

Canon 13

A judge should not be overly officious. She/he should not criticize other officials or attempt to explain other officials' judgements.

Sometimes when people are told they are “overly officious,” it sounds like a really bad thing. According to Webster, officious means 1) a: kind, obliging b: dutiful 2) volunteering one's services where they are neither asked nor needed: meddlesome. 3) informal, unofficial or impertinent (not restrained within due or proper bounds. a: given to or characterized by insolent rudeness.

So, it seems as if this word goes from not so bad to really bad. But, how does this apply to judges?

We know that a lot of judges are the classic “A” type personality. We know we are right and we have to find a way to express the fact that we are right. Sometimes that means we talk too much when we should be listening or waiting patiently to be asked for our opinion. On the other hand, sometimes our speaking out may be a lack of confidence and we feel we need to let the other judges know that we do know what we are talking about.

Something else to think about is exactly what our job entails. We are there to judge and maintain the integrity of the sanction. This does not include the meet director's or meet referee's responsibilities unless that is our job. For example, it is not our job to police coaches' attire or take on duties of the meet referee or chief judge when we are not in those positions. Do your job and don't try to take on other responsibilities unless requested to do so.

The bottom line is we should never criticize another judges' opinion nor should we be the one that explains someone else's judgements. Our job is to judge each routine to the best of our ability, explain our score when asked, and give every gymnast the benefit of our knowledge. Always be open to listening to another opinion. We all make mistakes and anyone who says they don't make mistakes after judging ten plus hours a day for three days is delusional.

So, in the words of Thumper, *“If you can't say something nice, don't say nothing at all.”* Be responsible for yourself and your score only.