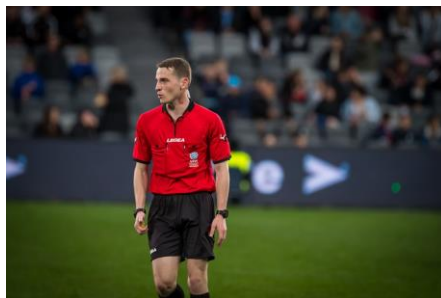




Welcome to this eighty second edition of **“The Referee”**, the newsletter for all NSW State League Football Referees. This newsletter will enable our branch to communicate directly with our members and will cover issues and areas of interest to all referees.

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 August 2020:

1. [Review the 2019/20 LOTG changes](#)
2. [Make yourself available for matches on Horizon WebRef](#)
3. [Attend training every week](#)
4. [Attend August General Meeting](#)

Coping With Pressure From Players on the Field

No matter the match there are always going to be 22 players desperate to win. They will look for every possible opportunity to gain the advantage, one thing that could turn the result in their favour. Unfortunately for us, this will often lead to players trying to put pressure on us as match officials. Although we can act on what the players and coaches do, we cannot control how they initially react. Therefore, we can only focus on how we react and our techniques for coping with the pressure.

It is important to take into account the game, the players concerned and the decisions you have made. A throw-in during a friendly match, for example, will never attract as much reaction as a crucial penalty decision in a cup final. Equally, knowing the players concerned can also add some perspective to your decision. Is the pressure being applied from the player who questions everything, or from the quiet forward? Is it the normal player that you learn to switch off from, or a player who might have a genuine argument? As match officials, in situations like these, we have two things in our favour.

Firstly, we know the Laws and will generally have a greater understanding of them than the players we are refereeing. Secondly, we know why we have made a particular decision and the thought process behind it. The pressure from players will often come immediately, without them having thought through the decision. We have the advantage of knowing what we have done and why we have done it. Knowing the reason behind the decision gives us our own peace of mind, but cannot always prove useful when dealing with players. So, when a decision has been made, we know the reasoning behind it, but the players continue to apply pressure. How do we respond?

I have three different techniques I use in certain circumstances depending on the game, the players involved and the importance of the decision:

1. Belief in what you have seen.

Having belief in what you have seen with your own eyes can be your biggest friend on the field. You have witnessed something that has forced you to make a decision, or you have decided what you have seen was not an offence. The players will only see this through blinkers and will want you to give the decision that benefits them. It is imperative therefore that you have the trust in yourself to believe that you have made the correct decision. This could serve you well when questioned by the players. In situations like this, it can also be useful to communicate this to the players. Often, I will use phrases such as: "It's a free-kick, 100%. I saw the trip and it doesn't need to be discussed.

2. Confidence to Explain Decisions

Sometimes it is the lack of knowledge from players that can cause you problems. Players will generally accept decisions in a more amicable manner if they are explained clearly and confidently by the referee. Having the confidence to explain these decisions can be a big tool in your referee armoury and can help you to gain the respect of the players. However, be careful not to explain every decision to every player as you will lose focus on the match and will have to explain the next decision as well. It is very important that you do not give the impression to the players or to spectators that you are trying to justify your decisions.

3. Acceptance that you may have made a Mistake

You will make mistakes. A judgement call could be misinterpreted, a player could have run across your line of sight or you may have found yourself in a position that doesn't give you a good view. In situations where you think you have made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it. Sometimes it is important to wait until the next phase of play in case something happens. For instance, it is not wise to admit a corner kick should have been a goal kick and then the attacking team scores from the corner.

Being honest that you have made an error can be a fantastic tool. Players who hear a referee admit they might have made a mistake on a decision will be more than likely to accept a referee's explanation of why they are correct later in the game on a different decision. However, this comes with another word of warning. Be careful what decisions you admit and how many times in a game. Players will generally accept a small decision in a safe area, but they can be less tolerant of a referee who admits they have made a mistake on a penalty. Also, be careful how often you do this. Admitting you have made a mistake 4-5 times per half will lead to the players losing trust in you.

I use these three techniques at various stages in a match to help cope with the pressure that the players are trying to exert on me. Some of them work to prevent pressure, others to cope with it when it happens. 99% of the time your gut reaction will be correct. There are various techniques that could work for you as a referee. Don't be afraid to try them, see what works for you and what doesn't. It is very important that each referee finds something they are comfortable saying, as words and phrases that work for one will not necessarily work for another. Having confidence in what you are saying will portray the confidence you have in your decision. It is no use explaining something you don't believe yourself, as the players will definitely not believe it. Remember, the end result is the same: every player wants to win and they will try what they can to gain an advantage.

Modified and adapted by Richard Baker from an article in "Refereeing" by Michael Oliver – Volume 25 May 2015.

2019-2020 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 2019/2020 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.*

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

Important Dates

Friday 7th August 2020 – General Meeting via Zoom starting at 7.30 pm.

Friday 4th September 2020 - General Meeting at Bankstown Sports Club, 8 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown NSW 2200, starts at 7.30 pm.

Note: All dates are subject to the current COVID-19 situation and any further restrictions that may be imposed.



7 Tips to Stay Focussed for 90 Minutes

As a referee it's quite difficult to stay focused for 90 minutes. Just as you are watching a player being challenged, a coach yells, the crowd sings and you'll hear another player shouting he got punched. Too much information all at once.

However, you still need to make the right call. So, we need to concentrate and stay focused on what actually happened. Following are 7 tips that mat assist with staying focused for the whole of the match.

1. Avoid negative thoughts and feelings. You can have an external focus and try to see what's happening on the pitch. But your focus can also be internal. You'll over-analyse how you performed while you're still refereeing. Or you keep thinking about that penalty kick that you did (not) give. Stay away from that.
2. Be task rather than outcome oriented. As a referee you don't need to win games, but you need to realise that everything you decide will have a result (the outcome). Ignore what the result of your actions could be. As a referee you need to follow the game and decide whether a goal is scored, a foul was made and if you need to give a card. Just a few basic tasks. But if you focus on what tasks you need to do, you'll make better decisions.
3. Use cue words. You don't have to speak those words out loud, but recite key words or phrases in your mind. Say "focus" constantly when you realise you were distracted. Or when you're positioning is not well, remind yourself by saying "diagonal" or "keep close to play".
4. Make yourself physically comfortable. If you train well and you're physically fit, you'll definitely are more at ease during your games. You don't have to worry about being unable to follow play.
5. Recharge your batteries in between plays. This tip is in line with making yourself physically comfortable. It's not just training prior to the game that helps. You should also slightly relax in between plays. Keep in mind that this relaxing means you breath normally, but don't start focusing on the fans or so. Those are external distractions that you should not focus on.
6. Add a consistent routine to your refereeing. Put cards in the same pockets every time. Isolate a player before you book him. If you do things always in the same way, it will go easier and you won't lose focus because something is different.
7. Focus on your breathing. Pay careful attention to each inhalation and exhalation. You'll notice the air flow in and out and you'll get more relaxed, which help you concentrate.

Adapted and modified from an article by Jan ter Harmsel (@dutchreferee).

What is a Save?

A save is an action by a player to stop or attempt to stop the ball when it is going into or very close to the goal using any part of the body except the hands/arms (unless it is a goalkeeper within their own penalty area).



**Richard Baker - NSWSLFR TSC Member
and Newsletter Editor**

