

**The Referee Coaches Pre Game Conference  
2007 SCCFOA Referee Symposium  
June 21, 2007**

Be on time, and keep it brief and to the point.

Try these, in this order:

-Introductions: Use a good, firm handshake, look 'em straight in the eye, and take charge of discussion. If you have never met him, say, "Hello, Coach -----; nice to meet you." If you are already acquainted, say, "Hello, Coach -----; good to see you again." Many experienced officials will tell you to always address a coach as "Coach -----," never by his first name. However, many others, including me, believe that such a greeting tends to place the coach on a 'superior' level to the officials, rather than peer-to-peer. So, especially if you are already acquainted, many of us will tell you that it is OK to say, "Hello, Bill; good to see you again."  
Do whatever you are comfortable with and what works for you, but don't let a coach's reputation or record of success intimidate you into believing he is superior to you.

-Verify captains numbers (and names, if desired); get the guys that he wants you to talk to for penalty enforcement - NOT just the toss representatives (quite often totally different people).

-Verify game time, and give him current real time. You need to have real time accurate to within just seconds. Make your B have truly accurate time. Y'all can get that from the Internet, or TV (all major networks begin prime time broadcasting at PRECISELY 8 pm EST (7 pm CST, etc.).

-Let U ask about equipment certification, then let him go check players.

-Verify pre-game schedule: when you will call for captains, when to get teams out.

-(Home coach) Verify halftime length, and review when you will call for captains, then team.  
(Visiting coach) Notify him of halftime length, and review when you will call for captains, then team.

-(Home coach) Verify location of game balls, so you can check them after you get through chatting, or when you arrive on the field later; verify ball person(s) name(s).  
(Visiting coach) Verify if they will use their own game balls. If so, verify location of game balls, so you can check them after you get through chatting, or when you arrive on the field later, & verify ball person(s) name(s).

-Review special conditions, such as wet ball mechanics, threatening weather, special ceremonies, etc.

-Ask about any 'special plays' they may have that you need to know about, such as hand-offs on kickoffs, etc. DON'T ASK ABOUT "TRICK PLAYS." They may not have any 'trick plays,' but they almost always have 'special plays' that can catch you off-guard.

-(first several games) Review any new rules that are likely to arise during the game (such as when coaches were first allowed to request a T/O).

-Don't encourage any questions, but leave the door open by saying, "That's all we needed, so, unless you have any questions...(brief pause)...good luck," and give another firm handshake, with eye-to-eye contact.

-Go find your U and return to the dressing room, or go about other duties as may be appropriate to your level.

That looks like a lot, but all of that can be done in less than 5 minutes per coach, typically, IF YOU TAKE CHARGE OF THE CONVERSATION. Don't be belligerent, but let him know you are in charge by taking the initiative in the discussion.