



Welcome to this one hundredth and thirteenth 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 March 2023

1. Don't forget to check out our new website on the Google Platform in Google Workspace
2. Make yourself available for 2023 matches on Dribl.
3. 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).

The Refereeing Mindset for Fixtures Played in Challenging Conditions

Are you able to concentrate on refereeing, or does the weather or ground mentally affect your performances? Wind, rain, snow, excessive heat, humid temperatures, and glaring sun can affect playing surfaces and matchday conditions. It is challenging to be at your best when weather conditions are not optimal.

But why do some officials referee better in cold weather? Why do some officials seem to be unaffected by the heat? Why do some referees find a way to get the big decisions correct when weather conditions are adverse? The answer is simple. Some officials referee better in adverse conditions due to a choice they make. That choice is where to apply their focus.

Imagine this scenario. You're appointed to a Saturday 15:00 fixture. You wake up early in the morning to 3°C temperatures, dark cloud and steady rain. You look outside and think:

"This is horrible. I don't want to referee in these conditions. The field of play is going to be muddy. I never officiate well in the cold."

On and on, you lament about the weather. You arrive at the ground and are miserable. The playing teams are going through their typical warm-up while you commiserate to your team about officiating in cold, dark and rainy conditions.

At this point, the playing teams have a significant mental advantage, even though you are refereeing the game on the same pitch under the same conditions. Why would you give the playing teams a mental edge before the game even starts? The issue at hand is not the weather. The problem is your focus. If you focus on rain, mud, cold, heat, or snow, you are not focusing on officiating your game.

No matter the weather, everyone on the field of play is under the same conditions. However, many teams often participate in the game with opposing mindsets, and those mindsets are choices!

You Can Choose to Focus on How You Will Facilitate The Game Instead of Focusing on The Weather

You can gain a significant edge if you change your mindset. Imagine how well you would referee if this were your thought process:

"Most officials don't like refereeing in the rain and cold. This is where I can separate myself from the other officials. While they are hesitant on the field of play, I will be alert. These are the conditions where I excel. My focus will be the difference-maker."

With this mindset, you will start the fixture with greater confidence and a mental edge.

In American football, in a 2022 National Football League mid-season game against the Buffalo Bills, the Miami Dolphins were expected to play in cold temperatures and the strong possibility of snow. Not only were the Bills playing at home, but they were also accustomed to playing in cold conditions. Miami quarterback Tua Tagovailoa commented he focused on competing, not the potential weather conditions.

"I think for me, it's understanding that there could be many things — could be snowing, it could rain, I don't know. For me, at least, it's a mindset thing, really. If I'm too focused and worried about, 'Is it too cold? Can I really grab the ball? Can I not,' then I would say I'm focused on the wrong things. It'll be hard to play that way going down there and playing against a good team." — Tua Tagovailoa, Quarterback, Miami Dolphins

Miami head coach Mike McDaniel succinctly stated that playing in unfavourable weather comes down to mindset.

"To me, you just decide if you're going to let it factor in or not, and then you adjust as best you can. It is the same field, the same elements, so you just decide mentally how much you will let it affect you." — Mike McDaniel, Head Coach, Miami Dolphins

What will you allow to affect your game, or will you choose the mindset to compete no matter the circumstances?

Tip for Gaining a Mental Advantage Refereeing in Bad Weather

Before leaving your house, establish your mindset. Write three positive statements about how you will mentally approach the upcoming fixture. For example:

“Refereeing in this weather is to my advantage. While others are focused on the weather, I will focus on my officiating the game. I will remain mentally tough throughout the 90+ minutes.”

You want to embrace refereeing in any conditions so you’ll have the mental advantage!

Modified and adapted from an article in The Third Team Blog by Nathan Sherratt – January 2023



Dealing With Negative Colleagues

When you’ve been practicing your mental toughness techniques, learning how to stay focused rather than being distracted by negative thoughts, and you’ve even gotten a handle on how stay positive when you or your team are not performing well out on the field of play. Great! You’re ahead of the curve and are setting yourself up for peak performance.

The nature of competitive sport, however, is that you’re not in this alone, and if you’re working in a team of referees, then the attitudes of your colleagues can be just as important as your own. An official who knows how to stay focused and motivated, saying things like “let’s enjoy refereeing this game” or “that was a great decision” or “it’s all about teamwork, I’ve got your back” will surely keep your spirits lifted and your head in the game. With referees like that, you’re not only likely to perform at your best, you’ll gain a whole new appreciation for officiating and what it really means to be a part of something bigger than yourself.

If, on the other hand, you’re refereeing with colleagues who are negative, get frustrated easily, argue with the players and club officials, make unhelpful comments, don’t always show up, are cutting towards colleagues, or otherwise ruin the game for everybody else, then it’s going to be much harder for you to stay focused and do your best.

Rather than allowing this to drag you down, damage your confidence, and pull you away from officiating, which you love, try these suggestions instead:

Don't Engage With The Negativity - It's easy to get sucked into the black hole of negative thoughts, words, and actions, especially if there is more than one colleague on your refereeing team who's causing trouble. However, you are still in control of yourself. If you see yourself taking on negative characteristics, taking your officiating less seriously, or reacting from a place of fear rather than confidence, bring awareness to what's happening and refocus your concentration on what matters to you: challenging yourself, improving your skills, having fun. Believe it or not you can still get the most out of your refereeing team when you don't waste your brainpower on those negative people.

Talk to Your Coach or Coaches - It's very likely that your coach or coaches will be aware of how disruptive one or some of your colleagues might be. If you've got a good coach or coaches, they're probably doing their best to address the problem at the root cause, but what they may not realise is how it affects you personally. If the negative behaviour is affecting you, then don't keep quiet about it, find a time to talk to your coach or coaches privately and see if there's any way they can address the problem more directly or improve the experience of working in an officiating team for you. Just remember to keep things in perspective and talk about how this negativity is affecting your confidence, enjoyment of refereeing, or performance during training or on matchday. Your coach or coaches are your ally and can come up with a solution that lifts a huge weight off your shoulders.

Approach This as an Opportunity For Growth -

You may not want to hear this, but experiencing this sort of adversity can actually make you a stronger match official. It's a challenge that tests your concentration, your commitment, conflict resolution skills, problem-solving abilities, and might just motivate you to perform even better. When you're thinking about this problem and how it affects you, take a moment to consider how it might benefit you as well. The answer may not be obvious and may not come right away, but asking this question can shift your mindset to still get something valuable from the experience.

Look Beyond The Outward Negativity -

Often referees who are negative or disruptive are not doing it to hurt you, they're just reacting to some other negative experience from their past and this is how it comes out. If you look beyond the outward negative expression and try acceptance, compassion, or even friendship then you might just find there to be much more beyond the surface, which changes everything. I'm not saying you should be their therapist, solve all their problems, or even that they'll allow you to get close, but you can start by making a small effort to get to know them better and see where that takes you.

I hope this helps to adjust your approach to negative colleagues so that even if you can't affect what they do, you can affect your response to remain positive.

Modified and adapted from an article in The Third Team Blog by Nathan Sherratt – January 2023





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.



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