



CORNY'S CORNER

Professionalism Starts From The Heart

Corny Galdones, March 2006

If we referees blow the whistle well, folks will look up to us. Right? Don't bet on it. Too often we overlook another factor that has a bearing — professionalism.

Image is everything. Perception is reality. Clichés these may be. Outdated they're not. How we behave, how we connect, how we dress, how we look, and how we perform determine how professional we are in the eyes of others. Much has been said and written about these. We're not going there since some people are either blind or deaf to this stuff that's to their advantage. They just don't get it. Instead, let's examine what makes us tick. Why do we do what we do? Our hearts hold the answer.

Professionalism can't be stressed enough. Want it! Applause won't occur unless our entire hearts are into it. Turning it on only as seen fit gets us nowhere except in the doghouse. Like it or not, our officiating places us under a microscope, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Aim with all our hearts to earn an undying trust of always doing the right thing at the right time. One "bad," and it's curtains for us. Build a good name, not a good excuse.

When we claim to be professional, are we sincere? Or are we giving lip service and putting up a front? Being of character is opposite from being a character. Which are we? Trying to fool merely makes us fools for we wear our hearts on our sleeves. Actions that are phony, selfish or plain stupid seem nothing but empty. Our hearts must be in the right place. Mean what we do. Do what we mean.

Respect society. Respect orders. Respect the game. Respect our profession. Respect everyone. With all due respect, take these to heart and more. Respect what others have done for us. Do we remember it? Do we show our gratitude? Do we return the favor? Do we continue to share its rewards? Do we even care? Yes. A thousand times, yes. Proving it does our hearts good.

We're all kids at heart. Forget about the money. We officiate for the fun and games. So live it up to your heart's content, but with common sense. Our antics shouldn't step on toes, question our morals and judgment, or try anyone's patience. Think about it. Is it proper? What are the consequences? If nothing else, what would Mom think?

Looking out for ourselves is near to our hearts. That's okay, provided we don't break any hearts. The welfare of others comes first. Helping them from the bottom of our hearts helps us, whether it's valuing mediocre matches, watching out for the little guy, doing a Good Samaritan deed, or anything of benefit. What's in your heart? Show the love, the passion.

Sound referees produce sound calls. Classy hearts produce classy actions. Combine everything and what do we have? Me. Hey, stop laughing! After all, every official can turn into a sound class act. Cross my heart.