



CHESAPEAKE REGION VOLLEYBALL ASSOCIATION

REFEREE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



Making It To The Top

Corny Galdones, October 2008

Everybody wants to be on top. It's a fact of life, even for officials. Those in a rush to be kings of the hill cheat only themselves by taking shortcuts in creating a firm foundation. Their day of reckoning is coming. When put to the test, a shaky structure could collapse sooner or later. Fetch the duct tape. Our budding Humpty Dumpty's may need it when the dust clears.

What's the hurry? Just because our compatriots have gone ahead of us is no reason to get anxious or bent out of shape. Biased factors such as politics and perception might have favored these lucky dogs. Hey, more power to them. Focus instead on what we can control. Teams at the top expect and demand the best. The players are better. The coaches are sharper. The action is faster. The stakes are bigger. In this pressure cooker, we can't learn as we go. Despite a bundle of nerves, we have to bring an "A" game to every match and can't be a basket case. Let's appraise ourselves. Do we know all there is to know? Do we have what it takes to do the job well? We'll progress faster and further by owning up to the truth. We'll reap what we sow. Good officials can realize greatness with experience and preparation. It takes time.

The number of matches we work is earning power, not experience. At any rate, practicing the same old habits isn't for our greater good. Work counts as experience when we break out of our comfy shells to take on new worlds, develop know-how, and improve from mistakes. No one has officiated until being ripped apart by players and coaches and living to talk about it. The point is to grow by facing new, tougher challenges under fire. With added exposure, no condition should catch us by surprise or at a loss on what to do or say and how to go about it. Be able to spot and resolve problems on the fly. Train to foresee the action and the moment it happens, know the proper thing to do. Through steady routine, our correct and confident decisions, mechanics and delivery should then become second nature, *i.e.*, more instinct and less thinking. Sell them. To bloom fully, an official must have these basics down pat to build upon. Knowledge begets knowledge. The higher we climb, the harder the learning will be. Our heads will spin unless we have seen it all and know what we're doing.

In moving up the ladder, a one-track mind intent on reaching the top by tomorrow and closed to everything else has a hole in the head plus a hole in life. Get a hold of ourselves. Get a life. In fact, get a total life, for the well-rounded are better suited for the big show. Besides whistle blowers, we have to be managers, professionals, mediators, diplomats and much more. Our skills must be honed for the whole shebang, or else we'll be stuck on a lower rung forever frustrated. No longer can we line up in the back. Step to the forefront as leaders by being on the ball, taking charge and directing traffic. No longer can we take it casual. Assume the mantle of role models by setting fine examples in dress, conduct and execution. No longer can we take the law into our hands. Keep everything under control like good cops by getting along with people while running a smooth match. No longer can we trip over our tongues. Turn into silver-tongued devils by cultivating a gift of gab to tell others where to go and have them like it. We'll be diamonds in the making by polishing every facet to do with officiating.

Our entire base has to be solid as a rock for us to make it to the top. Are we ready for prime time? Saying we are gets us nowhere. Go out and show them.