

game, as opposed to control the game.

Perhaps the two best words to sum up the qualities of a facilitator-type of official are management and communication. Good officials know how to keep the best interest of the players, coaches and fans in check. They also know how to keep the lines of communication open between themselves and everyone else involved with the game.

The best types of facilitators on the playing field are most likely to possess many of these attributes:

- **They are active listeners** — not only do they hear what players, coaches and other officials are saying, but they are listening to them, absorbing and understanding the information.

- **They ask questions** — whenever they are unsure of something, they seek clarification, especially from their partners and crewmates.

- **They intervene when necessary** — they let players and coaches know what is going to be tolerated and offer fair warnings. They don't interject themselves unless they have to.

- **They treat everyone involved in the game with respect** — they realize they have a job to do and that everyone else at the game has a job to do, too. They understand that only with everyone working in unison with professionalism on everyone's part can the game flow. Of course, they understand they can't control the professionalism of others, but strive to maintain their own.

- **They value constructive criticism** — good officials welcome feedback, whether it is positive or negative, so they can improve their game.

- **They allow the game to flow** — they allow players to create the

tempo and flow of the game and only intervene to do their job, rather than create work for themselves where none exists.

- **They prefer remaining in the background** — the less heard from the officials, the better the game is. At the same time, when the game action dictates they must come to the forefront, they do so without hesitation, professionally putting the game back on course again.

- **They get simple enjoyment from the game** — much like athletes enjoy playing, coaches coaching and fans watching, facilitator-type officials derive pleasure from their jobs.

Which type are you? The choice is yours.

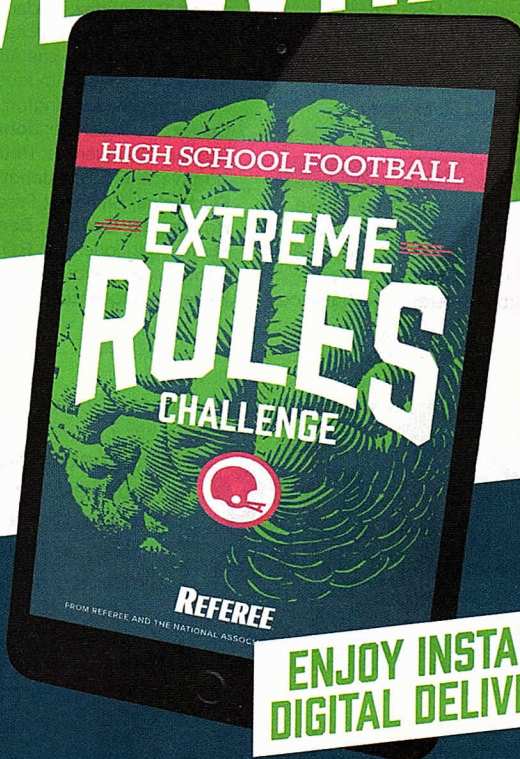
Adapted from a feature written by Dr. Peter Sacco, a psychologist and freelance writer living in Niagara Falls, Ontario, that originally appeared in the 8/03 issue of Referee. □

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