

## Managing people

### Communication skills

To be a good umpire, you must be able to communicate clearly and consistently. Good communication requires conscious thought about what types of messages you are sending and receiving.



### Body language

Use your physical appearance, your posture, gestures and facial expressions to get your messages across during a game. That way, the players don't have to hear you to know what you expect of them.

### Tone of voice

This is not about WHAT you say – rather, it's about HOW you say it. Your tone of voice is significantly affected by your emotions, so you need to keep track of how you are feeling emotionally as you perform your umpiring duties.

### Words

Choose your words carefully – the words you use should be appropriate for the people who are playing. Avoid swearing or derogatory words.

### Hints for effective communication

- **Keep cool** - keep your emotions under control, even if provoked.
- **Speak firmly, but don't shout** - shouters lose respect and invite criticism.
- **Look good** - dress neatly and appropriately for umpiring (to, at and from the ground).
- **Be confident** - nervousness is easily recognised (through non-verbal signals) and can make you vulnerable.
- **Use clear and timely signals** - players deserve this, and it's your job. Avoid pointing your finger – use an open palm instead.
- **Be open-minded** - listen to other views and answer reasonable questions from players and coaches.
- **Use technology** - make use of the available technology where appropriate.



## Conflict management

Conflict is an inevitable part of sport. People are passionate about sport, and passion invites conflict. So knowing the rules and mechanics is not enough – it's often how you handle people in difficult situations that will make you stand out as a good umpire.

### Conflict management strategies

- 1) **Prevention techniques** – prevention is always better than cure. If you establish a subtle influence on the game early in the game, conflict is less likely to occur.
- 2) **Be professional** – speak clearly and firmly in heated situations – avoid arguments and don't bluff your way through unjustified rulings.
- 3) **Keep cool** – don't overreact. Adopt a low-key posture. Use objective, neutral language.
- 4) **Compromise** – where appropriate, make a decision based on a compromise between conflicting parties. Where compromise can't be met, be prepared to make the final decision.
- 5) **Address the problem, not the emotions** – deal with the facts and use the available evidence when dealing with conflict.



6) **Focus on the person** – people are not objects, show empathy for players' concerns.

7) **Be fair** – avoid team or individual bias at all costs.

8) **Be confident and open** – don't be defensive or try to justify your actions. Clarify decisions using the facts when appropriate.

9) **Be firm** – deal with unfair play firmly and quickly.