

The www.CorshamRef.org.uk Newsletter No 66: January 2009)

International newsletter covering Football (Soccer) Refereeing matters.

Welcome, with an International perspective.

Welcome to the 66th edition of The Corsham Referee monthly International Football/Soccer Referees' newsletter.

Greetings and a Happy New Year to everyone over this holiday period.

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.

In all my years of Refereeing, the Referee's pre-match brief seems to get more detailed and varied as the years go by. In this edition of the newsletter, I have focused on providing you with a detailed pre-match brief, that I hope will give you all something to think about over the Christmas holiday period.

It's a great shame that a standard pre-match brief could not be produced for Referees worldwide, thereby leaving match Referees the simpler task of adding in any local pre-match briefing details or protocols for each game. A standard brief would also go a long way towards consistency between match officials. Every Referee seems to have different instructions for their Assistants when dealing with a corner kick for example, when surely one simple instruction would suffice. The brief provided below has taken many weeks to pull together, and to be honest, I'll be glad to tear myself away from this keyboard for a few days rest! I have used various sources to try and capture all of the general needs of a pre-match brief, but special thanks must go to information gleaned from The FA England training sources, the PGMOL, United States material, and to Sean Morgan-Smith for providing his written pre-match brief which is used by him on a weekly basis. I hope the information will stimulate you into making it easier for your Assistant Referees to do what you want them to.

I suppose that there will be some sections of the brief that will rankle with a few of you, but please take it in good faith as an innocent try at providing some standards at least. The brief will always be available on my website, via the Set-Piece page link at the top of each page. I would be grateful for any comments or additions that can be added later.

But for now, I'm going to turn off my computer, open up a few bottles of beer, put my feet up and watch a few of those terrible old movies that seem to always appear on TV over Christmas. Keep up the good Refereeing work wherever you are in the world; and my best wishes go to all of you.

Editor Julian Carosi.

"SET PIECES"

More 'set-piece' advice by Julian Carosi.

In my 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 increase, 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, using the Give and Go, Give and Sort technique that you can use during Free Kicks, advice on Dealing with a Mass Confrontation Melee of players, by offering you some ideas on how to carry out your Pre-Match briefing to your Assistant Referees.

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 Pre-Match Brief:

Introduction:

The advice given here, generally covers situations when there are three qualified match officials available, the Referee and his two Assistant Referees. Assistant Referees should carry out their duties based on the requirements of Law 6 (The Assistant Referees). The pre-match brief should take place in private, but not necessarily in the Referee's changing room. There are obvious advantages from utilising the field of play for the pre-match brief, but during inclement weather, the players' tunnel or any other covered space that enables you to point out the various features of the venue will suffice. You should try to create a harmonious atmosphere and show a positive attitude towards your Assistant Referees when delivering the brief. You are the team leader, so this is an ideal opportunity to develop a positive relationship. It is most likely that the flow of pre-match instructions will be broken by interruptions, so it is important that you maintain your concentration throughout.

Why do I need to deliver a Pre-Match Brief?

Prior to the commencement of each game, you need to provide your Assistant Referees (and if available, Fourth Official) with a pre-match briefing covering their duties, and to inform them of what you require them to do in certain situations. Amongst other things, the pre-match briefing allocates certain responsibilities, and informs the Assistant Referees where to stand and how to act in certain circumstances.

What should I include in my pre-match brief?

There is a lot of information for you to consider, and this is captured in the brief shown below. This can be watered down or added to, depending on your individual preferences. Nevertheless, there is enough information below to cover all of the standard briefing material.

The contents of the pre-match brief below, are based on the standard briefings used by Referees in England at all levels. The choice of which touchline each Assistant Referees will patrol, or which Assistant Referee will be responsible for taking a full match record, or how long the warm up will be, or where the players' equipment check will take place etc., is the prerogative of the individual Referee, and is also dependent on circumstances. In other words, the briefing shown below is not mandatory, but a baseline on which you can structure and compile your own briefing preferences. Or it can also be used exactly as it is, to provide a very good standard briefing that covers all of the main Refereeing points required in a standard game of football.

The following is an example of a Referee verbally giving his two Assistant Referees a pre-match brief. I have included paragraph subject headings that can be used to compile a crib list.

The briefing is broken down into three sections followed by a Summary;

1. BEFORE THE MATCH: 2. DURING THE MATCH: 3. AFTER THE MATCH:

Section 1: BEFORE THE MATCH:

Questions: Please question me at any time during this briefing if you are not sure of anything - and I will clarify.

Warming up routine:

I would appreciate your company when I warm-up before the game, and when I warm-down afterwards. This imparts a strong message of togetherness that we can build on during the game. We will complete a 10-15 minute warming up routine 25 minutes before kick off and then return to the changing room to make our final preparations 10 minutes before kick-off. I would like you both to take part in the warm-up unless there is a reason why you can't.

Senior Assistant Referee and Junior Assistant Referee:

I'd like the Senior Assistant Referee to patrol the 'Technical Area' side of the field of play, and the Junior Assistant Referee to patrol the far-side touchline throughout the game. If I get an injury and am unable to continue, the Senior Referee will take my place in the middle. Can both of you please take out all of your equipment, including whistle, coin and notebook.

Fourth Official:

Note: If using a Fourth Official, they should also be asked to carry a whistle, coin notebook and cards, keep a complete record of the game, monitor and control the Technical Area occupants, inform the Senior Assistant of substitution requests, look after the replacement match balls and look out for any serious incidents that have been missed by the match officials.

Match Records: I'd like the Senior Assistant Referee to keep a note of the full match records. For example, which team kicks off in the first half, substitutes, the goals scored, and any cautions/sending off details etc. I want the Junior Assistant to be my additional set of eyes during the game, and to keep a look out for misconduct, for example, following the scoring of a goal; but do not take any match notes.

Touchline patrol path (right wings):

Please patrol the touchline adjacent to the right wing positions, and stay in this same position, on the same side of the field of play in the second half.

Players' equipment check:

Can the Senior Assistant Referee please check the home team players' equipment as they come out of their changing room, or gather players together on the field of play around the centre circle. Check for correct undershorts, undershirts, shin pads jewelry or any damaged studs. Please complete the inspection properly, as this will be the first contact that you have with the players; it is therefore important to set a good early example. Can the Junior Assistant Referee please check the away team players' equipment as they come out of their changing room. I will be in attendance, so please summon me if there are any problems.

Entry onto the field of play and goal net checks:

We will walk out together as a team at the beginning of each half, with both of you either side of me with your flags held unfurled in the outside hand. It very important, that as we walk onto the field of play, that we generate a very positive impression of our commitment towards this match.

When we get about 20 metres onto the field of play, I will give you a nod to break away and check your respective goal nets. Please come back to meet me in the centre together in the first half, and together to your touchline positions prior to the second half starting. In the first half, I will introduce you to the captains, and then complete the coin tossing ceremony. Before you break away to take up your position in the first half, we will shake hands just to show everyone that there are three teams here today.

After this, sprint away to your touchline position and await my final readiness check with you, before I start each half.

Buzzer Flag Testing:

Please test the buzzer flags one at a time just prior to our entry into the field of play when I say so. Test them again when I look towards you immediately prior to kick-off and once again immediately prior to the start of the second half. I'll give you a thumbs-up to say that everything is OK. If there is a problem with the buzzer flags, I will give you a thumbs-down. If this happens, we will have to revert to flag signals only.

Section 2. DURING THE MATCH:

Assist, don't insist:

Please offer *assistance* to me at all times and try not to *interfere* with what I'm doing.

Priorities:

Your priorities include assessing offside situations, and indication of the ball in and out of play. Support me in all other situations where your advice and input can improve and enhance our overall decision-making ability and control of the game.

Gestures: Don't make any obvious gestures, however, a discreet hand signal on occasions can be used to clarify a decision.

On the same wavelength:

Try to always be in tune with my style of Refereeing, so that we all operate on the same wavelength. This may vary throughout the game depending on circumstances. For example, if you see me applying strict Law to keep control of a fractious game, then you must do the same. Whereas if a phase of play warrants it, I may be more relaxed about how I interpret the Laws, in this case, follow my relaxed style also.

Ten Minute Refereeing: The first 10 minutes of a game; the five minute period immediately before and immediately after half time, and the last ten minutes of the game normally contain a large proportion of problems. I intend to Referee these periods more strictly/closely than normal. An arm down-stretched with the hand clenched into a fist will tell you that I intend to take stricter control of the game during those periods (or during the next ten minutes if tighter control is needed during any other period time in the game). During periods of tighter control, please can you follow my example by strictly applying the 'Letter of the Law' when making decisions whilst patrolling the touchline. An arm down-stretched with the fingers outstretched tells you that I have reached the end of a 'Ten Minute Refereeing' tight control period, and that I will be officiating in a more relaxed and tolerant way. It is important that both of you follow my lead. It is no good if I tighten down on control in a game, if one of you is doing the opposite. I may also use this signal to retain control of the game after a flash-point."

Eye to eye contact:

When the ball is in (or approaching) your patrol zone, please increase your state of alertness. I will be making lots of eye contact with you so let's work as a team and keep in touch throughout the game especially when decisions are being made, or are about to be made. For disciplinary issues, use discreet hand signals to describe the offence. If I need to consult you, you can advance 2-3 metres onto the field of play if necessary (e.g. if you are near to the Technical Areas), else remain on the touchline.

Do not be distracted by banter from spectators and keep your eyes on the field of play. Try to 'clock' my position regularly as the game progresses, so that you know where I am when you need to make a decision. In other words, when the ball comes into your immediate zone, try to locate where I am, and be more 'switched on' and prepared to react, especially if I am some distance away and catching up with play!

Flag technique:

As soon as we leave the changing rooms, please unfurl your flag.

Can you make sure that you hold your flag in the hand nearest to the field of play and switch hands whenever you change direction so that the flag is visible to me at all times. When facing the field of play, please always hold the flag in the hand closest to where I am positioned. And as a general principle, try and always show as much of the flag (unfurled) surface area towards me as you can – even when standing still. This makes it much easier for me to locate you out of the corner of my eye. If you hold your flag straight downward, there is very little of it that I can see from the corner of my eye.

When signaling, stop running and make eye contact and raise the flag with a deliberate (not exaggerated) motion. Use the hand that will be used for the next signal in sequence, and towards the restart direction. If you need to change hands, change hands low down before you raise your flag.

If you signal that the ball has gone out of play, continue the signal until I have acknowledged it.

Try to allow yourself some thinking time before signalling, as this will minimise stopping play unnecessarily or denying possible advantage situations from developing.

Signal beep:

Only use the signal beep to gain my attention if I have missed a flag signal. Situations where it would be useful are; offside, fouls (outside of my view particularly a penalty), throw-ins/corner kicks/goal kicks/ goal scored situations during tight decisions.

Ball in and out play:

Let me know when the ball leaves the field of play by using the flag signal showing the correct restart and direction. If you are unsure of the direction, just indicate that the ball is out of play and I will make the call.

Restarts: Wherever I stop play, or delay play for whatever reason, try to remember what the restart is. I may need reminding when I come to restart the game!

Replacement balls: I will control the need for replacement balls.

Flagging for a Law 12 offence:

Use the 'wait and see' technique in order to allow play to continue if there is a possible advantage for me to apply. It is important for you to make eye contact with me.

Before indicating for a foul, take into account where I am in relation to the incident, or whether I am actively seeking your assistance. Ask yourself, is it credible to get involved? But please have the courage to make important decisions even if they may influence the outcome of the match.

To distinguish it from the signal for offside, when a foul occurs out of my view, make eye contact with me, place the flag in the hand that indicates the free kick direction, then raise it and wave it to and fro, avoiding excessive or aggressive movement. Use the electronic beep if necessary.

Free kicks close to the penalty area. (So-called Ceremonial Free Kicks):

I will control the ball and organizing the defensive wall. Please let me know if the ball is moved illegally whenever my back is turned. Take up a position in line with the second last defender to check the offside line, and be ready to follow the ball by moving down the touchline towards the corner flag if there is a direct shot on goal to keep an eye on the goal line.

Free Kicks – controlling the 9.15 m distance:

When a free kick or a throw-in has been awarded close to you, help me by ensuring that the opponents retreat the required distance; but you do not have to enter the field of play in order to achieve this.

Offences missed by me (the Referee):

Please signal for any fouls that I miss. If you are better positioned and I have clearly not acted on an offence, or you have additional information concerning an offence (for example, unsporting behaviour or violent conduct) raise your flag (or use the electronic beep signal) to bring this to my attention. Give me some indication of what the foul is, and indicate with your flag, the direction for the restart of play. If you have time before signalling for a foul, look towards me, to see if I have already seen the incident, and am about to act on it. In other words, let me have the first bite! This is particularly important if a penalty kick is considered.

If you deem a foul worthy of more punishment than just a free kick, wipe your nose innocently with your free hand, I'll then judge the incident from my angle, and if I need to, I will come over and consult you.

Note: Some Referees ask their Assistants to 'tap their pocket' if they think a card should be issued, but this signal is easily seen by players and can make matters worse – so use it carefully. Whatever signal is used, try and choose a method that will not easily communicate itself to the players.

If there is any disciplinary action to take, please make sure that you can identify the offender(s) and what the exact nature of the incident is.

Dealing with mass confrontation:

If a mass confrontation arises, come along the touchline to observe, and enter the field of play if I summon you or if it is obvious that I need help. Form a triangle around the scene. I will identify the instigators, the Junior Assistant Referee will look out for players joining and inflaming the affray from the immediate area, and the Senior Assistant Referee will firstly manage the Technical Areas and then look out for players coming in from a distance to inflame the situation. Make a mental note of who does what, and aim to identify at least one culprit from each team – any others will be a bonus. Do not write any notes during the confrontation, but observe. Before I take any action, I will consult you.

When a goal has been scored:

When a goal has been scored, make eye with me and sprint quickly down the touchline 25-30 yards towards the halfway line without raising your flag.

In borderline cases where a goal has been scored, but the ball appears to remain in play, first raise your flag to attract my attention, and then run away quickly 25-30 yards down the touchline. Supplement this by pointing with a hand towards the halfway line.

If the ball has not entered completely into the goal and play continues as normal because a goal has not been scored, make eye contact with me and if necessary (apart from retaining any signal already given) we will use a discreet hand signal. We will then continue as normal, and I'll decide to consult you further if I need to.

Offside:

Please keep in line with the second last defender or the ball if it is nearer the goal line if it is nearer than the second last defender, and always face the field of play.

Offsides are yours at all times. Please use the "Wait and See" technique before you raise an offside flag. I'd rather you were slightly late and correct, than to be too quick and wrong. If you decide that an offside player becomes 'active' raise your flag, if he remains 'non active', refrain from flagging. If you are not sure, then always give the 'benefit of doubt' to the attacking team.

If there is a possibility of a collision between the goalkeeper and an attacker, do not delay raising an offside flag; get it up as quick as you can so I can stop play much sooner.

There are three elements to being actively offside. This is sometimes referred to as '**PIG**'. **P**laying the ball, **I**nterfering with an opponent or **G**aining an advantage by being in that position.

When you raise an offside flag, use the hand closest to the goal line, make eye contact with me and stand 'square-on' to the field of play.

If I don't immediately see your flag, keep signalling until it has been recognised or the ball is clearly in control of the defending team (or use the electronic beep signal to alert me to the flag signal). Else retain the flag signal and I may either consult with you when I notice it, or signal for you to drop your flag. Let me know at the end of each half - if I have missed any of your signals.

If you are to make valid and credible 'offside' judgments you need to be in line, because even a slightly out of line position will give a distorted view.

Whenever possible, face the field of play and move sideways (crab) up and down the touchline when monitoring a slow moving offside line as this gives you a better view.

If I want to keep play going to the advantage of the defending team following an offside flag signal, I will acknowledge you with a raised arm. If I do this, then drop your flag immediately.

Whenever you signal for offside, raise your flag high, make eye contact with me, and then lower your flag to indicate where the offside was located. Retain your flag signal until the ball is positioned correctly and then make your way to your restart position."

Throw-ins:

If it is a clear throw-in, show the direction whenever the ball goes out along the whole of the touchline. In your half, I will generally go with you and in my half I have a tendency to go quick, so follow my direction. If I am not sure and believe you have a better angle, I will have a quick glance at you to seek direction.

Don't indicate a 'tight throw-in' that could possibly be given either way, in an unconvincing, 'wishy washy' manner, as it will look like you are unsure of which way to award the throw-in. If you have any doubts about the direction and I am unable to lead you, award the throw-in to the defending team, or just raise your flag, make eye contact with me and follow my direction signal. Either way, deliver your flag positively and with confidence, using a sharp, crisp, clear signal, then the decision will be more readily accepted as correct.

If you signal one way, and I signal the other, please drop your flag immediately, and the throw will be taken in the direction given by me. (This is not done to undermine you, or to say that you were wrong and I was right, it is done to avoid any confusion, and to minimise any show of team weakness).

On very tight decisions, when the ball stays in play, give me a discreet hand signal if you can.

If I miss your throw-in signal, retain it until I have acknowledged it and taken action.

When a throw-in has been awarded close to you, ensure that the opponents retreat the required 2 metre distance; you don't have to enter the field of play to do this.

When the first few throw-ins of each half occur, we will use them as a means to 'BOSS' the game. Make a sharp signal, instruct the player to take it from exactly the right place, and keep a close eye on proceedings. In other words, we will use this as an early example to demonstrate that the Laws must be adhered to. Please try to get the first few decisions in each half correct.

On tight decisions, I will try to lead you with a discrete hand signal left or right, and would like the same from you if you notice that I am unsure (flag in the hand ready for direction). If either of us can see that the other has got it completely wrong, over-emphasise the lead so that we both signal the same direction.

Please monitor the correct placement of the feet when a player takes a throw-in, I will look for hand faults

Corner Kicks:

When signalling for a corner kick, point your flag towards the base of the corner flag. Try to firstly make eye contact with me, and place your flag in the hand nearest to the goal line, and in the best position for me to see it easily. In tight decisions, when the ball completely crosses the goal line but it still appears to be in play, raise your flag high, and then point it towards the base of the corner flag.

When the ball crosses the goal line far from your position, raise your flag and follow my decision.

Take a position behind the corner flag in line with the goal line. Check that the ball is correctly placed inside the corner arc. If you see me delaying the corner kick to deal with pushing inside the penalty area, stand in front of the ball until I am ready; else do not interfere with the kicker.

Goal kicks:

If the ball is not placed correctly inside the goal area, and you are unable to communicate this to the goalkeeper, stand still, make eye contact with me and raise your flag. Once the ball is placed correctly, move up the touchline adjacent to the edge of the penalty area, and then to your offside monitoring position, which is a priority in any case. If the second last defender takes the goal kick, move directly to the edge of the penalty area.

Closely monitor the first few goal kicks in each half and thereafter, give more emphasis to reaching your offside monitoring position quicker, rather than remaining next to the penalty area.

Use a clear flag signal to indicate a goal kick, by facing the field of play and making eye contact with me. Use the hand that is nearest to the goal line when flagging for a goal kick, as this will increase your eye contact line towards me.

Goalkeeper releasing the ball from his hands:

As with goal kicks, watch the first few occasions in each half to make sure that the goalkeeper is releasing the ball within his penalty area. If the goalkeeper is getting close to infringing, just let him know by giving him a verbal warning. Stay alongside the goalkeeper if there is an opponent close to him. Once the ball has been released, sprint to check the offside line, which is a priority in any case.

Six-second Release Rule:

I will deal with the goalkeeper's 6 seconds possession time limit - so please do not flag for this.

Penalty Kicks:

On most occasions, I will probably award a penalty before you indicate. So before you signal for a penalty, make eye contact and look to see where I am. If I have seen the incident, allow me the first chance to make the decision to award the penalty or not (if I have not already done so). If the incident occurs out of my line of sight or if I am a long distance away or I have not taken any action, make sure you are 100% sure that it is a penalty kick offence before you signal.

To indicate a penalty kick, raise your flag high and wave it to and fro as you would for any other free kick offence and use the electronic beep. Then make your way quickly to the corner flag – this will indicate to me that it is a penalty kick.

If the infringement occurs just outside of the penalty area, rather than inside, take up a position on the touchline boundary adjacent to just outside of the penalty area line and raise a free kick flag.

When I stop play, I will look over to you, and consult you if necessary. I will deal with any players that approach you. *(Note: You may wish to instruct your Assistant Referee to signal a penalty kick by placing his flag across his chest. Whilst this signal has never been officially shown in the Laws of the Game, it has been widely used. If an Assistant Referee uses this signal, it leaves the Referee with little option but to award a penalty kick, and it focuses all the negative attention - blame - onto the Assistant Referee.)*

To monitor a penalty kick, position yourself where the penalty area line intersects the goal line. If the goalkeeper blatantly moves off the goal line before the ball has been kicked, and a goal has not been scored, stand still and raise your flag. If the penalty has been taken correctly, make eye contact with me to check that I agree, and then make your way quickly backwards to your touchline by the shortest practicable route.

Obvious incorrect decision made by the Referee:

If you notice me make a blatant mistake, such as issuing two yellow cards to the same player without sending him off, or a red or yellow card to the wrong player, let me know immediately by vigorous flagging, beeping or even by entering the field of play to vocally warn me. Do not let me re-start the game without telling me. The other Assistant Referee (or 4th official) should if necessary, also assist if needed.

Substitutions:

Please can the Senior Assistant Referee manage all of the substitution requests, even if you have to run from the corner flag – this ensures that there is no confusion about which substitute has come on during the game. Use the approved flag signal to indicate a substitution. Please check the oncoming players' equipment, studs and jewelry etc.,

If I miss a substitution flag because I am looking the other way, I'd like the Junior Assistant Referee to also raise a *substitution* flag to bring this to my attention. You can both also shout at me if I am nearby.

Ensure that substitutes enter at the halfway line, and not until the outgoing player has completely left the field of play.

Keep a note of the substitutes' names and numbers as they occur.

Just prior to kick off, we will double-check to see that we have the same names and numbers of the substitutes in all of our notebooks, before we leave the changing room.

If substitutes need to warm up, please ask them to do so behind you, and not along the touchline half furthest away from you.

Bleeding and checking player's equipment:

If a player leaves the field to adjust his equipment or to have a bleeding wound treated, please check that the equipment has been corrected and any blood issues dealt with. I will look towards you to seek confirmation from you that this has been dealt with, before I allow the player back onto the field of play.

Concentration levels:

Please try to concentrate 100 percent during the match and remain fully alert and aware at all times. Even when play is furthest from you; be totally focused and 'switched on', always be ready for any eventuality and to 'expect the unexpected'. Do not be distracted by comments from the crowd behind you. Avoid responding to crowd comments, as they will probably provoke further comments. If the ball goes over the touchline near to you, leave it for the players to fetch, even if it is very close to you; I want your eyes to be focused on the players at all times. Never make a comment that may commit me to a particular course of action; because this may put me in an impossible position and cause unnecessary embarrassment.

Advantage:

Signalling, deciding and applying the advantage clause are my prerogatives so 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 the foul if the advantage does not ensue within 2 to 3 seconds.

Managing the Technical Area Occupants:

Adopt a low key approach initially, but be assertive when necessary. Please deal with any minor misconduct yourself by being assertive and polite. Ignore most of the banter, but bring to my attention any very bad language such as usage of the 'F' & 'C' words particularly directed at me the Referee, at you the Assistant Referees or players, clearly aimed at destroying the game or inciting the players. Remember exactly what was said. Do not get distracted. If you need to call me over, wait until play reaches a natural stop, step onto the field of play and wave your flag towards me rigorously. We will discuss (away from others) what has happened, and then I will deal with any problems. If I need to approach the Technical Area we will do so together. You will stand alongside me, facing the field of play with your back to the 'Bench', keeping an eye on the players on the field of play. I will do all the talking, but listen for any reaction, which may need to be mentioned in any report. Whilst I am talking to the occupants, please do not intervene unless I ask you to.

As a general rule of thumb, if there is trouble brewing with the Technical Area occupants, use a gradually assertive stepped approach, for example:

1. **Ask** them *politely* to behave. 2. **Tell** them *assertively* that the Laws of the Game require them to behave responsibly and that they have already been warned by you, 3. **Warn** them that next time, you will summon the Referee; and finally, 4. **Report** them to me. **ASK: TELL: WARN : REPORT.** Be consistent with this approach.

Timekeeping:

I would like the Junior Assistant Referee to keep his watch running continuously, and the Senior Assistant Referee to stop and start his watch to correspond to stoppages allowed by me; as a general rule this will be for injuries, substitutions and blatant time wasting.

When the last five minutes of the half approach, be prepared to provide me with a discrete time-down hand signal. Use your outstretched fingers downwards alongside your shorts to let me know how much time remains (i.e. two outstretched fingers means 2 minutes left to play). Watch out for me looking towards you as the half draws to a close. Do not signal completion of time unless I've completely messed up.

Section 3. AFTER THE MATCH:

As soon as I blow my whistle to end a half, please sprint to meet up with me as quick as you can. We will then wait until all of the players and team officials have left the field of play, before we leave. If there is any expected trouble brewing, please let me do all the speaking, whilst you both closely monitor what is going on. Can the Fourth Official please not come onto the field of play, but rather managed the movement of the Technical Area occupants, and then wait for us at the exit point so that we can all precede to the changing rooms together.

Please refrain from passing comment on any aspect of the game, solicited or otherwise, until we have taken the opportunity to consult with each other in the privacy of our dressing room. Please do not invite anyone into the dressing room, as this is my prerogative. If we have a visitor, please do not speak unless I ask you to.

Are there any questions or have I missed anything?

This is the end of the Referee's pre-match briefing:

Summary:

The above brief is comprehensive, and there are probably even more things that you could include. You may wish to formulate your own style and pre-match briefing content. It is best to create a standard brief to use at most games, and then add on anything additional that is peculiar to each game.

As you climb up the Referee promotion ladder, there will be other briefing areas to consider: security, policing, crowd control, floodlighting, media relations, photographers and many more topics to be covered in your brief, and you will always need to read the Rules of each Competition to look out for other topics to include in your brief, such as the number of occupants allowed in the technical area, where to inspect players' equipment and local protocols etc.....

It does take some time to memorise a complex briefing; so do not be afraid of writing down your briefing list as bullet points on a piece of card, and using it in your first games involved with Assistant Referees. You will soon learn to memorise your briefing after a few games. It is far better to cover all your topics, than to try and be clever and remember your entire brief by heart. One good way of structuring your brief is to do it whilst you walk around the field of play with your Assistant Referees, using markers as a prompt. For example, begin by the Technical Area and discuss how to deal with the occupants and substitutions etc. As you walk down the touchline towards the corner flag, discuss for example, throw-ins, offside, penalties, and then corner kicks. Walk along the goal line and discuss goal kicks, penalty kick monitoring positions. When you reach the goal itself, discuss the six-second-release rule, monitoring goalkeepers when they release the ball from their hands, checking the goal nets etc. As you walk into the field of play itself, talk about free kicks, eye-to-eye contact,

advantage, missing incidents, concentration levels and how to deal with melees etc. When you reach the centre circle, discuss the coin tossing ceremony, taking notes, which touchline to patrol and who will be the Senior Assistant etc. If the weather does not allow you to give your brief during your field of play inspection, use your imagination to picture yourself walking around the field – this will prompt you to remember all the parts of your brief as you communicate it to your Assistant Referees in the comfort of the warm and dry changing rooms. There are many other ways to structure your brief so that you can remember it. Using a tick-list or an alphabetically produced list is effective or grouping topics in subject headings such as: Stopping Play, Team Work, Club Officials, Responsible Areas etc. Use whichever system suits you best.

But please remember - the briefing you give to your Assistant Referees is not a list of orders, it should be a two-way communication between you and your two Assistants (and Fourth Official if he is present). Please listen and discuss and clarify any queries from them. The pre-match brief should not be overly long, but approximately of 10-15 minutes duration

The Referee needs the Assistant Referees, and the Assistant Referees need the Referee!

Julian Carosi www.CorshamRef.org.uk

Happy reffing.

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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If you want to contact me, go to my website and select the *Contact the Webmaster* link under the cartoon on the home page or on the top left of the page.

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