



## San Diego County Tennis Umpires Association



# Dealing With Anger

Rational thinking and calm emotions go a long way in helping you stay in control of match situation; but they can't eliminate all conflicts and anger-filled situations we encounter in the world of officiating.

The following are helpful tips in defusing conflicts with angry players, parents and coaches.

### Communication

1. Voice
  - A. It's not just way you say, but how you say it.
  - B. Avoid "stair stepping". Don't raise your voice higher and higher to match the other person's.
  - C. Keep your voice calm and even.
2. Body Language
  - A. Look at the other person and show interest.
  - B. Avoid facial expressions like rolling your eyes or frowning.
  - C. Avoid negative head shaking while the other person talks.
  - D. Use affirmative nods to indicate you are listening and understanding.
3. Content
  - A. Be an active "listener". Be able to paraphrase clearly, or repeat back the other person's words accurately. The other person needs to know you have heard what he/she is saying.
  - B. Focus on "I" messages. "I hear what you are saying, and I understand your anger, but the rule says...." DO NOT SAY "You don't know the rule" or "Calm down before you get a Code Violation."
  - C. Be secure enough in yourself that you can hear negative comments about you without reacting or escalating the situation.

### Don't Touch

1. Avoid any physical contact with the other person.
2. Never use physical touch to emphasize a point, or get the other person's attention.
3. We all have "physical boundaries" that if violated, hinder communication and conflict resolution.
4. Never become physically involved in physical conflict between parents, players and coaches.

### It's Not About You

1. Most angry people simply need to be heard more than anything else. Within reason, let them vent.
2. Focus on the main issue. Simply repeat your decision. Like a "broken record" continue to calmly make your statement until it is heard, or time to end the discussion.
3. Remember, your ultimate goal is to fairly enforce the Rules & Regulations of tennis. It is not about winning or losing a conflict situation.

\* referenced from: Taking Charge of Anger, by W. Robert Nay, PhD  
Anger, but William Gray DeFoore, PhD