



Welcome to this one hundredth and twelfth 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 finds its way to those who are likely to benefit most – and that’s you!!



#### Upcoming events in February 2023

1. 2023 Registrations are open on Playfootball. Please register ASAP.
2. Season starts on 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023
3. Make yourself available for 2023 matches on Dribl.
4. Attend Training – Wednesdays from 7 pm to 8.30 pm at Mona Park 3 - 27A Chisholm Rd, Auburn NSW 2144. Keep an eye on emails, Facebook page and website for wash out notices (if any).

## **Howard Webb Wants Former Players to Become Referees**

### ***Former Players Becoming Referees***

New Premier League referees chief Howard Webb wants to encourage former professional players to take up officiating. Webb has returned to English football after five years in the United States, having been named the first chief refereeing officer of the Professional Game Match Officials Limited.

The 51-year-old, who refereed the 2010 World Cup final, has pledged to broaden the number of referees, including trying to attract more female officials and others from diverse backgrounds. However, he also feels the professional ranks are an untapped source and believes some players could find refereeing attractive as an alternative career path.

Webb mentored 2022 World Cup final referee Szymon Marciniak during the early part of his career and much was made after Argentina's victory over France about the Pole's playing background. "We need to look at how we can entice people in. We've always struggled to get ex-players involved," said Webb, who will oversee all officials in the Premier League and English Football League. "But I am sure somebody out there will want to be a trailblazer.

"Somebody who's played in the Football League - I don't expect players who have played at the very highest level who have got other opportunities to come into [refereeing] - but somebody that has played a decent career, that's got good knowledge of the game, maybe late 20s, suffering with an injury or whatever it might be that means they can't play as regularly. "I think there's an opportunity for someone to really blaze a trail and we would welcome them wholeheartedly with the skills they have got from that playing career provided they have got the other skills they need to be successful."

Webb accepts the 13 and a half years it took him to reach the Premier League is likely to put off potential candidates from the professional game. However, he said the process has now been streamlined to reduce the time needed to gain the appropriate experience.

He added: "You still need to do some of those difficult yards to get the experience you need to survive at the high levels and flourish there, but you can credit what experience you've already got in the game through playing or whatever it is and then build on that as quickly as you can and get them up there as quickly as possible, and that will entice people in." 'If you have the skills, you will get the opportunity'

### ***More Women Referees***

Speaking to BBC Sport, Webb underlined his desire to recruit more referees from a diverse background, also noting the emergence of more female officials.

With Stephanie Frappart becoming the first woman to referee a men's World Cup match in Qatar, Rebecca Welch on the EFL list and Sian Massey-Ellis having established herself as one of the Premier League's best assistant referees, Webb feels it is only a matter of time before women are taking charge of the biggest games.

"It is fabulous we have these talented female officials coming through who have gone on a pathway the same way as other officials and shown they have quality," he said. "There is no limit these days. We are seeing that at the very highest level in the World Cup and domestically where more women are coming into the highest levels of the male and female game and doing really good work. "

"Whatever your background is, if you have the skills, you need and you have the quality, opportunities will be presented. I am excited to see female officials develop and take charge of some of the biggest games in our country and in the world in future."

### ***Respect the refs***

During the 2021-22 season, bans were handed to 380 players and coaches for attacking or threatening referees and match officials in English grassroots football. Webb admits "what is seen at the highest level of the game



impacts on other levels", with Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp having to apologise for the aggressive way he reacted to assistant referee Gary Beswick during his side's victory against Manchester City in October.

Klopp initially escaped a touchline ban and while the German eventually served a one-match suspension after the Football Association appealed against the leniency of the punishment, Webb says officials at all levels of the game need to know they are being protected. "The power of example is strong," he said.

"We don't want people dropping out because the experience they have is not a good one." "We understand the emotions and pressure people are working under at that level but when lines are crossed, we have a responsibility to be strong. That is what we will continue to aim for."

### ***Trying to make VAR work***

VAR should be quicker and simpler, says new English FA referees' boss Webb. In a week where it has been confirmed video assistant referees have turned six correct decisions into incorrect ones so far this season, Webb says he wants to demystify the refereeing process. He wants to use his experiences in Major League Soccer and the more open way they deal with VAR to improve the present system.

Webb says "everything is on the table" when asked whether this may involve supporters being able to hear exchanges between the referee and the VAR, even if this is not in real time." "We are looking at whatever way we can to pull that curtain back, to show the world the processes that go into making decisions, the rationale for decisions being taken," he said.

"People might not always agree with the final outcome but if they understand how we have got there, there is a much greater level of acceptance." He accepts getting 100% accuracy in the decision-making process is impossible and used the example of the penalty given in the World Cup semi-final for Argentina against Croatia which split opinions of the ITV commentary and punditry teams. "You are dealing with human beings, who are making judgements that split opinion, in a game that throws up lots and lots of subjectivity," he said.

"If we try to use VAR to rectify those kinds of decisions, someone is going to be left disappointed." Webb wants the use of VAR to centre around the "clear and obvious" errors, admitting that, apart from complicated cases involving numerous incidents, "if something is clear and obvious, it shouldn't take minutes to work it out".

"A lot of guidance and coaching I will be giving will be around not overthinking it," said Webb. "We don't want the VARs to be looking too hard. We want them just to look for those errors that jump off the screen at you."

***Modified and adapted from an original article by Howard Web – December 2022***



## Controlling the Controllables As a Match Official

Refereeing can be such a relentless, ever-changing, fast-paced and unpredictable environment on the field of play, which can have a huge impact on our performance in a successful or unsuccessful way. How much of this can we control or influence? What factors can't we control? How much control should we strive for? Should we let things be as they are?

Firstly, let's look at the uncontrollable variables, this is where we, as officials, have no control over or cannot influence the outcome in our favour. Such variables are, the weather condition, playing teams, the venue, spectators, how much time left in the game or to some extent our colleagues. The list of things not in our control are endless.

Let's focus on what we can control, which is 'US' more specially our **Attention** and our **Focus**. Attentional control relates to how a referee can focus awareness onto the environmental stimuli that are most relevant during the task. The process of attending selectively to the most important cues involve concentration.

Nideffer's Attentional model is a great start to build an official's awareness and understanding. Nideffer's approach to attention, can be broken down into two dimensions.

- Firstly, width. There are two options, broad or narrow. Broad takes in a great deal of information from the environment. Narrow is the opposite, one or two stimuli we focus and select. This dimension shows the change in the amount of information to be processed.
- Secondly, direction is where the attention is focussed, inwards and onto the psychological state or outwards onto the environment.

These dimensions each occur on overlapping continuums, creating four "quadrants" of attentional focus.

The important piece about this model, you might be thinking what is best? Where do I need to be? At any given point in time there might be places for all of them. So instead of thinking one is right and one is wrong. It's about becoming self-aware, where do I need to be in this moment. What's value for me right now, can I select and move through the different quadrants I need to be when I need to be there. So, coming back to when we say control the controllable, we can control where we are and recognise, right now I might be broad-external but I need to switch to internal-narrow. Then I can take the time, come back to my breath and be where I need to be. Attention and concentration as a referee must be adjustable, like a zoom lens on a camera.

Maintaining concentration is critical to performing at your best, yet figuring out what to focus on and maintaining the correct attentional focus during performance is not easy. This is where Nideffer's model can come in handy.

Below are additional exercises that may be helpful in improving one's ability to concentrate during a fixture.

- **Becoming self-aware of the controllable's vs. uncontrollable's** – make two lists. One list should be the controllable's, which are those factors officials can do something about. The other list should be the uncontrollable's, which are the elements of performance referees cannot do anything about.
- **Create a "What if" plan**, this can help prepare you for any obstacles or challenges you may encounter in the ever-changing, fast-paced, unpredictable environment of the field of play. Address the things you really fear in the game. Just list them all. Then address them one by one, asking yourself, is it controllable or not and if it happens I will....
- **Concentration cues**, highlight and develop a list of correct cues officials should be focussing on when following and off the ball. Use trigger words or short phrases to reinforce specific concentration cues for a task or skill i.e "drop back" or "run towards the corner flag".
- **Incorporate simulation pressure games or drills to train positive responses to adversity** (e.g. Use time pressure, making a decision on a Key Match Incident (KMI) or bad movement and positioning etc.).



Remember referees who can focus on the task at hand and avoid distractions enjoys the greatest possibility of success. So, invest your time and energy into things you can control such as attention. You are never going to be in complete control of everything so why not accept the unpredictability and enjoy what you can control.

*Modified and adapted from an article in The Third Team Blog by Nathan Sherratt – December 2022*



## 2022-2023 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 2022/2023 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.*

January 2023 LOTG Quiz Answers: 1 - C; 2 - B; 3 - A; 4 - C; 5 - D; 6 - B; 7 - A; 8 - D; 9 - C; 10 - B.

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## 2022 Award Winners

Congrats to all our Award Winners, [Sarah Ho](#) on Life Membership and to those Members for receiving their Years of Memberships Certificates.

Rookie of the Year: [Jackson Mackie](#)

Most Improved: [Sebastian Dougal](#) and [Harriet Gee](#)

Members Member: [Wayne Lenardon](#) and [Roger Doenau](#)

President's Award: [Richard Baker](#)

Assessor of the Year: [Richard Baker](#)

U20 Referee of the Year: [Logan Jones](#)

Assistant Referees of the Year: [Emma Kocbek](#) and [Cameron Wright](#)

Womens Referee of the Year: [Chloe Gray](#)

Mens Referee of the Year: [Hassan Jomaa](#)

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

