



Welcome to this ninety fourth 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 July 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 August General Meeting](#)

Tactical Restart Response

Restart of play management is difficult enough without considering the various ways that defenders could seek to play psychological tricks on both their opponents and the referee. Given that defenders are technically in a situation in which we usually say that they “have no rights,” it may surprise referees to learn that, in fact, there are ways in which the defending team can attempt to control the restart to their advantage — if they are willing to pay the price and the referee is willing to charge that price. Most referees limit their awareness to dealing with “failing to respect the required distance” (FRD). First, that is more complicated than it might appear. Second, there may be other dynamics at work here.

There is another misconduct that can be at issue here — “delaying the restart of play” (DRP). Players may seek to interfere with free kick restarts using either FRD or DRP tactics. Referees must not only be aware of that fact but must also understand the circumstances of each tactic and how that may affect the referee’s response. An opponent commits a DRP offence by acting in a way that the restart cannot occur. That is usually taking control of the ball or throwing or kicking it away — all of which are designed to take possession of the ball away from the attacking team. Without the ball, there can be no restart — at least not a quick one. That is so obvious that we should not have any difficulty recognising that this sort of action needs to be managed appropriately, initially with a word from the referee and if it persists, and the players don’t respond, then a caution as per Law 12. Remember, the objective of those tactics, by defenders, is to prevent the attacking team from exercising its right to restart play quickly.

However, another way of creating delay involves one or more opponents taking a position in relation to the ball that unambiguously prevents a restart in any direction that might be even remotely desirable for the attacking team. That is often referred to as “the statue tactic”: an opponent stands immediately in front of the ball to prevent any further action. An example of a more sophisticated ploy that has the same effect calls for an opponent, with every appearance of innocence, to come from the side and pass in front of the ball just as the attacker is preparing to take the free kick. As above, tactics of that sort are usually so obvious that they almost seem laughable ... but they are not. Merely being amused allows the defenders to achieve their goal (holding up the restart) with no compensating penalty (the caution).

It is important that referees understand DRP tactics on free kicks and not confuse them with FRD. The major difference is that, with DRP, the referee’s response should be swift and certain because the damage will already have been done. FRD on the other hand is a tactic that seeks to interfere rather than prevent. As such it is less obvious and is designed to suck the referee into a haze of options that often achieve one objective while the referee is focused on dealing with another objective.

It begins with geometry. The distance not being respected is a 9.15 metres (10 yards) line from the ball to the defending wall. However, it is not simply a line, it is also a set of angles defining how far to the left, to the right and above the wall the ball can be kicked without its path being stopped by an opponent. Sometimes, of course, the attackers don’t care about those angles. They may be close enough to the goal and the wall may be sloppy enough that they will try to blast the ball through the wall. No finesse, just power and luck.

However, for most other free kicks, the critical elements are the angle from the ball to the left and right ends of the wall and to the top of the wall. The impact of those angles is a function of three measures: distance to the goal, number of opponents in the wall and the distance from the wall to the ball. The first two factors are out of the attacking team’s (and the referee’s) control. The third factor is defined by Law 13. Any distance from the ball to the wall shorter than 9.15 metres makes it more difficult to score a goal. Further, the shorter that distance, the greater the impact in favour of the defenders. The right to a quick free kick restart is so strong that the Law expects the referee to defer to the attackers, even though there may be a clear violation of the minimum distance, if the attackers believe that a quick restart would allow them to beat the reduced angles (for example, they see an exploitable “hole” through the wall).

Using a DRP tactic is high risk (depending on the referee's character) because the likelihood of a caution is usually greater than with an FRD tactic (though the reward is both as great and more certain). FRD tactics force the referee to make more judgmental decisions and thus lower the probability of a caution. At the same time, by forcing the attacking team to request enforcement of the distance, the defenders may lose the objective of cutting down the angles but they still gain the benefit of delaying the restart (which may translate into the ability to bring additional defenders into the wall, thus rearranging the angles more to their benefit). Ironically, even with the minimum distance being enforced, the defenders may not lose all of their angle reduction advantage if the referee can't or won't actually enforce 9.15 metres but, instead, lets it go at some lesser distance.

Since the right to a quick free kick takes precedence, referees will defer to the attacker even if there is a violation of the minimum distance. When the attacking team requests enforcement, the referee will make sure the wall is properly positioned.

Referees should not enter the field in a competitive match if they do not understand and appreciate the tactics defenders use to gain advantages in situations, such as free kicks, where it might appear that the attackers have all the rights. Defenders will gnaw away at those rights as often as possible, to the extent the referee allows it (through ignorance or inattention), and whenever they are willing to pay the price. As always, the referee needs to anticipate, concentrate and stay focused for 100% of the match.

Modified and adapted from an article in The Referee - 20th November 2020

Do You Seek The Approval Of Club Officials, Players And Spectators?

Many referees worry too much about what others think about them. These officials have a desire for approval from others, such as colleagues, their referee coaches, players, and club officials. If you (or your referees) want to please others, you have a need to be admired, accepted, respected, or liked by other officials, referee coaches, or players. This is partly a simple case of human nature, but when taken to an extreme, it can cause officials to feel pressure and become a huge distraction.

Do you worry you'll disappoint the players or club officials if you fail to identify the foul play in the penalty area in the last minute of a game with the score at 1-1? Over thinking can cause you problems; for example, if a referee comments "If I make a simple mistake like missing a serious foul play challenge, then that's it, my game is ruined and I become very upset. My main concern is disappointing my referee coach, colleagues, or players and I'm worried they will think less of me as an official. Why am I so concerned with not letting down others?"

This type of thinking not only distracts you from performing out in the middle, but it also becomes a source of pressure for many referees. We call this concept social approval. Officials who are preoccupied with what others think tend to engage in what is sometimes called "mind reading."

Mind reading is when you make unfounded assumptions about what others might think about your performance, such as:

- "Is my coach disappointed with the errors I made today?"
- "Will the players be happy with my performance today if I make a mistake?"
- "If I mess up today, will others be happy with me?"

Social approval comes in many forms. Some referees want to please or gain respect from others. Some officials fear disappointing people.

The effect on you is still the same when you perform: pressure, tension, and distraction.

The key is to understand when you begin to read others' minds:

- Do you mind read when others are watching you referee?
- Do you mind read after you make a mistake?
- Do you mind read when you see expressions of disapproval from others?

The next step is to understand why you are so concerned with what others think about your officiating:

- Do you want to avoid embarrassment?
- Do you want to gain others' approval?
- Do you want to impress others with your refereeing skills?
- Do you use sport as a way to gain respect from others?

Once you can uncover when and why you mind read, you can learn to react better in these scenarios.

A Simple Mental Game Tip in Three Steps:

1. Catch yourself the next time you begin to mind read.
2. Tell yourself that's not important right now.
3. Refocus on making your next decision only. That's it!

This simple strategy will at least help you be more aware when you worry about what others think.

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



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.

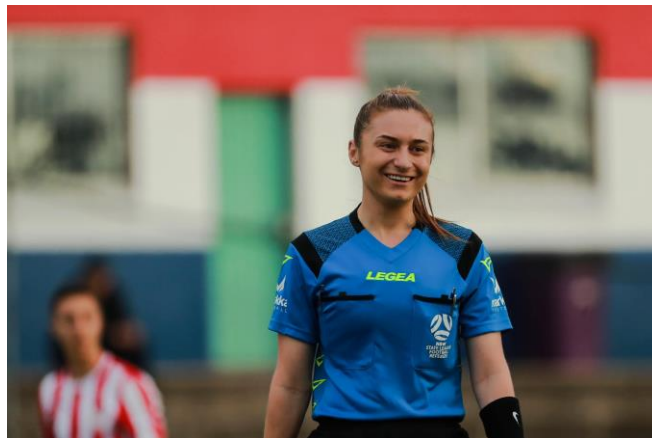
July 2021 LOTG Quiz Answers: 1 - A; 2 - A; 3 - C; 4 - A; 5 - D; 6 - B; 7 - D; 8 - A; 9 - B; 10 - 10.

Save These Dates

Friday 6th August 2021 – TBC

Friday 3rd September 2021 - TBC

Note: Zoom meetings may replace in person meetings.



Attitude and Bearing

You should always try to appear cool, calm and confident. Even when your stomach is churning and an inner voice is screaming "This going to explode! They are going to kill each other". You need to be outwardly calm and unpressured. Be aware that perception can become reality. You should monitor and control body language and the words that you use so that players see and hear a referee in personal control. Stand tall – look the part.



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

