



**Managing the Technical Area**  
2009 Referee Program Directives  
February 2, 2009

## **Techniques by Position**

The following are techniques individuals on the officiating team can use to positively manage personnel in the technical area. Not only consider the actions of those in the technical area but also use the “public, personal, and provocative” nature of comments prior to dismissal.

Remember, all officials should be approachable before, during, and after the game where appropriate. Be firm, fair, and calm.

### 1. Referee

- Cover bench management thoroughly in the pre-game
- Listen for comments from the bench area so that you don't put all the burden on the fourth official
- Eye contact with personnel (“the look”)
- Body and hand motions
- Position yourself in close proximity to the bench: presence lends conviction
- Acknowledge the coach: “I hear you” or gesture to him
- Use the “flyby” approach: run by the bench or position yourself by the bench on a restart so the coach can vent
- Take ownership of the issues (don't leave it on the shoulders of the fourth official): on a stoppage in play, communicate with the coach as the situation escalates. State your expectations and hold the coach responsible
- Empower the fourth official and AR1. Make them feel supported

### 2. Assistant Referee 1

- Maintain concentration on the field. Do not get caught up conversing with bench personnel
- AR can communicate with bench personnel in the same manner the fourth official does; however, prolonged interaction distracts from the primary role and focus and, as such, the communication must be distinct and to the point
- Use loud communication to the fourth official in front of the bench so the teams know you are participating in the process
- Support the fourth official: know the experience level of the fourth official. Ensure that you are able to read the situation and know when the fourth official has reached the point of no return

- Feel the situation and read when the fourth official has reached the point of no return
- Acknowledgment

### 3. Fourth Official

- Break the ice by introducing yourself to the coaches prior to the game
- Provide enough space for the coach to “vent” without crossing the line
- As the game progresses and situations within the game transpire, develop a plan to handle the technical areas without overreacting
- Impose a positive presence (near technical area personnel) when needed. Don’t follow and shadow them – let them coach
- Create the perception you are giving equal time to both technical areas/coaches
- Use the ASK, TELL, REMOVE procedure but do not hesitate to invoke the “remove” stage if the situation requires it
- Confirmation from the AR: If the situations permits, prior to having bench personnel dismissed, consider consulting with AR1. This way, it is a two-way decision and you will feel more comfortable you are doing the right thing for the game
- Find the peacemaker on the bench to help
- Use a well-placed smile
- Identify the person who will be dismissed
- Try to be in the camera frame when dealing with unruly bench personnel: presence means de-escalation. By being in the camera frame, you are demonstrating to everyone that you are participating and making a positive effort to manage the situation
- Be a “sounding board” for the coach but not a verbal “punching bag”
- Consider the “public, personal, and provocative”

## Ask, Tell, Remove Process

The following process is recommended for all officials to follow relative to conduct within the technical area.

- **Ask**  
If a situation arises where there is irresponsible behavior, you are to **ASK** the person(s) to stop.
- **Tell**  
If there is another occurrence where there is irresponsible behavior, you are to inform that person that the behavior is not permissible and **TELL** them (insist) to stop.
- **Remove**  
If the non-accepted actions continue, you must **REMOVE** that person immediately.

These are the recommended steps from U.S. Soccer and the CSA but they are not necessary if the behavior and conduct of personnel within the technical area requires immediate dismissal. Remember, where circumstances permit, use a “gentle escalate” approach so that referee team responses match the nature of the bench behavior. Try to use the least intrusive response that will solve the problem.

## 2009 Instructions to Referees

As a preventative measure, referees are instructed to utilize the following technique when dealing with personnel in the technical area:

**When the fourth official has determined that his utilization of the “TELL” step has been insufficient and the conduct in the technical area continues to be irresponsible and, thus, the fourth official is ready to escalate to the “REMOVE” step, the fourth official shall *notify* the referee. At a stoppage, the referee shall approach the technical area and “warn” the coach that any further irresponsible behavior will result in a dismissal from the game. Thereafter, any further irresponsible behavior will result in immediate dismissal (the “REMOVE” step).**

In the pregame, the referee team shall establish an escalation procedure by which the fourth official shall notify the referee of the irresponsible bench decorum and the subsequent process of the referee notifying the coach. **Note:** *This does not prohibit, at any time, the referee or fourth official from moving directly to the “REMOVE” stage based upon irresponsible bench decorum.*

## What You Can Say

Phrases you can say to bench personnel in a polite, respectful, and concise fashion. Comments should be short, to the point, said in a way that will not provoke a negative response:

- *“I hear you” or “I understand you, coach”*
- *“Coach, talk to me”*
- *“Coach, I will listen to you but not the rest of the bench”*
- *“I will pass along the message”*
- *“I will talk to the ref/AR”*
- *“We will talk about it at half time”*
- *“Talk to me rather than shouting”*
- *“I know how important this game is to you, it is just as important to us”*
- *“Coach, I understand you are upset but you need to calm down”*
- *“I can see you don’t agree with the call, but PLEASE – settle down”*
- *“Please stop being so visual. Talk to me but don’t wave your hands”*
- *“The ref got it, give him a chance”*
- *“Where are you going”*
- *“Don’t do it”*
- *“The ref was there”*
- *“This is a game of angles; we have a different angle than the referee”*
- *“If I have to call the referee over, you will be dismissed”*
- *“Coach, please talk to your assistant, he is getting close my having to take official action”*
- *Remind the coach of position papers and memos outlining bench decorum*

## What You Can’t Say

Officials should avoid any open ended phrases that conjure up debate or that “add fuel to the fire” by inviting further heated conversation

Fourth officials *cannot*:

- Curse, use abusive or insulting language: “Coach, shut up and sit down”
- Criticize the members of the referee team: “I agree – he’s having a bad day”
- Attack or criticize the coach or his team
- Say what you would have done in that situation
- Make physical contact with bench personnel
- Issue threats unless you are ready to enter the “Remove” phase and you are ready to follow-through
- Use phrases that invite further debate or negative discussion

## Reasons Why We Don't Take Action

- Want to be “friends” with bench personnel
- Afraid to address or lack of confidence to deal with any altercation
- Don't want confrontation
- Don't want to be “bad guys”
- Intimidated by coaches
- Feel assignments will be impacted negatively
- Will see the coach again
- The referee may have made a bad decision. However, the referee's decision, right or wrong, should not impact other official's decision to deal with the technical areas
- Feel it is the referee's game and other officials don't want to negatively impact the referee's game

## Actions That “Cross the Line”

The following is a list of actions that require the referee to “dismiss” the appropriate person from the technical area. Non-playing personnel (everyone except players, substitutes or substituted players) are not shown the red or yellow card. Instead, the referee identifies the individual and then advises that they are now to leave the Technical Area. Dismissal for non-playing personnel should be written as “irresponsible behavior” and specific details noted on the game report.

As a general rule, TELL twice, then REMOVE. Think persistent infringement. Try to prevent getting to the TELL stage. Remember, it is not ASK, TELL . . . TELL . . . TELL . . . TELL, then REMOVE.

- Coach/bench personnel leaving technical area (including entering the field) to dispute/dissent a call – even if the call isn't what he thinks it is
- Coach/bench personnel throwing/kicking anything while disputing a call
- Coach/bench personnel kicking/hitting advertising boards or bench in dispute of 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