

The Ten Commandments of Game Control

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Football is an intensely emotional contact sport. One of the major criticisms of officials is, “the let the game get out of control.” Assessing penalties for unnecessary roughness, unsportsmanlike conduct and/or player ejections is the reaction to the commission of undesirable actions by players. However, the following preventative officiating techniques, if applied from the opening kickoff to the final whistle, will go a long way toward keeping the game “under control” and minimizing the need to assess penalties and eject players:

- Talk to players constantly throughout the game.
- Be professional in your conversation and demeanor. Show players respect and demand respect in return.
- Be a good dead ball official – keep officiating until all threat of action is over and players have returned to their respective huddles.
- Be able to distinguish between good natured banter and “in your face trash talk.” Stay on top of the “trash talk.” Appeal to the players’ sense of professionalism, sportsmanship and the image that they project to the public.
- Immediately get between players who are engaged in a verbal altercation to prevent them from escalating to a physical altercation.
- Always be in control of your emotions. Never escalate to the players and coaches level of frustration or temper.
- Defuse volatile situations by not arguing. Be assertive while maintain your professional demeanor at all times.
- Courteously answer players and coaches questions.
- Congratulate players when they make a good play or show good sportsmanship.
- Hustle to pile-ups quickly at the end of a play .Make your presence by loudly announcing, “The Play is over.” Tell the players to, “Get off the Runner” or “Use the ground to get up” or “Watch your feet” or “Roll off the pile”, et cetera.