

The Corsham Referee Newsletter No 33 (March 2006)

1st March 2006 International newsletter covering Football (Soccer) Refereeing matters.

Welcome, with an International perspective.

Welcome to the 33rd edition of The Corsham Referee monthly International Referees' newsletter. I hope that all of you continue to enjoy your role in the world of refereeing. 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 'Previous Newsletters' 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.

REFEREEING TODAY MAGAZINE - A MUST FOR ALL REFEREES

For those of you who are interested in subscribing to the best ever Referee magazine, why not subscribe to the Referees' Association (RA) glossy magazine 'Refereeing Today' which is normally issued 4 times each football season.

Refereeing Today contains a blend of professional and grassroots material that will be of interest to referees at all levels.

The April 2006 issue has a theme of 'The Enjoyment of Refereeing' and includes a number of fun and job-satisfaction articles from all levels of the game: David Elleray, a piece from our newsletter friend and referee Hilton Mukuwiri in Zimbabwe, Referees' Coach Rob Harris (ex-top ref), the IFAB Law changes for next season, tips on refereeing, an update on small sided soccer for referees, and lots more. A further Referees' Association Conference edition of Refereeing Today is planned for release mid-May 2006, and the theme of this final edition for the current football season here in England, will be 'The World Cup'.

If you wish to forward any 'Refereeing Today' articles or photos for consideration, please email them to the Managing Editor Julian Carosi _____

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Keep up the good Refereeing work wherever you are in the world; and my best wishes go to you all. *Editor Julian Carosi.*

UEFA.COM REFEREEING UPDATE

Football's authorities are considering how to help referees such as England's Graham Poll through the use of technology.

The law-makers of football, the International F.A. Board (IFAB), is to discuss stricter action against time-wasting at its 120th annual general meeting in Lucerne, Switzerland on 4 March.

Caution for preventing restarts

The IFAB – which groups representatives from world football's governing body FIFA and the national associations of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - will deal with a proposed amendment to the Laws of the Game which, if approved, would see players cautioned for deliberately preventing the opposition from setting play in motion again.

Law 12

"The world governing body is advocating a new decision under Law 12 stating that any player who intentionally interferes with the ball to prevent an opponent from restarting play, at a free kick, throw-in, corner etc, will receive a yellow card," FIFA said.

After a goal

"By the same token, it is proposed that a yellow card be shown to any player who interferes with the ball after his

team has scored in an effort to delay the restart," the world body added.

Technical aids

The use of technical aids for referees is also on the agenda. Both FIFA and UEFA are looking at the issue of technological assistance to help referees and assistants in the decision-making process.

Communication system

UEFA announced last week that it is to test a referee communication system over the rest of the European season, starting with four UEFA Cup matches this week. The system, featuring an open microphone and an earphone, will allow the assistants and the fourth official to communicate with the referee and vice versa, as well as to hear what is being said on the pitch.

In favour

"UEFA is in favour of technological help, provided it has no incidence on the fluidity of play and provided it could not undermine the authority of the referee," UEFA said in making the announcement.

Voting rights

FIFA has four votes on the IFAB, while the four British associations have one vote apiece. A proposal requires a three-quarter majority (ie six of the eight votes) to be passed.

Full agenda

The full agenda for the meeting, which will start at the Palace Hotel in Lucerne at 09.30 can be downloaded from the official FIFA website. http://www.fifa.com/documents/fifa/events/IFAB_Agenda_Final.pdf

SOME HUMOUR!

A referee was very nervous about being appointed to a match with a team that he had experienced severe problems with a few weeks earlier. They were renowned for being violent and uncooperative. When the Referee arrived at the ground, he was pleasantly surprised to see a welcome card addressed for him in the changing room, containing a strange coded message:

'370HSSV-0773H'

When he got home after the game, his anxious wife asked him how he got on? "Not bad" the Referee replied, "Only 5 reds and 10 yellows".

He explained to his wife, that the small number of expected sendings off was probably due to the new attitude that the home team had afforded him.

"You won't believe it my dear", he said to his wife, "But they placed a welcome card in my dressing room, but I must admit, I can't quite work out what he '**370HSSV-0773H**' code means?"

"You fool" says his wife, " you've been looking at the card upside down."

COACHING CORNER *Keith Hackett Referees' Manager*

What are you trying to do from a coaching perspective to stop players intimidating your referees?

We have a top sports psychologist who will coach our referees in conflict management and body language. For example, in the famous case of Roy Keane hunting down Andy D'Urso, the referee is leaning and walking back, not forward.

Do you employ other specialists?

We use the same vision scientist as Manchester United, who helps us with peripheral vision and checking line accuracy and vision depth. We have a nutritionist who has designed a handbook. We consider ourselves the 21st club in the Premiership.

There have been a number of incidents recently of players trying to gain unfair advantage. How do you eradicate this?

We get together every two weeks and will review selected clips of both errors and best practice. We are working

hard to get a degree of uniformity and Uefa help us by providing video clips of various challenges. We look at distance from the ball, viewing angle and whether the decision was correct. It is an open debate. If a referee has a particular strength, he might give a masterclass - like detecting simulation.

How much detail do you go into?

We look at every free kick given and how the referee manages the results. We try to raise awareness - for example, if the wall is not being pushed back far enough from a free kick. We have three full-time divisional managers (who look after 20 top-flight referees) and 10 part-time coaches (like Paul Durkin, a former referee).

What happens if a referee performs badly?

If you have an indifferent game, you are unlikely to get a Premiership game the next week. We have to analyse mistakes to reduce them, and learn how to handle individual players. We are conditioning referees. A year ago, the average distance between the referee and the ball was 25 metres or more. We've got it down to 19 by using a diagonal path of patrol. You have to treat elite referees like elite players.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk> 13 Feb 06)

CARLING CUP FINAL APPOINTMENT (27 January)

Alan Wiley refereed the Carling cup final between Wigan Athletic and Manchester United at the Millenium Stadium on February 26th. It was the first domestic cup final as a Referee for the 45 year old official from Burntwood, who first joined The Football Leagues assistants referees list in 1991. Wiley has been previously in charge of 2 league cup semi finals, Sheffield United v Liverpool in 2003 and Chelsea v Tottenham in 2002. The Assistant Referees were John Holbrook from Kidderminster and Paul Norman from Sherbourne. The fourth Official was Andy hall from Birmingham.

FROM SCOTLAND TO IRELAND AND BACK

The Carnegie Premier League game on Saturday January 21st between Coleraine and Linfield was refereed by Chris Boyle. Chris is from Scotland as part of the referee exchange scheme involving officials from N Ireland, Wales, Republic of Ireland and Scotland. This is the second year of the scheme in which Associations swap officials to give them more experience outside their own environment. A referee from N Ireland will take charge of the Ayr United V Raith Rovers game on March 18th. IFA Referee Development Officer Alan Snoddy says "this exchange scheme is a very valuable part of the development of the future International referees, not only do they gain experience outside their own country but they are also assessed by a local UEFA Referee Observer and given feedback on their performance". Chris Boyle is 33 years old, and has been a referee since 1989. His profession is a Chartered Psychologist. He was in charge of the Victory Shield game between Scotland and N Ireland in October 2004. Chris thinks the hardest thing about refereeing is gaining respect without being dictatorial, and his pet hate is players who moan throughout the 90 minutes!

WORKSHOPS IN ECUADOR, VENEZUELA AND PERU.

The FA's Head of National Referee Development, Ian Blanchard, Regional Referees' Manager Ray Olivier and Premiership referee Peter Walton will deliver three back-to-back workshops in Ecuador, Venezuela and Peru. Over 150 senior referees will benefit from the courses, aimed at raising the standard of refereeing in the continent by focusing on a wide range of advanced techniques for referees such as Fitness & Nutrition, Communication & Body Language and Dealing with Players in Challenging Situations. The Ecuador Football Federation benefited from a three-day advanced referee training workshop in January last year and have requested a follow-up seminar to check on the progress of their elite referees. "The International Development Programme has proved to be a remarkable success in South America, where all the member countries of CONMEBOL have welcomed the assistance provided by The FA," said Nada Grkinic, The FA's International Development Manager.

"Despite South America being renowned for its footballing brilliance, they have embraced the advances made by The FA in several areas, one of which is refereeing.

These trips are also provide a useful platform for the exchange of ideas and we are already planning a Stadium Safety and Security seminar for later in the year."

JEWELL ON DIVING DEBATE

Despite new rules being introduced by governing bodies every summer, controversy surrounding various issues remains as fierce as ever with the new offside interpretation and goal-line technology particularly hot topics at the moment.

And Wigan chief Jewell admitted 'simulation', another modern-day buzz-word within the game, is increasingly accepted.

"We don't sit down and discuss it, but we're all trying to get an edge. Diving is not something we try to encourage and I'm not condoning it at all but if you get a chance, you go down. Some people call it gamesmanship, some say it is cheating," he said during a debate broadcast on Radio 5 Live.

Premiership referee Rob Styles described the difficulty in punishing diving due to the fine line between a genuine foul and 'simulation'.

"If you're going to caution a player for simulation, you are calling him a cheat. If you are going to caution a player you need to be sure. There should be a distinction between clear acts of simulation and situations perhaps where a player exaggerates the effects of a foul challenge to make the referee make a decision."

Professional Game Match Officials Board general manager Hackett admitted referees study diving cases in a bid to help them recognise diving during a match.

"We use video technology to look at incidents and clip those together and theme them, so it could well be that at a meeting we're showing 20 or 30 clips of incidents involving diving. From that we get a running theme on how we as referees can improve the detection," said Hackett.

COLLINA: DIVERS CHEATING THE GAME

Referee legend Pierluigi Collina has spoken of his sadness at the diving epidemic and told players: You're cheating the game. This season has seen a rash of players dive to get penalties or opponents sent off and, with referee standards seemingly at an all-time low, the match officials are being blamed for the chaos on the field.

Collina, the world's top referee until he quit this season, says it's not the fault of the men with the whistles. "A player who dives does not offend the referee. He offends his fellow professionals because he is cheating on them. If he manages to win a penalty and it changes the result of a whole season, even a career, that is a disaster for the players."

Collina believes unless FIFA gives referees a clear mandate to show the red card to the cheats, they will continue to get away with it.

ROBBEN TELLS PREMIERSHIP REFS: I'M NO DIVER

Chelsea winger Arjen Robben says he hopes his reputation does not precede him after being at the centre of several high-profile incidents which have led many to claim that he is a 'diver'. The Dutchman hit the headlines most recently when he crashed to the ground following an innocuous-looking shove from Liverpool keeper Jose Reina. Now he is afraid of the possibility that should he find himself on the end of any reckless challenges in the future, Premiership referees may be inclined to turn a blind eye. Robben - controversially denied a penalty by ref Alan Wiley in the 2-0 win over Portsmouth at the weekend - said: "I don't want to speak about diving a lot.

"I don't read or hear everything, but people can think what they want to. I just play my game and, if some people want to say some stupid things, they can. I don't know if referees look at me differently, you'd have to ask them. I hope everybody gets treated the same but I know that it doesn't always happen. Some referees have to think about treating every player the same, even if it's Ronaldinho or another player from a Premiership club. It doesn't matter how good you are, you have to be treated the same. I've doubted some decisions that have gone against me but it's not just me, it's all the players."

CHELSEA CONDEMN HAUGE DEATH THREATS

Chelsea Football Club have condemned death threats made towards referee Terje Hauge on fans' forums in the wake of the recent controversial Champions League clash with Barcelona. Norwegian referee Hauge sent off Blues defender Asier del Horno following a challenge on Barca's Lionel Messi, with the Argentinian teenager appearing to make the most of any contact between him and Del Horno.

The dismissal eventually cost Chelsea as they slipped to a 2-1 defeat at Stamford Bridge having led through a Thiago Motta own-goal, and threats to Hauge have since been posted on message boards on the club's official website and on a Norwegian fans' forum. It follows similar threats made to Swedish official Anders Frisk after he sent off Didier Drogba in the first leg of the sides' meeting last season. He subsequently retired as a result.

Chelsea insist the threats to Hauge have been removed and a club spokesman said: "As with the Anders Frisk situation last year, Chelsea football club totally condemns any threats made to referees, officials, players or supporters of any club or organisation."

HAUGE: I GOT DEL HORNO RED CARD RIGHT

Norwegian referee Terje Hauge insists he was right to send off Chelsea full-back Asier del Horno in the 2-1 Champions League defeat to Barcelona. The Spaniard was shown a straight red card for a foul on Lionel Messi in the 37th minute, a decision which Blues boss Jose Mourinho claims cost his side the game.

But Hauge has hit back: "I feel it is important to see the situation live.

"When you see it in slow motion, you can be fooled by how he got into the situation. I have got a good feeling myself but the red card was a key moment for how the match would develop. The incident will probably get discussed in the coming few days. It was expected that it would be a tough match and it was."

The incident has already stirred up much controversy with Mourinho bemoaning Messi's 'acting' while Frank Rijkaard and the Barca players have leapt to their team-mate's defence.

PLAYER FINED AND BANNED FOR REFEREE ASSAULT

A foul-mouthed footballer attacked a referee when he was shown the red card.

Persistent use of bad language landed Philip Low an early bath, but he lashed out at Scottish Football Association referee Keith Fordyce. Aberdeen Sheriff Court heard that the 24-year-old, who was playing in the number five shirt for East End Amateurs in a friendly against Dyce Juniors, slapped the referee once. Low, 27, has since been suspended from amateur football throughout Scotland, and is ashamed of his "shocking" behaviour. It had been an ill-tempered game which Mr Fordyce had struggled to keep under control, the court heard. Fiscal depute Ann Macdonald said Low, who has a history of violence, had been warned several times during the game about his language. About 7.15pm, when the match at New Advocates Pitches on Golf Road, Aberdeen, was drawing to a close, Low was shown the red card for continuing to use bad language.

"Mr Fordyce raised his right arm to signal the red card and at this time the Low carried out the assault and slapped the referee on the head," Miss Macdonald said.

"The accused was then escorted from the pitch by other officials and the match had to be abandoned and the police contacted."

Defence agent David Sutherland said: "Mr Low accepts this was shocking behaviour."

Sheriff Kenneth Forbes fined Low £500, saying he took the circumstances and suspension into account.

ALL FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME - even after 42 years of abuse

There now follows a brief extract from a conversation between a referee and a spectator at a Sunday league football match in Southampton three days ago. This week's competition is to guess how many 'F' words are missing from this short altercation.

"You're ruining this game, you are."

"If you don't be quiet I shall have to order you off the touchline."

"You've been useless since you blew your whistle to start this game."

"I'm ordering you from the field of play."

"All right. I'm going. It's no wonder they're short of referees in Hampshire with people like you ruining every game."

I was standing next door to the guy on the touchline when it all kicked off, but it was the referee who caught the eye. Neat. Dapper. John Francome would have described him as "well turned out". He didn't need a police escort off the pitch on the final whistle. The crowd of four were well behaved enough to allow him free passage to the municipal changing rooms. But you could see he had been a little stressed by the whole business. Just another Sunday morning football match. Yet another Sunday morning of being roundly abused. In a week when former Premiership referee Jeff Winter has been plugging his autobiography, here's a potted life history of another man in black. The man who sent the spectator off on Sunday. His name is Ken Webb, and he too has a tale to tell.

Sunday's match was the 3,092nd that Ken has had charge of. He's an accountant. He counts things. Once upon a time he was an apprentice at Maine Road in the days when Don Revie and Bert Trautmann were in the first team, but when the dreaded meeting with the manager came, and he was told he wasn't going to make it, he picked up a whistle, and he hasn't stopped blowing it since. More than 42 years of being sworn at. Have they invented a big enough medal for a man who puts up with that? If Jeff Winter thought coping with the likes of Gary Neville was hard, this is Ken Webb's description of what he's up against, week after week. "I always talk about some Sunday morning footballers being like this. He's probably played on Saturday and then gone to the pub for the night, danced into the early hours at a disco, crashed out in a mate's car, has woken up feeling like death, and staggered on to a pitch at half past 10 the next morning, still wearing his jewellery. Dealing with 22 of him is always an interesting way of passing 90 minutes. Mind you, there are an awful lot of really handy players out there, too."

Ken's seen it all. He's sent off 400 players in his career. He's booked Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck on dozens of occasions. He once yellow-carded a guy who gave his name as Burt Reynolds, but by the time the disciplinary hearing took place, he'd had time to change his name by deed-poll. He abandoned one game after just 10 seconds when two players broke their legs in a challenge. And once, in 1967-68 (don't forget he's an accountant), he lost control of a match in Millbrook, Southampton.

"A goal was scored out of nothing, and the team that conceded it refused to restart the match, saying the linesman had ruled it offside. I called both captains together and said the goal was going to stand and told them to get on with it. So they did. Punches everywhere, a lot of them aimed at me. A mass brawl. So I just ran for it. Into the changing room. The groundsman saw what had happened and locked me in for my own safety. Chaos. Eventually two policemen who were refereeing on nearby pitches got me out and escorted me to my car."

Ken admits things have got worse over the years. There was a measure of respect between players and officials in the Sixties, but that's been gradually eroded. "The behaviour you see on Match of the Day on Saturday night is mirrored a hundred times over the next day," he says. "But never forget Law 12. Abusive behaviour: red card. People shouldn't be afraid to use them."

Why? Why put yourself through that every week for 40 years? For the match fee of £14 and 24p a mile? "I just love the game," Ken explains. "And the challenge is there to all young aspiring referees. If you don't like the way the game is going, do something about it. All of us, working together, really can make the game better."

By John Inverdale Telegraph 1 Feb 2006 www.telegraph.co.uk

ROOKIE REFS GIVEN A BAPTISM OF FIRE

Barcelona hosted the 14th UEFA Advanced Course for Elite and Premier Referees and the 15th UEFA Introductory Course for International Referees at the beginning of February 2006. Officials got under way at Barcelona's Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I on Monday 30 Jan 2006 with a warm welcome from the chairman of UEFA's Referees' Committee, Volker Roth, to the 39 Introductory Course delegates.

Great potential

"You are here because you are some of the finest young referees in Europe," Roth told the group. "It does not mean you are the best yet - far from it. But we have seen some real talent in you which we like and we hope you can go on to fulfil your potential and one day become élite referees. I hope you enjoy your stay in Barcelona but remember you are here to learn - not for a holiday."

Fitness test

If any of the rookie referees had been anticipating a relaxing few days, they were in for a shock. UEFA fitness expert Werner Helsen put them through their paces in a rigorous fitness test despite the atrocious weather conditions. The sun may not have been shining on the young referees but few could complain about the surroundings, with the infamous Cooper Run taking place in the shadows of FC Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium.

Scottish weather

For once it was not a Brazilian by the name of Ronaldinho who took centre stage - it was Scottish referee William Collum who braved the elements to put in a memorable performance, covering 3,300m in 12 minutes, the best of the day. "I really enjoyed the run," said Collum. "I was a little nervous beforehand, but it was good to pass the test. I won't complain about the weather because I am used to this kind of rain. Maybe that was to my advantage."

Dangerous conditions

Helsen was happy with the performance of the 37 officials who took the test, if disappointed the dangerous conditions had forced them to abandon the sprint tests. "It was a shame we did not get chance to do the sprints as this is an important part of the physical test," he said. "The overall performance of the referees was good though, and although I would like to see them all achieving 2,900m (four of them ran 2,800m) it is great they all came through successfully."

Fitness test

With the first day complete, English official Mark Clattenburg admitted the course had already allowed him to look at some aspects of refereeing from a new perspective. "It has been an excellent day in which I have learnt a lot," he said. "The fitness test was a great start to the course and the lecture by Manuel López and Mattia Piffaretti in the afternoon was also very valuable because it taught us how to minimise stress and to improve our body language when refereeing in a more international environment."

Elite referees

With the 15th UEFA Introductory Course for International Referees well under way, Tuesday morning marked the beginning of the 14th UEFA Advanced Course for Elite and Premier Referees with a number of key discussions on emotional control, injury prevention and racism planned as the week unfolds.

Referees like to live life in the fast lane. Whether they are whistling away on the pitch or attending UEFA's annual seminar for top match officials, they are constantly being put through their paces both physically and mentally.

Improving the game

This week, Europe's elite officials have been typically busy at the 14th UEFA Advanced Course for Elite and Premier Referees at Barcelona's Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I, with a number of key discussions on emotional control, injury prevention and how the rules of the game can be improved.

Under pressure

Perhaps the most fascinating seminar took place on Tuesday when sports scientist Mattia Piffaretti held special sessions allowing delegates to open up about the pressures they face before, during, and after big games when their performances are heavily scrutinised by thousands of fans, media and coaches.

Human beings

"We come under a lot of pressure during these matches," said English official Mike Riley. "Yes, we are referees and we have a job to do, but we are only human beings trying to make the game as fair and as fluent as we possibly can. These kind of seminars are important because if you have been in a stadium refereeing in front of thousands of people, you cannot just switch off straight away." He added: "It is tough to sleep after such pressure and therefore we must learn ways in which we can relax and wind down after a game."

Climb the mountain

Piffaretti agrees. The Swiss has developed a number of methods for officials to deal with the rollercoaster of emotions they endure during a match. "Refereeing a game is very emotional - I would compare it with climbing a mountain. When referees walk on to the pitch they begin their ascent up the mountain and probably reach their peak at some point in the second half. What is important is that, despite the shift in their mental state, they make consistent decisions throughout a game."

Assured display

Piffaretti singled out for special praise the display of referee Frank De Bleeckere during the second leg of the Switzerland-Turkey FIFA World Cup qualifying play-off. The Belgian official resisted temptations to dismiss a number of players early on, after giving Switzerland an opening-minute penalty, and instead defused the situation with a calm and assured show of refereeing.

Stressful match

"This was a classic example of how a referee can remain calm in stressful situations," said Piffaretti. "Frank did not let the heat of the game get to him. He climbed the mountain but did not let the crowd or the players get to him and in the end it turned out to be a very impressive performance. I think some referees can learn from the way he managed this game."

English skills

As well as the elite course, Barcelona has also hosted the 15th UEFA Introductory Course which concluded on Thursday morning. This was a success for most of the young officials, although six have been told they must improve their English skills and one referee must take the fitness test again after struggling to complete the Cooper Run.

www.uefa.com

WELSH CANCEL GAMES AS REF ABUSE CRISIS BITES

Cardiff, 3rd December - The Welsh National League, based in North East Wales, is having matches cancelled due to a "critical" shortage in referees. Five matches were called off on Saturday 26th November and a further four did not go ahead on 3rd December. A recruitment campaign has now been launched to encourage people to train as referees. The League referees appointment secretary.

Arthur Pritchard, added: "I'd like to think it's just a blip but in recent years I've seen this trend developing and now the number of refs is falling off the graph." Earlier this year BBC Radio Wales 'Eye on Wales' programme reported that growing abuse of football referees had led to a recruitment problem. Yet Pritchard argued: "There's the old chestnut. Who wants to take the abuse? I don't think it's any worse these days than it ever was but people's tolerance isn't what it was."

FITNESS TESTING FOR CONTRIBUTORY REFEREES

In the first week in March referees eligible for promotion to the Contributory League system will be required to undertake fitness testing. Those failing at the first opportunity or unable to attend on the dates offered will be given one further opportunity on a later date. Those failing to reach the required standard will not be recommended for promotion.

The Testing Procedure

Before you are allowed to undertake the physical part of the tests you will be expected and advised to produce certification from your local GP's surgery indicating your Blood Pressure readings. The date of your readings must be within 14 days prior to taking the tests. Blood pressure readings can be taken on the evening but please note that the added stress of taking the tests can increase your blood pressure to the point where you may well not be allowed to take any further part in the tests. Please note that if your blood pressure is over 140/90, you will not be allowed to take any further part in the testing procedure.

The County Football Association will as last year, be taking 4 skinfold measurements to determine your percentage of body fat against your total weight. A high percentage of body fat will not preclude you from the rest of the testing.

With details of your age, height, weight, body fat and blood pressure readings completed you will now head out to the track for the physical part of the tests.

The first of two tests will involve you sprinting between two markers 50 metres apart. You will be required to complete 2 separate sprints within 7.5 seconds, with a resting period not exceeding 30 seconds between each sprint. At the conclusion of the 2nd sprint, you must make your way back to the start line. From the completion of this section, you will be given a period of not less than 15 minutes in which to recover sufficiently before starting the final part of the physical testing section.

The final test requires the individual to run continuously around a 400 metre track for 12 minutes, to pass the test you will be expected to cover a minimum of 2,500 metres. Walking, even after you have completed the required distance is not allowed.

THIS MONTH'S TOPICS:

This month, we look at the outside interference, remembering directions, and impedance following a free kick

OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE

Question: If there is outside interference with play or where a goal is prevented by an outside agent, should play always be stopped and restarted with a dropped ball? And what happens if a goal is not prevented?

Answer: When a goal is prevented due to interference by an outside agent, play is stopped - and the restart is a dropped ball in accordance with Law 5 and Law 8.

If a goal is not prevented, and the ball subsequently goes into the goal net after being interfered with by an outside agent, the referee's decision is not quite so simple, and will rely on his interpretation, and the circumstances of each event.

The following two points are worth considering:

(A) Would a goal have been scored anyway, if the interference did not occur? In other words, if the interference were so slight, that it made no difference to the outcome of the shot, then the goal should stand; as the ball was going into the goal anyway. This would be in the "Sprit of the Laws", which are written to allow the referee a great deal of interpretation.

(B) If the shot was going wide of the goal, and the deflection steered the ball into the goal, then clearly, a dropped ball should be awarded instead of the goal.

The difficulty arises, in the grey areas that lie between (A) and (B), and this is where the referee will have to use his common sense and intuition, to make a decision (one-way or the other).

If a referee wishes to argue, that any contact with any outside agent, including a spectator, nullifies a goal with a drop ball restart on the six-yard line, then that is their prerogative. But it goes against the "Spirit the Game", if the contact was so little, that it makes no difference to the outcome. It's all about ensuring that whatever decision is made; it is fair to the players involved.

Even in the pre-1997/98 Law books (where more information and advice was available) there was little help in providing a definitive answer to every scenario that can occur due to outside interference. Although the following words contained in Law 5 did sum up the flexibility given the referee - and this principle still applies today.....

"The referee has discretionary power to stop the game.....if he deems such a stoppage necessary".

Therefore, if the interference were so slight, that it makes no difference at all to the outcome, it is not necessary to stop play.

To summarise: There is no black and white answer. Whatever decision a referee makes as far as outside interference is concerned, he will not find an answer to match his scenario in the Law book. The trick is to decide if there was any interference, and if there was, did it affect the end result? Outside interference involving a spectator, is more likely to result in play being stopped by a referee, compared to dog running onto the field. But the referee should always use the Laws to keep the game going, rather than trying to find ways of stopping it.

DIRECTION TIPS

Question: Is there a method that Referees and Assistant Referees can use to help them remember which way a team is kicking, and how to remember which team is defending and which attacking?

Answer: 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 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.

IMPEDANCE AFTER A FREE KICK

Question: A player takes a free kick and then uses his body to shield the ball from an opponent without anyone else touching it. Is this player committing any offence?

Answer: As far as the written Laws are concerned, there is no exception that excludes a free kick taker.

"It is not an offence if a player, with the ball under control within playing distance, screens the ball from an opponent without using his arms." *Law Book Chapter entitled 'Additional Instructions for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials.*

But.....

When a player takes a free kick, the kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player (Law 13).

So, no matter how close the kicker is to the ball, it is **never** within playing distance of him, and he **cannot** be said to have the ball under control. In other words, he cannot play it, or control it, until another player has touched it.

Therefore, if he purposefully uses his body as a shield to block off an opponent, he is guilty of impeding the progress of an opponent (Law 12). It makes no odds how close the kicker is to the ball, as he cannot legally play it, and he can he have it under his control.

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

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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):

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(Also - Managing Editor and Laws Editor of [Refereeing Today](http://www.refereeingtoday.com), <http://www.footballreferee.org/> Referee, FA Referee Instructor, and FA Referees' Assessor Wiltshire, England).

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