



Welcome to this one hundredth and eleventh 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!!



HAVE A GREAT 2023 SEASON

**HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL
NSWSLFR MEMBERS AND
REFEREES WORLDWIDE**



Upcoming events in 2023

1. 2023 Registration are open from early January on Playfootball. Please register ASAP.
2. Make yourself available for 2023 trial matches on Dribl.
3. Attend Training - Tuesday 3rd January 2023 then Wednesdays from 11th January 2023 – 7 pm to 8.30 pm at Mona Park.
4. Fitness Tests on 10th and 17th January 2023 at 6.30 pm. Venue to be advised.
5. Annual Seminar – Saturday 21st January 2023 at Bankstown Sports Club from 8 am to 1 pm.

Basic Principles of Decision Making For Referees

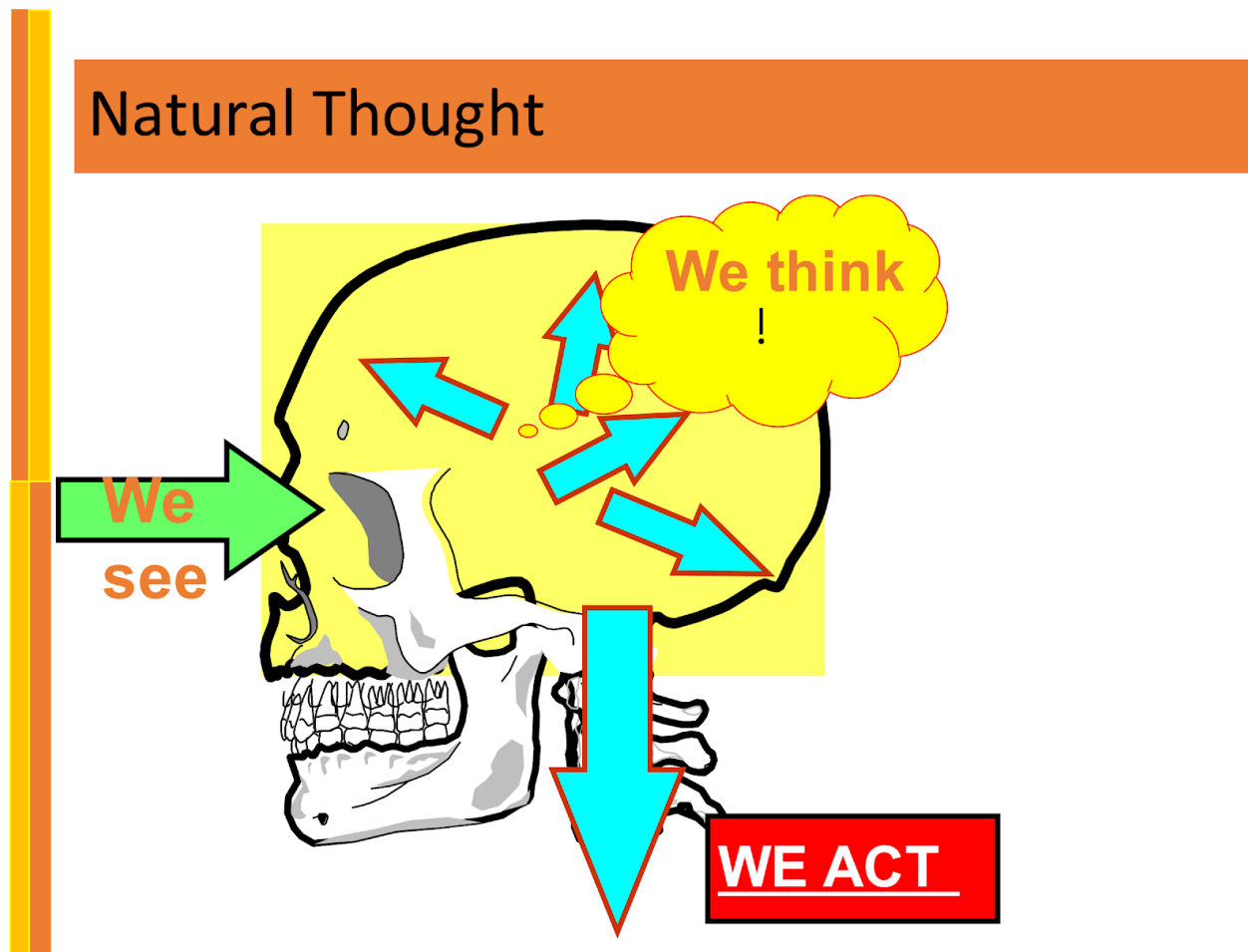
Decision making is the cornerstone of effective refereeing. In order to make appropriate decisions, referees must:

- Be able to communicate well
- BE ABLE TO HANDLE AND DEAL WITH CONFLICT
- Be fit and mobile
- BE PROACTIVE NOT REACTIVE
- Have a good knowledge and accurate implementation of the laws of the game.
- BE A GOOD MANAGER, OF PEOPLE AND EVENTS

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

SEE. RECOGNISE. THINK. ACT.

Referees must be a master of this process, able to make difficult decisions, often with heavy consequences, in a split-second and with confidence.



Step 1: SEE

Fitness – mental/physical

Viewing positions

Dropping zones

Scanning radar

Reading and anticipating play

Step 2: RECOGNISE

Messages from players

Speed of challenge

Fair or Foul?

Player's reactions

Step 3: THINK

Consider what you have seen, and what the appropriate response is.

Step 4: ACT

Whistle, arms, voice

Calm approach

Air of confidence

Firm but fair

Correct application of Law

This is an insight into the world of Decision Making when officiating football from grassroots to the top. All referees must study, reflect on, and improve these essential decision-making aspects of their performance. Examine the discussed topics and consider which you might be able to improve in. Watch for each in professional referees at the top level, and see how they approach and handle different scenarios and challenges. Refereeing takes time and dedication, but with the right attitude and continuous learning you will see yourself improving.

Modified and adapted from an original article by Keith Hackett – May 2021



How Are Officials Influenced When Making Offside Decision?

“You don’t notice the referee during the game...unless they make a bad call (decision).”

Referees are under a significant amount of pressure to make the correct decision when it counts. In fact, in a 90-minute game, officials make over 300 decisions per game, and usually, less than 2% of these are incorrect. With so much to be aware of, it’s only natural that mistakes are made by human beings every now and then, but there are definitely some things that players and club officials do unknowingly that make those errors more frequent.

Let’s examine what happens during that less than 2% of the time that referees make mistakes. Research has shown that players and club officials who are seemingly uninvolved in the game can influence an assistant referee’s decision regarding the judgement of offsides.

What Studies Have Shown

Psychologists selected all of the offside decisions from a complete season of a German football league.

The aim was to identify three things:

- Were the offside decisions, correct?
- What was the distance between each of the players, and what was the distance between the players and the assistant referee’s line of sight?
- How many players were around the player receiving the ball?

They were trying to see if the number of players close to the official’s line of sight or the number of players around who the ball is played to would influence whether the assistant referee’s decision was correct.

So, what did they find?

- More players close to the referee meant more incorrect decisions – Interestingly, when more players were near to the assistant referee’s line of sight, the official made more incorrect decisions.
- More players close to the relevant one meant more incorrect decisions – Having more players around the relevant one (meaning, the one being passed to and in question of being offside) had a similar effect. When this was the case, the official made more errors.

Why Did This Happen?

There could be a number of reasons for these refereeing mistakes, but the study is clear that the players themselves are having some kind of effect. Having a significant concentration of players in a close area of the field of play would make it difficult for anyone to see who is infringing law, a trained eye being no exception. When you’ve got more people to distinguish, decision making becomes less accurate, because the chances of an error increase. In theory, a high concentration of players could lead to more errors depending upon whether the official raises their flag or not. Assistant referees are advised to only lift the flag if they are completely sure that the attacking player is offside, so if it is too close to pass judgment, the benefit goes to the attacking team. At the elite level of the game, this is where VAR comes in very useful, there’s no hiding from technology.

What More Do We Know About the Psychology of Referees?

Like everyone, officials can have subconscious biases, causing them to make below par decisions without even meaning to. Here are some of the most common and impactful ones:

The Crowd Effect

One referee bias is the Crowd Effect, the atmosphere that spectators create can influence the official's decision by making them change their emotional response, and subconsciously challenging their decision.

The Home Advantage Effect

Similarly, there seems to be a Home Advantage Effect, with home teams being less likely to receive yellow and red cards, and having more time added when they are losing. This links to the atmosphere that the crowd create, and the referee's subconscious desire to please the crowd. Essentially, when the home spectators are generating too much noise, the official might fail to properly integrate the relevant visual and auditory cues, meaning they will favour the home team and award fewer fouls against them.

The Ill-Disciplined Team Effect

Another bias is the Dirty Team Effect, where referees rely on past experiences and knowledge about a team to make quick decisions. This means that a team with a poor reputation might be treated more harshly by an official, simply because they rely on previous thoughts about that team, rather than what's actually happening in front of them.

Final Reflections

This research has shown the power of positioning in affecting a referee's decision. From this, we can see just how easy it is to make an incorrect decision and fail to penalise infringements of The Laws of The Game. However, with a crowd watching the players and club officials from every angle, it's hard for an official's mistakes to go unnoticed.

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.

December 2022 LOTG Quiz Answers: 1 - C; 2 - B; 3 - C; 4 - A; 5 - D; 6 - C; 7 - A; 8 - D; 9 - B; 10 - A.

Save These Dates

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

