



## Survey Results: “Upward Feedback”—Giving Feedback to the Referee

Wow, that moment when you are watching a senior official referee a game and you see him or her do or say or make a call that does not make sense to you. Do you give feedback? Do you keep it to yourself, after all this is a senior official? What is the best course of action?

Here is another question? Would you give feedback to your boss at a non-referee job? The Harvard Business Review<sup>1</sup> suggested that giving feedback to your boss is appropriate given certain criteria:

1. Be sure your boss is open to feedback
2. Give specific examples of what you are seeing and hearing
3. Focus on how you can help your boss improve not on what you would do
4. Do not assume that the boss does not want feedback
5. Assume you understand everything the boss is understanding
6. Do not treat the situation as a way to get back at the boss

How does this apply to referees? During the 2017-2018 season, wpgrefs.com had a survey that gathered data about giving feedback.

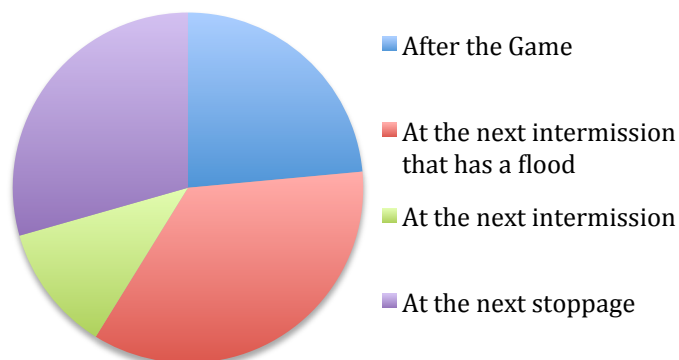
**89% said “yes, give feedback regardless of seniority.”**

One question asked “when should linesman give feedback to the referee?” The results of this question was nearly unanimous as 89% of respondents said “you should give feedback regardless of seniority” with the other 11%

saying that only a linesman with more experience than the referee should give feedback. Also, 100% of the survey respondents said that they would want feedback from junior officials or linesman. Therefore, #1 and #4 (boss is open to feedback) are confirmed; referees want meaningful feedback.

Another question posed to officials is pictured to the right and was “when do you give feedback to the referee?” The results of this were less unanimous with answers very close together suggesting that “as soon as possible” may best describe the results.

### When to give feedback?



However, there is another interpretation. The most common answer, was “at the next intermission”.

<sup>1</sup> <https://hbr.org/2010/03/how-to-give-your-boss-feedback>

This also confirms the Harvard Review as giving feedback at the next flood provides the opportunity to provide more details and be more specific. Therefore, #2 (be specific) is confirmed.

So, what can referees learn from this survey?

- 1) Give feedback regardless of seniority. Always be open to the chance that you may be wrong and learn from that experience...but give the feedback and see what the officiating team thinks. "Hey I saw...what do you think ? Should that have been done differently or did I misunderstand what happened?"
- 2) Most referees want feedback. So offer it. Open the lines of communication!
- 3) Give the feedback as soon as possible and as appropriate. This could be at the next stoppage or this could be at the intermission.
- 4) Be specific. Give details. The more specific, the better the feedback is!