

Blow a call in a college football game, get suspended right ?

Believe or not, wrong. its the wrong thing to do, but its not a suprise. Not at all.

There is a reason why there is so much secrecy around officiating in college football and basketball; to protect the people doing the hiring. If you dont have to worry about scrutiny, why not throw the people you hired under the bus ? Or if you can, just lie about the entire situation and tell everyone it was the right call, or say nothing at all so all the suspicion falls on the game's officials.

In the Oklahoma game, the officials got it wrong according to statements from their bosses, and of course the many Tivo replays. [Of course the bosses conveniently](#) left out that the replay official wasnt provided all the angles that TV viewers saw, or that the equipment doesnt provide for freeze frame. Freeze frame is what, a \$99 dollar software upgrade ?.

Conveniently leaving out key information that would change the public's expectation of the person actually doing the job is one quick and easy way for management to throw their employees under the bus. Which is exactly what happened here. The result was the suspended replay official being harassed and threatened and suffering physical repercussions.

His boss should be suspended or fired for not having the balls to take the blame and redirect the public outcry to him/herself.

Thats a huge business lesson to anyone who manages professionals who have to deal with public scrutiny.

Oklahoma fans suggested it was a conspiracy by the Pac 10. The Pac 10 said nothing. When you hear such inflammatory comments without response, its never the work force with the problem, its management. Just ask any PR firm that specializes in crisis management.

When you see problems on a repetitive basis in any profession, the first place to look isnt the people on the job, its the people managing the people on the job.

Should it really matter which conference an official comes from when he/she is selected for a game ? Of course not. Most officials will call a game fairly. But how exactly is "fair" defined ?

From what i can see "fair" in all sports is a little bit different from manager to manager or conference to conference. The only certainty is that officials will do what all employees do, they will strive to make their bosses happy. They will do what it takes to keep their jobs and train to get promoted.

There are a lot of judgement calls in every game, in every sport, in any business. How any given judgement call is evaluated is purely a function of how the employee is managed. Call it mechanics, and those mechanics differ from conference to conference in every college sport. Getting assignments comes down to making the guy/girl in charge happy. As in any business, that always comes first, even at the expense of what fans may consider "fair" or even accurate. You may not believe it. But it happens. All the time.

Who hasnt been in a position where the boss wants to prove who is in charge, facts be damned ? Talk to officials at any level about different calls. You will here the same phrase repeated all the time. "this is the way they want me to call it ", or "they dont want us to call that"

What a great management lesson.

The job of management is to hire the best possible people for a position and put them in a position to succeed. Which means that the hiring process has to be strong. It means the recruiting and training process has to be strong. A workforce of professionals has to have bench strength. There have to be well trained individuals ready to take the place of those who quit, retire, or cant meet the standards of the organization.

It means communication has to be strong so that employees and management can have give and take and work to improve the organization and profession. It means the evaluation process has to be strong. Its not simply a matter of tracking statistics as a Pac 10 official said would happen going forward. Statistics are worthless if management doesnt understand how to use them as part of a bigger goal. Managers need to be able to communicate with each employee about their individual needs and design programs to help them improve, or make a change if they cant meet those expectations. And finally, management needs to be open to communications with the outside world as a means of developing strong relationships with its customers and garnering ideas and suggestions that independent eyes and ears offer that might improve the quality of performance.

Thats good business.

Its not what we have seen from the conferences that have been involved with controversies. Of if its there, they certainly havent communicated it to their customers and to their employees that i have communicated with.

In an industry as big and public as collegiate sports, thats a huge mistake. It also leads to some basic questions.

Why are officials hired and assigned by conference rather than a national organization ? Isnt the current system a formula for lack of consistency and public mistrust ? Is resistance by conferences to a single entity for officials just a confirmation of management over quality of work ?

Why are hiring practices and programs not publicized ? Dont they want to attract the best and the brightest officials ? Shouldnt the same professional interviewing , work analysis and hiring techniques applied to other professions be applied by the NCAA to their officials ?

Hey Im just a college football and basketball fan, but sometimes the lack of business 101 principles that any of their business schools teach is worse than glaring and there is no better time than now to make changes.

Or they can wait till the next official who makes a mistake is thrown under the bus and suffers the personal consequences. They wouldnt do that to other professionals under their hire, why do that to officials ?

What type of training do the officials receive during the summer and season ? Is it a fulltime focus during the offseason and off days, or is it a camp for a couple days ? I realize that for some this is a weekend occupation while they work other jobs, but given that some with a full schedule, particularly in basketball can make

more than 150k per season, I think its a reasonable question for fans to ask if the officials their teams count on are fully trained.