

Scenario 1

I'm new to officiating. Will I have to deal with irate players, coaches or spectators?

- Possibly. There is a common perception that official's are regularly abused. This is not necessarily the case. There is some abuse but this is isolated and receives disproportionate publicity from the media.
- Many officials find it a very enjoyable and rewarding experience and have extended careers in their chosen sport.
- Don't take it personally. Abuse often comes from over-enthusiastic supporters.
- If the interaction does become more serious, refer to the other scenarios provided on the Officials site.

Scenario 2

The coach of a team/athlete approaches you after the game.

What should you do?

- Open body language – look towards them
- Be open-minded and positive – they might want to congratulate you!
- Allow them to speak – and listen!
- Respond appropriately e.g. Thank you for your comments
- Follow up with coach, mentor, friend, club, or school

Scenario 3

The coach of a team/athlete approaches you after the game and challenges you regarding a call made during the game.

What should you do?

- See responses from Scenario 2
- Let them talk
- Active listening – eye contact, nodding
- Don't take it personally
- Be willing to discuss the ruling e.g. "This is what I saw.....and I ruled this way because....."
- Tone of voice – even, remain calm and composed
- Be aware of your body language
- They're allowed their opinion, and you're allowed yours
- Follow up with coach, mentor, friend, club, or school

Scenario 4

The coach of a team/athlete approaches you in an aggressive manner after the game and abuses you regarding a call made during the game.

What should you do?

- Determine whether you are at physical risk or not
 - No physical risk – see Scenario 3
- Physical Risk - Yes
 - Say “This is not a good time to have this discussion”.
 - Walk towards a group of people, club official or friend. Reassess the situation.
 - If they have calmed down, you may choose to follow the Scenario 3 responses.
 - If they haven’t calmed down, remove yourself from the environment.
 - Carry out any reporting process/disciplinary protocols for your sport if appropriate.
 - Follow up with coach, mentor, friend, club, or school.

Scenario 5

During the game/event, a player/athlete aggressively approaches you and pushes you in the chest.

What should you do?

- Step back and create space between you and the player/athlete.
- Take appropriate action in accordance with the rules/disciplinary procedures of your sport.
- e.g. Rugby, Hockey – show the red card.
- Netball – order the player off the court.
- If the player refuses to leave, suspend the game and seek appropriate advice.

Scenario 6

A player/athlete questions your decision during the game/event

What should you do?

- There are varying levels of responses to this, and these will differ from sport to sport, e.g.
- Netball
 - Ignore it
 - Recreate the hand signal
 - Repeat the infringement
 - Umpires can assist players by coaching them through the game at lower levels
- Hockey
 - Ignore it
 - Explain the decision at a convenient stoppage
 - Able to coach at lower levels also
- Follow the NSO links to your chosen sport to seek further clarification.

Scenario 7

A player/athlete in frustration at their own action behaves inappropriately

What should you do?

- Response depends on the behaviour
- Swears (heat of the moment reaction)
 - Ignore it
- Equipment abuse
 - Manage the situation
 - Penalise (in most cases)
- Directs abuse at the official
 - Manage the situation
 - Verbal warning to player and/or captain
 - Penalise/apply appropriate sanction/discipline
 - If this was a serious incident, seek guidance and support during the game if possible, and after.

Scenario 8

You arrive at the venue and find that aspects of it are not suitable for play/competition.

What should you do?

- Seek advice from local authority or facilities manager.
- Use common sense to overcome the issue.

Scenario 9

Spectators are encroaching onto the field of play.

What should you do?

- Ask them to step back during the play.
- Stop the game and ask specific spectators to step back – emphasise safety for both players and spectators.
- Seek support from team management or friend.

Scenario 10

A player/athlete suffers a serious injury during the game/event.

What should you do?

- Stop play immediately.
- Seek medical assistance (doctor/call ambulance).
- Manage the situation (keep player comfortable, follow instructions of medical guidance on the phone).
- Assess viability of the game continuing or being suspended/abandoned e.g. move game to an alternative venue, alter timings of the game.
- Resume game if possible.

Scenario 11

I'm at my child's sports event and I'm asked to umpire, but I don't know the rules.

What should you do?

- Do it! Be confident – they wouldn't have asked you if they didn't think you could do it!
- You don't need to know all the rules. Apply common sense.
- Put player safety/wellness first.
- Depending on the age of the players, set expectations about your ability.
- Apply the rules fairly to both teams (don't be harder on your child's team).
- Did you enjoy it? Contact your local official's club/association and make it official!