

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY – INTRAMURAL SPORTS

Constructive Criticism

As an intramural supervisor, one of the most important aspects of the job is constructive criticism. The only way the intramural program will continue to improve is through the employees. Our officials are a vital tool for the program, and better officials means better programming. Every shift will consist of intramural supervisors helping our officials become better with rules, mechanics, positioning, and game management. The only way they will get better at all these aspects is through constructive criticism provided by the supervisors. It's important to know how to give this type of criticism, so you do not discourage our officials.

The learning process ends when someone asks, "What do I need to work on?" and the response is, "Nothing. You had a great game." Everyone has something to work on. The learning process is also damaged when the respondent criticizes ineffectively. The official seeking knowledge will tune the criticizer out. The official may even be so disillusioned by the experience that he or she will not seek constructive criticism again. Some points to consider when giving constructive criticism:

Start off by saying something good.

Assure the official that he or she did some things well and that there are also things he or she can work on to improve.

Make criticism specific.

Do not say: "You always miss slides." Rash generalizations are counter-productive. Is a slide missed every time?

Use "I" and "we" when communicating.

By using those terms, you stress that you want to work out the problem together, rather than make threats. Officiating can be a lonely business. By using "we," the official feels that he or she is not alone.

Show the person you understand his or her feelings.

Statements like, "I've learned from the same mistake," assures the official that you've been there and have had the same feelings or made the same mistakes.

At the end, reaffirm your support and confidence in the person.

Reassure the official that you are there to help him improve. You may even tell the official you wouldn't waste your time with the criticism if you didn't think he or she was worth it. End it on a positive note so the official has something to look forward to - and something to work on - for the next game.

