



## CORNY'S CORNER

### *Officiating Is About C's*

*Corny Galdones, May 2003*

Practically all components of volleyball officiating start with the letter C. These can be classified into three major groups. The first group of C's is the core qualities every official should have or practice.

**Competence.** Know how the sport is played. Know the rules. Be skilled in making correct calls using proper mechanics. Know what to call and what not to call.

**Consistency.** Apply each rule the same way throughout the match.

**Common Sense.** Not everything is cut and dried. Use good judgment to know when to apply the spirit of the rules instead of going by the rulebook.

**Control.** Regulate the atmosphere and administration of the match on an even keel. Allow the coaches and team captains to express their points of view and players to vent their frustrations without being abusive or disruptive. Do not ignore any misconduct. Use tact, verbal or whistle warnings, and if necessary, sanctions to settle the situation quickly.

**Confidence.** Internally, don't doubt yourself. Be positive in your calls. Avoid replays. Externally, project a commanding presence. Groom and dress impeccably. Stand straight and tall. Do not hesitate in making and displaying your decisions. Be polished, crisp and smooth with your mechanics.

**Composure.** Stay cool, calm and collected, especially when under fire. Curtail your emotions.

The second group of C's pertains to various elements in officiating a match.

**Competition (not Center of Attention).** The contest is not about you. Let the match and the players be the attraction. Be invisible. Facilitate and administrate, ensuring neither team gains an unfair advantage over the other.

**Coaches.** Be cordial with them, but don't chat. Let them coach. Don't let them coach you.

**Captains.** As the first referee, be approachable, but only by the captains. Let them have their say and be done with it. Address their concern then get on with the match. No prolonged conversations.

**Coordination & Cooperation.** You're not a one-person band. Officiating a match is a collective effort. Make every member of the officiating crew feel part of the team. Let each one do their respective jobs. Gently prompt them if needed.

**Communication.** What you say to coaches and players and how you say it in tone and body language can make a big difference in their acceptance and respect for you. Be clear, concise

and considerate when dealing with or addressing them. Talk with members of your officiating crew before the match about possible match situations and what actions or signals you expect from them. Then be sure to get their signaled input during the match. Keep them in the match with continual eye contact.

***Concentration.*** Stay focused. Do not let activities irrelevant to the match or play action distract you from the business at hand.

***Court Management.*** Take care of all match-related business. Start the match on time. Keep the match moving to completion. Secure the game ball. When permitted, proceed with the next match if your relief official is tardy.

***Court Awareness.*** Widen your view. Be aware of any activity on the court and its periphery that may affect play.

***Continuity & Cadence.*** Keep the match flowing at an even, lively pace without rushing the players. Avoid delays.

***Cards.*** Prevent sanctions from happening. Use sanctions judiciously to maintain control.

***Critique.*** After the match, review with your officiating partners the circumstances that could have been handled better. Curb repeating mistakes.

The third and final group of C's is the intangibles of being an official.

***Character & Conduct.*** Technical skills are not all there is to being an official. Professionalism and ethics are just as important, if not more. Once you become an official, you always will be conceived as an official. Be ever conscious of your behavior on the stand, off the stand and when in public. Be accountable for your actions. Carefully consider the consequences of participating in activities that may be perceived to be irresponsible, inappropriate, unethical, noncompliant or a conflict of interest. Perception is reality.

***Community.*** Being volleyball officials bonds all of us. As Sister Sledge sang in the late 1970's, "We are family." You represent us. Be a credit to our corps.

***Cash (or lack thereof).*** Net earnings from volleyball officiating are more like chump change than a cash cow. Choose this calling for the love and enjoyment of the sport.

***Commitment.*** Make officiating a top priority. Give it your best shot.

***Colleagues & Camaraderie.*** Your cadre of cohorts can become your friends, advisors, supporters and fellow carousers. Cultivate and cherish these rewarding relationships.

***Contribution.*** Show care, concern and passion for our profession. Give back to officiating by sharing your gained experience and knowledge with neophyte officials. Assume officiating-related positions or responsibilities that will benefit others. Lead. Be a role model.

The craft of officiating can be difficult because of its many facets. However, it's easy to describe officiating by remembering its basics start with the letter C. Ciao.