



CORNY'S CORNER

Are We Traveling Or Officiating?

Corny Galdones, July 2006

More and more, officials are lugging briefcases, backpacks and rolling suitcases to the courts for their matches. What's up with this? When did these travel fashions become standard officiating equipment? I must have dozed off in the clinic that covered this topic.

Being prepared is the proper approach as long as we don't get carried away. Murphy was right on target. What can go wrong will go wrong. However, if we were to haul stuff to the court for every possible scenario, we would need a footlocker. Simplify. The bare essentials are ample. The less we tote, the more professional we look.

Taking our lunch pails to work is a must. Just don't do it literally. Getting hungry or scared witless may occur while officiating, but that's no reason to bring a full meal or a change of underwear to courtside. A hand-held kit bag with our officiating gear, line judge flags and a cushioned standing pad will do. How about a fanny pack? Well, it's not called that name for nothing. Wearing one isn't a pretty sight. Clutch it instead. Carting anything more to the scorekeeper table is overkill. Surely, we can function without our security blankets and office files. Besides, being packed appears as though we have places to go, things to do. What's the hurry? The match is our one and only priority. So put the cell phone away. The call from that hot date can wait till later. Get it? Get with it.

The same goes for bearing a load of bubble gum or sweets to entice members of the work team to do a good job. We're better off using our people and communication skills during the match rather than going around offering, "Wanna piece of candy, little girl?" Whatever we do, remember this tidbit. Perceptions, folks. Perceptions.

If we can cram a million things into our wallets or handbags, we certainly can manage with a little officiating kit. What goes into it, anyway? Whistle. Spare whistle with a different tone. Disposable whistle to loan. Lanyards. Red and yellow cards. Rulebook. Flipping coin. Net chain. Ball pump, needle and gauge. Pens. White-out. Pencils. Eraser. Officiating patch. Magnetic holder or Velcro strip for patch. Earplugs. That's it. Personal items can be added to full capacity but no more. Don't forget the breath mints.

Everything else should be stowed in the officials' lounge or locker room. Secure anything valuable. Unfortunately, we must resort to this measure because our belongings sometimes have a tendency to walk away. That's sad. What has our community come to? Where has the respect for our fellow officials' property gone? Once, these questions weren't necessary. There was honor and trust. Times have changed. Or have they? The answer is yours. But I digress.

Opportunities to blow our whistles exist all over the country. Suitcases and other baggage help to get us there. They're for traveling, not officiating. Let's keep it that way. As for our work gear, minimize. It's sharper.