



**FIBA**

We Are Basketball

# IMPROVE YOUR... FIRST IMPRESSION

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This material is written by Mrs Dubravka Martinovič and managed by the FIBA Referee Operations.

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**FIBA - International Basketball Federation**

5 Route Suisse, PO Box 29  
1295 Mies Switzerland fiba.com  
Tel: +41 22 545 00 00  
Fax: +41 22 545 00 99

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# IMPROVE YOUR... FIRST IMPRESSION

As mentioned in the IOT manual, **top-level refereeing is improving every year** and higher standards of performance are expected. Since successful officiating depends largely on the referees' (crews) ability to demonstrate game control and have quality decisions, **it is important that referees are able to look, act, and sound like they are in charge of the game and ready to make quality decisions.**

Considering that people often form opinions about the characteristics of others from the simple samples of their appearance, making a good first impression from the first minute you enter the gym is very important.

**"They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so the "picture" you first present needs to demonstrate who you are and the role you present"**

A lot of research has demonstrated the role of someone's physical appearance, body posture, facial gestures, tone of voice, and the rhythm of speech in forming first impressions. Here is a **summary of several important findings** that you should take into consideration when thinking about the first impression:

- ▲ Emotional and non-verbal behaviour of a person has a strong influence on the first impression and judgment of that person. (1)
- ▲ First impressions are usually formed quickly, automatically, and within milliseconds of seeing a person. (2)
- ▲ Tone of voice and rhythm of speech tends to influence the impression we make on others. In other words, what we think about others in terms of vocal attractiveness, strength, dominance, empathy, or trustworthiness can be derived from their voice. (3)
- ▲ The first impression and appearance have a strong influence on social interactions with others, preference decisions, and trustworthiness judgments. (4)(5).
- ▲ People often make a snap judgment about someone's personality - attractiveness, likeability, trustworthiness, competence, and aggressiveness - based on the first impression of the facial appearance of others. (6)

These findings suggest how the first impression is important for social and emotional interaction, collaboration, and communication with others, especially in situations where correct judgments and quality decisions should be made.

In officiating this can have a profound effect on the acceptance of your decisions because the **memory of these impressions** has the capacity to influence your future actions and interactions with others (colleagues, coaches, players). **The visual, emotional, and verbal** messages we send create a memorable first impression.

## **HOW TO CREATE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION:**

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### ▲ **HAVE GOOD MANNERS**

As this usually largely depends on the culture and cultural norms, good manners such as being on time and presenting yourself appropriately is the first step toward creating a great first impression.

### ▲ **BE OPEN TO LISTEN**

As much as it is important to have a confident tone of voice and to use appropriate words when meeting someone for the first time, it is equally important to listen. Do not interrupt, be perceptive and listen when others are speaking. This will help you make an impression as a considerate and mindful referee.

### ▲ **DEMONSTRATE CONFIDENT BODY LANGUAGE**

Confident body language can be both – calm & strong depending on the situation and the context. Calm body language with a friendly face and eye contact can defuse many tense and/or conflict situations. Strong body language with a straight standing posture and a firm look can send a clear message of what is allowed and what is not.

Eye contact, hand gestures, and facial expressions are important parts of the body language you present. If used appropriately, they can help you to reinforce communication with colleagues, players, and coaches.

Convenient body language depends on the **culture** (i.e., looking in the eyes when speaking with someone), but also on **vocational demands** (i.e., your roles and responsibilities during the game) and the **age group** you are officiating to (i.e., U14, U19 or senior teams). Make sure that you are aware of this when preparing for your first international tournament and international games.

### ▲ **SPEAK APPROPRIATELY**

When speaking with participants on the court use credible words and an appropriate tone of voice. Professional vocal image is as important as body language and non-verbal communication. Whenever your body language doesn't match your words, trust and integrity can be lost. Make sure to use words, phrases, and a tone of voice that fits the situation's context, the facts of that situation, and the rules you are referring to.

## ***FIRST IMPRESSION OF A REFEREE CREW (& REFEREE TEAM)***

Leaving a good first impression of yourself is important but leaving a strong memorable impression of a referee crew is essential. Every time you wear your FIBA uniform you do not present just yourself as a FIBA referee but all of the FIBA referee team too.

When you enter the gym together, at the same time, with the same uniform (dress code) you leave a greater first impression on others. With the uniformity in dress code, physical appearance, and the way you behave and address others, you send a clear message – **we are the referee crew, we are a team**. With this first impression you make as a team you create strong foundations for trust and integrity of your decisions.

As you have noticed, making a good first impression does mean you need to “fit in” to some degree. But it doesn’t mean you should lose yourself and your personality pretending to be someone you’re not. There are certain **vocational demands** and officiating principles about how referees should look, behave, and sound, but it is important to demonstrate this in alliance with **your personality**.

Therefore, the best way to create a good impression is by presenting officiating requirements – **the role and responsibility you have during the game in harmony with your personality**. Doing this will make you feel more confident, help you to build trust and integrity in communication and collaboration with other participants on the court, and eventually lead to better decisions and game control.

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5, route Suisse - P.O. Box 29  
1295 Mies  
Switzerland  
Tel.: +41 22 545 00 00  
Fax: +41 22 545 00 99