

The Corsham Referee Newsletter No 45 (March 2007)

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

Welcome, with an International perspective.

Welcome to the 45th edition of The Corsham Referee monthly International Football/Soccer 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; 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.net 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.*

The following is a letter sent in to one of my local newspapers the Gazette and Herald, and speaks for itself!

MANAGERS SHOULD THINK BEFORE SPEAKING *By John Berry. Chippenham, Wiltshire, England.*

I had to blink when I read Devizes Town manager's comments on the referee for his team's match against Bitton, (*Gazette Newspaper, February 1*).

Paul Thompson's most crass statement was: "You can accept the odd errors." Oh, really! Which might they be? A foul throw? Or a dodgy goal kick? No, can I suggest the referee makes his odd error by disallowing a last minute goal for Devizes in a Championship-settling match!

Just how many errors does he think that his players make during a game? He says that if he made 10 mistakes in one day then he wouldn't be doing his job. On that basis let me assure him that his players are not doing their jobs. Mistakes are part of the game as they are made by humans, in the same way that referees are prone to mistakes.

He also complains that for verbally abusing him the referee sent off a Bitton player. I always thought that was one of the offences for which players could be dismissed.

Mr Thompson might be surprised to learn that referees, too, face pressure. Not only have they got to control the game, but they have to contend with the hostility of the crowd, and the likes of managers such as Mr Thompson shouting verbal abuse.

Like many managers Mr Thompson refuses to accept responsibility when his team loses. No matter that he got the tactics wrong; that his striker shot wide from three yards or that his defender gave away a needless penalty. What really matters is that the referee bears responsibility for such errors! If managers such as Mr Thompson wish to be taken seriously then they ought to think more carefully before uttering such rubbish.

Good on you John (from Julian Carosi)

ARE REFEREES GIVING OUT THE WRONG MESSAGE WHEN MANAGING CEREMONIAL FREE KICKS?

By Julian Carosi

During Tuesday (20 Feb 07) night's European Champions League game, between the English team Manchester United and the French team, Lille, Manchester United's Ryan Giggs caused a storm by scoring the only goal against with a quick piece of thinking. Manchester United's Loiuise Saha had been hauled down by the Lille player Efstathios Tavlaridis, when Saha might have gone on to score. A direct free kick was correctly awarded to Manchester United, near the Lille goal. Whilst Lille's defenders were preparing a defensive wall and had lost concentration, Ryan Giggs took the free kick and scored the winning goal. Referee Eric Braamhaar was correct

in allowing the goal to stand, as no infringement had occurred. Mr Braamhaar was clearly in dialogue with Giggs prior to the kick taking place, and was fully aware of the situation (i.e. that Giggs wanted to take a quick free kick).

A free kick is called free, because it allows the team who are taking the free kick, to take it whenever they want to. The team committing the foul has no rights to delay the kick, and that is how it should be. The French team were very unhappy with the decision and bizarre scenes followed, with Lille players being encouraged by their coach to leave the field of play (or so it would seem). Lille subsequently protested about the goal, but the complaint is thrown out by UEFA who have allowed the result to stand.

When a team commits an offence, they do not have the 'right' to have the free kick delayed to their favour. Providing that the Referee is happy for the free kick to proceed, it is the defending team's fault if they lose concentration. It is not compulsory for Referees to blow their whistle, or to signal for a restart play, unless they clearly say so. The default is (and always has been) that the offended team can take the free kick whenever they want to.

The crux of the confusion is when the defending team wrongly interpret the Referees body-language, to mean that a delay will occur, to allow the Referee to organise the 9.15m distance, pending a signal from him to start the free kick.

The main consideration points for a Referee to successfully manage ceremonial free kick situations are as follows

- sprint to the location very quickly and ask the attacking side the question, "quick one or ten yards?"
- be aware of what is going on, and establish control of events if needed.
- use zero body-language when ascertaining if the offended team require the 9.15m distance to be managed or not (i.e. does the attacking team want to take a quick free kick or not?)
- quickly move away discretely if the a quick free kick is about to take place.
- signals can be verbal, such as "yes, OK" or "away you go", or even a gesture, for example by movement of the arm.
- If the offended team ask for the wall to be positioned correctly, the Referee should clearly show his whistle to both teams, to indicate that the free kick must not start until he signals.

The Law surrounding free kicks is good, and the players and the Referees understand it. Most coach/managers know that the option to allow time to set up the free kick is for the benefit of the injured team, and once they have set up their free kick, and the Referee is happy, he should not delay the restart any further, by giving the defensive team even more time to set up their wall.

What the Manchester United v Lille incident does highlight, is the importance of the referee controlling the restart of play, either by allowing a quick free kick to take place, or by delaying the start at the behest of the offended team or to deal with any other issues.

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION BOARD (IFAB) MEETING

The guardians of the Laws of the Game of Association Football, the International F.A. Board (IFAB), composed of representatives from the football associations of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as FIFA, will be discussing various possible amendments to the Laws when the body convenes at the Lowry Hotel in Manchester (England) for its 121st Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 3 March 2007. The four British associations have one vote apiece, while FIFA, representing its 203 other members, has four votes, with any proposal requiring a three-quarter majority (i.e six of the eight votes) to be approved.

The agenda for this year's IFAB AGM includes FIFA's proposed revision of Law 4 to prohibit players from displaying political, religious or personal statements on their equipment and thus allow such transgressions to be handled by the FIFA Disciplinary Committee. A further submission from the world governing body proposes that a yellow card be shown to any player who covers his or her face with a mask while celebrating a goal.

Among the items for discussion and decision in section IV of the agenda are goal-line technology, with three separate projects submitted for consideration, and the sanctions to be imposed on any player who intentionally strikes an opponent with an elbow. The IFAB will also address the issues of pitch-side TV monitors and video evidence.

The IFAB meeting on 3 March 2007 will be followed by a media conference at the Lowry Hotel at 12.30pm. Accreditation is not required. However, media representatives interested in attending are requested to contact The FA's media department at: IFAB@TheFA.com.

Further information from:
FIFA Media Department
media@fifa.org

The full agenda for the meeting, which will start at 9.30am, can be downloaded here:
http://www.fifa.com/documents/fifa/publication/IFAB_Agenda_2007.pdf

HOMER

(An extract from the brilliant book 'Soccerpedia' by my friend Andrew Ward. Arranged in A to Z format, this entertaining and authoritative book offers the chance to get to know the Laws of the Game and its history in detail. www.anovabooks.com Publisher Robson . Publication Date 28 September 2006: ISBN 1861059833 Size (h x w) 234x156mm Pages 368 Normal price £10.99 (approx. \$20.35) Can be bought from www.Amazon.co.uk)

Referees are called 'homers' if they appear to favour the home side, supposedly swayed to do so by the presence of home supporters or the size of the home club. During a match in the 1950s, Len Shackleton (Sunderland) consistently called the referee 'Mr Khayyam'. At the end of the match, when the referee asked him what all the 'Mr Khayyam' was about, Shackleton explained that he thought the referee had the same first name - Omar.

Home ground is considered to be an advantage, and statistics show that home teams generally score more goals than away teams. It is not necessarily refereeing that produces this. Home sides are favoured with a more generally supportive crowd, a familiar environment and less travelling to matches. What may seem like home bias, in terms of refereeing decisions and the issuing of cards, may be down to home teams attacking more and exerting more pressure. More penalties are awarded to home teams than away teams, but again this may be what one would expect if home teams spend a disproportionate amount of time in the opposition penalty area.

During a match between Manchester United and Newcastle United, Alan Shearer (Newcastle) intercepted a backpass and tried to go past goalkeeper Tim Howard (Manchester United) when his leg was clipped (January 2004). The referee did not award a penalty but video replays showed that he could easily have done so. That incident provoked a discussion about whether Manchester United, at Old Trafford, had had fewer penalties awarded against them than would be expected. In fact, there had been only three awards between December 1993, when Fox scored for Norwich City, and the Shearer incident over ten years later.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was in trouble with authorities after contesting the referee's decision to give a penalty-kick to Manchester United, saying that it was to be expected from a referee who had given eight penaltykicks to United in the previous eight matches he had refereed at Old Trafford (October 2004).

Alan Nevill, Nigel Balmer and Mark Williams have researched the 'homer' issue. They found that referees watching a videotape with the sound turned down awarded 15.5 per cent fewer fouls to the home team than referees watching with the volume up and the crowd noise apparent. But the more experienced the referee, the more balanced they were.

George Best has summed up the players' definition of the homer: 'It's human nature, isn't it, if you're a referee? If you go to Leeds and you've got forty thousand people screaming at you, or you go to Liverpool or Old Trafford, you're going to go with the flow. That's what used to happen, and it still does to a certain degree. Referees are going to make decisions that the home fans want to know about.'

There is another meaning of 'homer' - the referee who likes to get home safely after the match.

CORSHAM REF WEB SITE POLL RESULTS

The results of the poll on treating injured players can be found below.

Question: What should a Referee do if a player gets a minor injury and lies down on the grass whilst play continues?

Answers (Votes) Percent

1. Assess the situation before making a decision. (168) 42%
2. Continue with play, only if the injured player is not in the way. (113) 28%
3. Always continue with play. (36) 9%
4. Shout over to the player and ask him if he is OK. (26) 7%
5. Encourage the team in possession to kick the ball out. (16) 4%
6. Err on the side of caution and always stop play. (15) 4%
7. Do nothing. (10) 3%
8. Tell the player to make his way off the field if he wants treatment. (8) 2%
9. Wave the trainer on whilst the game continues. (3) 1%
10. Tell the player to get up! (2) 1%

A new poll is now available on the home page of: www.CorshamRef.net

The question is: "Which of these hypothetical Law changes would you like to see accepted?"

UPDATE ON THE FA ENGLAND NATIONAL GAME STRATEGY 2007-12 (feedback from a recent online FA survey)

We wanted to find out your views and let you have the chance to help us get our 2007-12 National Game Strategy right.

Over 17,000 people have now given us their feedback via regional consultation events, the online questionnaires and an extensive under-16 survey.

The research findings are interesting and give us a real picture of what is needed to further develop the game. Some key headlines are:

- No.1 priority is tackling bad behaviour.
- 1.1 million 5-15s who don't currently play would like to play competitive football in a team and somehow improve their technical skills.
- Having a referee for every game and better facilities ranks highly.
- Over one million girls have played recreational football, but 52% of girls under 15 have never had the chance to play.
- Qualified coaches and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks in youth football are being demanded.
- This research is helping to give some added focus to our plans and we are now busy progressing with the first draft of the strategy.

Our next steps are to present our strategy and business plan to The FA National Game Board, which consists of representatives from the game who make policy decisions across grassroots football. We will then announce our final agreed Strategy internally to all counties and other key stakeholders in the summer and will look to announce the Strategy publicly later in the year.

Thank you for your support to date and I look forward to writing to you with our plans later in the year.

Sir Trevor Brooking CBE | Director of Football Development

CAR TROUBLE

A referee pushes his BMW car into a petrol station. He tells the mechanic it died. After the mechanic works on it for a few minutes, it is idling smoothly.

The referee says, "What's the story?"

The mechanic replies, "Just crap in the carburettor"

The referee asks, "How often do I have to do that?"

RIVER WALK

There's this referee out for a walk. He comes to a river and sees another referee on the opposite bank. "Yoo-hoo!" he shouts,

"How can I get to the other side?"

The second referee looks up the river then down the river and shouts back, "You **ARE** on the other side."

AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

A football player goes into the doctor's office and said that his body hurt wherever he touched it.

"Impossible!" says the doctor. "Show me."

The player took his finger, pushed his elbow and screamed, he pushed his knee and screamed; likewise he pushed his ankle and screamed. Everywhere he touched made him scream.

The doctor said, "You're not really a player are you?"

"Well, no" he said, "I'm actually a referee."

"I thought so," the doctor said. "Your finger is broken."

KNITTING

A highway patrolman pulled alongside a speeding car on the motorway. Glancing at the car, he was astounded to see that the referee behind the wheel was knitting! Realizing that the referee was oblivious to his flashing lights and siren, the police man cranked down his window, turned on his bullhorn and yelled, "PULL OVER!" "NO!" the referee yelled back, "IT'S A SCARF!"

IN A VACUUM

A referee was playing Trivial Pursuit one night. It was his turn. He rolled the dice and he landed on Science & Nature.

His question was, "If you are in a vacuum and someone calls your name, can you hear it?"

He thought for a time and then asked, "Is it on or off?"

AND FINALLY

An assistant referee was visiting his referee friend, who had just acquired two new dogs, and asked him what their names were. The referee responded by saying that one was named Rolex and one was named Timex.

The assistant referee said, "Whoever heard of someone naming dogs like that?"

"HELLLOOOOOOO.....," answered the referee, "They're watch dogs! I always have one in each hand."

NEWS from www.telegraph.co.uk:

BIG SCREEN BENEFIT FOR REFEREES (By Patrick Barclay 11 Feb 07)

When Cristiano Ronaldo fell under challenge from Steed Malbranque at White Hart Lane on Sunday 4 February, television's experts disagreed, George Graham (*ex Arsenal Manager*) supporting the decision of the referee, Mark Clattenburg, to award a penalty and Ray Wilkins (*ex Chelsea and England player*) declaring there had been no contact. This is why FIFA are right to be sceptical about the value of video refereeing. If such experienced observers as Graham and Wilkins, sitting together with technology and time to think, cannot concur, the notion that controversy can be removed from the game is exposed as false. Their friendly little debate also reinforces the Premier League's wisdom in refraining from heavy-handed action against Tottenham, who showed the incident on their giant screens during the interval and were reported to be facing sanctions for breaching the ban on the replaying of anything controversial, presumably on the grounds that it might incite spectators.

I gather the worst Spurs can expect is a letter reminding them of the need to be careful, and that seems sensible. In the choosing of highlights, like refereeing itself, there are always going to be borderline cases. If we are to have giant screens - and, at the small number of stadiums which have them, they appear to be appreciated by spectators - the odd question mark is bound to arise over a decision, especially when the referee is having a turbulent time, as in the Spurs-Manchester United match.

Indeed my view is that referees have little to fear from a lifting of restrictions on what can be seen at the interval or the end of a match (constant replays during play might be too intrusive). The restrictions are not always helpful to the officials, as was emphasised during the World Cup final when French and neutral fans were angered and bewildered by the dismissal of Zinedine Zidane, believing him to be the victim of a dive by Italy's Marco Materazzi, until they found out about the great man's off-the-ball butt.

By and large, referees tend to be vindicated, or at least the reasons for their decisions, such as a player blocking their view, explained by replays. So the lifting of censorship's burden from the giant screens could actually reduce discontent among crowds, as well as improving the service to the customers by letting them take their own views on dives, the intent involved in handling offences and so on. Perhaps the Premier League's common sense in recognising that no riot took place at White Hart Lane - that, in fact, no harm at all was done - suggests they are moving in this direction.

WASTINGTIMEITIS (18 Feb 07)

The luckless Chris Kirkland, who many believe is destined to become England's first-choice goalkeeper, faces another six weeks out with a torn finger ligament. He suffered the injury in training, but might first have damaged it playing for Wigan at the Emirates Stadium.

A leading physician tells me: "This is a very common injury among goalkeepers, a form of wastingtimeitis. It can spread pain and frustration to opposing French players and managers. As with many injuries, it stems from ignorance. Many keepers do not realise they can take goal kicks from the side the ball goes out. They put unnecessary strain on their fingers by continually picking the ball up and carrying it to the opposite side of the penalty area."

SHEEP DROPPINGS ANYONE?

Goalposts are moved to spare rambblers:

Goalposts have been removed from a children's football pitch because council officials fear rambblers might bump into them at night. The miniature posts were in the way of a public footpath that cuts across Beech Road park in Alderley Edge.

The Cheshire town is home to Premiership footballers such as Liverpool's Peter Crouch and Rio Ferdinand, of Manchester United. The posts were ordered to be removed after concerns that any walkers following the route in the dark might not see them. A spokesman for Cheshire county council said: "The football pitch crosses a public right of way. The cross bar was quite low on it so we asked if it could be moved to one side so it didn't affect walkers at night."

But Mary Maczkowiak, the chairman of Alderley Edge parish council, said the officials who moved the goalposts were "killjoys". She claimed that few people would walk across the field in any case as it was so muddy.

"I had noticed that the goalposts had disappeared and after further investigation found out that they had been removed after a visit from the local rights of way officer, because there is a public right of way that runs through the fields," she said.

"They must have just come round and done a sweep. It is so ridiculous — there are far more important issues with footpaths round and about."

Frank Keegan, a councillor, said the removal of the posts was "a gross abuse of public money".

The decision is the latest health and safety ruling at the expense of football. Last month it was reported that a school had banned soccer matches to prevent injuries.

Cathy Long, head at Burnham Grammar School, Bucks, was said to have stopped playground matches in case pupils were hurt by the ball.

"It has become the latest thing to kick a ball at each other," she said. "A member of staff accidentally had a football kicked in her face and we have had a few kids having to see matron."

A referee also called off a match in January because he thought sheep droppings on the pitch were a health and safety risk. The match between Caerwys Reserves and Rhuddlan Town in North Wales had been moved to a caravan park because another game was being played on the main pitch. But after inspecting the field, the referee Harry Guest decided sheep droppings could be dangerous and postponed the Clwyd League President's Cup tie.

The Scottish Youth Football Association has issued safety guidelines to coaches advising them to ban anyone from sitting behind goals in case they are hit by a ball.

Premiership footballers may also fall foul of health and safety officials when Control of Noise at Work regulations come into force in April. Under the rules, firms must make ear protectors available to all employees who are exposed to excessive noise in order to protect their hearing.

The noise levels at many football grounds, caused by tens of thousands of singing fans, are said to be well above those permitted. Officials and even players may have to wear protectors during matches.

UEFA RULE IN MANCHESTER UNITED'S FAVOUR

European football's governing body rejected the French club's claims that Ryan Giggs' decisive 82nd-minute free-kick had been taken too quickly and announced they would be pursuing further action against Lille for attempting to walk off the pitch in protest. However, that charge of improper behaviour will not be heard until March 22, long after the second leg at Old Trafford is done.

UEFA's decision was the only one possible. To have ordered the fixture replayed would have been to lay every remaining Champions League game open to anarchy. Thierry Henry famously scored with a similar, quickly-taken free kick when the Chelsea keeper, Petr Cech, was still organising his wall and yesterday UEFA's control and disciplinary body concluded there had been "no evidence of a technical error" by referee Eric Braamhaar. Ferguson commented that if Lille had scored a goal in this manner he would have blamed his keeper, Edwin van der Sar, remarking: "How long does it take to line up a wall?"

NEWS FROM www.UEFA.com Friday, 19 January 2007 by Pascale Pierard

PROTECTING THE REFEREE (New legislation will increase protection for French referees)

Disregard for authority on the sports field is an appalling phenomenon that can result in aggression and violence. Players are not the only ones to blame. Some parents, blinded by their own ambition, have no hesitation in telling their child to "Break his leg!" and abuse the referee if he awards a decision against their team. Sometimes managers and coaches also join in. Insults are too often hurled at referees in all sporting disciplines.

Mass exodus:

While elite referees are protected, their younger colleagues who operate at youth or amateur level are particularly vulnerable to physical violence and intimidation. They do not necessarily have barriers or stewards to protect them. Sometimes they do not even have assistants and are on their own. Faced with a mass exodus of referees France has adopted legislation under which referees in all sports are given the status of public servants, alongside firemen, policemen and customs officers. As of this month people who attack referees in France can now be punished twice as heavily as before under accelerated legal procedures. They run the risk of being fined up to €30,000 and imprisoned for two years. In murder cases, they will be sentenced to life imprisonment.

New law

The new law represents tremendous national recognition of the work and value of referees. Jean-Louis Piette, president of the Higher Refereeing Council, had been calling for such a law for a decade and had lobbied tirelessly to promote the idea. Things began to move more quickly last June, when a bill was tabled by senator Jean-François Humbert. Having been approved by the senate at the start of the summer and by parliament in October, it became law on 1 January and applies to referees in all sports and at all levels, including the 28,000 registered football referees. Over the last five years, around 20,000 of France's 153,000 referees have lost heart and given up. Although they are still signing up at 17 or 18, many have had enough by the time they reach 30. This exodus is leaving a gap in the age pyramid.

'Respect'

Piette explains: "If someone calls you a fool in the street, you have virtually no chance of having a complaint upheld in the courts. From now on, it will be different for referees. The law has a deterrent effect. It's a bit like people's fear of police officers. If you fear someone, you respect them. Violence is not only a problem in the suburbs, where it is relatively well contained. It is even spreading to rural areas. It can be seen in referees' relationships with players and managers. Some throw stones at the referee's car.

'Too lenient'

"Being part of a crowd also means troublemakers can, to a degree, remain anonymous," Peitte added. "It's hard to find a person who threw a firecracker from the middle of a crowd; this law will make it possible to track these people down because their offences are now considered as serious as attacks on a police officer. The French Football Federation will also be able to be more authoritarian. Too often, when sporting justice has been severe, such as where youth coaches who are supposed to set a good example are concerned, the civil courts have been too lenient. From now on, we will be singing from the same hymn sheet."

'Truly protected'

The law also gives referees the same fiscal status as self-employed workers. "There is no relationship of subordination between the referee and the federation, although clearly referees must respect the laws of the game and the rules laid down by the federation," Piette concludes. "Referees are truly protected. They can therefore be even more impartial and independent on the pitch; this special financial and fiscal status is also a good thing in the current era of scandals. Referees used to be a weak link. Now, they will be less tempted." Finally, all referees can combine their job with their passion. France has therefore sent out a strong signal in favour of those without whom sport would be impossible. Will others follow suit?

This is an abridged article that appears in UEFA's February edition of the uefadirect. To read the article in full, you can download a pdf file here. <http://www.uefa.com/newsfiles/493209.pdf>

STAMPING DOWN ON UNRULY CONDUCT (8 February 2007 by Simon Hart)

UEFA will send its leading referees into the knockout rounds of the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Cup with instructions to tackle the problems of player protests and simulation.

Punish protests:

"We have to stop this type of behaviour," said UEFA Referees' Committee member Hugh Dallas in a presentation entitled Protecting the Image of the Game. Referring to mass protests either to the referee or between the players themselves, Dallas told the match officials at the UEFA Advanced Course for Elite and Premier Referees that in such 'mob scenes' they should punish not only the initial offender but other players involved if needed. Players running to such incidents from across the pitch deserved to be sanctioned and when there was excessive physical contact, Dallas stressed, a yellow card was not enough. "Confrontation now is becoming a bigger problem in our game. It's tactical, it's deliberate."

Simulation concerns:

"We are also concerned about simulation," Dallas added. "It's becoming a bigger and more difficult problem to control because the players are becoming very good at it. Why are they becoming very good at it? Because they are practising on the training ground how to cheat." The course delegates were reminded that any attempt to deceive the referee warranted a yellow card, no matter where the incident took place on the field. "We must drive this out of the game," said Dallas, who also noted that there can be cases of players simply falling over under normal contact where a booking is not warranted. In addition, Dallas underlined the need for strong action to stop players encroaching at free-kicks.

Closing address:

Bringing the course programme to a close on Thursday evening, committee chairman Volker Roth told the match officials to take firm measures against aggression, be it physical or verbal. "Protect the players – this is your most important task. We have seen some sequences of brutality and you cannot allow acts like elbowing. We must be strong without forgetting that we are sportsmen – that means if you are always strong with cards, this does not work. But if you have brutality, show the red card. We have to stop these mass protests too, with at least a yellow card.

Course benefits:

"Respect is a question of education but sometimes it seems that some players and coaches are not very well-educated, so the respect is gone," continued Roth. "To bring it back, you have only one possibility - to use the Laws of the Game." Swiss referee Massimo Busacca highlighted the benefits of the course for these leading officials when he said: "We try to work towards consistency and uniformity, and look at those subjects which help us to improve and be ready for UEFA Champions League or UEFA Cup games. We all know how important these games are, and how important the adequate preparation is for us."

REFEREES TO REMAIN IN TUNE

Referees will continue using communication devices in the UEFA club competitions until the end of the season after positive feedback persuaded UEFA to extend their trial use in matches.

Decision in June:

Following reports from the 48 match officials who used the communication system during the first part of the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Cup campaigns, UEFA's Referees' Committee decided to continue the testing period for the rest of the season. In June, the committee will review the situation and decide whether to employ this communication system in the longer term.

Another angle of vision:

"If this new technology can be of help for the referees, we will support its use," said Referees' Committee chairman Volker Roth. Committee member Pierluigi Collina spoke in positive terms about the electronic devices, which allow referees to communicate with their assistants and the fourth officials on the touchline. "This allows you to get another angle of vision," he said. "The referee can ask his assistant for a second opinion before making a judgment on a critical situation."

Introduced last season:

Yvan Cornu, head of UEFA's refereeing unit, said of the new technology: "The use of the communication should not replace the regular eye contact within the refereeing team. And the assistants will still have to use the flags to signal any incidents." After their introduction by UEFA last term, the devices were employed at the 2006 FIFA World Cup and have featured also in some domestic competitions. For the majority of the referees, this season's trial has been their first experience of the technology and so the committee is keen to extend the testing before officially approving the introduction of the new technology.

Benefits:

In their comments, the referees indicated the immediate communication and constant contact with their assistants as the biggest benefit. According to their feedback, the handling of incidents out of the view of the referee has also improved. In addition, they feel that using the communication system helps increase the self-confidence and motivation of the officials and gives an added sense of security. As a result, the arbiters feel their team work and co-operation have become better.

Minor problems reported:

Although most referees are happy using the earplugs and microphone, there were minor problems reported. Some officials felt their concentration was disturbed, while others were uncomfortable running while wearing the belt that holds the transmitter. There were also slight problems reported with hearing and balance while wearing the earpiece.

USA CUP NEEDS REFEREES (advertised on <http://www.thefa.com/>)

Tuesday, 30 January 2007.

Schwans USA Cup will be holding its 23rd year of competition from 16th to 21st July 2007. In the past 22 years, Schwans USA Cup has hosted teams from 35 US States as well as countries such as Austria, Bermuda, Brazil, Columbia, Denmark, England, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Russia, Scotland, Sweden and as many others.

The Tournament is played at the National Sports Centre, the world's largest premier soccer complex, which is located just north of Minneapolis in Blaine, Minnesota. The National Sports Centre is one of the finest soccer complexes in the world with 54 full size grass fields in one location. The championship games will be held on one of the side by side exhibition stadiums where the US National teams have played. The tournament provides excellent competition and cultural exchange, an experience you will remember forever.

At Schwans USA Cup we are constantly looking for quality Referees. If you would like to know more or wish to take part, please contact Trevor Wing on:

Contact details for interested referees in England.

Telephone: 01642 599655

Mobile: 07860 780 446

Email: Trevor.wing10@btinternet.com

For further information visit: www.usacup.com

THIS MONTH'S HOT TOPICS:

This month, we look at an offside question; a jumping goalkeeper and violence occurring during a penalty kick; holding outside and then inside the penalty area; whether to flag early or not, a penalty shoot-out scenario involving an injured player; and finally, what exactly is the vicinity of the field of play?

GAINING POSSESSION OR NOT?

Question:

Attacker (A) is in an ONside position near the right touchline.

Attacker (B) is in an OFFside position near the left touchline,

An ONside team mate (C) who is just inside the defending team's half, lobs the ball high towards the area behind the second last defender for attacker (A) to run onto.

The second last defender realises that attacker (A) will gain possession of the ball, so he reaches up with his hand and deliberately deflects the ball away from where attacker (A) is running to, and towards the left where the OFFside player is positioned.

OFFside attacker (B), then runs and makes contact with the ball.

As a deliberate handling is a foul, can it be a controlled possession, thus resetting the criteria of offside?

What action should the Referee take?

Answer: The Referee should stop play and award a direct free kick to the attacking team, at the place where the defender deliberately handled the ball. If this was inside the defender's penalty area, then a penalty kick should be awarded.

Note 1: The defender cannot be said to have controlled the ball, when he deliberately handled it. Therefore, offside cannot be reset at this point. To allow a deliberate handing of the ball to be seen as controlled possession, would be stretching the Laws much too far.

Note 2: If the deliberate handling prevented a goal scoring opportunity, then the defending player should be sent off. At the very least, the defending player should receive a caution for deliberately handling the ball.

Note 3: Had the ball been deflected towards attacker (A) instead of attacker (B), it would be possible for the Referee to apply the advantage clause as a viable option. In other words, a good chance on goal with only the goalkeeper to beat, is more advantageous to the attacking team, than awarding them a free kick.

THE JUMPING GOALKEEPER.

Question: Law 14 states that the goalkeeper "must remain on his goal line, facing the kicker, between the goal posts until the ball has been kicked". The goalkeeper may move anywhere along the goal line from side to side, before the penalty kick has commenced. Many goalkeepers will move slightly to one side and flap their arms about to encourage the kicker to aim at the other side, or to distract him. What action should the Referee take if the goalkeeper jumps up into the air from his goal line, just as the kicker shoots.

Answer: Law 14 does allow the goalkeeper to move along his goal line before a penalty kick is taken (*i.e. 'the defending goalkeeper remains **ON** his goal line until the ball is kicked'*). But there is no stipulation that states both feet **must** remain on the goal line. Although jumping slightly up and down on the goal line cannot be said to be '*remains **ON** his goal line'*'; because the goal line extends in a vertical plane upwards, as long as the goalkeeper does not leave the plane of his goal line (*i.e. by coming into the field of play before the ball has been touched*) common sense should be used, and the penalty kick should be allowed to proceed.

VIOLENCE DURING A PENALTY KICK

Question: What would happen if one of the following scenarios occurred whilst a player was running up, in the process of taking a penalty kick.

(a) the Referee witnesses an attacker strike an opponent.

(b) the Referee witnesses a defender strike an opponent.

Would the penalty kick procedure be the same?

Answer: Law 18 (Common Sense) dictates that if the Referee were able to stop the penalty kick before the ball is actually kicked forwards (*i.e. the ball had not come into play*), it would be more sensible to deal immediately with the violent conduct.

It's easy to reorganise a penalty kick, whereas it's not quite so easy to stop World War III if you delay taking action.

FIFA Q&A Law 14 No. 31 is as follows:

A defender starts holding an attacker outside the penalty area but finishes inside the penalty area. What action should the referee take?
He would award a penalty kick.

Comment:

An actual infringement of holding may continue in time for several seconds. The foul does not necessarily occur solely at its commencement, or solely at the end of the holding period. In other words, the holding infringement happens over the whole period of the shirt holding and over the distance travelled by the players whilst the holding continues. Holding (or shirt pulling) is a direct free kick offence. In the FIFA Law 12 question No. 31 above, the holding offence is continuously committed in sequence, both initially outside of the penalty area, and finally inside of the penalty area. Therefore, a direct free kick (or penalty kick) could be awarded anywhere along the trajectory path that the offence continued to be committed.

To keep within the 'Spirit of the Game/Laws', and to encourage more goals in accordance with modern IFAB/FIFA philosophy, the Referee should award the direct free kick/penalty in the position that is the most advantageous to the team that was fouled. In other words, when the holding begins outside of the penalty area, the Referee can apply advantage to the attacking team. If the player, who is doing the holding, continues to hold his opponent, and the opponent then enters the penalty area, then it is more advantageous to award a penalty kick to the attacking team, rather than a direct free kick outside of the penalty area. Conversely, if the holding begins INSIDE the penalty area and the players then travel OUTSIDE of the penalty area, the advantageous result is the same - a penalty kick.

LATE OR EARLY FLAG? YOU DECIDE.

Question: The scenario is as follows. The ball is played over the top of the defence for an attacker to run onto. The attacker is offside and is chasing the ball. The ball looks like it's going to travel straight through to the goalkeeper. When should I flag the player offside?

At present, if the ball is easily going to reach the goalkeeper, I will not flag and allow the goalkeeper to play-on from his hands. Some Referees have included this scenario in the pre-match talk. Whilst some Referees say flag early and he'll decide whether to give offside or play-on, others say you decide when to flag.

Answer: You will need to adhere to the Referee's pre-match instruction.

But as a general rule, it's a judgement that you need to make, taking into consideration the probability of the ball safely reaching the goalkeeper.

There are also many other factors to consider, the skill level of the goalkeeper, the age of the contestants, the weather, the score, the style of the Referee, the 'heat level' of the game, the time remaining, whether the moon is in the right position or not!!! etc.

The trick is to make eye contact with the Referee if you can, and take your steer from him. I know that this is not always possible in the heat of the game, but where it is definitely safe to do so (as a rule of thumb) players prefer to keep the game moving.

In short, what you need to strive for is the ability to read the intention of the Referee, and not raise your flag if you think that he will allow play to continue. If there is any doubt (or if there is any chance of an attacker making a lunge at the goalkeeper), then raise your flag.

It's a very fine balance between contradicting the intentions of the Referee and the safety of the players. Whilst it is very easy to drop a premature offside on the say so of the Referee, it's not quite so easy to repair a broken leg if a late flag encouraged the attacker to make a play at the goalkeeper.

WHAT IS THE VICINITY OF THE FIELD OF PLAY?

Question: A player is sent off and leaves the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area. He returns to the changing rooms, showers and changes into his regular clothing and then returns to watch the continuing match from outside the metal barriers surrounding the field of play. What action, if any, can the Referee take; or does the player then become just another spectator? *He does nothing further wrong whilst viewing the match.*
The Referee also asks the away team Spectators to leave the ground for giving him foul and abusive language.

Does the Referee have any powers under the rules to do this? Should the Referee have gone to the home team officials and asked them to take action? When the spectators refused to leave the ground, the Referee abandoned the match. Should the Referee have done this for this reason, without alerting the home club officials?

Answer: The wording of Law 12 (Fouls and Misconduct) below, does not specify in great detail what the vicinity of the field of play actually consists of.

"A player who has been sent off must leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area."

The reason for this, is because a player, who has been sent off, has the potential to cause further trouble for the Referee if he is allowed to remain near the field of play.

A previous answer to this question from FIFA stated:

*This is a matter of commonsense, as all field layouts are different. It is suggested that the person removed, should **not** be able to participate as he or she did previously.*

The Acting National Coach Australia also provided some more advice in 2002:

"Players or officials are required to go outside the boundary rope or fence surrounding the playing area in the event they have been ordered off." (Source - South Australia Referees Circulars Numbers 1-6: 2002)

A player, who has been send-off because he deliberately prevented a goal by handling the ball, is much less likely to cause trouble, than a player who has committed violent conduct. The onus is therefore on the Referee to use common sense depending on the likelihood of further trouble being generated by the close presence of the sent-off player.

The bottom line is, is that the Referee has the Power to request that a troublemaker be removed completely, if his presence is likely to endanger the safety of the remaining players because of his actions.

As far as spectators are concerned, a Referee cannot himself ask them to leave the ground for foul and abusive behaviour. If this were the case, it would happen in nearly every game!

The Referee **must ALWAYS seek the help of the Home team Club Officials** who will deal with the spectators. Under no circumstances should the Referee approach the spectators himself. He does not have the Power to do this, and it is very likely to lead to violence and escalated trouble if attempted. Once again, the bottom line is, is that the Referee has the (Law 5) Power to stop, suspend or terminate the match because of outside interference of any kind (and this includes troublesome spectators). The onus is therefore on the Referee to use common sense depending on the likelihood of any danger because of the actions of the spectators. It is then, that the Referee can abandon the match. But the Home Club Officials should at least be given the chance to deal with the spectators if at all possible.

HOW LONG CAN AN INJURED PLAYER STAY OFF?

Question: In a recent Cup game - one away team player had been badly injured late in the 90th minute of the game, so that he was unable to return immediately onto the field of play before the end of the game, which was a draw. The injured player's team did not have a substitute, so they carried on with ten men into extra time, and played out the 30 minutes. In the meantime, the injured player continued to be treated on the sidelines. The game ended in a draw, which resulted in Kicks from the Penalty Mark.

At the end of the 30 minutes extra time, the now recovered injured player was still standing on the sideline, in full kit, and no formal substitution had been made, so my view he was technically still a legal player, and able to return. I asked him to confirm whether he was fit enough to continue, and he said no. Only then did I ask the home team to remove one of their players to make it ten apiece.

Was I correct? Or can I just decide straight away, that he was gone for good?
Is it any different from if a player has gone off injured in 119th minute, and not yet returned by final whistle?

Answer: There is no stipulation the Laws, which states that if an injured player remains off the field of play for a given time, his right to return is forfeited.

Further confusion arises, because of the ambiguous wording in the Laws that state, "only the players who are on

the field of play at the end of the match are allowed to take kicks from the penalty mark. When in reality, an injured player who just happens to be off the field of play receiving treatment when the final whistle blows (no matter how long his treatment may have taken), should certainly not be prevented from taking part in the 'kicks from the penalty mark,' if he is eventually able to continue. To prevent him from doing so would be a gross miscarriage of the 'Spirit of the Laws' as they are meant to be applied. If this were the case, those unscrupulous players and coaches who have no qualms in manipulating any loophole (fair or unfair), would aim to knobble their opponents' 'best penalty' kick taker, seconds before the end of the game, to give the unscrupulous team a much better chance of winning the 'shoot-out'.

As mentioned above, the stipulation within the Laws of Association Football (LOAF), states that only the players who are on the field of play at the end of the match are allowed to take kicks from the penalty mark. The only exception is when a goalkeeper is injured and is unable to continue; he may be replaced by a named substitute, provided that his team has not used the maximum number of substitutes permitted under the competition rules.

FIFA Questions and Answers (now included in the LOAF for ease of reference), also state:

Kicks from the penalty Mark, question (e).

e) May an injured player be excused from taking part in kicks from the penalty mark to determine the result of the match or home-and-away tie?

Yes, but he cannot be replaced by another player.

Therefore, in your scenario, because the injured player was no longer unable to continue, both teams will go into kicks from the penalty mark with 10 players per side. An injured player can only be substituted during the 90 minutes of a game (or 30 minutes of extra time). Once you have blown your whistle to end the game/period, (apart from the exception with the goalkeeper mentioned above) no substitutions can be made.

You were correct to ask the injured player in your game whether he was able to take part in the shootout or not? And to subsequently ask the home team to remove one of their players to make it ten apiece.

Regards Julian Carosi julian@carosi.freeseve.co.uk

This newsletter remains free to subscribers. But if any of you wish to make a small contribution so I can buy myself a beer, you can do so via **PayPal** to julian@carosi.freeseve.co.uk or via **Nochex**.



www.nochex.com/payme.asap?email=julian@carosi.freeseve.co.uk



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

Thanks to those of you who have already bought me a beer!



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):

Email: julian@carosi.freeseve.co.uk Web site: www.CorshamRef.net

(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: <http://mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/corshamref/sub/newsletter/newsletr.htm>

Regards, Julian Carosi www.CorshamRef.net