



Welcome to this ninetieth 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!



To do for NSWSLFR members in April 2021:

1. [Review the 2020/21 LOTG changes](#)
2. [Make yourself available for competition matches on Horizon WebRef](#)
3. [Attend training every week](#)
4. [Attend April General Meeting on Zoom](#)

6 Quick Tips For De-Escalating An Argument During Your Game

Disagreements are a part of most sporting events, relationships, friendships, and workplaces. Humans are social creatures, and without a doubt we will come across a person's perspective or a topic area with which we disagree. While we try our best to be respectful, it can be difficult keeping things neutral, especially during a sporting event with my little Johnny out on the field.

If arguing is a normal part of life, as referees, how do we do it better and keep our games under control? If we know that disagreements are going to happen in our games, how can we keep them at minor instances and not turn into a massive abuse situation?

The below tips are not necessarily meant to help you come out on top as the winner of the argument, but instead get through the disagreement and keeping everyone cool through it. While these tips are designated for on-the-field use, they will absolutely transfer to your daily life.

1. Take a breath and pause

When people's normal response is to immediately respond, you have to retrain your mind to slow down. When you start to notice that situation begins to severely escalate, force yourself to take three deep breaths and inherently count to three to give yourself time to consider your response options. Instead, we need to consider the why behind what the person said. The why is the motivation here, so when we can deescalate much quicker when we truly understand why someone is acting the way they are. To do this, we can't lash out quickly – we have to be thoughtful in our response

2. Don't respond emotionally

Arguments escalate because we allow our emotional minds to take over in the heat of the moment. On the field, it can be an exhilarating feeling, but such emotions tend to feed the fire of an argument, rather than working to douse the flames. Try your best to ignore the emotional content of the other person's argument (including personal insults or attacks) and focus on the core issue that requires working through toward a compromise or concession.

3. You do not have to prove yourself right in the argument

Sometimes we continue on in an argument not for any good reason, but because we feel like we need to prove ourselves. We've tied our own self-worth, self-image, and self-confidence to winning – especially in the world of sport. Even if by doing so, we hurt a loved one or someone we respect. Despite what we tell ourselves, arguments are not about proving ourselves to be better or smarter than another person. We aren't. We are human, fallible creatures just like others, and we will make mistakes and be wrong, too. Don't make an argument about your needs or self-worth – something that stereotypes us as referees because of the select few videos that are circulating the internet.

4. Decide the value of the argument early

Not every argument during your game should carry the same weight, just as not every decision we make in your games have the same importance. Whether you eat a bowl of cereal or an apple is a decision of very little consequence. In the same way, an argument about whether the grass is green or mostly green is probably not one worth having.

Are you arguing about something you really care about? Is it a technicality of the rule or law, or whether you interpreted a game critical decision correctly based on the law or rule? If you don't particularly care about the outcome, let the other person "win" and save your energy for an argument that you're really invested in.

5. Keep an open mind

Having the emotional intelligence to have empathy is an advance skill to have in your toolbox. Empathy is being able to put yourself in the other person's shoes to understand their perspective and actually understand why they could be right. To have empathy, you don't need to agree with the other person. On the field, we KNOW that there will be disagreements and arguments, but what we can control is how we can respond. As referees, we have to overcome the fact that players, coaches, fans and the media do not see us as human beings – they see the

badge/whistle. So, keep your mind open throughout the match on how to approach the disagreement to find common ground with the person.

6. Learn how to respectfully disagree

A lot of people aren't really interested in whether they "win" an argument or not. Instead, what they really want is simply to be heard. A simple acknowledgment that you hear those you argue with and what they're saying, but respectfully disagree with them is often enough for others to disengage from the argument. A simple smile, nod, thumbs up or something similar will keep arguments at bay because if there is an irate coach or player, they will at least understand that you acknowledged them and their feelings.

Finding common ground for a compromise is a valuable strategy to employ in wording toward a quick resolution of an argument. Diplomats employ this strategy daily, and you can too by working to find the things you share in common, and building upon them. "You want steak for dinner, I want seafood. So, let's go out to a steak and seafood place!" There doesn't need to be a winner on the field

Remember, there doesn't have to be a "winner" to every argument. Two people on the field can simply come together, discuss something of mutual interest, and then walk away without either person changing his or her mind. Or a simple compromise can be reached more quickly if both people are open-minded and are willing to give a little.

Arguments are a part of the game, we know this. Learning to navigate them more definitely will help you get over these little speed bumps and get back to enjoying your games more quickly.

Modified and adapted from an article in The Referee Company by Jordon Halstead



2020-2021 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 new 2020/2021 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.

March 2021 LOTG Quiz Answers: 1 - A; 2 - C; 3 - D; 4 - B; 5 - C; 6 - B; 7 - A; 8 - D; 9 - B; 10 - C.

Important Dates

Friday 9th April – General Meeting via Zoom starting at 7.30 pm.

Friday 7th May 2021 – TBC

Friday 4th June 2021 – TBC

Friday 2nd July 2021 – TBC

Friday 6th August 2021 - TBC

Note: Zoom meetings may replace in person meetings.

Avoiding Allowing Negative Self-Talk To Cause You To Make An Error

Have you ever missed a clear foul in the penalty area?

Officiating under pressure, especially in key fixtures, such as cup finals, can be extremely difficult for referees. You might feel like the spotlight is on you and everyone is watching every move you make and decision you take. In addition to this, the intensity of the fixture could be going through your mind: “If I make a mistake now, the outcome of the game could be decided by me. Concentrate.” You don’t want to let either team or your colleagues down on this stage, so you keep thinking, “Just concentrate.”

I remember, specifically, a game I refereed early in my career where this was my mentality, as a result of this, I ended up making an error on a key match decision (KMD). I was relatively newly qualified and the fixture was a local derby. The home team had won the reverse clash earlier that season, so the away side were looking to put things right. In the 85th minute, the score line was 0-1. I knew that if I made a mistake, I could cause one of the teams to lose the game. I kept thinking, “Don’t miss anything, don’t make a mistake, don’t give anyone a reason to blame you,” over and over.

What do you think happened?

You’ve probably guessed correctly. I missed a clear foul in the penalty area. It was right in the centre of the box, virtually on the penalty mark. I felt so down and disappointed afterwards, especially when I saw the immediate cheering from one team and yelling of abuse from the other upon my waving away of the foul. It was such a simple decision for me to make. All I needed to do was make my run a couple of metres to my left and my viewing angle would have been 100 times clearer. I can identify foul play quickly and easily, so there was nothing I really needed to focus on. I just needed to position myself correctly. However, I did the complete opposite. My negative self-talk meant that I talked myself right out of success in that pressure-packed situation.

I find this quote to hold so much truth: “You can talk yourself into victory or defeat.” This is what I did.

Instead of stepping onto the field of play and thinking about what you want to avoid, or don’t want to happen; think about what you WANT to do. You WANT to achieve the highest level of accuracy in your decision making as you possibly can, so have that focus. Think to yourself, “How can I make sure I give myself the best chance to make a correct decision.”

Being trusted on a key fixture or any game generally can be stressful for referees. Rather than thinking negatively or about ‘not missing a KMD,’ think about and see yourself ‘making the correct decision.’ The way you think can drastically influence your presence, authority and credibility out in the middle.

Modified and adapted from an article in The Third Team Blog by Nathan Sherratt

Pre-Match Instructions

The pre-match instructions should cover the duties, responsibilities, and means of communication for the referee team. Depending on the familiarity of team members, the level of competition, and the importance of the match, the pre-match instructions can take place 10 minutes to an hour prior to the game.

A typical pre-match talk would discuss:

1. Officials work together as a Team.
2. AR's duties are to assist the Referee by
 - a. Indicating out-of-bounds and restarts
 - b. Indicating offside
 - c. Indicating fouls and misconduct the Referee could not or did not see
 - d. Indicating substitutes
 - e. Recording game information (one writes, others watch)
 - f. Keeping backup time and indicating time remaining
3. Indicate goal/no goal.
4. Indicate offside, not offside position (delay okay).
5. Indicate fouls only if the Referee needs assistance (screened, out of view).
6. If waved off or overruled, put the flag down and stay calm.
7. Review positions on corner kicks, goal kicks, close-in kicks, penalty kicks.
8. Always make eye contact when signalling.
9. Make frequent eye contact throughout the game.
10. Talk to the players as needed.
11. Mirror each other's signals when necessary.
12. Do not permit dissent, delay, encroachment, interference with the keeper, discussion of judgment calls.
13. At the end of the half and match, move quickly to halfway circle (nearest to the ball collects it).
14. Enter and leave as a Team.
15. The keys to being a successful team are preparation and communication.



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