



The Ref's Report

September 2025

Volume 1 – Edition 6

Dear Match Officials,

As we reach the end of the 2025 football season, I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you most sincerely for your commitment and contribution as a match official. The role you play is central to the health and success of our game. Without match officials, the competition simply could not take place, and your willingness to serve each week has ensured that countless players, coaches, and supporters have been able to enjoy football in our region.

I hope that your journey this season has been both rewarding and enjoyable. Whether you are a new official beginning to build confidence or a more experienced referee further honing your skills, I trust that you have continued to improve with each game you have officiated. Every match provides an opportunity to learn, and it has been pleasing to see so many of you seek advice, share experiences, and take on feedback in a positive way.

Being a match official is not always easy. Decisions must be made in the moment, sometimes under pressure, but your calm presence and fairness bring integrity to the game. While the financial reward is appreciated, I believe what drives most of you is something much deeper — a sense of service, the desire to give back, and the satisfaction of knowing that you are playing a vital part in the world's most loved sport. You are role models of respect, discipline, and resilience, and you help shape the culture of football in our zone.

The season itself tested us all, with heavy rain, postponed games, and cancellations disrupting the normal rhythm of competition. Despite this, many of you continued to accept your appointments each week without hesitation, without seeking changes, and without questioning why you had been assigned to a particular ground or grade. This kind of trust, reliability, and dedication makes the task of appointing referees so much smoother and is very much appreciated.

As we now move into the off-season, I encourage you to enjoy a well-earned break while also keeping fit and active. I sincerely hope that each of you will return for the 2026 season and continue to contribute as a match official within Football Far North Coast. Our game depends on you, and your involvement makes a difference in the lives of so many young people and adults who love playing football.

I look forward to welcoming you back early in February 2026 at our Annual Match Officials' Seminar (14 February), where we will prepare together for another exciting year ahead.

Best wishes,

Lee MacMaster – Match Officials Development Officer – 2025



Congratulations to Mick Smith – Referee of the Year 2025

Football Far North Coast is delighted to announce that Mick Smith has been awarded **Referee of the Year** at the FFNC Awards Lunch on Saturday, 27 September.

Mick has had an outstanding season, consistently demonstrating professionalism, commitment, and a genuine desire to raise the standard of officiating. Each weekend he has shown a willingness to continue improving his craft, which has been recognised and appreciated across the football community.

The **Referee of the Year Award** is determined in consultation with clubs across the zone, reflecting the high regard in which Mick is held. A highlight of his season was his excellent performance in the Men's Premier League Grand Final clash between Byron Bay FC and South Lismore FC.

Well done, Mick! We congratulate you on this well-deserved honour and look forward to seeing you back on the field in 2026.

The Ref's Report

A Newsletter for the Match Officials in Football Far North Coast

FOOTBALL



Q1 - During play, a defender deliberately handles the ball just outside their own penalty area to stop a promising attack. The referee plays advantage as the ball immediately falls to an attacker, who dribbles into the penalty area and shoots on goal. The goalkeeper saves the shot, and the ball goes out for a corner kick. What is the correct decision?

- A) Award a corner kick only, as advantage was applied.
- B) Stop play, caution the defender for stopping a promising attack, and restart with a direct free kick.
- C) Allow the corner kick and caution the defender at the next stoppage.
- D) Restart with a penalty kick and caution the defender.

Q2 - A goalkeeper inside their penalty area throws the ball high into the air intending to punt it. Before the ball touches the ground, the goalkeeper misjudges the drop and deliberately handles the ball again with both hands. What is the correct decision?

- A) Play on, as the ball never left the goalkeeper's control.
- B) Indirect free kick to the opponents from the spot of the second handling.
- C) Direct free kick to the opponents from the spot of the second handling.
- D) Retake by the goalkeeper, as this was a mistake in technique.



Q3 - An attacker in an offside position receives the ball after it rebounds directly off the crossbar. What is the correct decision?

- A) Offside – the attacker is penalised.
- B) No offside – play continues.
- C) Restart with a goal kick.
- D) Restart with a dropped ball.

Q4 - At a penalty kick, the kicker's teammate clearly enters the penalty area before the ball is kicked. The penalty is taken, and the ball enters the goal. What is the correct decision?

- A) Goal is awarded.
- B) Penalty is retaken.
- C) Indirect free kick to the defending team.
- D) Dropped ball.



Q5 - During active play, a substitute who is warming up near the halfway line suddenly runs onto the field and deliberately stops the ball from reaching an attacker who would otherwise be through on goal. What is the correct decision?

- A) Restart with a dropped ball where the ball was when play was stopped; substitute cautioned.
- B) Restart with a direct free kick (or penalty if inside the penalty area) and substitute cautioned.
- C) Restart with a direct free kick (or penalty if inside the penalty area) and substitute sent off.
- D) Restart with an indirect free kick from the place where the substitute entered the field.

Save the Date - 2026 Match Officials' Pre-Season Seminar

Saturday 14 February 2026 - Goonellabah Sports Club (to be confirmed) 10am to 1.30pm

All Match Officials for the 2026 season are expected to attend this important seminar.



LAWS OF THE GAME

QUIZ



COMES OUT EVERY SUNDAY

Stay Connected in the Off-Season

Even though the season has wrapped up, it's a great time to stay sharp and up to date with the **Laws of the Game**.

- Keep learning and testing your knowledge by taking the **weekly quiz every Sunday**.
- Sign up with **A & H International** for the latest in referee resources, the quiz, the newsletter and equipment: referee-equipment.com.

Stay tuned, stay prepared, and be ready to hit the ground running when football returns for 2026! ⚽

From Steve Mackney – General Manager, Football Far North Coast

THANK YOU

Thanks to each match official for your contribution to community football in 2025. This year has presented numerous obstacles, and efforts to recruit, retain, and provide support for match officials remain an ongoing challenge.

Planning beyond 2025 is already underway, and given the historical reality that some existing match officials will not return next season; we request your help in championing the cause to others to step up and become accredited match officials.



HOW CAN YOU HELP TO ENTICE OTHERS TO BECOME A MATCH OFFICIAL?

Overview of becoming an accredited match official:

- An individual must be at least 13 years of age;
- An individual must have (or initiate) their own registration/account with the Football Australia Learning Centre;
- Work through the SIX online Laws of the Game modules (i) *Components and Equipment*; (ii) *Participants*; (iii) *Game Events*; (iv) *Offences and Sanctions*; (v) *Temporary Dismissals (Sin Bin)* * (*), noting that this is not applicable in FFNC, and (vi) *Additional Information*.
- Pay \$33 (plus a small credit card fee) to gain access to and complete the second theory component of the C3 Junior Football Match Official program, which comprises FOUR modules – (i) *Match Control*, (ii) *Positioning*, (iii) *Technical Concepts* and (iv) *Game Management*;
- Pay \$150 (plus a small credit card fee) for all the learning, clothing, equipment, registration and insurance to start refereeing in 2026 – the clothing and equipment a participant gets is a green shirt (new referee), black shirt (graduate referee), shorts, socks, whistle, set of flags, set of cards, notebook and coin (for match day purposes);
- Register and attend a three-hour face-to-face C3 Junior Football Referee Course;

OVERVIEW

The costs outlined above must be paid in the first instance by the person themselves.

FFNC will reimburse \$183, to a new match official once they complete their accreditation, then register with FFNC and after they have officiated at least ten fixtures, appointed by FFNC.

The next C3 Junior Football Referee Course is scheduled for Sunday 30 November at Ballina Soccer Club (TBC) from 9am to 12 noon. Please contact Steve Mackney or Lee MacMaster for further details.

Answers: Test Your Knowledge of the Laws (Page 2)

Q1 - ✓ **Answer: C**

Explanation: The advantage was correctly applied. Since no goal resulted, the sanction for the deliberate handball (SPA – stopping a promising attack) must still be administered. Restart is the corner kick as per normal play; the defender is cautioned at the next stoppage.

Q2 - ✓ **Answer: B**

Explanation: The ball was released from the goalkeeper's hands, so handling it again before another player touches it is an infringement. The correct restart is an **indirect free kick** at the location of the offence.

Q3 - ✓ **Answer: A**

Explanation: A rebound from the goal frame or match official does **not** reset offside. Since the attacker gained an advantage from being in an offside position, offside must be given.

Q4 - ✓ **Answer: C**

Explanation: If a teammate of the kicker encroaches and the goal is scored, the restart is an **indirect free kick to the defending team** from the location of the encroachment.

Q5 - ✓ **Answer: C**

Explanation: Interference by a substitute is misconduct. If the substitute interferes with play, a direct free kick (or penalty if in the penalty area) is awarded, and the substitute must be **sent off** for denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO) or for interfering with play.

How can I assist you?

As your Match Officials Development Officer this year, I would love to know how can assist you to improve your refereeing. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me for support – referees.coach@ffnc.net.au or 0477317798

