

Conflict Management – Community Level

Purpose: To develop leaders in officiating at a community level

Strategy: To begin to develop strategies to assist with conflict as an official

Conflict – what is it?

The dictionary definition of conflict is ‘a serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one’.

The main thing to recognise is that conflict is a normal part of sport. What is important, is how we learn, as officials, to manage it.

Activity:

Write down some examples of conflict that you have experienced while you have been officiating. We can reflect on these as we move through this worksheet.

Conflict - how can we identify it?

There are generally five stages of conflict:

1. Latent stage – You are not yet aware of the conflict.
2. Perceived stage – Officials, players and spectators becoming aware of the conflict
3. Felt stage – emotional and physical responses (stress/anxiety/ body language cues)
4. Manifest stage – conflict is open and can be observed
5. Aftermath stage – outcome of conflict, resolution

Consider the examples you have written down. Can you break them into these five stages? Try doing this now.

Conflict – which stage should we as officials focus on?

Stage two. The earlier we can manage the conflict, the more likely the conflict can be resolved without escalating further.

In your example which you broke into the five stages, when did you step in to manage the conflict? If you managed the conflict at stage 2, well done! If you didn't, reflect on your why and if you would do it differently in the future.

Conflict - how can we manage it?

The first things we need to be conscious of as officials, are the mechanisms we already have in our sport to assist with managing conflict.

1. The rules of your game.

Your rule book is your bible. Know the rules, understand their intent and know how to implement them. The better you become at this, the less conflict there will be for you to manage.

2. Technical Bench.

Is there a tech bench used in your sport? If there is, how can you use the bench to assist you to manage conflict?

3. Support person

Is there an experienced official, officials coach or venue manager available to assist in situations of conflict? What is the process for you to gain their help? If there isn't, can you request this assistance through your association?

Before your season commences you should have answers to all 3 points above. This is a strong first step to managing conflict in your sport.