pants readjustment" as his way of telling you he is upset at you.

Also of interest, in a sidebar to the article on Joey, was a list of 4 officials currently in the league that all went to the same high school in Philly. In a league of 60 officials, 4 went to the same high school. Did they have a great officiating program there? A great trainer in the area? Was there something in the water? Or, is it a reflection of how the league recruited new officials into the league? I think I know the answer, but until I'm sure, we all can just guess.

Meantime, if you don't have your subscription to referee magazine, get it now!