

Positioning for Referees on the Football(Soccer) Field of Play

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www.corshamref.org.uk

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This article describes a starting point for the various positions that a Referee can take during the course of a game. Positioning depends on a number of factors: the weather, wind, skill and fitness of the players (and the Referee), 'trouble' areas, condition of the field of play and many more elements including whether or not Assistant Referees are available.

The aim here, is to provide some basic positional advice for the Referee - but it must be emphasised that each Referee will have his own views about where to stand, he will have his own fitness level and his own level of experience. When dealing with conflict, and to gain a better view in certain play action circumstances, Referees will occasionally need to deviate from the guidance shown here.

The Referee's 'goal' (as far as his positioning is concerned) is to attain a maximum panoramic view of the play area at all times..... without getting in the way of players, and without having to be an Olympic sprinting champion.

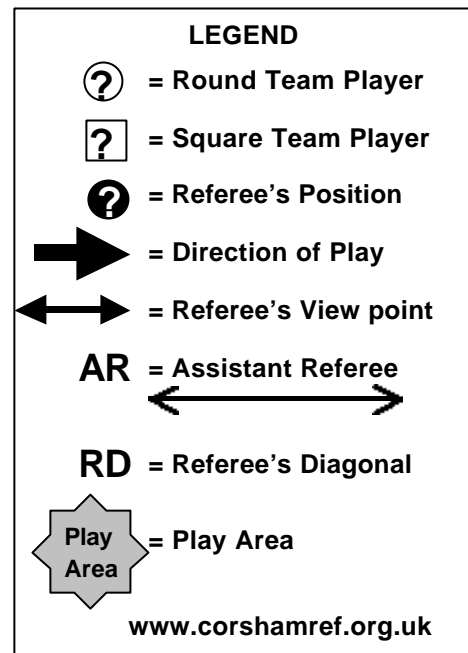
The ability of a Referee to make correct decisions will depend greatly upon his position on the field of play.

It is very important that Referees should be able to move up and down with play to be near the immediate (or anticipated) area of play action. Fitness is therefore an important factor in enabling the Referee to "keep up with play".

A good Referee will be able to gauge the skill, attitudes and mood of the players when anticipating play - thus enabling the Referee to move towards a position in readiness - even before a pass has been made between players.

In static restarts such as throw-ins, Referees should try to move into the correct position before play recommences.

Restarts should not be unduly delayed by the Referee moving into position - they can be sanctioned by him from a distance, without having to be 'on-the-spot'.



For ease of reference, the above legend describes the detail shown on the diagrams appearing on this page.

RD = Referee's Diagonal.

AR = Assistant Referees' Position.

Direction of play depicted by thick uni-direction of play arrow.

Numbered or ? clear circle = Round Team Player(s).

Numbered or ? Square = Square Team Player(s).

Numbered or ? black circle = Referee's position(s).

Double ended arrow on the field of play = Referees' field of view line between him and his Assistant Referees.

Double ended arrow along the touchlines = Assistant Referee's touchline quarter.

Shaded star shape = Active play area.

Fig. 1 Play Area

This is the most important positioning section in this article.

Referees must try to position themselves throughout the game, to have the play area in between themselves and their Assistant Referees. This can not be achieved in all circumstances - but in can easily be achieved in most situations.

The active area of play should always be between the Referee and his Assistant Referee(s). This will enable the Referee to see any flag signals, and to deal with infringements promptly.

A structured approach to positioning will enable the Referee to expend his energy sensibly and to keep enough in store to be able to reach conflict areas quickly.

When commencing a Refereeing career, it can be very exasperating when experienced colleagues (who never sprint anywhere!) always seem to be near the conflict areas on the field of play, whilst new Referees have to sprint for the whole 90 minutes to 'keep up with play'. It is all down to positioning, anticipation, fitness, being alert..... and of course, experience.

Referees should always keep their eyes on the play area. To achieve this, the Referee will need to spend a lot of his time walking and running backwards when moving to new positions.

The Referees diagonal system maximises his positional pattern on the field of play. And should allow the Referee to keep the play action between himself, and his Assistant Referees. The hallmark of a skilful Referee, is good positioning, fitness and movement, and the ability to anticipate play.

Fig. 1 Play Area

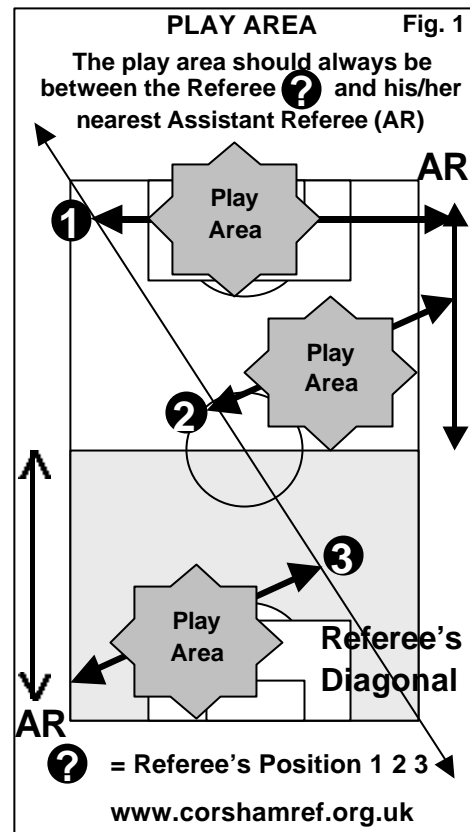


Fig. 2 Place Kick

A place kick is the method of starting a game. It is also used after a team scores a goal (the non-scoring team takes the kick-off).

Before summoning the two captains at the start of the game, and to complete the 'coin tossing' ceremony, the Referee should position himself in the centre circle on the halfway line Fig. 2 position (1), facing towards the far touchline.

Assuming that the round team is taking the place kick, the Referee should then place himself at position (2). Because the round team have the ball, they are more likely to retain possession and attack the square team goal. The Referee should therefore position himself in anticipation of the ball making its way into the square team's half, and having the Assistant Referee in the (top right hand corner) in his line of sight as shown by the arrow.

Position (3) can be taken if the Referee believes that the ball will be played all the way back to the round team's defence.

During place kicks from the centre spot, Assistant Referees should position themselves so that they are adjacent to the second last defender, in readiness to judge for any offsides.

This will prevent the Assistant Referee from having to suddenly sprint to monitor any off-side offences at the commencement of the game, and therefore reduce the risk of injury before they have had time to warm up properly.

The normal position for the Referee prior to a kick-off, is on the Referee's diagonal which he is to patrol, just outside of the centre-circle, and facing the team who are taking the kick-off – and away from the vicinity any congregated players.

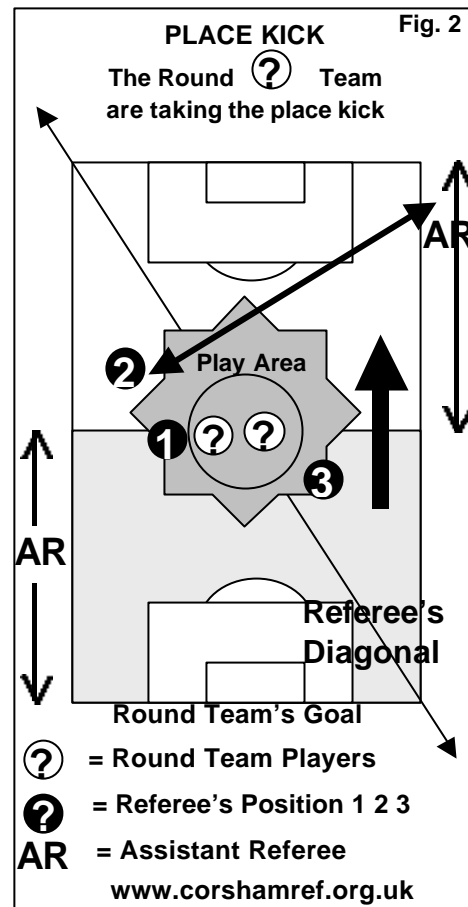
This position can vary slightly, but do try and keep away from the action area.

In other words, do not get in the way of the players during a kick-off – but allow yourself a good view of the centre circle action area. The Referee should aim to stand just outside of the centre circle,

It is important for the Referee to project himself as a figure of authority.

Any weakness shown before the game has commenced will give the wrong signal to players and coaches.

Fig. 2 Place Kick



Referees should ensure that there is plenty of time to complete the coin tossing ceremony prior to kick-off time.

It is very important to create a calm and confident impression by positively summoning the team Captains to the centre-circle with a loud and confident blow of the whistle - "make sure everyone hears it".

A quiet whistle at this stage will demonstrate a weakness to the players - they will probably think: "We have a 'right one' here this week".

Weakness with the whistle is one of the easiest ways to lose the confidence of the players. Be pleasant in your manner to the Captains, be sincere..... and say "Enjoy the game".....

Make sure your bearing is positive and exudes confidence - this will form a good impression for any on-looking players. Test your whistle at home and before you enter the field of play.

On entering the field of play, the Referee should be smartly dressed, and walk towards the centre circle in an upright and confident manner. The ball should be carried (and definitely not dribbled) and placed on the centre spot in readiness for the coin tossing

Figs. 3(a) & 3(b) . Corner Kick

During the taking of corner kicks, the Referee should position himself so that the players in the penalty area are between himself and the Assistant Referee. The aim is to have the play action within the penalty area between the Referee and the Assistant Referee.

To enable the Referee to have a clear view of the play area during the taking of a corner kick, the Referee should take up a varying position approximately within the dark striped area at position (1).

Referees should not enter the goal area (6-yard box), and they should not wander too far to the right of position (1), and neither is there a requirement to enter the penalty area unless it is to deal with conflict, or to get into a better viewing position.

If the corner kick is taking place on the Assistant Referee's side of the field of play, Referees will normally ask their Assistant Referees (AR) to position themselves off the field of play behind the corner kick taker (see AR top right in Fig. 3a).

If the corner kick is being taken on the far side of the field of play to the Assistant Referee, the Referee will decide during his pre-match brief, which of the following two positions he wishes his Assistants to adopt during the taking of corner kicks. (1) On the goal line towards the goal, about 10m (10 yards) down from the corner flag (see AR top right in Fig 3b) - (2) Off the field of play behind the corner kick taker (see AR top right in Fig. 3a).

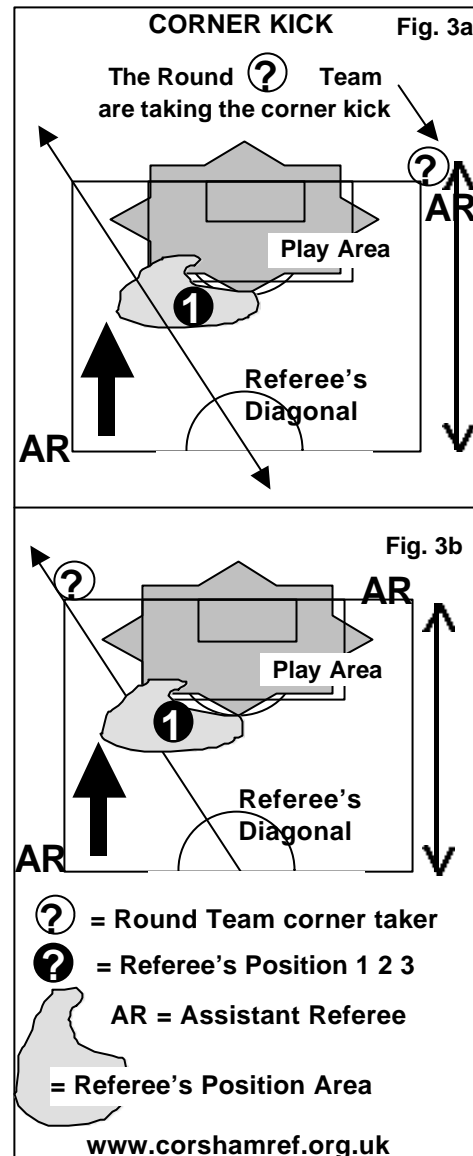
The main task for the Assistant Referee, is to look for the ball crossing over the goal line during its flight from the corner arc, to judge offside when play breaks, and to judge whether the ball has entered the goal or not. If following a corner kick, play breaks quickly down-field towards the round team's half, the Assistant Referee on the right in Fig 3b, can cut across the corner of the field of play, to reposition himself along the touchline to watch for offsides etc.

The inactive AR's on the left (in Figs. 3(a) & (b)) should position themselves alongside the second last round team defender at the far end of the field of play - this will normally mean standing near the halfway line, approximately at the position shown.

If Assistant Referees are available, the Referee should vary his position slightly at each respective corner kick. If Referees take up the same position during all of the corner kicks in a game, players will soon exploit this by fouling opponents on the Referee's 'blind side'. Keep the players guessing by moving around during corner kicks.

Players are very adept at pulling opponents shirts, nudging them, standing on opponents' feet and all sorts of other infringements. By varying his position, players

Figs. 3(a) & 3(b) . Corner Kick



If players are misbehaving themselves before the corner kick has been taken, the Referee should stop play immediately by blowing his whistle loudly, and strongly warn players about their unsporting conduct (and caution players if necessary).

If the Referee is aware of any possible trouble spots between players, then he should adjust his positioning to be nearer to the trouble area, at the same time still keeping a relatively good view of the remaining action area.

Referees should not stand inside the goal area - "unless they want their heads knocked off !!"

Referees are advised to blow their whistle to signal that the corner kick can be taken. A corner kick entails both teams being confined in a small area of the field of play jostling for position - a whistle signal to allow commencement gives players a clear signal that the corner kick is about to be taken, and prevents any misunderstanding should a goal be scored (or an

do not know where the Referee will be, and therefore are less likely to infringe.

Whilst a corner kick is taken, the Referee should never take his eyes off the players in the penalty area. It only takes a second for a player to intimidate an opponent - and all done when the Referee is walking to his starting position whilst having his back to the players !! The Referee should also look out for infringements occurring before and during the taking of the corner kick.

Fig. 4 . Goal Kick

As soon as the Referee has indicated a goal kick, he should start moving backwards to a new position near the centre of the field of play, in readiness to observe any fouls in the drop zone when the goal kick is being taken.

The Referee should look out for fouls committed whilst the ball is still in air following the taking of a goal kick. Referees should aim to position themselves to allow a sideways view of the players contesting for the ball as it is being delivered from the goal kick. Referees will need to anticipate just how far an individual goalkeeper can kick the ball during a goal kick.

Referees should never turn their back on the active players before a goal kick has been taken - this is a common mistake made by new Referees. The Referee must keep his eyes on the ball at all times during the taking of a goal kick. It only takes a fraction of a second (whilst the Referee has his back turned) for the goalkeeper to take a goal kick, and an attacker then illegally enters the penalty area, gains possession of the ball before it has left the penalty area and scores a goal - and all done when the Referee is walking away and looking in the opposite direction !!

The Assistant Referee nearest to the respective goal should signal to the Referee when the ball has passed over the goal line for a goal kick, and check that the goalkeeper completes the goal kick correctly. The Assistant Referee should position himself slightly up the touchline from the corner flag, adjacent to the level of the goal area line (see AR position, top right in Fig. 4). The Assistant Referee should stand sideways to the field of play (facing up towards the half way line) and raise an outstretched flag 90 degrees out horizontally from the body and towards the goal.

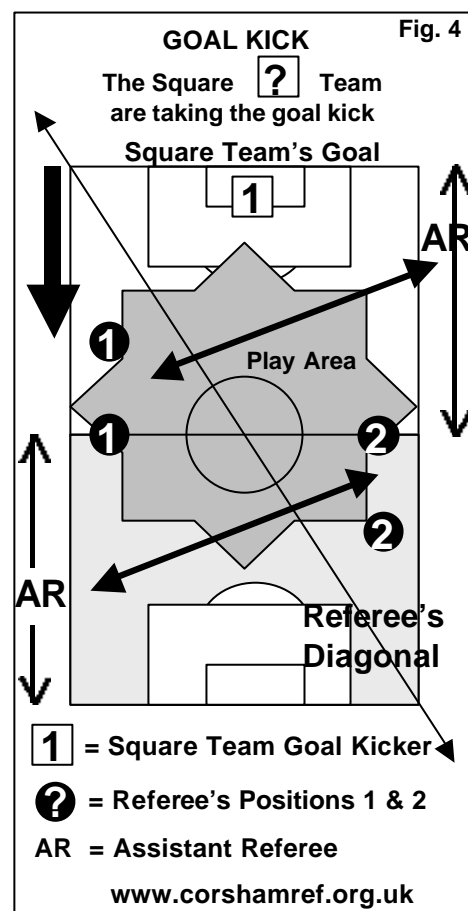
The Assistant Referee can also use body language (depending on the Referee's instruction to him at the beginning of the game). To signal a goal kick using body language, the Assistant Referee should face sideways to the field of play (facing up towards the half way line) with his flag pointing down the inside leg (i.e. so that the Referee has a clear view of the flag). If there

infringement occurring) when the Referee and both teams are not ready.

It is not always possible to whistle commencement at all corner kicks - example, when a quick corner has been taken - in this case, play should be allowed to continue without a whistle signal.

It is not advised that Referees stand at the extreme end of their diagonal on the goal line, when corner kicks are taking place; because there is a danger that they will not be able to catch up with play if the ball suddenly breaks away to the other end of the field of play.

Fig. 4 Goal Kick



It is not recommended that Referees stand in the centre circle (unless the ball is going to be punted out near one of the touchlines).

Positioning during the taking of goal kicks, very much depends on a number of factors:

- (a)... which side of the goal area is the goal kick being taken from, or the ability of the goalkeeper (e.g. how far can he kick the ball),
- (b)... the weather (which direction is the wind blowing ?),

is any dispute between players as to whether the ball has passed over the goal line, or whether it is a corner kick or a goal kick - the Assistant Referee should always use his flag for a sharp signal.

The Assistant Referee will check that the goalkeeper has placed the ball inside the goal area before moving swiftly up field along the touchline, and taking up a position alongside the second last defender (to observe any offsides following the taking of the goal kick). The Assistant Referee and/or the Referee will check to see that the ball has travelled outside the penalty area before another player touches it.

Common sense dictates that the Assistant Referee cannot be in two places at the same time. He should periodically check the correct positioning of the ball during goal kicks, but he should concentrate more on the important aspect of offside.

It is more important for the Assistant Referee to be in a position to judge offside, than it is to worry about whether a ball is in the goal area (or not) before the taking of a goal kick. A good compromise (starting point) is for the Assistant Referees to stand up field, adjacent to the edge of the penalty area. (i.e. 18 yards up from the corner flag).

This allows the Assistant Referee to judge the positioning of the ball in the goal area, and lessens the distance he will have to sprint up the touchline to get alongside the second last defender, when the goal kick is taken.

During the taking of goal kicks, Referees should move out towards the touchline to enable a good panoramic sideways view of the drop zone. (The drop zone is where the Referee anticipates that the ball will reach during a goal kick.)

By standing to one side, the Referee can watch for any pushing or shirt pulling between contesting players. Once the ball has reached the drop-zone the Referee should adjust his position back onto (or near to) his diagonal.

One major consideration for the Referee to contemplate - is that he should place himself in such a position, that he will have a sideways view of the drop-zone (where the ball will reach), and that the drop-zone is between the Referee and the Assistant Referee nearest to where the Referee anticipates play will progress towards.

Question 1: With regards to Goal Kick positions 1 or 2 in Figure 4 above.

If you are looking at Fig. 4 like it is, and the 'Square' team goalkeeper is taking the goal kick from the LEFT side of his goal area; where should the centre Referee stand if the goalkeeper has a good kick, the weather is calm, and the field of play is in good condition? Should the Referee stand in position 1 or should he stand in

(c)...the skill of the players (one team may be better than the other team when contesting for high balls),

(d)...the state of the field of play (the goal area may resemble a muddy patch, making it difficult for the goalkeeper to kick the ball properly - or the grass may be too long) and finally,

(e)...the age of the player taking the goal kick (a youth player will not be able to kick the ball as far as a senior player).

There are two basic positions for a Referee to stand during the taking of a goal kick (positions (1)'s and (2)'s shown in Fig. 4).

The positions can vary slightly - depending on the factors mentioned above.

For example: if the square team goalkeeper at the top of Fig. 4 has a good long range kicking ability, the Referee should stand at the farthest downfield position (2). This will enable the Referee to have a good panoramic view of the play area.

Conversely, if the square team goalkeeper at the top of Fig. 4 has a weak kick, or the wind is blowing strongly towards him, the Referee could stand in either of the positions marked No.1.

An experienced Referee will consider all of the factors before anticipating where the ball will land during the taking of a goal kick. There is no correct position for him to stand. The Referee needs to gauge and adjust his positioning during every goal kick. As a rule of thumb, the Referee should not position himself inside the centre circle (but this position can be taken if there is a very strong wind blowing across the field of play, and the Referee anticipates that the ball will land on the halfway line, somewhere near the touch-line).

Question 2: With regards to Goal Kick positions 1 or 2 in Figure 4 above.

If you are looking at Fig. 4 like it is, and the 'Square' team goalkeeper is taking the goal kick from the RIGHT side of his goal area, where should the centre Referee stand if the goalkeeper has a good kick, the weather is calm, and the field of play is in good condition?

Should the Referee stand in position 1 or should he stand in position 2?

Answer 2: – the answer is the same as Answer 1, except that the Referee should stand further to the right, nearer to the touch line.

In other words, the Referee will need to position himself to get a wider view of the field of play.

This can mean standing on top of the left touch line itself, or even outside of it. Conversely, if the Referee

position 2?

Answer 1: Under these circumstances, the best position to stand is in position 2 depending on how far the goalkeeper can kick the ball. By standing in this position, the Referee will have the 'drop zone' between himself and the Assistant Referee on the far side of the field (bottom left). By taking this position, the Referee will also be positioned closer to the bottom 'Round' team's goal should the ball continue onwards in that direction. If the ball is 'headed' back up towards the top 'Square' team's goal, the greater distance that the ball has to travel will give the Referee more time to catch up with play, by running back up his diagonal towards the 'Square Team's goal'.

One of the greatest factors to consider under these circumstances, is which team is better at winning the high balls. For example, if the 'Round' team at the bottom of the diagram has a tall midfielder who is good at winning high balls, then the Referee would be better taking position 1. The clue to the answer is anticipating both where the 'drop zone' is, AND which team is most likely to win the ball (thus anticipating where the ball will travel).

anticipates that the 'Square' team's goalkeeper at the top of Fig 4 will kick the ball towards the left touch line, the Referee will need to move nearer to the centre of the field of play, and position himself closer to the 'drop zone'.

Fig. (5a) Penalty Kicks.

There is a great deal to look for and to monitor during the taking of penalty kicks.

A change to the Laws for the season 2000/2001 advised that Assistant Referees are now expected to indicate to the Referee when the goalkeeper moves forward from his goal line at a penalty kick - they are also responsible for judging whether the ball has crossed the goal line for a goal.

The nature of the signal to be given is to be determined by the officials in pre-match discussions (briefs). Taking this advice into consideration, the best position for the Referee and the Assistant Referee is depicted by the positions shown in Fig 5a.

It can be very difficult (nearly impossible) for the Referee to watch for all encroachment by players, at the same time as ensuring that the penalty kick is taken correctly. Recently, Referees have been asked to 'clamp down' on encroaching players.

It is very important to let players know beforehand, that encroachment will not be tolerated. Tell the players to stay out of the penalty area and penalty circle, until the kick has taken place.

This sometimes deters players. But invariably - in real life, Referees only have one pair of eyes.

The Referee must give a clear signal to the players (particularly to the penalty taker and the goalkeeper) to tell them when the penalty kick can be taken.

Fig. (5a) Penalty Kicks.

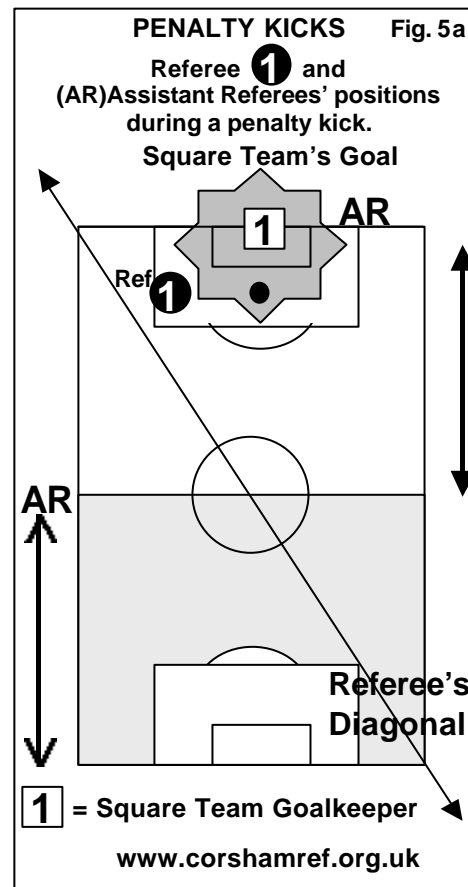


Fig. (5b) Kicks from the Penalty Mark.

The Referee should position himself as shown in Fig. 5b (black circle Ref. No. 1).

The Assistant Referee (AR) who is responsible for monitoring the goal, will take up a position alongside the goal as shown in Fig 5b - (to the right of the goal).

To ensure that the kicks are taken fairly, and as quickly and smoothly as possible, the awaiting goalkeeper (round figure No. 1) should remain in the position shown in Fig. 5b - near the Assistant Referee (AR).

In other words - the goalkeeper who is the team mate of the penalty kick taker, must remain on the field of play, outside the penalty area in which the kicks are being taken, and on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line, at the position shown in Fig 5b 'Awaiting Round Team Goalkeeper'.

This minimises the distance that the goalkeepers' have to walk between kicks. It also prevents managers from providing additional coaching to their goalkeepers between kicks.

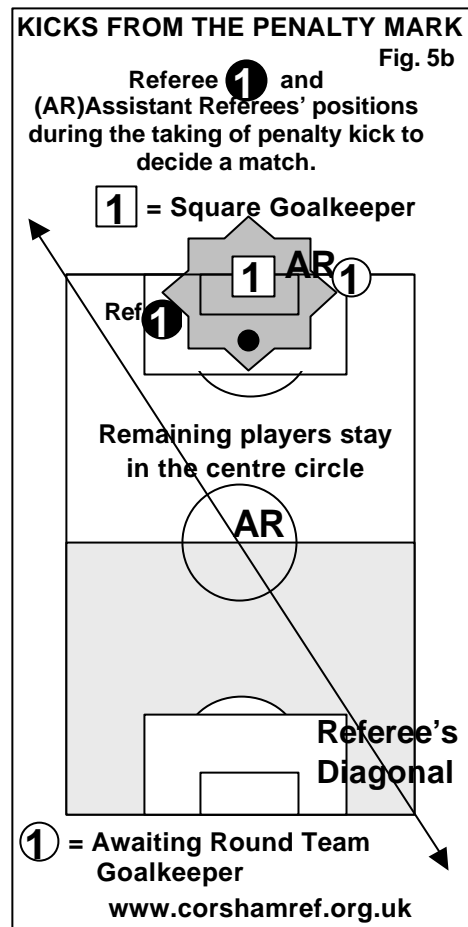
The position of the waiting goalkeeper also allows the Referees' to keep them within sight - thus preventing any unnecessary antics.

The Referee must give a clear signal to the players (particularly to the penalty taker and the goalkeeper) to tell them exactly when the penalty kicks can be taken.

All players, except the player taking the kick and the two goalkeepers, must remain within the centre circle. All team officials must remain off the field of play.

The Assistant Referee who is responsible for organising the players waiting in the centre circle, should position himself in (or near) the centre circle.

Fig. (5b) Kicks from the Penalty Mark.



Figs. 6(a) & 6(b) . Throw-in.

The Referee will need to have a clear view during throw-ins - but he must not get too near to the thrower. The Referee can move away from his diagonal towards the thrower.

The Referee should aim to keep both the thrower & the Assistant Referee in view.

Figures 6a and 6b show the optimum positions for a Referee to stand (alongside, or near to the Referee's diagonal - RD) during the taking of throw-ins.

A team taking a throw-in, already have possession of the ball, so they are more likely to retain it, than losing possession to their opponents.

Therefore, during the taking of a throw-in, the Referee should try and position himself so that he has a panoramic view of the play action (the area where the thrower is standing, and the anticipated area that the ball will be thrown into) between himself and his Assistant Referee.

The Referee should put more onus on anticipating a successful attacking move by the throwing team. An attacking move can develop quickly, so the Referee needs to ensure that he is in such a position to allow himself a good view of the anticipated attacking play area.

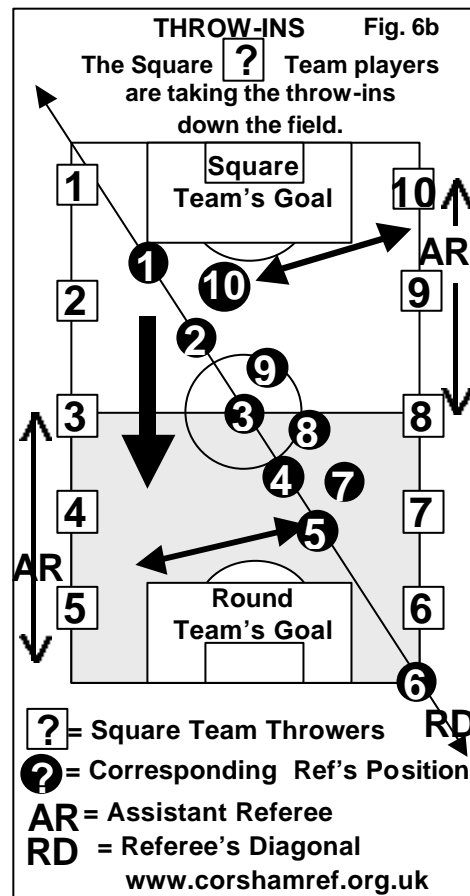
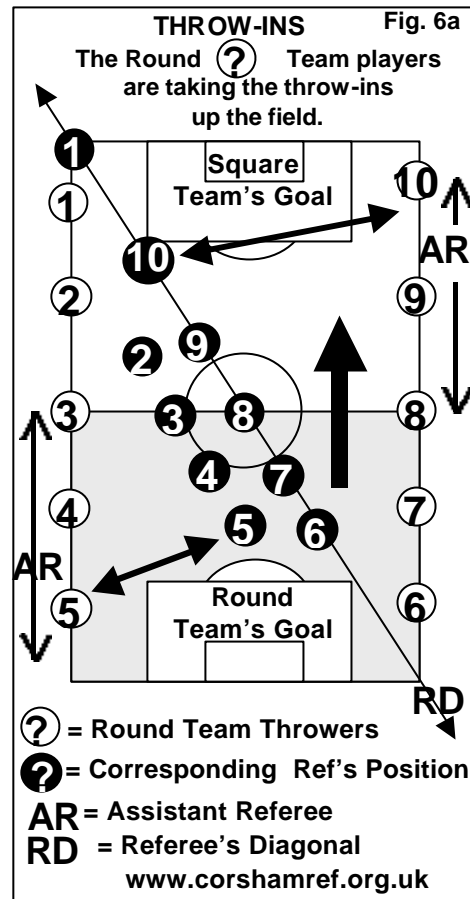
This normally means standing slightly nearer to the halfway line than the thrower - thus keeping the play action between himself and his Assistant Referee.

Two variations to this are as follows:

(a) when the attacking team throw-in is being taken very near the defending team's corner flag at each end of the Referee's diagonal (Fig 6a attacking round team player position 1) and (Fig 6b attacking square team player position 6) - an optimum position for the Referee here (particularly when Club Assistants are being used), is alongside the goal line (or touchline) (Fig 6a Ref black circle position 1) and (Fig 6b Ref black circle position 6). This allows the Referee to have an unobstructed view of the goal area and the play action areas. Referees will need to sprint to this position quickly before a throw-in is taken. This can sometimes be difficult for the Referee to achieve in a fast flowing game. If the Referee is unable to reach this corner flag/goal line position before the throw-in is taken, or when he requires to vary his position and work in conjunction with his Assistant Referee on the far side - he should position himself at (Fig 6a black circle position 10 or Fig 6b black circle position 5). This will make it easier to sprint to the centre circle should play break quickly.

(b) when the attacking team throw-in is being taken within say 20 yards (20 metres) of the defending team's corner flag at the end of the Referee's diagonal (Fig 6a round team player position 1 or 2 and Fig 6b square team player position 6 or 7), the Referee can take up a position on the touchline (nearer to the corner flag than the throwing player). This position enables the Referee to closely

Figs. 6(a) & 6(b) . Throw-in.



monitor the throwing player. It also allows the Referee to have an unobstructed view of the goal area, the play action areas, and the Assistant Referee on the far side of the field of play. The attacking thrower will 'more than likely' throw the ball towards the penalty area. If the Referee is positioned on (or very near) the touchline, he will have a clear view of the area where the ball will be contested for. Taking this position will also enable the Referee to look out for any offside infringements.

Referees will need to sprint to these corner positions quickly before a throw-in is taken. This can sometimes be difficult for the Referee to achieve in a fast flowing game.

If the Referee is unable to reach this corner flag/goal line position at the end of his diagonal before the throw-in is taken - he should position himself at (Fig 6a Ref black circle position 10) or (Fig 6b Ref black circle position 5).

Although the Referee should aim to keep as near to his diagonal as possible, he can deviate from it, to lessen the distance between himself and the thrower, especially if he anticipates any trouble areas between players.

For example, the Referee will need to move away from his diagonal and towards the thrower, when the throw-in is taken near the opposite corner flag to his end diagonal (Fig. 6a round player positions No. 5 & 10) and (Fig. 6b square player positions No. 5 & 10).

Before an attacking team takes a throw-in at the halfway line (player positions 3 or 8) the Referee who should be positioned on or near the halfway line (at Referee positions black circles 3 or 8) should always look over towards his Assistant Referee (the one who is looking out for the attacking team offsides) and locate his position. This locating of the Assistant Referee allows the Referee a fraction of a second, in knowing exactly where to look to identify any ensuing offside flag after a throw-in has been taken. It also develops the Referee/Assistant Referees' eye contact team bonding spirit, and lets the Assistant Referee know "that the Referee is aware of, and is acknowledging and encouraging his participation.

Anticipating play action following a throw-in will enable the Referee to adjust his position and lessen the distance he has to run to catch up with the following throw-in play action. Each game is different, and each player is capable of differing standards - so the Referee will need to adjust his position according to a number of differing factors in every game.

The details shown here enable Referees (new Referees in particular) to understand the importance of positioning during a game. It can be very frustrating for new Referees when they see experienced Referee colleagues almost strolling around during a match - whilst they themselves seem to have to sprint to all their positions during their early games. It's all down to anticipation and

If Assistant Referees are available, the Referee will normally conduct and take charge of throw-ins taken at player positions' 1,2,3,6,7,8 - whereas, the Assistant Referees would be expected to conduct and take charge of throw-ins taken at player positions' 3,4,5,8,9,10.

Assistant Referees should be positioned near, but not impeding the thrower. And be goal side of the thrower on the touch-line.

When Club Assistant Referees are used, the Referee will need to take more responsibility for ensuring that a throw-in is taken correctly. The Referee can give his Club Assistant Referees some responsibility for ensuring that the throw-in is taken correctly (some Referees allow their Club Assistant Referees to watch and signal for any 'feet faults' during the throw-in, whilst the Referee watches for hand faults.) If the Referee wishes to take full responsibility for correct throw-ins, he will need to position himself nearer to the touchline, to lessen this viewing angle along the touchline when watching for feet faults.

A defensive team taking a throw-in, within their own half of the field of play, already has possession of the ball, and are more likely to retain it, than losing possession to the attacking team. Therefore, the Referee should put more onuses on anticipating a successful defensive move.

A defending move in this area of the field of play can develop quickly, so the Referee needs to ensure that he is in such a position to allow himself a good view of the anticipated defensive play area, and to be able to move quickly into the other half of the field of play as play develops. The Referee can do this by standing slightly nearer to the halfway line than the defending team's thrower - thus keeping the play action between himself and his Assistant Referee. This allows the Referee to have an unobstructed view of all the play action areas. The Referee would not be expected to position himself near the corner flag or on the goal line when a throw-in is taken by the defensive team in their own half of the field of play by the corner flags (Fig 6a round team player position 6 and Fig 6b square team player position 1).

correct positioning - and of course experience.

Although the Referee should aim to keep as near to his diagonal as possible, he can deviate to lessen the distance between himself and the thrower, especially if he anticipates any trouble areas between players.

For example, the Referee will need to move away from his diagonal and towards the thrower, when the throw-in is taken near the opposite corner flag to his end diagonal (Fig. 6a round player positions No. 5 & 10) and (Fig. 6b square player positions No. 5 & 10).

Before an attacking team takes a throw-in at the halfway line (player positions 3 or 8) the Referee who should be positioned on or near the halfway line (at Referee positions black circles 3 or 8) should always look over towards his Assistant Referee (the one who is looking out for the attacking team off-sides) and locate his position.

This locating of the Assistant Referee allows the Referee a fraction of a second, in knowing exactly where to look to identify any ensuing off-side flag after a throw-in has been taken. It also develops the Referee/Assistant Referees' eye contact team bonding spirit, and lets the Assistant Referee know "that the Referee is aware of, and is acknowledging and encouraging his participation.

When Club Assistant Referees are used, the Referee will need to take more responsibility for ensuring that a throw-in is taken correctly. The Referee can give his Club Assistant Referees some responsibility for ensuring that the throw-in is taken correctly (some Referees allow their Club Assistant Referees to watch and signal for any 'feet faults' during the throw-in, whilst the Referee watches for hand faults.) If the Referee wishes to take full responsibility for correct throw-ins, he will need to position himself nearer to the touchline, to lessen this viewing angle along the touchline when watching for feet faults.

Fig. 7a . Free Kicks.

Because free kicks can happen in any area of the field of play, it is impossible to describe Referee positioning in all instances. As mentioned with Goal Kick positioning above, there are a number of factors that the Referee will need to take into consideration. Anticipation of how play will develop is a major factor when deciding positioning. Nevertheless, the overriding aim is for the Referee to keep the play action between himself and his Assistant Referee.

Fig. 7a shows six possible positions that the Referee can take during the taking of free kicks. For example, when a Square player is taking a free kick at position marked by the square player No. 4, the Referee should position himself at Referee position 4 as depicted by the black circle numbered 4. (or at Referee position 1., 2, or 3 depending on how near to the goal, the Referee anticipates the ball reaching).

Position 6a should be taken, if the Referee anticipates that the defending Round Team will win the high ball emanating from the free kick taken by the Square Team from position 6 in the top right hand corner of the field of play. Conversely, if the Square Team have tall attackers who are good at winning high balls, the Referee should place himself at position 6b, as opposed to position 6a. Once he has indicated the approximate area of the restart, the Referee should try to move quickly out of the way. The Referee would not normally interfere with the kicking team's right to take a quick free kick when the location is well away from the penalty area. The aim is to get the ball back into play as soon as possible - unless the team taking the free kick asks for help in dealing with encroaching opponents.

Below are some tips for Referee positioning during the taking of free kicks:

- (a) Always try and keep the players involved, and your respective Assistant Referee in view at all times.
- (b) The Referee does not necessarily have to 'be on the spot' to organise every free kick. But will need to be in close proximity to prevent any retaliatory after-effects following a 'crunching' foul tackle.
- (c) The nearer the free kick gets to the goal, the more the Referee will need to manage the free kick restart.
- (d) During 'ceremonial' free kicks taken near the goal, the Referee should stand out wide, and behind the wall, between the wall and the goal line (or in front and slightly to the side of the wall), thus giving a good view of the defensive wall, goal, players and the Assistant Referee.
- (e) Referees should not turn their back on players involved with a free kick.
- (f) Do not physically push back players in a defending wall.
- (g) Aim to be near the ball drop zone, following a lofted free kick. This way, Referees can look out for fouls committed whilst players are battling for possession. Try and get a sideways view of the drop zone.

Fig. 7a . Free Kicks.

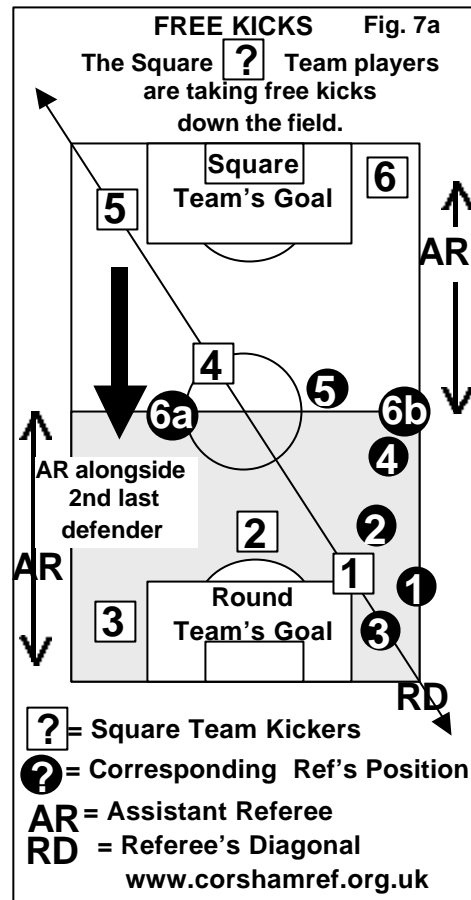
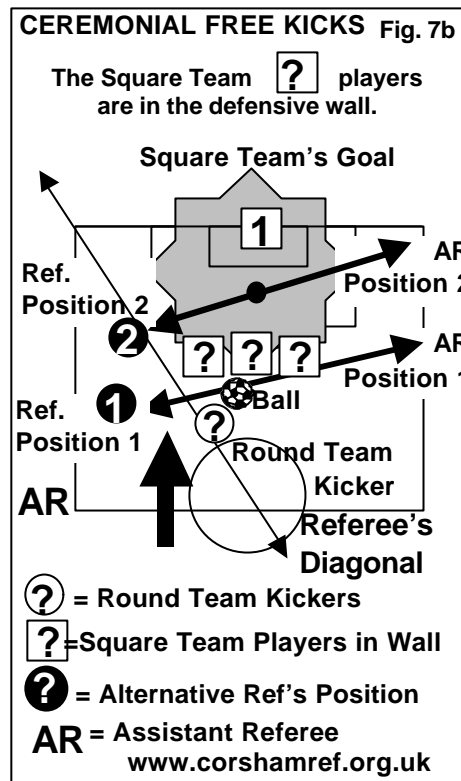


Fig. 7b. Ceremonial Free Kicks.

During the 'ceremonial' type free kicks nearer to the goal, the Referee will usually (but not always) 'orchestrate the taking of the free kick. This allows the defensive wall to position itself, and for the attacking team to discuss shooting tactics. This is now an accepted part of football. The Referee usually tells the players to NOT start (ceremonial free kicks) until they have received his signal, and he does this by tapping his whistle or pointing to it, indicating that players must wait for a whistle before executing the free kick. If a team then takes a 'ceremonial' type free kick before the Referee has signalled, then the kick should be retaken. In Fig 7b, the Referee at Ref. position (Black circle No. 1), uses his Assistant Referee to judge for offside. The Referee at position 1 has a good view of the play action, and can see all the players involved, including the goalkeeper and the Assistant Referee. If the Referee decides to take up position 2, he will monitor any offside infringements - and the Assistant Referee can be placed alongside the goal line to act as the goal judge. (AR Position No. 2.) AR Position 2, is useful if an attacking team has a good free kick taker, and the Referee anticipates that a shot will be fiercely 'blasted' towards goal. In this instance, the Referee has decided that his Assistant Referee is better placed than him, to see if the ball crosses the goal line between the goal posts for a goal - or not!!

Fig. 7b. Ceremonial Free Kicks.



Let the players know that any 'ceremonial' free kicks must not take place until you have signalled. Stand in front of the ball, talk to them, organise the defending wall, prevent opponents from throwing 'handbags' at each other, hold your whistle up to show players that you will signal when the kick can take place - in short, take full control of the situation. This will prevent all sorts of problems arising should you leave players to organise the 'ceremonial' free kicks (near goal) themselves.

The Referee is not obliged to prolong a free kick taken near the goal area - so there is nothing to stop a team taking a quick free kick. This gives the advantage to the attacking team. There is also no obligation (unless he specifically tells the players to await his signal) for the Referee to blow his whistle before a free kick can take place. If the attacking team 'plays on' immediately, irrespective of whether the defending team is within 10 yards or not, then play must be allowed to continue. If the move does not materialise, and the attacking team then complain that the defenders were not 10 yards away, it would be grossly unfair under such circumstances to allow the attacking team to have two chances at the free kick, just because their quick free kick did not prove fruitful! If the attacking team wants to take a quick free kick, then they cannot expect the Referee to provide them with the ten yards' distance. If the result of the quick free kick is a goal, then this should be allowed to stand - so long as no infringements to the Laws have occurred. To prevent any problems in free kick situations near the goal, the Referee should (if he can) ask the attacking team if they want to take a quick free kick or not. If they do, then play should be allowed to start at any time. If the attacking team do not want to take a quick free kick, then the Referee must instruct them to wait for his whistle - and this must be enforced. This way, the Referee can move to his position and control the distance of the wall from the ball before the free kick is taken. If the free kick is then taken before the Referee has signalled by blowing his whistle and a goal is scored, then bad luck for the attacking team. The goal must be disallowed and the free kick retaken. There can be no other decision. The intention is to give the initiative to the attacking side by allowing them to take a free-kick without needing to wait for the referee's whistle - unless they request the wall be moved back. The initiative must always be with the attacking side, the team that have been offended against. They are perfectly entitled to take a quick free-kick and Referees are actively encouraged to keep the game moving in that respect. However, if the player taking the free-kick, or indeed one of his team-mates, asks the referee to move the wall or any defender back, they must then wait for the official to give the instruction as to when to take the free-kick. That would then give the defending team the time to prepare their wall.

Figs. 8a & 8b. Referees diagonal.

It is an individual Referee's decision, to decide which touchline his Assistant Referees will patrol. There is nothing in the Laws to stipulate otherwise.

Some Referees prefer their Assistants to patrol the touchline area nearest to the players' left-back position, and others prefer their Assistant Referees to patrol the touchline nearest to the right-back player position. Some authorities (and Countries) insist on one method or the other.

New Referees should be encouraged to vary the positioning of their 'Linesmen' before they become too accustomed to only running in one diagonal direction.

Most Referees like to keep their Assistant Referees patrolling the same touchline in both halves of the game. But some ask their Assistant Referees to swap touchlines in the second half - and some have been known on the odd occasion to make their Assistant Referees run the far end of the same touchline that they patrolled in the first half.

The general method is to keep Assistants on the same touchline throughout the game - the senior more experienced Assistant Referee normally takes the 'Technical Area' side (because he is more experienced in dealing with any unruly 'bench' occupants.)

It can sometimes be useful to allow the junior Assistant Referee to 'have a go' at controlling the technical area side of the field of play. This will allow the Junior Assistant Referee to gain experience with dealing with the Technical Area occupants, and management of the substitutions. The Referee will normally run up and down a diagonal from one corner flag to the other, diagonally across the field of play during the game.

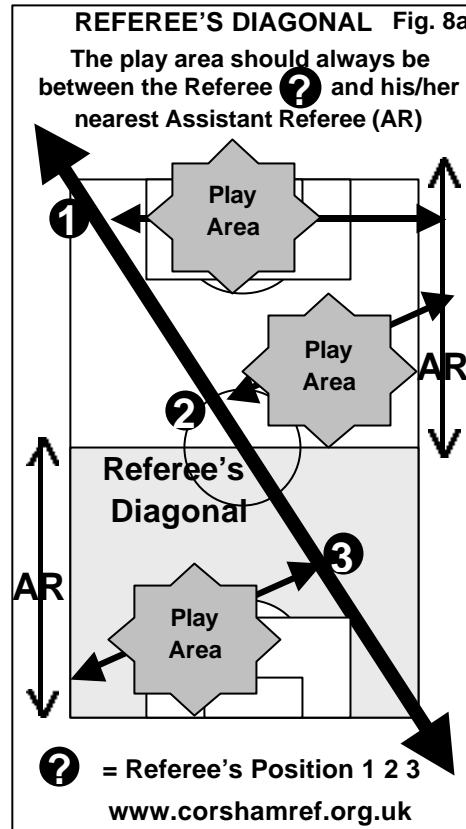
The Assistant Referees will be asked to run respective touchlines, depending on which diagonal the Referee runs during a game.

In Figs 8a & 8b, the Referee's diagonal is from bottom right corner to top left corner.

The Assistant Referees are therefore positioned (as also depicted in Figs 8a & 8b) alongside the players' left back touchline positions at either end of the field of play.

If the Referee decides to run an opposite diagonal from bottom left corner to top right corner, then his Assistant Referees would patrol the touchline nearest to the players' right back position. The idea of running a diagonal, is to maximise the Referee's energy by enabling him to keep the play action between himself and his nearest Assistant Referee - without having to cover every blade of grass!

Figs. 8a & 8b. Referees diagonal.



Before deciding which area of the touchline the Assistant Referees should patrol, the following factors should be considered by the Referee.....

...The 'geography' of the respective 'Technical Areas' during the pre-match field inspection. Is the technical area marked?

Are they near to each other?

Are they big enough to contain the permitted occupants - if not, where will the occupants stand?

Is one bigger than the other and better equipped thus giving an advantage to one team?

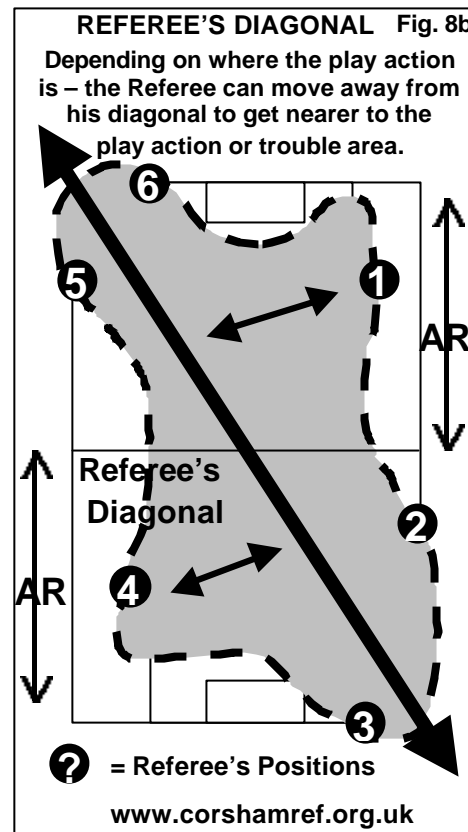
Will the Assistant Referee run past the technical areas on his allocated touchline, and are they near enough for him to control and monitor?

What is the state of the touchline? - it is very common for the left back touchlines to become muddy and bumpy due to the constant running up and down by Assistant Referees.

Where are most of the crowd standing?

If there are no technical areas, where will the teams camp?

Fig. 8b. Referees diagonal.



The shaded area in Fig. 8b above shows the areas that the Referee will be expected to move into during a game. He does not have to run up and down exactly on his diagonal (bottom right corner to top left corner).

The Referee will not normally venture into the non-shaded areas of Fig. 8b, and will only do so if there is any conflict to deal with.

The non-shaded areas are better policed by the respective Assistant Referees who are much nearer to the action than the Referee could ever be.

Positioning at the higher levels involves many more factors for consideration. The players are fitter, and large crowds may be involved. The coaches and the managers are more experienced, and it will take greater skill to keep them under control. The players themselves have a finical pressure to do well. Players retain possession of the ball for longer periods, and they are expert at getting all they can out of the Referee. Some of the players have more experience at their playing level than the Referee. In these higher levels of football, players are invariably much more fitter (and younger) than Referees. It is therefore important when making a step up the Refereeing ladder, to increase your fitness levels in order to keep up with the players you are expected to referee! Running a strict diagonal system is a good foundation for Referees to learn the basics of positioning on the field of play. It allows the Referee to utilise his Assistant Referees (and Club Linesmen) without having to think too much about positioning. And on most occasions, the Referee is in the right place at the right time.

To increase credibility of decisions, and to maintain your authority and control, a Referee officiating in the higher levels will need to move away from a strict diagonal pattern, and adopt what is known as a '**Flexible Control Path**'. Here, Referees need to be much closer to the play action and have a good line-of-sight during all incidents occurring on the field of play. One of the 'tricks of the trade' is to make better use the '**DEAD BALL TIME**', by moving more quickly into a new position. This will give you a much greater advantage when making decisions in the next phase drop zone or play area.

The GIVE & GO: GIVE & SORT Technique:

If play has stopped, (or you stop play), there is no need to hang around when there is **no** trouble brewing. '**GIVE**' the foul, goal kick, corner etc, and '**GO**' away immediately to take up a new position. This will minimise dissent and allow you to position yourself much quicker pending the next anticipated phase of play area. Have breather when you get there. **GIVE & GO**.

If you anticipate that there may be potential trouble after stopping play for a foul (or after the ball has naturally gone out of play) - then '**GIVE**' a decision and then '**SORT**' it out. In these cases, you will need to sprint to the trouble spot. The faster you can get there - the less trouble you will have to contend with. When restarting play, advise the players to await your whistle signal. This will allow you time to move to your new position - thus controlling the game on your terms when it really matters. **GIVE & SORT**.

GIVE & GO: GIVE & SORT

If the ball is hoisted long up the field, don't necessarily run along your diagonal, but try and get as far forward as you can - taking the shortest route. This can on occasions mean running out wide towards the touchline, in order to keep play between yourself and your Assistant Referee. Rely more on your experienced Assistant Referees - there is normally no need to get close if play is towards the corner near an Assistant Referee. Try to anticipate where the ball might go next. Holding back a little will allow you to quickly move wide, should a cross come in from the corner. Try and keep out of the centre circle at all times, unless you use it as the shortest route from A to B.

Thinking ahead to anticipate play also helps. When you make a decision to run out wide, ask yourself what you would do if the ball suddenly goes far into the other half. This will allow you to react faster when you need a sharp change of direction! In other words, don't just think about reaching your current new position - plan an escape route.

Running diagonals with Club Linesmen is totally different to running diagonals with Assistant Referees. The Referee with Club Linesmen will need to judge the capabilities of both his Club Linesmen. For example, if one of the Club Linesmen is of the breed "Wellington boots, fag in mouth, pace of a snail, has not got a clue about offside etc" and the other Club Linesman is of the breed "I am a Registered Referee and have been Refereeing 20 years" and he can run and signal better than you can! etc. etc. Then the Referee can adjust his diagonal to apply more emphasis on being nearer the 'fag in mouth' half of the field of play. Thus giving more responsibility to the more experienced Club Linesman. This enables the Referee to make most of the 'fag end' decisions himself, and quickly correct the wrong decisions of the snail! Every game is different - it is all a case of balancing the amount of usefulness you can get out of each Club Linesman. In general, I find Club Linesmen to be excellent – some of them are even better than proper Assistants that I have come across. If this is the case, I always try and persuade them to take up the whistle, and have been successful on many occasions. The strange thing, is that some of them quickly pass you on the promotion ladder and leave you well behind! But good luck to them (Julian Carosi).