

# Is "Why" Your Style?

By Ed Rae, SDI

**"Some men see things as they are and ask why...?"**

***George Bernard Shaw***

Douglas MacGregor had "X" AND "Y" theories. Industrial context. He asked 'why' about management styles. Strictly a task focus-X- vs strictly people focus -Y. This was a management theory. Then later came theory "Y." Presumably a better hybrid. A change in style.

***We referees have styles too, let's theorize:***

## **Dramatist.**

**How others may see you:** Emotional, visible, impulsive, shoot from hip, excitable, entertaining. It's all about him/her on center stage.

**How you see yourself:** Original, individualistic, imaginative, idealistic, creative. Of course you know better than all the players, your peers most of time.

**How you move:** Late, loose, protocol unimportant, so signals are in your own sweet way.

**Prefer:** To referee. Dislike being the Assistant( AR.) Lampoon 4th official, eschew administrative tasks. Have little or occasional use of instructors , assessors, administrators. Pay no heed to coaches, players needs. Meer bagateel all.What has the world done for me lately?

**Downside to this style:** You may be dogmatic, out-of touch. May appear disorganized. Victor Borge was so funny, as a comedian at the entertaining 88 keys. No one played piano any better, as a result though. Look like you do not care for others in game.

## **Practice Needs:**

Use formal signals once in a while. Ask more. Tell less. Be open to other points-of-view. The game may involve many other refs, who may watch you. But they cannot be you. You may learn from them. Take the AR tasks seriously. As you would want AR's to do, when you are the referee.

Even the players can teach you nuances. Learn. Otherwise you stagnate at an adolescent level of development. You may be accomplished, but the game has cryptically changed.

While you were motionless in backward glances, the game moved on, became cunningly complex. Never noticing as you looked in the mirror, the players had their ebullient eyes on the ball.

## **Technician**

**How others see you:** Busy with details, slow to decide, logical, rigid, fact conscious, small trifling calls.

**How you see yourself:** Good communicator, thorough, wise, prudent, analytical, objective, scholarly.

**How you move:** straight forward, no wasted motion. But no one can get too close.

**Prefer:** People stay out of way, just obey law to letter. Want players to be as technical as you are. Unrealistic at best.

**Downside to this style:** Players frustrated at delays in decisions. You rarely take risks, so rarely get big reward. At times game is in gut not gray matter, so you lose control when you must quickly react to emotions. Problem is, you are still mentally fact gathering.

### **Practice Needs:**

Outline possible scenarios ahead of time; talk with assessors, peers about situations, so you can speed up decision making. Take a chance - give an early card, withhold a card, try quiet word when players are loud. Be counter intuitive once in a while.

## **Controller**

**How others see you:** Determined, dictatorial, unemotional, robotic, task oriented, unfriendly to players.

**How you see yourself:** Must be on top or rushing to get there. No time to interact, my way or highway. "I am perfectly capable of making them all, get this game through precisely correct."

**Prefer:** To rule with iron hand, often full of cards. Want coaches, players to bow to your imperial ways.

**Downside to this style:** You tell all. No sell in your calls. Team effort not easy for you so cooperation fades quickly by peers. Players think you at best effectively ugly . At worst interfering in their game, way they want to play. Can get banished for harsh manner.

### **Practice Needs:**

Listen more. Take time, back off, before rushing to judgment. Let players a have a say, it is often correct. Discount for bias but listen . People are not an obstacle, they are the reason we do this. Make up your mind to be less intrusive, more flexible. Work with more flexible referees. Talk to players and coaches about what styles they see in good officials.

## **Facilitator:**

**How others see you:** easy going, flexible, soft-touch, warm, friendly.

**How you see yourself:** Value traditions - sprit of game, persuasive, sentimental, warm, loyal, players come first.

**How you move:** Informally, casually, moderate pace but will work hard, at crucial times when players need your close-in support.

**Prefer:** Can't we all just get along? Happy Days. Happy endings. Every player to sing in the choir. Glad games all. You sing: "I wish I had a pencil thin mustache."

**Downside to this style:** Too personal, long conversion, interaction may be seen as favoritism. May not use discipline when it really is needed. Then a card may come too late to save a good experience. Competition can be adversarial, and combative. Often not happy, because of you.

### **Practice needs:**

Work on being independent of group, be assertive. Take some idea from controlling, other styles. Be more formal with players and coaches - still polite. But businesslike. Trust players & coaches , but verify. Take action when they show unwelcome, unsporting side.

### **No one style fits all exactly.**

Most referees have some blended style. Key is to use a variety of styles. When needed one must be heavy handed, and drop the hammer of fouls, misconduct. At other time when players need no help, back off and just facilitate. Let some contact go. At some time in some games one method works well. Later on in same game it may not. Same team on a different day may respond to a style you have never tried before. Try it. Variability is part of game.

Players adjust to coaches, opponents ,grounds, referees , weather, moods, fatigue, star alignments. Ever notice at tournaments, no matter what, referee rectitude is: always run right diagonal? Why is that? Suppose the AR is knee deep in muck, but the other half clear? Refs are stuck. Change diagonal once in a while. Adjust to the undulating universe that players do. Most who are admired, admit to flexibility in the human equation.

No one style comes into being all at once. Coaches, players, referees all develop over time. Be open to change. Watch other games. Styles vary, modes change, everyone experiments. So do we. If we are becoming, going, advancing.

Dr. Samuel Johnson ardently admonished about foolish consistency. Hobgoblin of retro-referees, it seems. Brave broadband. Maybe the fast forward is the "why" theory. Examine why you are doing 'it' in a certain fashion. This game? This time ? This situation? This type of game? This unique conundrum? Is it traveling well? Well, ask "why?"

If the answer makes sense, then keep that studied style.

**If not going well, ask "why?"**  
**Then curry cheer: change your style.**