

The Corsham Referee Newsletter No 43 (January 2007)

1st January 2007 International newsletter covering Football (Soccer) Refereeing matters.

Welcome, with an International perspective.

Welcome to the 43rd edition of The Corsham Referee monthly International Football/Soccer Referees' newsletter.

I hope that you have all had a peaceful Christmas, and I wish you all the very best for the new year 2007.

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; or 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.

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

Editor Julian Carosi.

NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER (FEBRUARY 2007)

Next month's (February 2007) newsletter will be dedicated to debating **The Power of Doing Nothing'**. Most football referee instruction, teaches referees to do something - the advice in next month's newsletter does the complete opposite, and debates whether it is sometimes better, for referees to do nothing!

This will not be an attempt to change the face of Referee communication, but rather to engender discussion and thought towards simplifying and standardising communication throughout the Referee fraternity - the aim (as always) being to increase the enjoyment of the players as they peruse their sport.

In a game of football, although the referee spends a great deal of time running around chasing players and following the path of the ball, he rarely needs to communicate anything - vocally or via body language. Yet conversely there are many occasions when the fact that the Referee 'does nothing', actually imparts a message that says much more than any other form of visual message or sound can communicate.

If you think that you have any advice on **The Power of Doing Nothing'**, please email me. Julian Carosi

Exclusive to The Corsham Referee Newsletter.....

WHY BECOME A REFEREE? *Provided by Warrington Referees' Society Secretary Peter Newton.*

Transcript of a talk given by top English Premiership Referee Howard Webb at the Warrington Referees Society on Thursday 14th Dec 06.

When growing up as a teenager, I never actually wanted to become a referee, as it wasn't something that appealed to me at the time. But it was not long, before I realised that I wasn't going to reach the dizzy heights that I'd hoped for as a football player. It was during this time, that my father, who was a referee, made me aware of a forthcoming referees' course.

Most of the referees for the games that I'd played in, seemed to be old men, so I thought that I'd give it a go, to see if this young whippersnapper could do any better! I believed then, that younger referees might get more respect, because they should be fitter and more in tune with the game. I also thought that there was a need in our area, for younger people to become involved as referees.

So at the tender age of nineteen, I enrolled on the course along with a few friends of mine. The local leagues were desperately short of referees, so immediately following our success in passing the exam - we were given games to officiate.

I quickly realised, that there was a great deal of pleasure to be had from refereeing a game of football. I felt a huge responsibility every time that I walked out onto the field of play. The FA entrusted me with that particular game; and for a young lad of 19, it generated a feeling of worth. This feeling (of being given a huge responsibility) is an honour that I take with me into every game; as should all referees.

I was lucky to have an in-built aptitude for refereeing, and was subsequently pushed through the lower levels quite quickly. As my self-belief grew and my strong personality developed, I found better ways to manage and to successfully communicate with the players and club officials. I was always prepared to learn and listen from those with more experience.

Thankfully, I've never been involved with any violence as a referee - but then being 6'3" and 15 1/2 stone probably helps! I worked hard on increasing my fitness levels, and the improvements that this generated, cemented my total dedication to refereeing. As a young person, my aspirations were always high (and they still are). But aspiration also needs to be balanced with the need to keep to your feet on the ground and to be prepared to work very hard to climb the refereeing ladder.

At the local levels, there is still sometimes a lack of respect shown for those that have decided to become referees. Those who would never referee themselves are very quick to criticise from the sidelines. But this is the world of football as it has always been. It's part of the ambience of the game that referees must learn to take in their stride. Nevertheless, as guardians of the Laws, it is also our continuing duty to educate people about the important role of the referee.

The bottom line is, that if we become short of referees at the local level, it will effect the quality and numbers of referees able to officiate successfully at the very top levels in six or seven years time. Even now, there are too many matches being refereed by unqualified officials - and this must be damaging the game; for there is nothing better for two teams, than when a proper referee turns up who is neutral and qualified. It makes for a good game, in the same way that having proper nets in the goal or having a decent ball to play with does - it's all part and parcel of what is needed for a proper enjoyable game of football to take place.

When I started out as a referee, the benefits of maintaining a good level of fitness, a good camaraderie amongst the refereeing community and a possible full-time career, were aspects that I never even thought about.

There is great satisfaction to be had, in being able to successfully manage 22 people for 90 minutes in a highly contested game of football; more so, than from a one sided 5-0 game.

Many thanks go to Peter Newton for submitting this article.

REFEREES' SQUARE PRE-MATCH BRIEF (Provided by Major Patrick 'Boots' Wellington).

The 'Referees' Square Match Brief' is an easy to remember structured way for a football/soccer referee to brief his/her Assistant Referees and Fourth Official prior to a game. The instructions can be delivered during the match officials' pre-match warm-up (thus bonding the team further), as part of the field of play (FOP) inspection, or separately depending on the circumstances, or the individual Referee's preference.

The 'Square Match Brief' maximises the ratios of what people remember, by using a combination of the best methods to remember things as shown below:

People remember: 95% of what they teach to someone else

80% of what they experience personally

70% of what they discuss with others

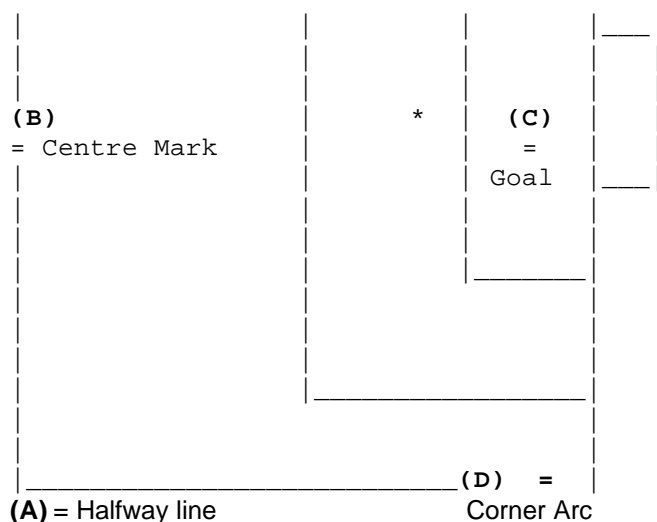
50% of what they both see and hear

30% of what they see

20% of what they hear

10% of what they read

Start at A and work clockwise BCD - A



To **A** - Walk to FOP from the changing room.

At **A** - Stop and brief on entering FOP. Assistants on either side of Ref, flags unfurled, breaking away to check goal nets on entering FOP and returning to Centre Circle for match preliminaries) etc.

A to B - Jog warm-up shuttles under Referee's direction. Return to **B**.

At **B** - Stop and brief on where officials will stand for pre-match preliminaries, which touchline they will patrol for the match, and Senior/Junior/4th Official individual responsibilities; team/match history (if known); note taking.

B to C - Jog and stretches shuttles under Referee's direction. Return to **C**.

At **C** - Stop and brief on (1) Penalties (goal judge (movement acceptability)) (2) Goal Kicks (ball placement) (3) Ball punted from goalkeeper's hands (carrying the ball out of the area).

C to D - Sprints and jog shuttles under the Referee's direction. Return to **D**.

At **D** - Stop and brief on Corner Kicks (ball in arc); substitute warming up areas etc.

D to A - Jog shuttles under the Referee's Direction - return to **D** to start next part of brief.

From **D** to **E** - Brief on (1) Flagging for: (a) Corner Kicks (b) Goal Kicks (c) Penalties. REINFORCE Referee and Asst Referee co-operation throughout - delayed flags and eye contact. (2) Goal Scored (3) Off Side (4) Thrown In (5) Fouls and Misconduct (including Mass Confrontation and entering the FOP) (6) Advantage (7) Time signals. At return to **A** - Stop and brief on Substitution Procedure, dealing with technical area, checking injured player return (inc. blood); what to do at the end of each half etc

Many thanks go to Major Patrick 'Boots' Wellington for sharing his very interesting and simple to remember method of delivering pre-match instructions.

www.Telegraph.co.uk news articles

TO DIVE OR NOT TO DIVE, THAT IS THE QUESTION? 10 December 06

The Cristiano Ronaldo Appreciation Society gained some surprising new members this week, including former Liverpool defender Alan Hansen, who saw nothing wrong with his theatrical tumble to win a penalty for Manchester United at Middlesbrough. England supporters, of course, have an issue with Ronaldo because of his supposed collusion in Wayne Rooney's sending-off at the World Cup. But although they complain that there was no contact between Ronaldo and Middlesbrough goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer, many people do not seem to understand that intent is an offence in itself.

Former Chelsea star Gianluca Vialli brilliantly explains the so-called diving problem in his excellent book *The Italian Job*, writing: "You can be fouled without being touched. The rules even specify this. If I'm running with the ball and a defender comes in to slide-tackle me, I have two options. I can either let him run into me, thereby winning a free-kick but risking injury. Or I can try to jump out of the way, which may mean I end up on the ground without being touched.

"If I choose the latter option, odds are I won't win a free-kick and to me, this is unfair. If the defender's slide tackle is clearly going to be a foul, I don't see why I have to run into him to prove the point. Why do I have to help the referee make a decision, particularly if I risk getting myself injured?"

REFEREE GETS IT RIGHT IN THE END (11 Dec 2006)

Torquay's 1-1 draw at Hereford produced one of those rare occasions when a referee actually changes his mind over a penalty decision. The referee in question, Gary Sutton, initially pointed to the spot when two Torquay players, Carl Motteram and Chris McPhee, collided in the Hereford penalty area. But, after consulting his linesman, he realised his mistake. Torquay manager Lubos Kubik said he was pleased with the decision, even though a penalty would have won his side the game. "From the bench I saw what happened and I didn't want to win the game with a penalty like that, as it wouldn't have been right," he said. "It was a very hard game against a good team, and we were a little bit lucky."

FA IN BID TO CATCH CHEATS ON VIDEO (17 Dec 2006)

Video replays could soon be used to identify and punish players guilty of diving, if the Football Association succeed in convincing FIFA it is in the best interests of the game. The FA hope to raise the issue of retrospective punishments when the International Football Association Board convene in Manchester in March. If FIFA agree, new rules could be explored to allow the use of post-match video evidence to penalise cheats. FA spokesman Andrin Cooper said: "We have asked FIFA in the past to consider it and we will again raise the issue of using video evidence retrospectively. We want to try to convince them that it is in the interests of fairness and the image of the game."

Cooper admitted: "We are the only nation pursuing this. I don't want to blow this out of proportion – all the FA is trying to do at the moment is get some flexibility from FIFA. Then we will explore what we can do.

"We agree with the general principle that, if the referee sees it, you don't re-referee the game, but think there needs to be a bit of give on the borders in the interests of fairness.

"Unless we can get the principle agreed by FIFA, there is not a lot we can do."

www.FIFA.com news articles

FUTSAL FOR THE BLIND - PLAYING BY THEIR OWN RULES (04 Dec 2006)

Just as in futsal or beach soccer, futsal for the blind has its own set of basic rules, with the participants' unique capabilities affording this discipline a special place amongst the world's footballing spectacles. Futsal for the blind takes place between two teams made up of one fully or partially sighted goalkeeper and four partially sighted and blindfolded outfield players. The ball used contains sound-producing capsules, which produce a 'tinkling bell' effect. This sound is what helps the players locate the ball.

Games are made up of two 25-minute periods, separated by an interval of 10 minutes. The pitch itself needs to be outdoors for acoustic reasons, and is surrounded by lateral barriers measuring between 1 and 1.2 metres. These barriers help guide the players and speed up the flow of the game.

Curiously, spectators must remain silent throughout the entire game and are only permitted to celebrate goals. This is vital so as not to confuse the players. The game is similar in style to conventional futsal, although the players must hold their heads up at all times. Also, prior to each attempt on goal the players are obliged to shout the word "voy" to let the other players know their location. The players are guided by three people: the goalkeeper, who cannot set foot out of his area; the coach, when the ball is in the middle section of the pitch; and a vocal guide positioned behind the opposition goal.

Fouls are accumulated throughout each period of play. Once a team has committed four personal fouls, each subsequent infringement is punished by the award of a penalty kick. There is no limit to the number of substitutions and substituted players can re-enter the field of play. The only exception occurs once a player has committed five personal fouls, at which point they can take no further part in the game.

REFEREE ATTACKED IN AFRICAN CONFEDERATION CUP (02 Dec 2006)

South African referee David Bennett was attacked after Royal Armed Forces of Morocco were denied a stoppage time goal in the African Confederation Cup second leg against Etoile Sahel of Tunisia on Saturday. Etoile Sahel, runners-up in the African Champions League in 2004 and 2005, won on away goals after drawing the first leg 1-1 in Rabat last month. Bennett and his linesmen were attacked by the furious visitors after a close-in effort from Brahim El Bahri was disallowed for offside.

MY 2006: WORLD CUP REFEREE HORACIO ELIZONDO (25 Dec 2006)

The year 2006 will live long in the memory of Argentina's Horacio Elizondo. A PE teacher by profession, Elizondo left his own indelible mark on refereeing at this summer's FIFA World Cup™, taking charge of both the Opening Game and the Final at Germany 2006. The 43-year-old poetry enthusiast did not stop there. In total, he took charge of five matches on world football's greatest stage, a new record which he shares with Mexican arbiter Benito Archundia.

In the wake of his exploits on German soil, the Argentine official was widely praised both at domestic level and by the international footballing community at large. This recognition culminated in him being chosen to referee the final of the Copa Libertadores in August. As if to set the seal on an unforgettable year, in early December Elizondo announced his decision to put away his notebook for good and retire from the game he loves.

"Once you've fulfilled your greatest ambitions, it's no easy task to admit to yourself that there's nothing else left for you to achieve. I didn't want to be up there blocking the path of some driven, energetic newcomer, nor have to make my farewells after a series of poor performances. I felt that this was the best way to go, as a winner."

TEENAGERS ATTACK REF IN THE STREET

www.liverpoolecho.co.uk, Luke Traynor 26 November 2006 21:08

A referee was beaten up in the street by members of a teenage football team in an apparent revenge attack. The well-known match official was set upon by around 10 players, some he recognised from a side in the Anfield junior league, who repeatedly punched and kicked him. As he lay bruised and battered on the pavement, the laughing yobs shouted: "What are you going to do now, send us off?"

The referee was left needing hospital treatment - including stitches to an ear wound apparently caused by a bite. Two weeks earlier, the Anfield man had taken charge of a game involving two sides in a bad-tempered match. Police investigating the assault are considering if the louts targeted the referee because of his actions in the stormy fixture. Officials will be asking the team to name the culprits and the players could be banned from all future league games.

Steve O'Reilly, organiser of the Anfield junior league, said: "Up to 10 lads really beat him to a pulp. "The referee recognised some of them from a controversial game he's taken charge of a couple of weeks ago. This will not be tolerated and we will find those responsible and take action."

The referee, in his 40s, was confronted on Friday evening as he left the pub where he had enjoyed a drink. He was left with facial injuries and was taken to hospital for treatment.

Ian Dibbit, referee liaison officer, said: "We have passed some names on to the police who are investigating. "It's the first time I've known one of our referees being attacked by players in the street."

A spokeswoman for Merseyside police said: "We are investigating the assault and pursuing a number of lines of enquiry including one that the attack may have been linked to the victim's refereeing background."

RESPECT THE REF INTERVIEW By Gareth Bourne - 26 December 2006 www.skysports.com:

In 2003 Sky Sports News Reporter Dan Roan began an investigation called The Shame Game, exploring the level of abuse suffered by referees at the grass roots level. Now three years later Dan has revisited the theme in a new study called Respect the Ref to see if the situation has improved. He spoke to skysports.com's Gareth Bourne about his latest discoveries.

Gareth Bourne: Dan, it's been three years since you did the Shame Game campaign in 2003, what if anything has changed after conducting the Respect the Ref investigation?

Dan Roan: In 2003 we didn't know exactly what the situation was so we asked around and spoke to different county FAs and the FA as well. We found statistics to show that in that year there were 180 assaults on referees nationwide. Seven of those cases were for serious violent assault. We've revisited those stats this year and we've found that they have actually improved. This year there have been 125 assaults on refs, four of which fell into the violent category.

It's encouraging to find that the situation appears to have improved slightly in terms of assaults, but it can be misleading because so many of these cases go unrecorded. What we have concluded at the end this year's campaign is that there is still a big problem and a big worry, because while it continues, the more referees will leave the game and if they leave the game then amateur football in this country will suffer.

It's very difficult, because abuse of referees appears to be so ingrained into the fabric of football in this country. It seems to be part of the deal; if you referee you are going to get stick.

Gareth Bourne: What kind of initiatives have you come across to tackle the problem at grass roots level?

Dan Roan: There are a number of different initiatives but perhaps the most advanced was one called Don't Cross The Line, which was being run in Liverpool with help from Liverpool and Everton football clubs and set up by a guy called Malcolm Lee. Malcolm was an amateur referee in the junior Liverpool leagues who became sick and tired of the abuse he experienced. Being junior football the abuse he experienced was largely from the touchline with parents getting too heated. And that's another aspect to this investigation it's not just the players, it's also spectators who are responsible for abusing the officials.

Malcolm spoke of one official who was threatened by three members of a family after sending off an 11-year-old boy. Malcolm himself encountered spectators taking out baseball bats from their cars and things like this are difficult to comprehend at this level of football. Malcolm's campaigners go around to matches with banners to make it very clear to parents that they have to do their bit and act as role models for their kids. They also try and impress upon the players as young as eight that they have to respect the referee at all times, bring sportsmanship to the game and shake hands with your opponent at the end of the game. This is one example of what can and is being done and they are starting to see an improvement in the behaviour of players and spectators towards referees.

Gareth Bourne: Do you find referees who have been abused are reluctant to speak out?

Dan Roan: Sometimes yes, but there was a case in Southampton run by a guy called Steve Hatch whose two sons had given up refereeing because they were tired of the abuse and violence they had experienced. One of Steve's sons had been kicked and spat at by a player and decided to speak out by launching a campaign with a local newspaper. He started the campaign by appealing for other referees who had been abused in the area to speak out to try and put a stop to it. That takes quite a lot of courage, because by speaking out you rock the boat and that takes huge strength of character. Football needs to get tougher and consider introducing life bans for players or spectators that physically abuse referees.

Gareth Bourne: How far does the Professional game influence what goes on at grass roots level?

Dan Roan: It has a big influence and I'm not sure if the top players are aware of how much an impact their behaviour has on amateur football. Referees make mistakes from time to time but it's hard to know what the governing body can do to eradicate the level of criticism unless than they start to introduce really draconian measures. If you look at the examples from this season like Graham Poll after the game between Chelsea and Spurs who was heavily criticised it's very difficult. Ironically the most infamous incident this season was involved two players Ben Thatcher and Pedro Mendes.

We spoke to the head of the Wiltshire FA who said that it partly explained an incident where a 16-year-old ref was head butted by a 13-year-old player. When it gets to the stage where senior officials believe that it's influenced by events in the professional game then we do have cause for concern. It's time for players in the professional game to realise just how important their roles are.

Gareth Bourne: So what are the implications of this abuse for encouraging young officials into the game?

Dan Roan: There was an 18-year-old female ref Sapphire Kolinsky who was punched in the face by a 13-year-old in a junior game. She was a young enthusiastic ref, exactly the type of person that the FA is trying to attract to the game and she has turned her back on it after that incident. And that's something that we had never heard of when we did the Shame Game campaign three years ago. Maybe that's where it has moved on a bit, this new trend of abuse from players at the junior levels of the game.

Gareth Bourne: So is the problem of abuse getting worse?

Dan Roan: In that sense it is getting worse unfortunately. But the FA have to be seen to be taking control of the situation, because the more these cases get highlighted the less appealing it is to become a referee. At the moment there are about 29,000 referees in the UK. 7,000 of which are leaving the game each season, but it's about recruitment and attracting the young refs into the game. The FA has to improve the training for referees and incentivise youngsters to take up the whistle.

They are trying to fast track the best referees to get them to higher level quicker. Encouraging ex-players to become referees would help as would improving existing officials' performance but putting more emphasis on their training.

As I said the situation is very complicated and reducing the level of abuse towards referees is very much a work in progress, but through the Respect the Ref campaign we hope to raise awareness enough to improve the conditions that our grass roots officials are expected to work in.

THIS MONTH'S HOT TOPICS:

This month, we look at dealing with a drunken player, goal-scoring criteria, a field of play inspection of a waterlogged pitch, and the history of the advantage clause.

Question: Does a Referee have any jurisdiction in deciding whether an ill or injured player can carry on playing on the field of play or not? For example, how does he deal with a player under the influence of drugs or drink?

Answer: With issues of safety, Referees shouldn't assume players to be "innocent until proven guilty", but rather be erring on the side of caution. It's up to the Referee to ensure that the situation is safe by being proactive, rather than being reactive and waiting until there are conclusive reasons to believe otherwise.

Of course, Referees should not be breath-testing players before the game. But if something comes up to raise a doubt in the Referee's mind, then it's up to the Referee to eliminate that doubt before proceeding as a matter of basic caution. The fact that someone has been drinking, raises the very real possibility that their ability to play the game safely is impaired. Just because they don't seem drunk, doesn't mean that everything's okay.

Although in general, Referees are not medically qualified to make a judgement on why a player is behaving as if he were drunk (or to assess the extent of an injury), there will be times when common sense dictates that the Referee will have to make a sensible decision to protect the player from himself, and from causing potential injury (or contamination) to other players.

There are many symptoms that could lead to a player behaving strangely. He may be on medication, or he may be genuinely ill or not be ill at all. He may have behavioural difficulties. He may have taken drugs or yes! - he may be under the influence of alcohol - but by how much? Smelling alcohol on someone's breath is an invitation for a reasonable suspicion that they've probably consumed it. Certainly there are other possible explanations, but consumption is the most likely.

Another consideration to think about, is if a seriously injured (or drunk) player is asked to leave the field of play by the Referee, and that player further damages himself whilst making his way off the field of play, this could lead to serious accusations being made against the Referee for ordering the player to leave the field before being medically assessed by a qualified person.

But we live in a world frightened of litigation. My advice is as follows:

Referees should always exercise extreme care in their choice of words to describe players who may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, especially in connection with drug influence. In such circumstances, the matter should in the first instance be considered as a team responsibility and suitable attention be drawn to a club official, perhaps suggesting that a player looks too ill to continue/participate or seems to have a problem. Give the captain, coach/manger or a responsible medical person the chance to make this decision, and consult them by suggesting that the player seems to have a problem, and ask THEM to take some appropriate action. It should be pointed out to the team officials that the behaviour of the player might be dangerous to other players or to himself.

A Referee is given licence to use his common sense, and if a Referee believes that a player may be under the influence of alcohol, there is a huge chance that the Referee will be correct in his assessment of that player. Of course, there is a remote chance that the Referee may be wrong, but that is very doubtful, as a drunk person is usually easy to spot.

It's like giving permission for a player to wear a plaster cast or glasses; it is not a black and white decision. Therefore, if a Referee smells alcohol on a player breath and the player is behaving as if he were drunk, and the team officials take no action, then the Referee should simply not allow him to play.

Other Referees may wish to allow this player to participate in the game, but that's their prerogative. But my advice (failing sensible action being taken by the player's team) is for Referees to do what they think needs doing, and not worry about getting one decision wrong in maybe 100.

Alcohol is a suppressant and also a drink which dehydrates people...particularly players of football matches. If a Referee decides that safety is compromised, the Referee should make sure to put this in a report and outline it specifically to the appropriate authority.

Question: What was the original criteria for judging whether a goal-scoring opportunity is imminent?

Answer: The original FIFA 1991 MEMORANDUM stated:

Interpretation of Law XII, IBD 15

2. Criteria for judging whether a goal-scoring opportunity is imminent:

- a. Attacking player moving **DIRECTLY** toward the opponent's goal.
- b. There were fewer than two opponents in a position to defend against the attack. (see below*)
- c. The incident was close enough to the opponent's goal to be considered a goal scoring opportunity.

* A foul is committed on an attacking player (for example just outside of the penalty area):

When the goalkeeper is the person who commits the foul:

- (a) If there are two or more defenders near the goal, then it is NOT an OBVIOUS goal scoring opportunity.
- (b) If there is only one defender near the goal, then it IS an OBVIOUS goal scoring opportunity.

When a defender (not the goalkeeper) is the person who commits the foul:

- (c) If there is only one defender AND the goalkeeper near the goal (i.e. 2 or more players), then it is NOT an OBVIOUS goal scoring opportunity.
- (d) If there is only one defender near the goal, then it IS an OBVIOUS goal scoring opportunity.
- (e) If there is only the goalkeeper near the goal, then it IS an OBVIOUS goal scoring opportunity.

Question: Is there any advice or guidelines on deciding whether a match should be played or not regarding rain? How much water is allowed on the surface, the coverage/depth etc.?

Answer: There is no scientific measure that you can use to decide whether a match should be played or not. And even if there was, I'm sure that it would confuse the issue rather than help. Nevertheless, any experienced Referee will take the following into consideration before making a decision.

- It is not the depth of the water that decides if a game is playable or not, it is the depth of the Referee's duty of care that is the crucial factor!
- Whilst players are always willing to play in a mud bath, they are less willing to accept responsibility if one of their colleagues gets a broken leg because of a mistimed challenge due to a waterlogged surface. It is the Referee who then becomes the criminal for allowing the game to take place!
- It is the Referee's responsibility to make the decision and nobody else's.
- The Referee should not be influenced by the teams' opinion. If an accident happens, it is the Referee who cops it. The teams will deny any responsibility! Therefore, when a field of play inspection is carried out, the Referee should not do so in company of team managers or Club Officials, as they will try to influence the Referee's decision.
- The whole of the field of play surface MUST be safe. There is a great danger that if 99 percent of the field of play surface is OK, and the game is allowed to be played, players will assume that 100 percent of the surface is OK, and play normally, and not compensate for any dangerous puddle or deeply muddied area. In other words, playing on a field of play, which is partially 99% OK, is just as dangerous (if not more so) than on a field of play, which only has a single deep puddle of water. Neither game should be played.
- When the weather is doubtful, the Referee should aim to arrive at the ground as early as he can to make an inspection. This may allow time for travelling teams to be warned of a cancellation.
- When the weather is doubtful, a check on the local weather forecast can help. For example, although a field of play may be waterlogged in the early hours of the morning, a prediction of sunshine and wind, will give the Referee a good idea of the possibility that the field may become playable later in the day. If the forecast is for more rain, then the chances are, that the game will not proceed.
- At the lower levels of football, it can be useful for a local Referee to be contacted, to make an early inspection on behalf of the match Referee who lives some distance away from the ground. This can prevent unnecessary travelling.
- When completing the field of play inspection, a good indicator of the suitability of the surface, can be quickly ascertained by inspecting the goalmouth areas and the centre circle area first. These are the areas that get more use, and are more likely to be waterlogged.
- When completing the field of play inspection, other areas for close inspection, are places covered in shadow from buildings or trees. They are more likely to be more waterlogged than those areas that are basked in sunshine.
- The whole of the field of play surface MUST be inspected to eliminate any hidden areas of danger.
- A referee, who is seen to be completing a thorough field of play inspection, will have greater credibility when he decides to call off the game, than a Referee who only spends a few minutes making his inspection.
- The wind and the position of the sun and its path as the game progresses can also be taken into consideration. For example, if a field of play is 'just about playable', but the path of the sun means that its rays will soon disappear behind the trees or over the horizon, then a wet the field of play surface, is more likely to get worse, not better.
- At local level, if it is clear, that waiting an extra 30 minutes or possibly up to an hour, will allow the water to drain off, then play could be delayed with the agreement of both teams. But this depends very much on the weather forecast, the time of day and the team's agreement. Generally, it is better to make a decision quickly, based on the surface suitability at the time of the scheduled kick-off.

- The referee should wear a set of studded boots when inspecting the field of play, as this will give the best indication of the suitability of the playing surface.
 - A surface that does not yield any purchase to studded boots is dangerous, and the game should not be sanctioned. This includes, any part of the surface that does not yield, no matter how small an area.
 - Test the surface by rolling a ball along the worst effected areas. If the ball holds up and does not roll properly (for example, the ball stops due to surface water) there is a high chance that tackles and challenges for the ball will be miscalculated, resulting on potential danger to players.
 - The ability of the ball to roll naturally, in conjunction with the ability of players to keep a good purchase with their boots on the watery surface, are the two most crucial factors when judging if the surface is playable or not.
 - A damp field of play with muddied deep ruts and divots (a legacy of a muddy game played the day before) is less likely to be playable than a completely flat field.
 - When the Referee has made his decision, it should be communicated to the teams as soon as possible. When a Referee is communicating his decision to the teams, that in his opinion, the field of play is not safe, the decision should be made confidently. If teams suspect any doubt in the Referee's decision, they will try and persuade the Referee to change his mind. In short, when a Referee makes his decision, he should not back down, and he should make it abundantly clear that the decision is his to make, and the game will not be played under his authority.
 - The inspection of a waterlogged field of play, and whether to sanction a game or not, is not a difficult decision to make for a Referee. It is fairly obvious to identify dangerous area that could potentially cause an injury. Common sense should be used.
 - Young players are more likely to get injured on waterlogged surfaces. Therefore, even greater care must be taken when making a decision to allow the game to be played or not.
 - If there is any doubt (no matter how small), then the game must not be played.
-

Question: What is the history of the advantage clause?

Answer: The word 'advantage' appeared for the first time in the Laws in season 1938-39 following a complete rewrite and renumbering of the previous Laws. The original sentence that appeared in Law 5 was as follows:

"He shall, however, refrain from penalising in cases where he is satisfied that by doing so he would be giving an advantage to the offending team."

In 1956-57, the following was added to Law 5:

"If the Referee has decided to apply the advantage clause and to let the game proceed, he cannot revoke his decision if the presumed advantage has not been realised, even though he has not, by any gesture, indicated his decision. This does not exempt the offending player from being dealt with by the Referee."

The following Advantage clause amendment appeared in Law 5-season 1996-97, as International Board Decision 7. This original Law 5 text and FIFA instructions were as follows:

"If the Referee applies the advantage clause and the advantage which was anticipated does not develop at that time, the Referee shall penalise the original offence."

Reason:

The amendment seeks to indicate a timescale during which the Referee may penalise the original offence if the anticipated advantage does not develop.

This now gives the Referee the possibility of waiting to see how an advantage situation develops and if it does not develop after a short while, **e.g. two/three seconds**, then the Referee has to immediately stop the game and penalise the original offence, provided that the ball is still in play

The Corsham Referee Newsletter No 43 (January 2007) www.CorshamRef.net
(if not, then play must be restarted in accordance with the Law). Furthermore, should a second offence be committed by a player of the offending team during the time the Referee is allowing for the development of the anticipated advantage, then the Referee must sanction the more serious of the two offences. In any case, this does not exempt each offending player from being dealt with appropriately (caution or dismissal) by the Referee.

The modern Law 5 text is shown in the paragraph below:

The Referee "allows play to continue when the team against which an offence has been committed will benefit from such an advantage and penalises the original offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time."

Before the 1996/1997 season, if the Referee allowed an advantage, he was not allowed to bring play back and penalise the original offence if subsequently, the advantage did not develop. In other words, it was just bad luck for the team whose player had been fouled.

A free kick awarded for a foul should not benefit the team that committed the foul. The essence of the modern advantage clause is to promote fairness to the **offended** team, and not to allow the **offending** team an unfair advantage by allowing them time to prepare their defending players in readiness for a free kick against them. The advantage clause also allows the Referee to keep play moving - thus promoting flowing football.

It is important to remember two facets of this developing Law 5 change.

Firstly the wording encapsulating the time allowed for a Referee to bring back an advantage to the original scene of the foul. "If it does not develop after a short while, e.g. two/three seconds."

The latest Law 5 text does not mention specific time, so it is important not to lose visibility of this original time measurement allowance - especially for new trainee Referees.

And secondly, if the Referee allows advantage, and lets play continue - if a second offence is committed by a player of the offending team during the time the Referee is allowing for the development of the anticipated advantage, then the Referee could sanction the more serious of the two offences.

For example: A defender attempts to impede an attacker 2 metres outside of the defender's penalty area. Although the attacker is unbalanced and falters, he manages to keep upright, retains possession of the ball and moves towards goal.

The Referee shouts "Play on, Advantage!"

The attacker moves into the defender's penalty area where he is immediately tripped by another defender and fouled a second time, resulting in the attacker falling to the ground. The award is a penalty kick (for the more serious offence/punishment) and not an indirect free kick (for the lesser offence/punishment) for the original impedance.

If the attacker had not been fouled a second time, and had gained no advantage from being allowed to play-on; the Referee should stop play within two/three seconds and award the attacking team an indirect free kick at the place outside of the penalty area where the first foul (impedance) occurred.

Further advice based on information from Ken Ridden Director of Refereeing The Football Association England was provided to Referees in the form of 'Guidance Notes For Referees 1996/1997'. His advice covering the advantage clause was as follows:

"The change in Decision 7 (Law 5), referring to the Advantage Clause, is very significant and requires a lot of thought. The new wording is intended to ensure that the team offended against does not suffer unfairly if a Referee reasonably applies the advantage clause, but the advantage is immediately nullified by extraneous factors. It must be noted that if the Advantage clause is invoked and the player offended against loses control of the ball as a result of his own error, then play must be allowed to continue. Likewise, if a player receives the ball from an 'advantage' situation but shoots wide of the goal, the original offence should not be penalised with a free kick.

It is more important than ever, that Referees identify appropriate 'advantage' situations early, and convey their intentions to the players, a clear shout and the correct hand signal.

At local league level players often see a greater benefit in a free kick, only expecting the advantage if there is a clear-cut (obvious) attacking opportunity.

The change of the wording of this Law does not change the necessity to consider all factors when applying advantage, what it does, is affords a 'safety valve'. A Referee may now legally, award a free kick after an advantage does not transpire through an act of fate.

The long-standing principle of the Advantage Clause remains the same. You should remember that as a Referee you must look at the anticipated advantage in terms of the team offended against and not judge the issue solely on whether the fouled player retains possession of the ball after the unfair challenge."

The above 'History' is a small insight into 'when and why' the Advantage clause was added to the Laws. The principles included above are still adhered to today and offer an understanding on how the Advantage clause has developed and how the modern Referee should use it.

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 - 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).

Disclaimer: The content of this newsletter is not sanctioned by or affiliated with any governing body of soccer. The opinions expressed here are sometimes those of the Corsham Referee webmaster and the readers, or from other media sources. Reference to the male gender in this newsletter is for simplification only, and apply to both males and females. All rights of the current Laws mentioned in this newsletter are reserved by FIFA, and they are the official laws of the International Football Association Board. The Editor is not obliged to publicise unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

This Newsletter and previous copies will be available via The Corsham Referee web site Newsletter page. PRINTABLE pdf VERSIONS OF ALL THE NEWSLETTERS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE WEB SITE.

To subscribe or to unsubscribe to this newsletter, go to The Corsham Referee web site address above or go here: www.corshamref.org.uk

Regards, Julian Carosi www.corshamref.org.uk