

concentration. With these lapses in concentration comes an inevitable drop in consistency. Something which was called in the first game or let go in the first game was now adjudicated differently and consequently called differently. To assist referees keep concentrating and consequently maintaining consistency, they need to know how to relax and focus at the appropriate times. This is a learned response that is developed over time. It's important for any official on any level to maintain focus on the game.

The atmosphere in which the contest is played can make that task more daunting however, particularly if one or both coaches is barking at you. The ability to handle remonstrations from coaches and others involved in the game while still being able to maintain a high level of consistency is what differentiates the good officials from great official.

HOW TO ASSIST REFEREES LEARN TO BE CONSISTENT

Any new official, or one moving from one level to another, goes through a transition period as they learn what calls (and no-calls) are appropriate to the setting they find themselves in. But there are tools to expedite the process. Referee coaching and feedback from respected people will always assist a referee's progress and ability to adjust.

But there is no substitute from video review. With improved (and less expensive) technology, officials working at lower levels have the ability to review their work as well. "(FIFA referees) watch a ton of different situations over and over and over again, to try to get it in our minds what things look like. What you're looking for, what angle you're looking for, making sure you're in the right position to see what you want to see. I'm not sure if consistency can be taught, but it can be learned. I'm not sure that someone can tell you, 'Here's how to be consistent,' but what you can do is watch and develop that consistency for yourself. I watch as many games as I can. As I'm watching games, I'm making my decisions, over and over again. " (Jennifer Bennett - Referee Magazine)

FIFA does try to teach consistency. FIFA officials attend clinics and watch many, many clips with specific instructions identifying this is a cautionable offense' and should be called. They're trying to teach consistency to multiple people.

Basketball is no different from our soccer counterparts. A common method of educating and training officials, both at the elite end and at the grass roots end of basketball is to observe game situations, and to be given strict instructions as to what should or should not be called. This process goes a long way to having everyone officiating from the same page, being consistent.

CONCLUSION:

The question of whether consistency is a natural attribute or a skill acquired over time may never be completely answered. But maintaining your consistency will improve your game at whatever level you work. Hopefully it will go a long way to prevent the following;

The Blue point guard drives to the bucket and puts up a runner from the middle of the lane. As he does, he collides with a Red defender. As the ball goes in the basket, you hit the whistle and signal a blocking foul, setting up a potential three-point play. Immediately you hear the Red coach barking behind you,

"C'mon, that was a charge at the other end. Give us some consistency out there!"

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BUILDING BETTER BASKETBALL

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WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY

CONSISTENT?



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For more information visit www.vbra.basketball.net.au

Consistency is often the common catch cry from coaches, players and spectators, but is that really the trait that officials are striving for?

“Be consistent” you hear that phrase from the first day you put on a referee shirt. The phrase has so many meanings and connotations depending on who says it. If it is from a coach, a player or even a spectator it usually means, we want you to call it in our favour at this end and to be consistent call it in our favour at the other end. Seriously coaches and players view consistency as applying evenness to calling the game. “Call them the same at both ends” As you know evenness is not something referees take into consideration – they simply judge each play on its own merits and make the appropriate decision based on the rules and interpretations of the game, acknowledging the fact that any two plays are never exactly the same.

According to **Article 47 in the Official Rule Book states** – “When deciding on penalising contact and or deciding on a violation, the officials shall in each instance regard and weigh up the following fundamental principles;”

1. “The spirit and intent of the rules and the need to uphold the integrity of the game.”
2. “**Consistency** in the application of the concept of advantage/disadvantage whereby the officials should not seek to interrupt the flow of the game unnecessarily, in order to penalise personal contact that is incidental and which does not give the player responsible an advantage nor place his opponent at a disadvantage.”
3. “**Consistency** in the application of common sense to each game, bearing in mind the abilities of the players concerned and their attitude and conduct during the game.”
4. “**Consistency** in the maintenance of a balance between game control and game flow, having a feeling for what the participants are trying to do and calling what is right for the game.”

Consistency is almost impossible to measure. “Look at the foul count ref. We’ve got eight fouls and they’ve only got two!” The coach has conveniently overlooked the fact that his team is relying on shooting from outside, while the opposition, because they have a distinctive height advantage they are pumping the ball inside. In essence, statistics pertaining to foul counts are not indicative of a referees level of consistency. Basically, consistency is in the eyes of the beholder.

DOES CONSISTENCY IMPLY DOING IT CORRECTLY?

Consistency by itself does not equal competence. A referee who continually calls travels when a player legitimately makes an unusual move to the basket, is being consistent, consistently wrong. What an official needs is to be consistently competent!

Having said all this, consistency for an official is something that they should strive to achieve, and if regularly achieved it will go a long way to creating a foundation for an official’s creditability along with improving their competency as an official.

WHAT CAN A REFEREE DO TO BE CONSISTENT?

Because officials see the game differently from players, coaches or spectators, their definition of consistency differs. Consistency for an official can incorporate a number of parameters.

- As quoted above from the rule book, referees need to work on consistency with applying

advantage/disadvantage principles to decisions, consistency with common sense to each game and consistency with maintaining a balance between game control and game flow.

- Consistency for a referee means they as an individual should be aiming to call the game as close to the same as they can from the start of the game to the end of the game. (bearing in mind not every play situation is the same) If something appears to be very similar and you called it that way previously, it is in your interests to call it the same way the next time.
“Some would argue that being consistent means calling the same action the same way regardless of where or when it occurs or any other circumstances” (Referee Magazine Article)
In most instances, that approach will be effective.
- As vital as it is for an official to set the same standards from one call to the next, it is just as important to establish consistency with your partner. “Nothing will drive a coach to distraction quicker than a situation where one official is calling things significantly different from another. If one official is quick with the whistle and his or her partner or partners have a – let them play approach, players and coaches can become frustrated.” (Referee Magazine Article)
As a team with your partner in a game, it is important that you aim to be working from the same page.
- Whether we like it or not, familiarity can often breed contempt, and in turn accusations of a lack of consistency from one week to the next. Referees particularly on the domestic scene end up officiating the same players and teams on a regular basis. When you are around the same personnel long enough, the players, coaches and even spectators get to know you, not as a person necessarily, but as an official. They get a sense of who you are, what you call, and how you handle specific situations. Hence it is so important that you show the same “game face” in every game and that you work to call the games with some form of consistency from one week to the next.
- Overall competition consistency is something that all officiating bodies are trying to gather and maintain. Basically in the sport of basketball, our rules and interpretations are created by the International body, FIBA. As the controlling body of the sport, FIBA establish the rules and the rule interpretations, continually monitoring and revising them for the benefits of the game. From here each of the 212 Nations which play the game adopt these rules and interpretations, usually placing their own slant on how they want the game to be played. Australia is no different, with the showcase competitions of the NBL and the WNBL, setting the standards that then indirectly filter down to the lower levels. In our local Associations Competitions, the style of the game is basically set by the competitions themselves, while staying within the broad guidelines of the official FIBA rules. Local associations across the state implement various by – laws which can influence the way the game is played. Therefore it is imperative that referees understand the style of game of the competitions they officiate in, which in turn will lead to an overall consistency in calling that competition.

CAN CONSISTENCY BE LEARNED?

“I’m not sure that someone can tell you – here’s how to be consistent – but what you can do is watch and develop that consistency for yourself” (FIFA Soccer Referee – Referee Magazine Article)
Consistency and concentration go hand in hand. At domestic levels, the first area which starts to deteriorate, when an official has backed up for their third or fourth game in a row is their