



## Referee Tip of the Week – Ask, Tell, Remove

Whether you are a new referee, youth referee, or a referee of many years we must not only do our job on the field of play but we must keep the team in order and under control throughout the match. US Soccer provides us guidelines on dealing with the benches, and these tips can be helpful when dealing with spectators as well. This week's tip is to help you handle situations with coaches and personnel, substitutes and in some cases spectators.

As part of your pre-game duties have the teams set up benches appropriately. We do not have the luxury of marked technical areas, however the referees must set the guideline for the teams. Set the tone for the game with a well organized field. Simple guidelines in setting the "technical area" –

- 1) Teams must be on the same touchline (same side of the field)
- 2) Have them set their bench or start the line of bags 10 yards from the halfway line and 3 yards from the touchline to allow the AR room to see & run.
- 3) An organized field shows your professionalism and makes a good first impression and gain respect for the referee crew.

There are times when coaches, assistant coaches, and other personnel are emotional during the match, this is part of the game. As referee we want to do our best to work with coaches and players to keep them in the game, referees should communicate with coaches they are part of the game, referees earn respect by acknowledging coaches, do not over react and dismiss a coach just for simply questioning a call, give them a simple "I got it coach as you run by" a simple hand wave to let them know you have heard them, on the other hand do not let emotions become out of control and affect the game.

When is it too much?

- Coach/bench personnel leaving technical area (including entering the field) to dispute/dissent a call
- Coach/bench personnel throwing/kicking anything while disputing a call
- Directed abusive, insulting or offensive language and/or gestures
- Inflammatory and/or aggressive behavior (verbal and/or physical) with the opposition
- Interfering with the restart of play and field players
- Making unwanted and/or aggressive contact with opposing players
- Interfering with the AR or fourth official in the performance of their duties

These actions are all considered "Irresponsible Behavior" and have to be dealt with by the referee. So what is the best approach? USSF has given referees the tools to deal with these situations in three simple steps:

- ASK - if a situation arises where there is irresponsible behavior, you first ASK the person to stop.
- TELL – if it happens again, TELL the person that the behavior is not permissible and insist it stop.
- REMOVE – If the behavior continues, you must REMOVE the person immediately.

It is important to use these steps and words so that coaches know when they hear TELL, it is the same as a player being shown a yellow card and cautioned. "Coach, I am telling you I don't want to hear it again, please."

If behavior continues you must now ASK for cooperation. "Coach, I am asking you to stop! I have heard enough."

If emotions continue to escalate and affect the game and your ability to referee a good match you have taken the recommended steps and now you must REMOVE this coach/team personnel or other individual.

If a situation of Irresponsible Behavior is something that warrants removal, example "offensive, insulting or abusive language or gestures." This type of situation you will go immediately to removing the person from the game.

As referees these steps provide us guidelines on handling spectators as well. Issues with parents and fans can be dealt with using ASK, TELL, REMOVE as well.

Remember you must make notes on your game card about any incidents, as you will be required to include these in your game report. Coaches/Team personnel that are removed from a match must be documented in a written supplemental report, noted as irresponsible behavior and sent to the CYS office with the pass.

For more information about this topic, be sure to read the 2009 Referee Directive, "Managing the Technical Area (<http://www.ussoccer.com/Referees/Referee-Development/Directives.aspx>).” In addition to this directive, there is lots of useful information on the USSF website (<http://www.ussoccer.com/Referees/Referees-Home.aspx>) in the Referee section. Take time to visit it often as information is updated regularly.

Have a great weekend on the fields!