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!