

Welcome, with an International perspective.

Welcome to the 28th edition of The Corsham Referee monthly International Referees' newsletter. Please let me have any contributions for the newsletter, as readers are always interested in hearing about Refereeing from around the world. Please let me know if you have any difficulties in receiving or reading the newsletter; and let me have any suggestions on how it can be improved. It is issued free by email in both html (web page format), and plain text format. Previous issues (and printable pdf versions) can be seen by using the Newsletter link on the home page of my www.corshamref.org.uk web site. This newsletter is issued approximately on the 1st day of each calendar month.

This month, the newsletter contains combination of news from around the world and some advice for you to think about. My 'Ten Refereeing Tips' that appeared in the August 2005 edition of this newsletter, are now featuring as a three part instalment in the Referees' Association national magazine 'Refereeing Today'. As the Managing and Laws Manager for 'Refereeing Today', I can only encourage those of you who are serious about Refereeing, to subscribe to the 'Refereeing Today' magazine. Subscription rates are low, and the magazine can be posted to wherever you are in the world. <http://www.refereeingtoday.com/>

Keep up the good Refereeing work wherever you are in the world; and welcome to our new readers.

GOAL SAFETY:

Football should be fun, safe and enjoyable, whether you play in a park, at school or for a local club. The FA has produced Guidance notes and Technical notes and is re-launching this important campaign that sets the standards in Goal Post Safety.

Background:

Tragically, several children in England have been killed as a result of falling goalposts since 1991.

During the 2001/02 season, The Football Association carried out a programme of on site inspection and testing of goalpost sets at a number of sites across the country. Some of the findings are as follows:

Of all goals tested, 41% of mini-soccer goals, 50% of 5-a-side goals and 22% of junior goals failed stability tests.

These types of goals are almost all of a portable type and reliant upon secure means of 'holding down', either using anchors or weights.

Anchor weights are rarely used properly or to the recommended loading.

Ground conditions can affect the stability of goals therefore it is important to liaise with manufacturers on the appropriate ground fixings in relation to weather conditions

Users at every 2nd site were unaware of the safety campaign involving goalposts. Through extending this campaign to the third year - with 250,000 leaflets going out to Clubs, Schools, youth groups, referees, coaches and leisure facilities across the country from the beginning of November 2002 – The FA is committed to raising this awareness and aims to create a safer environment for all football.

Only 51% of users were unaware of how goalposts should be assembled correctly

Only 50% of goals inspected and tested had any means of identification and many are pre - PAS or BS/CEN standards

Key Areas of FA Concern:

The stability of goalposts

Wooden Goals

5-a-side or goals on artificial pitches – not properly weighted

Mini soccer goals – not erected properly

Metal cup hooks – dangers of cuts, gouging

Modifying of existing goals and DIY changes or welding of equipment

(Source: <http://www.thefa.com/Grassroots/FacilityDevelopment/GoalpostSafety/>)

Unsafe Goals include:

Goals often built before 1996 to poor standards

Home made goals.

Rusted goals or goals with rusted bolts

UEFA's REFEREE SEMINAR

UEFA's annual seminar for leading officials got under way in the House of European Football in Nyon on Tuesday 30 Aug 05 with a rousing speech from UEFA Chief Executive Lars-Christer Olsson as the referees completed their final preparations for the new club and international seasons.

Fitness test

This year the main emphasis of the third summer gathering for UEFA Elite and Premier referees, and the fifth seminar for assistant referees, was placed on practical discussions with fitness work and UEFA's strict new policy on the protection of officials at the top of the agenda.

'Protecting referees'

"Football is a game of emotions," Mr Olsson told the seminar in his opening speech. "But it is the role of the officials to remain calm even when players, coaches and supporters are feeling the strain. That is why it is imperative that we give you the best protection possible and we will strike hard on any club or individual who abuses the match officials."

'Total focus'

The Elite and Premier referees were then given a fascinating insight into mental preparations for a game by sports psychologist Mattia Piffaretti. "As a referee you go through a range of emotions throughout a game and it is crucial you react in the right way," Piffaretti said. "With everything that is going on they need to be in the right frame of mind to withstand the pressure and all the distractions so they can focus fully on the job in hand."

'Mental suitcase'

"My advice would be for officials to pack their mental suitcase long before the game so they are fully prepared for the emotional journey on which they are about to embark." He added: "Right now, I am only here to see what the general feedback is to my ideas but hopefully if the referees feel they can benefit from my work, I can play a role in helping the officials become more mentally prepared."

'Physical challenge'

Further presentations were made by UEFA Referees' Committee member Vladimir Sajn on maintaining consistency in the game and from UEFA's refereeing manager Yvan Cornu on dealing with security issues before UEFA Technical committee member Andy Roxburgh and Olympique Lyonnais coach Gérard Houllier provided a presentation on reading the game. While the referees were being put into overdrive mentally, their assistants were being put through their paces on a physical level as they tried the new FIFA fitness test under the watchful eye of UEFA's fitness expert Werner Helsen.

'Successful trial'

"Not only did it give us a chance to see if the test suited the officials it also gave us an insight into their fitness levels," Helsen told uefa.com. "This new test is all about interval training and short sprints and is far more suited to the movements made by referees in matches. The test was a success and almost everyone achieved the necessary standard."

All in all the gathering was a great success.

'More transferable'

As the Elite and Premier officials departed on Wednesday morning the assistants were given one final presentation on their roles this season by FIFA referees' instructor Manuel López Fernández. "All in all the gathering was a great success," said UEFA Referees' Committee member Ken Ridden as the course came to a close on Wednesday. "It was great to see all the referees and assistants together and I expect the standard of refereeing will improve again as a result of this seminar."

<http://www.uefa.com>

PENALTY RECORD FOR FA CUP

An FA Cup tie in England was settled by a record penalty shoot-out of 40 attempts, with Tunbridge Wells beating Littlehampton FC 16-15. The previous record was 24 penalties.

(The Guardian 2 Sept 05)

REFEREE ASSAULTED AT UNDER-11 MATCH

Montreal, 2nd September 2005

The parent of a young Canadian footballer has been charged with assault after a referee was attacked and punched over a red card he gave to a star player who tripped an opponent. Alexi Tsasack, 30, was recording the player's number in his notebook when three parents allegedly stormed the field and jumped him from behind in an U11 boys' game between Rosemont and NDG. A bystander jumped a fence and tried to lead the stunned referee away from the parents. The NDG team's coach was allegedly hit and kicked by three parents from the opposing team. "Is this what I get for volunteering to coach soccer?" asked Matteo Cappadocia, who suffered a bloody nose.

REFEREES' ASSOCIATION (RA) MEMBERSHIP DROPPING

The year-end figures for England showed a further decline and this was probably in line with the FA's own slight decrease in registered referees. Figures for the end of March for the last few years are:

2001 16130

2002 15179

2003 14290

2004 13630

2005 13149

The big drops took place from 2000 to 2003 when we were losing 1000 members a year. Has the rapid decline been halted? Let's hope so.

NEW RA SHOP

The RA now have a dedicated sales website.

Visit www.RAshop.co.uk to see the new ranges and marvel at the bargain prices.

RAshop has been launched using a new highly secure credit and debit card sales platform. It makes purchasing painless and simple.

CLIPS FROM THE THE MIDLAND REFEREE NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 05

LIONS RUGBY HELPLINE

For those who follow men who play with funny shaped balls, a British & Irish Lions helpline has been set up. It is 0800 10 10 10. That is, 0800, won nothing, won nothing, won nothing.

TOP REFEREES

The 5 Referees who refereed most games in the FA Barclays Premiership in England last season, with the number of yellow and red cards each issued were: Graham Poll 31 games, 101 yellow cards, 4 red cards; Steve Bennett 28-98-5; Mike Riley 27-77-7; Rob Styles 23-65-7; Howard Webb 23-72-2.

RED START TO RA CONFERENCE

This year's annual Referees' Association Conference in Southport England, began in style at 7.30pm on Friday 17th June with 'Supper with Southport' and the entrance of the European Champions Cup, won by Liverpool for the 5th time the previous month. Two Liverpool security guards took the Cup to all the tables so that photographs could be taken. Referees expressed their gratitude to Geoff White who had organised the surprise. Referees' wives who were Liverpool fans and who had given Geoff a kiss, had to wipe their lips when they found out he was actually a Man Utd fan.

VIETNAMESE REFEREE ARRESTED FOR ALLEGED MATCH-FIXING

Hanoi, 26th August - A professional-level Vietnamese referee has been arrested and will face trial on match-fixing charges, becoming the first target of a campaign to rid football of corruption. Referee Luong Trung Viet, 37, and three assistants are accused of taking 20 million dong (nearly 1,300 dollars) from a national V-league team to fix a match in April. Viet was arrested in a southern Vietnamese province but the three assistant referees were still free pending further investigation. Vietnam's domestic V-League has been marred by allegations of corruption and match-fixing among players since its debut 2000-01 season. Viet is the first referee to be investigated under a so-called "clean hands" campaign to rid the sport of corruption.

BOTSWANA MISSION

Botswana, 27th August - TheFA Head of Refereeing, John Baker, and Southern Area Referee Manager, Janie Frampton, were in Botswana for a week where they cleared any confusion created by the new Law changes and amendments. They used theory and practice to interpret the changes to local referees. Baker told Botswana's 'Mmegi Sport' that an amendment that seemed to be causing too much confusion was the one on offside. He stressed: "We will be with 33 referees at the National Stadium to tell them how the new interpretation works. It seems to be causing confusion in many countries, but I hope by the end of the day, they will be more knowledgeable about it." Baker praised the Botswana Football Association (BFA) for taking refereeing seriously as compared to other countries. He said the initiative by the BFA to train referees 3 times a week is a welcome development that other countries need to emulate. He added that physical fitness makes a good referee. Janie Frampton spoke about her experiences as a woman referee in England and encouraged more women to take up the whistle in Botswana. (www.Internationalreferee.com)

RED CARD SEND OFF

Llanelli, South Wales, 14th August - Footballer Stephen Sherriff, 21, tragically killed in a car crash, had a referee's red card put in his coffin to send him on his way.

LONGER SHORTS!

Preston, Lancs - Some local referees have reported players of Canaries FC, a predominantly Asian club, to TheFA for wearing longer-than-usual shorts. The players wear 'Stanley Matthews-style' kit because of Islamic edicts regarding modesty. Soho Square, which has recently issued guidelines to clubs and leagues promoting religious and racial tolerance, has raised no objection to the kit.

FIFA ORDER WORLD CUP MATCH TO BE REPLAYED

Bahrain and Uzbekistan will have to replay their World Cup play-off first leg match because of a mistake made by FIFA Japanese referee Toshimitsu Yoshida. The Bahrain Football Federation received a letter cancelling the result, which Uzbekistan won 1-0 on 3rd September. Yoshida ruled out a penalty scored by Uzbek's Server Djeparov because of encroachment in the area by a team-mate, but crucially did not allow them to retake the penalty kick, awarding a free kick to Bahrain on the edge of the penalty area where the team-mate had encroached.

The Laws of the Game are written to cover 'in the opinion of the referee'. Yoshida was wrong on a point of Law, which says the penalty kick must be retaken. Games cannot be replayed if the referee's opinion turned out to be wrong, but he applied the Law incorrectly and so Fifa were left with no alternative.

The new date will be on Saturday, October 8th in Tashkent, with the 2nd leg, Bahrain v Uzbekistan, in Manama on Wednesday, 12th October, which will be refereed by Graham Poll. Neither team has ever qualified for the World Cup finals. The winner will play the fourth placed team from CONCACAF for the right to go through to the finals.

MICROCHIP EXPERIMENT BEGINS IN FIFA UNDER-17 TOURNAMENT

Lima, Peru (Reuters) - It looks just like any ordinary football but the adidas "smartball" that made its official debut in the Fifa Under-17 World Championship in Peru on Friday 16th September could change the face of football forever. The smartball is fitted with a tiny microchip designed to help a referee decide whether the ball has crossed the line completely for a goal to be scored, and will also be used to determine whether the ball has gone out of play.

CLIPS FROM THE TELEGRAPH NEWSPAPER <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/>

CURVED BALL IDEA

During the 0-0 draw between Tottenham and Liverpool last weekend, at least one goal was denied because an out-swinging corner was judged to have crossed the goal-line before being headed into the net. I have seen this before and find it an irritating example of the law-makers' laziness in keeping up with developments in the game. Now that the ball can be bent with relative ease, it seems silly to hamper the technique, not just at corners but in open play. Why, for instance, if a player is clever enough, should he not be able to bend the ball outside an opponent on the touchline, so long as it lands back on the field? It is an unnecessary restriction. Law 9 could easily be amended to say that the ball is out of play when it has wholly crossed the line and touched the ground or another surface or a player, the italicised bit replacing the current "whether on the ground or in the air". It would make football ever so slightly tidier and better.

(Patrick Barclay 18 Sept 05)

THE RIOT ACT - NEARLY!

There is a lovely old apocryphal tale about the Liverpool manager Bill Shankly when he was managing Huddersfield Town. The young Denis Law had missed a couple of days of training to return to Scotland without permission, and Shankly decided that his beloved protégé was in need of a few home truths. He asked his assistant manager Andy Beattie to help him rehearse the reading of the riot act. Three times Shankly's assistant walked in pretending to be the player, but the manager was unable to find the scolding tone he needed. A fourth time Shankly heard the knock on his door and looked up determined to give poor Beattie both barrels. But in walked Law instead.

"Denis, it's you," said Shankly walking across to embrace his prodigal son. "Where have you been? We have been worried about you."

(Clive Tyldesley 17 Sept 05)

ITALY'S FIRST LADY

Anna De Toni made history on 25 Sept 2005 when she became the first woman to referee a match in the Italian league. De Toni, 28, took charge of the fixture between Alto Adige and Lecco in Serie C2, Italy's fourth division. *(25 Sept 05)*

PEACE TO REFEREES

The spirit of the late Brian Clough lives on at Manchester City, where manager Stuart Pearce and his players have declared peace on referees. Pearce, who, of course, played under Clough at Nottingham Forest, says: "He had a strict code of conduct and I can't see the point of chasing a referee around a pitch. They never change their mind anyway." Pearce admits having a quiet word with referee Graham Salisbury after Nedum Onuoha was sent off in the Carling Cup defeat at Doncaster in midweek, which resulted in the red card being rescinded.

But he adds: "As soon as a manager of a Premiership side who have just been knocked out of the Carling Cup turns round and says 'bad decisions, bad decisions', he hasn't got a leg to stand on."

The only disappointing aspect of Pearce's commendable attitude is that he will never match the priceless invective of Harry Redknapp, who has been accused of using abusive or insulting words towards an official after referee Nigel Miller allowed Derby's Inigo Idiakez to re-take a penalty against Southampton last weekend.

Redknapp said: "Our goalkeeper made a great save but then some linesman who had never been on telly before realised his mum might be watching and decided to make a name for himself. "

(25 Sept 05)

POLL TESTED NEW HI-TECH EARPIECE

Graham Poll become the first referee to operate a new hi-tech communications system which enabled all four officials to be in contact with each other during the Newcastle v Manchester City game on 24 Sept 05. Poll also tested the system in the Liverpool v Chelsea Premier League game played on 2 October 05. There have been similar experiments in the past but the equipment proved inadequate with outside interference - during a match one referee suddenly heard through his earpiece that his taxi was waiting outside. The latest equipment is based on that used by the Ministry of Defence in places such as Iraq, and Keith Hackett, manager of the select group of Premiership referees, is hopeful that if the communications system can successfully operate in a sensitive area like Baghdad it should be able to work properly in a football stadium.

With FIFA's permission Poll, Assistant Referees Mike Tingey, Glenn Turner and Fourth Official Graham Laws each wore an earpiece in the Newcastle v Manchester City game". The referee had a press-to-speak button which in the future could enable Hackett or the match assessor to listen in to conversations between a player and the match official. This would be useful for Hackett to assess the man-management skills of his referees handling potentially difficult situations.

"The basic principle will be to assess whether it benefits refereeing and improves refereeing," said Hackett, who confirmed other systems would be tested over the coming weeks. "We will want the system clearly tested before any further decision is taken. Will it be operator friendly? How will it react to a large crowd? Last time there was interference from taxi companies and building-site walkie-talkies. We are pretty confident because technology moves on, but we shall see." A major benefit will be that the Referee and Assistants can communicate immediately. For example, if the Referee is cautioning a player and behind him another player commits an offence such as pushing an opponent the assistant would inform the referee through his earpiece without having to wave his flag to attract his attention. In the time it can take the referee to reach the touchline tempers can rise but if the Referee could caution the second player quickly it would eliminate the potential for more problems.

At the moment, it is a press-to-speak system; but there could be discussions about the possibility of having an open-microphone turned on throughout the whole match, that could be heard by the other officials and the Assessor, *but NOT the spectators or TV pundits!* The experiment proved to be a successes, and if an open-microphone is agreed, it would be able to record the insulting and abusive words from players! It would certainly make players think twice if they knew that their bad language would be heard by a third party; for example, the Match Assessor, and even recorded. Knowing that his Assessor could hear the language, would also force the Referee to take action more often against the offender; thus lowering the acceptance level for dealing with this growing type of bad behaviour. Denials from players, such as, *"I did not say that"*, would also become a thing of

the past. Rugby Referees have successfully used a similar system for a number of years, and very often remind irate approaching players to, "be careful it's on the mike". Fourth Official are also able to be part of this new communication system, and this may also curb the technical area occupants from saying something out of turn. The recording of verbal incidents, and how they were managed, will also prove a very useful learning point for the next generation of young Referees when being instructed on how to manage confrontational match situations.

The new system worked without any outside interference (which was a problem in the previous system). It made Poll feel more part of his team as opposed to being out there in the middle on his own. This feeling was not anticipated, and it also enabled Poll verbally thank his Assistants when a correct tight decision had been made. Another feeling to contend with, is the strange looks from players at a Referee seemingly talking to himself! The equipment comprises of a 2lb pack worn in a cummerbund, and the earpiece (which also serve as the microphone) are personalised by being moulding into the users ear to ensure maximum comfort. Further experimenting will continue, and if the system receives the blessing of FIFA, it could be used regularly in Premier League and Football league games.

(Transcribed from articles by Christopher Davies 24 and 27 Sept 05)

INJURY BLADES

The Manchester United manger Alex Ferguson found the loss of his captain, who hobbled off at Anfield recently with a broken metatarsal inflicted by Liverpool player Luis Garcia, infuriating. "The interesting thing about Roy Keane's injury is that it clearly shows the shape of the blade stud," he said. "We do not allow our players to use blades at Manchester United, and we have some photographs up in the dressing room - they have caused some terrible facial injuries. I am not saying it caused the injury but it cannot have helped."

(Tim Rich 24 Sept 05)

MANAGERS AND PLAYERS ARE SHOWING WELCOME RESTRAINT

By Premiership Referee Graham Poll:

The Premiership has had its share of critics this season but I am delighted to be able to praise the conduct of players and managers in the early weeks of 2005-06. Referees have been able to manage situations on the field without suffering abuse and watch the analysis of televised games without hearing complaint after complaint from managers of losing teams. Fears that there would be two or three dismissals in a high number of games after English football's encouraging initiative to improve its image have been premature. With more than 50 Premiership matches played it is pleasing to note that not a single player has appeared to offend, abuse or insult a match official as none has been dismissed for this offence, although Nicky Butt, of Birmingham City, was charged for comments made following his sending-off at Portsmouth last Saturday.

This serves to prove that when a concerted effort is made to highlight and minimise an issue it can be done. As our select group manager, Keith Hackett, reiterates, prevention is better than cure, although there comes a time when actions do speak louder than words.

The PGMOL, a combined body of the Football Association, the Premier League and the Football League, working alongside the Professional Footballers' Association and League Managers' Association, set out a number of preventative measures to improve the image of the game.

One was to produce a poster reminding players of the importance of showing respect to match officials. Along with this was a series of meetings which managers attended where not only players' behaviour was discussed but also the post-match comments from managers regarding the performance of the match officials.

(23 Sept 05)

STOLEN FOOTBALL SHIRTS TRAP FANS

When thieves stole 600 new Portsmouth FC shirts worth £24,000, police asked the football club to delay unveiling them and kept watch on the terraces for "stupid" fans turning up in them. Several fans turned up at last Saturday's home game thinking that the shirts had gone on sale. They had bought them from touts at half the official price of £40. One youth of 17 has been charged with handling stolen goods and several others have been cautioned by the police.

(22 Sept 05)

COME ON REF

Advice from referees' chief Keith Hackett who says there is much we can learn from overseas officials!

Question: In last year's European Cup we had Chelsea playing Arsenal in a Champions League game and it was refereed by Spanish officials. What did you think of their performance?

Answer: First of all, I didn't see the game so I can't comment specifically. But what I can say is that whenever a European referee is in the middle when English teams are involved then we video the game and look at his performance and see what we can learn from it.

Question: What do you actually look for?

Answer: We look at distances covered, the accuracy of the decision making and his movement in general. We have done this before in the past with Pierluigi Collina who is regarded as the best and I agree with that. The whole aim is to learn and to reduce errors in the game. We also use Pro-zone which monitors the referees movement every minute of the game which provides valuable feedback to us.

Question: Are we getting towards a consistency throughout Europe?

Answer: I recently attended a meeting with delegates from UEFA. It was a good meeting aimed at getting consistency. It is an attempt to get a dialogue going and initiate a process that we can come to more accurate decisions across Europe. We had a debate and workshops to discuss these matters.

Question: What were the main areas that you focused upon?

Answer: It was to show trainers and instructors of referees that we can improve, detect and recognise the careless and the reckless challenge - and to maintain a consistent approach. For example, a careless challenge would result in a free kick while a reckless challenge would result in a free kick AND a caution. Both might result in a red card if serious.

Question: Is it possible to get consistency throughout Europe?

Answer: I think there is a belief that we can't do it differently in England and vice-versa. I think there is a recognition that we should look at ways through debate of getting consistency across Europe. I feel comfortable with that and believe that we are going along the right lines. There is much more communication amongst the refereeing fraternity within the UEFA members.

Question: Is there a tendency that we may get 'robot refs' throughout Europe?

Answer: Every referee is different, individually. They all have different levels of management qualities and experience. In recent times, the style of refereeing has reduced the number of cautions but has not meant every ref is the same. Having reduced the number of cautions within the game we are concerned that we are not too liberal and that players will get injured and go unnoticed and unpunished. We are trying to strike a balance.

By Lawrie Madden 26-03-04 <http://www.givemefootball.com/>

THIS MONTH'S TOPICS

This month, we look at overhanging balls! We also provide some advice to help those Referees who have trouble remembering which way the teams are kicking!

Question 1: A goalkeeper catches a ball, which is positioned directly halfway over (and on top of) one of the penalty area lines. Part the goalkeeper's hand is on the surface portion of the ball that overhangs outside of the penalty area line. Is there an offence?

Answer 1: The lines of any area of the field of play are part of the area that they encompass. Therefore, the ball remains inside the penalty area, and as such can legally be handled by the goalkeeper. No offence has occurred. It is the position of the ball that is the deciding factor in the above question, and not the goalkeeper's hands.

Whenever the ball remains inside the penalty area, and this includes when the ball is immediately on top - or above - a penalty area line (even though part of the ball is physically overhanging outside of the penalty area), the ball is said to be INSIDE the penalty area.

Therefore, if a goalkeeper handles ANY surface of the ball when it remains inside the penalty area, no offence has occurred.

A goalkeeper is allowed to handle the ball if it is inside his penalty area (which in this case, it was!)

Question 2: An attacking player shoots the ball towards goal. A player (other than the goalkeeper) deliberately stops the ball with his hand from crossing the goal line and entering the goal. However, the part of the ball, which he touches, is off the field of play. Obviously he has committed an offence by denying a goal, but is the restart a dropped ball and a caution only, or is the restart a penalty kick and a sending-off offence?

Answer 2: Whether the player's hands are inside or outside of the goal line when he handles the ball, it makes no odds. If an opponent makes a shot on goal, and the defender denies the goal by deliberately handling the ball when it is still in play, then it is a sending off offence in accordance with Law 12.

Whenever the ball remains inside the penalty area, and this includes when the ball is immediately on top - or above - the goal line (even though part of the ball is physically overhanging outside of the penalty area), the ball is said to be INSIDE the penalty area.

Therefore, if a defending player deliberately handles ANY surface of the ball when it remains inside the penalty area, a penalty kick should be awarded in accordance with Law 12 (handles the ball deliberately).

Question 3: I get confused as to which was to point when making a decision as a Referee. Is there any advice that can help me?

Answer 3: All Referees and Assistant Referees will have at some time or other in their careers struggled with getting the direction of flag and arm signals correct. It does take time to perfect the art of refereeing and 'lining', and it is quite normal for new (and even some old!) Referees and Assistant Referees to easily get confused with the direction in which teams are playing. This is problem is usually at its worse at the beginning of the second half, especially for an Assistant Referee who has remained on the same touchline, because the teams are kicking in opposite direction to the first half.

The following are some simple methods that can be used to help:

Firstly, the greatest piece of advice is to work very hard at retaining your concentration at maximum levels. It is so very easy to 'switch off' and get distracted. And the more you can relax yourself, the easier and more natural and correct your signals will be.

Throw-ins: - Concentrate on the team colours. Most teams will have different predominant colours. If not, then one team will probably have striped or patterned jerseys. Whilst you are in the centre circle as a Referee awaiting the start of the game, or alongside your touchline as an Assistant Referee, and before the game commences, concentrate on one of the team colours, and say to yourself: "RED LEFT". In other words, the RED team are kicking to the left of you. Repeat this phrase a number of times. If the field of play has a slope, or a distinctive feature at one end (a tree for example), you can use "RED DOWN", or "RED TREE". The direction of which the Red team are playing is towards the 'LEFT' or 'DOWN' the slope, or towards the 'TREE'. Choose one method and stick to it. RED LEFT or RIGHT is a good phrase for an Assistant Referee to use, whereas, RED DOWN, or RED TREE is a better phrase for the Referee to use.

As the game progresses, you do not have to be a 'rocket scientist' to anticipate when the play action is approaching your area of responsibility, or towards a touchline or goal line. As play gets nearer, start repeating in your head, the phrase you have chosen above:

For example: "RED LEFT - RED LEFT - RED LEFT - RED LEFT)". If the ball goes out of play for a throw-in, you will have consciously prepared yourself to make the correct decision before it actually happens. There is no need to think "BLUE RIGHT" for the attaching team's direction, because you will automatically know that.

As play moves away from your area of responsibility, you can relax a bit. The idea is not to look as though you are 'staring into space' and talking to yourself, but to increase your levels of preparation as play approaches you; and think the words in your mind "RED LEFT - RED LEFT".

It is more difficult to keep concentration in games where you do not have much to do as a Referee or Assistant Referee. This is when you have to also keep saying to yourself: "KEEP CONCENTRATING - KEEP CONCENTRATING"

In situations where you are not sure which way to signal a throw-in, if you are an Assistant Referee, make yourself some time by raising your flag straight up. At the same time look towards the Referee for help. An astute Referee, will give you a discreet signal as to the direction of the throw. It is also useful as an Assistant Referee from time to time during the game, to get a 'fix' on the Referee's position, so that if you need to make eye contact with him, you know roughly where he will be. If all else fails, have a pre-set direction that you will use (for example, if you are unsure, give the throw-in to the defending team). Whatever pre-set direction you use - use it in all of your games, and make sure you give a strong signal, as this will lessen the dissent you may receive on a dubious decision. Of

course, if the Referee overrules you, drop your flag immediately and go with his decision. Players, by their action, can also very often give you some idea as to which team should take the throw-in. So do not disregard any of the things that may help you make a correct decision.

If you are still unsure as a Referee, which team is playing which way, you can also buy yourself some time by shouting out "RED THROW" instead of worrying about which way to point your arm signal.

Goal Kick, Corner Kick?: As play approaches the goal line, in addition to the above method, you can say; "RED DEFENDING - RED DEFENDING" instead. Once again, you are preparing yourself up to make the correct decision should the ball ricochet quickly out of play and over the goal line. This is also useful during the taking of corner kicks: Say to yourself, "RED DEFENDING - RED DEFENDING" as the ball is kicked from the corner arc and into the centre of the penalty area. It then becomes easy to give the correct decision if the ball is deflected once again out of play over the goal line.

They do say that the first signs of madness is when you start talking to yourself. But don't worry too much, because you have to be mad to be a Referee!

All Referees in their career will have struggled to remember which way teams are kicking. It becomes easier with experience, and the more relaxed you can be, the less confused you will be also.

Let me have your thoughts on this month's topics. Regards Julian Carosi _____

This newsletter remains free to subscribers.



This newsletter will **always** remain free to **all** members.



I hope that you have enjoyed this issue of the newsletter, and that you are all continuing to enjoy your refereeing roles. All the very warmest wishes to you all, wherever you are in the world.

Regards, Julian Carosi (Newsletter Editor):

_____ Web site: www.corshamref.org.uk

(Also - Managing Editor and Laws Editor of [Refereeing Today](#), Referee, FA Referee Instructor, and FA Referees' Assessor Wiltshire, England).

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