

Game Day Preparation

Preparation doesn't stop when you get to a venue. Just as players don't arrive and start playing, officials shouldn't arrive at the venue and start officiating. First, make sure that you have the proper hydration and energy for the game; many officials eat a banana or an energy bar. You need to do what works for you. Make sure you stretch. It is too easy to pull a muscle or suffer injury without proper stretching. Obviously, make sure that any equipment you need is clean and in working order. You are judged by how you look.

When good officials get out on the field, they continue preparing for the game. Watch as the players go through their drills to focus on the player's speed and train your eyes. Watch them working through key parts of a game; start ruling on the play in your mind.

All officials will need to make tight calls at some stage of a game. Preparing yourself physically and mentally for those tight calls during warm-ups will help you make the right call during the game.

Don't waste preparation opportunities during the pre-game warm-ups. The players are preparing for the game and so should you. Prepare in the same way as the players – practice your positioning for key sequences during the game. Use this time to focus, get into your routines, and get your mind ready for game time.

As Alexander Graham Bell said, "preparation is the key to success." For officials that want to be at their best, officiate a great game, or even advance through the ranks, preparation is an absolute necessity. Spending some time every day working on your game will pay dividends. You will see the difference in no time. However, it doesn't stop with individual preparation. In many sports, officials work in teams. As with any other team environment, officiating teams need to be on the same page.

See '**The Officiating Team**' in this section for more information on this. Only when officials prepare both individually and as a team can they be at their best on game day.

Also, have a look at the '**Officiating for the First Time Checklist**' in the Development Toolkit for a comprehensive list of actions that you need to tick off before you step onto the field of play.