



Welcome to this sixty eighth edition of **“The Referee”**, the newsletter for all NSW State League Football Referees. This newsletter will enable our branch to communicate directly with our members and will cover issues and areas of interest to all referees.

We wish to ensure that all information, educational resources and opportunities that our branch provides for referees finds its way to those who are likely to benefit most – and that’s you!



LEGEA

Anticipate play by reading the game, for example when goalkeeper has possession. As play moves about the field try to move towards the area the ball is likely to go to rather than where it is. If the ball is being passed sideways then there is less need to move. This requirement does not mean you have to follow where the ball is going constantly, but to identify reasonable movements in play and react before that – for instance if the ball is played to a full back who looks to pass forward to a winger making a run, then moving early towards the player looking to receive the ball will allow you to be ready for any challenge that might come in.

Preventive Officiating - The Referee and The Other Match Officials

The Referee's Position: The referee's diagonal that he or she runs goes from corner flag to corner flag. Actually, a referee who strictly adheres to this diagonal will miss seeing a number of fouls. I like to think that the referee's positioning isn't a straight diagonal as much as it is a modified version of a half-open scissor - corner flag to corner flag and penalty arc to penalty arc. The referee is not a slave to this positioning, but it is a rough guide to follow, especially for the newer referee. I have seen many youth football games when the referee made an important call - sometimes correctly, sometimes incorrectly - and loud dissent followed since the referee was 40 metres away from the play. I have seen just as many games in which the call was completely missed by an out-of-position referee. Just as with phones, long-distance calling can be very expensive. The preventive officiating technique is to be fit enough and to hustle each game so that you are close to the play. Teams are much more likely to dissent from referee decisions when the referee is far away than with the same decision when the referee is 5 – 10 metres from the ball. After all, presence lends conviction.

Should you blow the whistle for a foul in which you are too far from the infraction, continue running to the point of the restart. You will appear to be closer to the play than the referee who simply blows the whistle and stands there. During the course of the game, you might encounter 1 - 2 players on each team who are causing problems. Modify your diagonal so that every time one of these players receives the ball, you are less than 10 metres away. Players rarely commit fouls when the referee is right there.

The Assistant Referee's Position: During normal play for nearly the entire game, the assistant referee's position is parallel with the second-to-last defender. The first defender is almost always the goalkeeper. It is very challenging for new assistant referees to have the discipline to stay with the second-to-last defender instead of watching play develop 40 metres upfield, especially when the ball is in or near the other penalty area. Half the challenge of being an assistant referee is having the discipline to be exactly in the correct position. For example, should the other team take possession of the ball and launch a long pass to your half, you will know if the player running toward the ball is offside by being parallel to that second-to-last defender.

Should 21 players be in the other half of the field with only the goalkeeper in your half, the assistant referee's position is not with the second-to-last defender in this instance but at the halfway line. Another exception to being parallel with the second-to-last defender is when the ball is closer to your goal line than the second-to-last defender is. Your position would then be parallel to the ball. Other exceptions are during the taking of a corner kick and penalty kick. The assistant referee's position both times is at the goal line. On a corner kick, the assistant referee is behind the corner flag. On a penalty kick, the AR is at the intersection of the 16.5 metre line and the goal line. Summarising, the referee's perfect position can vary but the assistant referee's position almost always needs to be exactly in line with the second-to-last defender except with the situations noted above.

How Officials Position Themselves as a Team: Watch the "A" League, overseas professional games and your senior colleagues on NPL games and concentrate on the officials, paying special attention to their position and signals. You will notice that referees like to keep the ball between them and an assistant referee. It's easier to officiate a match when there are two relatively close views, from different angles, of play around the ball. You'll also see that referees often jog when play is in midfield, such as in or by the kick-off circle, and the ball might be 15 metres away. However, referees sprint to get closer to the ball when it is in one of the "hot areas" such as in or by the penalty area or by the benches. The penalty area is hot since it's by the goal and important goal-scoring opportunities happen there. The area in front of the benches is hot as coaches and substitutes have a close view of play by the touchline and will probably be upset should you miss something against their team.

Running on the Field: Referees and assistant referees need to be in good shape. They spend much of the game running forward. They might sidestep as well. This technique is fine for the referee to use so that the goalkeeper with the ball is still in view while the referee moves down the field to the area where the ball will land. Sidestepping is also good for the AR to judge offside. However, a "cross-over step," with your legs crossing over each other as you move downfield, can look bad and may make you stumble, so please avoid it. Running backwards is also important at given times. For the ref, again it's used when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball and is about to distribute it. The referee can also run backwards to prepare for restarts. ARs can run

backwards along the sideline when the ball is right in front of them yet they need to move downfield to stay parallel to the second-to-last defender who is in motion. You will notice that players are aware when an official is looking at them and are much less likely to commit a foul because of this. Conversely, I have seen ARs turn their backs to the ball to move down the sideline and a foul was immediately committed. A reason that a referee should practice moving backwards and to the side when the keeper has possession of the ball is simple: the referee needs to view the ball to make sure the keeper has not dropped it by mistake or the keeper was not fouled, while the referee moves downfield to the area where he or she thinks that the ball will go, sometimes called the drop or target zone. All officials should use their ears in addition to their eyes to detect deflections as the ball goes out-of-bounds. ARs can use their ears to concentrate on hearing the thwack of the ball being kicked while looking directly at the second-to-last defender and forwards as well to correctly judge offside.

What Does an Assistant Referee Do? According to Law 6, the assistant referees 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
- When a player may be penalised for being in an offside position
- When a substitution is requested
- When misconduct or any other incident has occurred out of the view of the ref
- When offenses have been committed whenever the assistants are closer to the action than the referee (this includes, in particular circumstances, offences committed in the penalty area)
- Whether, at penalty kicks, the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and if the ball has crossed the line.

The assistant referee can play a pivotal role in controlling the match, particularly in spotting off-the-ball incidents behind the referee's back. This is why the assistant referee must always concentrate for 100% of the match, even when the ball is in the other half of the field. Let's say that white took a shot that was saved by the red goalkeeper, who punted the ball to the other half of the field. While running upfield, red defender No. 3 punches white forward No. 10, who falls to the ground. The forward is at the very least stunned, maybe seriously hurt, perhaps this player is now bleeding. The referee certainly did not see this as he or she was following the play, as was the AR in the other half of the field. Red defender No. 3 needs to be sent off for violent conduct and play restarted with a direct kick for striking an opponent where the punch was thrown (and not where the ball was at that time). The trailing AR, who saw the infraction, should raise the flag. If the referee cannot see it, the other AR should raise that flag and after getting the referee's attention, point to the AR who made the important call. If that does not work out, the AR who saw the foul could always yell the referee's name to get noticed. If the AR misses this serious foul, what type of problems do you think the officiating crew will have for the rest of the match? These days it is a little easier because we have communications gear to help the officiating team.

When a Referee Overrules their Assistant: The referee can overrule the assistant referee but the assistant can never overrule the ref. The assistant is to assist the referee and not insist instead. We have a situation in which the ball has gone over the sideline near the assistant referee, who indicated that it is blue's throw-in. However, the AR did not see the last bounce off a blue leg so it should be white's throw-in instead. The referee should blow the whistle and indicate that it's a white throw by pointing the direction that white is going. The ref should also say something nice to the assistant such as, "Thanks, John, but your vision was blocked when the ball last came off blue so it is white's throw." The assistant should then point the flag in white's direction. A referee should not overrule the AR often, otherwise the officiating crew will not be working as a team and the players will realise that the ref has no confidence in his or her assistant - so why should the players? While overruling the assistant may be necessary on one or two occasions during the match when the ball is out of play, it is absolutely dangerous when the ball is in play. When an assistant's flag goes up to signal an offside or foul, players tend to stop, even if they have been told to play the referee's whistle, not the assistant's flag. So, it is much easier to overrule the assistant while the ball is out of play and do it only when the ball is in play if you are absolutely certain that the AR has it wrong.

Referee's Instructions Before the Match: The teams spend time training and working on teamwork in practice. Their coaches go over tactics before the game. Doesn't it logically follow that the officiating team needs to spend some time before the game discussing how they will work as a team? The referee should go over what is expected of the assistant referees. I tell them to wait a split second to raise the flag for offside just to be certain that the player in the offside position is involved in the play. A slower flag and correct call, is much better than a

quick flag and incorrect call. I also tell them to run all balls down to the goal line. For good goals, they sprint up the touchline metres or so, watching the players on the field at all times. Should the ball go into the net but the AR spotted a foul or some other problem which the referee did not see (that would nullify the goal), the AR should wait at the corner flag, the referee comes over. They then can briefly discuss what happened and determine whether the goal is valid. This does not include offside, as the AR should have already raised the flag and the referee spotted it, whistling for offside. If the ball goes over the goal line and comes out in one of those bang-bang plays that happen once or twice a year and it's a good goal, the AR raises the flag to get the ref's attention – as soon as the referee sees the flag, the AR sprints 15 metres upfield. This is the only time that the referee blows the whistle for a goal.

The referee should also mention that for ball over the line plays that occur between the referee and AR, if the referee knows which team's ball it should be, he or she will give a small signal, such as hands on stomach pointing in one direction, so that the AR flags in that direction. After all, the officiating team looks bad when the referee consistently signals the ball one way and the AR has it another way. It's very important for the referee and ARs to have good eye contact with one another. On throw-ins, the AR can watch for any infraction with the feet up to the halfway line closest to the AR while the referee watches for any infractions with the upper torso. The signal from the AR for an improperly taken throw-in is a twirl of the flag. Past the halfway line, the referee watches for any infraction. You would not want the AR twirling the flag 60 metres away for a foot completely over the touchline in the corner of the field when the referee is so much closer. AR's should be told to signal fouls within a 25 metre radius of the AR by using the flag as a whistle and twirling the flag. More than 25 metres away, the AR would twirl the flag only if he or she clearly sees an obvious foul that the referee missed. AR's are also to be told to watch for off-the-ball fouls behind the referee's back.

Should there be opposing players within 9.15 metres of a free kick near the AR, the assistant should come onto the field to pace off the 9.15 metres rather than the referee. Play is restarted with the referee's whistle after the opponents are 9.15 metres from the ball and the AR has returned to the proper position. One AR has the look, the other one has the book. Meaning that one AR watches for the entire game, not putting numbers of cautions or send-offs in the book, while the other AR records all this information. At halftime, the officials discuss any numbers in the book to make certain that there are no discrepancies. At that time, the AR with the look records those numbers. The reason that one AR has the look is so that while the referee and other AR are recording the number of a player being cautioned or sent off, retaliation or any other misconduct is not missed.

AR's can also signal if fouls should be cautions (yellow cards) or send-offs (red cards). The signal for a caution is hand over shirt pocket (where the referee often keeps the yellow card) and send-off is hand touching back pocket (where the red card is often kept). Although there are other AR signals to alert the referee to caution or send off, these are the most accepted ones. If the referee blows the whistle for a foul near the AR, the assistant should then raise the flag in the direction of the team receiving the free kick. Doing this eliminates the problem of players or coaches saying, "The assistant was right there and did not see a foul but the referee decides to call it from 25 metres away!"

Halftime: This is the interval at which teams, including the officiating team, go over what went right the first half plus what went wrong and how they are going to correct things in the second half. The officiating team as well needs to discuss any potential challenges awaiting them in the second half. An AR could say, "I saw White 10 and Yellow 4 talking to one another after they challenged each other for the ball toward the end of the half. I could not hear them as they were too far away. You (the ref) were running upfield in the other direction at the time. I don't think that it was a nice conversation. We should watch out for those two fouling one another in the second half and take appropriate action."

Player Management: Officials need to approach the game knowing that they will be fair and maintain that attitude throughout the match, no matter what poor or favourable experiences they already have had with the teams that are playing. It is also very important that the officials listen to the players. Some officials conduct the game as if they are the ultimate power. I have even heard one referee called "Hitler," because of the way he acted during games! Yes, the officials are in control of the game, but they must be approachable to the players.

During the match, the officials must be in constant contact with the players as it makes the game go much smoother. Players and coaches appreciate officials who work hard and care.

Attitude: This brings me to the approach of the assistant referees. The AR's, as we have seen, have an important role to play in a game. I have heard many officials say "I'm just the assistant referee for the game." Wrong attitude! I cannot tell you how many AR's I have worked with who would be much better if they only thought that what they were doing was important and really concentrated. Hard work goes a long way! In many games, the success of the officiating team's performance often depends upon a critical call by the assistant referee. The assistant referees are on the side of the field and are obviously closer to the benches and spectators than the referee. Should a coach or substitute complain about a call that the referee made, sometimes it is better to ignore the comment. Other times you can say something such as "The referee was much closer to that foul than either of us" or "The referee had a very different angle than you did." Never contradict or undermine the referee in any way to coaches, players or spectators. Let's just say that officials who undermine their colleagues are better off spending their free time doing something else!

Whistle While You Work: The Whistle is another communication tool in your toolkit. Football referees carry their whistles in their hands, not in their mouths. In raising the whistle to the mouth to blow it, a referee has a moment to analyse a foul to make certain that there is not an advantage situation developing. To emphasise the use of the whistle when it is necessary to blow it, such as for fouls, offside or close out-of-bounds, refrain from blowing the whistle some other times, such as when the ball was kicked so far off the field everybody can see that it is no longer in play. Or when a team has a kick-off after a goal, simply say, "Play." If the ball clearly went into the goal, there is no need to blow the whistle; simply point to the kick-off circle. However, the ref always blows it for a goal and points to the kick-off circle on those rare occasions when the ball hits the post, goes over the goal line and then bounces out. You blow the whistle in this bang-bang case so that everyone understands that it's a goal. Many people say that "blowing the whistle is an art form." Indeed, it is. I often considered my whistle to be like conducting a great symphony of players, coaches and assistant referees. You blow the whistle at normal pitch for common fouls, offside and when the ball just goes over either the sideline or goal line.

You blow the whistle very hard for a bad foul that warrants at least a verbal warning, perhaps a caution or send-off, as well as for a penalty kick foul or to disallow a goal. Blowing the whistle hard emphasises to everybody that you have seen exactly what happened and are going to act decisively. Referees use the pitch of their whistles and their voice for game control plus management of the players and coaches.

How Assistant Referees Use the Flag: Assistant referees are to run up and down the sideline with the flag on the side of the field at all times so that the referee can easily see the flag upon looking at the AR. The arm holding the flag is straight. Always keeping the flag on the field side is not easy because, as soon as the AR changes direction, the flag (which is down by the legs) then must be placed in the other hand. Think change direction, change the hand holding the flag. If you are new to the AR role you might need to practice this technique away from a game situation to get it right. But it will soon become a very good habit that you have perfected. Just as the referee blows the whistle decisively, ARs raise the flag decisively. Your mechanics should indicate that you are confident in the call. As we have mentioned, the referee's position tries to keep the ball between the ref and AR at all times. Yet sometimes, this is nearly impossible.

The Officials Are a Team: Since the officials are a team, they enter and leave the field as one unit - referee in the middle clutching the ball, assistant referees on the side of the referee with the flag to their outside. The more they work as a team, the more they act as a team - before, during and after the game - the more they will enjoy officiating. The perception of these officials will be much better than an official who wants to be the lone ranger.

Based on my personal experience.



Active Member of the Month

Congratulations go to Sam Kelly who is the Active Member of the Month for March 2019. Sam got the highest points for his all-round performance during March for his dedication to training, attending the general meeting and doing well in the monthly LOTG Quiz. He was awarded a \$50.00 Caltex Voucher for his efforts at the April General Meeting. Well done Sam.



2018-2019 Laws of the Game Quiz

A thorough understanding of the Laws of the Game is an essential quality of a good referee. All referees should regularly review their Laws of the Game book to ensure they are correctly interpreting and applying them.

This monthly LOTG Quiz is highly recommended for all active referees and assessors and counts towards meeting part of the criteria for honour games consideration and annual awards. To reinforce your knowledge you are encouraged to utilise your Laws of the Game Book to assist in answering the quiz questions. All quiz questions are based on the current 2018/2019 IFAB LOTG.

[Click Here](#)

Click on the "Click Here" button to complete the highly recommended monthly LOTG Quiz to test yourself on how well you know the laws.

May LOTG Quiz Answers: 1 - A; 2 - C; 3 - B; 4 - D; 5 - B; 6 - B; 7 - D; 8 - C; 9 - D; 10 - B.

Important Dates

Friday 7th June 2019 - General Meeting at the Bankstown Sports Club, 8 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown NSW 2200, starting at 7.30 pm

Friday 5th July 2019 - General Meeting at the Bankstown Sports Club, 8 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown NSW 2200, starting at 7.30 pm

Friday 2nd August 2019 - General Meeting at the Bankstown Sports Club, 8 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown NSW 2200, starting at 7.30 pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Baker'.

Richard Baker - NSWSLFR TSC Member and Newsletter Editor

