



2019 NHSOA/NSAA Volleyball Summit

LESS IS MORE < = >

Communicating with Coaches

The Things Coaches Say...

- Coaches say a lot of things in response to calls that we make or do not make.
- Sometimes, the best response is no response!
 - A smile, a nod, or—if needed—a stern look may be all that is needed.
 - If they are not talking to you, it is not necessary to respond.
 - Do not “chase” a coach down to give them information they are not requesting.

The Things Coaches Say...

- Most of the time, however, you will need to give some type of response.
 - Questions deserve answers, but lengthy discussions are not an option.
 - The more you talk to coaches, the more they believe they can talk to you.
 - When all else fails, “Coach, let’s play” is a good response.



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Communication with Coaches 

- Communicate through the coach to address any issues with players.
 - Jewelry, illegal equipment, uniform issues
 - Conduct on the bench
- Perception is reality!
 - Pre-match, spend equal amounts of time with each coach.
 - Do not be overly familiar with coaches, and do not call them by name.
 - Do not allow coaches to distract you during the match.

Serve and Protect 

- Do not allow the coach to “yell” across the court at the first referee.
 - Intercept the coach and redirect them to you.
- Be proactive in anticipating when a coach will have a concern about a close call or non-call.
- Walk the coach out of the substitution zone, if needed.
- Do not entertain discussions about judgment calls.
- Monitor the players on the bench and address any outbursts immediately.

Progression of Discussion 

- The coach questions a call.
- The referee answers the question as asked.
- The coach keys in on the words that seem to support their point.
 - Referees and coaches often have different “definitions” for the same word.
- Using language from the rules protects you from the problems of misinterpretation.



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Scenario #1



- A tall back-row setter near the net reaches higher than the net and deflects a ball coming from the other team.
- The first referee calls an illegal block.
 - Coach challenges R2 and says, "She wasn't blocking—and she didn't even jump!"
 - R2 responds, "She doesn't have to jump."

Rules response, "Coach, your back-row setter was close to the net and was reaching higher than the top of the net when she deflected the ball coming from your opponent. This makes her a back-row blocker."

Scenario #2



- Libero runs into the front zone and uses an overhand pass to make the team's first contact—front row setter dumps the ball while it is completely above the height of the net.
- First referee signals illegal attack, and coach immediately yells, "She's front row!"
 - R2 responds, "Coach, your libero set the ball in the front zone."
 - Coach argues, "It wasn't a set! It was a dig—it was the first contact!"

Rules response, "Coach, your libero was in front of the attack line and used overhand finger action."

Scenario #3



- A player slides to play a ball and part of their knee crosses the center line.
- The second referee whistle and signals a centerline violation.
 - Coach challenges R2, and R2 responds, "Coach, she was under."
 - Coach responds, "She wasn't under, she was still on the line!"

Rules response, "Coach, contacting the floor across the center line with any part of the body except the hand or foot is illegal."



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Scenario #4



- On a player’s first contact, the ball quickly rebounds from forearm to shoulder - no call.
- Coach holds up two fingers and yells, “Double!”
 - R2 responds, “First contact, coach.”
 - The coach continues to argue that it was “two hits.”

Rule book response, “Coach, multiple contacts are legal during one attempt to play the ball.”

Tips for Diffusing



- Do not ignore bad behavior—address it early!
- Let the coach talk first, and don’t interrupt.
- Answer questions, but do not respond to “statements.”
 - You do not have to have the last word!
- Provide “a soft answer.”
 - Do not threaten coaches with sanctions.
- Be honest in your response.
- If the coach is walking away, let them go.
