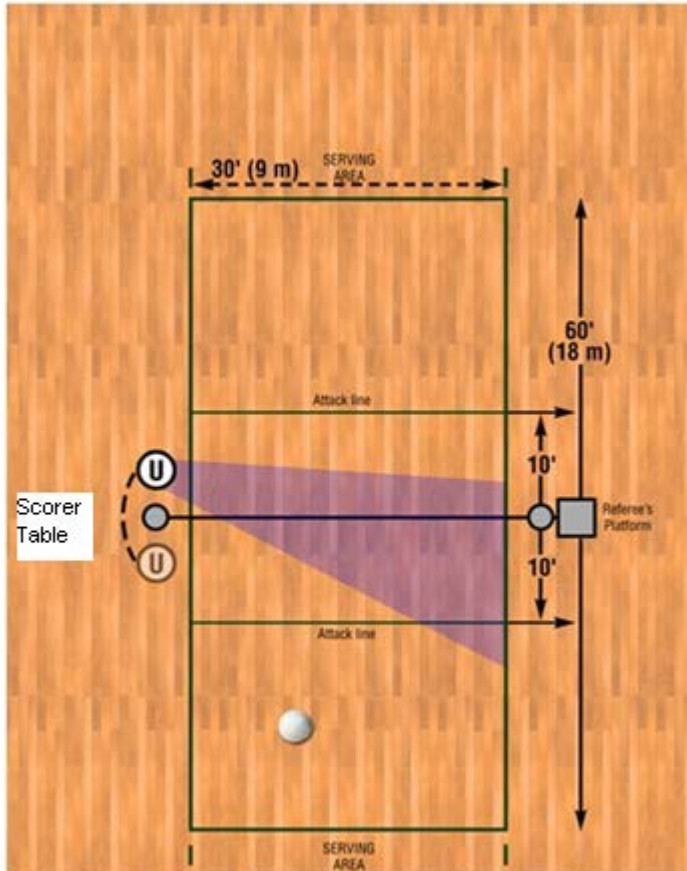


FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY – INTRAMURAL SPORTS

4v4 Volleyball Training – The DOWN-REF’s Job

Down Ref

The second official, commonly known as the “down-ref,” has two jobs: to help the head referee (the up ref) make calls that he or she may not have seen, and to make centerline and net violation calls.



The umpire stands on the floor opposite the head ref on either side of the net. He or she should stand far enough back so that the entire net and centerline can be seen without much adjustment. The umpire should stand on whichever side of the net he or she feels they can see the most; this may mean moving from one side of the net to the other depending on which side of the net the ball is on. Generally, the best view of the net and centerline is from the defending team’s perspective, that is, on the side of the net where the ball is not. If the ball is returned to the other side, the umpire can move to the other side of the net to prepare for the proceeding return.

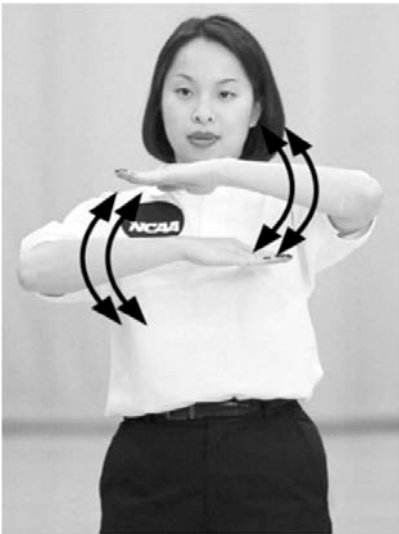
Using tunnel vision is one of the most frequent mistakes made by second officials. By gluing our eyes as second referees to the net during rallies to catch every net and centerline violation, we lose sight of what else is happening on the court. Zoning in on the net leads to missing calls because without the big picture, we aren’t aware of or fail to anticipate all sorts of violations. Spectators have the best view in the house. They see the entire court and all the action. It’s too bad we aren’t spectators. In fact, we must be exactly that to do our second referee job right.

Helping the first referee on concealed ball handling errors, four team contacts, illegal attacks or blocks by back row players at the net, players reaching over the net, failed pancakes, and especially illegal back row attacks from the attack line are other duties as assigned for a second referee. That’s more reason to tune in on the action instead of just concentrating on the net and centerline.

Pay little attention during play to the net and centerline until the ball enters the vicinity. Relax. The blockers aren't going anywhere. Meanwhile, we should enjoy the game but be on our toes to assist the first referee on calls. Take in everything occurring on the court. Transfer those eyes over to the action and identify what could happen next. That's important. To eliminate any doubt in detecting a violation and signaling it to the first referee, look through the net directly at the playing scene with peripheral vision on the net activity, not the other way around.

As the attack unfolds, watch the game, not the net. Once the attacker is recognized plus feet placement in relation to the attack line noted, or when a player could contact the net playing the ball, that's the proper time to shift our second referee eyes to the net and centerline. Focus on the blockers without ignoring the offensive players. Don't follow the ball as it crosses beyond the blockers. Keep those eyes front and center until no player at the net can commit a violation. When all is clear, track down the ball quickly while transitioning sideways to the blockers' side with either side steps or a crossover first step but not a Sunday stroll. Set in position before the second team contact and start the process anew with a broad scope to observe the entire attack develop.

The second official also has responsibility for controlling the conduct of the team's subs with assistance from the first referee. As the down ref, you will hear and see things that the head referee will not, and it is your responsibility to keep the players and subs under control. It is also important to make sure subs stand behind the black (basketball) line so that the head referee is not confused as to who is on the court and to keep viewing lanes open for the line judges.



Know This:

At Ferris State Intramurals the judgment of our officials is beyond contestation and therefore persistent arguing about a judgment call can warrant disciplinary action. Only the captain may speak to the referee about a call.

Your toughest challenge will be to support a poor decision or judgment call by the first referee. There is no easy, set procedure for mollifying a captain upset with the controversial call. Your top priority is damage control by blunting the captain's wrath. Statements like, "It's the first referee's call." Or "I can't help him when he does things like that." Will not do. A good approach is a conciliatory but conclusive response such as, "I understand captain, but the call stands." Or words to that effect. A reinforcing statement such as, "That call was consistent with previous ones made." Could work. In a very obvious situation, sometimes collectively admitting, "We missed it." Is acceptable to a captain. (Use only once per match!) Confidently handling this dilemma with kid gloves and a united front comes with experience.

Indicate to the captain that the play might have looked different from the official's angle. Many officials use this tactic. An experienced captain will have heard it many times. Therefore be careful not to overuse it. Here are suggested phrases to use:

- “Captain, I know how it looked from your perspective, but my partner had a different perspective and we have to go with that.”
- “Captain, his/her angle is a bit different.”
- “From his/her angle, it looked OK.”
- “You may be correct. He/she had a different angle and it probably looked cleaner from their vantage point.
- “Captain that was a tough angle. I probably did not get into position fast enough to help.”

Give unequivocal support to the other referee. This can be done by indicating that the call was correct, or that you saw exactly the same thing. Care needs to be taken in using this tactic. If the captain agreed with the call in the first place, there wouldn't be a complaint. Usually, there is little value in trying to be confrontational on a judgment call. However, this may be the only technique to work with some captains and should be used selectively as an official.

- “That’s a judgment call, captain, and in his/her judgment, it was clean.”
- “Captain, she had a very clean view of that call and did not see a lift/double.”
- “Clearly my partner did not judge the contact to be a lift/double.”
- “I saw it as a clean play.”
- “It was a good call captain. Please sit down.” “Thank you.”
- “Your captain is the only spokesperson for your team. You need to sit down.”
- “I’ve worked quite a few matches with my partner and I have yet to see him/her change a ball handling call, even if he/she might have missed it. Arguing probably will not help.”
- “It was a lift/double.”
- “It’s a judgment call, captain; let’s play now.”
- “Captain, she/he had a good look and he/she is the only one of us who can call ball handling in that situation.”
- “Captain, she/he is working hard up there. Please give him/her a chance to do his/her job.”

The Down Ref’s Job Quiz:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1WBODYj2vfL55KKIv37tEeyRJfVqAZFw6d3XZHicTiLI/viewform>