



## WHO IS A TECHNICAL OFFICIAL?

### Common Traits of the Successful Technical Official

- While any type of personality can succeed as a technical official, many qualities are common to experienced and highly skilled officials around the world.
- Most of these traits are aspects of their character that they either possessed naturally, or developed over time, and many of them are essential to success as a technical official.
- What this means to the new officials is that there will be some aspects of your "on-court persona" that you must nurture and develop, in order to feel at home on the court.

### Integrity

- The most important character trait all technical officials share is a strong sense of personal integrity: honesty on and off the court is essential to anyone hoping to convince others to trust him.
- A kabaddi match requires the players to rely upon the technical officials to make often-difficult decisions during hotly-contested matches, and the Rules confer nearly total discretion on the officials to do what is best for the game within the rules.
- An official who lacks the personal integrity to see things honestly, and behaves according to the Rules of the Game will not get very far as a technical official. Players and colleagues will come to be mistrustful of the official's intentions and impartiality; and once a technical official loses the trust of the players, then loss of match control is never far behind.
- Players and spectators are willing to forgive an occasional mistake by the officials, so long as they seem to be trying their best to be fair to both sides. One thing they will not forgive is dishonesty.

### Courage

- As important as Integrity is to a technical official, it is meaningless without the courage to do what the official knows to be right.
- Whether it is denying an appeal for "violation" play that the technical official deems to be unintentional, turning a deaf ear to loud appeals for a point or bonus, or denying a "touch", or sending off of players, or denying

a final raid, the technical official cannot make the call that will cause the least amount of grief.

- Rather, he/she must make the call that he believes to be the right one.
- Kabaddi is a game of energy and excitement, and disappointment over a call, or no-call, is often expressed angrily and loudly.
- But we have other tools for dealing with expressions of disappointment that get out of hand; avoiding the problem by making the wrong call is not one of them.

## Decisiveness

- Courage and Integrity will carry an official a long way. All the courage in the world will not matter, however, without the ability to make decisions quickly.
- Kabaddi is a fast-paced, highly-intense game, where the play is ever-changing and the action can cover the whole court in a matter of seconds.
- A technical official who takes too long to make up his mind about what has just happened may find play leaving him behind; and he who waits for prompting by the players to announce a decision will be seen as weak and easily persuaded.

## Patience

- While Decisiveness is necessary, patience—on the kabaddi court field, as in life—is a virtue.
- Technical Officials hoping to appear decisive and alert often have more time to announce a decision than they realize.
- Waiting an extra second or two before blowing the whistle can often prevent a great many problems.
- Waiting an extra second may allow a stumbling raider to recover his footing, and continue on to score.
- Waiting an extra second may show whether the struggle will go the raiders way or the anti raiders way—and whether whistling will allow a tactical foul to succeed in disrupting an attack.
- Waiting an extra second may determine whether a raid is successful, thereby sparing the technical official the embarrassment of having to explain to an exasperated team that the that the raid was unsuccessful.
- Patience involves more than waiting to see how play develops, though a patient technical official will often take his time dealing with a troublesome player or coach to maximize the effect of any card given for misconduct, perhaps giving the troublemaker the opportunity to bring his temper under control, or waiting until tempers have cooled before speaking to a player about a controversial call.

- This is because a wise technical official will try to use every available tool—the voice, the whistle, the card, sometimes the “stare of death”—to keep the match under control.
- And a patient technical official regards time as a resource to be used, avoiding the rush to take actions that will only make things worse.
- The benefits of patience are many....up to a point.
- The challenge for the new official is learning when to be patient, and when to be prompt.

### Fair mindedness

- The reason that Kabaddi confers so much discretion on its officials is because everyone presumes that the technical official will be fair and impartial.
- There is more to fairness, however, than simply treating both sides equally: a technical official who relishes playing “gotcha” with the players— lowering the boom for trifling matters, or imposing disproportionate punishments for minor offenses—may be treating everyone the same, but is hardly being “fair” as far as the players are concerned.
- Unfairness to everyone is, after all, hardly a recommended path to success in any walk of life, and Kabaddi is no exception.
- Being “fair-minded” means more than treating everyone consistently. It means treating everyone with respect, and trying to avoid intruding needlessly on a game that rightly belongs to the players.
- There will be times when this will mean coming down sternly on a player or coach whose behavior is simply unacceptable; but we do not have the power to do so because Kabaddi thinks that we are infallible.
- Rather, the game entrusts us with our authority because someone has to make a decision...and everyone is counting on us to be fair.

### Empathy

- A good technical official will know all the rules, and be able to apply them fairly and impartially. A great technical official will understand the needs and motivations of the players, and empathize with the challenges that face them on the field of play.
- Empathizing with the players does not mean that you are willing to tolerate rough or reckless play. It does mean that you will be able to sense a player’s frustrations, whether caused by disappointment or a painful knock in the ankle, and use this knowledge to help you manage the game

- A technical official empathizing with a player will be able to tell the difference between a frustrated player who needs a moment to calm himself, and a nasty player who must be dealt with harshly.
- A technical official able to empathize with the players will sense the difference between a game in which players accept hard, physical challenges with good spirits in the course of a sporting contest, and a game in which tempers are rising due to the level of contact.
- A technical official who can empathize with the players will have the ability to distinguish between trifling fouls that have no effect on the game, and apparently minor contacts—such as a painful rap leg, or a physical catch that disrupts a promising attack—that will make players angry unless they see Justice being done.
- Technical Officials who have played the game have an advantage in this regard: their on-field experience will help them read the body language of the players and let them understand instantly how a play is likely to affect tempers on the pitch.
- Those who have not played kabaddi, or some other sport at a competitive level of play, must find some way to develop this ability on their own.

### Coolness under Fire

- Ernest Hemingway once defined courage as “grace under pressure.”
- Kabaddi has provoked riots as well as devotion among its fans, and has grown to become a popular sport because of its capacity to excite our passions.
- But kabaddi’s ability to draw on raw human emotion presents a challenge for its referees: players and spectators watch the game with their hearts; referees watch with their eyes.
- If we allow our own feelings to start overwhelming our judgment, we risk chaos on the court.
- We are there to maintain order and keep everyone focused on the game, and everybody is counting on us to keep a level head, even when the disappointments of the moment have interrupted their own capacity for rational thought.
- Some of us are naturally excitable; most of us have a variable temperament, depending on our mood and on what is going on around us.
- Few of us are naturally inclined to relax in times of stress, or given to react to expressions of anger or insults by remaining calm and doing our best to ease whatever tensions are simmering around us.
- To be a top-notch technical official, developing this ability may be our biggest challenge.

## Humility

- People who lack confidence often compensate for their insecurities by adopting an air of superiority.
- Looking down at the rest of the world may prop up a weak ego, but will never help a technical official on the kabaddi court.
- While some can get away with being arrogant and brilliant, conceit by a technical official can cause all sorts of self-inflicted problems, and being arrogant and clueless is a recipe for disaster in all walks of life.
- Under the Laws of the Game, the technical official's decisions are final on all points concerning the fact of play: kabaddi, in other words, regards the technical official's judgment as infallible, so far as the game is concerned.
- Unfortunately, some technical officials take this to heart and approach the players with an attitude of arrogance and privilege, rather than with empathy and understanding.
- A wise technical official will realize that nobody is perfect, and that the reason he is blowing the whistle at the game is not because he knows more about kabaddi than anyone else, but because somebody has to make a decision on the field and that he, at least, has actually read the rules.
- Cultivating an attitude that the participants are inferior because there is so much about kabaddi that they do not know will not help a referee control himself, let alone the players.
- This, in turn, will limit how far the official's abilities can take him.
- On the other hand, the technical official who develops an attitude of sympathetic understanding to the player's concerns—recognizing that we officiate to help them play the game, rather than the other way around—will have more success on the field, and find no such limits on any future advancement.

## Self Confidence

- Unfortunately, humility is often well-deserved, and one whose ambitions far exceed his talents had best be humble, or be prepared to come to grief on or off the kabaddi court.
- But a strong ego and healthy confidence in ourselves and our abilities, tempered by the knowledge that we not above making a mistake, can make us strong and resilient, in our jobs as technical officials, and elsewhere.
- Though perfection may have no need for improvement, the rest of us can all use a little work, and recognizing that we are not perfect can lead us to better ourselves.
- But modesty by itself is no path to success at any endeavor.

- Unless we have the confidence in ourselves to make the calls we know to be right, and stand strong in the face of criticism, we will always be second-guessing ourselves.
- Perfection is an ideal that is probably beyond the grasp of any of us, but knowing that we have tried our best can give us pride in a job well-done.

### Good work habits on the court

- Humans are creatures of habit, and tend to revert to form during times of stress. It should come as no surprise that most accomplished officials have adopted and cultivated on-field habits that sharpen their performance.
- Sloppiness is often a state of mind. While an official can often get away with cutting corners on the court, it is not an approach that leads to excellence.
- Many times, officials come to grief not because they are poor referees, but because their work habits have left them out of position at the critical "moment of truth" for the match, or because they made the right call but used a faulty signal which led to an unexpected turn of events on the court.
- As a new official, it will be easier for you to begin training yourself to do things the right way from the outset, than it will be to break old, bad habits later in your career

### Hustle

- In kabaddi, as in most sports, there is a premium on hustle.
- There are benefits gained by being alert and moving quickly into position, and penalties to suffer by being slow to react to changing events.
- Officiating kabaddi is no different. The official who can anticipate and react to play as it is developing will usually be in place to spot a foul and prevent trouble; the official who always lags behind play will need luck and well-behaved players to maintain order on the field.
- Hustle depends more on habit and mind-set than it does on raw physical speed: many older technical officials somehow manage always to be in position wherever they are needed.
- Experience, though, can only teach us where we need to be; it is hustle that will get us there in time.

### Commitment to Fitness

- Of course, all the best intentions in the world often founder when confronted with the real world.

- For the technical official a technical official blessed with an abundance of talent, resourcefulness, courage, and the patience of a saint—the determination to hustle into position is useless without the legs to get there.
- Kabaddi is a physically challenging game, demanding a high level of fitness from its officials.
- Successful Technical officials all have some form of fitness regimen to keep them in condition, to enable them to officiate at their best; and they know that it is much easier to stay in shape than to get into shape.

### Knowledge of the Game

- All good technical officials need a thorough knowledge of the game: while “facts of play” are often judged at the discretion of the referee, a misapplication of the law is a violation of the rules and, if it affects the outcome, can cause a match to be replayed.
- Knowing and understanding the Laws of the Game is necessary for anyone who wants to officiate the sport.
- Immersing yourself in the game’s history and traditions is a good way to continue your education as a technical official.
- It will give you a more complete understanding of the “whys” and “wherefores” of the game, and help you understand some of the nuances and finer points of the rules.
- More importantly, understanding the reason for each rule will let you apply them all at the right time.
- Knowing why a particular Law exists lets you keep things move smoothly on the field, for it lets you sense when to apply which rule, as well as when an infraction can be overlooked as too trivial to stop play.
- And being able to place each rule in its proper context is essential, in order to make each rule work as it is intended.
- Watching as much kabaddi as you can, whether live or on television, will help you develop a sense of how other technical officials react to events on the field, and hone your sense of when a contact is a foul, and when a foul is so trifling that it is safe to let it pass.
- It will also help you when you encounter the dilemma every kabaddi official confronts at some time: the unexpected, whether in the form of an event not covered in the rules, never covered in your training, or one which simply leaves you scratching your head in wonder
- When this happens, the deeper your understanding of the game, the better equipped you will be to solve whatever problem confronts you: you may not remember the rule...but you may very well remember the solution.