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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Being consistent starts long before you step on the court

Most of us think that “being consistent” relates to our decisions and judgments made during the match in areas such as ball-handling and back-row faults. We may also think that “being consistent” relates to our management of the game and interactions with coaches and team captains.

For an official, “being consistent” begins long before you ever walk out onto the court. It begins with your pre-match preparation, pre-game discussions with your partner and officiating crew as well as your actions during the match.

Having a consistent approach to match preparation is critical to being consistent for each and every match.

1. What are some examples of consistent **pre-match preparation**?
 - **Verifying your schedule** several days in advance of the match
 - **Coordinating** travel plans with your partner
 - **Before leaving home, verifying that you have a complete uniform and all equipment necessary for officiating**
 - **Planning to arrive at the facility with sufficient time** to find the venue and locker room, and allowing adequate time to get dressed **Pre-match activities and discussions are critical to good performance.**
2. Pre-match activities are more than simply the pregame discussion with your partner. They also include:
 - **Inspecting the court, net system and playing area**
 - **Verifying that all necessary equipment is in place**, including the proper number of balls and scoring materials such as score sheets and lineup sheets
 - **Meeting the event manager** or go-to person so you know who to turn to in the event there are issues during the match
 - **Identifying** and planning your exit strategy following the match **Officials that follow the same pre-match protocol for each match will find that they are able to address many issues prior to the match rather than having to fix them during the match**, or having a hiccup the first time something happens before getting it right. I have had the pleasure of working with many of the top referees in the country. Based on my experience of working with these officials, having a consistent pre-match is a key factor in their success. They consistently check the details for each and every match.

One top official whom I regularly work with each season holds the same pre-match discussion each and every time we work together. Even if it is our fifth match that year, we go through the same routine and discussion. We have both talked about things that happened during our matches. Some the items we covered during the pre-match discussion helped prevent what could have been issues in our matches. My suggestion for you: work on being consistent in your approach to all matches. **“Being consistent” begins before you enter the court and before the first serve.**

Golf: in golf, the players are very consistent with their routine; find your routine in volleyball