

The Psychology of Officiating.

Psychology of officiating has been an ongoing interest for sport psychology practitioners and researchers since the late 1980s. Research has identified eight main characteristics officials across various sports have in common:

Consistent	Behaving in an unchanging way with a goal to uphold the same fair standard throughout.
Rapport	A warm, relaxed relationship of mutual understanding, acceptance, and sympathetic compatibility between or among individuals.
Decisiveness	An ability to make decisions quickly and effectively.
Poise	Carrying oneself in a dignified, self-confident, and composed manner.
Integrity	A quality of being honest and standing behind strong values and morals.
Judgment	An ability to make considered decisions and sensible conclusions.
Confidence	A feeling of self-assurance arising from one's appreciation of one's abilities or qualities.
Enjoyment	the state or process of taking pleasure in something.
Motivation	The intensity and effort one is willing to direct toward an action.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

If quality officiating is largely psychological, which ultimately creates an **environment that fosters positive, safe, and healthy environment for peak performance**, why is so little time and training placed on developing and practicing such skills?

What is common with the characteristics is that they are **psychological skills that you can rehearse and practice**. Most are observable behaviors, underpinned by various thoughts and emotions. Many sports, including swimming, require their officials to be both physically and mentally capable – it is no easy feat to stand or walk on a hot and humid pool deck for 4 hours straight!

Yet, much of the certification process is focused on the mechanical aspects of officiating – physical techniques, rules and regulations, knowledge-based tests, and proper attire.

Critical Questions:

Knowing that successful officials are characterized by eight pertinent psychological factors, as an official, reflect on the following:

1. Which of these factors do I possess?
2. Which of these come “naturally” to me?
3. What do I need to work on?