

**The www.CorshamRef.org.uk Newsletter No 64: November 2008)**

International newsletter covering Football (Soccer) Refereeing matters.

***Welcome, with an International perspective.***

Welcome to the 64th 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.*

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## **"SET PIECES"**

### **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, how to establish a rapport with players by gaining their trust via the TRUST triangle, how to deal with simulation, how to manage a penalty kick, how to approach the kick-off at the beginning of each game, how to manage the first 10 minutes of each game, self-evaluation, how best to apply advantage and Assistant Referee tips, by offering you some advice on the Give and Go, Give and Sort technique that you can use during Free Kicks.

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.

### **The Give and Go, Give and Sort technique:**

In this article, we look at how a Referee can make the best use of the time that it takes to set up a free kick; and whether it is better for him to stay nearby, or sprint to his new restart position in readiness for the commencement of the free kick.

The word 'free' in the phrase 'free kick' signifies that a team can restart the game without relying on, or without waiting for any action from you (the Referee) or the opposing team. In other words, the team is 'free' to take the kick freely whenever they want to. There are of course exceptions to this, for example, when a player needs to be cautioned, or when the offended team asks you to pace out the required 9.15m distance that opponents must be away from the ball.

In essence, this means that when you stop play for a free kick, you need to do one of two things:

- (a) either you need to get to the scene very quickly to deal with any indiscipline, or to manage the setting up of what is commonly known as a 'ceremonial free kick' etc.
- (b) or you should use the available (dead-ball) time to reach your restart position to monitor ensuing play, pending the taking of the free kick.

This leaves a third option!

- (c) you could linger near the free kick location when you don't need to, or wander round aimlessly in no-man's land.

It is the third option above, which the Give and Go, Give and Sort technique strives to eliminate.

### **Why?**

A free kick is the result of one team being fouled by the opposing team. This generally produces tension, which very often is unfairly directed at you the Referee. If you have a habit of lingering in the vicinity of free kicks, your presence will invite comments from the players, and very often, the comments will not be polite! One of the simplest ways for you to minimise dissent, is to get the game restarted as soon as you can. Once a game has restarted, the players' minds are refocused on what they need to do to win the game, rather than how best they can berate you. It therefore follows, that the easiest way to force players to restart the game quickly, is for you to get well out of the way. This can be achieved, by sprinting 40-50 metres away to your new monitoring position in preparation for the arrival of the ball from the free kick.

This is not a *rocket science* idea; it is easy to appreciate, that when there is no Referee nearby to moan at, there is no point in moaning. So instead, the free kick is taken much quicker. You would think that this is a concept that most Referees learn instinctively. But you would be mistaken! There are untold numbers of Referees, some novices, and some with many years of experience, who wonder why they end up issuing so many cautions for dissent. All I can say, is that if you want to *ratchet* up your tally of *cheap* cautions, then the easiest way to achieve this is to linger around free kick locations, or any other restart location when you don't really need to be there. A free kick does not have to be taken on the exact blade of grass where the incident occurred, so it is possible for you to use your whistle and voice to instruct correct ball placement from a distance with a reasonable degree of accuracy. So ask yourself the question - why do I generally need to be nearby during a free kick? The answer is that on most occasions, you don't.

If you move away quickly, moaning players will have nobody to moan at, and the view of you running to your restart position encourages play to restart quickly. Your absence will focus the players' minds on the game (rather than on you the Referee); it also helps to keep you alert and focused.

If you remain nearby, you will also have to work twice as hard to keep up, or to get alongside the next phase of play. Astute Referees will make maximum use of the time that a free kick is being taken to set up (dead-ball time) to sprint to their restart position, and then take a breather when they get there. Referees who linger near free kick locations, will have to sprint to keep up with play, and have much less energy when they get there - if they get there at all. This will affect decision-making, as the brain works much better with a full tank of replenished oxygen. Getting to restart locations early, also allows you to readjust positioning to gain a better viewing angle. If you linger nearby when a free kick is being set up, and then arrive late at the drop-zone, you will find that the action has already moved onto the next phase and you will be chasing the game. There are many positive reasons why it is better to move away quickly after awarding a free kick, of which the above are but a only a few.

OK - so if you are still with me, you will be pleased to know that we have reached the Give and Go part of the technique; the reasoning of which has been described to you in the paragraphs above.

### **GIVE-AND-GO**

If you are happy that everything is going well, there is no reason for you (the Referee) to remain nearby to a free kick location. Simply GIVE the free kick, (goal kick or throw-in etc.), and then GO immediately to take up your position for the next phase of play (i.e. the monitoring area where the ball will next be delivered; this is commonly referred to as the drop-zone. By doing this, the game restarts on the terms of the team taking the free kick. If you get out of the way, the players will just get on with it. So by the time that the kick is taken, you should already be in a good position to look out for an offside infringement should this happen. As you sprint away, keep a wary eye on the site of the free kick location to ensure that nothing goes amiss. If anyone subsequently decides that they want to offer you some dissent, they will be forced to either shout at you from distance or to chase after you. If this happens, then the dissent becomes more noticeable for all to see and/or hear, and the punishment of a deserved caution becomes much easier for you to justify.

GIVE AND GO means that there are no issues to resolve, and the free kick can freely take place without any need for you to remain nearby.

All you need to do, is to GIVE the free kick and then use the (dead-ball) stoppage time to take up your position for the next phase of play.

GIVE the free kick and then GO to your restart position.

Therefore, as a general principle, doing nothing to manage free kicks, is often much better than doing something! By sprinting away in one easy movement, you will encourage a quick restart, and prevent yourself from becoming embroiled with players because of your close proximity. GIVE-AND-GO.

OK - so if you are still with me, you will be pleased to know that we have now reached the second part of this technique, the Give and Sort part.

## **GIVE-AND-SORT**

When you award a free kick, there will be occasions when you need to restart the game on your terms, rather than allowing the free kick to take place freely, i.e. whenever it is convenient to the team taking the kick. There are several reasons why you will need to delay (SORT) a free kick, some of which are listed below:

- When the attacking team has asked you to position the defending team's wall correctly.
- When you want to manage a free kick that is very near to the penalty area.
- When you need to caution or send off a player.
- When you want to have a quiet word with a player.
- If there is an injury to deal with.
- If a substitution request is received.
- When opposing players blatantly encroach into the 9.15m distance.
- When tempers are frayed.
- When the free kick is taken many metres away from where it is supposed to be taken.
- When the wrong team tries to take the free kick.

GIVE-AND-SORT means that you have recognised the possibility of some form of confrontation taking place, or that you need to delay the restart for other reasons.

In other words, if there is something to SORT out before you allow the free kick to take place, you will need to get there very quickly to deal with the incident firmly. You also need to let the players know that the commencement of the free kick must wait until you are ready. You can do this by using a combination of clear vocal instructions, repeated sharp whistle peeps and hand signals. The aim is to ensure that the players know that the game restarts on your terms and only when you are positioned where you want to be for the next phase of play.

'GIVE AND SORT' means that you (the Referee) 'GIVE' a free kick, but have to make your way quickly to the scene to 'SORT' out a problem by doing something.

You 'GIVE' the free kick and then you 'SORT' out the problem.

Once the problem has been sorted out, you will need to let players know that they should not restart the game until you signal for them to do so. Always use a whistle to restart the game, on these occasions, as it can be heard by everyone. Get to your restart position, and give a loud blast on your whistle when YOU are ready.

### **Summary:**

On most occasions, a free kick can take place without any interference from the Referee. This allows the game to flow and gives the offended team the best chance to make the most of the situation. You GIVE the free kick and then use the (dead-ball) stoppage time to GO quickly to your monitoring position for the next phase of play. Conversely, on those occasions when you GIVE a free kick, but then have to manage it, you will need to SORT out any problem, before play can be restarted.

The reasons why many Referees generate trouble during free kicks, is that they don't GIVE-AND-GO or GIVE-AND-SORT. They wander about or linger in a sort of no-mans' land between the two concepts. Neither sorting out the problem positively, nor making any effort to quickly get to a sensible restart position. In fact, some Referees seem to insist that they always stand on the exact blade of grass, and deliver a direct free signal, when the players already know it is a direct free kick, and where it should be taken! This is when the problems arise - as this encourages moaning, and Referees get left way behind when play restarts. It also gives players' too much thinking time which can lead to problems developing. The greatest way to stop players getting themselves into trouble is to get the game restarted as soon as possible.

It is very rare during free kicks that you will need to do anything other than get there quick to sort out a problem, or to sprint away and allow the free kick to be taken freely.

The Give and Go, Give and Sort technique is so blatantly simple and effective, that anyone can appreciate the reasons behind it. The difficult part, is to get Referees to react to free kicks much quicker than they generally do. For very often, there seems to be a fog of delay for whatever reasons.

Can you Give and Go, Give and Sort?

Try it out in your next games.

Julian Carosi [www.CorshamRef.org.uk](http://www.CorshamRef.org.uk)

Happy reffing.

## 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.*

***Continuing the 'Different Levels of the Game' section from last month's newsletter.....***

### **Advancing as an Official**

As you gain experience as a referee, you will find that opportunities abound for those with the drive, energy, and dedication to develop their skills as officials. Some of these opportunities require years of training and a bit of luck. Others are close at hand, and need only a phone call or a few hours of your time.

### **Training-Formal and Informal**

As a certified soccer official, you have already had a basic level of classroom training in order to obtain your badge. You will have to complete additional class work yearly in order to retain your certification. Some soccer clubs will also offer informal clinics for officials to hone their skills on the field.

As a referee, the best thing you can do to further your education is to immerse yourself in the game. Read as much as you can about the game's history and traditions, and watch as much soccer as you can find whether at the pitch, at the stadium, or on television. Soccer is a dynamic sport in which the action is non-stop, and many decisions you need to make as a referee will involve observing and interpreting the ever-changing actions of the players. Without a thorough understanding of the way the game is played, you will be at a disadvantage when called upon to evaluate a player's actions on the field. And the more familiar you are with tactics, styles of play, and what is and is not generally accepted on the pitch, the more effective you will be as a referee.

In addition, you should view each game as a chance to learn. If paired with a good official as a crewmate, you can learn what others do to excel and get ideas for handling your own matches; if paired with a poor one, you can learn what doesn't work, and learn what to avoid. Mentors, and other senior officials, can also prove to be an invaluable resource for you.

### **Assessors**

Each state runs its own program to teach, develop, and assess officials. Some programs are formalized and rigid, others are relaxed and less structured. In all cases, the assessor is charged with teaching proper mechanics, determining when an referee is ready for advancement, and helping officials reach their highest potential as referees. Unfortunately, some officials come to regard a visit from the assessor as no more welcome than a trip to the dentist, or a routine proctology examination.

As with every craft, there is an art to assessing, and some people are better at it than others. While a few assessors view their job as one of finding fault and deem tact to be a needless distraction, the vast majority are sympathetic and only want to help. All assessors can offer constructive criticism to the referee willing to listen, but some have a tendency to make referees behave differently, and some referees will start officiating not for the players, but to impress the man (or woman) with the clipboard. This not only undermines the very reason for the assessment, but can poison a relationship that should be more like mentor and student, and less like adversaries. As a result, there are two things to remember when dealing with an assessor:

(1) The assessor is always right; and

(2) If the assessor seems to be mistaken, unhelpful, or strikes you as an idiot, remember Rule Number 1-then take a deep breath, talk to a senior referee that you trust, and don't get discouraged.

Assessors can be one of your best resources as you learn the art of officiating. A poor assessor may only have criticism to offer you, but a good assessor will teach, and a great assessor can inspire.

### **Formal Advancement**

All governing bodies have their own career pathways for soccer officials. The United States Soccer Foundation and American Youth Soccer Organization, for example, both have several grades of officials, each with its own age and experience requirements. Referees who advance through the ranks gain valuable experience during the process of upgrading, and get the chance to be assessed by more experienced officials.

Referees interested in formal upgrades should contact their local referee organizations. Presently, referees working within the United States Soccer Federation can start doing so at age 17, as long as they have the necessary game experience to begin the process.

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

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## **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*

## **BACKPASSES**

In 1992, a distinctive change was made to the laws. Goalkeepers were no longer permitted to touch the ball with their hands when it was deliberately kicked to them by a team-mate. (The backpass terminology can be a bit confusing - the law applies to all passes to the goalkeeper, including square passes and forward passes.) Previously, passing to the goalkeeper had been resented, almost always booed, and referees had been loath to penalise goalkeepers who failed to release the ball quickly. A study of the 1990 FIFA World Cup showed that the ball was only in play for about 45 minutes per game. In some games the ball was with goalkeepers for as much as eight minutes.

A prototype was tested at the 1991 under-seventeen World Championship, and the law itself was introduced the following year. Goalkeepers could handle headed backpasses and chested backpasses but players were not allowed to get around the new law by flicking the ball up with their feet and heading it back (1992), even if the goalkeeper didn't handle the ball (IFAB 1993). Initially, goalkeepers could handle a team-mate's throw-in, but this was later outlawed (1997). All transgressions of the law were punishable by an indirect free-kick taken at the spot where the goalkeeper handled, or six yards out if the handling occurred inside the goal area.

Some people thought that the new law might induce lots of throw-ins if defenders opted to hoof the ball into the stand as a regular alternative to the old backpass. The main concern, however, was that goalkeepers would suffer injuries in tackles with forwards. This theory was stoked by an incident in July 1992, when Manchester City goalkeeper Andy Dibble broke a leg in a Dublin friendly when challenging an onrushing forward after a backpass.

Most people soon saw the entertainment benefits. The ball was in active play for longer and the weaker team put under more pressure. The early days brought several comic goals - goalkeeper Paul Crichton (Grimsby) completely missed a pass from team-mate Paul Futcher at Nottingham Forest (August 1993) - but goalkeepers quickly impressed with their standard of footwork. They began to be seen as footballers in their own right rather than crazy eccentrics.

The only tricky part of the law was distinguishing a deliberate backpass from a clearance that inadvertently went to the goalkeeper. When Brian Borrows (Coventry) miscued a clearance at Everton, the ball hit his other leg and bounced towards goalkeeper Ogrizovic, who picked up the ball (October 1992). The referee gave an indirect free-kick, having adjudged this deliberate.

Chelsea scored a disputed second goal against Wimbledon in a similar manner (March 1996) when the referee awarded a free-kick after goalkeeper Neil Sullivan picked up what was considered by the referee to be a deliberate backpass. Likewise in the Austria-England international (September 2004), the Austrian goalkeeper Manninger conceded an indirect free-kick, and England set up a goal for Lampard in the 2-2 draw. There is no refereeing signal for a backpass to guide the goalkeeper (and often there would not be time to give such a signal). Goalkeepers have to make up their own mind.

As more and more young players came into the game knowing not to pass back to the goalkeeper, free-kicks grew fewer and the game flowed. A new type of goal appeared, like the thirty-yard stunner from Gemmill (Nottingham Forest) when the Leicester goalkeeper hurried a clearance (February 1994).

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

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### **Referees to remind captains of 'Play On' policy:**

Referees will use the Captains' briefing to reinforce that the decision to stop play for injured players rests with officials.

If the referee deems the injury to be of a serious nature and stops play the match will be re-started with a drop ball and team in possession at the time play was stopped will have the ball returned to their goalkeeper.

Keith Hackett, General Manager of the PGMO, said:

"We discussed the 'play on' protocol with all the Premier League managers in our pre-season meetings. The feeling was that the decision on whether to stop play for an injured player or not should rest with match officials. It was felt matches are too often brought to a halt unnecessarily, which breaks the flow of the game.

With head injuries and those that are clearly of a very serious nature the referee will take the appropriate action. Of course teams with a player down injured can choose to put the ball out of play, but they shouldn't expect to get the ball back. This protocol has now been adopted by the FA and UEFA in their competitions as well, so players and fans should get used to play being waved on by referees."

Source: <http://www.premierleague.com/page/Headlines/0..12306~1367439.00.html>

## NEW NEWSLETTER FEATURE:

Regular articles by Stanley Lover can be found on the [www.CorshamRef.org.uk](http://www.CorshamRef.org.uk) web site along with any respective images.

### Whose Game Is It Anyway? (by Stanley Lover)

#### Trials and tribulations of a novice coach

I hate coaches - well, not coaches as such but coaching - or, more accurately, some forms of coaching. The kind that is long on theory and short on fun; where players are just numbers, shuffled into straight jacket roles, stifling free expression of skills.

It all started at my first match for Blackheath and Kidbrooke Church of England Primary School. Apart from playground scrimmages with an old tennis ball, we learned the game in house matches, wearing red, green, blue or yellow hoops. We played on the adjacent practice field of the world famous Blackheath Rugby Club. Friday afternoon was our football period, eagerly awaited from every Monday morning. When bad weather put paid to chasing a ball we were crammed into a darkened classroom for a geography lesson illustrated with black and white slides, often about children in African villages. The reason for these lessons was not the best motivation to absorb knowledge so geography became one of our least favourite subjects.

Ten years old, small for my age but quick as a whippet and showing promise, I ran home to announce the big news - my name was on the team sheet at centre-forward for the next Saturday's big match against local rivals Fossdene Road Secondary School. The local press said our schools were at loggerheads. I didn't know what that meant but it didn't sound very nice.

I was doubly proud when elder brother Bert promised to be there with a team-mate Jim Funnel, the goalkeeper of Hampton Court Rovers, a Sunday morning side based in The Rampant Bull pub in Plumstead. They took me to away games in the back of a lorry with the lads singing bawdy songs whose words I can easily recall, although not without a blush.

The match was on Pitch 35 exposed to a chill wind in the centre of Blackheath Common. Bert and Jim, sporting scarves in our colours, fussed around me and started the school song "*Play up Kidbrooke, let's have another one*". I felt embarrassed.

Five minutes after the start I heard Bert's voice booming, "*Stan, move over more to the right!*" Distracted, I took my eye off the ball and felt it

thumping into my ear. I moved to the right but it made no difference - the ball was miles away now.

A little later I intended to kick for goal but heard a loud cry, "*Hold it, Stan!*" I obeyed and hesitated. "*Now, pass it left!*" I passed the ball left but it trickled to their centre-half. He gathered the ball and started to run past me. "*Take him out!*" screamed Bert and Jim. How was I supposed to do that? Push him, kick him, grab him? Not being versed in these foul deeds I made a clumsy lunge, knocking him off the ball and hurting my ankle as we fell. I'd committed my first intentional foul and felt ashamed.

The referee, one of their teachers, blew his whistle shrill and long. He thundered towards me with a ferocious scowl, big black walrus moustache twitching. I was in big trouble. Towering above me as I nursed my leg he growled, "*Any more of that my lad and you're off!*"

If that had happened I would have disgraced the school and probably never again played in the coveted black and red vertical striped jersey. I struggled to my feet and hobbled bravely back into the game. The pain got worse; I could hardly drag one foot in front of the other. Then I heard Bert shouting, "*Get back, you're offside!*" A whole series of instructions sailed across the pitch. I was getting fed up with this. Did they want me to play like a robot, reacting like a puppet on a string? Whose game was it anyway, theirs or mine? Didn't they know that coaching during a match was not allowed? Well, I didn't either - it would be another fifty seven years before soccer rules permitted coaching in play - but they should have known.

There was no fun in trying to play somebody else's game. I sulked and made little effort to show my talents for the rest of the match. We lost 1-0.

Bert and Jim thought I had played well but could do better. Still sullen I said I would have been better without the instructions from the touchline. Bert said they were coaching me. Well, I thought, if that's coaching I'd prefer to be allowed to play my own game.

As I progressed as a player in the war years, from schools football through to semi-professional level, there were no official coaching schemes in operation. Even at a top pro club Charlton Athletic, where I played as a junior, coaching was very rudimentary by comparison with current sophistication.

Twenty years after my first taste of "coaching" from brother Bert I became a coach! Not by choice but at the request of a new mistress at my son's primary school, Christ Church.

Miss Pendwick, a sports enthusiastic, had replaced one of the three ageing lady teachers and had learned that I was a referee. She wanted to start a football team to play in the local league - would I coach the boys?

I agreed and started to learn about coaching from two of the very few books available SKILFUL SOCCER FOR YOUNG PLAYERS by Walter Winterbottom, and CONSTRUCTIVE FOOTBALL by Howard Fabian and Tom Whittaker (Arsenal's Manager).

From these a carefully planned first session of ninety minutes was charted, starting with an introduction to the game and then, after a warming up period, on to practice the basic skills of control, passing, shooting, heading, etc. A final twenty minutes kick-about would be for fun.

That was the theory.

My students were fifteen excited boys aged between six and eleven. Most had never played or even seen a real game of football. When I arrived at our training ground, a patch of bare earth behind the school, they were everywhere, shouting, screaming, chasing around, climbing trees, wrestling and rolling in puddles of mud. With parents and teachers conspicuous by their absence I lost five valuable minutes rounding up the little monsters and sat them at my feet.

Not one had thought of putting on their (mostly brand new) soccer gear to be ready for the lesson - another ten minutes lost sorting out shirts, shorts and stockings. Boots had to be laced and tied.

All ready? Not quite. Six years old Ronnie Blackett's shorts were too big and fell to his ankles. A spare lace solved that problem. And, "*What's this, Billy Thorpe?*" His legs looked strange. The laces were tied from foot to knee criss-crossed, Roman legionnaire fashion. And young Colin Cook, a grandson of an Admiral of Her Majesty's Royal Navy, limped around painfully with feet splayed out like Charlie Chaplin's tottering tramp.

"Perhaps your boots are too small" I suggested, "Let me check." It did not need a Sherlock Holmes to find the cause - Colin had his right boot on his left foot and the left on the right! This revelation changed his worried frown into an angelic smile of relief and the rest of the group fell about with giggles and laughter. More of my rapidly dwindling time disappeared while getting this item sorted out.

The carefully planned session was in ruins. However, the boys had great fun and were eager to do it again. I told them our first match was only three weeks away and that we needed more serious training to make a good show for Christ Church.

Limited to a squad of fifteen made team selection simple - size and weight taking priority, with four subs on an imaginary bench. Moving from our tiny kick-about unmarked training area up to a real pitch was an eye-opener for the boys - so much space and enormous goals - even on a small size field intended for youth play.

Our league debut, against a Woolwich primary school, was a shock for our youngsters. Facing bigger and stronger opponents, already experienced in team play, they had no chance to put into effect the 4-4-2 strategy of their coach. They applied their own simple formula - kick-and-rush. Wherever the ball went so followed the ten outfield players, like a swarm of bees trails its queen.

Goal-kicks, of which we had many, were a problem; none of our lads could kick the ball out of the penalty area.

The referee, one of their parents, had to forget this rule to keep the game moving. We were slaughtered 0-19.

The second and third matches went much the same way, 0-15 and 0-11, but we were getting better! Straight talking, about disciplined defence and support for our attack, must have been heard because, in our fourth match Colin Cook, comfortable now with his boots on the correct feet, scored! Result 1-4.

Colin scored again in the fifth game to put us in front but we were robbed because their equalizer was clearly off-side to anyone other than their referee. But, we finally showed our class with a glorious victory 1-0 in the sixth match; Colin doing it for us again.

Now that the team was not an embarrassment to the school we attracted supporters - a few noisy parents, chanting girls and Miss Pendwick. We were

on our way to the top! In fact we finished third, a feat recorded generously in the local media. Colin Cook, our top marksman, learned quickly and confirmed his talents in an England Youth XI after he moved to a naval college to follow family tradition.

That first year in coaching was instructive and rewarding. Remembering how I did not enjoy my first school match, because I was expected to play like a robot, I tried to encourage the boys to develop basic skills and apply them in a disciplined team without losing the fun element. During play I kept quiet, leaving it to them to do their best. At half-time I'd suggest one or two simple solutions to problems they had met, adding a few words of encouragement to keep up morale. It seemed to work.

I realized that the value of advice from brother Bert and Jim was well intentioned but I had not been prepared for it; the coaching should have been done before the match. That's easy to say in hindsight but my initiation into coaching taught the value of preparation, improvisation, player management, team play, and - top priority - that the coach has a duty to keep alive the fun element of the game. It is, after all, a game intended for the enjoyment of the players.

Coaches, referees, administrators, fans, et al, are but the supporting cast for the principal actors in the most popular sporting activity on Planet Earth.

Yours in sport,  
Stanley Lover  
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## Never mind respect — we should be treating our referees like Gods.

Guardian Newspaper Blog: Posted by Steven Wells Thursday 2 October 2008

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/blog/2008/oct/02/referees.wells>

Referees are like traffic wardens, valuable public servants who are soft targets of a dumb, unthinking sheep-like. There seems to be a memo running around the slightly sweaty world of science fiction fandom to the effect that the present is moving so fast that writing fiction set in the near future is all but impossible.

Which is annoying if only because it kills my second favourite geek pub argument (after who'd win in a fight between Roy Keane and five Orcs?): which profession will be the first to be entirely replaced by robots?

The answer, of course, is referees. Everyone agrees — the bastards have got to go. Things came to a head last weekend when referee Rob Styles was royally crucified for giving a penalty that apparently never was. Starting with the moaning commentators and ending in a crescendo of tabloid bile, it eventually seemed as if the entire nation was screaming in outrage.

A Martian might be excused for thinking that Styles had committed a crime against humanity, or broken one of our species' most profound taboos. What he actually did — as he is required — was make a snap decision about a player falling to the ground in the penalty area during a football match.

Meanwhile, in the US there was a strangely similar hoo-hah about gridiron referee Ed Hochuli when he flagged Atlanta defensive end Julius Peppers for a "helmet-to-helmet hit ... roughing-the-passer penalty that wiped out Carolina's interception return for a touchdown in the first quarter". Whatever the hell that means. (And this, remember, in a sport that has been all but ruined as a spectacle by various attempts to purge all possibility of human error through the application of technology).

So on both sides of the Atlantic and across dozens of sports the consensus is reached. The referee is a useless, interfering, grandstanding bastard. And the sooner we replace him entirely with machines incapable of mistaking a mistake, the better. And the consensus sucks. Would an orchestra be better conducted by a metronome? I for one am sick of hearing ex-players (who couldn't referee a kids game) telling us that "the ref's having a good game", or a poor game, or a nightmare. If these so-called experts are really good enough to rate a referee's performance, why aren't they out there refereeing? Keeping fit and active in the game they keep telling us they love? Rather than earning a dodgy crust getting fat and old while trotting out the same half dozen or so well polished opinions. (If I hear the phrases "he won't be happy with that" or "he'll be thinking" one more time, I shall scream.)

The answer is that they know the job is too damn difficult. In most games the referee is the only person on the pitch who actually earns their appearance fee. Never mind respect — we should be treating our referees like gods.

And yes, I have refed. Incredibly badly. I officiated for one half of a game between showbiz hacks and the cast of the British remake of Mean Machine — which included Vinnie Jones and Razor Ruddock. And afterwards Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels actor Vaz Blackwood told me to my face that I was a "cheating cunt". It was not the most edifying and uplifting experience of my life, but it still gives me pause every time I hear some bloated pundit talk as if every decision was so blinding obvious that only a complete moron could possibly get one wrong.

I'm not talking about the abuse refs get from fans. That's just dandy (I myself know that all Premier League officials are part of a vast pro-Liverpool conspiracy — pass it on). But in English football the anti-ref alliance between commentators and pundits is destructive of the game itself.

Refs are like traffic wardens — incredibly valuable public servants who are soft targets of a dumb, unthinking sheep-like consensus. And just as traffic wardens perform a vital task in keeping the planet-raping speedophile car filth in check, so referees are crucial to the very existence of the sport.

That's why I cringe whenever I hear some triple-chinned has-been former red-card magnet deride a ref for "thinking he's the most important person on the pitch". The ref is the most important person on the pitch — the most important person in the entire sport.

Undermine the authority of the ref and the entire structure of the sport collapses. And what rushes to fill the vacuum? The Corinthian values of the millionaire brats who play the game? The free-market amorality of the owners? The bumbling blazered bureaucracy? Only the referee remains pure of motive and entirely dedicated to the fundamentals of the game. Which is why the Respect campaign doesn't go far enough. The referee should be omnipotent and beyond question. Even when the ref is wrong — totally wrong, magnificently wrong, egregiously, almost-certainly-been-bribed catastrophically wrong — the ref is right. We need to instil a culture where to challenge a ref's authority is considered the sporting equivalent of picking one's nose in front the Queen.

We should tool the refs up. Not with guns, obviously. That would be stupid. But certainly with tasers. In fact if we're going to bring technology into the game, let's forget video (lest soccer ape the ridiculous spectacle of gridiron refs spending ages reviewing just-shot footage in especially adapted What The Butler Saw machines).

Let's make the players wear undergarments laced with a filigree of super-conductive wiring. One word of dissent, one raised eyebrow, the slightest suggestion of a smirk, one tiny gesture of sarcastic applause and the offending player is dealt a brief but instructive agony. This could be particularly effective with those players feigning injury. Bzzzzzz! Get up. Bzzzzzzzz! Get up. Repeat as needed.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Respect needs to start in the commentary box and the back pages of the tabloids. All you old lags, all you wannabe Motsons, all you catcalling conveyers of cowardly consensus — show some respect for the game and shut your stupid mouths. The damage you do to the very fabric of the sport every time you undermine the ref is incalculable. Shut it, you sl\*gs.

## YOU MUST BE JOKING REF?

We're starting up an amateur football team. Would you care to join?'  
'I would, yes, but I'm afraid I don't know, the first thing about football.'  
'That's all right. We need a referee as well.'

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A spectator at a match in the North of England kept up a constant barrage of insults and derogatory remarks directed against the referee.  
Finally the ref could stand it no longer. He marched over to the stand and, looking the noisy spectator squarely in the eye, shouted,  
'Look here - I've been watching you for the last twenty minutes . . .'  
'I thought so,' the spectator shouted back. 'I knew you couldn't have been watching the game!'

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Referees at Celtic Rangers matches always have a particularly hard time. One poor unfortunate, officiating at his first fixture, was checking in with the team managers before the kick-off.  
'Well, that seems to be about everything,' said the Rangers boss.  
'Now, if you'd just like to give us the name and address of your next-of-kin, we can start the match.'

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The angry captain snarled at the referee. 'What would I happen if I called you a blind bas\$ar\* who couldn't make a correct decision to save his life?'  
'It would be a red card for you.'  
'And if I didn't say it but only thought it?'  
That's different. If you only thought it but didn't say it, I couldn't do a thing.'  
'Well, we'll leave it like that, then, shall we?' smiled the captain.

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Just a minute, ref!' yelled the goalkeeper.  
'That wasn't a goal'  
'Oh, wasn't it?' shouted the referee. 'You just watch the Sports Report" on television tonight!'

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The office-boy had taken the afternoon off to attend his uncle's funeral. His boss, a keen football fan, went the same afternoon to watch a match between Aberdeen and Celtic, and he saw the office boy among the crowd.  
'So this is your uncle's funeral, is it' he said sarcastically..  
'I shouldn't be at all surprised,' said the office boy. 'He's the referee.'

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## THIS MONTH'S QUESTION and ANSWER TOPICS:

**Question 1:** The ball is kicked to his goalkeeper by a team-mate. As a result of kicking the ball, the goalkeeper loses one of his boots.

The ball goes to an attacker who is in a goal scoring position. What should the Referee do?

**Answer 1:** Law 4 states that it is not necessary to stop play for a player to correct his equipment. Players also have a responsibility to ensure that their equipment is put on correctly, so they cannot expect the Referee to stop play every time that a piece of equipment needs adjusting. If this was the case, then the game would suffer as a consequence. Football involves a high degree of chance, thereby making it an exciting game to play and to watch. If a goalkeeper loses his boot by accident, no infringement has occurred. Therefore, so as long as the goalkeeper is in no immediate danger to himself or to any other player, the chance should be taken by the attacker, and the Referee should allow play to continue.

The principle for this, is included in the chapter at the end of the Law book, which states under Law 4:  
"If a player loses his footwear accidentally and immediately plays the ball and/or scores a goal, there is no infringement and the goal is awarded because he lost his footwear by accident".

If the same situation arose and the play action was in a neutral area (i.e. there is no chance of an immediate goal opportunity), then the Referee could stop play to allow the goalkeeper to adjust his equipment. If it is safe to do so and it does not impinge on the play action, the Referee could wait until the ball naturally goes out of play. In most cases, all the Referee needs to do, is just to be aware of the situation - because the goalkeeper will normally put his boot back whilst play continues.

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**Question 2:** The Red team has been giving the Yellow team a bit of a kicking for the previous 10 minutes. I awarded a few free kicks and a few warnings against the Red team. Then a Red player goes in hard on a Yellow player. The Yellow player gets up and looks like he is going to retaliate with his fist up, but restrains himself and walks away. I caution the Red player for the bad tackle and warn Yellow player to keep cool. The Red player then walks off the pitch and starts crying out - won't play again because he feels "intimidated". The Red team's manager has a right go at me for losing control of the game and they are only 12 years olds - and that I should be protecting the players etc. etc. My argument was that the Yellow player didn't touch the Red player and showed self-restraint. The Red team had it coming with the amount of fouls that they were putting in. Was I right to just warn the Yellow player to keep it cool or should I have cautioned him as well?

**Answer 2:** Wouldn't it be nice if we all had the ability of hindsight?

Ask yourself if issuing a caution to the yellow player would have pacified the red contingent?

I think that you already know the answer to this!

As a general principle, whenever two teams are involved in a fracas, make sure that you discipline at least one player from each team. In other words, if both teams are guilty of unsporting actions that have no part in the game itself, then both teams need to be punished.

Ask yourself if the following is part of how football should be played?, *"a player looks like he is going to retaliate with his fist up but restrains himself and walks away."*

I think that you already know the answer to this as well!

You intimate that you had some sympathy for the Yellow team because you believe that the *"Red team had it coming,"*

If you thought that the *"Red team had it coming,"* then you should have sorted it earlier, and not wait until the inevitable happens.

If you fail to protect a victimised team, then that team will protect itself by using retaliation.

There is a good learning point here for you. In future games, if you get the feeling that a team "has it coming", then trust in your instincts, and act quickly.

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**Question 3:** How do you decide whether to do a drop ball contested by two players, or whether you tell one team to give it back to the other to restart play?

**Answer 4:** It is the players who decide, not the Referee. The Law book clearly says that, *"A referee cannot decide who may or may not contest for the ball"*.

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**Question 4:** As a defending team is positioning their wall in accordance to their goalkeeper's instruction, the attacking team quickly take their direct free kick and score a goal. Should the Referee allow the goal, or should he insist on the free kick being retaken ?

**Answer 4:** The goal should be allowed. A team taking a quick free kick has not committed any offence, and the goal is therefore legal. The advantage must always be with the attacking (non-offending) team. There is no mention in the law about a quick free kick. Referees should offer every advantage to the attacking side, and give them the opportunity for a quick free kick to maximise every opportunity to score a goal. If the attacking players ask for a quick free kick, the Referee will allow them to get on with it. The Referee is also not required to step away from the centre of the incident. Neither is he required to blow his whistle, merely to signal to the attacking team to continue.

If the attacking team ask for the defensive wall to be correctly positioned, then the Referee will manage the free kick (commonly know as a ceremonial free kick) and ensure that all defending players are at least 9.15 metres from the ball before play is restarted. Holding the whistle aloft is a good way of demonstrating to both teams that they must await the Referee's signal before a 'ceremonial' free kick can be taken.

Whatever decision is taken by the attacking team (quick free kick or not?), the Referee should be very careful not to depict any body language that could possibly mislead the defending team into thinking that a ceremonial free kick is about to take place.

**Question 5:** A defender commits a foul on the edge of his penalty area. The Referee asks the attacking team if they would like to take the free kick quickly, or if they would like him to ensure that all the opponents move back the required 9.15 metres. The attacking team asks the Referee to ensure that the opponents are the correct distance away. The Referee makes it abundantly clear, that the attacking team must therefore await his signal before taking the free kick.

Whilst arranging for the defensive wall to move back the correct distance, the attacking team take the free kick quickly, and before the Referee has signalled. The ball is caught by the goalkeeper, and prevented from going in the goal. The goalkeeper kicks the ball up the field towards one of his team-mates. What should the Referee do?

**Answer 5:** (*Source Graham Poll Telegraph 20 Jan 04*): If a goal is scored in this situation it would be disallowed, and the kick would have to be retaken. If, however, the kick misses the goal or is saved by the goalkeeper, play should be allowed to continue, as it would be wrong to give the attacker two bites at the cherry when he has tried to circumvent agreed procedures.

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**Question 6:** A player has left the field of play (FOP) with the Referee's permission (say with an injury). While he is off the FOP, he engages in dissent directed towards the Referee. The Referee decides to stop play and cautions the offender. What is the correct restart? Also what is the difference between being already off the FOP (restart dropped ball) and leaving the FOP (restart indirect free kick) as mentioned in the Law book?

**Answer 6:** There are several conflicting comments in the Law book, but not as many as there used to be!

For example; Law 12 states that, "If the Referee stops play due to an offence committed outside the field of play (when the ball is in play), play must be restarted with a dropped ball."

Yet the Law book quote that you refer to, refers to a Violent Conduct offence committed when the player leaves the field of play, and shows the restart as an indirect free kick. (PS ) I've got a pencilled comment alongside that paragraph that says "This can't be right?"

It is confusing I'll grant you.

The only saving grace is that when a player leaves the field of play without the Referee's permission, and the Referee stops play, the restart is an indirect free kick. Hence that is the difference between being already off the FOP (dropped ball) and leaving the FOP (indirect free kick).

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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)

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