

AFC Referee Academy
Practical Guidelines for
Referees

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Introduction

This booklet is intended to assist referees in their interpretation and application of the Laws of the Game and should not be seen as contradicting them.

The content provides general guidelines and advice for referees in managing the game on the field of play.

The AFC Referee Academy hopes that this booklet will not only be useful for referees, assistant referees, referee assessors, coaches and referee educators operating at the very highest level of football in their Member Association and in AFC Competitions, but also for all referees operating in the semi-professional and in the grass-roots game. The AFC Referee Academy also hopes that these notes will aid and guide match officials in the uniform interpretation and application of the Laws of the Game.

Refereeing GAME PLAN

What is your GAME PLAN?



As a referee, many of you will prepare for your match both physically and mentally, including the tactical awareness and playing styles of the two teams involved. Key players that will have an influence on the game, set play situations and the awareness of your positioning will also have a major influence on your management of the game.

However, whilst doing your homework on the two teams is beneficial, the analysis will be meaningless if referees do not have a GAME PLAN and how they will control and manage the game.

As a referee, what is your strategy in managing the potential type of game you will be refereeing?

- What have you learnt from reviewing the tactics of the two teams?
- What influence will key players have on your decision making?
- How may these impact on your decision making and to bringing the game to a successful conclusion?
- How will these factors of Game Analysis, Tactical Awareness, knowledge of Key Players etc. how can this help you referee the game through 90 minutes?

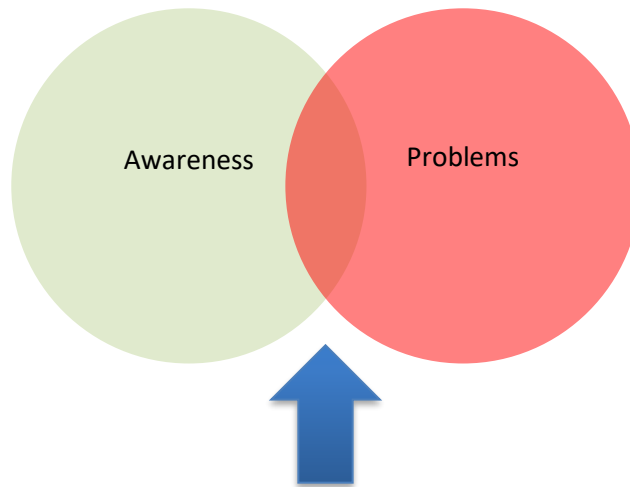
Bringing the game to a successful conclusion is using your GAME PLAN to take the appropriate action at the right time and making the correct decisions based on the homework on each team.

As a guide, it is good to review the last three games of each team including the last time these two teams played each other (if applicable). However, this will be difficult at the very start of a new season, but as the season progresses, there will be ample opportunity to review past performances.

Before thinking about creating a GAME PLAN, you must have a good understanding of the main characteristics set out below.

Team Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of teams are they? • Are they physical teams? • Do they play a particular style? 	History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous history between the two teams • Personal history between the two teams
Individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the key players that will have an influence on the game? • Which player(s) are likely to cause you a problem? • Management of Technical Areas - Head Coach, Technical Area Staff? 	Outcome of the match <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winning the league/trophy/cup • Avoiding relegation • Promotion • League position • Qualifying for ACL • Financial reward

Refereeing GAME PLAN



The first step to a solid game strategy

Previous History

Knowledge of the previous history between the two teams is also vitally important so that the referee can fully appreciate the significance of the match including the rivalry between the spectators. This is particularly important with local derby matches or with matches that has had previous bad history between them.

Personal History

Another important factor to consider is your previous history between the two teams. Have the previous games gone well? Will they remember a mistake you made in the past or did you award a controversial goal or penalty kick? Did you have a high number of yellow cards or dismissed players from the teams. Some teams, players, coaches and spectators have long memories and sometimes they have difficulty to forgive and/or forget.

Outcome of the Match

Of course both teams will want to win the match but some matches have far greater consequences including promotion, relegation, progression to the next round of the cup competition, winning the league or trophy, league position to qualify for a Champions League place etc. including the financial awards in football at the highest level.

Tactical Specifics

Team formation	Tactical understanding and how this may affect your positioning and movement
Corner Kicks	Attacking - Players/player positioning, corner kick taker
Defending	Zonal/man2man, defenders on goal line, positioning
Attacking Free Kicks	Players/player positioning, target player or dropping zone, free kick taker

Referee GAME PLAN

Referees should always be asking themselves,

- What can I do to bring the game to a successful conclusion?
- What do I need to do to establish and maintain control?
- What is my strategy to managing this game?

As a referee, having a GAME PLAN on how you are going to deal with potential game situations before you enter the field of play is vitally important and this must be clearly communicated and understood by the referee team. Assistant referees and the 4th Official, including the VAR Team where used, must fully understand how you as the referee will be approaching the game. Having a preventative mind-set is very important.



In the first 10 minutes of every game, players often approach this period with high intensity and often reacting to the crowd and the coach's motivation and build-up to the game over several days.

As the referee, you need to maintain tight control to underpin your authority, particularly in this opening period. You need to adjust the way that you control the game, in response to the way that the game is being played by the players.

As the temperature of the game rises, you will need to adjust to the way the game is officiated. This is not being inconsistent, rather merely raising the level of control in line with how the game is being played. The consistency is in the way that the referee always manages to keep control, by adjusting their authority to encourage the flow of the game.

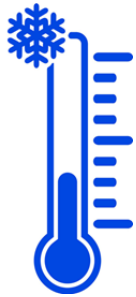
For referees to manage a game in a flexible and efficient way, you need to constantly vary the degree of your involvement, based on the fluctuating temperature of the game, and the allowance of leniency given to players.

There will be periods in most games when teams are in their most dominate phase or the game tempo has risen, when you as the referee must be authoritative.

This can be achieved by applying strict Law and management to control (or regain control) of the game; for example:

- (a) Allow no advantage and stopping play for every foul
- (b) Work much harder at identifying and being near to possible conflict areas
- (c) Admonishing players in a more open and public way
- (d) Discipline players in strict accordance of the Laws
- (e) Deal quickly with acts of dissent towards referee's decisions





Conversely, during less confrontational periods, you may relax control, allow the game to breathe by not penalising trifling offences (such as applying greater use of the advantage clause, and being more openly friendly towards the players), thereby increasing the flow and enjoyment of the game for all.

There are important 10-minute periods in each game of football; these periods nearly always require stricter control by the referee. Examples of this include

- the first 10-15 minutes of a game;
- the five-minute period immediately before and immediately after half time, and
- the last ten minutes of the game.

In addition to this, further variable ten-minute periods (for example, following an incident trouble flash-point yellow card or red card incident or the scoring of an important goal), referees need to ensure they maintain tight control. A substitution, a yellow card challenge, a penalty kick award, a tight offside judgment, or even a refereeing error can heighten the negative reactions by players.

This allows referees to maximise their capability by focusing their (fitness and mental) resources into gaining proper control of the game, particularly in those periods of the game identified as being more difficult than others.

When the temperature of the game rises, it is important for referees to sometimes 'slow the game down' as part of your game management. For example, taking the time to speak to a player after a foul has been committed. Not allowing quick free kicks. When administering discipline, take a bit more time to speak with the player rather than trying to get play restarted quickly. Through your authority and positive body language, increase your awareness and demonstrate a step-change in your approach to managing the game until the game calms down and is in complete control.

Summary

The importance of preparing a GAME PLAN before every match cannot be underestimated.

Every game will have its own pressures and therefore it is vitally important that referees are well prepared both mentally and physically before the game.

The top level referees do not try to avoid pressure; they accept that it is part of the game. Many referees are confident that they have the skills to deal with any situation, treating pressure as a challenge that is welcomed.

Having a GAME PLAN will allow you to anticipate potential problems during the game and how the referee will manage these situations if and when they arise. Therefore, doing your homework on the two teams well before the game will not only give you greater awareness of the potential problems, but to also allows you to mentally rehearse the actions you may take to deal with them.

Clearly communicating your GAME PLAN to your referee team can be equally, if not, more important as doing your pre-match warm up routine. All the referee team must be in tune with how the referee will want to manage the game. Preparing yourself mentally for anything which could happen during the game will help you to remain calm under pressure and you will be better in control of your emotions.

When you are confident in the knowledge of what your GAME PLAN will be...

- you will be more relaxed even though you may feel a little nervousness, but with a sense of calmness and confidence
- your decisions will be made instinctively without conscious thought process as you will have a strong belief in your ability
- you feel as if you are in the right place at the right time
- you maintain concentration and have an awareness of what is happening around you
- you will maintain control over your emotions and not become tense, therefore remain in total control of yourself and the game

Having a GAME PLAN is all about helping you to perform to the best of your ability

Stamping your Authority on the Game



“There are opportune situations in every game which, if acted upon correctly, not only gives a referee greater control but also earns the respect from the players, coaches and spectators.”

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For referees to manage a game in a flexible and efficient way, you need to constantly vary the degree of your involvement, based on the fluctuating temperature of the game, and the allowance of leniency given to players. There will be periods in most games when teams are in their most dominate phase or the game tempo has risen, when you as the referee must be authoritative.

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The first 10 minutes of the game

Why is the first 10 minutes of the game important for the referee?

- Make it clear to the players how you will interpret the game situations that have occurred (consistency is very important)
- Set your high standard from the very beginning on what is acceptable and not acceptable
- Taking the appropriate action
- Players will "check" how the referee will interpret and react to game situations

The five-minute period immediately before and immediately after half time

In the 5 minutes before the half time, the game temperature rises or one of the teams are trying to score a goal and go for the half comfortable result.



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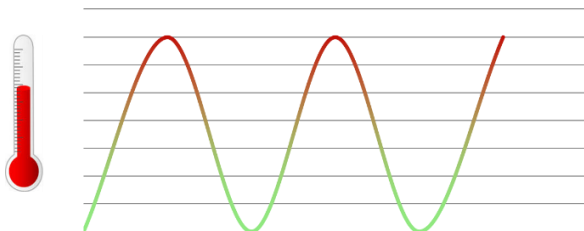


In the first 5 minutes immediately after the half time, both teams have been motivated (or warned) by their coaches, they would have recovered their strength and will want to start the game with high intensity and determination

The temperature of the match can reach a maximum, as teams have little time to achieve the result they need. Player fatigue and emotions can run high in the closing period of the game. Statistics prove that more goals are scored in the second half and in particular the final 10 minutes of the game. The players' target is to achieve the needed result for the team. During this period of time, there is a higher risk of clashes between players and tempers flare up.



Game Temperature Rises



When the temperature of the game rises, it is important for referees to sometimes 'slow the game down' as part of your game management. For example, taking the time to speak to a player after a foul has been committed. Not allowing quick free kicks to be taken.

When administering discipline, take a bit more time to speak with the player rather than trying to get play restarted quickly. Through your authority and positive body language, increase your awareness and demonstrate a step-change in your approach to managing the game until the game calms down and is in complete control. Examples of game temperature rises:

After a key decision in the match

- An important goal is scored or disallowed
- A penalty kick is awarded or not awarded
- A player is sent off

What strategies can you use as a referee to manage the game when the game temperature rises?

- Limiting the use of advantage and stopping play for every foul (unless non-offending team has an obvious goal scoring opportunity)
- Anticipate and read the game to identify problems and be close to possible conflict areas
- Send clear messages to players in a more open and public way – taking a bit more time
- Discipline players in strict accordance with the Laws of the Game
- Deal quickly with acts of dissent towards referee's decisions

Summary

It is important for the referee to know when and how to stamping your authority on the game that will give you greater control of the match. If you establish your authority early in the game, it sets the tune for the rest of the game and how the players will accept and respect your decisions. Remember you never get a second chance to make a first impression. Therefore, the timing of your intervention is important and when, how you act or react to the situation. When you recognise when game temperature rises, always ensure you and your team also rise to the occasion.

Game Empathy & Understanding

A referee's role is a complex one that comprises elements of management such as a context-based, adequate interpretation of the Laws of the Game, common-sense, game empathy and many soft skills in the area of personality and communication.

Referees at the top level understand themselves as game-managers and are more aware for the need to integrate a common-sense-based, management-orientated approach into their refereeing. Those referees who are selected for promotion to the highest levels of the game are strong in the area of game-management thanks to interpreting themselves as game-managers rather than a Law enforcer.

It is therefore not surprising that the very best referees are known for excelling in game-management qualities, sometimes overstretching the Laws of the Game some would argue, but they are entrusted to officiate in their top competitions and major finals.

To prevent any misunderstanding, game empathy does not exclude enforcing the Laws of the Game if required. It is about understanding the Laws of the Game and applying them in the best possible way through the game understanding and game management concept.

It is however absolutely essential to understand that game empathy neither replaces nor excludes the application of the Laws of the Game. The Laws are the base on which a referee can build and reveal their style of managing and understanding the game. Knowing the Laws is the minimum prerequisite every referee has to fulfil - applying them in the correct and best possible way is an essential part of managing a game effectively. Only a referee who bases their management skills on a deep interpretation of the Laws - combined with the responsibility to prevent any threat to the safety of the players as well as the courage to intervene if needed - will thus succeed at the highest level.



There is no ill feeling in the relationship between "Laws of the Game" and "Game Empathy". It is about finding the right balance when considering the Laws of the Game, Game Empathy and Understanding and the Spirit of Football. Both "Laws of the Game" and "Game Empathy" are two sides of the same coin: a refereeing mind set which equally serves the Laws of the Game, players, technical staff and spectators.

Everyone should have empathy for the needs of each game - the best referees are not unsympathetic 'robots'. The very best referees 'understand' and 'feel' the game and referee with an empathy for the needs of each game. As with any referee, it is important to build trust and rapport with the players in order to have a successful working relationship. It is, however, near impossible to teach this "feeling for the game" but is gleaned over time the more experience you get as a referee. Nevertheless, this article examines ways in which a referee can develop and increase their understanding of game empathy to further improve their match control and gain greater respect from players, coaches and spectators.

Game empathy is where game context and game understanding are used appropriately to arrive at an outcome or decision that is both credible and in the best interests of the game. The positive reputation and successful performance of the Refereeing Team is built on the skill and judgement used to select sensible options to act in the best interests of the game, whilst maintaining credibility in their judgement of decisions and match control. Game empathy can be generally called 'what football expects'. It is an expression of football intelligence, and to be used effectively, it requires recognition of the limits of what it is reasonable for the referee to do in a variety of match situations.

Applying the letter of the Law or the 'Spirit of the Law' where the referee obeys the letter of the Law but not the spirit. They are obeying the literal interpretation of the words (the "letter") of the Law, but not necessarily the philosophy and spirit intended by The International Football Association Board (The IFAB), who have sole responsibility for developing and preserving the Laws of the Game. Conversely, when a referee obeys the spirit of the Law but not the letter, the referee is doing what the authors of the Law intended, though not necessarily adhering to the literal wording.

Game empathy often involves ability of making a **balanced judgement**:



For example, deciding whether to issue disciplinary action or choosing to manage a situation. The referee acts within the game context, taking into consideration their match control and any disciplinary action that may be required according to the Laws of the Game and in the 'spirit of the game'. The referee has the discretion to take appropriate action within the framework of the Laws of the Game. However, game empathy cannot be used as an excuse by referees to ignore issuing yellow cards or red cards when the actions by the offending players or team officials are guilty of cautionable and/or sending-off offences.

When considering accuracy and consistency of decisions, players, coaches and spectators expect the referee to make the same decisions across similar circumstances for both teams in the same game.

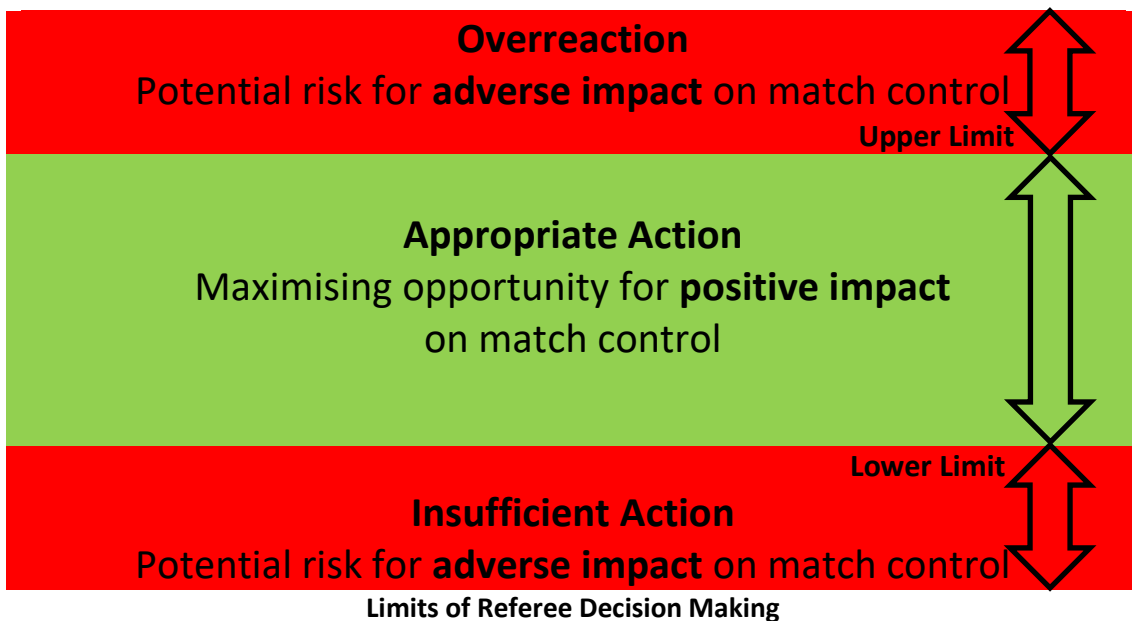
This is more likely to be viewed as consistent and fair. However, it is important to recognise that the game context and conditions will also change during the game. Therefore, referees will also need to adjust to the changing situation. A referee may use game empathy and understanding to arrive at an outcome or decision that is both credible and in the best interests of the game which can sometimes be different from the referee's earlier decisions in the match.

With the emphasis on game management, game empathy and football understanding, all players, coaches, spectators and referees understand that no two game situations are alike. For example, a foul tackle is committed by a player which falls between careless (no YC) and reckless (YC). The game is being played in a fair and sporting manner, low game tempo, only a few minor fouls and players showing good respect to each other and towards the referee, will only require a small intervention and management by the referee but no disciplinary sanction is required.

In another game, where there are many fouls, players are being aggressive towards each other, the game temperature is high, a referee may choose to give a yellow card for a similar tackle. Here, the referee recognises the game context and acts within the best interests of the game in order to manage the players and to control the game.

In principle, the referee decision making diagram below is the range of responses that the Refereeing Team can make to maximise the opportunity for producing a positive impact/outcome, whilst also minimising the potential for a significant adverse effect on their match control.

Where a referee overreacts to a situation or takes insufficient action, this often leads to adverse reaction by players, coaches and spectators and can pose risks to overall match control.

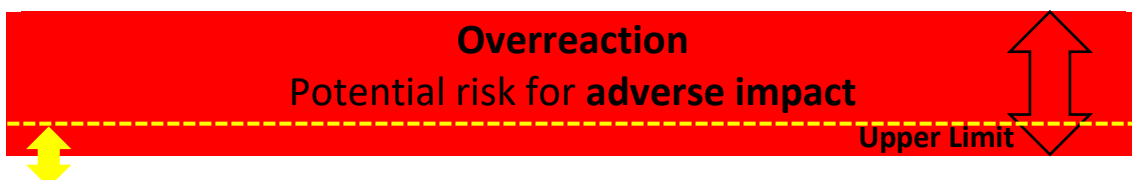


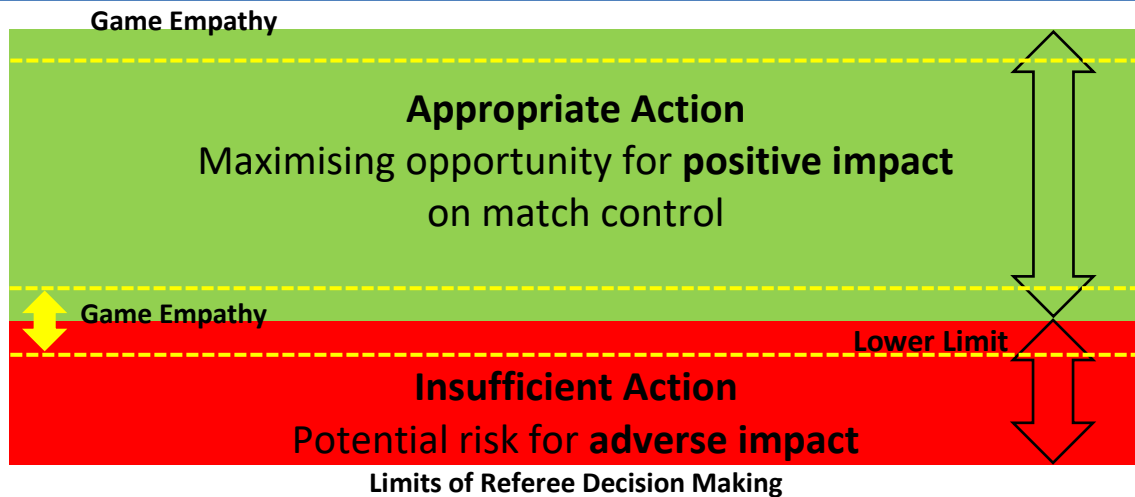
For example, a player commits a clear red card offence and the referee decides to give a YC. Players, coaches and spectators will become frustrated with the decision as they believe it is insufficient action. In another situation, a referee overreacts to a situation, giving a red card for a foul which is careless, just a foul and does not require any disciplinary sanction. Both situations have the potential risk for adverse impact on the referee's match control.

Therefore, it is vitally important for the referee to take the appropriate action on all their decisions, considering game empathy and game context, giving what is expected during the game. Thereby maximising the opportunity for positive impact on their match control.

Conversely, Game Empathy at the upper and lower limits of the 'referee decision making', the context in which a particular situation occurs may affect the boundary for appropriate action, e.g. both management in terms of a clear public warning or a yellow card are both reasonable options.

In such circumstances, where there is a reasonable rationale for game empathy, the referee approach taken should be supported. It is here that the skill and experience of a referee will judge the risks to match control and overall game management.





By understanding game empathy in certain match situations, it will allow referees to use their skill and management to judge situations, using game context before considering what action to take in the best interests of the game.

Football referee management skills are constantly being developed and understood in a fast and physical game, where referees are required to make sound decisions under pressure. It requires instant decision making, judgement, control, whilst showing empathy for the game, and game knowledge are all a part of the complete development of a referee. The very best referees understand themselves as game-managers with a good understanding of game empathy.

Summary

In conclusion, a modern football referee's role is a quite complex one and comprises more than merely applying the written Laws of the Game - even if knowing and interpreting them is an essential part of the job. Referees are entrusted to interpret these Laws against the background of their meaning, for the good of the game and their common sense approach. When you are in control of your emotions, you will demonstrate confidence in your body language and communication. Having a high level of Game Empathy will increase your awareness of the feelings of the players and coaches, which will in turn help you to be more in harmony with the game.

Advantage

Law 5 – The Referee states *“The referee allows play to continue when an offence occurs and the non-offending team will benefit from the advantage, and penalises the offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time or within a few seconds”*

Definition of Advantage – “a condition or circumstance that puts one in a favourable position ...” If a team has possession of the ball, it does not always constitute an advantage!

All advantage decisions are at the discretion of the referee, and based solely on the referee’s judgment as to the specific circumstances of each individual offence. Usually, an advantage decision cannot be second-guessed because to do so would require knowing what would have happened in the absence of the decision. Either giving it or not giving it could be effective but it can seldom be described as “wrong.” Consequently, it is almost impossible to put together a brief scenario and then expect anyone, no matter how experienced or expert, to definitively state that an advantage decision would be right or wrong — the number of and complexity of the factors going into making the decision to apply advantage or not are too great to allow this.

So let’s consider the factors that should be considered in deciding whether to apply the advantage clause or not. These factors play an important part in the referee’s decision making process and highlight the judgements which a referee has to make at the time an offence is committed:

1. The skill level of the players?
2. The conditions of the field of play?
3. The state of the match?
4. The position on the field of play?
5. The temperature of the match?
6. Control of the ball by the player fouled or by a team mate?
7. The seriousness of the tackle?
8. An attacking opportunity?
9. Referee’s control?

Factors to consider:

1. Skill level of the players?

The skill level of the players is a factor that the referee would need to consider and as a general principle the higher the skill level, the more likelihood of applying the advantage to the offended team. In youth football, the age of the players also needs to be considered in the referee's decision making. Young players are often still developing at this early age and may lack the experience and physical aptitude to understand and benefit from an advantage. This is not saying the referee should never apply the advantage clause with young players; they should take this factor into consideration when judging the skill level of the players and whether the offended team will benefit from an advantage.

At higher levels of the game, the referees have greater opportunity to apply advantage from all areas of the field due to the skill and technical abilities of the players. As the skill level of the players decreases, referees must consider whether the players and/or team have the ability to mount a credible attack from the application of advantage.

2. Conditions of the field of play?

Poor playing conditions must be a consideration for the referee. The ground conditions will also affect the extent to which advantage can be allowed to develop. Whilst applying the advantage clause on a fairly normal playing surface may be acceptable as the 'run of the ball' is likely to be predictable, the referee also needs to consider playing conditions which might vary from being hard and bumpy to being very muddy or heavy and the ball not rolling freely. Wet and windy conditions are also factors that might affect the movement of the ball. In these circumstances, the team will probably gain a better advantage by the award of the free kick, rather than the risk of quickly losing possession of the ball or being closed down very quickly by opposing players.

3. State of the match?

The score, history of the teams from (poor) previous encounters, discipline levels and the players' respect towards the referee, time in the match (1st minute or 90th minute) are contributing factors which the referee must take into consideration and might affect the referee's control.

4. Position on the field of play?

Traffic Lights

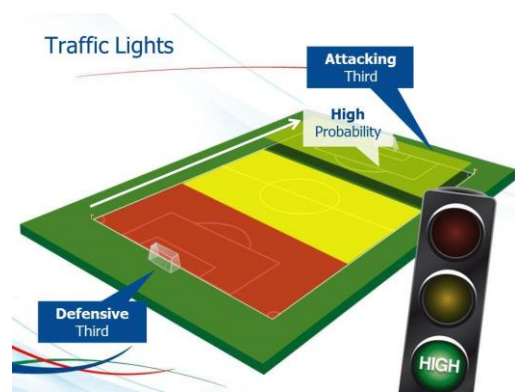
The 'Traffic Lights' analogy can be used to aid the referee's decision making by dividing the field of play into three distinct areas which the referee can use when considering to apply the advantage clause or not. The likelihood of applying the advantage clause to the defending team in the 'red' zone would probably have a low probability of success and, therefore, the safe option would be to award the free kick. However, there would be occasions where the referee would allow play to continue, for example, from an offside signal by the assistant referee and the ball goes through to the goalkeeper, without any risk of physical challenge between the attacker in an offside position and the goalkeeper; it would be beneficial in this instance to allow play to continue.



In the middle area of the field, the referee will need to consider some of the other factors before deciding whether to apply the advantage clause or not. In this area, the referee needs to consider the active and credible control by the player fouled or by a team mate of continuing an immediate attack rather than merely just possession of the ball. Another consideration would be when a foul is committed in this area, would it be more advantageous to the team to have the free-kick rather than play an advantage? Applying the advantage clause in this part of the field of play has a moderate probability of success.



In the attacking third of the field of play, the likelihood of a sustained and promising attack has a high probability of success. However, there are some teams who would prefer the award of a free kick as a better option, rather than applying advantage. This is an area, some 5m to 15m outside the penalty area, where teams practice ceremonial free kicks and skilful players are often accurate with the execution of the free kick. Players will be quick to tell the referee whether they would rather have the free kick rather than apply the advantage.



5. Temperature of the match?

In a high tempo match, the referee would be less likely to apply the advantage clause and would only do so if the advantage benefitted the offended team but did not place match control at unnecessary risk. By awarding a free kick, the referee may be able to calm the proceedings and reinforce match control without acting as a negative influence on the game.

6. Control of the ball?

Active and credible control by the player fouled or by a team mate is a really important factor as without this, there is no advantage to be applied.

7. Seriousness of the tackle?

The seriousness of the tackle is probably the most important factor and referees must not consider applying the advantage clause unless there was a clear opportunity to score a goal. If the severity of the tackle warrants a red card, the referee must stop play and dismiss the player from the field of play. By stopping play immediately after a serious offence, the referee remains in control and may prevent a negative reaction by opposition players and retaliation by the offended player.

8. Attacking opportunity?

The probability of an immediate, promising attack or an attempt on goal must be a consideration of the referee and merely having possession of the ball does not constitute advantage.

9. Referee's control?

All advantage decisions are at the discretion of the referee, based solely on the referee's judgment as to the specific circumstances of each individual offence. Referees should never sacrifice their match control by applying the advantage clause. Every advantage award always has an element of risk to the referee's control and therefore it is important to have a feel for the game and to consider the consequences and benefits of applying the advantage clause.



We have considered the number and complexity of the factors a referee needs to assess before applying the advantage clause. All the factors are important. Applying advantage requires skill and experience, and if used properly, it will allow the game to flow and increase the enjoyment for all of the participants. The two most important factors which are critical to match control are the **Seriousness of the tackle** and ultimately whether by applying the advantage clause there would be a negative influence on the **Referee's Control**.

Final thought...

When a foul is committed, is it more advantageous to the offended team to award a free-kick rather than playing an advantage? Awarding attacking free kicks near the opponents penalty area opens up the opportunity for specialist free kick takers to have a chance to score a goal. Also, evidence has shown from many competitions around the world that the majority of goals scored have predominately come from set play situations rather than in open play.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the advantage signal applied?

When a team against which an offence has been committed will benefit from such an advantage after taking into consideration the above criteria. Therefore, the signal cannot be made immediately the offence has occurred but made within a matter of a few seconds. By pausing for a second or two to consider whether to apply the advantage clause (or not), the referee can assess which is more advantageous to the team, whether to allow play to continue or to stop play and penalise the offence.

Where (or where not) on the field of play would a referee usually apply the advantage clause?

A referee would be less likely to apply the advantage clause in the defensive third of the field of play and would consider the 'traffic lights' analogy to assess the probability of success in the defensive third, middle and attacking thirds of the field of play.

Why would the referee want to play the advantage?

To benefit the game and the player or team against which a foul was committed, the atmosphere of the match, the feel good factor.

How do you communicate the Advantage signal?

Signal (as approved in the Laws of the Game) and with verbal communication "advantage, play on". The signal is communicated when the referee has decided when an advantage has accrued (not necessarily when the offence has been committed) but when the referee has considered whether to apply the advantage or not. There have been many situations where referees have 'lost' the player who has committed the offence and when play is stopped or the ball goes out of play, they cannot remember which player committed the foul. Referees may find it helpful to say to themselves the colour of the player's shirt and the number (i.e. Blue 8) after applying the advantage in order to aid their memory retention.

How long is the advantage signal maintained?

The advice on the Application of the Laws of the Game suggests that if the advantage does not accrue after 2-3 seconds, then the referee should penalise the original offence. The advice to referees is that they should maintain their signal for the same duration (2-3 seconds.) Once the signal has been 'dropped', in most circumstances, this is the time the referee **may not** go back to penalise the original offence as any longer could lack credibility.

The 4 P's of Advantage

As an aide-memoire, referees should consider the following 4 P's when considering applying the advantage clause:

- **Possession**
 - active and credible control by the player fouled or by a team mate without possession, none of the other P's matter
- **Potential**
 - probability of a continuing and immediate attack or an attempt on goal
- **Players**
 - number and skill of attackers versus the number and skill of defenders
- **Proximity**
 - distance from goal (traffic lights)

Summary

The referee may play an advantage whenever an infringement occurs; however all advantage decisions are at the discretion of the referee, and based solely on their judgment as to the specific circumstances of each individual offence. Referees should never sacrifice their match control when considering applying the advantage clause.

It is important however, following the application of the advantage clause, and the completion of the move, the Referee should either rebuke the player who committed the foul, caution or dismiss the player depending on the severity of the offence. It is also important to communicate to the player who had been fouled that you have played the advantage and that you have spoken (or taken disciplinary action) to the player who committed the offence. When a caution is to follow an advantage, it must be administered at the next stoppage of play.

It is important for the referee to learn and understand the proper application of the advantage clause so that that they are in tune with how the players are approaching the game. When a potential advantage situation arises, the referee must very quickly evaluate the situation and then decide if the attacking team will have a greater advantage from maintaining possession of the ball or from the foul being penalised.



Advantage (1)



Advantage (2)

Communication of the advantage signal is essential to ensure that everyone is aware that the Referee has recognised the offence, and has decided to keep the game flowing. The communication with the voice “Advantage – play on” accompanied with the approved arm signal, using one or both arms, sends out a clear message to all the players.

Finally, applying the Advantage clause requires skill and experience. However, there is a great sense of satisfaction when a team scores after having allowed play to continue.

Creating Time to Create Thinking Time

Time is of the essence – the timing of your intervention, the timing of your whistle or raising your flag, the timing of your verbal communication, your management of players or match situations, your anticipation of play, your movement and positioning, and ultimately, your decision making process, is the art of successful refereeing that can be developed over time and with practical experience.

Creating thinking time is a process that allows referees to use a range of skills in order to create time for themselves, giving you a greater ability to read the game, improve your game knowledge and understanding, including

Creating thinking time in refereeing is an art that develops with experience and can often be compared with that of a midfield player. There are many situations in a game where a referee can create time to their advantage in allowing thinking time in the process of match control and decision-making process. The respective professions of a top referee and top midfield player have several similarities in their ability to create time for themselves, vision, reading of the game, game knowledge, anticipation, positioning and movement, good fitness levels and skills of when and how apply it.

Considerations where creating time could be advantageous for a referee



Creating time is a skilful art of refereeing and with experience it evolves, when used at the right time and in the right manner it can be most advantageous for the referee, not only in their match control but in the application of Law and decision-making process.

Application of Advantage: -

Application of advantage can often be a complex judgement for the referee to make with several judgments having to be taken into consideration in a split second. In using their refereeing intelligence and skill sets in creating time and not immediately penalising an offence, the referee can greatly enhance and influence the spectacle of a game, adding to the enjoyment of players and spectators alike.

Major Decision-Making: -

Critical moments in a game are when a referee must make a major decision-making judgement, it is important for referees to create time for themselves in allowing thinking time to enable him/her to absorb and gather as much information as he can before making the critical decision. Such typical decisions where benefit of creating time is beneficial are possible match changing situations, possible strong disciplinary action may have to be taken and possible dismissal from the field of play. Suggested situations to consider are, mass confrontations, serious foul play, seeking advice of an incident from a colleague, penalty kick etc.

General Decision-Making: -

In open play there are situations where creating time is beneficial for your match control and decision-making. It is often incredibly difficult for either the assistant referee or referee to accurately judge who last played the ball as it goes out of play for goal kick/corner or throw in. However, by creating time and making no immediate decision, players by their reaction or body language will often give you the clues and make the decision for you.

In instances where there is the potential for a goal to be disallowed/allowed and the referee needs to seek further information, it is important that the referee creates time in gaining that information from a colleague in a composed manner.

Management of Players: -

There are occasions when the referee wishes to speak to a player/s regarding their conduct and this is the time when the referee needs to create time in doing so, stopping play and ensuring that he is seen to deliver an appropriate message to the player.

Management and Control of the Game: -

Creating thinking time can help to control the tempo of a game when the intensity and temperature is running high. After awarding a free kick take control of the kick and have it taken in your time, perhaps creating time to speak to the offender simply as a calming tool in controlling the game.

When there are signs of two players feuding be alert to the signs and create time in speaking to them 'nipping' it in the bud and making them aware of their behaviour as it may escalate into influencing further problems.

Management at Set Play Situations: -

Penalty kick situations are often emotive decisions, and this is the time when referees must be confident and composed creating time in manage the situation. We often see referees running around in the penalty area checking to make sure players are conforming to Law in respect go goalkeeper on the goal line and other players remaining outside the penalty area and at least 9.15m from the ball. WHY run and be rushed, create time in being composed and ensuring the simple things are done well. When play is stopped it is the referees time and the players should be co-operating with them, when the ball is play it is the players time and the referee is assisting the game and the players.

Free kick situations, again referees should create time in ensuring that they have their 'set' up right before allowing the kick to be taken and don't be rushed, players will not take free kicks until they have their 'set' up right.

Free kicks and corner kick situations, be alert and aware to player behaviour in crowded areas and if unacceptable, create time and speak to the offending players before allowing the kick to be taken – proactive refereeing.

Summary

Creating time is about being composed and ensuring the simple things are done well as a referee. By using time to your advantage, it will help you better manage the game and the players. It is important

to use your football intelligence and a range of skill sets which will help you to create time that would be in the best interests of the game.

Simulation

An action which creates a wrong/false impression that something has occurred when it has not (see also deceive); committed by a player to gain an unfair advantage.

There has been widespread debate involving commentators, players, managers and match officials, concerning the issue of players attempting to deceive the referee.

In simple terms, a successful act of simulation to gain a favourable and often match changing decision evokes strong emotions. However, in practice, differentiating between a foul, a fair challenge, and an act of simulation is extremely difficult, even with the advantage of multiple camera angles and slow motion replays.

We recognise that an offence, which gains an unfair advantage, and which can directly affect the result of a match, has the potential to undermine the integrity of the game.

So what is simulation?

The Laws of the Game state that, players must play within the Laws and respect the principles of fair play and also the safety of their opponent. In considering whether a challenge is fair or foul, we should be mindful that the Laws of the Game recognise that football is a competitive sport and that physical contact between players is a normal and an acceptable part of the game. Players have worked hard to respect each other in their behaviour on the field.

The Laws of the Game state that a player must be cautioned for Unsporting Behaviour if a player “attempts to deceive the referee by feigning injury or pretending to have been fouled (simulation)”

The Law is relatively simple. However, we all recognise that applying it in practice can be extremely difficult. Given the speed of the game and the incredible skill of both attacking and defending players, it is very difficult for match officials to differentiate between a fair or foul challenge and identify acts of simulation, particularly when a player is attempting to deceive the referee by exaggerating the effect of a normal contact challenge.

In judging these incidents, there are five key questions that a referee must consider in their decision making process.

To identify whether an act of simulation has occurred, the referee must consider:

1. Is there contact between the players involved?
2. Is there fair/normal contact between the players, resulting in no offence being committed?
3. Is a player legitimately avoiding contact with his opponent to prevent injury?
4. Does the player exaggerate the effect of a normal contact challenge?

Clearly there are many examples in a game which involve normal contact, or where players legitimately seek to avoid contact. These are a normal part of the game and are not penalised by the referee.

In situations where a player falls to the ground in an attempt to deceive the referee, and there has been no contact between the players, it is more likely that the referee will judge this as an act of simulation, and a caution will be issued.

It is more difficult for a referee to judge that simulation has taken place when contact has occurred between the players. If the referee considers that either the attacker:

- has initiated the contact with an opponent in order to deceive, or
- that the attacker has exaggerated the effect of the contact with an opponent in order to deceive,

then a caution will result.

Examples of initiating contact include:

- an attacker deliberately moving their leg towards an opponent to make it appear that they have been tripped,
- running into an opponent or
- altering the normal course of their run to collide with an opponent.

Exaggerating the effect of contact usually involves a player falling to the ground when the contact with an opponent was not sufficient to cause the fall. This usually, although not always, includes falling in an overly dramatic manner designed to attract the referee's attention.

Although we recognise that identifying acts of simulation is difficult, referees have an obligation to safeguard the integrity of the game by cautioning players when it is considered that the player has attempted to deceive the referee.

If a referee identifies that a player has fallen to the ground, when there is no contact between the player and the opponent, or that the player has initiated the contact, or that the player has exaggerated the effect of any contact, then the referee should caution the offending player.

Given the speed of the game, and the incredible skill of both attacking and defending players, at times it is difficult for match officials to be certain that simulation has occurred. When there is some element of contact between two players and the referee is unsure if this was a genuine challenge by the defending player to play the ball or the referee has doubt that an act of simulation has occurred, allowing play to continue without taking any action may likely be the best option for the referee to take.

However, players should be aware that, if their actions are interpreted as an attempt to deceive the referee, they run the risk of being cautioned for simulation. Physical contact is a vital part of our game and there are many, many examples of players who strive to continue playing in spite of the contact between them and their opponent.

Simulation: how to identify it

Referees must train their eyes, mind and responses. When evaluating a player's action to determine if it meets the criteria of simulation, consider the following signals:

1. Location on the field

Players usually carry out acts of simulation in or near the penalty area. The player is willing to take a chance that their deception will go unnoticed by the officials and will result in gaining a penalty kick or free kick in a dangerous position. It is therefore important that our positioning and angle of view is credible to make that judgement.

2. Contact

It is difficult to caution a player for simulation (unsporting behaviour) when there is contact with the opponent. Hence, contact and who initiates it, must be taken into consideration. Do not mistake simulation for exaggeration. Exaggeration occurs when a player "over reacts to a slight contact challenge" and must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour

3. The score

A team that needs a goal to draw level or to take the lead may attempt an act of simulation to gain a penalty kick or free kick around the edge of the penalty area.

4. The ball

Can the attacker get or play the ball? Attackers with the ball who have touched it too far in front of them may go down easily as a defender challenges them because they know they will not be able to get to the ball (it will go over the goal line or an opponent will get it) and they will lose possession.

5. The attacker's feet

As the player is going down, observe his feet. Does the player bring his feet together and drag them along the ground causing the player to intentionally lose his balance and go to ground or does the player initiate the contact by kicking the feet of his opponent in an attempt to deceive the referee that the defender initiated the contact?

6. The attacker's actions *before* they fall and *when* they land

Firstly, *concentrate the attacker's eyes and head*: players who attempt to deceive the referee are likely to try to make eye contact with the referee. It is a natural reaction for players to look for the decision maker (the referee) and to see where player is positioned. Secondly, *concentrate the attacker's arms – bracing the fall*: attackers who go down as a result of an unfair challenge usually do not have the opportunity to brace their fall. On the other hand, those players who plan their fall will look to cushion it by extending their arms out or by rolling on their shoulder.

Simulating a Card

There have been a number of occasions where players have tried to influence the referee by mimicking the issuing of a card to an opponent putting pressure on the referee to say that the offence warrants further punishment. Referees need to take strong positive action against players (including substitutes and substituted players) who are guilty of unsporting behaviour or any coaching staff who mimic the issuing of a card.

Summary

Our football is revered throughout the world for its passion and excitement and for upholding the values of fair play. We are fortunate that simulation is not an acceptable part of our game. However, all those involved in the game recognise that we cannot be complacent.

We must act together to discourage players from any actions which attempt to deceive the referee and we must support match officials in their actions to combat acts of deception, recognising that they will not always get it right. Applying the Law in practice can be extremely difficult.

When a referee identifies that a player has fallen to the ground when there is no contact between the player and the opponent or that the player has initiated the contact or that the player has exaggerated the effect of any contact, then the referee should caution the offending player.

The greatest asset that a Referee has in relation to making the correct decision is their proximity and 'angle of view' during simulation incidents. This is why it is very important for Referees to work hard in achieving a good viewing angle and proximity to incidents when attacking moves approach the penalty areas. The one important factor that always sells a decision on simulation is the position of the Referee when the decision is made!

Referees must be prepared to accept that they may occasionally punish a player for simulation when no simulation has occurred because such decisions are difficult to make. However, referees need to be strong, positive and confident whenever an act of simulation occurs and take the appropriate action.

Players should be aware, that if their actions are interpreted as an attempt to deceive the referee, they run the risk of being cautioned.

Handling the Ball

The 'handball' section of Law 12 was revised in 2021 to make the Law clearer and to incorporate guidelines which were already given to referees and were not well known by the football community.

However, whatever the wording, there will always be some inconsistency and debate around handball as its assessment is subjective but follows a number of principles:

- football does not accept a goal being scored by a hand/arm (even if accidental)
- not every contact of the ball with the hand/arm is an offence
- a player's hand/arm position should be judged in relation to their body movement in that particular situation
- justifiable position - players cannot be expected to move with arms by their side

Determining whether the ball strikes the hand is often the simplest part of the judgement for the referee - FACT. The referee must then decide if this is a handball offence or not and presents the referee with one of their most difficult challenges. Once a handball offence has been recognised, the referee must decide whether this is just a direct free kick (DFK) or penalty kick (PK) only, DFK or PK and a yellow card or a DFK or PK and a red card offence.

Law 12 clearly states that a direct free kick or penalty kick is awarded if a player commits a handball offence (except for the goalkeeper within their penalty area) when the ball is in play.

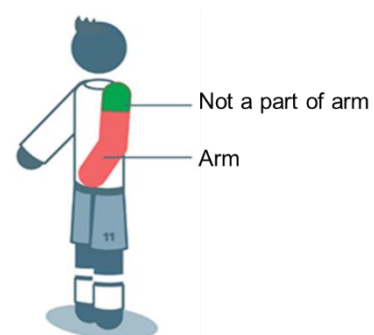
Law 12 – Handling the Ball

Handling the ball

For the purposes of determining handball offences, the upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit. Not every touch of a player's hand/arm with the ball is an offence.

It is an offence if a player:

- deliberately touches the ball with their hand/arm, for example moving the hand/arm towards the ball
- touches the ball with their hand/arm when it has made their body unnaturally bigger. A player is considered to have made their body unnaturally bigger when the position of their hand/arm is not a consequence of, or justifiable by, the player's body movement for that specific situation. By having their hand/arm in such a position, the player takes a risk of their hand/arm being hit by the ball and being penalised
- scores in the opponents' goal:
 - directly from their hand/arm, even if accidental, including by the goalkeeper
 - immediately after the ball has touched their hand/arm, even if accidental



The goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as any other player outside the penalty area. If the goalkeeper handles the ball inside their penalty area when not permitted to do so, an indirect free kick is awarded but there is no disciplinary sanction. However, if the offence is playing the ball a second time (with or without the hand/arm) after a restart before it touches another player, the goalkeeper must be sanctioned if the offence stops a promising attack or denies an opponent or the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity.

Explanations

Unnaturally Bigger

The hand/arm has made the body unnaturally bigger by being in a position which is not a consequence of, or justifiable by, the player's body movement in that situation

Handball Offence

Extending the arm/hand away from the body laterally or vertically makes the body 'unnaturally bigger'. This includes when the hand/arm:

- is clearly extended away from the body (to create a bigger barrier for the ball to pass)
- is clearly extended above the shoulder (to create a bigger barrier for the ball to pass)
- moves towards or is on the ground and does not support the player's body

The hand/arm has not made the body unnaturally bigger because its position is a consequence of, or justifiable by, the player's body movement in that situation

Not a Handball Offence

This includes when the arm/hand:

- is close to the body
- is away from the body because of the player's 'natural' movement
- contact with the ball is a consequence of the player deliberately playing the ball with another part of the body (against himself/herself)
- moves towards, or is on, the ground to support the player's body

Justifiable position

Players cannot be expected to move with arms by their side. This means:

- hand/arm position can be understood/explained by the player's body movement
- hand/arm position is the result (consequence) of the player's normal movement
- hand/arm is moving into the body to avoid contact with the ball

Creating a bigger barrier

In a match situation, the referee needs to recognise the actions of the player when their sole intention is to block a shot or the cross. The position of the arms may be justifiable for the movement and action of the player. However, the player takes a risk if the arms are extended away and act as a barrier for the ball to pass if the ball makes contact with the arms.

Creating a bigger barrier is an action by the player that physically prevents ball from reaching its intended destination. It does not matter if the ball makes contact with the feet, legs or body of the player first and then hits the extended hand/arm, the player has successfully created a bigger barrier for the ball to pass.

Practical Situations

1. If a player is attempting to block a shot on goal or a cross and the ball deflects off the body, legs or feet onto the player's arm(s) which are extended away from the body, remember what the player is trying to do. The player is trying to stop the shot/cross and there is a high risk of a handball offence because the player has created a bigger barrier for the ball to pass
2. If the ball changes direction after deflecting off the player's feet, legs or body onto the player's arm which are extended away from the body and it prevents the ball from passing, the player has created a bigger barrier for the ball to pass and therefore a high possibility that this will be penalised as a handball offence
3. Priority for the referees is to recognise the actions of the player. Most players in defensive situations will try and block the shot or the cross, that is their role. This is completely different to a player who is clearly trying to avoid contact, or is unaware that the ball is coming towards them, or the ball accidentally hits their hand/arm which is extended away from the body but justified by being in this position
4. There is a big difference between a player who deliberately tries to play the ball and the ball accidentally hits the arm (no offence) to a player whose sole intention is to block the cross/shot and the high risk involved if the hand/arm creates a bigger barrier for the ball to pass (handball offence)

Disciplinary Sanctions

A caution for unsporting behaviour is expected a player handles the ball to interfere with or stop a promising attack or handles the ball in an attempt to score a goal whether or not the attempt is successful or in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent a goal.

If a handball offence denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity the offending player should be shown a red card.

Summary

It is important for referees to look at two specifics - did the player deliberately touch the ball with their hand/arm, for example moving the hand/arm towards the ball **or** were the player's actions to block the shot on goal or is to block the cross. The position of the arms may be justifiable for the movement and action of the player, but the player takes a risk if the arms are extended away and act as a barrier for the ball to pass.

Illegal use of the Arms and Body (Inside the Penalty Area)

At attacking set-play and corner kick situations, it is important to raise the referees' awareness of the tactical situations of illegal use of the arms and body inside the penalty area that can develop and threaten match control if not managed correctly. By increasing the detection of these offences and using their preventative player management techniques, the referee's match control is greatly enhanced.

In order to put this into some perspective, it is stated that *"Football is a sport in which physical contact is a natural part of the game and only **unfair** physical contact should be punished"*

Definition of holding an opponent

- The **illegal** use of the hands, arms or body to hinder the movements of an opponent
- Holding an opponent includes the act of **preventing** an opponent from moving past or around using the hands, the arms or the body

Definition of 'blocking an opponent'

- The **illegal** use of the body to hinder the movements of an opponent
- Holding an opponent includes the act of **preventing** them from moving past or around using the body
- Blocking is a **holding** offence

Definition of pushing an opponent

- The **illegal** use of the hands, arms or body to **unbalance** the movements of an opponent
- It is very easy to unbalance an opponent even with a slight push!

Definition of impeding the progress of an opponent without contact

- Impeding the progress of an opponent means moving into the opponent's path to obstruct, block, slow down or force a change of direction when the ball is not within playing distance of either player

Law 12 – Fouls & Misconduct

- Holding & Pushing is punishable by the award of a Direct Free Kick or Penalty Kick
- impeding the progress of an opponent **with contact** is punishable by the award of an Direct Free Kick
- impeding the progress of an opponent **without any contact** being made is punishable by the award of an Indirect Free Kick (no bodily contact)

Frequently asked Questions

1. How do we as referees respond to a coached tactic of holding/pushing?

- Be proactive, raise awareness
- Unless it is obvious to everyone – referees are expected to use common sense and to apply the ‘spirit of the game’ and game expectations
- Positioning is important, proactive with players
- To be seen to be dealing with offenders
- Use a stepped approach; public admonishment, isolate and warn the players involved, consider disciplinary action if they persist
- Have a shared responsibility as a referee team to monitor players particularly at set play situations

2. Is holding/pushing an accepted part of football and when should we penalise it?

- Players don’t appeal and this fact is generally accepted by most teams but referees need to penalise the clear and obvious holding and pushing
- Credibility is important and we have to see and recognise it
- We need to know where to look – using a referee team approach
- Players/coaches do their homework – so should we as a referee team
- Holding is not acceptable and we have a responsibility to apply the Laws of the Game using a stepped approach in dealing with these incidents and taking the ultimate action of a penalty kick or free kick and a caution

3. Is it the referee’s responsibility?

- Protecting the image of the game is the referee’s responsibility
- Need to penalise those offences that are clear and obvious – football expectations
- Be proactive and to prevent it from getting worse

4. How do we involve our Assistant Referees?

- Areas of credibility, looking at different areas of the penalty area, communicating proactively via the Communications Kit
- By encouraging assistant referees to indicate clear and obvious offences in their area of responsibility/credibility

5. What action should we take?

- Use a stepped approach
- Referees be consistent throughout the game
- Must penalise the clear and obvious offences
- Being proactive, positioning, awareness and talk to players
- Communicate to players so that they know you are watching

- Ultimate action is to award a free kick or penalty kick and/or caution the offender
- Individually and collectively as a referee team we need to be stronger in dealing with these situations

Preventative Techniques

- Prior to a restart occurring, especially early in the match, take preventative action by controlling the holding and pushing in the penalty area
- Use the whistle, voice and physical presence to assist you in establishing your presence in the match
- In an attempt to send a “broadcast” message to everyone, the players identified should be isolated and given a clear public warning
- Create credibility
- **Prevention, Prevention, Prevention is better than cure**

If there is no response to your initial preventative actions, these incidents must be dealt with firmly;

- Before the ball is in play it should result in either a yellow card or red card depending upon the seriousness of the offence
- Award a direct free kick or penalty kick and caution the player if it happens once the ball is in play

Conclusions

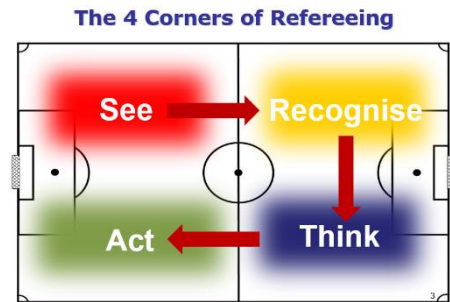
- Preventative action by the referee can act as a deterrent and prevent future action which may be much more difficult to manage.
- Early intervention to manage restarts targeted for the penalty area will aid your match control as the game progresses.

Summary

We need to recognise and take the appropriate action when we identify each incident. By using our preventative management techniques, we can minimise the numbers of offences that may occur through the use of our communication skills, player management skills and with confident body language to let players know we are observing. We need to adopt the right approach when managing these situations but we also need to ensure that we create credibility if we are taking further action.

The 4 Corners of Refereeing – Incidents inside or around the penalty area

The 4 Corners of Refereeing focuses on our thought processes when an incident occurs in or around the penalty area. These four skill areas are important to help us improve our detection rate of offences, identification of the location of the offence and aid our decision making process.



Referee – Assistant Referee Cooperation: Location of the foul inside or outside the penalty area

Fouls that occur on the edge of the penalty area test the decision making accuracy of all match officials. The “inside or outside the penalty area” decision is not easy and requires attentive teamwork to ensure that the correct decision is made. Assistant Referees can be of particular assistance with fouls that occur along the front edge of the penalty area as well as along the side of the penalty area nearest them. Referees on the other hand, must take ownership of the “in or out” decision on the side of the penalty area that runs in their diagonal or area of patrol.

Referee’s Note: During your pre-match instructions, a thorough discussion on responsibilities regarding the “inside or outside the penalty area” decision should be addressed. Pre-match preparation will ensure teamwork and quick, accurate decisions occur. The Assistant Referees must understand their role and responsibilities in relation to an “inside or outside” decision.

The Laws of the Game (Law 1 – Field of Play) state that the “lines belong to the areas of which they are boundaries.” This means that:

1. The lines that mark the penalty area are *part* of the penalty area and, also,
2. Any foul that occurs on the lines that mark the penalty area, should be judged to have occurred *inside* the penalty area. Remember, it is not the location of the ball that matters but the **location of the contact**.

When play approaches the edge of the penalty area where the Assistant Referees has a responsibility, they should ‘open their mind up’ to two possibilities:

1. **Offence** – is the challenge normal contact - fair or unfair i.e. is it a foul or an offence
2. **Location** – if an offence is committed, where did it take place, “inside or outside” *Assistant Referees Note: When there is a significant probability for a challenge or handball near the lines that mark the penalty area, you need to be correctly placed i.e. in line with the second last opponent and whilst offside is the priority, you should ‘open your mind up’ to the potential for a foul or handball offence and the location of the offence. Effective use of peripheral vision and body position (shoulders square to the field of play) will provide the best opportunity for you to assist the referee in making the correct decision (although this is recognised as difficult when the Assistant Referee is running at speed). Clear and confident information to the referee would support the decision-making process. If you are not in a position to confirm the location of the offence then you must not guess.*

Match Incidents – Inside or Outside the Penalty Area

When judging whether an offence is committed inside or outside the penalty area, match officials need to consider the following questions:

SEE

1. What are you considering when play is developing either inside or around the penalty area?

- What can I see?
- Am I in a good position?
- Are players blocking my view?
- Is my position credible?
- Can I interpret players body language – eyes, malice?
- Speed of the challenge
- Position on the field of play
- Aerial challenge or on the ground
- Ball on the ground or in the air

RECOGNISE

2. What are you considering when analysing each situation?

- Foul or no foul
- Knowledge of the Laws
- Normal football contact or not
- Recognising players actions
- Recognising the type of challenge
- Contact or no contact
- Awareness of players
- Awareness of team tactics
- Playing conditions
- My angle of view
- My focus and concentration

THINK

3. What are you thinking about these situations and what influences can help you?

- Based on experience and teachings
- Gut instinct
- Knowledge of the Laws
- Experience
- Thinking Time
- Thought process
- Information from colleagues
- Trust in my judgement
- A feel for the incident
- Incidents close to the penalty area line are often committed outside the penalty area (if in doubt – always out)

ACTING (Decision)

4. How have you come to your decision?

- Based on fact and a clear view
- Confidence in decision making
- Having a clear thought process
- Good use of personal experience
- Clear information from colleagues
- The decision feels right
- Gut feeling and instinct
- ...and a bit of luck!

5 Gut feelings you should never ignore in your decision making:

1. It doesn't feel good
2. It doesn't look right
3. I clearly recognise this
4. This comes naturally to me
5. This just feels right

Understanding or knowing of a situation without specific data or evidence at the time. These are our automatic conscious or unconscious reactions when making decisions.

Instinct

Instinct is innate and is developed over time and with experience. The cognitive skills, knowledge and application of the Laws of the Game involves:

- Perception, Memory, Reasoning, Judgement (See, Recognise, Think, Act)

Summary

In summary, the 4 corners of refereeing considers the decision making processes a referee would go through when making a decision on incidents and are summarised by the following points:

- The decision is based on fact
- Have confidence in your decision making process
- Have a clear thought process
- Using your experience in recognising offences correctly
- Receiving clear and timely information from colleagues when required
- Clear pre-match instructions and responsibilities of the referee team
- The decision **Feels** right
- ...and sometimes, a bit of luck!

Foul Recognition- Careless, Reckless or Using Excessive Force

Introduction

In considering whether or not a challenge is fair or foul, we should remember that the Laws of the Game recognise that football is a competitive sport and that physical contact between players is a normal and acceptable part of the game. Players have worked hard to respect each other in their behaviour on the field. Players also need to respect each other when making tackles in a game.

However, the Laws of the Game make the point that players must play within the Laws and respect the principles of fair play and also the safety of their opponent. As referees, every time a challenge is made, we have to differentiate between those that are fair challenges and clearly win the ball whilst causing no harm to the opposing player, from those that are not. Once we have decided a challenge is a foul challenge, we then have a further decision to make, is it merely careless, is it reckless, or is it used making excessive force?

Guidance on how match officials will interpret the physical nature of challenges

- To be able to judge the difference between those challenges that are fair from those that are not
- To consider when an unfair challenge is Careless, Reckless or committed with Excessive Force
- To consider our decision making process when a tactical foul occurs

Direct and indirect free kicks and penalty kicks can only be awarded for offences and infringements committed when the ball is in play.

In 1997, The Laws of the Game were changed so that that referees were not required to try and put themselves in to the mind of the player and take into account the player's intentions when challenging for the ball. Referees are required to look at the consequences of player's actions; did the player making the tackle play the ball legitimately? Was it Careless? Was it Reckless? Or did it endanger the safety of an opponent by using Excessive Force? This important change in the Law also made the players responsible for the consequences of their actions, reminding them to consider the safety of their opponent when making the challenge. It is no longer acceptable for players to claim they played the ball if in doing so they risk injuring their opponent. It is the consequences of the player's actions that the referees have to consider.

A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offences against an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be CARELESS, RECKLESS or using EXCESSIVE FORCE

- charges
- jumps at
- kicks or attempts to kick
- pushes
- strikes or attempts to strike (including head-butt)
- tackles or challenges
- trips or attempts to trip

If an offence involves contact it is penalised by a direct free kick or penalty kick.

A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offences:

- a handball offence (except for the goalkeeper within their penalty area)
- holds an opponent
- impedes an opponent with contact
- bites or spits at someone
- throws an object at the ball, an opponent or a match official, or makes contact with the ball with a held object

Careless Challenges

Careless is when a player shows a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or acts without precaution. If a challenge is deemed careless, no further disciplinary sanction is needed other than the award of a free kick or penalty kick. It's important to know that this means that when a penalty kick is awarded for a careless challenge, the challenge itself should not be punished by a further sanction of a yellow card. A careless challenge results in the award of a free kick or penalty kick and no other disciplinary action is required.

In considering what is a careless challenge, we can think that a player is making a genuine attempt for the ball and is in close proximity of their opponent, puts in a great deal of honest effort into the challenge, but mistimes it and in doing so, fouls the opponent.

Reckless Challenges

Reckless means that the player has acted with disregard regarding the danger or the consequences to his opponent. The Law is quite specific: a player who plays in a reckless manner must be cautioned. So let's turn now and look at those challenges which we consider to be reckless. Before we do so though, let's consider what we mean by a reckless tackle. Reckless challenges can be defined as a player who makes a challenge in a manner where there is a clear risk of endangering an opponent and the player has no regard of the possible consequences to the safety and welfare of his opponent when making the tackle. Even though we said at the start that the Laws of the Game allow for physical contact, it's important that players always take into account the consideration of the safety of the opposing player when making a tackle. Any challenge that threatens the opponent's safety must be sanctioned more severely than just the award of a free kick or penalty kick. The two sanctions available to us are, recognising that it is a reckless tackle punished by a yellow card or it is a tackle using excessive force which is punished by a red card. We will see some examples now of challenges where the player may even win the ball but in doing so pays no regard to the safety of his opponent and the tackle can be classified as reckless.

Using Excessive Force

In this final category, a tackle which is made using excessive force, the player has exceeded the necessary use of force and is in danger of injuring his opponent. The challenge goes beyond the risk of endangering the safety of an opponent. It is a challenge that may be viewed as malicious, or has violent intent and may even be designed to hurt or maim an opponent.

The advice to referees in the Laws of the Game state "Any player who lunges at an opponent in challenging for the ball from the front, from the side or from behind using one or both legs, with

excessive force and endangering the safety of an opponent, is guilty of serious foul play” therefore the player must be shown the red card.

It is vitally important that we as referees identify such challenges and are strong in dealing with them, punishing correctly with either the award of a free kick or penalty kick and the dismissal of the offending player.

Giving the importance of recognising such challenges, referees are asked to consider the following questions which will help them to correctly identify the offence:

1. Does the player have a chance of playing the ball in a fair manner?
2. Can the player legitimately play the ball without putting his opponent at undue risk?
3. What degree of speed or intensity is the player using when making the challenge?
4. What is the distance the player has travelled to challenge for the ball?
5. Is the player making the challenge off the ground/airborne and in control of his actions?
6. What was the position of the feet of the player making the challenge?
7. Did the player lead with his studs showing when making the tackle?
8. Does the player show clear malice or brutality when making the challenge?
9. Does the challenge clearly endanger the safety of the opponent?

Tactical Fouls

In judging the tackles so far we have considered the physical nature of the offence, whether it was careless, reckless or used excessive force. In effect, what we have been considering is the physical nature of the challenge and the effect on the opposing player. It's the intensity of the challenge with which we have been concerned. What we now need to consider are those tackles that don't have a physical impact on the opposing player but have a tactical impact on the match itself. Very often, fouls are made by defending players which, although lacking in any intensity, are clearly designed to disrupt an attack and, furthermore, prevent a promising attack from developing. While we may judge these tackles merely to be careless their impact on the game is obviously more serious and the punishment by the award of a free kick would not be sufficient. In such cases where we judge the tackle to have a tactical advantage to the defending player, then a sanction stronger than a free kick is required, very often leading to a yellow card for unsporting behaviour.

Practical Elements of Decision Making

There are 4 practical elements of decision making that we as referees adopt:

1. **SEE**
2. **RECOGNISE**
3. **THINK**
4. **ACT**

In SEEING the offence it's important that we are always in the right position, that we adopt the appropriate viewing angle and we use our abilities as experienced officials, to read and anticipate play, making appropriate use of our fitness.

We then have to RECOGNISE the challenge itself and we have to recognise the severity of the challenge. We have to be able to differentiate between whether the challenge is a fair challenge,

careless, is reckless or uses excessive force. Further considerations are the speed of the challenge, the intensity of the challenge and the ability of the player to win the ball – without impacting on his opponent and the relative movement of the players.

Having seen the offence and stopped the game, having recognised the challenge for what it is, the most important part of the process is then to take our time to THINK about our actions and the correct decision. The referee needs to consider all the factors that help judge the challenge in the context of that particular game; the **severity of the challenge**, what the next phase of play might have been, for example, was a promising attack denied? Whether or not we should play advantage? And whether or not it's credible in the circumstances to play advantage or whether it is more appropriate to stop the game and punish the offence. The most important thing that we have to think about is what are the consequences to our match control of taking the appropriate decision?

The final stage of the process is when we take appropriate action which can be as minimal as giving a free kick, using our whistle tone, our arms or, last but not least, our voice to convey to the players the severity of the offence. We should at all times try to adopt a calm approach, giving an air of confidence, remembering that in all of our actions we should be seen as firm but fair. It is crucial that we should use our thinking time to make sure that the decision we take is the Correct Application of Law and is appropriate for the match and those particular circumstances.

Conclusion

We have already stated that football is a competitive sport and that physical contact between the players is both normal and an acceptable part of the game. However, what we as referees must identify is the physical contact which goes beyond the acceptable. Foul play needs to be sanctioned with either the award of a free kick, the award of a yellow card for unsporting behaviour or a red card for serious foul play. In determining the appropriate punishment, we've considered the physical nature of the challenge; was the tackle merely careless, did it go beyond careless and was it reckless, did it have an element of risk to the opposing players' safety, or did it go beyond reckless, involve excessive force and clearly endanger the safety of the opponent?

Remember, we said that for a careless tackle, a free kick or penalty kick is sufficient punishment. For a reckless tackle, a yellow card must be issued for unsporting behaviour and for a tackle that uses excessive force and endangers the safety of an opposing player, we must be strong and sanction this with a red card. Our overall priority is to protect players' safety; any tackle that endangers the safety of a player must result in the dismissal of the offender from the field of play.

Finally, we turn our attention not only to the physical nature of the challenge made, but also to its tactical impact. With regard to those tackles which disrupt a promising attack and give advantage to the defending team, the punishment of just a free kick is not sufficient.

Summary

The correct recognition and judgement of fouls during the game is important, enabling the physicality of the game to continue whilst allowing skilful players to flourish. It is important as referees that we spend time analysing the nature of our decisions and making sure that our interpretation of the offence is correct.

Tactical Fouls: Interfering With or Breaking Up a Promising Attack

The Laws of the Game require a player be cautioned (listed as unsporting behaviour) for committing a foul for the tactical purpose of interfering with or breaking up a promising attack.

Typically, *tactical fouls* have several characteristics but a key element in all is that the foul interferes with or breaks up what would otherwise be a promising attack. Simply, a *tactical foul* is aimed at taking away a possible advantage from the attacking team. The characteristics of *tactical fouls* include:

- **Usually in the attacking end of the field**

Defensive players commit the foul because they acknowledge that the attacking team will have a credible opportunity to go-to-goal with a high degree of effectiveness. It normally involves the speed of the attack

- **Numerical advantage**

The foul is committed by defenders to prevent an attacking team or player from gaining a numeric advantage and not to be confused with denying a goal scoring opportunity.

Time to defend

- Tactical fouls are committed to give the defending team time to get a numeric advantage between the ball and the goal.

Prevent the ball and/or player from advancing

- Normally, committed to prevent the ball and/or attacking player from getting into space behind a defender or behind the defence. This assists in developing a numeric advantage
- It is if the ball gets by, the player doesn't or if the player gets by, the ball doesn't concept
- Look for open areas of space that the ball would normally be played into or where an attacking player would run into if they were to receive the ball. This would be behind a defender, into space and normally in the attacking half of the field, often within 35-40 yards of the goal. Space and the opportunity for a potential shot or attacking advantage are warning signs.

The defender knows they are beaten

- Defenders commit this foul because they know they have been beat by the attacker. Look for one vs. one situations, such as an attacking player along the touchline going by his defender into space (normally along the wing) to set up a cross or to cut in toward the goal.

Minor nature of the challenge

- Normally the foul does not involve hard, physical contact, hence, it is consider minor in nature. But, it is often major in nature because it destroys the game.

Note: Tactical fouls are typically planned and require the referee to issue a yellow card due to the nature of the foul.

Referees need to be conscious of certain players who may be the target of tactical fouls. As the game develops, match officials should identify these players and be on the lookout for opponents who may foul them to break up a promising attack. Wide players (players on the flanks or in wide positions) are often targets as they have greater opportunity to get the ball behind the defence and into positive/promising attacking positions. In addition, players with speed are often on the receiving end of tactical fouls because the opponent must find a way to stop their progress and to stop them from getting behind/around the defence.

Tactical fouls are not sporting tactics

The referee's ability to identify tactical fouls is tested virtually every game. This is particularly the case given the speed of the modern game and the counter-attack style many teams employ. In addition, the severity of punishment for denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity and a tackle that involves serious foul play (both = red card + expulsion) "forces" a player to foul further away from his own goal and to look for other ways in stopping the progress of an attacker respectively. The skilful and creative player in the centre of the field or the speedy winger is often targets of such tactical fouls.

What is a tactical foul? Trying to find a definition (any definition!) that fits all possible scenarios is never easy, but for the purpose of this article, let us define it as follows:

A tactical foul is a foul that stops a promising attacking move, thus gaining a clear advantage for the defenders. They have a tactical implication because they are designed to normally impede the progress of an attacking opponent.

Since the idea is to stop or slow down the opponent and his attacking play, tactical fouls are tackles/challenges that do not (necessarily) endanger the safety of an opponent. Often, such fouls are "minor" and easily escape punishment as referees do not recognise the tactical implications of the challenge and fail to read the tactical, attacking advantage that has been denied. They are usually non-reckless, being mostly careless in their nature. Sometimes tactical fouls are commented on as being "cynical." Such a subjective term is not really helpful to a referee. The referee needs a more objective set of criteria to identify tactical fouls.

The Laws of the Game does not offer much guidance to referees with regards to criteria for tactical fouls, save a short mention regarding blatant handball to deny an opponent getting possession of the ball, or blatant shirt pulling in preventing an opponent from taking up an advantageous position.

"Why was the foul committed here?"

Tactical fouls are not deserving of a yellow card on its own merit, if seen in isolation. But when taking the match situation as a whole into consideration, the foul warrants a caution. Therefore, as a first step in identifying a criteria for tactical fouls, referees should ask themselves the "HOW" as well as the "WHY" the foul was committed. It is the "WHY" that unlocks the identifying process. This will enable referees to identify the true nature of certain fouls as being tactical fouls.

As mentioned, tactical fouls are committed in order to strip a team of an effective promising attack. As such, a tactical foul is one for which the tackler is willing to accept the likelihood of getting a yellow card in exchange for stopping or slowing down a promising attack.

There are six common characteristics of tactical fouls:

1. Tactical fouls occur **usually close to the attacking end of the field**. Defenders commit the foul because they are aware the attackers will have a credible opportunity to attack their goal with a high degree of effectiveness. The attack may develop from a counter-attack after dispossession of the ball, and speed is of the essence to get the ball/player into the attacking half of the field.
2. Tactical fouls are used to gain a **numerical advantage** for defenders to stop or hinder the attack.
3. Tactical fouls give defenders **time to defend**. It gives the defending team time to get goal-side of the ball, thus creating a numeric advantage for defenders.
4. Tactical fouls **prevent the ball and/or player from advancing** with his promising attacking move (e.g. deliberate handball or obstruction or holding attacker). The foul is committed to prevent the ball and/or attacking player from getting into space behind a defender or behind the defence. It is the theory *“if the ball gets by, the player doesn’t* or *“if the player gets by, the ball doesn’t”*. Look for open areas/space that the ball would normally be played into or where an attacking player would run into if they were to receive the ball. The open areas would be behind a defender and close to or in the attacking half of the field.
5. The defender **knows that they are being beaten**. The defender knows that they do not the skill and/or the speed to stop the attacker. Tactical fouls usually occur in one-versus-one situations. Not to be confused with denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (red card).
6. Tactical fouls are **usually minor in nature**, i.e. they are more often not careless in nature as opposed to being reckless. These fouls are often considered minor because they normally don’t involve hard, physical contact. Due to their “careless” classification, these fouls often go unpunished. Shirt pulling or using the defender’s body to make contact with the opponent and impede his progress are frequent examples.

Referees should ask themselves, *“why did the player commit the foul here?”* Often, tactical fouls occur in the wide open channels and spaces (close to the touch line) on the field, so it is critical that **assistant referees** also be aware of these characteristics and provide the referee with the necessary assistance via communication.

As play develops, referees and assistants need to anticipate potential actions by defenders that wants to slow down the attack. Recognizing these warning signs will aid referees in positioning themselves pro-actively prior to the defender’s challenge, so that they have a better angle of view of the tactical foul. Also, it may aid the referee by increasing his presence (getting closer to the ball) and thereby preventing a foul by a defender. A well-positioned referee will be in the defender’s vision and his presence may deter the defender to initiate a tactical foul on an attacker.

Assistant referees should feel empowered to provide assistance in identifying and bringing these tactical fouls to the referee’s attention when the referee has not been successful in identifying the tactical nature of the foul. The assistant referee should utilise a signal – agreed upon prior to the game – if the assistant believes the situation warrants a caution.

DELAYING THE RESTART OF PLAY

The aim of this session is to heighten the referees' awareness of delaying tactics adopted by players or teams and to highlight the problems that may affect the referee's match control. The session also examined the use of management techniques in dealing with players who deliberately delay the restart of play and to ensure that the Law is correctly applied.

The Referees should be seen to be managing situations when there are attempts to delay a restart: the referee should speak in an obvious manner to the player[s] concerned and, if they repeat such actions, a caution will be appropriate.

Delaying tactics are most frustrating for opposition players, coaches and spectators alike and can cause problems for the referee in managing the game. It is therefore vital that we can quickly identify these tactics and use our effective player management techniques to limit the amount of time players use to delay the restart of play.

Instances of delaying the restart of play often result in game disruption and player confrontation, as they provoke opponents, and can lead to physical contact. This is especially true when players hold the ball, forcing the opponent to grab it to gain possession or standing in front of a free kick. Referees must be aware of the potential for game disruption or confrontation, and should use their preventative measures or take disciplinary action to effectively manage the situation.

Player/Team Delaying Tactics	Referee Management/Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More often when teams are winning • When teams are under pressure • Away from home • Goal Difference • Reduced players due to dismissals, injuries • Ball Boys/Girls not returning the ball quickly • Last 20 minutes <p>Set Play Situations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goal Kicks 2. Throw-ins 3. Corner Kicks 4. Substitutions 5. Free kicks 6. Penalty Kick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of voice and whistle to let the players know • Communicating using arms/body language to indicate that you are aware of the tactics being employed • Use of the 4th Official • Recognition – nip it in the bud early • Awareness of players tactics • Using a stepped approach – quiet word, public admonishment • Use of captains to communicate you are not happy with the tactics employed by their team • Awareness of previous disciplinary action – 2nd yellow card but if there is a breach of Law then the player must be dismissed from the field of play • When you have exhausted all your man-management techniques/skills - take disciplinary action • Appropriate time to maintain control

Time Consuming

Time consuming is not an offence in the Laws of the Game. As the ball is in play and opponents have a chance of possession, no offence against the Laws is committed. However, such a ploy can raise the tempo of the match as opposition players become frustrated in not being able to play the ball.

Referees must take **preventative** action to encourage players to put the ball back into play quickly or to prevent opposing players from delaying the restart of play. At the same time, referees and assistant referees must be able to distinguish between actual “delay tactics” from the normal pace of play and actions of players. Finding the right balance is not easy but referees and assistant referees should not be spectators when sensing ‘delaying tactics’ and should become involved.

Involvement can be displayed in many forms depending upon the situation but consider the following and or a combination of the following:

1. Have a **physical presence** near the restart area
2. **Verbally** encourage players to put the ball into play
3. **Visually** indicate to players to put the ball into play or that they are delaying. Hand gestures and/or pointing to your watch are often used
4. **Whistle** to get everyone’s attention. The whistle signals urgency and can be heard by players, coaches and spectators
5. **Indicate** that time will be added

The ability of the referee to anticipate and feel the onset of delay tactics means that the referee can positively manage and “balance” the time lost without the need to issue a yellow card. A strong, positive message in the early stages will “sell” a caution later, if required.

Law 12 - Referees must caution players who delay the restart of play by tactics such as:

- taking a free kick from the wrong position with the sole intention of forcing the referee to order a retake
- appearing to take a throw-in but suddenly leaving it to one of his teammates to take
- kicking the ball away or carrying it away with the hands after the referee has stopped play
- excessively delaying the taking of a throw-in or free kick
- delaying leaving the field of play when being substituted
- provoking a confrontation by deliberately touching the ball after the referee has stopped play

Main Considerations

Restarts of play are opportunities to show your authority as the players will test you

- Position of restart
- Management of players
- Use of the Captains
- Disciplinary action where appropriate
- Being seen to manage the situations (pro-active)

Allowance for Lost Time

Many stoppages in play are entirely natural (e.g. throw-ins, goal kicks). An allowance is to be made only when these delays are excessive. On a separate issue, referees are reminded that when adding additional time at the end of each half there must be clear reasons to justify why they continue to go beyond the communicated time; examples include substitutions taking place, a goal being scored, delaying tactics by the team etc.

Conclusions

- A restart means that the game is beginning again so – **BE ALERT**
- Problems can arise **BEFORE** the ball is in play and referees were reminded to be proactive in dealing with delaying tactics by teams/players
- Simple situations can become big problems
- Be ready for the '**unexpected**'
- Work as a team: use pre-match instructions and the communications kit to encourage players to get the ball in play
- Focus and concentration are key requirements
- Know the Law and when to take disciplinary action
- Make sure you **TAKE CONTROL**

Summary

There is a need for match officials to be more proactive and vigilant in ensuring that players do not delay the restart of play. The Law is clear: delaying the restart of play is one of the seven cautionable offences. However, referees are encouraged to use preventative management techniques so that disciplinary action is only taken as a result of a clear breach in Law.

Allowance for Time Lost

Allowance is made in either period for all time lost through:

- substitutions
- assessment of injury to players
- removal of injured players from the field of play for treatment
- wasting time
- disciplinary sanctions
- stoppages for drinks (which should not exceed one minute) or other medical reasons permitted by competition rules
- delays relating to VAR 'check' and 'reviews'
- any other cause, including any significant delay to a restart (e.g. goal celebration)

Many stoppages in play are entirely natural (e.g. throw-ins, goal kicks). An allowance is made only when delays are excessive and the allowance for time lost is at the discretion of the referee.

A referee must make allowances for time lost during the standard 90-minute duration of the match. The additional time ensures that, as precisely as possible, every game is played in full, allowing for time lost through a variety of possible incidents.

The referee does not need to make allowances for natural breaks in play such as throw-ins, corner kicks and free kicks. The referee does need to allow for time lost through substitutions, deliberate time wasting during natural breaks in play and the assessment or removal of injured players.

Calculation

The amount of allowance for time lost is entirely at the discretion of the referee. At the end of each period of play, the 4th official will indicate the minimum amount of stoppage time to be played. Once begun, the referee must not play less than the amount that has been indicated as a minimum. Referees are advised to make further allowances if there are any additional stoppages for the aforementioned reasons.

Substitutions

Substitutions are made during a stoppage in play. A single substitution can take a few seconds or the best part of a minute. In official competitions a maximum of three substitutions can be used by each team. When one considers that there can be a maximum of six substitutions in a game, the allowance for time lost must therefore be played at the end of that period of play in which the substitution or substitutions have taken place.

Assessment and Removal of Injured Players

Assessment and dealing with injuries take time. The referee has to determine whether the player requires the physiotherapist and/or the stretcher. However, the potential diagnosis of any injury can

only be made after the injury assessment process has been conducted by the team physiotherapist. A referee is required to allow an injured player to be medically assessed before being removed from the field of play for any required treatment.

Medical professionals suggest, as a guide, that it would take a skilled physiotherapist approximately 45 to 60 seconds to carry out an injury assessment but it may take longer for more serious or complicated injuries or for head injuries. It depends upon the severity of the injury. Once the referee has questioned the player who then asks for medical assistance (where appropriate), the referee signals for the medical staff to enter the field of play. Only for a physical offence where the opponent is cautioned or sent off, an injured player can be quickly assessed/treated and then remain on the field of play.

In principle, the delay should not be any longer than currently occurs when a medical person(s) comes onto the field to assess an injury. The difference is that the point at which the referee used to require the medical person(s) and the player to leave is now the point at which the medical staff leave but the player can remain.

To ensure the injured player does not use/extend the delay unfairly, referees are advised to:

- be aware of the match situation and any potential tactical reason to delay the restart
- inform the injured player that if medical treatment is required it must be quick
- signal for the medical person(s) (not the stretchers) and, if possible, remind them to be quick

When the referee decides play should restart either:

- the medical person(s) leaves and the player remains or
- the player leaves for further assessment/treatment (stretcher signal may be necessary)

As a general guide, the restart should not be delayed for more than about 20–25 seconds beyond the point when everyone was ready for play to restart, except in the case of a serious injury and/or an assessment of a head injury.

Only a goalkeeper or a player who has a serious injury such as a concussion or players from the same team who have collided and need immediate attention, are allowed to receive treatment on the field.

At the end of a period of play the referee must make an allowance if time has been lost for the assessment of an injury and the removal of the injured player from the field of play.

Examples of Delaying the Restart of Play (Time Wasting)

Referees are advised to be seen to be managing situations where there are attempts to delay a restart of play by speaking in an obvious manner to the player[s] concerned and, if they repeat any such actions, a caution will be appropriate. For example:

- taking a free kick from the wrong position with the sole intention of forcing the referee to order a retake
- appearing to take a throw-in but suddenly leaving it to a team-mate to take
- kicking the ball away or carrying it away with the hands after the referee has stopped play
- excessively delaying the taking of a throw-in or free kick

- delaying leaving the field of play when being substituted
- provoking a confrontation by deliberately touching the ball after the referee has awarded a free kick against that team

Disciplinary Sanctions

Disciplinary sanctions may vary in length of time from the moment the referee stops the game, taking the necessary disciplinary action and then restarting the game. The time lost during this period must be added to the end of each half.

Stoppages for drinks or other medical reasons permitted by competition rules

Referees must add the time lost from stoppages for drinks stoppages for drinks (which should not exceed one minute) or other medical reasons permitted by competition rules at the end of each half.

Delays relating to VAR 'check' and 'reviews'

One of the match officials (usually an AR) should be responsible for recording and informing the referee how long a review took (from the TV signal to play restarting) so the referee can make full allowance.

Any Other Cause

"Any other cause" refers to stoppages that are not covered in any other section. These can include, but are certainly not limited to; significant delay during a goal celebration, stoppages to remove other ball(s), animal(s) or object(s) from the field of play, spectator incursion, floodlight failure or where there is a delay in the replacement of the match ball.

Calculating the Allowance of Lost Time

In Law, the referee acts as timekeeper. Although the allowance for time lost is at the referee's discretion, they should make sure that, as precisely as possible, the period of play is played in its entirety.

Where a fourth official is appointed, one strategy adopted is for the referee to delegate the fourth official to record notable stoppages on a card to assist in calculating a reasonable allowance for lost time.

Stoppages during Additional Time

Additional time added on at the end of each half is to compensate the time lost in each half for the above mentioned reasons. During additional time, it may be necessary for the referee to make allowances for time lost for the same reasons. It is important to remember that the length of **additional time typically remains the same**. However, additional time may be increased by the referee but not decreased. During additional time, it is merely stopping the watch to compensate for the lost time and not adding time.

For example, at the end of the second half, the fourth official displays a minimum of two minutes to be played. After one minute of additional time played, a player is seriously injured and requires removal from the field of play. The delay in removing the player on the stretcher takes approximately five minutes. However, the additional time remaining to be played is only one minute. The referee does not add on the five minutes it had taken to remove the injured player.

Time Consuming

Time consuming is not an offence in the Laws of the Game. As the ball is in play, and opponents are able to challenge, no offence against the Laws is committed if, for example, team-mates are passing the ball amongst themselves. This is time consuming, not time wasting. However, it can raise the temperature of the match as opposition players become frustrated in not being able to play the ball.

Extended Time

This is when a period of play needs to be prolonged for the taking or retaking of a penalty kick. Even though the regulation time has expired, including all the allowances for time lost, the referee must allow the penalty kick to be completed before signalling the end of that period of play.

Referee Assessors

Referee Assessors have an important duty to ensure the referee carries out all his duties according to Law. This includes that of timekeeping. Any discrepancy should be recorded on the referee's assessment report.

DENIAL OF AN OBVIOUS GOAL SCORING OPPORTUNITY (DOGSO)

Law 12 – Fouls & Misconduct – Sending Off Offences

Following the revision of the Laws of Game for season 2016/17, we are going to examine one very important change relating to the disciplinary sanction, for some 'denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity' or DOGSO offences that are committed inside the penalty area.

The main reason for the change is that a penalty kick is a very good opportunity to score a goal, so when a penalty kick is awarded, it 'restores' the goal-scoring opportunity that was 'lost'. Therefore, the punishment of the player should not be as severe as the punishment for a DOGSO which is committed outside the penalty area. The red card is deserved for DOGSO outside the penalty area, as a free kick is not as good a scoring opportunity as a penalty kick.

As a result, Law 12 was changed, so that for DOGSO offences in the penalty area, where the defender is penalised for an offence, which was an attempt to play the ball, or challenge the opponent for the ball, the defender will be cautioned and shown the yellow card and not sent off the field of play.

However, The IFAB does not want to encourage unfair play, so for DOGSO offences inside the penalty area, which are not an attempt to play the ball or challenge the opponent for the ball, the offending player will still be sent off (red card).

DOGSO Offences:

1. *Where a player denies the opposing team a goal, or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a deliberate handball offence the player is sent off wherever the offence occurs*

2. *Where a player commits an offence against an opponent, within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:*
 - a. *The offence is holding, pulling or pushing or*
 - b. ***The offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball or***
 - c. *The offence is one which is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g. serious foul play, violent conduct etc..)*

In all the above circumstances the player is sent off.

Unless an offence falls into one of the DOGSO offences which remain a red card, the offending player is cautioned and not dismissed from the field of play.

The considerations that match officials use for judging whether a player has denied an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent are:

- **DISTANCE** between the offence and the goal
- general **DIRECTION** of the play
- likelihood of keeping or gaining **CONTROL** of the ball
- location and number of **DEFENDERS**



However, as a result of the Law change, for DOGSO offences in the penalty area where the defender (including the goalkeeper) is penalised for an offence where there was a clear attempt to play the ball or reasonable possibility to challenge the opponent for the ball, the defender will be cautioned (yellow card) and not sent off (red card).

Here are some of the skills and attributes required of match officials:

Skills and Attributes required of Match Officials

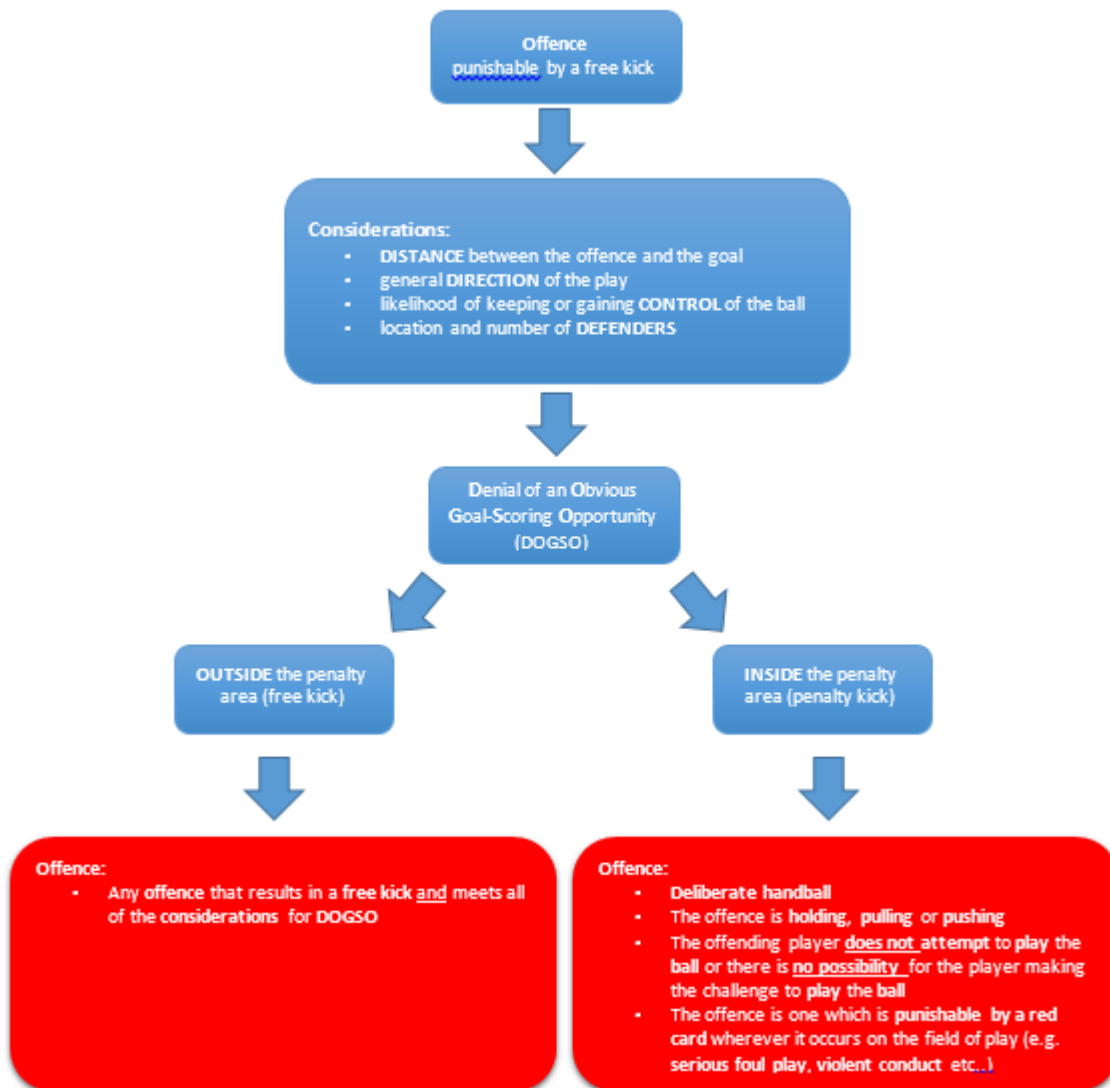
- Knowledge of LAW
- Having a clear thought process
- Have the ability to freeze frame the incident at the moment the offence takes place
- Judging whether the defender, who is inside his own penalty area, attempts to play the ball, or challenges the opponent for the ball- or- not
- The Refereeing Team make best use of the physical evidence available
- Clear positive body language
- Credibility of positioning

The change in the DOGSO wording in Law 12 does not mean that every DOGSO offence in the penalty area is sanctioned with a caution (yellow card). The reduction from sending off (red card) to caution (yellow card) is only intended for DOGSO offences **inside** the penalty area which the referee decides are **a clear attempt to play the ball or challenge an opponent for the ball**. Where this is not the case, especially for the offences mentioned - the sanction remains a sending off.

All DOGSO offences outside the penalty area are sanctioned with a sending off (red card) as there is no change in the Law for these offences.

Occasionally, when an attack is stopped by a cautionable or sending-off offence and the attacking team takes a quick free kick which restores the 'lost' attack; it is clearly 'unfair' if this 'new' attack is stopped to issue the YC/RC. However, if the referee has distracted the offending team by starting the YC/RC procedure, the quick free kick is not allowed. For a DOGSO offence, the player will be cautioned and not sent off because the attack was re-started (as when advantage is applied for a DOGSO offence).

DOGSO Decision Making Process



CONCLUSIONS

All of these criteria are used at the exact instance the foul takes place and we have to make the judgement that the defending player has denied an obvious goal scoring opportunity or not.

It is also important for the referee to be fully concentrating, to make their decision at the time the offence is committed, and to make the judgement at that point as to whether an obvious goal scoring opportunity has been denied or not.

It was also evident from the video examples of how the positions of players can change in a matter of seconds after the incident occurs by the movement of defending players back towards their own goal.

When reviewing match incidents, we have the ability to pause the action at the time the offence has been committed to create a correct picture of the offence, position of the attackers, defenders and the ball in order to decide whether a goal scoring opportunity has been denied.

The referee team does not have this ability which illustrates the importance of having full concentration not only to determine the offence but, also, create a picture of the position of attackers and defenders at the time the offence is committed; with this information the referee can make a judgment of whether an obvious goal scoring opportunity has been denied or not.

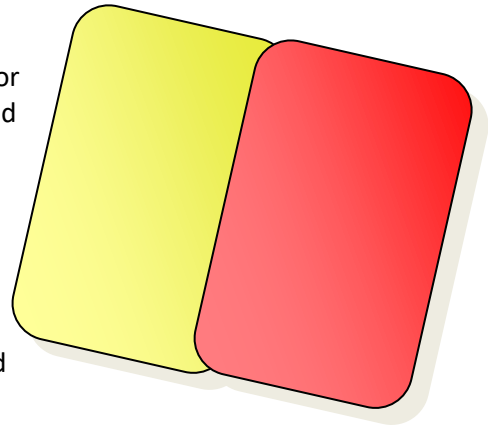
In Summary, referees must consider the following:

- Consider the application of Law 12 and the criteria for the **obvious** denial of a goal scoring opportunity
- Have a clear thought process in analysing all the information to create a correct picture of the offence
- Positive reaction by the referee to the situation with clear positive body language
- Have credibility in their positioning and creating a good viewing angle in order to be in the best position to judge whether an offence has been committed or not
- Communication with the Assistant Referees/4th Official to make best use of the physical evidence to provide the best chance of arriving at the correct outcome

Use of Red & Yellow Cards

The Laws of the Game require referees to show cards for appropriate offences to players, substitutes and substituted players only.

Referees should not use the cards in an aggressive or provocative manner which is likely to inflame an already emotive situation nor should the card be used in an over-demonstrative manner which may humiliate a player and perhaps cause the player to over-react. The cards are an aid to communication.



The general procedure for cautioning players is to state to the player that they are being cautioned; enquire his name, warn the player about their future conduct and, finally, show the yellow card. The immediate display of a card should only be used to reduce the risk of negative reaction or to prevent acts of retaliation. Referees are reminded that this instant use of a card should continue to be used sparingly and only on occasions when it could diffuse a possible flashpoint. This procedure remains the exception and the normal cautioning procedure (which provides an inbuilt calming down period), finalised by a showing of a yellow card, remains the standard practice.

Where a player is to be disciplined, they should be isolated before disciplinary action is taken; try and maintain eye contact with the player when issuing the card. Referees are reminded to examine their own cautioning technique including the knowledge of which pocket the red and yellow cards are kept in to ensure that the procedure is efficient.

If a player is cautioned or dismissed by the referee in the tunnel area, during the half time interval, the referee will be responsible for informing a representative of both Clubs and to ensure an appropriate announcement is made over the public address system.

FREE KICK MANAGEMENT

There are two distinct management processes we adopt as referees when managing free kick situations. Firstly, the procedure that we adopt is (or should be) automatic – a natural reaction by the referee to any given situation involving free kicks (PROCESS).

Secondly, the management techniques used in the way we control these situations (our experience) and how we successfully complete the procedure. The aim of this session was to create a uniformed approach of managing free kick situations albeit with some slight differences to the referee's personality and physical presence (CONTROL).

When managing free kick situations, there should be a procedure in place so that the referee is both consistent and effective. It is impossible to manage a free kick correctly without having a system or procedure to follow and it needs to be understood by all players, and followed.

Process Management

Process Management is a systematic way of doing things. In free kick situations; the process we adopt needs to be sequential to ensure we achieve our objectives. In this exercise, the Group were asked to consider the thought processes they would adopt when awarding a free kick. Whilst naturally, the referee goes into 'automatic mode' when managing free kicks, having to think about the processes they would adopt will reinforce their understanding of the importance of having a systematic process in place. The flow diagram on the next page is a suggested process the referee may adopt when awarding a free kick:



Definition of a Free Kick

- A free kick is the privilege of kicking the ball without obstruction in such a manner as the kicker may think fit
- The free kick is a device used to try and regain the balance lost when the offence was committed
- The side offended against may have suffered dearly when this occurred and is entitled to compensation

Process of Managing Free Kicks



A free kick may be taken quickly – without the referee's whistle provided that:

- no disciplinary sanction is to be taken or referee has not started the disciplinary sanction procedure (for example where a player has a clear goal-scoring opportunity)
- the free kick is taken quickly after play is stopped (i.e. few seconds...)
- the ball is stationary at the place of the offence
- the free kick requires no management by the referee
- the referee has not yet started to control the wall / the opponents to get them back the appropriate distance

Control Management

The second part of controlling free kicks is the way in which they are controlled. This is mainly down to individual skill and experience of the referee:

- Personality
- Presence
- Communication skills
- Player management
- Knowledge and applying Law – what to do
- Knowledge of players and team tactics
- Achieving and maintaining 9.15m
 - Not looking away or turning your back on play
 - Awareness of attackers remaining at least 1m from the 'wall' until the ball is in play
- Positioning
- Signal

Conclusions

- There are two distinct management processes we adopt as referees when managing free kick situations – **Process** and **Control**.
- When managing free kick situations, the referee should have a procedure in place so that the process is both consistent and effective. It is impossible to manage a free kick correctly without having a system or procedure to follow and it needs to be understood by all players, and followed.
- Controlling free kicks is mainly down to individual skill, personality and the experience of the referee. Learning from experiences will make us better prepared.
- Having an awareness of team and player tactics before the game and as the game develops will help the referee to control these set play situations and can also facilitate their style.
- Attacking free kicks close to the penalty area where goals can be scored directly from the restart, it is important that the ball is correctly located and controlled by the referee.
- Referees are responsible for ensuring that free kicks are taken without impediment unless a team decides to take a quick free kick.
- Verbal and visual communication and being proactive. Speak to the players during the game and communicate your restart requirements. Encourage them to participate.
- Taking up the most advantageous position for the restart will help the referee to be in a credible position to adjudicate any infringements that may occur.

Summary

It is critical to set the tone early at all free kick restarts: set your standards and then hold the players accountable – set the precedent. Not dealing with players who fail to respect the required distance and interference early makes it more difficult to get distance in the critical areas of the field as the game develops. Where failure to retire the required distance or delaying the restart of play is blatant and obvious, the referee's control is being tested and it is particularly important that we act firmly and take the necessary disciplinary action. Where it is less obvious, referees should use their management and communication skills to get players to conform to the requirements of Law.

Positioning & Movement during Open Play and Set Play Situations

The aims of this session were to consider how we can improve our positioning and movement to put ourselves in the right place at the right time to make the right decision and to review our positioning at Set Play situations.

1. What are the KEY ingredients of good referee at positioning and movement during open play?

- Fitness & Acceleration
- Reading the game
- Creating an angle
- Referee – Ball- Assistant Referee
- Anticipation
- Tactical Awareness
- Anticipation of play
- Angle vs. Proximity
- Not taking up player's space
- Staying behind the ball

Requires the ability:-

- to read and anticipate play
- to run at high intensity whilst still being able to concentrate on the game and being able to analyse the decision you are going to make
- to sprint through midfield to gain a good position
- to keep your assistant referees in view at all times
- to create the right viewing angle as the play progresses – considering the above points

2. What are the KEY skills and attributes required of the referee in managing set play situations?

- Awareness
- Taking control of the ball
- Clear communication
- Remaining calm and confident
- Pre-match instructions
- Management of players
- Authority
- Clear process
- Tactical awareness
- Direction of kick
- Strong body language
- Control of the situation
- Communication – verbal & whistle

Positioning & Movement during Open Play and Set Play Situations Practical Demonstration

This practical demonstration session on the field of play reinforced the learning points from the theory content.

The situations we considered were:

- Various Attacking Free Kicks
- Managing 9.15m
- Wall Management
- Positioning for restart in play
- Managing Penalty Kicks & Positioning
- Managing Kicks from the Penalty Mark

The aims of this session were to look at the processes the referees adopted in managing the 9.15m but, more importantly, the position the referee adopted for the restart. This is mainly down to the individual skill and experience of the referee:

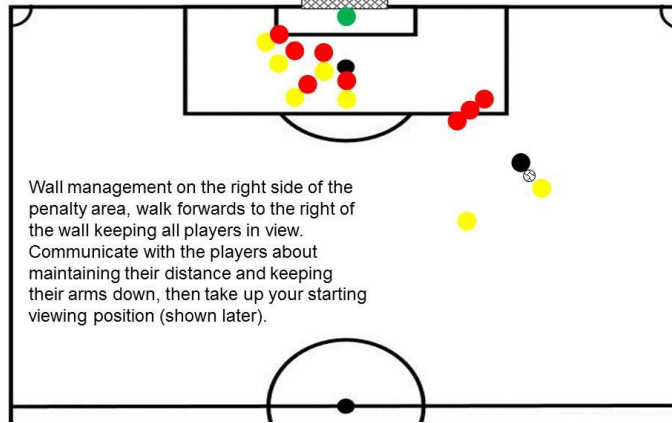
- Personality
- Presence
- Communication skills
- Player management
- Knowledge and applying Law – what to do
- Knowledge of players and team tactics
- Achieving and maintaining 9.15m
 - Not looking away or turning your back with players behind you!
 - Location of attacking players close to the wall
- Positioning
- Signal

Discussions on the most advantageous position for the restart at the various set play situations will help the referee to be in a credible position to adjudicate any infringements that may occur.

When the referee awards a free kick they must keep in mind that the offending team is being punished for a player's behaviour and the offended team is being compensated by the award of a free kick. The intent of the free kick is to provide the offended team with an opportunity to realise an advantage. This advantage is compensation for, in many situations, one taken away by the offending team and in other cases it is punishment for conduct that was not safe or fair.

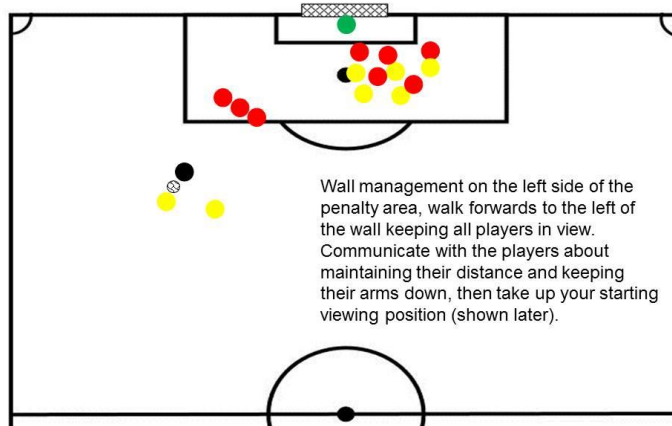
Wall Management – 9.15m (Walking the Wall)

Wall Management



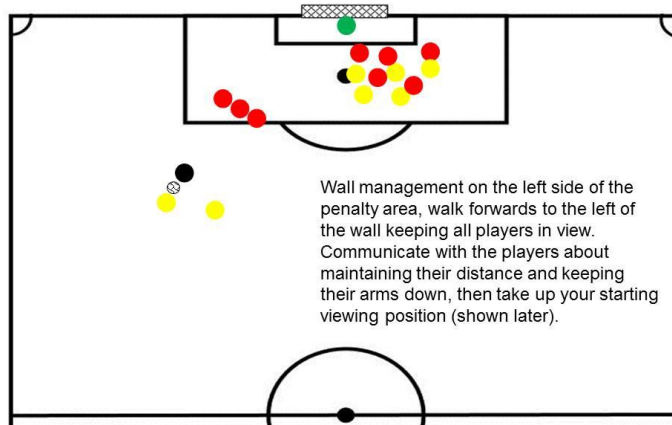
Wall management on the right side of the penalty area, walk forwards to the right of the wall keeping all players in view. Communicate with the players about maintaining their distance and keeping their arms down, then take up your starting viewing position (shown later).

Wall Management



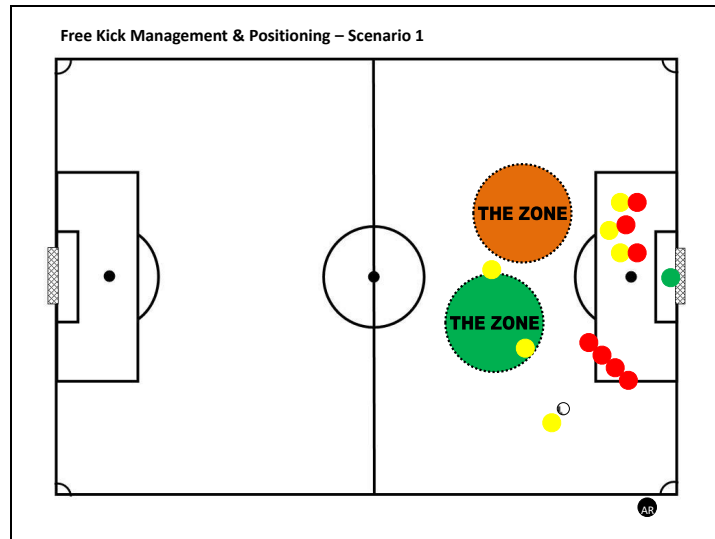
Wall management on the left side of the penalty area, walk forwards to the left of the wall keeping all players in view. Communicate with the players about maintaining their distance and keeping their arms down, then take up your starting viewing position (shown later).

Wall Management



Wall management on the left side of the penalty area, walk forwards to the left of the wall keeping all players in view. Communicate with the players about maintaining their distance and keeping their arms down, then take up your starting viewing position (shown later).

*In all these scenarios, it is important to remember that these are guidelines and not mandatory positions referees should adopt in every situation. The **green shaded areas** were considered to be the optimum viewing position. The best position is one from which the referee can make the right decision. All recommendations about positioning are based on probabilities and must be adjusted using specific information about the teams, the players, and events in the match up to that point.*

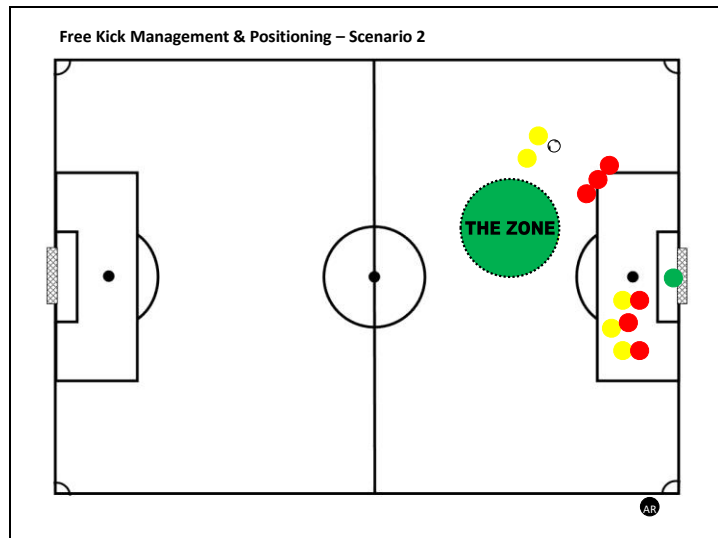


There were some variations to some of the positions adopted by the referees and the group were split over the two zones. The best position is one from which the referee can make the right decision. All recommendations about positioning are based on probabilities and must be adjusted using specific information about the teams, the players, and events in the match up to that point.

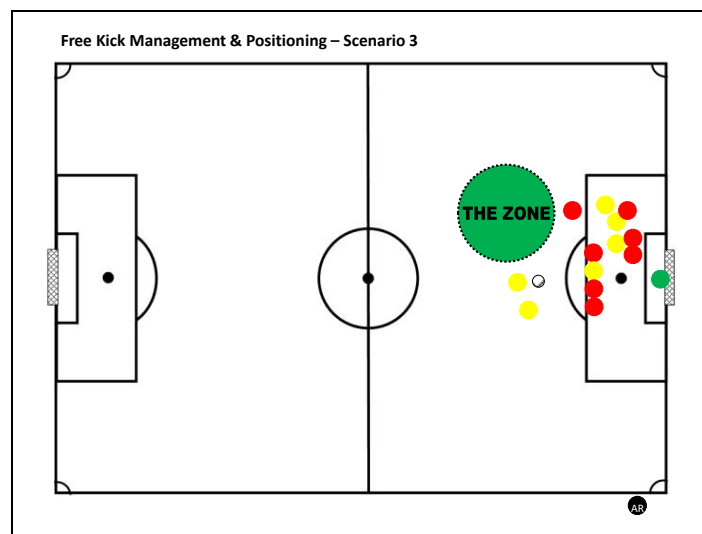
Questions posed to the referees for their consideration. From your starting position:

1. Can you see the ball and the kicker?
2. Can you see any potential offence in the wall?
3. Can you see the potential dropping zone of the ball?
4. Are you interfering with players?

Free Kick Management

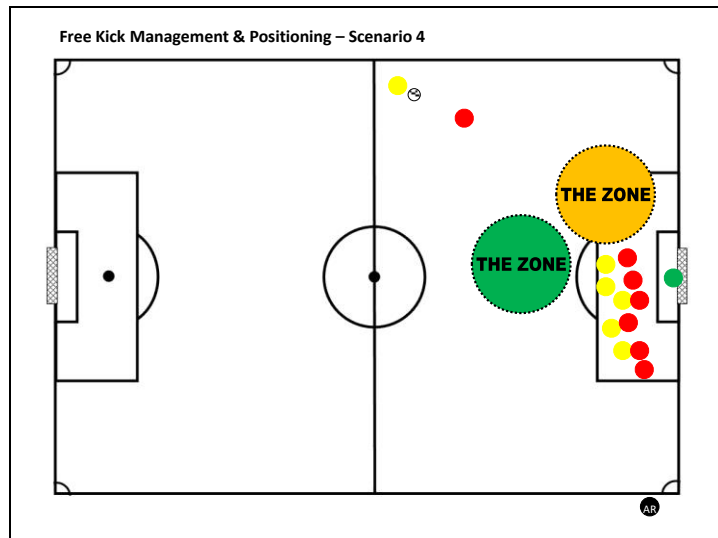


In this scenario, the majority of the referees were consistent in their starting position giving them a good view of any potential offence in the wall and an opportunity to move closer to the penalty area and the potential dropping zone of the ball.

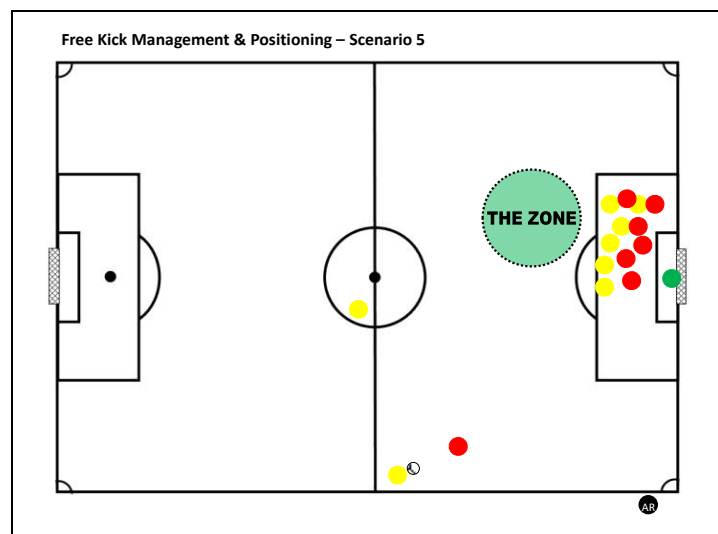


In this scenario, the majority of the referees were consistent in their starting position giving them a good view of any potential offence in the wall and an opportunity to move closer to the penalty area and the potential dropping zone of the ball.

Referees were asked to consider the position of the wall on the penalty area line and should a handball offence occur, it may create an area of doubt as to whether the offence took place inside or outside the penalty area.

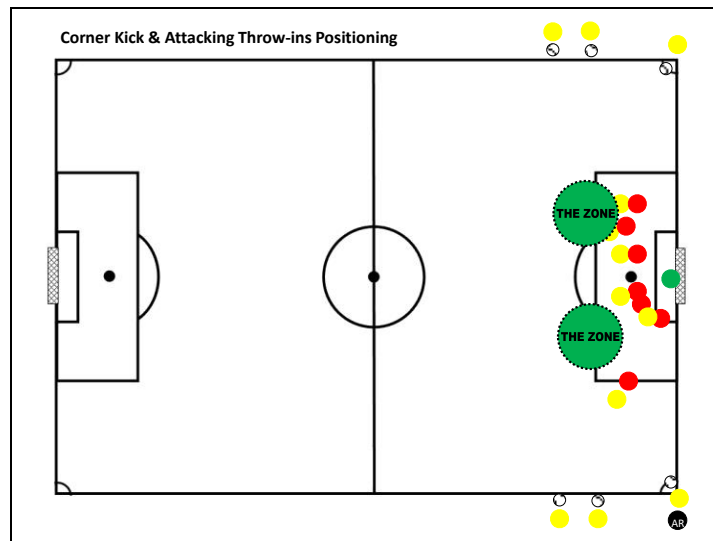


There were some variations to some of the positions adopted by the referees and the group were split over the two zones. With the use of the communications system, there is no longer a requirement for the referee to watch the kicker playing the ball as they will be informed by the Assistant Referee. However, the referees in the orange zone were asked to consider maximising the team angle.



In this scenario, the majority of the referees were consistent in their starting position giving them a good view of any potential offence in the wall and an opportunity to move closer to the penalty area and the potential dropping zone of the ball.

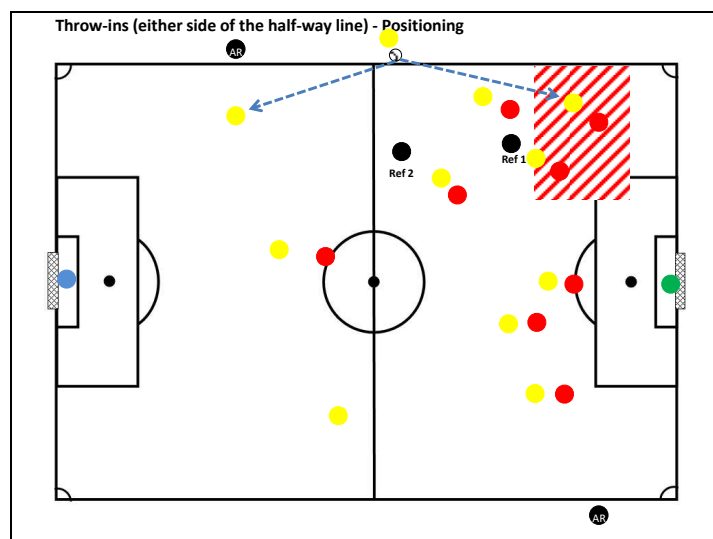
Positioning at Throw-ins and Corner Kicks



Whilst we have a standard starting position for corner kicks, referees may wish to consider taking up a position on the opposite side of the penalty area for near post corners. However, this position is based on probabilities and must be adjusted using specific information about the teams, the players, and events in the match up to that point. The long throw-in is another further tactic used by teams that can put pressure onto the defenders by throwing the ball deep into the penalty area.

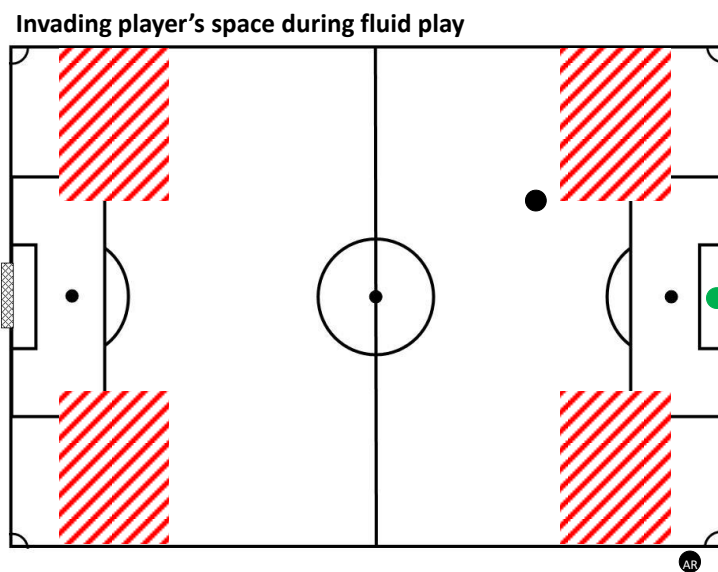
Throw-ins (either side of the half-way line)

In this scenario, referees tend to anticipate the dropping zone and take up a position at (Ref 1). Don't over anticipate: by taking up the position at (Ref 2), it would be easier for the referee to move forwards if the ball is thrown down the line. Referees can be caught up with play at (Ref 1) position with the possibility of having to move backwards to avoid invading the player's space. Also, by taking a position at (Ref 2) and the ball is thrown back towards the defence, the referee would be in a good position to anticipate the next phase of play.



Invading Players' Space during open Play

- Referees need to be aware of invading players' space in the Red shaded areas as teams practice their attacking playing situations in these areas
- It is important to let the play develop in front of you rather than gaining closer proximity to the ball in these areas:
 - Firstly, to avoid being hit by the ball
 - Secondly, to stop play develop around the referee (referees turning 360°)



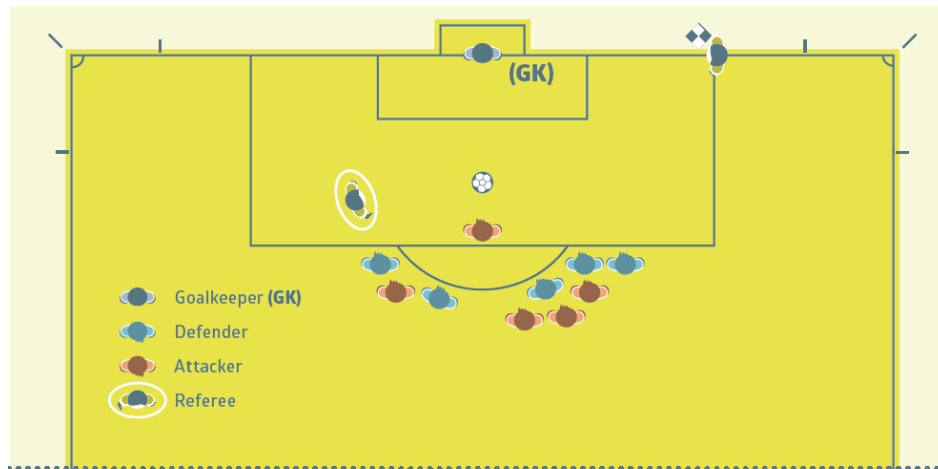
Penalty Kick Management

- To ensure consistency in our approach
- To ensure Law 14 is applied consistently and correctly
- To review our knowledge and understanding
- To give advice on management techniques

Procedure

- Ensure the ball correctly placed on the Penalty Mark
- Tell kicker to wait for signal
- Be proactive - speak to:
 - goalkeeper on goal line and warn about the consequences of encroachment
 - All other players to remain outside the area, warn about the consequences
- Signal for kick to be taken
- Decide on appropriate action if necessary if infringement of Law 14 occurs

Penalty Kick Positioning



- Level with the Penalty Mark
- Take a position as far back as the last player outside the penalty area
- Viewing Angle (turning your body) to see
 - Players entering the Penalty Area before the ball is kicked – (majority of players enter from the 'D')
 - Kicker Infringement

Kicks from the Penalty Mark Positioning of the Referee and Assistant Referees



- Referee taking up position on the junction of the goal area
- Referee to create a viewing angle – positioning your body to observe Kicker Infringement and goalkeeper movement
- Assistant Referee 1 taking up position on the intersection of goal area/goal line to check the ball has crossed the line
- Assistant Referee 2 on the centre circle monitoring the other players

Summary

Good positioning, clear and unobstructed view, a good viewing angle and proximity to incidents all form the basis of good and credible decision making. Whilst we cannot be too prescriptive on the position the referee adopts in every situation, the above examples will not only help you to consider the positions you adopt but also why you have adopted them.

Guidelines on the use of Communications Equipment for Match Officials

Communications System

The "Communications System" is a tool for the referees, assistant referees, fourth officials and VAR when used and a series of guidelines and best practice advice on the use of the communications system has been assembled. Like all communications systems, they should be fully charged before the game, prepared and tested; they should be checked prior to entry to the field of play, re-checked immediately prior to kick-off and checked again immediately prior to the start of the second half.

It is important to remember that the communications system is a tool that can be used to further enrich teamwork and co-operation, it does not replace the 'basic building blocks' of communication: body language, voice, whistle and flag.

'Two-way' communication is the best practice approach, with the communications system used for:

Clarification

- You are seeking information from your colleagues to help you understand a situation

Confirmation

- You are sharing what you know that is of relevance to the situation

Guidelines and best practice examples:

Guideline 1 – Testing the Equipment

In order to fully check that the communications system is working effectively, referees, assistant referees and the fourth official should check the System on arrival to the ground. It is recommended that the communications system is worn and tested during the pre-match warm up routine. The use of the Communications System is mandatory.

Guideline 2 – The Fourth Official

In order to reduce the potential distraction to the referee and assistant referees, the fourth official should be advised to operate using the 'push to talk' function. The following is a list of best practice advice for use of the communications system by the fourth official:

- **Substitutions** – the fourth official should provide the referee with a 'heads up' regarding an imminent substitution, including the identity player 'coming off' and where they are on the field. This provides the referee with an opportunity to manage the substitution process efficiently. When a substitute is ready, a phrase such as "substitution, substitution, substitution" provides a clear and unambiguous communication.
- **Injuries** – seriously injured player(s): the fourth official can use the system to alert the referee to the need to stop play when the on field refereeing team are unaware of the situation.

- blood injury: should a change of player's equipment be necessary due to contamination with blood, an early 'heads up' can be given by the referee to the fourth official to arrange for a 'clean' item to be made available.
- management of a player returning: following treatment for an injury the fourth official can liaise with the referee to get permission for the player to return, this means that the referee does not need to change their focus from the developing phase of play.
- **Allowance for lost time** – towards the end of each half (typically 43' and 88'), the referee and fourth official can discuss the time to be indicated. The referee may delegate timing of injury stoppages to the assistant referee operating on the opposite side of the field of play from the technical areas, who before play restarts updates the fourth official, who can then record key stoppages on the match record card. The fourth official can also provide a 'count down' to end of each half.
- **Ball out of play** – when the ball leaves the field of play in the vicinity of the technical areas, the fourth official may be able to assist the assistant referee (and referee) by confirming the direction of a throw-in in situations where there is a deflection. A phrase such as "blue, blue, blue" provides a clear and unambiguous communication.
- **Disciplinary confirmation** – following all cautions the fourth official should confirm the identity of the player back to the referee, usually before play is restarted. A phrase such as "blue eight" provides a clear and unambiguous communication.
- **Disciplinary 'run down'** – approximately every 15-minutes, at an opportune moment or upon request from the referee the fourth official should provide 'run down' of any players who are on the field of play who are 'on a caution'. Similarly it is useful to confirm that when a player 'on a caution' is substituted the referee is updated by the fourth official that a player on a caution has gone off.
- **Fouls and misconduct** – although the referee retains authority to decide on all points connected with play, the fourth official should offer clear and timely advice re fouls and misconduct. This includes advice when the fourth official has a clear view of the severity of a foul tackle.
- **Misconduct by Technical Area Occupants** – the fourth official can use the communication system to discuss any behavioural issues with the referee to agree the appropriate course of action.
- **Safety issues raised by the Safety Officer or Police** - if the game needs to be stopped for any reason, the fourth official can immediately confirm this to the referee.
- **Potential issues leaving the field** - at half time and full time the fourth official can give the referee a 'heads up' with regard to any "issues" in the tunnel area, which may be to warn the referee of a potential situation where the referee may wish to delay entry into the tunnel area.

Guideline 3 – Clarity of Communication

The communication system should be used to 'add value' to the decision making process, hence clarity of information is critical. Covering of the mouth by the hand is not considered good practice and although the communications system is encrypted and conversations between match officials cannot be 'listened' to, match officials should be very mindful to what they say, selecting appropriate language. The use of insulting and/or offensive language is completely unacceptable.

The following is some best practice advice about the PROCESS:

Pose with clarity the correct question, at the correct time

Repeat 'key word(s)' – 'rule of three' e.g. "red card, red card, red card" or "penalty, penalty, penalty"

Only one to speak at critical times to avoid 'over talk'

Credibility – if necessary have a face-to-face conversation

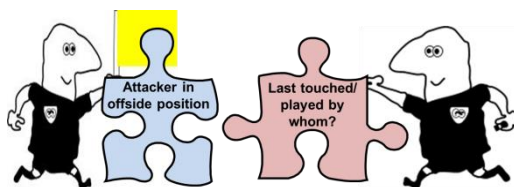
Evidence gathering – use the communication system to exchange relevant information

Simple and straightforward language

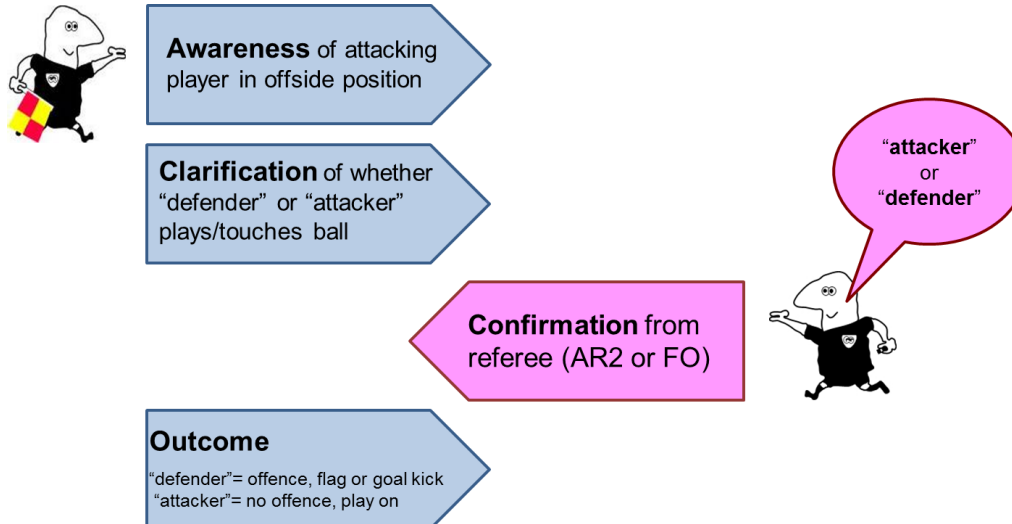
Set the expectations pre-match

Guideline 4 – Offside Situations

- **Potential offside offence** - when judging whether a player(s) could be penalised for being in an offside position, assistant referees should communicate to the referee "waiting on...", it would be helpful to communicate either the player's number or name, which may allow the referee to confirm that the player has interfered with an opponent by challenging for the ball – some referees may prefer not to
- **Confirmation of an offside offence** – when the assistant referee raises their flag to indicate an offside offence, they should also "buzz" and use a clear phrase such as "offside, offside, offside". Phrases such as "not offside" or "onside" should not be used as this could easily be misconstrued
- **'Tight non flag' situations** – some assistant referee use the words "on" or "no" to communicate that play is continuing; however some referees may wish the assistant to 'think this' rather than say it out loud. To assist the referee in managing the aftermath of a disputed 'non flag' situation, the assistant referee could provide the identity (name/number) of the defending player who 'played the attacker onside'
- **'Jigsaw offside' situations** - when the assistant referee has half of the jigsaw (an attacking player is in an offside position) and the referee the other half of the jigsaw (WHO last played/touched the ball), it is only when both pieces of the jigsaw are available that the 'full picture' emerges.



The following simple process should be adopted:



- **Proactive communication** – a number of referees and assistant referees have adopted a proactive approach, confirming whether an “attacker” or “defender” last played/touched the ball. In situations where the ball is last touched/played by a defending player, it is usually useful for the referee to confirm whether it was “deliberate play”, “deflection” or “save”, as this will affect whether any attacking player in an offside position may be penalised.

Guideline 5 – Ball In/Out of Play

- **Throw-in** - following the exchange of team sheets the match officials should agree which colour to state in their communication, particularly when teams play in kits that have stripes or unusual colours. Dialogue between the referee and assistant referee prior to any directional decision would be helpful to ensure that when decisions are made publicly, as it reduces the likelihood of any crossed purposed signals. Phrases such as “blue, blue, blue” are recommended
- **Goal kick/corner kick** – prior to the indication of a goal kick or corner kick dialogue between the referee and assistant referee should take place, again simple phrases such as “goal kick, goal kick, goal kick” or “corner, corner, corner” are recommended
- **Ball in/out of play** – when the ball is in play following a restart, it is helpful to the referee (and other assistant referees) if the ‘active’ assistant referee confirms that the ball is in play, simple phrases such “three, two, one, in play” or “in play, NOW”. The benefits of this confirmation are a) the referee can keep their focus on the potential dropping zone of the ball, b) a more accurate judgement of offside or an infringement being deemed during play or not. In addition communicating that the ball is “staying in play” is also helpful when the ball is played down the touchline, particularly as it informs the referee and the other assistant referee operating on the opposite touchline that phase of play is continuing.

Guideline 6 – Set Play Situations and retake of a penalty kick

It is be helpful to the referee if the non-active assistant referee watches the ball at free kick situations to ensure that no offence is committed by the kicker. At the taking of the free kick or corner kick, communicate “ball in play...**Now**” or “three, two, one...**Now**” so that the referee can keep their focus on the potential dropping zone of the ball. It would be helpful to have dialogue between the referee

and assistant referee regarding players' tactics at Set Play situations in order to raise awareness of potential infringements, also, for dialogue between the match officials. Before the ball is in play, it is useful to confirm the names/numbers of defending players who have taken up positions adjacent to goal posts or the identity (name/number) of a player standing in an offside position.

Should the assistant referee need to advise the referee that a penalty kick should be retaken, the communication system could be used to supplement any agreed visual signal, with the words "[referee's name], credible retake"

Guideline 7 – Offences and Disciplinary Action

Where appropriate the referee may invite assistant referees and the fourth official to offer information regarding on field offences, particularly when they have a good viewing angle.

In areas of the field of play where a flag signal is expected, assistant referees must continue to use their flag to indicate the offence; however, the communication system should be used proactively to alert the referee to the impending flag indication and to clarify what the assistant referee has seen. Phrases such as "defensive foul" or "attacking foul" are recommended, as they are clear and unambiguous.

Assistant referees are reminded to think about the 'bigger picture', making sure that they identify the offender and also consider the consequence of an offence e.g. is it a promising attack or denial of a goal scoring opportunity.

Some referees use the phrase "referee it for me" to alert the assistant to situations where the play is in the area of field of play in which an assistant would be expected to assist or following a long pass from the defensive third. Whilst offside is the first decision, the assistant should then 'open their mind up' to the possibility of a foul or handball. Phrases such as "back to me" confirm the referee is taking the 'reins back'.

Advantage – where a referee applies advantage, if possible the assistant referee and fourth official should 'sweep up' to assist in the identification of the offender. Simple "advantage - colour, number" phrases such as "advantage, Blue 7" confirm the identity of the offending player.

No offence – where in the opinion of the assistant referee there is no offence, the communication system can be used to confirm this. Phrases such as "no, no, no" or "nothing" can be used. It is important to avoid phrases such as "no foul" as this may cause confusion if the referee mishears.

Play around the penalty area – some referees encourage their assistant referees to use phrases "inside" and "outside" when play is in and around the part of the penalty area near to the assistant referee. This proactive communication provides useful information should an offence take place. If the assistant has confirmed "inside" and not then said "outside", the location is most likely inside the penalty area.

Prior to the kick off the referee should agree the preferred communication from assistant referees and fourth official in relation to disciplinary action. Some referees may prefer their assistant referees to wait until the referee asks for confirmation, other referees are happy to filter out information.

Confirming disciplinary action - where the referee is seeking clarification from the assistant referee (or fourth official), the referee should ask a simple question “what did you see?” Any advice must be clear and precise. Using the simple phrase of “colour + number (or name), offence, recommended action” for example “Yellow 2, violent conduct, red card” keeps the process simple.

When the referee has not seen an incident and the assistant referee or fourth official is bringing it to the attention of the referee, again simple clear advice is required, for example.

“Referee’s name, assistant’s name, stop play, discipline action, player, offence”

When disciplinary action is taken the referee should advise the fourth official of both the identity of the player (name and/or number) of the player being disciplined; this will assist the fourth official in managing occupants of the technical areas as they will be able to give an indication as to the reason for the disciplinary action. It is important to be factual i.e. “red card for violent conduct”, and not “red card for elbowing an opponent”.

Guideline 8 – Goal

In addition to a positive movement back towards the halfway line, assistant referees should confirm that a ‘correct goal’ has been scored by a verbal communication of “goal, goal, goal”.

Guideline 9 – General Communication

Other helpful advice during open play is for the referee to communicate to their assistant referees that the ball has been deliberately played back towards his own goalkeeper by saying “back pass”. This will alert the assistant referees to a potential infringement by the goalkeeper or more likely that a ball played has been played by a defender which would mean that an offside offence had not occurred.

Summary

The above guidelines offer advice and guidance regarding the use of the communications system. The referee should make clear during the pre- match instructions the expectations of their team in terms of using the communication system to enrich team work and co-operation.

Body Language

This is about raising your awareness of situations that can develop which may threaten match control if not managed correctly and to understand the importance of non-verbal communication through effective use of body language.

Body Language can be described as “the bodily gestures, postures, and facial expressions by which a person communicates non-verbally with others.”

Body Language can be described as **KINESICS** which considers a person’s Appearance, Posture, Gestures, Facial Expressions and Eye Gaze/Eye Contact.

Appearance: Is your appearance appropriate for the situation? Are you well-groomed and clean? Hairstyle? Is your clothing clean and neat? Do you ‘stand out’ from the crowd or blend in?

Body movement and position: Do you move with confidence and an upright body position? Is your head hanging down, or held upright? Is your walk steady, not too fast or too slow? Running Style?

Facial expression: Do you have a pleasant facial expression, appropriate for the situation? Do your eyes appear bright and interested, or dull and bored? Is your face expressive or locked into a single look?

Eye contact: Do you make steady eye contact? Do your eyes dart back and forth or do you stay focused? Are you staring inappropriately? Does your eye contact match your overall facial expression?

The variations and combinations of elements affecting first impressions are nearly endless. You cannot possibly factor in all possibilities, but you can take your knowledge of body language and apply it to first impression situations with deliberate thought and choice.

Body language is a tool to help the referee control the match and to show authority and self-control. It was also expressed that body language is not an explanation of the decision they have made.

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal signals are unconscious parts of our behaviour which is a deeply rooted part of our entire makeup: it is the most basic part of our personality. This refers to things we do that we do in our body language that we are not conscious of such as mannerisms and the way we react to different situations: it is something we have been born with, the way we have been brought up. If it is negative, we can make the individual aware of it in order for them to modify their behaviour but we can never actually eliminate it.



First Impressions

Research shows that Body Language influences 90% of the first impression you create. That's a huge percentage, especially when you consider the importance of first impressions and how they set the stage for further interactions.

When do you make a first impression?

- when you arrive at the ground
- at the exchange of team sheets with the manager and the captains
- in the tunnel with a potential TV audience
- when you enter the field of play with spectators.

A first impression is usually formed within just a few seconds; most of the time you haven't even said a full sentence before a first impression is made but the fact remains that first impressions are incredibly important. Anything you can do to improve the first impression you make is a hugely positive step. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression!

Usually body language occurs unconsciously. Yet the body language we use decides to a large extent the quality of our communication. It follows that therefore it would be good to become conscious of our own and others' body language. We can learn to use our body language for a purpose as well as learn to understand and interpret the body language of others.

Body language is also interlinked with what you say and how you say it. As well as that, various body language signs can complement each other to strengthen the meaning of what you communicate.

Part of the art of good refereeing is finding the right balance in decision making, communication and discipline. A referee's use of body language can establish relationships on the field with the players, while also remaining in control of a match. It can show confidence, calmness, firmness, authority, or even the referee's human side, for example, when a player is injured.

Referees can use body language to enhance their performance, show leadership, enhance game management skills such as mediating and creating a connection, and to win trust and respect from players. Body language should be changed to suit the situation. It is a form of communication; it needs to be natural and fluent. Don't force yourself into a character which you were not, as players will perceive this. You have to remain yourself.

Summary

In summary, the importance of knowing how we communicate, how we come across to someone is decided only for a small part by the words we speak. To leave a good impression behind, it is important that we know, and to a certain extent can control, our body language. It is therefore necessary to get to know our own body language first. We should learn about it so that we can recognise it in others as well as in ourselves.

All match officials need to call upon their command presence as they interact with the players. Match officials must be able to decide upon the most appropriate method to deliver a message and, at the same time, ensure that the message matches the situation and/or player.

Summary continued

Every situation may require and/or every player may respond to a different type of message. What works in one situation or with one player may not work in/with another.

Finally, with strong command presence comes an aura of confidence. Confidence can be felt and seen by all game participants. In fact, as a viewer of a game, you can feel the referee's confidence based upon their physical movements, the way they walk, their upright body posture and how they communicate confidently looking directly at the player, making eye contact ("presence").

Mass Confrontation

Mass confrontation on the field of play provides a challenge for every match official. Confrontation can occur in a number of situations, and have many causes and it is a severe challenge to our match control. As match officials, we have to be alert to the potential for a confrontation to develop and to have a strategy in place if a confrontation occurs.

The guidelines below will help to explain the roles and responsibilities of all four officials which should be clarified in pre-match instructions by the match referee.

- Important that roles and responsibilities of all four officials are clarified in pre-match instructions.
- Awareness of opportunities to prevent mass confrontation by penalising earlier smaller offences and managing the tempo of the game.
- Once a confrontation has occurred, the referee to attempt to move quickly and purposefully to the scene to prevent escalation by strong whistle technique and body language.
- Where possible the main offender should be isolated and moved to a neutral area.
- If the confrontation develops the referee team should adopt good viewing positions.
- Assistant Referees should quickly adopt the most appropriate viewing position and at the conclusion of the incident, the assistant referees should be prepared to offer assistance to the referee confirming the identify of players involved, their location and any other relevant information
- Formal consultation to take place following an incident to ensure that all players involved are identified. This also creates time for the players to calm down before the game is restarted.
- A minimum of two yellow cards are required; both the instigator and retaliator should be cautioned.
- In the event of mass confrontation the fourth official's priority should be the conduct of the occupants of the technical area. At the conclusion of the incident the fourth official should bring to the attention of the referee anything they may wish to report
- The incident should be reported to the FA (either by the match assessor or by the referee.)
- We must protect the image of the game and respect towards all Match Officials.

Summary

It is not possible to prevent an escalation of a confrontation immediately. The Referee and Assistant Referees should observe what happens and should avoid physically being involved in separating fighting players. Strong use of the whistle might be helpful.

Dealing with Offensive, Insulting and Abusive Behaviour

This session is aimed at helping us all work together to change the negative attitudes and abusive behaviour on the touchline and on the Field of Play.

The outcomes of this session were:

1. To identify the referees role
2. To offer advice and guidance for referees
3. To consider application of Law 12
4. To look at ways of improving behaviour in football

Match Officials Responsibility

- Early recognition
- Positive action – nip it in the bud early in the game
- Use of the captains
- Effective player management
- Disciplinary action
- Create an encouraging environment
- Be pro-active: don't look for problems
- Deal positively with Offensive, Insulting and Abusive behaviour when it occurs – don't ignore it

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

Challenging

- Continually asking questions to undermine you
- Repeated moaning about decisions
- Gestures made in a derogatory manner
- Running at a referee objecting to decisions

Harassing

- Running aggressively towards a referee
- Players surrounding the referee
- Pressurising the referee to change a decision

Referee's Responsibility

- Apply the Laws of the Game consistently
- Be a Role Model
- Be calm, positive and confident
- Communicate effectively
- Use the Team Captain, **if required**, to help manage the players
- Consider a stepped approach to managing players
- Manage poor behaviour including sanctions
- Deal with dissent appropriately
- Consider the safety of players
- Prepare fully for the match

Code of Conduct for Match Officials

- Support fellow match officials
- Remain honest & impartial
- Do not tolerate inappropriate language from players and/or officials
- **Submit accurate, concise reports**

Summary

Referees should ensure offenders are punished uniformly and the following points may be helpful to prevent an escalation of the problem:

- Early recognition
- Positive action – nip it in the bud early in the game
- Use of the captains
- Effective player management
- Disciplinary action

The 'Art' of Assisting the Referee

Law 6 – The other Match Officials, states that:

Other match officials (two assistant referees, fourth official, two additional assistant referees and reserve assistant referee) may be appointed to matches. They will assist the referee in controlling the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game but the final decision will always be taken by the referee.

Assistant referees

They indicate when:

- the whole of the ball leaves the field of play and which team is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in
- a player in an offside position may be penalised
- a substitution is requested
- at penalty kicks, the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and if the ball crosses the line; if additional assistant referees have been appointed the assistant referee takes a position in line with the penalty mark

The assistant referee's assistance also includes monitoring the substitution procedure.

The assistant referee may enter the field of play to help control the 9.15m (10 yards) distance.

'Philosophy' of assistant refereeing



The three key components of the philosophy are to:

- **'Add value'** by assisting not insisting (unless appropriate e.g. a fact such as ball is out of play), recognising the need to communicate/share information, and the best way to do so e.g. by using a public flag
- **'Bear in mind the consequence'** by considering the needs of the Refereeing Team, the context of the match and the game strategy being led by the Referee
- **'Create good options for the Referee'** by providing advice and assistance that best the best chance of arriving at the correct outcome

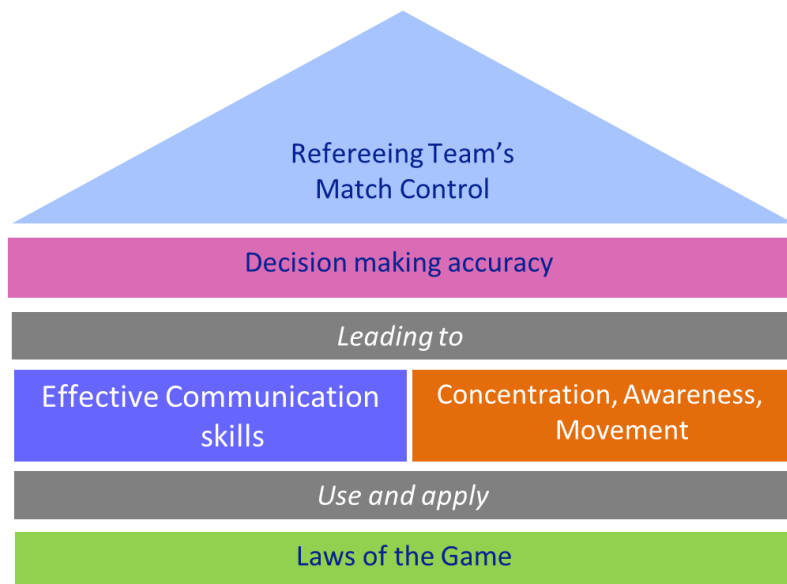
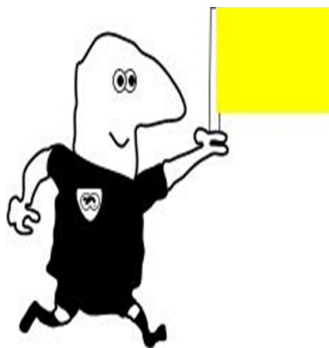
Role of the assistant referee

'Adding value' is when the assistant referee provides accurate and timely assistance to the referee in relation to: ball in/out of play; offside situations; and fouls and misconduct.

The 'art' of assisting the referee

Core values:

- **Keep it simple**
- **Responsibility**
- **Accountability**



- Whilst assessing **offside situations** is the **primary role** of the assistant referee, the **primary responsibility** of the assistant referee is to **'add value'** to the decision making of the referee
- Before assisting the referee, the assistant referee should always **'consider consequence'**

'Adding value' is where the assistant referee brings to the attention of the referee misconduct or an incident that the referee has either not seen, or where from their viewing angle the assistant referee provides additional information which enriches the decision making of the referee e.g. the severity of a foul challenge or the likelihood of the attacking player controlling or gaining control of the ball when there is a denial of an obvious goal scoring opportunity.

The 'window of opportunity' to 'add value' is most likely to occur in the areas of the field of play where the assistant referee has **both** responsibility and credibility.

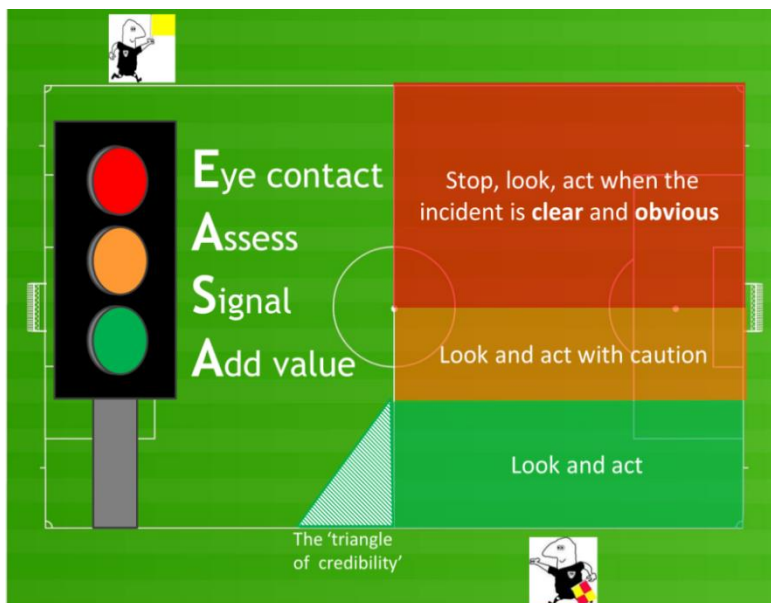
Before publicly providing assistance with a flag indication, the assistant referee should establish both the **position** and **body language** of the **referee**. In addition to creating 'thinking time' for the assistant referee, extending the 'initial courtesy' to the referee increases the likelihood that the flag indication will 'add value' and at the same time reduces the likelihood that the referee and assistant referee will act at crossed-purposes. **Eye contact > Assess > Signal (if appropriate) > Add value**

Areas of responsibility and credibility

On any match day the refereeing team: referee, assistant referees and fourth official (when appointed) have a collective responsibility when it comes to applying the Laws of the Game. Whilst at all times the referee remains the team leader and ultimate decision maker, there are particular areas of the field of play where the assistant referees have a responsibility to assist the referee.

Offences and incidents on the field of play

As a general guideline, for on field incidents and offences, a 'traffic light' system can assist the assistant referee in recognising their areas of responsibility and credibility.



GREEN the area of the field of play extending approximately 20m infield from the touchline on which the assistant referee is operating. Notice this channel extends into the penalty area and into the opposite half of the field of play – the 'triangle of credibility', where an assistant may have a more favourable angle to recognise the severity of an offence or a deliberate handball or holding offence out of the line of vision of the referee.

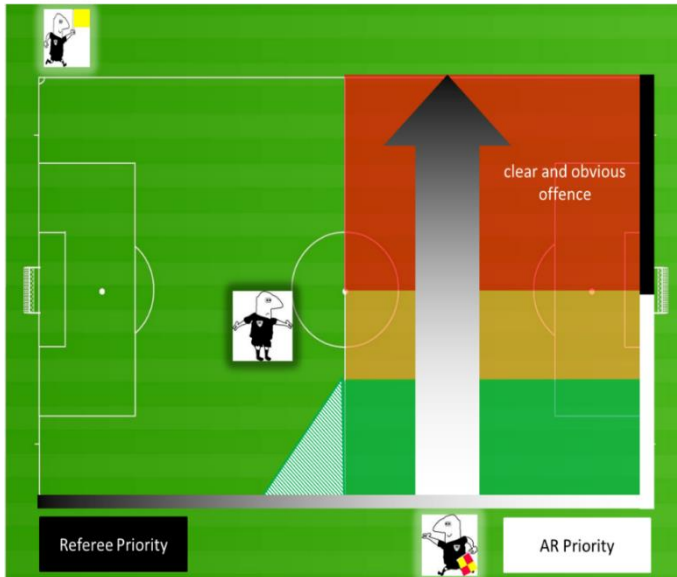
AMBER the area past the green area to the penalty mark

RED the area from the penalty mark to the opposite touchline.

The greater the distance from the assistant referee the more **clear** and **obvious** the offence must be before the assistant referee would be expected to 'get involved' if it is not seen by the referee.

Ball out of play

The assistant referee should indicate all of ball out of play situations along the touchline on which they operating as well as those occurring along the goal line in their half of the field of play.



General guideline: the referee will most likely lead the decision making directional indication in the areas emphasised in **black** and the assistant referee in the areas indicated in **white**.

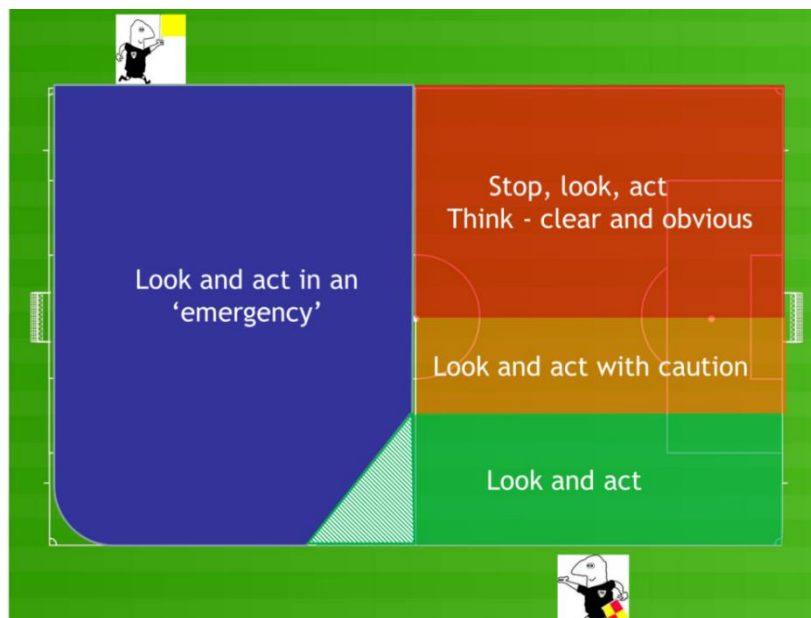
However, in the black areas, there may be situations where the assistant referee will need to raise their flag to confirm ball out of play, following which the referee will confirm the restart of play.

In the **grey** area, who leads the decision making process is likely to vary according to the situation.

Summary

The likelihood of a match being successfully refereed increases when the referee, assistant referees and fourth official work together as team and a culture of collective responsibility exists.

Whilst not intending to be prescriptive regarding areas of the field of play where an assistant referee would (or would not) be expected to 'get involved' in assisting the referee, the traffic light system can be used as a useful guideline. In exceptional situations, such as an act of violent conduct not seen by either the referee or assistant referee on the opposite touchline, an assistant may need to 'get involved' in the **BLUE** area in the best interests of the refereeing team and the game.



The 'Art and Science' of offside

Law 11 – Offside

The primary role of the assistant referee is to provide the referee with accurate and timely information in relation to offside situations.

It is important to remember that it is not an offence to be in an offside, it is only when a player who is in an offside position at the moment the ball is last played/touched by a teammate becomes involved in active play that an offside offence occurs.

Offside Position = Fact

Offside Offence = Fact + Active

Offside position – a player who is in his opponents' half of the field of play and nearer to his opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent is considered to be in an offside position

In deciding whether an attacking player is nearer to the opponents' goal line than the second last defender, consideration should be given to the position of the **attacker's head, feet and body** (torso) in the opponents' half (excluding the halfway line) that is nearer to the opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent i.e. the hands and arms of all players, including the goalkeepers, are not considered.

'Wait and see' technique - assistant referees should only signal for offside when certain about an offside offence.

To ensure that accurate judgement of offside situations is made, the assistant referee should not raise the flag immediately, but should use the 'wait and see' technique to factor in the following criteria into their assessment of the offside situation:

- 1) Movement of the ball i.e. direction, speed, distance travelled, any deflection
- 2) Involvement of the player in **active play** by:
 - interfering with play or
 - interfering with an opponent or
 - gaining an advantage by being in that position

When interpreting Law 11 – Offside, the following definitions apply:

A player in an offside position at the moment the ball is played or touched by a team-mate is only penalised on becoming involved in active play by:

- interfering with play by playing or touching a ball passed or touched by a team-mate or

- **interfering with an opponent by:**

- preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by
- clearly obstructing the opponent's line of vision or
- challenging an opponent for the ball or
- clearly attempting to play a ball which is close when this action impacts on an opponent or
- making an obvious action which clearly impacts on the ability of an opponent to play the ball

gaining an advantage by playing the ball or interfering with an opponent when it has:

- rebounded or been deflected off the goalpost, crossbar, match official or an opponent
- been deliberately saved by any opponent

A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent, who deliberately plays the ball (except from a deliberate save), is not considered to have gained an advantage.

A 'save' is when a player stops, or attempts to stop, a ball which is going into or very close to the goal with any part of the body except the hands/arms (unless the goalkeeper within the penalty area).

With regards to gaining an advantage by being in an offside position, the assistant referee **and** referee need to remember that a **deliberate save can be made by any opponent**, not just the goalkeeper or, when the ball has rebounded or been deflected off the goalpost, crossbar or match official. The meaning of the terms 'rebound', 'deflection' and 'deliberately played'. To assist in this the following guidance is provided:

Rebounds off:

- Opponent is stationary
- Ball returns in the general direction it came from

Deflects from

- Ball changes direction
- Opponent finds the ball coming at them in an unexpected manner
- Opponent creates an obstacle e.g. blocking the ball

Deliberately plays the ball

- Opponent makes a clear movement towards the ball
- The quality of the play is not relevant e.g. if a player makes a clear attempt to kick the ball (deliberately plays it) and the ball does not arrive at the intended destination this does not change the interpretation that the ball was deliberately played

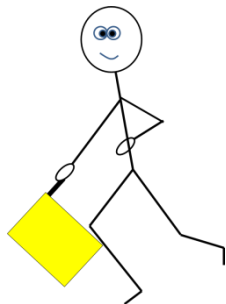
Interfering with Play

With regards to interfering with play, there are circumstances where an **attacking player in an offside position** may be **penalised before playing or touching the ball**, if, in the opinion of the referee, **no other teammate in an onside position has the opportunity to play the ball**. For example, in an offside situation where it is clear that having applied the 'wait and see' technique the most likely outcome is that the attacking player in an offside position is the only player who has the potential to play the ball.

In this situation a raised flag to indicate offside reduces the risk of **potential physical contact** between the attacking player and a defending player, often the goalkeeper.

When making judgements concerning offside, it is better to be have a slightly delayed and correct indication, than to be too hasty in raising the flag to indicate an offside and be incorrect as no offside offence occurs.

If an assistant referee indicates that a player is involved in active play, and their raised flag is not seen immediately by the referee, the assistant referee must retain the signal until it is either recognised or acknowledged by the referee, or the ball is clearly in control of the defending team. If available, the 'communication system' and or the electronic beep signal should be used to alert the referee to the flag signal if.



For a very tight judgement where an assistant referee decides that it is “not offside”, in addition to moving with purpose with the attacking phase of play, a discreet gesture with the flag, called ‘walking the dog’ may give valuable support to the referee when the referee makes eye-contact, as well as communicating publicly that the assistant referee has made a judgement, rather than not recognised the situation. Such a communication is rarely necessary and should only be used in very tight situations.

In the rare situations where the referee is 100% certain that a player is in an offside position and involved in active play, and the assistant does not raise his flag, the referee must take the ultimate responsibility and penalise the offside offence. Equally if an assistant referee raises their flag for an offside offence and the referee is 100% certain that the player is not involved in active play, or the ball has been played by a defending player and not a teammate of the attacking player, the referee should acknowledge the flag signal and allow play to continue. Referees must not compound an obvious error by automatically blowing their whistle in the event that a flag is raised by an assistant referee.

Position of the Free Kick

If an offside offence occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick where the offence occurred, including if it is in the player’s own half of the field of play.

When an offside offence occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick to be taken from the position of the offending player when the ball was last played by one of his team-mates

Throughout the Laws, the general principle is that a FK is awarded where an offence occurs so this now applies to offside. A FK can be awarded in a player’s own half if the player moves from an offside position in the opponents’ half to commit an offside offence in the player’s own half.

Infringements and sanctions

If an offside offence occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick where the offence occurred, including if it is in the player's own half of the field of play.

A defending player who leaves the field of play without the referee's permission shall be considered to be on the goal line or touchline for the purposes of offside until the next stoppage in play or until the defending team has played the ball towards the halfway line and it is outside their penalty area. If the player left the field of play deliberately, the player must be cautioned when the ball is next out of play.

An attacking player may step or stay off the field of play not to be involved in active play. If the player re-enters from the goal line and becomes involved in play before the next stoppage in play, or the defending team has played the ball towards the halfway line and it is outside their penalty area, the player shall be considered to be positioned on the goal line for the purposes of offside. A player who deliberately leaves the field of play and re-enters without the referee's permission and is not penalised for offside and gains an advantage, must be cautioned.

If an attacking player remains stationary between the goalposts and inside the goal as the ball enters the goal, a goal must be awarded unless the player commits an offside offence or Law 12 offence in which case play is restarted with an indirect or direct free kick.

‘Getting the most out of pre-match instructions’?

“Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure”. These are the wise words of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 BC), and whilst they were not directly spoken or written by a referee tutor, assessor, coach or mentor, they have resonance and relevance for all referees. Preparation extends to all facets of successful refereeing or assistant refereeing, including pre-match instructions. The focus of this short article will be on ‘getting the most out of pre-match instructions’, and will consider four key aspects: ‘when, where, how and what’? The content of this article is intended to ‘open your mind up’ to possibilities for reflecting upon and developing your own pre-match instructions, and is not intended to be prescriptive. Remember that the very best match officials at every level adapt their strategies and approaches to best suit the context of the particular game.

Whether working with neutral assistant referees or with assistant referees attached to clubs, the pre-match instructions delivered by the referee must be clear, concise and contextualised, as these three elements positively influence the likelihood of turning the pre-match instructions into successful teamwork on the field of play. Clear, to ensure that the messages are completely understood, concise, to ensure that the messages are delivered in a short period of time so that full concentration is maintained, and contextualised, to ensure that the messages are best suited to the team with who the referee is working e.g. club assistant referees, neutral assistant referees, experienced or less experienced colleagues.

When?

To get the most out of pre-match instructions, the referee should carefully consider the time ahead of the kick off at which to brief their team. The timing should take into account external factors, such as arrival time at the ground of the match officials, team sheet exchange, safety briefing, whether an assessor and/or coach will be present, to avoid any disruption or distraction. An interruption during the delivery of the pre-match instructions has the potential to reduce their impact and effectiveness.

The referee should consider a proactive approach ahead of the match day. When making contact with their assistant referees, referees should consider sharing a match day timetable, below is an example which could form part of an email. Suggested timings are for a 3pm and (7.45pm) kick off, where the team sheet exchange is 45 minutes ahead of the scheduled kick off, with a pre-team sheet and post team-sheet exchange option:

- **Pre-match Instructions (pre-team sheet option)** 1.45pm (6.30pm)
- Change into match kit ahead of team sheet exchange 2pm (6.45pm)
- Team sheet exchange 2.15pm (7pm)
- **Pre-match Instructions (post-team sheet option)** 2.20pm (7.05pm)
- Warm Up 2.30pm (7.15pm)

When devising a match day timetable, the referee should consider any relevant responsibilities, such as making an inspection of the field of play, warm up, time for exchange of team sheets and any safety briefing.

Where?

To get the most out of pre-match instructions, the environment in which they are delivered should be carefully considered. Avoiding any interruption or distraction should be a key consideration, and maximising the opportunity for ensuring a clear understanding of the instructions should be the priority. There are advantages associated with both an indoor and outdoor environment, key considerations are summarised below:

Inside - the match officials' dressing room

Advantages

- Controlled environment – the referee can influence who is present, restricting it to the refereeing team and assessor and/or coach, and minimise distractions and interruptions
- Physical environment – the referee can organise the physical environment to best engage colleagues e.g. have eye contact during the briefing
- Privacy – the referee can brief their team without being overheard or interrupted

Potential disadvantages

- Authentic environment – lacks the opportunity to 'walk through' instructions, making use of the field of play to visualise key messages
- Interruptions and distractions - noise/music from adjacent team dressing rooms

Outside - on the field of play – typically an option where the referee elects to deliver their pre-match instructions prior to the team sheet exchange

Advantages

- Authentic environment – the referee can use the field of play and physical environment to assist their team in visualising potential match scenarios
- 'Walking through' the instructions – areas of the field of play can be used to assist in developing the sequence of key messages, such as areas of credibility and responsibility

Potential disadvantages

- Poor weather – rain, low or high temperatures, can limit opportunity to use the field of play
- Interruptions and distractions - messages/music on the public address system, other people or activity on the field of play or its surrounds

How?

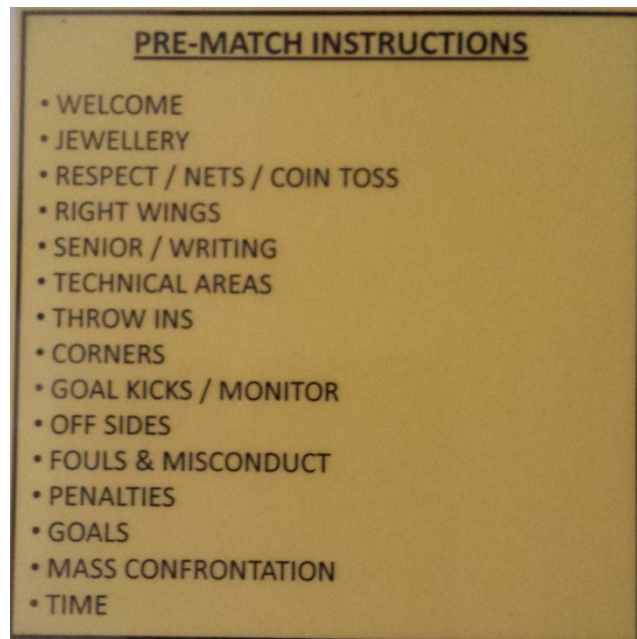
To get the most out of pre-match instructions, the referee should create a positive conversational environment, demonstrating leadership of the briefing.

Working with neutral assistant referees: the following are some key considerations for getting the most out of pre-match instructions:

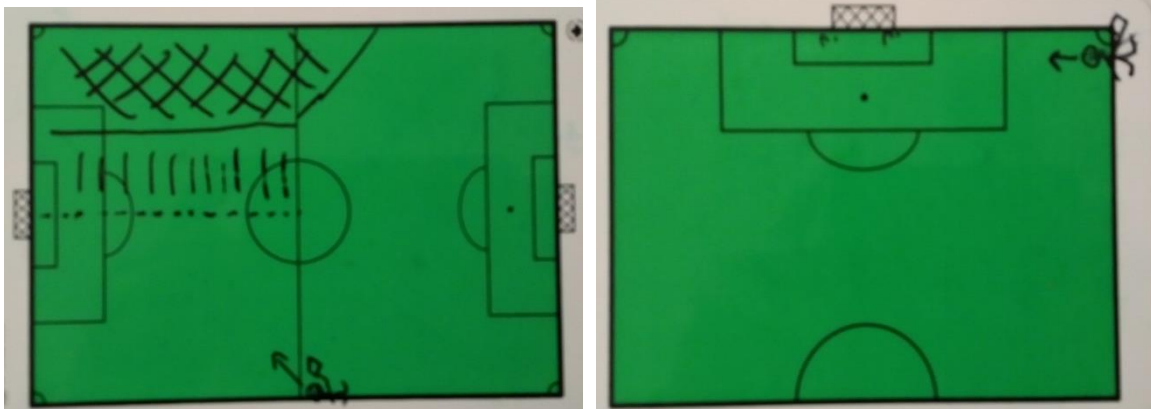
- Eye contact – referees should position themselves so that they can see both assistant referees (and fourth official), allowing the referee to recognise any non-verbal cues from body

language, facial expressions from colleagues. The referee should avoid sitting between the two assistant referees, as this results in the referee having to turn away from one assistant to directly address the other

- Physiological needs – consider how the weather conditions may affect the concentration levels and attentiveness of the refereeing team, for example rain, cold temperatures, sun in the eyes
- Check-list – to ensure that all of the key points are covered, consider using a checklist as an aide memoir – see an example below of a small laminated card used by one referee:



- Other referees have taped a checklist to the side of a water bottle!
- Field of play – use the field of play to assist colleagues in visualising situations or scenarios, this can be achieved using the actual field of play, 'walking through' the pre-match instructions, or using a small laminated field of play if delivering the pre-match instructions in the dressing room, this can be used to illustrate scenarios with a non-permanent marker – see an example below:



- Examples – use examples to illustrate specific scenarios e.g. move to a specific area of the field of play to indicate where the area of credibility for assisting is

- Encourage questions – provide the opportunity for the assistant referees to ‘stop me and clarify’ any points during the instructions, better to clarify a point of uncertainty ahead of the match

What?

To get the most out of pre-match instructions, the referee should take the time to cover all of the key points in sufficient depth to prepare their team, recognising the context of the match and experience of the team. Clear, concise and contextualised messages should be communicated in a logical and sequential way.

Working with neutral assistant referees: ideally the pre-match instructions should not last any longer than 10 minutes, however what is important is that all of the key points are covered in sufficient depth to prepare the team. Within the Contributory League system and matches played in the Football League and Premier League, there is a standard set of pre-match instructions. Referees ask their assistant referees to carry out their duties in accordance with the instructions which are based on the requirements of Law 6 – The Assistant Referee.

To get the most out of pre-match instructions the referee should cover the following areas:

- Context of match – ‘homework’
- Seniority
- Players’ Equipment Check – which team to check
- Lead out > Fair Play handshake > check goal nets > coin toss > patrol path
- **Offside** (Primary role)
 - “wait and see” technique
 - Key factors:
 - 1) Movement of the ball (direction, speed, distance, any deflection, etc.)
 - 2) Involvement of the player in active play by:
 - Interfering with play or
 - Interfering with an opponent or
 - Gaining an advantage from being in that position
- **Fouls and Misconduct** (Primary Responsibility – Team effort), ‘add value’ and ‘consider the consequence’ – specific scenarios e.g. edge of penalty area, know which player(s) have been cautioned
- **Disciplinary sanctions** (if asked)
- **Penalty Kicks** – establish my position as referee and recognise my body language
 - Indication and communication for a retake if significant movement of the goalkeeper (stand still and hold flag across waist)

- **Restarts of play**
 - Throw-in – eye-contact, monitoring feet/hands and 2m distance
 - Goal kicks – monitoring
 - Goalkeeper with the ball – priority and monitoring
 - Corner kicks – must monitor if attacker there
- **Mass confrontation** – roles and responsibilities
- **Actions by players** – dissent, violent conduct
- **Record of match** – clarification if needed
- **Time/Watches** – additional time
- **Technical Areas** – be proactive – ‘stepped approach’
- **Substitutions** – management
- **Player bleeding** – check/change shirt – assistant referee/Fourth Official role
- **Cup Competitions** – competition rules

The above is not an exhaustive list or prescriptive, it is intended as a scaffold for developing your own pre-match instruction.

In summary the purpose of this short article is to consider how to get the best out of pre-match instructions, it is not intended to be prescriptive or provide an exhaustive list. It should allow you to reflect on your own pre-match instructions and consider whether they are ‘fit for purpose’ and best prepare your team for the task ahead: “all things are ready, if our mind be so.” (William Shakespeare, Henry V), so maximise the potential of pre-match instructions.

Player Management – Dealing with Aggressive Behaviour

Some people say that refereeing is an art, some say a science. The science provides us with the solid facts, the Laws of the Game that are correct in any situation we find ourselves in. On the other hand, the art is more behavioural, in the way we manage players, and it is a skill which is developed throughout a referee's career

Of the two components, the science elements are the most easily observed and corrected. The art elements on the other hand are not so easily identified, and even harder to quantify since they involve personal feelings and preferences. The art component is mostly interpersonal problem solving, better known as player management, and game control.

How a referee or assistant referee interacts with the players and officials in the game are not guided by any hard fast rules you can learn from a book, but by intuitive judgment the referee has on how to handle a difficult situation that will bring about the best result for the game. At this point, each referee must decide which player management and game control techniques works best for them.

It is a collective responsibility of everyone involved in football to protect the image of the game. For match officials, this is consistently applying the Laws of the Game: protecting football's image by taking action against unacceptable behaviour, protecting players from challenges that could endanger their safety, and acting against, among other things, surrounding the referee, player on player confrontation or incidents of mass confrontation.



A successful referee must be a good **communicator** through their **personality and presence**. The players' need the referee to tell them what is expected from them, and what they are looking for. To be a good communicator, means that you have to learn to listen and filter through what you hear. A referee needs to have a **feel for the game**. It is difficult but not impossible to referee a football match without an intrinsic understanding of, and feeling for, the game.

Teamwork is vitally important and it is here assistant referees can act as the 'eyes and ears' when witnessing player aggression so that they can make the referee aware of the potential of the problem escalating. It is also important that Referees are aware of their feelings during a game. Being able to adapt to suit each and every situation will enable you to communicate efficiently with players.

Player Management – Aggressive Behaviour

What is our role as a match official?



Our role as a match official can be related similar to the use of a fire extinguisher in that it is used to prevent the escalation of major fire by early intervention. Similar to the role of the referee, early intervention in managing potential disharmony between players may prevent future problems.

However, using the wrong type of fire extinguisher could either escalate the problem or even have fatal consequences and the wrong player management approach used by a referee could exacerbate the problem for the referee in the game.

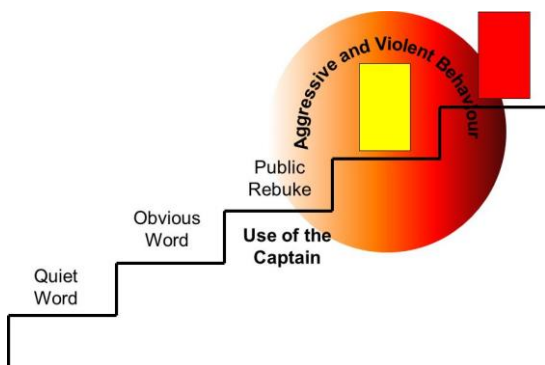
Hopefully, our role is simpler than that, and not life threatening. However, our role is to manage an environment in which two sides can play and enjoy a game of football safely within the laws of the game.

Fire Extinguisher Chart

Extinguisher		Type of Fire				
Colour	Type	Solids (wood, paper, cloth, etc)	Flammable Liquids	Flammable Gasses	Electrical Equipment	Cooking Oils & Fats
	Water	✓ Yes	✗ No	✗ No	✗ No	✗ No
	Foam	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✗ No	✗ No	✓ Yes
	Dry Powder	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✗ No
	Carbon Dioxide (CO2)	✗ No	✓ Yes	✗ No	✓ Yes	✓ Yes

Stepped Approach to Player Management

We will have seen, heard and used the stepped approach to managing players in any given situation.



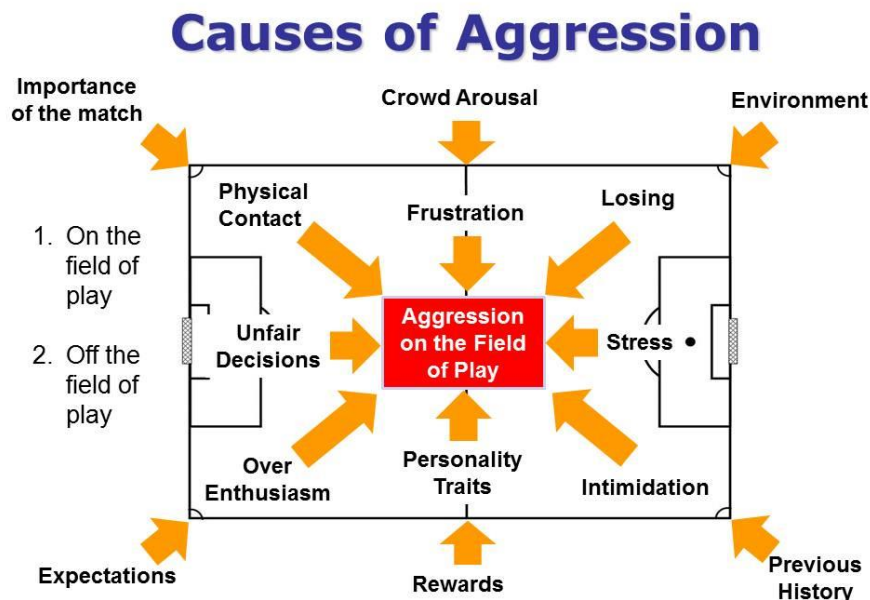
Indeed the more experienced and proficient match official usually realises that used correctly, these player management techniques are often more instrumental in keeping players on the field of play than they are in removing from the game. However, the stepped approach does not negate the fact that the referee has the authority within the Laws of the Game to issue disciplinary sanctions without recourse to the captain.

The best way to gain respect is to stop problems happening before they occur. This can be achieved through body language, communication, use of the whistle, and through different approaches to managing players.

When dealing with aggressive and violent behaviour, the disciplinary action to be taken can be clouded by a number of factors, including the number of players involved, identifying who are the peacemakers and who are the aggressors, was it an act of aggression or an act of violent conduct?

It is this area of uncertainty that may pose a threat to our control if the situation is not managed and dealt with effectively.

Recognising Aggression



It can be seen that aggression comes from a variety of sources and it is important to understand where these sources stem from. Knowledge of these football related stressors allow us as match officials to understand what causes players to become frustrated which can lead to aggression and a decline in performance. It can also help us to better understand why players become angry towards an opponent, towards a match official, or even towards a team-mate.

However, we must recognise that aggression is most likely to occur when players are frustrated and aroused, often because they are:

- Losing
- Perceived unfair decisions
- Someone has committed an act of aggression towards them
- Physically in pain as a result of a challenge
- Playing below their capabilities
- On the end of hostility from the crowd

Having identified the causes of aggression, it is important now to understand what the warning signs match officials need to be aware of, as they can happen at any time in the match. There is normally a trigger situation. For this reason, we as match officials must not let our guard down and get complacent. The following are examples of actions or warning signs that should resonate with all match officials that game disrepute, aggression or mass confrontation may occur:

- Severity of the initial foul
- Location on the field
- A tackle that ends up with a player hitting the perimeter advertising
- Foul challenges near the technical areas
- Ball is often out of play or not playable
- Near the boundary lines
- The distance a player runs to become engaged in the situation
- Score
- Time of the game
- Physical contact that is above the 'norm'
- Player standing over another player (intimidating stance)
- Players putting hand or finger near opponent's face
- Players running into the goal to get the ball after a score
- The comments between players
- Delaying the restart of play
- Carrying / throwing the ball away
- Kicking the ball way
- Body stance and aggression displayed
- Invasion of player's personal space
- Chest-to-chest – aggressive attitude
- Push or shoving
- Touching the face of the opponent
- Collision with the goalkeeper
- Players continuing their run towards the goalkeeper
- Challenges off the ball
- Frustration levels / Temperature of the game
- Body language
- Hostile crowds

Responsibility

We should be mindful that the Laws of the Game recognise that football is a competitive sport and that physical contact between players is a normal and acceptable part of the game. Players have worked hard to respect each other in their behaviour on the field. However, when these aggressive situations occur, the manager, coach, captain and the player should take responsibility for his behaviour and to reduce aggression.

- Is it our responsibility to manage aggression?
- What can we do to prevent escalation of the problem?
- How do we know when we have exhausted our management process?

It is recognised that some action must be taken to try and resolve the situation. The key message here is to do something. To do nothing is not an option. The action you take will obviously be determined by the act of aggression itself.

As match officials, we need to recognise the difference between assertive behaviour and aggression behaviour and in particular, acts of hostile aggression that needs to be eliminated from our game.

Be professional - speak clearly and stay composed in heated situations as this demonstrates confidence in managing the situation. Avoid argument or debate, and don't try to bluff through with unjustified decisions.

NEVER LEAVE AN ANGRY PLAYER ANGRY

One of the most important messages here is never leave an angry player angry. It is important that before we restart play, the player is in control of his emotions. Leaving players angry could potentially lead to players taking their own retribution for perceived unfair decisions or during further challenges for the ball with an opponent. Therefore, by just taking that little more time to calm the player and the situation down, perhaps using the captain to try and influence his player to control his emotions, may further enhance the referee's match control.

When two teams compete in a match, conflict is already present. It may be mild, it may be subdued, and it may even be masked by the appearance of harmony, but the potential for aggrieved feelings is always waiting.

An event in the game may trigger an eruption, a series of difficulties may cause frustration to build, and sometimes the referee or assistant referee decisions or non-decisions will make you the focal point of aggression.

As a match official, we must approach any contest with the notion that a central part of the job requirement is handling conflict successfully.



The skills and attributes required are far ranging but have the same consistent message - for successful player management, you need to be a good communicator, not just of decisions made but equally important have the ability to get your message across to players, managers and spectators.

As a referee this skill is absolutely vital to your success. It is important to convey to players that you are calm, in control, and confident, while at the same time being positive and fair. The verbal aspect of communication is very important.

However, the way you deliver your message can be even more important. It is not only what you say, but how you say it and the way you treat players in delivering the message.

Good interpersonal skills are essential to player notions of good refereeing. Players generally expect and prefer referees to communicate calmly, confidently, properly, assertively and respectfully and perceive these qualities through communication, presence and gestures.

These skills and attributes are delivered through the referee's character or personality and have the ability to lead players and create an environment where football can occur with enjoyment and safety.

Summary

In summary, it is important to spend time analysing our decision making processes in key match situations to best ensure that our interpretation of the match situation is correct.

It is also important to remember that our authority may be challenged at any time during a match and a key message is that prevention is always better than cure! If action is taken early in the game, or in early signs of conflict, it is less likely to occur.

Used effectively, assistant referees add two pairs of eyes and ears to the management of the match and can draw the referee's attention to situations that might otherwise not be noticed and addressed.

Match officials must remain objective, no matter what prior knowledge of participants or the teams an official has.

Be definite and firm with your decisions and the way you communicate using confident body language, positive responses and effective management techniques when dealing with players.

Remember the staircase approach to player management and the action you take is appropriate to offence(s) that has been committed.

Finally, be firm and deal with unacceptable behaviour firmly and quickly and set your boundaries in a polite, professional and assertive manner.

Assisting the Referee – fouls in and around the penalty area

When a foul is committed by a defending player near to or inside the penalty area, the assistant referee should first make eye contact with the referee to establish their position and actions. In situations where:

- **it is clear that the referee has not seen the foul, and**
- **the assistant referee is better placed to make the judgement, and**
- **a flag signal is necessary to indicate publicly that a foul has taken place,**

the actions of the assistant referee should be as follows:

If the foul is **INSIDE** the penalty area:

- the assistant referee should raise the flag in the same hand that will be used for the remainder of the signal and agitate/wave the flag to indicate a foul has been committed
- where available it is recommended that the electronic beep is used and/or the 'communication system' is used to advise "penalty, penalty, penalty"
- following the signal for the foul the assistant referee should make a **clear physical movement** along the touchline towards the corner flag post keeping alert in case the referee does not see or over-rules the flag signal
- If the referee awards the penalty the assistant referee should stand just in front of the corner flag post until the situation is calm and only then move to the standard position.

If the foul is **OUTSIDE** the penalty area:

- the assistant referee should raise the flag in the same hand that will also be used for the remainder of the signal and agitate/wave the flag to indicate a foul has been committed
- where available it is recommended that the electronic beep is used and/or the 'communication system' is used to advise "attacking free kick, outside, outside, outside"
- following the signal for the foul the assistant referee should make a **clear physical movement** along the touchline towards the halfway line to a position **level with the front edge of the penalty area** and stand still

IN or OUT?

Where a referee penalises a defending player for a foul near the boundary of the penalty area and **seeks guidance** from an assistant referee concerning the exact location of the offence, if in a credible position to assist, the assistant referee's action should be as outlined above **without the flag being raised**.

SUMMARY

When the foul is clearly inside the penalty area, if needed, the 'normal' indication for a foul should be followed by a clear physical movement to the goal line. When the foul is outside the penalty area, if needed, the assistant referee should make a clear physical movement to a position level with the front edge of the penalty area.

Critical Thinking and Communication

When match officials think critically and communicate clearly, they are also able to eliminate ambiguity in communication.

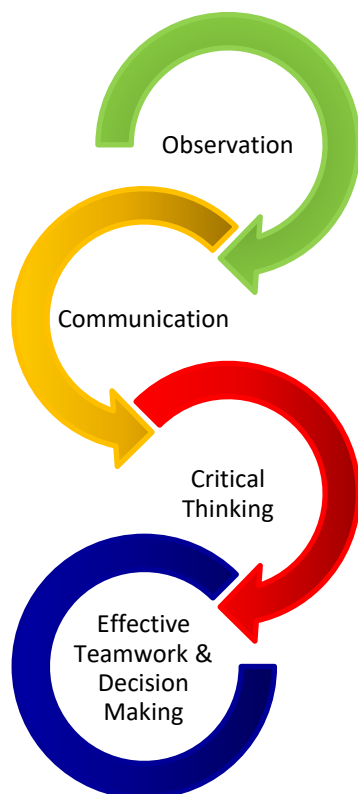
Critical thinking is a multi-step process. It can be defined as an active, intelligent process where a match official will observe, analyse and reflect on what they have seen and integrate it into their current knowledge and understanding when making a decision.

The aims of this session are to:

1. analyse the effects of our communication at critical decisions in the match
2. examine the factors that affect our decision making process

Critical thinking is the disciplined process of actively and skilfully visualising, recognising, analysing and evaluating information generated by our observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, and/or communication, to reach an answer or conclusion.

As previously mentioned, the likelihood of a match being successfully refereed increases when the referee, assistant referees and fourth official work together as team and a culture of collective responsibility exists. On any match day, the refereeing team have a collective responsibility when it comes to applying the Laws of the Game. Whilst at all times the referee remains the team leader and ultimate decision maker, there will be times during key incidents in a game where critical thinking and clear, concise communication with colleagues is vital.



Observation

When observing incidents, it is important that we have the optimum viewing position to judge offences.

This means paying much closer attention to:

- Your positioning at the time of the offence
- The view you have of the offence or situation
- Prioritising your gaze
- Awareness of players
- The recognition of whether an offence has been committed or not
- Do you have 100% of the information?
- The support you need from colleagues, if any?
- Clear and concise communication
- ...leading to effective teamwork and decision making

Communication

Communication is as much about listening as it is about delivering. Listening involves a careful interpretation of what is being said and not said. It allows the referee to consider points of view from others and distill the facts before making a decision.

Communication is paying much closer attention to:

- When giving or receiving information, using **precise language** for describing an observation or interpreting information

Being aware of all three parts of the messages you send:

- Words you use
- Tone in which they are said
- Displaying confident body language

Clarifying and Confirming Information with Colleagues

Clarify

- You are seeking information to help you understand what your colleague(s) is/are saying and why they are saying it – asking the right questions

Confirming

- You are stating your understanding of what is being said and why they are saying it

Your confirmation is only successful when your colleague agrees that you have understood them

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is paying much closer attention to:

- Your decision making process
- Word choice
- How we process information we receive
- Clarity of communication between colleagues
- Asking the right questions
- Confirming messages in your own words
- Confidence in your body language and facial expressions
- ***Taking your time***

Effective Teamwork & Decision Making

Effective teamwork and communication is where the assistant referee brings to the attention of the referee misconduct or an incident that the referee has either not seen, or where from their viewing angle the assistant referee provides additional information which enriches the decision making of the referee. The key message here is communication and, following any observation of these incidents, the communication between the referee, assistant referee or 4th official must be:

Clear.....rather than.....Unclear

Accurate.....rather than.....Inaccurate

Precise.....rather than.....Vague

Relevant.....rather than.....Irrelevant

Consistent.....rather than.....Inconsistent

Logical.....rather than.....Illogical

Complete.....rather than.....Incomplete

Fact (I know)....rather than.....Feeling (I think)

Summary

Critical thinking is integral to our decision making process. It is, like many skills, developed through time and experiences. It builds confidence in communication. Critical thinking and communication are intricately connected. Effective communication requires clarity of thought, ability to listen intentionally and convey messages in the most optimal way. It is far easier to communicate when you are prepared with facts. Here are some critical messages for you to consider:

- **Critical Thinking** requires good observation, experience, reflection/summarising, reasoning, and/or communication, to reach an answer or conclusion
- **Critical Thinking** requires logical thinking and reasoning
- **Critical Thinking** is the ability to think clearly and rationally
- **Critical Thinking** can help us acquire knowledge and improve our decision making
- **Critical Thinking** can help us further improve the accuracy of our decision making

Anticipation of Play & Reading the Game

Our game is analysed so much, everybody wants utopia! We are praised or criticised for a decision from multi TV angles yet little consideration is given to the angle of view we have and/or the distance we are from the incident.

There is a wide belief in football that successful referees '**see**' things often before they occur. They display an ability to be able to successfully anticipate play and is achieved by using their instinct and experience

To read the game as a referee, we must be one step ahead of play, anticipating the next move of the phase of play before it happens. This gives you more reaction time for you to become pro-active rather than re-active to situations that may occur.

So, what is the best position?

FIFA's definition from their '*Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees*' state that the best position is one which the referee can make the right decision from.

However, in practice, the 'best position' is never known in advance. It only becomes the best position only if it has enabled the referee to see what was needed to be seen. Therefore, there is no such thing as a perfect position every single time as it varies as the game changes

We have all heard the term **to be in the right place at the right time**. We are also aware that good positioning and movement by a referee enhances his control and encourages good football.

This is achievable by several means. If you read the body language of the player playing the ball, such as the direction they are looking and the open angle of the body, it will give a good indication of which direction the flight of the ball will take. You then have to judge the weight of the pass as to where the dropping zone might be. This can also be achieved by looking at the body language of the kicker and how much physical strength they are putting into the pass. Communication is another tool in which we can anticipate play.

Reading the Game is about:

- Being one step ahead of play
- Anticipating the next move of the phase of play before it happens
- Being proactive rather than reactive to situations that may occur
- Reading situations accurately, move into a good position to correctly observe, decide, then act



Anticipation

The next stage in developing your positional skills is the use of anticipation skills. The ability to read the game is vital to good control, therefore anticipation is fundamental to achieve good a position to judge incidents.

Good anticipation is a balance between judging where play is likely to go next and where you are likely to be needed next. Probably likened to looking through a crystal ball, predicting something that could potentially happen in the future. This projects that there is an element of uncertainty; we are looking into the future and there may be many things we do not know. One of the ways of dealing with this uncertainty is to anticipate, trying to predict where the ball is likely to be played giving you more time to select the best viewing position.





To help us to anticipate play, referees should ask themselves the following two questions and make one decision:

- 1. Where is play going?**
- 2. Where can I go to get the best view?**
- 3. Decision: Go there!**

The sooner you adopt the positional sequence, the easier it will be to cover the required ground whilst selecting the best viewing position.

Summary

Referees are advised to be one step ahead of play by anticipating the next move of the phase of play before it happens. By being proactive rather than reactive to situations that may occur and reading situations accurately, referees can move into an optimum viewing position to correctly observe, decide, and then take the appropriate action.