Have you ever wondered what your assignors really think about you?  What would they tell you if they could?

Many assignors have issues within their associations and with officials, most of which they are reluctant to share at times, worried about how the officials might feel upon hearing the news.

Here are some things your assignors really wish you knew (but may not have told you).  While the assignors and supervisors who contributed to this story will remain anonymous, they hope officials receive their messages loud and clear.

**Avail – ability Often Tops A – bility**

If you’re that official who can’t get off and go to a game until 5:30pm after a long day’s work, you’re losing out on game opportunities, period.  Many officials might think they’re being clever, since for most high school sports the varsity contest starts late, so the official is figuring on guaranteeing himself or herself a season long varsity schedule.

That may work for some officials, certainly:  Varsity game almost every night!  But at what cost?

What if you really aren’t a full-time varsity level official yet?  You might keep getting varsity assignments, but also keep logging bad evaluations from coaches and supervisors. When playoff time comes, you’re out of the loop year after year. Why? You couldn’t make yourself available for the supervisor to assign you appropriately for your level, and move you along gracefully to the upper-most level of your potential.

Conversely, you might consistently be in the top third of your unit, but find yourself working freshmen/JV games at 4pm.  Sometimes that’s where you’re needed so the assignor can fill a slot.

Don’t lament those games.  Not only will you likely be paired with a lower-level official who needs your help and experience, but you’re also ingratiating yourself with your supervisor.  Come time to move up levels, guess who will be likely be recommending you?  That assignor who always needed your help and experience.

**It’s a Job.  Work It Like One!**

“I wish people would think about this as a new job.  You have to get some training! And then you have to keep up your education to keep up with changing times,” said an assignor from Oregon.

At the lowest levels, officiating still works out to about $25-$30 an hour.  That’s a pretty good job, even though you may not be working it 40 hours a week.  A job at McDonald’s pays a third of that.  You are hired for a probationary period, during which you are trained for the many workstations.  You follow around an experienced employee, you read manuals, you watch corporate videos, you attend mandatory staff meetings and you don’t move up until your boss approves it.  Wherever you are scheduled that day, that’s where you work.  You might move from fries to grill in one day, and you’d better be ready for either job.  Afterward you clean up the shake machine and go home a bit grimy, only to have to show up the very next day with a clean uniform.

So why are those basic concepts so hard to follow for some officials?  Even if you have no ambition to move beyond the lowest levels, you still have to study the manual and rulebook.  You have to show up on time, clean and showered with a proper uniform. You’re expected to do that for a minimum wage job and officiating pays much more than that.

The difference, according to one assignor, is the lack of constant supervision.  Since as an official you’re an independent contractor, you might think you are your own boss, which in a way, you are.  But you’re still being scrutinized ----- by your partner, your supervisor, evaluators, coaches and players and the public at large.  Whereas your mishaps at McDonalds might only be talked about in the break room, your every move will be discussed thoroughly by nearly everyone who sees you on the court or field.

So why look foolish?  Is it because you don’t care?  Maybe you don’t mind showing up, doing whatever job you feel the game deserves and cashing the checks.  That’s unacceptable, and assignors can’t comprehend why you would allow that to happen.

You might still get some games (availability trumps all), but don’t for a second feel like you’re going to advance in the industry.

**It’s Not Personal, It’s Not Political, It’s You**

“The assignor never did like me.”  “Come playoff time, it’s the same old officials.”

Let’s be fair.  Not every assignor is going to do his or her job well.  But most assignors are conscientious and work diligently to not only fill games but also to try to put the best people in the best positions to continue positive movement upward.

If you’re not assigned to a playoff game, maybe *you* are not good enough.

If you start thinking the assignor has sent secret notes to the state playoff selection official, all of whom collectively decided to keep you down, you’d better start wearing a tinfoil hat.  It just isn’t so, and if you keep blaming everyone else, you’ll fail.

Your attitude has just trumped your aptitude.  You might be the best official on the field or court, but no one really wants to work with you, especially the assignor you keep blaming for your lack of upward mobility.

When it comes to assignments, it’s not personal.  It can’t be.  The assignor can’t possibly survive by making assignments personal.  They have too many people to answer to and, when using ArbiterSports or another online assigning service, too much data crunching they can’t overcome.

If your partners see you on the schedule and sigh deeply with regret, you’re in for it.  Feelings like that don’t go unnoticed by assigners, supervisors, and subsequently anyone who asks whether you’re the next great thing.

Your assigner wants you to ask others why you aren’t getting the games you think you deserve.  But you better prepare to hear something you might not like to hear.  Because in most cases, it’s not them ---- it’s you.

**You’re Not My Only Priority**

“I had one guy a few years ago call me on Thanksgiving Day at noon and wanted to talk about football assignments for the following year.” said an assigner from Ohio. “Last year, an official sent me open dates via e-mail for his crew 11 out of 15 days consecutive days.  Then there was the official that called me at 1:30 in the morning…..to discuss a date for the following year.”

Yes, you want appreciation, attention and to know you’re liked.  But your assigner can’t be that parent for you all the time-----there are other officials out there and there are only so many hours in the day.  The last thing your supposedly “part-time” assigner needs is for you to make his or her job harder.

So don’t call your assigner and say, “Hey, I actually can’t work tomorrow night.  It’s my anniversary.”

“The calendar has been around since Augustus Caesar over 2000 years ago and some officials apparently have never caught on that it is a useful tool,” said the Ohio assigner.  “Anniversaries, birthdays, etc., fall on the same day every year. And it is amazing how some officials ------usually the same officials ----  call every year and drop a contracted game because they didn’t record those type of events on a calendar.”

And don’t send an e-mail to your assigner the day after a game, saying, “Hey boss, I forgot to fill out the game report last night, but we ended up throwing out that coach.  Call me if you want details.”

Administrative tasks matter to assigners.  Taking cate of your administrative tasks at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way will endear you to assigners.

**NINE MORE THINGS**

* **Not all the best officials work the best games.**
* **Relationships with coaches can hurt you.**
* **Assigners don’t work for you.  We work for the schools/conferences/leagues.**
* **We usually find out if you are lying about the reason for a turn back.**
* **Sometimes you receive weak partners to test how good you are.**
* **A rating system is only a piece of the puzzle**
* **The more you ask about a game the less chance you will get it.**
* **Bad mouthing other officials doesn’t make you look good.**