



Worst Evaluation Ever

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Getting evaluated can be a positive or negative experience depending entirely on how you approach the evaluation.

The very first formal evaluation I received was in 2010 at a training clinic at UNC, Chapel Hill. I went into the clinic with an overly-confident attitude and I displayed an inability to change my game according to the feedback I received by the evaluators. I went through the three day clinic thinking I was showing everybody how the game was supposed to be officiated, but I was really showing a lack of desire for improvement. When I received my written evaluation I expected to hear that I was a promising young official who had an uncanny knack for making the right calls.

Instead what I got back was that my positioning was truly awful, my foul threshold was more appropriate to a U11 game than a high school game, my signals were all over the place and were done so fast that no one had a clue what I called, and that I showed an unwillingness to accept criticism. I read the evaluation with growing anger towards the clinicians until I got to the very last comment, which read:

“When Gordon is on the field, he behaves as if everyone showed up to the game to watch him officiate and not the players.”

Yeah, that one hurt.

I almost quit officiating after reading that last sentence. For a whole month I reread my evaluation and tried to understand how I gave off the impression that I was unwilling to learn and wanted to be the center of attention in a profession that prefers to be forgotten after the game. Eventually, I chose not to remain angry at the clinicians for doing their job in pointing out to me the unpleasant details of my lackluster officiating skills and outward demeanor. I chose to work on what I could change immediately while making a sincere effort to be open to any criticism I received from any official more experienced than me (which at the time was pretty much everyone in the association).

I spent that offseason getting into the right position for every play and making my signals as clear as possible. I also began actively seeking out the more experienced officials to ask them questions and reading any book on officiating that I could find. I showed that I was eager to learn and adjust my game by immediately correcting my mechanics whenever I was told I was doing something incorrectly.



My first real evaluation was awful because I went into it thinking I knew everything after officiating for two years. My first reaction to being told I was not a good official was to blame the clinicians. I could have continued in my anger and remained at the same level I was back in 2010, but I chose to adjust my attitude and realized that the evaluators did their job. They told me I wasn't very good and it was up to me to work on every aspect of my game until I could earn a good evaluation.

Getting evaluated isn't about being perfect or making the right calls because you are going to screw up and you'll miss a call or two. Getting evaluated is about keeping a learning attitude and demonstrating that you can adjust your game to what the clinicians tell you.

Want to read some officiating books? Here's a list of some of my favorites:

- [As They See 'Em: A Fan's Travels in the Land of Umpires](#) (Bruce Weber)
- [First Dooowwnnn...and Life to Go! How an Enthusiastic Approach Changed Everything for the Most Colorful Referee in NFL History](#) (Red Cashion)
- [Forward Progress: Confession from a Rookie Football Official](#) (Todd Skaggs)
- [Inside the Meat Grinder: An NFL Official's Life in the Trenches](#) (Chad Brown)
- [Last Call: Memoirs of a Football Referee](#) (Jerry Markbreit)
- [Nobody's Perfect: Two Men, One Call, and a Game for Baseball History](#) (Armando Galarraga, Jim Joyce)
- [Planet of the Umps](#) (Ken Kaiser)
- [Successful Sports Officiating \(ASEP\)](#)
- [The Final Call: Hockey Stories from a Legend in Stripes](#) (Kerry Fraser)
- [The Worst Call Ever!](#) (Kyle Garlett, Patrick O'Neal)
- [Upon Further Review: Controversy in Sports Officiating](#) (Blair Kerkhoff)

If you'd like a read that is specific to lacrosse officiating you can order the Kindle version of my book here:

- [Advancement Rules: Improving Your Lacrosse Officiating](#) (Gordon Corsetti)