

The www.CorshamRef.org.uk Newsletter No 62: September 2008)

International newsletter covering Football (Soccer) Refereeing matters.

Welcome, with an International perspective.

Welcome to the 62nd 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.*

Rule 1: The Referee is always right.

Rule 2: In the event of the Referee being wrong, Rule 1 applies.

(Les Stubbs, Chelsea player in the 1950's - Source, page 83, 'Greavsie the Autobiography' by Jimmy Greaves, first published in Great Britain 2003.

The new Law book for season 2008 - 2009 can be downloaded from the FIFA web site here:

<http://www.fifa.com/worldfootball/lawsofthegame.html>

The new Law book contains a completely re-written chapter entitled, '*Interpretation of the Laws of the Game and Guidelines for Referees*'. This chapter contains **compulsory** advice that supplements the Laws. It is based on the old FIFA Questions and Answers, and the previous Law book chapter entitled, '*Additional Instructions for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials*'. It is recommended that all Referees read the new chapter.

100 Years the Referees' Association (England). *By Mal Davis and Julian Carosi.*

A centenary celebration article:

In the late 1800's and early 1900's, it is difficult to imagine what satisfaction the pioneer referees acquired from their craft. I suppose part of their reward would have been the same as the modern day referee, pleasure in helping the game develop, personal exercise in the open and of the psychological feeling of being in control. Their task would have been more difficult, as there were no Referees' Associations or local Societies to provide guidance, encouragement and education. Financial rewards were meagre, the refund of minimum travelling expenses plus a few shillings, at a rate per hour very much less than any Trade Union would tolerate. Considering that the referee was - even then - an essential factor in any match (and in view of the hardships they had to endure), they did not grumble about it - instead, rather like today, they continued to enjoy it.

Following the introduction of the first thirteen 'Rules of Association Football,' handwritten in the Freemasons' Tavern in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, by the newly formed Football Association (The FA) on 26th October 1863, referees for the first time had a standard set of Laws to apply. But it was 30 years later in 1893, before The FA formed the very first local Referees' Association at Anderton's Hotel in London. There were 79 in attendance, with CW Alcock (Secretary of The FA) nominated as President, FJ Wall (later Secretary of The FA 1895-1934) assuming the role of Chairman and Arthur Roston Bourke the Honorary Secretary. The London Society's prime purpose was to examine the qualification of referees by oral methods and to appoint them to matches. Two years later, Vice President William Pickford was instrumental in getting the Society to produce "The Referees' Chart", 1895-96. This contained 17 Laws (or rules) and was far more substantial than those drafted in the 1863.

PRESIDENTS:

1908 - 1913	C E Sutcliffe
1913 - 1914	J A H Catton
1915 - 1919	World War I
1919 - 1920	C E Sutcliffe
1920 - 1922	W C Kirby
1922 - 1925	A Pellowe
1925 - 1932	E H Spiers
1932 - 1933	J R Schumacher
1933 - 1934	vacant
1934 - 1938	E H Spiers
1938 - 1939	J Gilroy
1939 - 1946	World War II
1946 - 1948	J Gilroy
1948 - 1964	W S Turnbull
1964 - 1972	A H Lavender
1972 - 1982	K H Burns
1982 - 1983	F H Lightfoot
1983 - 1984	K H Burns
1984 - 2003	P N Willis
2003 - 2004	J Bunn
2004 -	D R Elleray

Following the success of the fledgling London Society, other referees throughout England soon began to group together to form their own Associations, Branches, Societies etc. (North Staffs formed a Referees' Club in 1896). By 1899, with a total membership of 773, there were 27 such groups, some of which even allocated themselves to games! The cohesive appointment of referees became too big a task, so the responsibility was transferred over to The FA. It was then, that the London Society ended its short but important career. But it had given Association Football a status and originated many improvements for referees. Composed mainly of London referees, another new society of Association Football Referees subsequently flourished for a short while. It was following this period, that the seed of the modern day Referees' Association was sown.

"In consequence of certain unpleasant experiences of referees in many parts of the country," the idea that these established groups of referees should form a Union, was first suggested by solicitor CE (Charles) Sutcliffe. In 1906, JAH (James) Catton Editor of 'Athletic News', supported Sutcliffe's idea, and subsequently wrote a series of articles urging the referee groups to combine together and strengthen their position.

Sutcliffe was later to become the Union's first President 1908-1913, followed by his close friend Catton 1913-14. Groups of referees, mainly from the North and Midlands gave their initial approval. Many believed that in unity lay strength. Sutcliffe, along with Catton, spared no effort to get things going. Meetings took place in Carlisle, Manchester, Birmingham and London.

"The 9th May 1908 heralded the birth of the Referees' Association, as we know it today."

Following a meeting convened by Sutcliffe on 5th March 1908 in Manchester, where Catton emphasised how a Referees' Union would serve the interests of referees and promote the good of the game, 39 Football League referees were approached. They and many others promised their support, and on 9th May 1908, over 300 referees travelled to a subsequent meeting held in Nottingham. Sutcliffe presided, and after he and Catton had spoken, TP Campbell (Blackburn) proposed and JT Ibbotson (Derby) seconded. "That a Referees' Union be formed". Every hand went up. And the Referees' Union was born.

During this meeting, W Gilgryst (Manchester) asked for the Union to be for referees' societies only, and not for referees and referees' societies. This suggestion was defeated by 99 votes to 65.

The following inaugural Referees' Union officers were appointed: President: CE Sutcliffe; Honorary Secretary: H Pollitt; Hon. Treasurer: W Pickford. The country was divided into three areas or divisions: Northern (Berwick to Sheffield), Midland (Sheffield to Worcester), and Southern (south of Worcester). Vice-Presidents and Secretaries were also appointed for each Division. These were, for the Northern, Midland and Southern, respectively: W Gilgryst & H Pollitt; AG Hines & H Ward; JC Stark & CD Crisp. Each Division had three Committee members appointed. They were, respectively: TP Campbell, JT Howcroft & FH Dennis; JH Pearson, F Heath & JT Ibbotson; FR Viveash, AG Neale & JT Clark. These eighteen men were the founder members of the Referees' Union. JT Howcroft (Bolton), who was unable to make the meeting due to illness, was later elected onto the Northern committee. Also present at the meeting was Catton. Membership was set at five shillings for seniors and two shillings for juniors. Members were allowed to decide their own status for themselves! It was also agreed to hold an Annual Conference, with the first one subsequently being held in Derby 1909.

By now, Sutcliffe was already an established referee. It is also satisfying to note that offside was just as contentious then, as it is now! During a busy Easter period, March 29th 1902 became infamous for what was known as the 'Sutcliffe Incident'. *"The referee Charles Sutcliffe angered the crowd with his offside decisions when Sunderland were held to a 1:1 draw at Roker by lowly Small Heath. A crowd gathered outside after the game and the police, fearing trouble, dressed the diminutive Sutcliffe in a constable's uniform and marched him out with other constables. He was immediately recognised in the coat and helmet several sizes larger but escaped in a waiting horsecab."*

In 1911 (Leeds), President Sutcliffe proposed that £25 should be transferred from the general account to form a Benevolent Fund, *"to aid referees or their dependants in case of need, sickness or death."*

In 1913, a decision was made to produce 'The Football Referee' magazine, starting in September 1913. By now, membership of the Referees' Union had exceeded 2,000, with Senior Members being charged 5s (shillings) per annum, Junior Members 2s, and Associate Members 6d (old pence). The Nottinghamshire referees were the only group, not to have affiliated to the Referees' Union. Membership dropped slightly over the ensuing years before the onset of World War 1, to a total of 1,588 in 1914 (147 Senior, 144 Junior and 1,297 Associate members). Six months after the War had ended, the Referees' Union Council met in Birmingham and it was resolved to hold a conference on 9th August 1919 in Nottingham. Membership in 1919-20 had dropped to 1,422.

In 1921 at the Southport conference, AJ Hutchins (Reading) proposed a change of name to 'British Referees' Association'. He said that we should be an '*Association of Associations*'. He agreed with Council to omit British, and the following day, the Referees' Union became known as the Referees' Association. And so the RU became the RA. In Reading 1922, the RA's first Honorarium (£100 cheque) was presented by acting Chairman Arthur Pellowe to the Hon. Secretary Alan Page. In Sheffield 1923, Life Membership was created, with the first two being AH Page and JW Kirkwood (Gateshead). Membership was now at a record 2,795.

The early 1920s were turbulent years for The RA. It was thought that the President should be a leading name in football, but President W Claude Kirby (Chairman, Chelsea FC) had failed to attend the 1921 and 1922 Annual Conferences, and pioneer Charles Sutcliffe was no longer at the helm. Founder member Sutcliffe, strongly criticised the policy of the RA and charged the officers with apathy. He said that when he was President, the organisation was successful, now it was disunited and unrepresentative, he could have no further interest in it! Alan Page countered, by pointing out membership had doubled since Sutcliffe was last President in 1920. Page said the attack was unsporting, unfair, inaccurate and a wilful misrepresentation of the facts. Sutcliffe also made destructive comments and sarcastic remarks in newspapers. The founder President's parting was eventually accepted by Council with, "thanks for past services".

The original three Divisions became four in 1936: The South was split to form the Southern Division and the Western Division (Wales became part of the Western Division in 1980). Later, in 1948, the North split to become the North East and the North West Divisions. Northern Ireland was part of the North West Division.

When the Second World War broke out in 1939, one of the first casualties was Association Football. Indeed, it almost became a fatality when refereeing came to a grinding halt for six long years. Many of the playing areas were turned over to allotments, barrage-balloon sites, air-raid shelters, etc, and it was many years before they recovered to a condition fit for playing purposes. The membership for season 1938-39 was 5,706; this dropped to just over 4,500 by March 1947. Even though many of the Referees' Associations and Societies had continued to hold membership meetings through the war period (although with diminished numbers), it was many years before the pre-war high membership numbers were regained. During the transitory period following the war, the Referees' Association rallied their members onwards under the banner of "Knights of the Whistle".

In 1947, the Meritorious Service Award was instituted, and in 1948, Treasurer Dixon Barker and his wife presented the RA with the President's badge of office, first worn by Walter Turnbull.

The first Annual RA Grand Draw took place at Solihull in 1976. The Midland Division's Secretary, Ken Anderton (Coventry), who was also on the Finance Committee, was the promoter, a task he undertook for 29 Draws until 2004. Following the re-structure, the RA Board assumed the responsibility for operating the Draw with RA General Secretary, Arthur Smith, becoming the promoter. The profits from that first Draw went towards staging the Conference; profits thereafter, have gone into the general fund and are now being allocated to special projects.

In 1980, the Welsh Division was formed. The members of each Division of the RA elected their own Vice-President and Secretary who represented their Division on the Council of the RA.

Referees' Association Secretaries - a brief history:

Until 1977, the Administration of the Referees' Association was carried out by various voluntary Secretaries running the organisation from their home address. The last voluntary Secretaries were Eric Babington 1964-1976, Ron Warnke and Owen Venning, 1974-1975. The first full-time General Secretary, Owen Venning started in 1974, following the death of Ron Warnke, when Venning relinquished the editorship of "The Football Referee" magazine. He was succeeded by Jim Taylor in 1984 and then by Arthur Smith in 1992.

On 8 October 1977, the Minister of State for Sport and Birmingham RA member Denis Howell MP opened the first RA office, a rented property at Kingswinford in the West Midlands. Howell is also a former Football League referee. Gradually, these premises were outgrown. In 1989, The RA purchased the leasehold property at 1 Westhill Road, Coundon, Coventry, and on 24th November 1990 the Lord Mayor of Coventry, Councillor W Hardy, opened the new headquarters.

Secretaries of the Overseas and Services Division have been Dixon Barker 1931-1939 & 1946-1950, C.W. Coward 1950-1951, W. Vine 1951-1961, D.G. Paget 1961-1968 and Alan Robinson 1968-2004. In 2004 Len Randall was appointed as the RA Board member responsible for overseas members, followed in 2007 by Ray Mallery.

Following many years of discussion, Conference 1999 accepted a proposal to consider restructuring the Referees' Association. A five member Management Consultancy Team (MCT) was appointed to make

recommendations, and their report was published in September 2000. The RA Annual Conference 2001 approved a motion to form an Implementation Team to propose a restructuring based on the MCT report. Their proposal to replace the Referees' Association and the Divisional structure with a newly constituted Referees' Association and three independent National Referees' Associations was approved at Conference 2003 in Cheltenham.

At the Annual Conference in 2004, the members of the Council of the previously constituted RA, retired and were replaced by the members of the Board of Management of the newly constituted Referees' Association, the Board of the Referees' Association of England (RAE), the Council of the Referees' Association of Wales (RAW) and the Council of the Northern Ireland Referees' Association (NIRA). The management of the operation of the Association became the responsibility of the Board of Management (Chairmen Bart O'Toole - 2004; Len Randall - 2005; Richard Blackman - 2006).

During Conference 2004, David Elleray, an international referee of the highest level, was introduced, and became the first Honorary President of the newly formed RAE. Amongst other improvements, his vision instigated a complete revamp of the 2-day Conference structure, with more emphasis on providing workshop sessions of the highest standards; these continue to benefit member referees of all ages. The business element of Conference is now dealt with on the Friday afternoon, with Saturday left for enjoyment, learning and meeting colleagues.

The current membership, for season 2007-08, is 12,528 in 305 societies - 278 in England, 23 in Wales and 4 in Northern Ireland. The largest society is the Amateur Football Alliance with 174 members and the smallest is Glossop RA with three.

Today, one hundred years later, the Referees' Association is undoubtedly in a much better position than our forefathers were in 1908. The legacy, established during their many difficult years, is something to be very proud of. Let's all work together so that they can say the same of us in 2108.

"SET PIECES"

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, and self-evaluation by offering you some advice on advantage.

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.

Applying the Advantage Clause

'The offended team should never be disadvantaged by the Referee's advantage.'

A Referee can allow play to continue, when the team against which an offence has been committed will benefit from such an advantage. The Referee can also penalise the original offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time."

(Law 5 - Laws of Associated Football)

The aim of this article is to show how the football (soccer) Referee - by astute application of the 'Advantage Clause' - can retain overall match control, and on occasions, allow play to continue when an infringement has been committed. Applying advantage at the right moments, makes the game more exciting and minimises unnecessary stoppages by keeping the action flowing.

Introduction:

In the game of football, when a foul is committed on a player, the award of a free kick to a player is not always to that team's best advantage, because it can stop the forward momentum of play, and allow time for the opposing team to reorganise its defence. The Referee can decide whether to award a free kick or to apply the advantage clause to let play continue. When a free kick is awarded, the offending team has a chance to regroup, thereby giving them an unfair advantage. Therefore, on many occasions, the team that has been fouled can receive more benefit if play were allowed to continue, instead of being stopped by the Referee to award a free kick. Law 5 of the Laws of Associated Football, allows the Referee to use his judgement in making these types of decisions. Is it better for the Referee to allow play to continue, or should he stop play and award a free kick? The Referee will consider the best option for the innocent team - and this is discussed below in more detail.

The Advantage Clause permits the Referee to apply two options when a foul is committed on a player:

Option 1. Allow play to continue to the advantage of the team whose player has been fouled, with the option of penalising the original foul, if the advantage for that team does not ensue within 2 to 3 seconds.

Option 2. If the Referee believes that there is no advantage to be gained in allowing play to continue, he can stop play immediately and award a free kick (or penalty kick) to the team whose player has been fouled.

When a team commits an offence, the Referee can prevent the guilty team from gaining any benefit, by applying the advantage clause to the innocent team. The Referee is not always obliged to stop play; because in some cases, this would be a disadvantage to the innocent team, i.e awarding a free kick is very often a less favourable option. When a Referee applies advantage, it is the offending team that are denied any advantage that they may have gained, had the Referee stopped play. The advantage clause allows the Referee to interpret Law 12, so that the offended team can benefit, rather than the offending team.

Applying advantage is the Referees prerogative - he can either apply advantage, or he can NOT apply advantage. In reality, Referees use a combination of both of these methods in every game, thus allowing them to control and keep the game flowing with the minimum of stoppages. During a good-natured match, the Referee will play advantage on most occasions when the offended team retains possession in favourable circumstances. Conversely, during an ill tempered match (and to retain control of a game), the Referee will keep the application of advantage to a bare minimum - else players may seek retribution on opponents by taking the Law into their own hands. The degree (or amount of advantage applied) can also be varied in a single game to calm players down during heated periods.

The ultimate aim is to ensure that offending teams are not allowed to profit from their offences.

Although it is possible in certain circumstances for Referees to caution or send-off a player some time after an incident has occurred - failure to act quickly in fractious circumstances may result in an ugly confrontation developing into a violent situation. If a serious (or violent) foul occurs or if there is any hint of an assault taking place, the Referee should stop play immediately and NOT allow advantage to develop. Taking action quickly in these circumstances can prevent further trouble escalating.

In other words, it's all well and good being free and easy with the application of advantage, but here are some occasions when it should not be applied.

Applying advantage in the penalty area of the offending team can also cause problems, as the Referee will have to make a very quick judgement on the possibility of a goal being scored immediately.

If following an innocuous foul on a defender, the ball makes it way to the defender's goalkeeper - it is sometimes better to allow the goalkeeper to continue play by kicking the ball from his hands upfield, than to stop play and award a free kick (so long as there is no danger to the goalkeeper or any other player).

The advantage clause allows the game to flow, and allows the Referee to penalise deliberate breaches of the Laws that are detrimental to the spirit of the game, rather than whistling too liberally for trifling and doubtful infringements. There is no need to apply advantage for a trifling or dubious offence, but instead, it should only be applied if the foul affects the game or the players. This is a difficult skill to learn, as we very often see Referees making a big meal of advantage, when there would have been no change to the game, whether the foul had been committed or not! It is in these situations, when it is better to just let the game continue without interference. If Referees apply advantage every time that a foul occurs, it will lessen their control of the game, and will have less effect on those occasions when a significant foul occurs, that really requires the correct application of advantage to be delivered. Therefore, an astute Referee is able to identify and deal with only those infractions that really affect the game.

By recognising what a true advantage is, and realising that it does not happen very often, a Referee's decisions will be much more appreciated by the players when he applies the clause correctly on those occasions when it really is needed. In a normal game, the Referee will only need to apply the advantage clause 4 or 5 times. All the other moments of physical contact need no intervention because the players will just get on with the game themselves. A carefully considered and selective application of advantage will have much more effect compared to advantages that are applied for every single tickle that happens between players.

To understand how to apply the advantage clause, it helps to understand the history of how it was introduced in to the Laws.

History:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reason:

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

This now gives the Referee the possibility of waiting to see how an advantage situation develops and if it does not develop after a short while, e.g. two/three seconds, then the Referee has to immediately stop the game and penalise the original offence, provided that the ball is still in play (if not, then play must be restarted in accordance with the Law). Furthermore, should a player of the offending team commit a second offence during the time the Referee is allowing for the development of the anticipated advantage, then the Referee must sanction the more serious of the two offences. In any case, this does not exempt each offending player from being dealt with appropriately (caution or dismissal) by the Referee.

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

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

Before the 1996/1997 season, if the Referee allowed an advantage, he was not allowed to bring play back and penalise the original offence if subsequently, the advantage did not develop.

In other words, it was just bad luck for the team whose player had been fouled.

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

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

Firstly the wording encapsulating the time allowed for a Referee to bring back an advantage to the original scene of the foul.

'If it does not develop after a short while, e.g. two/three seconds.'

Law 5 no longer mentions a specific time, so it is important not to lose visibility of this original time measurement allowance - especially for new trainee Referees. Notwithstanding this, the Referee can penalise the original offence as soon as the advantage does not materialise. In other words, if the advantage does not materialise in the first second, there is no need to wait the full two/three seconds allowed before stopping play for the free kick.

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

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

The Referee shouts "Play on, Advantage!"

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

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

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

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

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

At lower levels of football, players often see a greater benefit in the award of a free kick, rather than being awarded an advantage if there is a clear-cut (obvious) attacking opportunity.

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

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

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

Communicating Advantage at the right time:

One of the greatest feelings of satisfaction that a Referee can experience when officiating in a game, is when a team scores a goal following the award of an advantage. This feeling is even more accentuated, if during the movement, players from the same team had tried in vain to persuade the Referee to stop play for the foul. This is when the Referee can quietly smile to himself, knowing that he allowed play to continue to the benefit of the offended team - which subsequently led to a goal being scored by them.

The Laws are intended to allow games to be played with as little interference as possible, and with this in mind, it is the duty of the Referee not to penalise every single breach of the Law. As previously mentioned, constant whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches of the Law produces bad feeling and loss of temper on the part of the players and spoils the enjoyment of the game for all.

Every game and every advantage incident is different - so it is impossible to cover all advantage scenarios. Nevertheless, a Referee who applies advantage correctly will enhance the quality of the game. And his performance will be the better for it.

Following the award of an advantage, and the completion of the move, the Referee should either rebuke the player who committed the foul, or caution him (or send him off) depending on the severity of the offence. This will prevent (or at least greatly diminish) retaliation being taken by players later on in the game. Failure to rebuke offenders will result in players taking the Law into their own hands. It is therefore very important to 'nip' provocation in the 'bud' in the early stages. Rebuking players can be done quietly whilst running alongside - or for a more serious rebuke, openly by calling the perpetrator towards you for a lecture during a stoppage in play.

The Referee is not advised to apply advantage following incidents of a serious nature. Doing so, will give the opportunity for retribution to be taken by opponents - and this could lead to serious trouble occurring. In such cases, the Referee should ignore any appeals to allow advantage to continue. For example - if a defender commits a 'leg breaking tackle' from behind, on an attacker, but the ball breaks away to a colleague of the injured attacker who subsequently moves forwards - the Referee should stop play immediately (unless it is blatantly obvious that a goal will be scored within the very next second or so) and swiftly deal with the perpetrator of the offence by sending him off. If the Referee allows play to continue by invoking the advantage clause, then the chances are that a colleague of the injured player may seek retribution by committing a violent act against either the perpetrator or one of the perpetrator's colleagues. By stopping play immediately after a serious offence, the Referee gains control of a potentially escalating situation; and by doing so, reminds the players that HE is the only one legally permitted to hand-out punishment on the field of play.

It is important, that when a Referee applies an advantage, that he communicates this properly to the players as quickly as possible. This ensures that everyone is aware that the Referee has recognised the offence, but prefers to keep the game flowing. The use of advantage does not mean that the Referee is absolved from punishing perpetrators; they can be dealt with later. Failure to deal with miscreants, may lead to retaliation from the offended team.

Some Referees use the same advantage communication signal for 'play on', when no offence has occurred. This will confuse players and spectators who are out of the verbal range of the Referee. The advantage communication signal should only be used when an offence has occurred, and the Referee wishes to allow play to continue. If a Referee uses the same signal when a foul has not occurred, it will lead to confusion, and furthermore, lead to accusations that the Referee has missed a foul, whenever a true advantage is later played. A good Referee is able to convey the intended message, whereas a bad Referee only confuses players. There is a clear distinction to be made here. When a Referee allows play to continue following a foul, he is allowed to bring play back to penalise the original offence with the award of a free kick. In short, the Referee has two chances to benefit the offended team (play on or free kick). When a Referee allows play to continue after a trifling or doubtful breach on the Laws (i.e. no foul has occurred), he is not allowed to bring play back for a free kick. An astute Referee will be able to recognise what actions are significant and what aren't. This is why it is very important, that the advantage clause communication is only ever used whenever a foul has occurred.

Shouting "Play on" when no foul has occurred can confuse players. Players will be unsure if the Referee has seen a foul and allowed advantage - or whether the Referee had deemed that no foul had occurred, thus letting play continue. In such circumstances, the Referee would be better shouting: "Play on. No foul" or similar words that communicate that no foul had occurred. In most cases where no foul has occurred, it is sometimes better just to allow play to continue without saying or indicating anything.

Explaining advantage decisions to players will increase communication between the Referee and players.

The Referee should make it evidently clear when he has awarded an advantage. He should communicate this by LOUDLY shouting:
"Play on!, Advantage!"

And by moving both hands and arms forward in a sweeping motion upwards from waist level.

It is very important that the Referee signals by using both voice and arms - this is a widely-know and accepted internationally used signal that must be executed simply and without flamboyance or eccentricity.

Awarding and showing advantage should be done as quickly as possible - any delay by the Referee in deciding whether to award advantage or not, will be seen by the players as a weakness in quick decision-making..

Paradoxically - allowing a slight delay to see how play develops may occasionally lead to a more successful application of the advantage clause. In other words, there will be occasions when you should not blow the whistle too quickly. Nobody said it was going to be easy!

When an attacking team approaches the opponent's penalty area, there is a higher probability of a challenge being made. Therefore, the Referee should mentally prepare himself to potentially make a very quick decision and whistle signal. The aim is to minimise the delay factor of blowing the whistle to stop play.

Clear advantage communication informs the players that the Referee has acknowledged the foul, but has allowed play to continue. Failure to 'communicate' a significant advantage will result in players assuming that the Referee has not seen the offence. This will lessen the confidence that players have in the Referee.

Influences that can affect Advantage:

The prerogative of awarding advantage belongs solely to the Referee. He should not be influenced by any appeals from players, managers, coaches or spectators, who for some strange reason, always think that they know better than the qualified Referee. Because applying advantage is a personal choice, there will always be an opposite view; therefore, the Referee should prepare himself to deal with dissent from team officials (e.g. managers and coaches). In most cases, these are just minor moan and groans, and should just be ignored.

The application of the 'Advantage Clause' depends very much on the mood of the players, the differing skill levels of the competing teams, weather and ground conditions, history of previous encounters, whether it is a relegation or promotion match or a Cup final, which side of bed the players got out of this morning - and whether the Moon is in the correct position or not! (Only joking!)

A Referee can treat two identical advantage incidents in a game completely differently. For example - following a foul in one game, the Referee allowed advantage to develop. In an identical incident during a different game (or in the second half of the same game), the Referee stopped play to award a free kick. Therefore, the incident itself is invariably not always the only measure to consider when awarding advantage or not - there are many other outside factors to consider before the Referee decides.

"The foul is only the catalyst when deciding advantage - the complete answer is the foul itself, plus the variable equation of circumstances surrounding it."

For example - following a foul in the first half, the Referee allows advantage, but in the second half following a similar foul, the Referee stopped play immediately and awards a free kick. The reasons why he may have taken this action are numerous - i.e., the first half was played in a very sporting manner, but the second half had developed into World War 3 - necessitating tighter Referee control on the game by NOT awarding any advantage in an attempt to stabilise and regain control of the game. When taking such varying action in the same game, the Referee will undoubtedly receive accusations of "inconsistency". Ignore such remarks. It is more important for the Referee to retain 'consistent control' of the game, and if this means adjusting the way advantage is permitted - then retaining control of the game consistently, is far more important than worrying about petty comments.

The Referee should be discreet in establishing and building up control in the early stages of an anticipated difficult game. One method towards gradually building full control is NOT to award too much advantage early on in the game, but build up the application of advantage gradually until it can be applied more liberally without jeopardising early control of the game.

Advantage should never be used by the Referee to negate taking action to protect players' individual skills and flair. In other words, applying advantage should not be an alternative to properly and rightly disciplining offending players for fouls that they commit. Advantage should never be used as an excuse for not dealing properly and positively with offenders. The Referee must never use advantage solely as a disguise for failing to act on the offence seen. In other words, if the original foul warrants a caution (or a red card), the perpetrator should be punished accordingly when play allows.

Referees must apply restraint when allowing advantage, and never use the application to solely seek pleasure themselves. The Advantage Clause is there for the players' benefit, and not to feed the reputation of indulgent or over-ambitious Referees.

It can sometimes be difficult to anticipate retaliation following a hard physical challenge for the ball. Retaliation very often occurs at the scene of the crime, so it is important not to immediately follow the flight of the ball if trouble is anticipated. The Referee should leave his eyes (for just a few seconds) on the scene of the challenge, before following the path of the ball (this is known as the trailing eye technique). If there is the slightest hint of retaliation being taken by players, advantage should not be applied.

The age of players can be factored into the Referee's advantage equation. Young players can lack the maturity to understand and to benefit from an advantage. They also lack the physical aptitude to capitalise on most advantages given. That is not to say that the Referee should NEVER apply advantage with young players. As an extreme example - an advantage given to a young team 1 metre inside their opponents half of the field of play is not quite the same as allowing advantage to an English Premiership League team of professional players in the same position. The young team players would benefit more from a free kick, whereas the Premiership side is skilful enough to monopolise the situation to their benefit - and actually want the Referee to keep play moving whenever possible. The skill level of the teams must therefore also be considered. A Sunday morning team would probably benefit more if a free kick were awarded to them inside their own half of the field of play, as opposed to the Referee allowing them an advantage. Conversely, highly skilful teams will accept an advantage in any part of the field of play. The advantage clause should also be applied carefully and thoughtfully whenever veteran players or disabled players are involved.

Ground conditions will also affect the extent to which advantage can be allowed to develop. Deciding to award advantage on a normal surface is different to allowing advantage on a frosty or very muddy and bumpy surface. During inclement weather, the team will probably gain a better advantage by the award of the free kick, rather than being allowed to run on with the ball.

Referees Perspective:

Applying advantage is a technique that if used properly, will promote the flow of the game, and increase the enjoyment for all of the participants. The Referee therefore, has a duty to use and learn the proper application of this clause. Proper application will also enhance a Referees ability and reputation, because players will appreciate an official who is in tune with how they want to play.

The factors influencing when advantage should, or should not be applied by the Referee could be: (a) the players' level of respect for each other and towards the Referee - (b) the skill levels of the teams - (c) the flow of the game - (d) the players' discipline levels - (e) a previous bad encounter between the teams - (f) revenge..... These are feelings and contributory factors that should be easy enough to discern during the game; nevertheless, a Referee needs to be on his toes in every match.

When considering the application of the advantage clause, Referees are advised to ignore sweeping generalisations such as:

- (a) never play advantage in the first fifteen minutes, or
- (b) only allow advantage in the last attacking third of the field of play.

These types of statements are too simplified and constricting to be of any practicable use. There are many additional factors that make generalisations confusing to apply:

- (i) passing skill of a team
- (ii) age of the players
- (iii) mood of the game
- (iv) weather

Each advantage incident must be considered in its own bubble, and not governed by generalised statements. Advantage is a flexible clause that is meant to enhance the whole game, and not just pre-selected parts of it.

The nearer an attacking team is to their opponent's goal, the more effective an advantage will be. Advantage is not a slide-rule measurement where all possibilities can be easily be described in a written list. Applying advantage also depends on the position on the field of play where a foul occurs. For example, a team with little footballing skill will not appreciate advantage being awarded to them in the close vicinity of their goal (e.g. in their defensive part of the field of play). The award of a free kick is more advantageous to them, because the ball can be safely kicked upfield. (away from immediate danger) into their opponents' half. If there is any risk of a defender losing control if the ball following an advantage to him near his own goal, it is better to award a free kick - else there will be a considerable chance that the advantage will be gained by the offending team.

A team of inferior skill, will be less likely to be able to keep possession of the ball in their own half for long enough to gain a benefit from any advantage.

The age of players also needs to be factored into the advantage equation - as previously mentioned, younger players are less likely to achieve benefit from advantage than older players are. Many Referees do not play advantage in the defensive half when young teams are involved. Conversely, it is not unusual for one young aged team to be far superior in skill to their opponents - in this case, the Referee may be more liberal with advantage if an offence is committed in the skilful team's own half.

If a team has a free kick expert available - a free kick may be a better option for them (rather than awarding advantage) when an offence occurs near their opponents' penalty area.

Referees will need to consider very carefully, and act swiftly when deciding advantage (or not) to an attacking team in the defending team's penalty area. Unless it is plainly obvious that allowing advantage to the attacking team will result in a certain goal, the Referee should err on the side of caution and stop play as quickly as he can when an offence is committed against an attacker in the defending team's penalty area. This will certainly prevent complex problems arising if a foul in the penalty area is ignored - but the advantage does not develop. The immediate award of a penalty kick is probably more beneficial to an attacking team, than that team being allowed advantage in their opponents' penalty area. If a Referee allows advantage following an offence in the penalty area, and the attacker subsequently shoots and misses the goal (or the goalkeeper saves it), the Referee should not award that team a free kick (or penalty) for the original offence. This would be tantamount to offering the attacking team two advantages. This would be unfair, and against the spirit of the game. Applying advantage in the penalty area, is a difficult task for the Referee to decide. The Referee needs to be less flexible in his application of advantage when it happens inside the penalty area.

One area where awarding a free kick to an attacking team is usually the better option, rather than applying advantage, is the area 10 - 15 metres or so in front of the defending team's penalty area. This is the area where (ceremonial) free kicks are very often successful, especially if the attacking team is good at taking them. If you apply an advantage to the attacking team in this area, and the result is negative, they will probably chastise the Referee. Therefore, as a default, be prepared to stop play for a free kick in this area, rather than apply advantage, especially if there are lots of defending players in close proximity.

"If the advantage works, the Referee is Go(O)d, if it does not work, the Referee is (D)evil!"

Possession of the ball should not be the main factor when applying advantage. In certain circumstances, the team, who has been fouled, may gain no advantage by merely retaining possession of the ball. The advantage materialises, if that team is able to make positive progress towards their opponent's goal, thereby increasing their attacking possibilities. Possession alone (particularly in a team's own half) can very often swing the advantage towards the team who committed the foul. If a player to whom an advantage has been allowed, still has a number of opponent's 'closing' him down in his own half, then the better option would be to award a free kick for the original offence.

If following the award of advantage to a player in his own half, a player has no option but to progress backward towards his own goal, then this is also not considered to be advantageous to his team. In this case, the Referee should award a free kick for the original offence.

The Assistant Referees' Role with Advantage:

Imagine a situation following a foul, where the Assistant Referee uses an arm signal to indicate, "Play on. Advantage", and then a goal is scored; which is subsequently disallowed because the Referee calls play back to penalise the original foul by awarding a free kick!

Assistant Referees should never shout 'Play on' or 'Advantage' or indicate advantage by shouting or using an outstretched arm. The fact that an Assistant Referee does nothing (apart from running along the touchline), is plenty enough to tell the players that they should continue playing. Assistant Referees must always take their steer from the Referee - who is the only one allowed to indicate an advantage situation.

OFFSIDE:

Assistant Referees can very often be seen signalling to players with an encouraging wave of their hand when allowing play to continue following an appeal for offside. Such signals from the Assistant Referee are not required and will eventually lead to confusion and trouble. The fact that an Assistant Referee has NOT raised his flag to award an offside is enough to tell the players that no offside offence has occurred.

If following an offside signal by an Assistant Referee, the ball subsequently travels safely to the defending goalkeeper - an astute Referee will more than often apply the advantage clause (by NOT signalling) and allow play to continue. This is advantageous to the defending team, and keeps the game moving when there was no need to stop it.

Although Assistant Referees should not signal or decide advantage, they should indicate to an unsighted Referee when a foul has been committed - thus allowing the Referee to decide whether to apply advantage or not. If a flag signal for any type of offence is not immediately seen by the Referee, the Assistant Referee should keep signalling until he is acknowledged by the Referee or until the Assistant Referee recognises a clear advantage to the team against which the offence has been committed - in this case, the flag should be lowered.

If a Referee decides to penalise an original foul committed on the edge of the penalty area, following an advantaged that did not ensue - the Assistant Referee may be asked to indicate to the Referee whether the foul occurred inside or outside of the penalty area. A subtle way of doing this is for the Assistant Referee to stand facing inwards to the field of play, make eye contact with the Referee, and then step sideways towards the corner flag, to indicate that the foul occurred inside the penalty area. If the foul occurred outside of the penalty area, then the Assistant Referee should side-step towards the half-way line. But to avoid any misunderstanding, these types of body-language signals must be agreed with the Referee during his pre-match brief.

Summary:

In practical terms, experience on the field of play is the best way of learning when to apply advantage. Below are a few bullet points that will help you to become a better Referee in terms of YOU applying advantage in a more thoughtful way.

- Only the Referee should apply or signal an advantage.
- Assistant Referees are advised not to indicate advantage in any way. This is the prerogative of the Referee.
- Use the standard, "Play on, advantage," shout, accompanied with a forward seep upwards of both arms. Communicate this strongly and LOUDLY.
- Do not apply advantage too liberally. Be selective. This will increase its impact.
- Do not use the standard advantage signal above when no foul has occurred. A simple vocal, "Play on" will suffice.
- Constant whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches of the Law produces bad feeling and loss of temper on the part of the players and spoils the enjoyment of the game for all.
- Ask yourself on each advantage situation, "Is a free kick more beneficial?"
- Do not apply advantage following a serious occurrence or an assault. STOP PLAY.
- In the less skilled levels of football, more benefit is achieved by awarding a free kick.
- Unless a goal is 100% definitely going to be imminently scored, it is wiser for a Referee NOT TO AWARD ADVANTAGE to an attacking team in their opponent's penalty area (especially if a penal offence has been committed). A penalty is a much better and safer option.
- A free kick is usually the best option for an attacking team in the area just in front of the defending team's penalty area.
- Don't forget to punish perpetrators after an advantage has been applied. At the very least, be seen to have a word with them.
- If the advantage does not ensue within 2 to 3 seconds, penalise the original offence.
- If an applied advantage is not realised (i.e. an attacker makes a mess of shooting towards goal, do not award a free kick for the original offence. This would be tantamount to applying advantage twice to the offended team!
- Try using varying levels of advantage to control fractious periods in a game.

With experience, advantage becomes very easy and very enjoyable to apply. It becomes second nature, and experienced Referees know by instinct when to award advantage and when not to. And it must be done in an instant. Can you improve?

Julian Carosi 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 recommended 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.....

Ages of the players can range from small children all the way up to adults, and some states have senior leagues for players in their 60s and beyond. Referees should try to calibrate their officiating to match the skill, and age level of the players. Younger children are usually more interested in having fun than in winning and are unlikely to commit dangerous fouls or to fake injuries. Teenagers may need a firmer hand. And adults, especially adult men, can get out of hand quickly if the referee appears to be weak, but usually respond well to firm guidance so long as the officials seem to be trying their best. There will remain, however, similar distinctions among the three principal levels of play. Youth games at the premier level will be taken very seriously; recreational games at the adult level are usually played for fun. At any level, however, the players will not be happy if we do not take our job seriously.

Gender differences are the subject of debate among referees and others. While generalizations are often inaccurate, and the spread of women's soccer is calling many old assumptions into question, there appear to be marked differences between the games played by men and boys as compared to women and girls. While there will be wide differences between individual teams and players, as a group these distinctions seem to remain the same within comparable levels of play.

- While both sexes can be equally skilled, and their games can be equally intense, men are physically stronger, and their play tends to be faster and more physical. At the youth level, boys games tend to be faster-paced, with more rough-housing, than girls' games.
- At all levels, males tend to cause more on-field trouble than females. On the other hand, they also tend to be more predictable—at least to the typical male referee.

A man, or older boy, who is hacked may come to his feet looking for revenge, and the referee will be alert to signs of trouble. By and large, though, the demands of an on-going game are often (though not invariably) a major distraction to him, and if a few minutes pass without retaliation he may very well forget which player hacked him as his mind returns to the game.

A woman, on the other hand, will get just as angry during the game, but the referee—especially a male referee, who may be looking for a typically male response to a nasty foul—can be misled if she does not rise to confront the source and may relax if she does not avenge herself at once. It is possible that she may not strike back at all, deeming retaliation to be the mark of a barbarian. It is also possible that, being an intelligent player, she has no intention of getting even when everyone is watching her, and will wait until the next run of play—or the next half ... or the following week ... or the following season—before exacting her revenge.

In this situation, a referee wishing to prevent trouble might consider having a quiet word with the player during a subsequent stoppage, commenting on the foul, asking if it still hurts, and promising to keep an eye on things for her (and, by inference, on her as well). This may be enough to keep her from striking back, at least during the one match. After that, it will be some other referee's problem.

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

DANGEROUS PLAY

In the 1880s a player called Dave Russell was so acrobatic that he would bring `high balls down to the grass with a foot in the vicinity of an opponent's ear. As one player said about Russell, `He was a high kicker, as I have special reason to remember, for twice in one match his boot got so uncomfortably near to my forehead that for several days it only required a look in the glass to remind me of a somewhat unpleasant time with Russell.' In Russell's day, players were allowed to raise their feet. After 1891 it was considered to be dangerous play if a player raised a foot above hip height and threatened to injure an opponent's upper body, or if an opponent had to withdraw from that type of challenge to save being injured. Dangerous play also includes occasions when players stoop too low to head the ball, thus causing opponents to withdraw their feet instead of risking injury to the person heading the ball (*IFAB 1954*).

The punishment is an indirect free-kick. Referee Mike Riley awarded one in the Bulgaria penalty area when a defender raised his foot high as Ibrahimovic (Sweden) went to head the ball. Riley cautioned the offender (June 2004).

A scissors-kick (or bicycle-kick) is permissible providing it is not dangerous to an opponent. A spectacular example was a goal kicked over his own head by Trevor Sinclair (QPR), with both feet in the air, over twenty yards from the Bamsley goal (January 1997). If the kick impedes an opponent's challenge for the ball, then the referee should award an indirect free-kick for dangerous play.

DEAFNESS

Teams of deaf players have occupied a special place in British football since the earliest days. Glasgow Deaf FC was formed in 1871, and `deaf and dumb' internationals were played in 1892.

When England Deaf & Dumb beat Wales Deaf & Dumb 3-0 at Southampton, it was described as `the quietest international ever' (September 1925). The 500 spectators handclapped at times but refrained from cheering. The referee used a flag instead of a whistle. In matches involving deaf and hearing players, referees have used a whistle and a flag.

When Stockport County centre-forward Ray Drake lined up to kick off in the 1950s, he had to rely on a colleague tugging his shorts at the sound of the referee's whistle. Drake was deaf. This, and other stories, are documented in a book by Martin Atherton et al. called *Deaf United: A History of Football in the British Deaf Community* (2000).

Jimmy Case (Brighton), who had a hearing deficiency, was sent off for a second caution (for time-wasting) when his team led Leicester 1-0 in the final minute of a up tie (September 1994). Case claimed that he hadn't heard the whistle to restart the game. It is the player's responsibility to inform the referee of am, hearing, impairment, and the team's responsibility to facilitate smooth communication between the referee and a hearing-impaired player.

While deaf players like Case and Drake have appeared in teams of hearing players, other deaf players have their own version of the sport, with special FIFA tournaments. Interpretation of the rules may be slightly different. The deaf player's equivalent of the professional foul is to stop momentarily as if seeing a flag and then continue playing.

There have been a number of deaf referees. Some say that it's an asset!

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

Reference NB

14 July 2008

To: Contributory League Secretaries

Supply League Secretaries

Dear Sir,

Players Equipment - Safety

In readiness for the start of season 2008/09, can you please ensure all your constituent clubs are aware of the directives issued to match officials in respect of player equipment as outlined below:

Players Equipment - Safety

Match Officials are reminded that Law 4 states: "A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player including any kind of jewellery."

- All items of jewellery (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands etc.) are strictly forbidden and must be removed. Using tape to cover jewellery is not acceptable.
- Under-shorts worn by players, are to be of the same main colour as the shorts.
- If undergarments (shirts or shorts) are worn, the colour must be the same main colour as the playing kit or shorts. If a long sleeved under garment is worn the sleeve colour must be the same colour as the sleeve of the short sleeved shirt.
- Please note that under garments and thermal shorts may contain clothing manufacturer's marks but must not exceed an area of 20 square centimetres and must not be visible outside playing kit during the period of a match.
- Match Officials are also to incorporate a footwear inspection into the pre-match safety check of players' equipment. This will take place in the tunnel immediately prior to the game.

Boot manufacturers have recently been experimenting with designs and some give cause for concern. The use of blades on the sole of the boot is an example of such concern. The Football Association have offered the following guidelines:

"When inspecting footwear officials are to be alert to the possibility of the edge of the blade developing rough areas on either the plastic or metal used in their construction.

These burrs are very sharp and have been the cause of lacerations on opponents. If match officials are concerned over the condition they should refuse to sanction their use until they have been made safe.

If evidence emerges during the game e.g. torn stockings, lacerations, you may wish to follow up the inspection with the player(s) concerned during a stoppage."

Referees are to report any instance where the kick-off has been delayed, as a result of the footwear inspection. I hope this is of assistance.

Yours faithfully,

Neale Barry

Head of Senior Referee Development The FA

Letter to the Toolstation League in England, explaining The FA's Respect campaign.

THE RESPECT PROGRAMME

We have today, 7 August 2008, received notification from The FA concerning the Respect programme and the following document will assist clubs to adopt the protocol.

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOUR MANAGEMENT TEAM AND PLAYERS ARE AWARE OF THE PROGRAMME

You will be aware that the Respect Programme is being introduced by The Football Association for season 2008/2009 to help raise standards of behaviour and address the problem of abusive behaviour in the game. The Respect Programme is a key aspect of the FA's Vision for the next 4 years and it is hoped that, as well as improving behaviour in the game at all levels, it will assist with the recruitment and retention of referees. The Programme sets out a number of objectives, which cover both the Professional and National Game. However The Football Association seek your assistance with the introduction of two of the objectives that deal with the referee working with the team captain on the day to effectively manage the game and the pre-match fair play handshake.

Set out below are guidelines applicable to both objectives. Match officials at this level of the game are aware of these.

1 Working with the Team Captain

- 1.1 The referee will work with the team captain in order to manage the players and the game effectively. It should be noted that the International Football Association Board (IFAB) Guidelines for Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials state that the captain has no special status or privileges under the Laws of the Game but he has a degree of responsibility for the behaviour of his team.
- 1.2 The referee must control the game by applying the Laws of the Game, and deal firmly with any open show of dissent by players (e.g. not move away from the incident, but stay and deal with it).
- 1.3 The referee should use a stepped approach where appropriate to managing players e.g. 1) free kick, 2) free kick with quiet word, 3) free kick with public admonishment (this is the time referees should consider using the captain to more visibly get the message across), 4) yellow card.
- 1.4 The stepped approach does not negate the fact that the referee has the authority within the Laws of the Game to issue disciplinary sanctions without recourse to the captain.
- 1.5 Whilst recognising that players may on occasions make an appeal for a decision (e.g. a throw in, corner or goal kick), it is important that the referee distinguishes these from an act of dissent which should be punished with a caution.
- 1.6 Even if the captain is some way away from an incident when the referee feels he needs him involved in a discussion with a player, the referee will call the captain over rather than using any other senior player. This will ensure that the captain remains the point of contact for the referee.
- 1.7 These guidelines should be seen as an additional preventative/supportive tool in order for referees to manage the game effectively. The key to the above is using the captains in a more visible way, where appropriate.

2. Fair Play Handshake Protocol

This will be discussed at the Western League Board meeting on 14 August and, if approved (*it has since been approved*), it is proposed to introduce it the following week. However, clubs are welcome to to adopt the protocol if requested by the match referee.

The Fair Play Handshake is to be adopted by the FA Premier and Football Leagues, the Football Conference, Isthmian, Northern Premier and Southern Leagues from the commencement of the season.

- 2.1 The starting eleven from both teams together with the three match officials should take part in the handshake.
- 2.2 Each team should line up on the same side of the half-way line that they exit the tunnel, with the match officials in the middle.
- 2.3 The Home team, led by their captain, then walks to shake hands with the match officials, and then the away team's players (see 1 at Appendix A). Once each Home team player has finished shaking hands with the last away team player they disperse to their favoured end to kick-in.
- 2.4 Once the last home team player has completed the handshake, the Away team then follow their Captain passing in front of the match officials to shake hands (see 2 at Appendix A) before dispersing to the opposite end of the pitch from the home team.
- 2.5 Once the handshakes have been completed the match officials then proceed to the centre circle for the coin toss.

Appendix A

HANDSHAKE FORMATION

AWAY TEAM

HOME TEAM



NEW NEWSLETTER FEATURE:

Regular articles by Stanley Lover can be found on the www.CorshamRef.org.uk web site along with any respective images.

Stanley is taking a well earned holiday this month.

YOU MUST BE JOKING REF?

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

'370HSSV-0773H'

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

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

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

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

Two junior doctors were involved in a fight in the hospital. The senior surgeon had to pull them apart.

"What's this all about?"

"It's the Referee in G ward.. he's only got two days to live".

"He had to be told," said the second doctor.

"I know." said the first, "but I wanted to be the one to tell him!"

A referee working an international school tournament calls a delay before starting a match in order to allow a thunderstorm to pass by. Both teams and the officials find themselves in the clubhouse chatting when the ref proclaims " I heard a good joke the other day!" and begins to tell it to the team captains who are standing near by. The joke started like this " A French priest and an Italian nun met at the fish market one day..."

At this point one of the assistants elbowed the ref in the ribs and whispered in his ear " Ref, one of these teams is from a French school and the other is Italian - and they're probably mostly Catholics! You might want to be careful about how you tell this story!"

Giving his assistant a wink he replies " Thanks for the heads-up. I hate it when a good joke goes flat."

The ref turns back to the captains and starts over..... " O K BOYS I WILL TALK SLOOOOWLY AND YOU CAN PUT UP YOUR HAND IF YOU NEED HELP WITH THE BIG WORDS. A FRENCH PRIEST AND AN ITALIAN NUN....."

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION and ANSWER TOPICS:

Question 1. If a Referee applies an advantage, and the attacking team take a shot at goal, but do not score (or the ball is saved by the goalkeeper), can the Referee bring play back to the original offence?

Answer 1. If a Referee allows advantage following an offence, and the attacking team subsequently take a shot on goal (in 2 to 3 seconds) but do not score (or the goalkeeper prevents the ball from entering the goal), the Referee should not bring play back and award the attacking team a free kick (or penalty) for the original offence. This would be tantamount to offering the attacking team two advantages (chances to score). This would not be fair, and is against the 'Spirit of the Law'. By allowing advantage, the Referee gives the offended team a better chance of scoring a goal, or a better change of positively progressing with play. If following a foul, the offended team gain an advantageous position but do not make the most of their advantage, then they should not be given a second chance, just because they were not skilful enough to make the most of the opportunity.

Question 2 : A defender grabs the shirt of an attacking player. The Referee sees the foul, but applies advantage by signalling to the attacking player. Unfortunately, the attacking player is upset at having his shirt held, and elbows the defender in the face. What action should the Referee take?

Answer 2: When an advantage has been applied by the Referee, he allows play to continue, thus any further offences committed whilst play continues, must be punished in accordance with the normal rules. The advantage clause is there to give an offended team the opportunity to continue with play if the circumstance warrant it. The advantage clause is NOT there to allow the offended team to commit a retaliatory offence themselves, without fear of the proper punishment being applied.

The Referee should stop play. Send off the attacking player for 'Violent Conduct'. Play should be restarted with a direct free kick (or penalty kick) to the defending team. The defending player should be cautioned.

Question 3: Should Referees wait to see, then if the advantage is there, they should signal it. Do you agree with this, or would you prefer an immediate signal, and then bring play back if the advantage does not ensue. How should the Law be interpreted?

Answer 3: When a Referee considers an advantage situation, he has three options.

1. Stop play immediately and punish the original offence with the award of a free kick
2. Allow advantage, and bring play back if advantage does ensue within 2 to 3 seconds.
3. Ignore the challenge, and allow play to continue normally, because no infringement of the Laws has occurred.

If an advantage is applied (even if it is only in the Referee's mind), the Referee should indicate advantage to the players as soon as he can; and not wait to see how play progresses. Early action by the Referee to communicate advantage, will prevent players taking the Law into their own hands, and seeking retribution.

There is sometimes not enough time for a Referee to signal advantage during an incident. Just because the Referee does not signal advantage (or he does not have enough time to signal), it does not mean that he cannot call play back if the advantage does not ensue. If a Referee agrees advantage in his own mind, he should also communicate this to the players as soon as he can.

Question 4: Explain why a Referee should award a goal to the opposing team, when whilst the ball is in play, a defender intentionally handles, or punches the ball into his own goal?

Answer 4: If a defender intentionally handles the ball or punches it into his own goal, then the Referee should allow play to continue when the team against which an offence has been committed will benefit from such an advantage (Law 5). In this case, the goal is much more advantageous than awarding a penalty kick - which can be missed!. The defending player should be cautioned for deliberately handling the ball.

Question 5: An attacking player is 'dribbling' the ball inside his opponent's penalty area and is tackled hard by one of the defending players. The Referee blows the whistle. The goalkeeper and the defending players all stop playing, but the attacking player manages to keep his feet and continues on with the ball and kicks it into the goal. The Referee allows the goal to stand because he said that the attacking player had the advantage anyway. Was the Referee correct in applying advantage and allowing that goal after he blew the whistle?

Answer 5: By blowing his whistle, the Referee has indicated to ALL of the players, that he has stopped the game. Any goal scored after the whistle has been blown, and before the Referee has signalled to restart the game (or before the game has been restarted in a legal way by the team that had been offended against) must not count. The attacking player's goal in this question, is illegal. A Referee applying 'advantage' should do so by indicating this with a forward upward sweep of both arms, and by shouting "Advantage Play on". If there is not time enough to signal this, the Referee can award 'Advantage' in his mind - and if the advantage does not ensue, he can bring play back to the scene of the original offence. Blowing the whistle means that the Referee has stopped play - it is not a signal used to allow an 'advantage' to continue. Blowing the whistle to indicate advantage, or to allow advantage to continue would be totally confusing to players and spectators.

Question 6: A defender, denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity, fouls a first attacker. However, the ball goes to a second attacker. The Referee applies the advantage, and the second attacker shoots towards goal and scores. The questions that come to mind are:

Question (a): Does the original misconduct by the defender get resolved since the goal was scored? In other words, should the original misconduct - denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO) - be disciplined with a sending off?

Answer (a): Award a goal and caution the defender for unsporting behaviour. Play resulted in a goal, therefore the denial was not effective.

Question (b): As a follow on, if the attacker shoots and a goal was not scored (advantage did not materialise), should the Referee allow play to continue, but send off the defender at the next natural stoppage?

Answer (b): Play should not be stopped to penalise the original offence. The defender should be cautioned for unsporting behaviour at the next suitable moment.

Because the Referee allowed an advantage, and the attacking team executed this by attempting a shot on goal, then the advantage has materialised. If a team executes an advantage situation within 2 to 3 seconds, for example, by taking a shot on goal, or by passing the ball to a colleague, it makes no difference whether the act is successful or not. Once the team have taken the chance to positively use the advantage, then play cannot be brought back to the original offence, just because they were unsuccessful.

The words "if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time," in the advantage clause, refer to situations following a foul, where a player is illegally thwarted by an opponent from continuing with play within 2 to 3 seconds. For example, a player is fouled, but stumbles forward with the ball; he is unable to continue running forward at the same pace he used prior to the foul. The Referee decides that because the momentum of this player was illegally baulked, the player has been denied the right to continue with his attack. The Referee makes a quick decision, and concludes that this player's team would benefit more by the award of a free kick (for the original foul), than by being allowing them further time for the fouled player to regain his balance, which looks very unlikely to happen.

Question (c): If the original scenario only involves one attacker (for example - a defender, denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity, fouls an attacker. However, the attacker manages to stay on his feet. Upon the foul, the Referee applies the advantage, and the attacker shoots and scores (or does not score). Is the same principle applied, and should the defender be sent off at the first opportunity?

Answer (c): A goal is scored, so it was not denied, and the defender should not be dismissed. The use of the advantage clause does not absolve the Referee from the responsibility of dealing with the offender, who would again be cautioned depending on the severity of the offence.

Note: FA publication 'Advice on the Application of the Laws of the Game' (page 10):

"If an offence is going to result in a sending-off, then it might be wiser not to allow advantage, thus reducing the risk of further misconduct."

Question 7: If the Referee is unsighted, but an Assistant Referee sees the foul; is the Assistant Referee allowed to apply the advantage clause? Is he also allowed to shout out, "Play on, Advantage!" or make any advantage (play-on) gesture to the players with his hands?

Answer: 7 Although the Law 5 advantage clause is a power specifically given to the Referee (and not to the Assistant Referee), there is nothing to stop the Assistant Referee applying the 'spirit of the advantage clause' in his mind; so long as he does not communicate this in any way to the players. The fact that an Assistant Referee makes no advantage communication to the players, is a clear enough indication for players to play-on.

Advantage, or play-on signs by an Assistant Referee risk causing major confusion. If there is a possible advantage to be had, then the Assistant Referee should keep his flag down. (It is also possible for an astute Assistant Referee to give a 'hidden' signal to the Referee indicating that a foul has occurred. For example, by discretely tugging his own shirt.) If the advantage does not ensue in the next 2 to 3 seconds then the Assistant Referee can raise a flag to indicate to the (unsighted) Referee that a foul had occurred.

An alternative method, is for the Assistant Referee to raise a flag immediately when the foul occurs, thus allowing the Referee to apply the advantage or not. Whatever method the Assistant Referee uses, will depend very much on the Referee's pre-match brief to his Assistants (see below for an example). In general terms, the first method is no different to that used by Assistant Referees when judging offside scenarios, whereby some discretion is allowed in delaying the flag signal, or by not making a signal at all. The aim is to keep the game flowing when possible - and the Assistant Referees (along with the Referee) also have an important part to play in this.

In the meantime, the Assistant Referee must try to maintain his position with regards to monitoring any offside infringements.

Example words for the Referee's pre-match brief to his Assistant Referees covering advantage situations could be something along the lines of.....

"Signalling, deciding and applying the advantage clause is my prerogative. Please do not indicate advantage to players by making any verbal or hand signals. If I am unsighted and you see a foul, try to give me a 'hidden'

signal that a foul has occurred. For example, by discretely tugging your own shirt. If I do not see the foul (or your discrete signal), and it is a minor foul, apply the 'spirit of the advantage clause' in your mind and keep play going when you can - and only flag if the advantage does not ensue in 2 to 3 seconds. Always try to maintain a proper position with regards to monitoring any offside infringements. If I miss your flag signal, please drop it if play continues to the advantage of the team who was fouled. Else retain the flag signal and I will consult with you when it notice it."

Question 8: An attacking player takes a free kick, and plays the ball a second time but it accidentally deflects to an opponent. Should the Referee apply advantage and allow play to continue?

Answer 8: The Referee should not apply advantage and allow play to continue. The Advantage clause was introduced to deal with offences committed by an opponent, and not for Law infractions committed by a player by himself.

In accordance with Law 13 (Free Kicks), during the taking of a free kick, if the ball comes into play, and the kicker touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player, play should be stopped and an indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred.

Question 9: Should a Referee only apply the advantage clause for Law 12 infringements?

Answer 9: The 'advantage clause' allows the Referee to set aside the written Law and apply a personal interpretation of 'fair play' by not stopping play for an offence, if in his opinion, the team offended against would benefit from this decision.

Law 5 states:

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

There is no clause that states the offence must be a penal offence. It can therefore be a penal (direct free kick) or a technical (indirect free kick) offence.

Although there is nothing in the Laws to stop a Referee applying advantage after the ball has come into play from a free kick say, and the free kick taker commits an offence by touching the ball a second time before it has touched another player, generally, the Referee will stop play in such circumstances, as he would do if a foul throw has been taken. This is more in keeping with the 'spirit of the advantage clause', which was generally introduced for fouls committed against an opponent, and not so much for offences committed by a player all by himself!

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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