

and center line like a hawk while transitioning from side to side. We've stressed checking lineups, getting substitutes in and out of the game quickly, administering timeouts, watching the libero come and go, tracking the setters and watching for alignment issues. Seems like a lot of responsibility. However, have we taught the second referee how to take care of those duties and expand their focus to encompass more?

For example, what about the bang-bang play at the net on the second referee's side? Who made contact last? How about the ball that possibly is over/outside of the antenna on the second referee's side? Have we really shown referees how to get in a good position to see those situations and help the first referees know what just happened? What do we mean by "looking through the net"? What should the second referee do when the line judge is frantically waving a flag because the ball passes outside the antenna but goes unnoticed by the first referee, who then allows play to continue?

In situations where line judges are inexperienced and not seeing touches off the block, have we taught the second referee to work even harder to help with those decisions? And when there is a pancake by a player and the first referee's sight line is clearly blocked, have we taught second referees that helping is critical? The second referee has to be aware when the libero sets the ball with finger action on or in front of the attack line. But how does the second referee indicate to the first referee what just happened? Sure, we teach officials to discuss those things prematch, but is that enough? Our training also includes knowing how to keep score, but does it include how to quickly identify what is wrong with the score sheet so it doesn't take 10-15 minutes to sort out the problem?

Oh, yes — coaches, disruptive players and unruly fans. Second referees are expected to be aware of and involved with them as well. But how? We give referees reading materials and we even talk about

what to say in those situations. But do we arrange preseason scrimmages and/or hands-on situations to train the second referee prior to the regular season? Are we able to train referees how to think on their feet, how to choose the correct words to use to defend and protect the first referee's controversial calls, and how to defuse the situation and restore order? Do we teach how to warn, but not threaten? If there is a misapplied rule, can the second referee handle damage control?

Many of our training techniques are based on "on-the-job training," hoping referees can figure it out as it happens in a live match.

Many players today are playing volleyball nearly year round, and the skill level of those players has increased significantly. Shouldn't we also move the level of training for second referees to the next level? Many times, we say "with experience" an individual will get better at handling second referee situations — and typically we all do. But perhaps we should bolster training to stay up with and ahead of the skill level of the players. We need to develop second referee training that is more than the X's and O's of officiating volleyball, and then figure out how to measure the effectiveness of our training. Maybe we are adequately training our second referees. However, it's time we take an inventory of how we approach second referee training, roll up our sleeves, and get down to really educating and preparing them. We should not settle for adequate.

After all, if it is a partnership between the first and second referees, shouldn't the focus on training be equal?

Patsy Burke, Birmingham, Ala., serves as the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) state volleyball rules interpreter and director of the AHSAA state officials camp. She is a former member of the NFHS Volleyball Rules Committee. She is a retired NCAA D-I and D-II volleyball and softball official. She is an active high school and USAV(JN) volleyball official. □

THEY SAID IT

"You have to absorb all the information you can get because you can always be better. Become a student of the game and learn how to apply all of it as you gain experience. You may not be able to understand some things when you first learn them, but work on bits and pieces."



— Michelle Prater, PAVO and USAV national referee and NCAA Division I women's referee, on how officials can improve.

DID YOU KNOW?

Among the things volleyball and basketball have in common are a starting place — Springfield, Mass. YMCA instructor William G. Morgan is credited with inventing volleyball. He blended elements of basketball, baseball, tennis and handball to create a game for his classes of businessmen which would demand less physical contact than basketball. The first match was played at Springfield College in 1896. Physical education instructor Dr. James Naismith invented basketball in 1891 while working at the YMCA Training School in Springfield.

SIDELINE

Atkinson Joins NFHS Administrative Staff

Lindsey Atkinson has been named to the NFHS administrative staff as director of sports/communications associate. She will serve as administrator for volleyball, tennis and girls' lacrosse. Atkinson rejoined the NFHS staff last year as coordinator of sports after serving in a similar position from 2006-08. Atkinson graduated from DePauw University in 2002. She also holds a teaching certification from Marian College and her master's degree from Kaplan University. She is a Registered Athletic Administrator with the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association and a Certified Interscholastic Coach.

