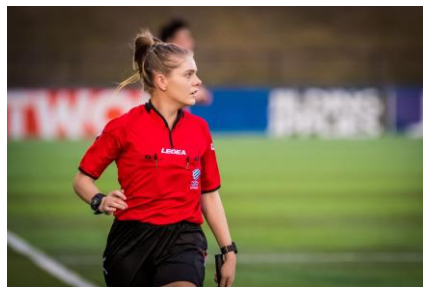




Welcome to this eighty fifth edition of **“The Referee”**, the newsletter for all NSW State League Football Referees. This newsletter will enable our branch to communicate directly with our members and will cover issues and areas of interest to all referees.

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!



Identify the mood or temperature of the game and use this awareness to ensure an adjustment in pace and/or increased involvement to prevent problems. “Tempo” is the key word here. Games can go in cycles, where the tempo increases or decreases at different times in the game. As the referee seeking to maintain match control an approach which varies with the tempo of the game usually helps – for instance when the tempo is high, then being pickier over free kicks to slow the game down, playing less advantage and increasing communication with players usually helps. A low tempo game, where the players are looking to get on with playing football (fairly) allows the referee to take a more relaxed approach, allow trivial offences to go unpunished and play more advantage.

Tool or Weapon? – Challenging with Hands or Arms

As referees we should continue to monitor and examine players' upper body challenges, with the goal of consistently identifying the severity of such actions during a match. So, what considerations and techniques should officials currently use?

For a number of years now, the IFAB and FIFA have used clear definitions of what constitutes a careless challenge, a reckless challenge and a challenge that is more serious, using excessive force:

- **Careless** is when a player shows a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or acts without precaution. No disciplinary sanction is needed
- **Reckless** is when a player acts with disregard to the danger to, or consequences for, an opponent and must be cautioned
- **Using excessive force** is when a player exceeds the necessary use of force and/or endangers the safety of an opponent and must be sent off

The application of these definitions on severity is no different in the National Premier League in New South Wales. In addition to this, FIFA considerations help officials define reckless hand/arm challenges with the phrase 'used as a tool'. A simple definition of this is when the hand or arm is used by the player to help accomplish whatever he or she is trying to do.

Examples of this could be gaining an advantage in an aerial challenge, creating space, or trying to win a physical battle with an opponent. If the hand/arm is used to assist in doing this unfairly, the officials will normally identify this as using the hand/arm as a tool, and sanction the offence with a yellow card (caution):

<https://youtu.be/SaC2hF58FNQ>

Click on the link above to view Examples 1 – Reckless Use of an Arm.

Officials are also trained to be aware of their responsibility in identifying those foul challenges with the hands/arms that involve excessive force (and therefore endanger the safety of their opponent) and must be considered serious foul play, subsequently resulting in a red card (sending off). In its considerations, this is what FIFA classes as use of the hand/arm as a 'weapon' (designed to inflict injury or harm on an opponent):

<https://youtu.be/FFf7U5FNlag>

Click on the link above to view Examples 2 – Excessive Force.

So how are officials trained to be able to recognise these types of upper body challenges, especially when for much of the time the ball is on the ground? Improved concentration on recognition of visual cues is a key component. As referees we are aware that players can challenge with hands or arms at any point in the game. However, referee coaches have identified some game scenarios to help our referees recognise the potential for possible contact with hands or arms, and to therefore be better prepared to judge the severity of any offences. These include players receiving the ball from a pass, players protecting the ball, and players running for the ball in close proximity to their opponents. In addition to this, players jumping for the ball with their opponents can lead to many types of contact with hands or arms. In all of these scenarios, there are important recognition skills an official must possess to get ahead of any potential challenge.

On receiving or protecting the ball (often on the ground), officials should be aware of features such as:

- Are the arms out to make the receiver of the pass bigger?
- Is the receiver of the pass looking at the opponent as the ball comes?
- Is the receiver of the pass backing into their opponent?
- Is there an illegal hand or arm movement as a player tries to quickly break free or play the ball?
- Is the player who is protecting the ball swinging their arms?

The following video clips are examples of reckless challenges with arms when players were receiving or protecting the ball (yellow card).

<https://youtu.be/cqgvLbWLBik>

Click on the link above to view Examples 3 – Receiving/Protecting the ball.

Whereas when players are running for the ball, officials are also aware of:

- Are the arms of players swinging above waist level during the running motion?
- Are players, at times, potentially looking at their opponent while in possession or out of possession?
- What is the arm movement of players after a quick change in the direction of the body?
- Is the elbow movement of players running potentially leading to unwanted contact?
- Any close physical contact, does it involve hands or arms?

These two incidents illustrate illegal reckless challenges with the arms when running with or for the ball (yellow card).

<https://youtu.be/1SXpUoSMytI>

Click on the link above to view Examples 4 – Running for the ball.

When players of opposing teams are jumping to challenge for the ball, there are many factors officials are distinguishing between, to identify unfair contact, including:

- Is the hand or arm already in position on the jump or does it move while in the air toward the opponent?
- Is a player looking at the opponent rather than the ball?
- Is the hand or arm pushing down on the head of an opponent?
- Is the hand or arm moving across the face of an opponent?
- Is the hand or arm pushing into the neck of an opponent?

Officials are also made aware to pay attention to the particular danger caused by a player jumping near and extending their arm in an unnatural manner (are they causing danger with the movement of the elbow, for example?) In all of the following incidents, the offender is guilty of a reckless challenge with the arm (yellow card).

<https://youtu.be/-0 TnQctIOo>

Click on the link above to view Example 5 – Jumping for the ball.

So how do officials give themselves the best opportunity to accurately judge severity after picking up on the potential warning signs that there could be illegal use of the hand or arm in a challenge? Officials should be encouraged more so to focus on the fundamentals of good positioning and angle of view, in addition to heightened concentration and awareness of unfair contact.

Teamwork is another vital component, with every member of the officiating crew having a different angle and proximity, and the awareness to know they potentially may need to provide important information, all of which goes into the process of getting the decisions correct.”

Modified and adapted from an article in Professional Referees Organisation USA (April 2020)

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.

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

Important Dates

Friday 27th November 2020 – Annual General Meeting at Bankstown Sports Club, 8 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown NSW 2200, starts at 7.30 pm.

Denial of an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity

Caution or send-off?



Richard Baker - NSWSLFR TSC Member and Newsletter Editor

