

The www.CorshamRef.org.uk Newsletter No 55 (February 2008)

1st February 2008 International newsletter covering Football (Soccer) Refereeing matters.

Welcome, with an International perspective.

Welcome to the 55th edition of The Corsham Referee monthly International Football/Soccer Referees' newsletter.

Greetings to everyone.

There are over 1,000 referees of all levels from all over the world that subscribe to this newsletter. Your comments and contributions are always welcome.

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

'SET PIECES' – Dealing with Simulation.

More 'set-piece' advice by Julian Carosi.

In the previous newsletters, I reiterated how a game of football/soccer consists of many - what can best be described as 'set-pieces', or jigsaw puzzle pieces that add up to form the whole 90 minutes. Each 'set-piece', if successfully managed, will result in the Referee maintaining control. One of the first aims of every Referee should be to use 'best-practice' techniques when managing 'set-pieces'. Once the standard 'set-piece' techniques have been mastered, the players' confidence in the Referee will rise, and they will more readily accept those awkward (non-set-piece) match-changing decisions, which seem to crop up in nearly every game. Subsequently, the Referee will feel more confident, in the knowledge that at least he has a structured way to deal with the majority of situations in a game of football.

In the article below, we add to the previous ideas on how to manage set-piece throw-ins, how to issue cards, how to manage goal kicks, how to build a positive image, and how to establish a rapport with players by gaining their trust via the TRUST triangle, by offering some additional considerations on how to recognise and deal with simulation.

These ideas are not prescriptive; rather, they will hopefully give you some new things to think about, and encourage you towards adopting a consistent approach by dovetailing them into your own style of refereeing.

SET PIECES:

"Simulation is one of the worst things in football. It's a cancer in football. And not from a refereeing point of view, because some people think that simulation is against the Referee.

(Ex-FIFA Referee Pierluigi Collina 2001)

'The credibility of the result goes out of the window if a game is settled by a dive. The only way we can stop simulation is to give a caution.'

(Ex Premiership Referee Graham Poll 2004)

'One issue that concerns me personally, is technically termed `simulation. Let's get real - this is diving. Cheating in fact. We've all got to show more honesty here. Every week, Referees are coming under intense scrutiny when making split-second judgment calls in this area. It's impossible to get them all right and everyone has got to take a greater level of responsibility. Respect for the game is paramount and respect for the Referee is essential.'

(Brian Barwick 2005 The FA England)

How to deal with Simulation.

Introduction:

Diving by players has become a scourge of the game. It takes a brave Referee to quickly flash a yellow card for simulation when an attacking player tumbles down too easily in the penalty area. Most Referees in their career will have chastised themselves on several occasions for not having the courage of their conviction by cautioning perpetrators for simulation. Simulation is a difficult decision to make, especially when players are jostling each other at fast speed. If Referees allow simulation to continue as it is, then they are failing their duty as the

guardians of the game and its image.

There is a big drive worldwide to protect the 'Image of the Game'. And one of the areas under the spotlight remains simulation.

The Law requires a Referee to caution for unsporting behaviour any player where simulating action is intended to deceive him. However, a Referee should be 100% certain that a player has simulated (feigned) an unfair challenge before cautioning him for unsporting behaviour. The Referee must be convinced that there has been no (or very little) physical contact whatsoever by the player who is challenging for the ball.

If, however, the Referee is not totally sure but there is a hint of simulation, the Referee is advised to take the earliest opportunity to be seen to speak clearly to the player(s) involved. It is not recommended that a referee makes any gesture with arm or hand as this may inflame the situation.

Players who clearly simulate injury in order to deceive the referee must also be dealt with under Law 12, International Board Decision No. 5.

(FA Learning Advice on the Application of the Laws of the Game booklet.)

When a player gets away with diving, it may not cause his opponents physical injury as a foul might, but there is no doubt the game is hurt. It is hardly surprising, that attention is now turning to the vexed issue of gamesmanship.

Players acknowledge that it is a difficult aspect for Referees to punish simulation. There is no easy way to be 100% accurate when deciding if an incident has been simulated or not. Players are expecting Referees not to sit on the fence, but to actually do something about it by eradicating it from the game! In this article (which focuses mainly on the diving aspects of simulation), you will find some guidance that can help you (as a Referee) to deal more confidently with simulation. And just as important, this article encourages you to be brave, make strong decisions and apply the correct punishment (a caution) when you have to.

The FA direction has always been there. Your duty as a Referee, is to mandatory caution perpetrators at all levels, for unsporting behaviour in accordance with the Law 12 Decision No. 4:

Any simulating action anywhere on the field, which is intended to deceive the Referee, must be sanctioned as unsporting behaviour.

Types of Simulation:

DIVING: Attacking players very often dive and fall easily to the ground inside their opponent's penalty area. This normally occurs at speed, with the aim being to dupe the Referee (and/or the Assistant Referee) into awarding a penalty kick, when in effect, no foul has been committed on the attacking player.

There are four types of simulation to look out for:

- Firstly, when there's clearly no contact.
- Secondly, when there's minimal contact and it's exaggerated.
- Thirdly, when the player drags his leg; and finally,
- Over-reaction, such as when a player goes down clutching his face after an opponent brushed past him.

FEIGNING INJURY: Thankfully, this is becoming less prevalent in the game, but it still occurs from time to time. A typical example of this occurs towards the end of a game, when players on the winning team use it as a ploy to either waste time, or to stall the positive momentum of the opposing team.

Simulation - How To Identify It

By R.D. Britto. Found on the Referees' Association England discussion page 3 July 2006:

A player who is tripped, will pitch forward, his head will go forward and down, his back will arch away from the ground, his arms will fly forward and down and he will try to recover the tripped leg under him to avoid an uncontrolled fall. When a player simulates a dive, he will do the opposite of these things to one degree or another. He pitches forward, of course, but he throws his head up and back, he arches his upper back away

from the ground, his arms fly up and back and the leg apparently tripped, he leaves behind him with the toe pointing towards the ground like a ballerina. He deliberately engineers a controlled fall by curving his body away from the ground to maximise the impact in the eyes of the Referee.

A further significant feature in all cases of tripping versus diving is that a trip is abrupt and sudden, whereas a dive is relatively slow and naturally graceful.

If Referees rejected appeals in all cases where a player falls down exhibiting the dive characteristics shown above, simulation would soon stop, especially if accompanied by a caution.

Clearly, not all instances of players falling to the ground are simulated. Some collisions are genuine fouls. Equally, on many occasions, the fouled player could have continued without falling down and making a meal of it. It is the Referee's job to differentiate the genuine from the simulated.

The following advice is from Terry Boyd B.App.Sci.(Physio), F.A.S.M.F. Sports Physiotherapist Australia.

Other simulation signs include the tactic of 'flicking up' both feet simultaneously. In this manoeuvre, the cheating player's body can be seen to remain relatively upright, as both feet are smartly kicked up towards their buttocks in a (strangely obvious) manner, to suggest that they have been tripped. In the event of such a trip actually being committed, the fouled player's head and body will suddenly pitch forwards, with the arms outstretched and the perpetrators feet well behind the centre of gravity.

A second "zero points" effort, is when an opponent makes contact with a player fairly at shoulder level, and the player then proceeds to fall as if he has been hit by a bus, shoulders inward, towards the tackler, with his legs sliding away from his opponent. It seems so obvious a dive to most of us: the relevant body parts are moving in the directions opposite to that which would occur if it were indeed an illegal push.

Simulation - How To Be Decisive and Creditable.

The greatest asset that a Referee has in relation to making the correct decision, is his proximity and 'angle of view' during simulation (diving) incidents. This is why it is very important for Referees to work hard in achieving creditable monitoring positions when attacking moves approach the penalty areas. The nearer you are, and the better view you have when making a decision, the more credibility you will have. The one important factor that always sells a decision on simulation, is where was the Referee when he made the decision?

It is difficult to make the right call all of the time. Players have become so convincing, that it is shameful to see the close up camera-shots of (cheating) players who are heroes to some children.

In say out of 10 incidents of simulation, there will probably be one occasion that was a genuine foul. If a Referee can accept that he will occasionally penalise a player for simulation when no simulation has occurred, it will increase that Referee's endeavour to play his part in ridding the game of this blight.

In a televised game, even close-up camera shots can be inconclusive when trying to identify simulation. But in the majority of games, where no cameras are in place, the only people that have any part in the act, are the diving player and the Referee. Most of the other players will not have been in a position to have a clear view of the incident. Therefore, make a decision if you have to, and don't worry whether or not anyone else has a better view, as this is very unlikely.

Key factors to consider before issuing a caution for simulations:

- If you decide to caution, you have to be very strong and swift in your action. No pussyfooting about here! Be strong, assertive and believe in your decision. Once you have made the decision, stick with it and deal swiftly with any dissent by issuing a caution in record time! This will take you to *the point of no return*. In other words. Players will see that you have applied the correct punishment, and know that you will not be changing your mind. The more delay you have in issuing the caution, the more time players have to try and influence you.
- Don't make a meal of the occasion by humiliating the perpetrator. A swift caution clearly shows what you think of his antics. Further chastisement by you will only inflame the situation. Get the game restarted as soon as you can.
- Forget it, if you are in the centre circle catching up with play. There is no credibility in making a decision from inside the centre circle, involving a simulation act inside of the penalty area.

- Be brave. You get nowhere as a Referee if you lack courage. Simulation is no different to a foul. Deal with it.
- Trust your instinct always, as it often proves to be correct, even though you believe that you have maybe not assimilated all of the facts.
- Accept that you will get a few decisions wrong - but keep this thought, it is possible to make even a wrong decision seem right for the majority of the onlookers.

Summary:

Referees are the guardians of the Game, and it is their duty to punish simulation whenever it happens. In time, a concerted effort by all Referees will hopefully purge the game of this blight.

A Referee who is prepared to accept that he may occasionally punish a player for simulation when no simulation has occurred, is a much better Referee than one who is always too frightened to ever penalise diving, because such decisions are difficult to make!

Stop sitting on the fence and letting players get away with cheating. Be brave and punish simulation. And work hard at getting as near as you can when making your decisions. You will need to sell each decision; so be strong and positive and confident whenever you penalise simulation.

When dealing with simulation, the aim is to issue a swift caution and get the game restarted in record time, This way, you save a heap of grief and force the players into refocusing their attention on the game instead of haranguing you.

Can you play your part in ridding the game of this menace?

Happy reffing.

Regards, Julian Carosi.

THE REFEREE'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

A fantastic referee book written by Jeffrey Caminsky from the USA was featured in the 2007 April edition of The Corsham Referee newsletter, where you can get details of how to buy Jeff's book entitled 'The Referee's Survival Guide'. *Can be bought from Amazon.com.* The book comes highly recommend by me (Julian Carosi) and provides answers to many of your problems on the field of play. Clearly written and easy to understand. The Referee's Survival Guide explains many of the "what's, how's, who's and why's" of life on the soccer field, as well as many of the things for a referee to avoid.

Below is a monthly excerpt to whet your appetite for Jeff's brilliant book.

When you get to the field

At a soccer field, everyone expects the referee to know precisely what to do at all times, and to be intimately familiar with the competition's etiquette and protocol. This can be intimidating for the new referee, who may very well know what a player or coach is supposed to be doing before the game, but never paid much attention to the referees until the game was about to start.

Customs and traditions may vary in different parts of the country and even from league-to-league or club-to-club, but in all cases, there are some duties that a referee needs to fulfil. Until you are comfortable within your own soccer community, here are some basic pre-game guidelines that you may find useful:

The Parking Lot

The referee's authority begins when he (or she) arrives at the game site, and continues until the official leaves at the end of the game. As a rule, for most games you should arrive at least thirty minutes before the scheduled kick-off.

Younger referees being driven to the field should have their parents (or whoever is providing a ride) wait at least until the game is confirmed. On occasion, a befuddled assignor may over-book the officials, or the club may double-book a field. You do not want to be stranded at the field, and unless you are within walking distance of home or rode your own bicycle to the field, you may want to double-check your assignment before your ride leaves you there.

Older referees who are adventurous enough to accept adult men's games should remember to park their cars facing outward...just in case.

The Field

Because it is the referee who determines whether the field is safe and conforms to the Laws of the Game, one of your first duties at the field will be to conduct an inspection of the grounds.

Ideally, by coming to the field thirty minutes early, you will have arrived early enough to conduct a thorough inspection of the grounds. This means walking or jogging around the field, noting the condition of both goal areas and all field markings (and noticing whether they are authorized or illegal), checking both nets, and noticing any wet or low spots as well as anything else that seems out of the ordinary. You will be able to oversee corrections of any and all deficiencies by game time, and the match will proceed on schedule, and in accordance with all aspects of Law 1.

As a practical matter, many fields serve as the venue for multiple games on a given day, and during a typical weekend in mid-season the demands of a fixed schedule will leave us pressed for time. While you should try to ensure that every aspect of the field is in accordance with the Laws, there will be times when this will be impossible. For example, a groundskeeper may not be available to remark the field; the team's corner flags may be locked in the trunk of the assistant coach-who is presently driving to Toronto on a business trip; and except at the professional level, it is unrealistic to expect goal posts that are two inches too low to be repaired by game time.

If a defect in the field can be corrected, it is your job to see that someone corrects it, even if it delays the start of the match for a short period of time. If it cannot be corrected within a reasonable period of time, you need to decide whether the deficiency presents an issue of safety. If it does, then the match cannot proceed; if it does not, then you should simply note the problem on your game report and let the game begin.

Many thanks to Jeffrey Caminsky for giving his permission for this article to appear.

SOCCERPEDIA

(A monthly 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. 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 Amazon.com

Alcohol

On match-days, in the 1950s, one professional player was known for varying his pre-match routine depending on whether or not he'd been drinking. If he was sober, he would walk straight up to his manager and say, 'Afternoon, Boss.' If he had been in the pub, he would creep around the side of the dressing-room. 'He scored five against Luton and he came into the dressing-room canned,' a team-mate recalled years later. 'He turned to speak to me, breathed, and I almost passed out.'

Many amateur team secretaries have tempted fate with instructions like 'Meet outside the Red Lion at two o'clock', with some players arriving early and conducting their warm-up in front of the pub fire. Contrary to popular belief, alcohol acts as a depressant rather than a stimulant.

On the pitch, referees who suspect a player of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs are advised to treat the matter sensitively at first - by talking to the captain or a team official. Referees do not carry breathalysers as part of their standard equipment.

Drink and football have been forever entwined. In the 1880s, when Aston Villa visited Scotland for the first time, they inspected a whisky distillery in the morning and lost their match in the afternoon. In 1898 Steve Bloomer (Derby County and England) was briefly suspended by the club's directors for 'attending the ground while under the influence of drink'. Three years later Bloomer received three more reprimands - for insobriety and inattention to training.

In the 1920s the Scotland team trainer gave each player 'a wee thimbleful of brandy and port just as we left the dressing-room', according to one player. Bottles of whisky have been left in dressing-rooms before professional matches, and professional players have been sighted in pubs before matches.

Grass-roots football has plenty of stories: the player who was stretchered off because he was too drunk to stand up; the winger who had to leave the field to pee every twenty minutes; the player who was so drunk that he tackled the corner-flag; the defender who pleaded with the referee to 'get that other ball of the pitch'; and the one who was so inebriated that he slurred his abuse at the referee.

The Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol Etc.) Act 1985 made it an offence for a person to be drunk inside a sports ground or when trying to enter a ground (any time up to two hours before the start and up to an hour after the finish).

Many thanks to Andrew Ward for giving his permission for this article to appear.

NEW NEWSLETTER FEATURE:

I am pleased to say that Stanley Lover will be providing regular contributions both to this newsletter and to the web site.

Welcome aboard Stanley, and we look forward to your excellent advice for Referees and some historical content.

Let's begin by introducing Stanley:

Five Minutes With ... Stanley Lover

Stanley F. Lover was born on December 18, 1925 in London, England. Currently living in Neuilly, near Paris, France, he is a Chartered Mechanical Engineer and a marketing consultant. A painter and sculptor, Lover is also a golfer (lowest handicap 3) with eight holes-in-one. He has served as Qualified Golf Referee for five years with French Federation de Golf. Tuberculosis ended a promising semi-pro playing career in 1946, so he turned to refereeing with over 1,000 matches including serving as an assistant referee in the Football League for 11 years, plus international matches and European Cup ties. He has held many leadership positions including President of the Football League Referees Association and The London Referees Society. He was the sole FIFA selection to the FIFA Panel of Instructors for Referees Courses (1971-94) where he conducted FIFA courses in all six Confederations. As a writer Stanley has contributed many instructional features and articles for referees worldwide and was recently honoured as one of the most influential figures in soccer officiating history by the National Association of Sports Officials in America.

Referee: You've got numerical ratings of the referees going back many World Cups?

Lover: Yes, from 1970 through 2006. At the 1966 World Cup in England, my role was to analyze games and suggest match control topics for daily conferences run by Ken Aston, then the chairman of the FIFA Referees' Committee. That set the pattern for following World Cups.

Later, FIFA Technical Reports on each tournament were useful for coaches but omitted comments on match control. I wrote reports for FIFA on match observations and recommendations in nearly all games (1974 thru 2002) and allocated my own ratings on a consistent basis.

Referee: What is the most significant rule change in the last 30 years? How or why is that important?

Lover: In a positive manner, two changes in 1992 and 1997 - keepers not being allowed to handle the ball when it is passed, or thrown, to them. That has eliminated a boring tactic and helped the rhythm of the game - there is more play to enjoy.

In a negative aspect, the 1993 change allowing coaches to direct tactics during play. In my view that's the worst change since the Laws were first codified in 1863. Officially, this privilege was intended 'To improve the quality of play' but, after 15 years who can claim it has achieved that goal? As one international coach said, "A coach only needs to convey occasional tactical instructions during play unless he is incompetent and has not established his ideas in training."

Visible coaches cause more harm to the game than players. I would gag them and do away with technical areas, which only serve as stages for maniacs.

Referee: What one rule change would you like to see made?

Lover: If you paid for ten gallons of petrol but only got six you would be entitled to sue. Fans pay dear for 90 minutes of soccer but see only 50-55 minutes of actual play. It's time to count time, on a neutral clock (as in many sports). Say, 60 minutes of ball-in-play. I know that could only apply to professional games, but that's what hundreds of millions of fans watch. We're in the 21st century, for goodness sake.

Referee: What one mechanics change would you like to see made?

Lover: Instant video support. It's depressing to observe referees crucified and humiliated every week for incidents they don't see or can't see. It is possible to devise a procedure that would satisfy players, fans, coaches - and referees. Again, we're in the 21st century!

Referee: You are widely known as the best writer to further the knowledge of referees in the English language? Given film clips, videos and constant television, what is the value of a book on refereeing?

Lover: Every serious referee will have a library of soccer books for quiet reflection and deepening knowledge; getting to the roots of the sport; motivating further research and study. Films, television, etc., are invaluable but tend to flash across one's mind: books are forever - books are Aladdin's Caves, hoarding words of wisdom to inspire passion.

Referee: What can a mid-level learn from watching a referee during a televised match? How?

Lover: Attitude: Communication: Positioning: Compassion for seriously hurt players. How? Observe the referee's performance; note the pros and cons. Relate the skills you see to your own ability.

Referee: What lies ahead for Stanley Lover? What plans are there for the next decade?

Lover: To plug away at improvements to soccer (as above). To back any action which promotes the true role of referees in preserving the game for the pleasure of players and fans. Also to promote worldwide legislation to class sports officials as valued citizens worthy of special protection. National Association of Sports Officials (NASO's) successful campaign is a model of achievement through tenacious lobbying. There's a huge public relations and education task still ahead.

Stanley Lover's impressive list of publications are show below.

Association Football Laws Illustrated (1971)
Soccer Laws Illustrated (1984)
Official Soccer Rules Illustrated - USA edition - (1999)
Association Football Match Control (1978)
Soccer Match Control (1986)
Soccer Judge (1980)
Illustrated Soccer Quiz Book (USA 1983) (Australia 1984)
Soccer Laws Explained (1993)
Soccer Rules Explained (UK1998) (USA 1998)
Know Soccer and its Rules (1996- present)
Fair Play Guide (1986-present)
You are the Ref - illustrated (for RA 1977)
FOOTBALL - The Game and Rules (UK1999)
The Match (2001)
"Kent Whistler" Magazine (1960-1965)
"Play on!" (2003) as publication of Football Association
Masterclass for Soccer Officials (USA 2003)

SOS! - "Save Our Shins" by Stanley Lover

Samuel Widdowson was renowned in Nottingham as a lace manufacturer and as a sportsman who excelled at running, hurdling, cricket and soccer. He played for his home town club Nottingham Forest (1866-1885) and for England (1880). As a youngster he almost gave up soccer because his desire to play to his skills was too often frustrated by the degree of physical violence tolerated in the game in the early 1800's. He simply could not afford to jeopardize his business or be deprived of sporting pleasures because of serious injury. Hope of change came when The Harrow School Rules (1860-63) set a standard of fair play, to be followed in essence by Cambridge University and The Football Association, by stating;

"Rule 11. All charging is fair but no holding, tripping, pushing with the hands, shinning or back shinning is allowed."

Anyone who has been *shinned*, whether in playing soccer or colliding with an obstacle, knows it hurts! Dr John Crane, thirty years doctor at Arsenal and sixteen as medic to the England team, explains why, "The front lower leg is all bone, with practically no fleshy protection of nerve centers. Without some form of cushion to absorb the impact of a flying boot all players risk lacerations or broken shinbones."

The Harrow example did not eliminate all *shinning*. As a lively centre-forward Samuel Widdowson had his share of injuries and decided to act. In 1874 he invented and patented the *shin pad*. It comprised strips of bamboo cane, laid side-by-side, encased in fabric to form a flat pad. He wore it taped to bare legs or outside stockings to cover the shinbone.

Six years later, recognizing the growing adoption of the *shin pad*, the rule makers officially permitted its use in Law 10. It then disappeared from the laws but was reinstated in 1990 after the outcry following the enforced retirement one of the world's best players, Marco van Basten of Holland, due to leg injuries. Until players could afford the commercialized shinguard they made do with whatever served the purpose. Pads of cotton wool, sandwiched between woollen stockings and flesh, were an obvious choice. Corrugated cardboard strips, cut to size and shape, were an alternative until wet weather crinkled them into ugly soggy lumps and erased the air pocket absorption quality. They were also messy to extract. A better alternative was the paperback book of 128 pages or less. A couple of Agatha Christie's shorter stories were perfect, providing a touch of drama to exposed flesh. They retained their shape but tended to move under woollen stockings until they finished at the back of the leg! They also became unreadable due to a potent mixture of sweat and aforementioned climatic influences. Their owners were not amused.

Players graduating to a higher class of soccer were obliged to follow their peers and buy manufactured

shinguards. Pleasant to the eye and touch, reasonably efficient but lacking the satisfying aura of inventive improvisation of cotton wool and paper, they became compulsory equipment in a 1990 revision of Law 4

"(1) (a) The basic equipment of a player shall consist of a jersey or shirt, shorts, stockings, shinguards and footwear"

The imposition of leg protection provided a market opportunity for the sports equipment industry. Modern technology has been applied to the humble Samuel Widdowson bamboo cane pads. A recent soccer equipment survey lists 36 versions of the shinguard, available in the price bracket of US \$7 to 35. All are high-tech products with materials ranging from simple cotton to polyester, synthetic leather, latex 'breathable' foam, fibreglass, fishbone, 'air capsule gel' and space age titanium. They offer qualities of super lightweight, shock dispersion zones, air cushioning, impact channelling, precise anatomical fit, protection for ankles and Achilles, calf protection, removable ankle inserts, Velcro closures. Some even claim to be 'washable'!

All are offered in pairs with no distinction between right and left legs. A hole in the market there for someone! Life was so much simpler in Samuel Widdowson's day.

by Stanley Lover - 2004

First published FIFA Magazine July 2004.

Acknowledgement required: 'Source FIFA Magazine' - thanks

(Telegraph News)

Offside has lawmakers flagging: By Patrick Barclay 27/01/2008

I wonder if the lawmakers were listening to Sven-Goran Eriksson's plea for clarity on offside. The Manchester City manager, confessing that he did not know whether Darius Vassell's equaliser against West Ham last weekend was legitimate or not - the striker had appeared to be in an offside position when Martin Petrov crossed but was deemed inactive at that moment by the linesman - declared: "Instead of a grey area, let us have it black and white."

It is about time. The worry I have often expressed is that the general improvement in the offside law over the past 10 or 15 years is being undermined by the lazy and, in some cases, inept drafting of FIFA's lawmaking body, the International Football Association Board. For instance, the basic Law 11 defines involvement in play as "interfering with play; interfering with an opponent; or gaining an advantage by being in that position". Because the third part so obviously poses more questions than it answers, the International Board have seen fit to add an explanation that advantage includes "playing a ball that rebounds to him off an opponent having been in an offside position". No one with a grasp of English grammar could fail to be as utterly confused as Eriksson.

The frustrating aspect is that by and large the Neanderthals - "if he's not offside, what's he doing on the pitch?" - are in retreat. People are coming to understand that intelligent engineering of the offside law is a good way to encourage positive football. Linesmen are beginning to recognise a well-timed forward run and even commentators (one or two, at least) to appreciate the benefits of delay in raising the flag. But the International Board, made up of four members from FIFA and, for historical reasons, one each from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, are seldom much help.

They have their annual meeting in Scotland in March and, if they asked my opinion, I'd show them how it could all be cleared up by making a player offside only if he is in such a position both when the ball is played and when he receives or is active (for example, sells a dummy) with it. In other words, attackers could surrender offside advantages by remaining passive, thus further diminishing the number of stoppages in a match.

While they are at it, they could change the silly notion that a player is level with an opponent if "any part of head, body or feet is nearer" to the opponent's goal-line. Arms are specifically excluded. So it depends whether you are in step with your opponent or not! Or if you run with your head thrust forward. Truly, I sometimes marvel at the International Board's capacity for unhelpful meddling. But it is not really funny when it holds back the progress of the game and we can only hope against hope that, when they gather in a few weeks, someone will have got them to understand how easy it would be to give Eriksson and company the clarity to which they are entitled.

YOU MUST BE JOKING REF?

Management Ladder

When "Blue Collar" workers get together, they talk about football and Refereeing.

When "Middle Management" get together, they talk about tennis.

When "Top Management" get together, they talk about golf.

Logical Conclusion:

The higher up you are in management, the smaller your balls.

A Monkey Can Do It

A tourist walks into a pet shop in Silicon Valley, and is browsing around the cages on display. While he's there, another customer walks in and says to the shopkeeper, "I'll have a C monkey, please".

The shopkeeper nods, goes over to a cage at the side of the shop and takes out a monkey. He fits a collar and leash and hands it to the customer, saying "That'll be \$5,000".

The customer pays and walks out with his monkey.

Startled, the tourist goes over to the shopkeeper and says, "That was a very expensive monkey-most of them are only a few hundred dollars. Why did it cost so much?" "Oh", says the shopkeeper, "that monkey can program in C with very fast, tight code, no bugs, well worth the money."

The tourist starts to look at the monkeys in the cage. He says to the shop keeper, "That one's even more expensive, \$10,000! What does it do?" "Oh", says the shopkeeper, "that one's a C++ monkey; it can manage object-oriented programming, Visual C++, even some Java, all the really useful stuff."

The tourist looks round for a little longer and sees a third monkey in a cage on its own. The price tag round its neck says \$50,000. He gasps to the shopkeeper, "That one costs more than all the others put together! What on earth does it do?" "Well," says the shopkeeper, "I don't know if it does anything, but says it's a Referee."

Young Referee

A young Referee was leaving the Referees' Organisation office late one evening when he found the Chief Executive standing in front of a shredder with a piece of paper in his hand. "Listen," said the Chief, "this is a very sensitive and important document here, and my secretary has gone for the night. Can you make this thing work?"

"Certainly," said the young Referee. He turned the machine on, inserted the paper, and pressed the start button. "Excellent, excellent!" said the Chief as his paper disappeared inside the machine. "I just need one copy."

Hot air

A football player is flying in a hot air balloon and realises that he is lost. He reduces altitude and spots a man down below on the ground. He lowers the balloon further and shouts:

"Excuse me, can you tell me where I am?"

The man below says: "Yes, you're in a hot air balloon, hovering 30 feet above this field."

"You must be a Referee" says the balloonist.

"I am" replies the man. "How did you know?"

"Well" says the balloonist, "Everything you have told me is technically correct, but it's of no use to me whatsoever."

The man below reflects for a moment, and then says: "You must be a football player."

"I am" replies the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well", says the Referee, "You don't know where you are, or where you're going, or what you're doing, but you expect me to be able to help. You're in the same position you were in before we met, but now it's MY fault."

A Ref named Tonks.

A young Referee named Tonks applied for a position at a Sports Shop based in London. An ex-road sweeper also applied for the same job and both applicants having the same qualifications (none) were asked to take a test by the Department manager.

Upon completion of the test both men only missed one of the questions. The manager went to Tonks and said, "Thank you for your interest, but we've decided to give the road sweeper the job."

Tonks: "And why would you be doing that? We both got 9 questions correct. This being a Sports Shop and me being a Referee I should get the job!"

Manager: "We have made our decision not on the correct answers, but on the question you missed."

Tonks: "And just how would one incorrect answer be better than the other?"

Manager: "Simple. The road sweeper put down on question # 5, 'I don't know.' You put down 'Neither do I.'"

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION and ANSWER TOPICS:

Question: Over the weekend a very interesting situation occurred.

An opponent had broken clear near the touchline. The goalkeeper ran out of his penalty area and tackled the opponent right on the touchline and in doing so, the goalkeeper kicked the ball out of play for a throw-in. The opponent, quickly picked up the ball and realised that a colleague was waiting for the throw to come to him so that he could quite easily knock the ball into the net. The goalkeeper realising this, uses his hands to knock the ball out of the thrower's hands. Is it?

(1) DOGSO ?

(2) USB ?

(3) Encroaching within the two meters?

Answer: Was the ball in play?

No.

Therefore it cannot be a DOGSO.

Did the goalkeeper fail to respect the correct distance at the throw-in?

Yes.

Therefore a caution is warranted in accordance with the Law 12 Caution offences.

But is it also unsporting behaviour?

Yes.

Therefore a caution is warranted in accordance with the Law 12 Caution offences.

But that does not mean that the goalkeeper gets a second yellow card.

The two Law breaches (failing to respect the correct distance and unsporting behaviour) occurred at the same time.

Law 5 tells us that the Referee should punish the more serious offence when a player commits more than one offence at the same time.

The penalty points for all caution offences when applied by County FA's (as shown in The FA Handbook) is 1 point each.

Therefore, the two Law breaches (failing to respect the correct distance and unsporting behaviour) are deemed to be at the same level of seriousness.

It therefore makes no odds which offence is listed down in the Referee's report.

But as far as the Spirit of the Laws is concerned, Unsporting behaviour might rate higher (more serious) than failing to respect the correct distance at a restart.

Question: A goalkeeper takes a goal kick. The ball leaves the penalty area but catches in the wind and swirls back towards the goal. The goalkeeper tries to tip it over the crossbar, but only succeeds in pushing it into the goal. What do you do?" Is it possible to play advantage in this circumstance, and award a goal to the opposing team rather than an indirect free kick?

Answer: Law 16 The Goal Kick, states that when the goalkeeper takes a goal kick, if after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper touches it a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded.

The Law 5 advantage clause generally refers to offences committed by one team against another, and not offences committed by one team all on its own. One exception to this, can occur when a player deliberately handles the ball (i.e. the offence is committed without involvement of the opposing team).

The correct answer to your question is therefore an indirect free kick.

Goalkeeper handles Twice (*similar question to that shown above*).

Question. There is a very strong wind blowing towards a goalkeeper. The goalkeeper takes a goal kick and boots the ball high up into the air and it passes outside of the penalty area, and therefore is deemed to be in play. A strong gust of wind catches the ball and returns it back towards the goalkeeper, who is forced to catch with his hands to prevent it from entering the goal.

Would this be an indirect free kick or would this be a retake of the goal kick?

Answer: If after a goalkeeper takes a goal kick, the ball is subsequently blown back by a strong wind without any other player having touched it, and the goalkeeper tries to stop the ball entering the goal by touching it with his hands, the Referee should stop play and award an indirect free kick to the opposing team.

In effect, the ball comes into play when it leaves the penalty area, and the goalkeeper is penalised for touching the ball a second time before another player has touched it.

Question: If I have to caution or send off a non-playing substitute for an offence off the field of play and before doing so have to stop play, in Law is the restart an indirect free kick to opposition where ball was when play was stopped?

In practice would you advise waiting for ball to go out of play, especially if offence was dissent or OFFINABUS? 1 more! - If a substitute entered the field of play to strike an opponent what and where is restart after red card?

Answer: All Referees should have a look at the back of this year's Law book (2007/2008), where the previous format of FIFA Questions and Answers has been condensed into a narrative format. It is here, in the newly written 'Additional Instructions for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials' chapter, that you will find such answers as those you are seeking. The answers to these types of questions seem to change each year, so it is no wonder that Referees become confused!

The offences mentioned in your questions can also be further complicated if an object is thrown (including a punch); and where the punch/object lands or would have landed.

As a general rule, if a substitute enters the field of play without the Referee's permission, play is stopped and restarted with an indirect free kick where the ball was when play was stopped.

If a player/substitute is already off the field of play and commits an offence off the field, play is restarted with a dropped ball from the position where the ball was located when play was stopped.

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 (Editor)

(www.CorshamRef.org.uk Newsletter Editor, Referee, FA Licensed Referee Instructor, FA Referees' Assessor Wiltshire, England, and an Editorial member of the FA/RA Refereeing national magazine in England).

_____ The new web site address is www.CorshamRef.org.uk

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