

Riddell Senior Umpires Coaching Session

1. Communication

List scenarios where the different combinations of umpires would need to communicate with each other during the game.

Field & Boundary

- ◆ Out on the full
- ◆ Boundary Throw In
- ◆ Mark Close to boundary
- ◆ Ball going over the boundary after a kick in
- ◆ Centre square infringement
- ◆ Report
- ◆ After a goal

Field & Goal

- ◆ All scores
- ◆ Mark in goal square
- ◆ At breaks (to know how long before next quarter starts)
- ◆ Report
- ◆ Advantage or down field call that score

Boundary & Goal

- ◆ Balls over, hit or near the behind post.
- ◆ When boundary umpires is at post
- ◆ When asked to assist with a score decision
- ◆ Goal umpires assisting when the ball is out of bounds/on the full and boundary is not at the post.

Field, Goal and Boundary

- ◆ When the goal umpire is not sure of a score
- ◆ Pre and post match discussions
- ◆ A count
- ◆ Deciding on B & F
- ◆ During and after a melee

List key skills (what you need to do) you need when communicating with each other on the field?

- ◆ **Be calm and clear**
- ◆ **Listen**
- ◆ **Be respectful of each other**
- ◆ **Don't rush, more important to get the decision right**
- ◆ **Ask questions if unsure**
- ◆ **Only convey the important information**

What would you do in the following scenario?

The siren has sounded, however it seems that there is some debate over if the ball was kicked before of after the siren, and it has gone through for a score. What should be the process.

- ◆ **Acknowledge siren**
- ◆ **Call umpires in to assist with making the decision**
- ◆ **Clear players form around you**
- ◆ **Stay calm and work through the situation**
- ◆ **If an emergency umpire is appointed or an umpires coach is in attendance, check with them**
- ◆ **Once decision is made, be a united front.**

Effective Communication

1. Keep calm

Umpires must remain calm in all circumstances. The ability to remain "cool under fire" communicates to others a sense of control, composure, maturity and skill in handling turbulent situations.

By remaining calm, umpires can think clearly thereby avoiding any tendency to "rush things" and become flustered.

Thinking clearly allows the umpire to prioritise the options and to choose the most appropriate course of action.

2. Treat players with respect

Umpires have to earn respect. Respect is earned by what Umpires "say and do" and how they "say and do it".

Umpires should treat players in a manner that they themselves would like to be treated, as equals – preferably on a first name (nick-name if appropriate) basis.

Umpires should not speak down to players or patronise them. All players know and understand that the umpire makes the final decision so there is no need for the umpire to continually reinforce this fact by making comments such as "I'm the umpire, what I say goes".

3. Use positive and appropriate body language

Good umpires exhibit self confidence. This can be achieved by using appropriate and positive body language, smiling or nodding at appropriate times.

When speaking to players, don't intrude into their personal space, stand further than an arm's length away, don't point your finger or thrust out your chest.

Wherever possible, if you are listening to a player or talking to him, maintain eye-to-eye contact.

Correct and positive indications for decisions that the umpire makes are other non-verbal actions that demonstrate self confidence.

4. Listen attentively

Communication is a two way process, talking and listening.

Listening attentively means participating actively in the communication process by acknowledging and responding (where appropriate and possible) to the speaker's words and feelings.

Not all comments directed to umpires during a match could be classified as a complaint. A question or comment made in a rational and mature manner needs a rational and mature response.

5. Communicate decisions

Competent umpires communicate their decisions effectively and strongly.

Positive communication of a decision reflects self confidence and demonstrates a security in the knowledge that the decision was correct.

Players appreciate umpires who communicate their decisions effectively. They have a lot more confidence in umpires when they know and understand what they are doing.

6. Do not embarrass players

Good umpires do not embarrass or belittle players. Most competent umpires avoid being the centre of attention and work hard at not embarrassing the players.

7. Penalise actions, not characters

At times, the umpire may have to caution a player to cease certain actions to avoid being reported.

When communicating this, the umpire should be mindful to focus comments on the offending behaviour or actions, not on the person's character or personality.

This is particularly important when the player is angry or frustrated.

8. Selectively ignore comments

Some issues are better left alone, not every remark requires a response, especially if the remark was viewed as a natural expression of frustration.

On occasions, it may be better to ignore the remark at that time but take the opportunity to follow up at a later stage if necessary, when the player may be more responsive.

9. Avoid sarcasm

Sarcasm is a barrier to effective communication. The purpose of sarcasm is to hurt the feelings or reduce the self esteem of others; it is unprofessional and has no place in umpiring.

10. Do not try to have the last word

In many instances the umpire will not change the player's mind then and there. It is good practice for umpires to answer a question. Your answer should be brief and direct yet provided in a calm and respectful manner.

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