

The 'R' Factor

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FROM THE GROUNDS

▪ Assistant referees are to follow play or the ball all the way to the goal-line. Two examples will show the importance of this.

- The ball is kicked from one half of the field to the other, well clear of any field players and going straight to the goalkeeper, who catches it near his goal-line. He then proceeds to throw it out to his defender, but in doing so carries the ball back over the goal-line. The assistant referee, who has followed the ball down, is in position on the goal-line to signal to the referee that the ball has gone over the line and a goal is awarded.
- A team is leading with four minutes to go when an opposing attacker makes a break to chase down a long ball heading for the goal-line. The Assistant Referee, 15 yards behind the ball, decides that the attacker won't reach the ball before it goes out and, feeling a bit tired after three games, stops running. The attacker reaches the ball and kicks it across to the goal area. A team-mate puts it into the net and the referee awards a goal. Unfortunately the ball had gone over the goal line before the attacker reached it and the Assistant was too far back to pick it up so the goal stood.

Both of these examples have actually happened and both demonstrate the importance of being up with play and being in position to make the correct decision.

▪ Some competitions allow for interchange instead of substitutions. The procedure for "Interchange of Players" is covered on page 91 of the current Australian edition of the Laws of the Game. In particular, the interchange is not completed until the player who was off the field enters the field. From this moment he becomes a player and the player he has replaced ceases to be a player.

In effect, an "interchange player" on the bench is not a player for the purposes of the Laws of the Game. Therefore, if the referee has reason to show a red card to one of these and expel them from the bench, their team continues to play with the full complement of players. A team only has its number of players reduced if one of the "players" on the field is sent off.

▪ Players should be allowed to take a free kick quickly, provided it is done as per law. If a player decides to take a free kick quickly and an opponent who is less than 9.15 metres from the ball intercepts it, the referee must allow play to continue (Page 71, "Distance", 1st paragraph).

▪ The referee awards a free kick to a team and an opponent immediately and deliberately steps in front of the ball, obviously with the intention of delaying the taking of the kick and preventing a quick free kick.

Another favourite ploy by players to delay the taking of a free kick against them, which is never seems to be penalised by referees, is to pick up the ball, carry it away a few yards and then drop it or throw it back to where the kick is to be taken.

These are both designed to delay the restart of play and allow their team to regroup. The player must be cautioned.

▪ The ball is kicked long and high and falls to two opponents. The player at the back jumps to head the ball and collides with the front player who is still standing on the ground. The referee awards a free kick against the jumping player.

This is a very common occurrence; but is it the correct decision? Perhaps. But it could also be a genuine, legal attempt to head the ball with the actual offence being committed by the player on the ground backing into his opponent. The test is to check where the bottom player is looking – is he looking at the ball and trying to play it? Or is he looking down or at his opponent and just moving backwards without a genuine attempt to play the ball? Rarely do we see this player penalised for "making a back", as they say, but it does happen so the referee needs to be on the lookout for it.

Thought for the month.

What do you get when you amalgamate YouTube, Twitter and Facebook?

YOUTWITFACE

TAKING OF KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK.

We have been asked to publish an article on the taking of kicks from the penalty spot to decide the result of a match. Why? Because Solo Cup matches may need to be decided that way and because time after time, errors are made when conducting them.

The actual Law covering the Procedures to Determine the Winner of a Match is on page 29 of the Australian edition of the Laws of the Game with further instructions on page 74. Every referee should already be familiar with these but should refresh their knowledge before undertaking such a game.

This article is aimed at summarising the procedure on the day and covers some additional aspects not covered by the Law.

- When inspecting the ground before the game, consider the possibility that these kicks will be needed and that you will have to decide which goal will be used. Some things to take into account are the state of the goals and the penalty mark; the surrounds behind the goals; the weather (sun, etc); the crowd.
- In your pre-match instructions, include your requirements for the taking of the kicks. If you have made your decision as to the goal to be used, inform the other officials.
- As soon as the final whistle is blown, you and the Assistant on the far side from the benches should ensure that all the players on the field remain there. The other Assistant and the Fourth Official immediately move to prevent anyone from the benches from entering the field and also any field players from coming off. The only persons allowed to go onto the field are the coach and trainer for each team. This is to provide the player with refreshments and to help organise the kickers. They must leave, taking water bottles, etc with them, before the kicks commence.
- ALL players on the field at full-time (and only those players) have to participate in the taking of the kicks. If a player happens to be off the field due to being injured, he is deemed to be on the field and is to take part, if able to. If too injured, he may be excused. If any player refuses to take part, the kicks have to be cancelled and a report submitted to the appropriate authority.
- If one team finishes with more players than the other, they must reduce their numbers to equal their opponents. It is your responsibility to see this happens but it is the team captain who selects the player or players to be excluded. All officials should record which player (or players) is excluded.
- You toss a coin and the team winning the toss decides whether to take the first or second kick.
- The team captains (or coach) give you the numbers of the first five players to take the kicks and each official should make a note of them - the goalkeeper may be included. The players named have to take the kicks in the order you have been given.
- You and one Assistant take the first kicker and both goalkeepers to the goal you have selected. Your Assistant takes the goalkeeper who is the kicker's team mate to the junction of the penalty area and the goal line. He must remain there, in the field of play, until it is his turn to defend against the kick.
- All other players must stay in the centre circle under the control of the second Assistant. The Fourth Official remains at the benches to control the team officials and substitutes.
- The Assistant on the goal line should be responsible for advising you if the ball has crossed the goal line. All other aspects of the kick are your responsibility.
- When the kick is completed, the kicker has to return to the centre circle and the Assistant there sends the next kicker on his list down. All officials should keep a record of the result of the kick (pre-match instructions).
- Each team takes alternate kicks until all five have been taken, or until there is a clear winner – i.e. one team has scored too many goals for their opponents to win. This means that each team has to take a minimum of three kicks.
- If there is no clear winner after the five kicks have been taken, the teams continue to take alternate kicks until one team has scored more than the other from an equal number of kicks.
- Every player must take a kick before any can take a second kick. If the scores are still even after all players have taken a kick, they continue but the kickers do not have to be in the same order as for the first round.
- A player can be cautioned or sent off during the taking of the kicks. If a player has been cautioned during the game and receives a second one during the taking of the kicks, he shall be sent off.
If a team has its number reduced because of this (or because of injury), the number of kickers is not evened up – this requirement only applies to the start of the kicks.
- If a goalkeeper is sent off, he can only be replaced by a player on the field.
However, should a goalkeeper be injured during the taking of the kicks, he may be replaced by a named substitute (provided that the team has not used its full quota) or by a player on the field.
He can also be replaced by a player on the field at any time.
- If the taking of the kicks has to be suspended because of poor light, weather conditions, spectators, etc., you should wait a reasonable time and then, if still unable to continue, the result is decided by the toss of a coin or by drawing lots.

RETIREMENT OF JULIAN CAROSI

Julian Carosi, referee, instructor and assessor in England, has decided to hang up his boots and retire from refereeing and also close down his website.

Those who have received the benefit of Julian's many articles and information through his website will understand what a great loss this is. I personally will miss the contributions he has made through his website and newsletters over the years and his comments for and on this newsletter. Here is just one randomly-selected article from hundreds published by Julian

Gaining respect of players and club officials - make sure that you get the big decisions right.

One of the most important duties of a referee is to control the match. The best way of doing this is to apply the Laws effectively and earn the respect of players. But how can a referee do this?

Have you ever ended a game and then on the way home thought 'I have cautioned two players today, one for arguing with me (dissent) and one for kicking the ball away (delaying the restart of play), but why did the players and officials think that I had a bad match?' It is possibly because you did the easy things and shirked the big decisions!

Players' and officials' perception of control is perhaps different to that of a referee. A referee who uses his/her authority to caution players for the 'lesser offences' and then fails to correctly deal with the 'big decisions' will not gain respect. So what are the big decisions? These include unfair challenges that have or could have caused injury to players; decisions have influenced the outcome of the match – like a penalty or a sending off for denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity - and dealing properly with players who commit serious foul play or violent conduct.

Some referees have difficulty recognising if a challenge is fair or unfair. By the time they have thought about it, several other incidents may have occurred. Referees who do find it hard to make decisions often respond to players shouts. Try to avoid this – be decisive and blow your whistle quickly. Indeed, some referees hide behind the advantage clause by waiting for players to appeal following a bad challenge and then shouting 'play on advantage', suggesting that they have seen the incident. More often than not there is no advantage to the team who has been offended. The advantage clause should only be applied when the team who has been offended has a good opportunity - perhaps a 70 percent chance - to score a goal. The advantage clause is not there to provide referees with an excuse for not making decision.

If you have trouble spotting the unfair challenge think to yourself 'did it look bad'. If it looks bad to you then it has also looked bad to players, officials and spectators. They expect you to penalise it. If in doubt, blow your whistle. If you are inexperienced as a referee, more often than not, if strong physical contact is made in a challenge by one of the players involved, and the opponent falls to the ground, the chances are that a foul has been committed. Just blow your whistle hard and award the foul! It is likely to be a direct free kick for one of the penal offences (probably pushing, kicking or tripping) so assertively point the direction

of the free kick and get play going again as quickly as you can.

When you have made your decision to award a free kick for the 'looks bad category', try to classify the challenge into careless, reckless or involving excessive force. That will help you to decide if any disciplinary action is required. Here is one strategy that you can employ to maximise your match control:

Careless challenge – e.g. holding, pushing, accidental kicks on an opponent whilst trying to get the ball, clumsy play – give a clearly heard blast on the whistle and award the free kick. There is no need to take any disciplinary action.

Reckless challenge – e.g. the lunging challenge that could easily hurt the opponent, use of arm in a way that could cause the opponent harm, more forceful challenges and mistimed tackles that cause players to fall to the floor, nasty challenges from behind that make clear contact with the player – give a long hard blast on the whistle and caution the player. Act quickly and decisively to stop other players getting involved – if you take action the incident may be swiftly diffused.

Excessive force – these are the challenges that really make you wince. Typical examples are the over the top challenge, the scything tackle from behind, flying tackles that are made from a distance away that chop players to the floor – blow your whistle very hard and for a long time. Send the offender off. You will know that positive action is required because usually these types of challenge will end up with a badly injured player and provoke a fracas involving a number of other players.

Remember the old saying, "sticks and stones may break my bones but calling never hurt me". Perhaps the referees' version of this is: "Bad tackles may break players' bones but calling and kicking the ball away never hurts"!

A referee who keeps control of a match by penalising the bad challenges and being appropriate and consistent when administering discipline will gain the respect of players, club officials and spectators. Of course it is also necessary to administer the easy cautions for dissent and delaying the restart of play by kicking the ball away – we can all get those right – but you must get the big decisions right as well.

*David Hutchinson, FA Licensed Referee Instructor &
Registered Assessor. Surrey FA England*

We wish Julian all the best in his retirement.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

Brazil.

A retired semi-professional footballer is suing the Baptist church for \$15m, claiming the 19 years he spent as a "fervent evangelist" ruined his chances of playing for Manchester United.

Brazil. – Again.

More Brazilian capers come from a fan who travelled the 6,000 miles from Brazil to England to watch his adopted side Accrington Stanley, who duly lost 2-0 to Crewe!

Diego Guerra, 24, fell in love with the club after watching them beat Nottingham Forest 1-0 in the Carling Cup on the internet in 2006. He has since followed the club's results, bought books on the club and even guided them to the top of the Premier League on the *Football Manager* game.

And again – Brazilian.

In Romania, Brazilian striker Michel Platini joined Dinamo Bucharest from CSKA Sofia despite being sent off in a friendly between the sides a week earlier for fighting with his new team-mates.

Spain.

Valencia's driving force, Ever Banega, is to miss the rest of the season after he failed to put the handbrake on and his car ran over his foot.

Botswana.

So many players retired after the African Nations Cup that a friendly against Egypt was postponed as the coach, Stanley Tshosane, had 'no national team'.

Ghana.

Asante Kotoko FC supporters have paid "far in excess of" 3,000 Cedis (\$1,800) to five 'men of God' to pray for their team – and they're currently top of the table.

And from England.

Welsh midfielder, Ryan Giggs, has played his 900th game for Manchester United, against Norwich City, in the Premier League

COIN TOSSER FACING LIFE.

Queens Park Rangers promised a life ban for the spectator who threw a coin at a linesman during their Premier League win over Arsenal this month.

Stuart Burt was hit on the back of his neck shortly before the end of a 2-1 victory at Loftus Road that bolstered the west London club's hopes of avoiding relegation.

The incident took place shortly after Arsenal was awarded a stoppage-time free kick.

Rangers, in a statement on their website, said the club was in the process of reviewing CCTV footage, adding: "QPR supporters are reminded that this is a very serious offence and anyone caught throwing an object onto the pitch – towards officials or players – will be issued with an immediate lifetime ban from Loftus Road."

QUESTION FOR THE MONTH.

The Laws of the Game state:

- (a) If while the ball is in play, a player, substitute or substituted player throws an object at an opponent or other person in a reckless manner, the referee shall stop play and caution the player, substitute or substituted player.
- (b) If while the ball is in play, a player, substitute or substituted player throws an object at an opponent or other person using excessive force, the referee shall stop play and send off the player, substitute or substituted player for violent conduct.

[Note: "Object" includes the ball]

There are five methods of restarting play. What are they?

The answer will be published in next month's newsletter.

However, if you can't wait that long, it is also shown in the Australian edition of the Laws of the Game – all you have to do is find it.

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