Managing Stress On and Off The Field

How to “Shut It Off” and Go Home Happy

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/philmcnulty/2012/04/chelsea_dreams_driven_by_reven.html
Qualities of an Effective Referee

1. Reliability
2. Communication
3. Decisive thinking
4. Elegance
5. Integrity
6. Common sense
7. Confidence
8. Motivation

Based on FIFA Standards & sport psychology research
A referee is a necessary evil in the world of sports & recreation?

Refereeing is the worst job in sport, yet provides the best seat in the house?

Few people opt to take up the whistle and be the ‘person’ in the middle?

WHY?
What is Stress?

- Stress is our body’s response to any demand made on it.
- The physical and mental arousal to circumstances that we perceive as threatening or challenging.
- The trigger that prompts the stressful reaction is called a STRESSOR.
Why talk about stress?

Stress from officiating has profound impacts on a referee’s mental health, attentional focus, performance, satisfaction with their profession & dropout intentions.

(Goldsmith & Williams, 1992)

“The stress level among referees is the same as for players and coaches or other top athletes”

(Associate Professor Bjørn Tore Johansen, U of Agder)
Let’s have at it...

1. Prior to a match, do you have a set routine that you do?

2. During the match, list some causes that might raise your stress or anxiety?

3. On a scale of 1-10 (1=low; 10=high), rate your post game stress levels (on average).

4. What do you do to combat stress in your refereeing?
There is so much pressure!

Players
Coaches
Spectators
Administrators
Other referees
Previous results
Weather
Yourself

A person’s appraisal of a situation determines whether or not it will be stressful.

- **Personal Stress**
- **Organizational Stress**
- **Competitive Stress**

Image source: http://www.lightbearers.org/fight-or-flight/
Stress if coping resources are inadequate

Our stress responses can be seen as:

- **Physiological** – increased blood pressure, flushed cheeks, headache
- **Emotional** – anxiety, fear, grief, excitement
- **Behavioural** – ways to behave in order to resolve the conflict
Top Stressors for Sport Referees?

- Making incorrect/controversial calls,
- Positional concerns,
- Abuse from coaches, players
- Pressure of game
- Conflict between their officiating and life outside refereeing (i.e. family and/or work)

Why is stress so difficult to deal with?

**ON THE FIELD**
- Lack of time to deal
- Fatigue
- Need to focus on tasks
- Lack of knowledge of stress
- Lack of coping skills
- Denial

**OFF THE FIELD**
How do You Cope with Stress?

Coping Strategies

- Problem-focused coping
  - Planning
  - Active coping and problem-solving
  - Suppressing competing activities
  - Exercising restraint
  - Assertive confrontation

- Emotion-focused coping
  - Positive reinterpretation
  - Acceptance
  - Denial
  - Repression
  - Escape–avoidance
  - Wishful thinking
  - Controlling feelings

- Seeking social support
  - Help and guidance
  - Emotional support
  - Affirmation of worth
  - Tangible aid (e.g., money)
Stress-Training for Officiating

- Time Management Skills Training – focuses on getting organized, prioritization of tasks
  - Checklists, prioritizing & saying ‘no’

- Cognitive/Mental Skills Training – focuses on changing negative and irrational thoughts; focuses on preparation, coping & decision-making abilities
  - Imagery, self talk, relaxation breathing

Weinberg & Richardson (1990), Psychology of Officiating
“Effective coping with stressful situations in officiating can serve as a buffer against burnout”

- Have a pre-game routine
- Relaxation breathing & imagery
- Psyching up – It’s crunch time!
- Humour
- Socialize with Stressors
  *(if they are people)*
- Have a post-game routine
Wrap – Up!

THANK YOU!