** PITTSBURGH ELITE OFFICIATING CAMPS - OFFICIAL NCAA CORRESPONDENCE** 

**COMMANDING RESPECT**

Wearing a striped shirt with an orange band creates a lot of responsibility. What it does not automatically create is personal respect. That has to be earned through a combination of accountability and acceptability. Above all, you must respect the game and give respect to others who have earned it before you can expect it in return.

1. **Make eye contact**.

This is a very valuable and simple thing for an official to put into practice. When you look a player or coach in the eye, it sends two important messages in both verbal and non-verbal communications. It conveys both confidence and alertness. By maintaining eye contact, the players and coaches know you can read them and that you are aware of what they are trying to do. Likewise, maintaining a confident but calm posture between the whistles -- not stooped, bored or like you are spoiling for a fight -- sends a subtle but powerful message about how you will conduct the game.

1. **Treat each game with top priority**.

 What is the most important game being played in the league that night? Whichever one you are officiating. No game is beneath you. It doesn't matter whether it's a preseason game or a late-season one between two clubs who are way out of the race. You owe to the game -- and to the paying customers who make it possible for us to make a living in it -- to hustle and to realize that it is a privilege to be out there. Keep yourself in good shape and don't make excuses.

1. **Don't make idle threats or false promises**.

At the point you tell the players or coaches, "That's enough! Do that again and someone sits!" you have drawn a line in the sand. If someone crosses it, you NEED to make the call. In the moment, it may be tempting to spare yourself the grief and give a "second-chance final warning." In the long-run, you command a lot more respect by being a man of your word.

1. **Support your teammates**.

Officials are human beings, and some people get along better than others. Behind closed doors, officials sometimes have disagreements about the handling of a certain play or whether the correct call was made in a particular instance. On the ice, you are a team and must act accordingly. Your goal together is to get the calls right, but you also need to stand up for one another. Don't air your dirty laundry on the ice, even if you are ticked off at a teammate. Unity is the key distinguishing marks of any good hockey team. It doesn't matter what league you are talking about, whether it's midget, junior, minor pro, or the NHL. No matter how individual talent there is, the team is doomed to failure unless there's a united we stand, divided we fall mentality that is placed above anyone's personal goals. Every team talks about unity. Coaches preach it non-stop. But talking about it and actually demonstrating it on a consistent basis are two different things. In good times, they push each other to be even better. In tough times, they stand together and never throw a teammate under the bus, especially not in public. When an opponent or outsider takes liberties on a teammate, the others instinctively come to their comrade's defense.

1. **Don't take yourself too seriously**.

There is a time to put on the game face and bear down. But there is also ample opportunity to lighten the mood at the rink.

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