

An officiating crew blows a 24 sec call. Every player on the floor knows it. Every fan in the building knows it. All but the 3 with whistles seem to know it. When it results in an easy basket and a player reacts demonstratively to the miss, should he get a tech? If the official called a technical because the player reacted, should the other 2 officials rescind the tech once they realize they missed the call that precipitated the tech?

If a coach then jumps out of his seat and yells, "what the hell is that all about", after the player tech, should a tech be issued to the coach?

What happens to the game when what should have been a turnover, turns into a 4 point play?

Which leads to the question, when should refs call technicals on players or coaches?

If a player, without anyone else other than the official he is talking to hear or know he is saying something, says "you fucked up that call", or "that was a bullshit call". Should a tech get called? What if another player had said the same thing to one ref without response, but when it was said to another ref, it elicited a technical. Was it justified?

Should the relationship between official and player be like teacher and student, where cursing is off limits? Or should the relationship, as it relates to vocabulary be equal to what players say to each other?

I personally think the relationship should be more like football. Who cares what the player or coach says. There is no part of the officials job that is defined by how a player, coach or fan feels, thinks or responds to an official. The officials have the obligation to enforce the rules. Fortunately in basketball, play continues on after a basket, and when it does not, the officials move away from the benches. If a player wants to sit and gab to an official, regardless of what or how he says it, play moves on, and he puts his team at a disadvantage, and the official is running to his spot on the court where he needs to be to do his job.

Now if a player or coach, keeps a ref from doing his job, by getting in his path, standing in front of, or next to the official during play and distracting him or her, then he deserves a technical. If he bumps or touches an official, he deserves to be ejected. At no point should the safety of any person on the court be at risk. But vocabulary, respect, "showing up" by being "demonstrative", those are not reasons to give a tech.

What does it mean to "show up a ref"? What does it mean to "Show respect"? If a ref is "shown up", "respected" or "disrespected" does it really matter? The ref is still empowered to enforce the rules regardless of any player or coach's actions or words away from the official. If you think about it, trying to protect oneself against being "shown up" or being "disrespected" is really about presenting an image. I can understand the natural inclination of an official to want to respond to someone yelling at them, or jumping up and down in response to them, just as I want to turn around and respond to fans that heckle me or one of our players during a game. It's a natural reaction. It's also a reaction that we suppress every single time it happens to us. If we can, why can't the officials?

If you agree that giving a technical when "being shown up" or "disrespected" is about image, then the logical extension of the line of thought is that refs are impacting the score, and potentially the outcome of the game to protect their image. How can that be right?

Let me also say, I'm only talking in the context of the NBA. Pee wee league officials are volunteers, or paid minimal wages. High school officiating may or may not be a profession for the official, but it's certainly not a high paying profession. In most cases, it's the same with college officials. NBA officials can make as much as a half a million dollars per year for 6 months work, with the opportunity to make more money in the off season running camps and doing other work related to officiating. Some even have had jobs during the NBA season scheduling and training refs for other organizations. Being cursed at is part of the job for all of us involved with the NBA, and in just about every other job on the planet for that matter. Dear Abby might not like it, but it's a reality. It's a reality that we all deal with, and so should officials. When an official calls a technical for any reason other than a player violating the rules of play, (operative words being "of play"), for preventing an official from doing his job, or for touching an official, then the call is about the official and not the game, and there is no place for that in an NBA game.

Which leads me to the NBA's operations manual. There is a rule that says that teams can not replay a controversial play, meaning a missed call by the officials, for fear of inciting the crowd. Hello, McFly, the whole reason people come to games is to be "incited." Fans booing officials is as much a part of the game as fans booing players, coaches and owners for that matter (some of my most memorable experiences are being booed by an entire arena. I love it!) Getting involved in the game is what people pay their hard earned money to do. It's what separates the going, from the watching on TV. Replaying controversial calls helps the fan experience, and the league needs to realize this.

And finally, what is up with Indiana Pacers fans. Your team has the best record in the NBA and you aren't selling out games. That's not the state of Indiana that I remember.

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