

13 Rules For Rookies (and Veterans)

- 1) **Know the Rules.**
This may seem obvious because new officials most likely have just been through training. Still it's not a bad idea to go over the rulebook before a game.
- 2) **Go Watch a Game.**
Go to a game and watch the officials. Watch how the crew communicates, the signals used and the positioning. Spend some time with them after the game. Find out what really happened.
- 3) **Know the Mechanics.**
Learn the mechanics and review them. The more you can think and visualize where you should be, the more natural it will seem during the game.
- 4) **Arrive Early and Prepared.**
Don't allow yourself to get in the habit of being the type of official who shows up right before game time. Get there early. Bring all your officiating gear. You never know what is going to happen.
- 5) **Tell Your Crew and Nobody Else.**
Your crew will want to know if you're new to the avocation and will help you. But, don't tell anyone else. Act like you've been there your whole life. An air of confidence does a lot to gain respect from players, coaches and fans.
- 6) **Check Point.**
Get in the habit of checking the field and equipment before the game. Make safety a top priority.
- 7) **Relax.**
You may have butterflies before your games (a lot of officials get them). As the game begins, take a deep breath and try to relax. Get into the flow of the game as soon as possible.
- 8) **Concentrate.**
Don't allow yourself to be distracted by anything. Focus on the game and your fellow officials. It's easy sometimes to let your eyes wander to activities in the stands or benches. Concentrate on the game at hand.
- 9) **Make Eye Contact with Fellow Officials.**
This habit will help you in all game situations, but especially when you're new. Making eye contact with your crew and using a few simple signals can explain a lot.
- 10) **Forget Mistakes.**
All officials make mistakes.
If you make one, remind yourself to review why it happened after the game and then move on.
- 11) **Check Your Hearing.**
It's best if you can tune out the fans, who usually only demonstrate how little they know. Listen to the coaches and players as long as their comments and questions are reasonable.
- 12) **Ask For Help.**
Ask experienced referees you work with to give you feedback.
You cannot work on 10 things at the same time, so ask for a short list.
- 13) **Assess Your Game.**
Did you have fun? Were you comfortable? Adjust your game to the level of play.