

Part Six

Hints for Judging Candidates

HINTS WHEN JUDGING NEW OR RENEWING CANDIDATES

Some day you may be called upon to rate or judge another official. Watching and rating other officials is beneficial for all of us, as no official should ever stop learning. By watching and teaching other officials we continually redefine our own officiating personalities and styles, while improving upon our own officiating procedures and techniques.

Evaluation by one's peers can be an intimidating experience so when meeting a candidate be sensitive and supportive. Ask about the candidate's officiating history. Give her the opportunity to ask questions while you complete the top portion of the rating form. It is important that candidates, especially those at the local and district rating levels, know that this is a learning situation and that the raters are there to help. Take a sincere interest in what the candidate is doing and how she is reacting. Watch the candidate carry out her pre-game responsibilities. Does she set a good tone for the game? Is she professional and friendly or is she overly officious and controlling?

As the game begins, watch for a while before writing comments. Let the candidate get settled into the game, but note if it takes her too long to respond to the tempo of the play. As the rater, you must evaluate the tenor of the game. Is it a rough game? Are the teams skilled or unskilled, equally matched? Is it a low key game or an intense cross town rivalry? You must determine what conditions confront the candidate before you can fairly judge her response to the game.

Next, watch how the candidate moves on the field. Is she in position to see the ball? Is she in the players' way? Does she anticipate play? Is she in quiet control of the game? Is there a purpose for her positioning? What can she see and what can't she see because of her positioning?

Evaluate her whistle use, whistle tone, arm signals and use/quality of her voice. Do all players respond to her whistle or only those players nearby? Is her voice effective in communicating with the players? Do her whistle and arm signals communicate confidence in the calls she is making? Once play is stopped, are players positioned correctly before play is restarted? Is play stopped and started efficiently.

The goal circle is critical. A bad call or poor judgment in this area can mean the difference between wins and losses. Is the candidate aware of the importance of being in the correct position to make the calls in this area? Does she position herself on the tangent to see potential far side and near side goal circle fouls by the ball carrier? Is the signal for a goal distinctive? Does she react quickly when the ball is cleared to make the transition from lead to trail?

The candidate's evaluation of fouls is important. Are her calls and interpretations correct, and more importantly, consistent? If you disagree with a call, be sure to check her positioning. She may be incorrect because of poor positioning. She may also be correct and you may be wrong because of what you can and cannot see from where you are standing. If you disagree with a call, be sure to give the candidate an opportunity at half time or the end of the game to explain what she saw and why she made the call. Don't simply write her off as an unqualified official.

How you actually do the rating is based on individual preference and/or local practice. Some judges mark down every foul missed and called. Others will write when there is a pause in the game and give general impressions with few specifics. However you use the rating form, be sure to identify specific weaknesses and strengths both for the candidate's benefit and to assist the individual who must give the candidate a verbal or written report. The raters may stand together or may choose to stand in different areas of the field to get different perspectives.

When giving Local and District ratings, the raters should confer just prior to half time to compare observations. During half time a spokesperson for the ratings group should talk with the candidate. Give the candidate an opportunity to convey her own reactions to the game. This may be helpful to you. Give your impressions of what she did well and offer your suggestions for improvement in the second half. Try not to distract the candidate with too many details. If you offer a few suggestions and she copes well with them in the second half, this will indicate to you her willingness to risk change and her potential for continued growth. Discuss both the candidate's strengths and weaknesses. Be honest in indicating mistakes, but also suggest ways to improve. Remember that you are not only a rater but a teacher as well.

When giving a National rating, the raters will ask the candidate if she desires half time feedback. While the raters may offer suggestions for improvement to candidates for lower level ratings, a candidate for a National rating should come to the rating game fully prepared and not expect "on the job" training suggestions or ideas. The candidate may speak with the raters immediately following the game if she chooses.

When the second half begins watch carefully for a response to half time suggestions. Notice the level of concentration during the second half. Does the game get more intense in the closing minutes? Does she respond and is she able to maintain control throughout the entire game? If an unusual circumstance occurs, does she respond appropriately and calmly?

At the end of the game talk to the candidate and summarize your observations for her. Be helpful, sincere, not too harsh, and remember that nobody is perfect. If rating a National candidate, do not initiate a post game conversation, but be available should the candidate request a constructive verbal follow up to the game.

Finally, before writing your recommendation, stop and think about the game that you just saw. Was it safe? Was it fair? Did the players and coaches respond well to the game? Did you see any of the game or did you only see the official? Does the candidate possess each of the qualities listed for the rating she is attempting? Be certain to sign the rating form, recommend a rating, indicate rating duration, and return the form to the designated individual. Simply writing "see again" on the form is not enough. If you feel that the game was not challenging enough, or that the candidate had very little action in her goal area, indicate this on the form and make a decision on a rating. Each member of the rating team should fill out her own rating form indicating her rating recommendation for the candidate.

See Part One of the manual for a description of each rating level.