



CORNY'S CORNER

Seek The Sound Of One Hand Clapping

Corny Galdones, September 2009

Each one of us chose to become an official. If someone talked us into it, we were lucky. At any rate, we're now held up to higher codes of conduct by everyone. Nothing less than superior morals, integrity and behavior are asked of us while on duty, off duty and away from duty. It's not fair, is it? Well, that's life. No choice we make is free of burdens.

Every contest is important to somebody. Stage our finest in look, action and effort to stand out in skill, class and poise. Bring honor to our sport, to our trade and above all, to everyone involved in the contest. Show them we care, quit messing around. Stick to business and keep talks short and sweet with coaches, players, work team and others. Stay invisible from the competition; allow its spirit to flow. For poor taste or bad judgment by us or any call of ours suspected as being biased, anticipate boos or much ado. Wanting bravos is natural, but no one came to see or hear us perform. Only vain puppies hang around afterwards hoping to be patted on the back. Forget it. Chances are we may be slapped on the head instead. Shoo! Toot and scoot. Quiet excellence with all substance and no flash, that's us, forever professional.

When at a contest not as an official, apply the Golden Rule. Treat the game officials like we would want to be treated as an official. Sure, we know how to officiate too. This doesn't give us a license to show them up, work them over, or rip them apart. Everyone's a critic. Should this urge or need arise, be kind. Do it with a positive slant or later in private with them when calmer heads prevail. If we feel they've done something wrong, be understanding for we make mistakes also and are as human as they are. Have a heart when airing an opposing view in our current role as player, coach or spectator. Let our cohorts officiate. Give them the respect our whistles deserve. If we can't or won't provide them this love, shame on us. In that case, here's the best thing to do. Bite our tongues and chill out. Never ever forget, we officials are a fellowship. If we don't support and protect one another, who will?

Society looks up to and counts on officials to know right from wrong, good from bad, thus we're expected and obligated to be model citizens. Go on, let the child inside us come out to play. Just don't break this trust. Be mindful wherever we go in public every waking hour of the day because even when not in uniform we're still linked to our function. Being angels isn't necessary, but we can't be devils either. A sin by one of us reflects on our entire officiating clan as well as on ourselves. Word gets around. Sooner or later, a leader of the pack will bark at us for our lapse and we'll end up in the doghouse. Whether having a brew, mingling with a coach or player, playing a prank, or testing the limits of wisdom, decorum, morality or the law, in spite of how noble or fun our intent may be, if this deed may be seen whatsoever as dumb, crass, improper, self-seeking, scheming, shady, illegal or anything negative, think, then think again. Is this risk really worth it? False or not, perception is reality despite our excuses and denials. If we keep up this nonsense and gain a bad reputation, we're toast. Tongues will wag about our notoriety. We'll be branded from then on as no good. Horrors! We might as well pack our bags, enter the Federal Witness Protection program and start all over.

Life is about choices. Having elected to officiate, we're bound by its exacting standards for how we carry forth. Abiding by them is not an option. It's a must at all times. Once an official, be an ideal official, no matter where, no matter what. Achieve this goal. Peace.