



## CORNY'S CORNER

### *Tunnel Vision*

*Corny Galdones, February 2007*

What problem is most common to second referees? Some might say a sore back, probably from carrying a partner or some extra weight. In either case, what could relate is coaches chewing our butts off about questionable decisions by the first referee. My educated guess would be tunnel vision. Don't take my answer as gospel, however. I once flunked out of college by carousing too much in my spirited youth. I wouldn't call that educated. Neither did my parents.

By gluing our eyes as second referees to the net during rallies to catch every net and centerline violation, we lose sight of what else is happening on the court. Zoning on the net leads to missing calls because without the big picture we aren't aware of or fail to anticipate all sorts of violations. Fixations aren't good for anyone except psychiatrists. Open up that vision. Spectators have the best view in the house. They see the entire court and all the action. It's too bad we aren't spectators. In fact, we must be exactly that to do our second referee job right.

Helping the first referee on concealed ball handling errors, four team contacts, libero in front of the attack line, illegal attacks or blocks by back row players at the net, players reaching over the net, jousts, failed pancakes, and especially illegal back row attacks from the attack line are other duties as assigned for a second referee. That's more reason to tune in on the action instead of just concentrating on the net and centerline.

Before each serve, don't lock in on the net. Scan the entire formation of the receiving team for overlaps. As play ensues, pay little attention to the net and centerline until the ball enters the vicinity. Relax. The blockers aren't going anywhere. Meanwhile, we should enjoy the game but be on our toes to assist the first referee on calls. Take in everything occurring on the court. Transfer those eyes over to the action and identify what could happen next. That's important. To eliminate any doubt in detecting a violation and signaling it to the first referee, look through the net directly at the playing activity with peripheral vision on the net scene, not the other way around.

As the attack unfolds, watch the game, not the net. Once the attacker is recognized plus feet placement in relation to the attack line is noted, or when a player could contact the net playing the ball, that's the proper time to shift our second referee eyes to the net and centerline. Focus on the blockers without ignoring the offensive players. Don't follow the ball as it crosses beyond the blockers. Keep those eyes front and center until no player at the net can commit a violation. When all is clear, track down the ball quickly while transitioning sideways to the blockers' side with either side steps or a crossover first step but not a Sunday stroll. Set in position before the second team contact and start all over again with a broad scope to observe the entire attack develop.

Tunnel vision? Oh, my aching back!