

Subject: Youth Soccer Insider: How refs could learn from Wall Street

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How refs could learn from Wall Street

By Randy Vogt

I've never worked on Wall Street although I would love to ring the bell starting the workday at one of the stock exchanges in the future. Many people have a negative view of Wall Street but there are a couple of important things that Soccer Americans, especially those who are referees, could learn:

Start your day happy. "Thank God it's Friday," "Rainy days and Mondays always get me down" and "Hump day" are three expressions illustrating that we long for the weekends and to get away from work. Wrong attitude!

How about we take the attitude of Wall Street instead? The stock market exchanges cheer at the beginning of the workday. Wall Street realizes they need to work to make money.

Of course, not everybody has a job to be cheerful about. I've had jobs at two companies where the company was not doing well and the president became frustrated and took it out on his employees. It was time for me to find a new job. But while I was looking for a new position, I still had to earn a living at those companies. So I thought of the good things about each job, such as I earned money, had made friends at the company and was active during the day. Concentrating on the positive did not change the reality that they were not good environments but made working there a little more palatable.

I'm not expecting referees to cheer after they blow the whistle to kick off the match. I am expecting them to take the attitude that it's a privilege, not a right, to referee and to be cheerful. After all, you will meet new people, have the opportunity to make a positive difference in other people's lives, get exercise and, hopefully, have fun, all while making a little money.



It might be a quarter-century later but I still remember being an official at a top women's amateur game since the match referee had a very poor disposition. He arrived at the field in a really rotten mood and it was obvious that he did not want to be there. The losing team, down by a goal, thought they should have been awarded a PK toward the end of the 90 minutes. If the ref had whistled and the PK was converted, the game would have gone into overtime.

It was very difficult for me to say if a PK should have been awarded as I was so far from the play. But it did cross my mind that since the ref did not want to be there, did he not whistle a chance to tie the game so he could leave?

On the other hand, what happens if the ref is pleasant (as most refs are) but the coach or players become frustrated and try and take it out on the ref? The ref does his or her best to control the match and could look on the bright side that the game will soon be over.

Volatility ahead. One day, the Dow Jones Industrial Average goes up 300 points and the next day, it goes down 250 points. Although the market indexes rarely go up or down more than 3% on any day, individual stocks can be much more volatile.

Same deal with refereeing youth soccer. You could be the best ref in the entire world to the coaches of one game, and then the next game a few minutes later, a coach tells you that you're absolutely clueless. It's very easy to stay humble this way.

On a Saturday night, I attended the induction ceremony for the Long Island Soccer Players Hall of Fame. Four of the five inductees had played professionally. My officiating their games was mentioned in two of the speeches that night and I received a nice round of applause.

The next day, I was refereeing futsal games in a boys U-15 division that had many issues with coaches being dismissed by other refs. They were not nice to me either! No matter what they said, I maintained a good attitude, which was very challenging. I dismissed three coaches in four games that day for personal attacks on others as well as cursing. It was very disappointing to hear their comments. I keep a record of every game so I know that in over 9,000 games, I've dismissed eight coaches until that day. And I had to think how former pros spoke of my ability very kindly years later but these coaches acted like idiots in front of their own children.

One of the biggest challenges in officiating youth soccer games today is many people who know little think they are experts. Maybe that's the influence of the Internet. Years ago, people kept quiet if they did not know much about a subject. Now, they are experts. So why not me as well? I plan on authoring books on opera, how to pilot an airplane and the mating patterns of penguins in the near future.

([Randy Vogt](#) has officiated over 9,000 games during the past three decades, from professional matches in front of thousands to 6-year-olds being cheered on by very enthusiastic parents. In [Preventive Officiating](#), he shares his wisdom gleaned from thousands of games and hundreds of clinics to help referees not only survive but thrive on the soccer field. You can visit the book's website at <http://www.preventiveofficiating.com/>)

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