

PRE GAME INSTRUCTION

BY

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When working as Referee in team of 3 or 4 Officials, it is extremely important that each individual knows the duties and responsibilities for which they are accountable.

The duties and responsibilities will of course change depending on the level of the game and experience of the members of the officiating team.

The following set of instructions is the one that I have used throughout my career and is written with a team of 3 officials on a local park in mind, as this is where most officiating is done.

The officiating team should assemble 30 minutes before the game. After introductions, to learn the experience level of my colleagues, I prefer to walk the field if no other game is taking place.

First of all

We will enter the field at the halfway-line as a team and complete the toss. You will go and check the nets and then take up your position on the touch-line, in line with the second last defender. At half time and at the end of the game please move in quickly to join me and we will leave the field together.

Offside is your responsibility at all times unless

1. The ball goes past the defender in which case you will follow the ball. Should the ball go out of play over the goal-line please indicate by raising the flag. On your diagonal please indicate whether it is a goal kick or corner kick if necessary. On my diagonal please make eye contact with me and, if I am looking for help, then indicate the restart.
2. If there is an attacking free kick in a scoring position I may want you to take a goal-line position. If I do, I will give you a clear signal (demonstrate signal) to go to the line. Hold the position for the shot. If the ball doesn't go in the goal then resume your normal position immediately.
3. If there is a corner kick on your side and the defenders are encroaching then please use your voice to get them back, loudly so they are aware I know. Without coming over I will indicate that I am supporting you. If they don't move I will indicate to you (demonstrate signal) to take up a position on the goal-line 11 yards from the flag. If they don't get back I will come and deal with it, if they do move then I want you to stay there so that I can monitor encroachment before the kick, If everything goes OK then following the kick resume your normal position immediately.
4. If a penalty kick is awarded during play I would like you to take up a position on the goal line where the penalty area (18 yard box) intersects it. Following the kick resume your normal position immediately.

If you move off of the offside line to assist me I will take responsibility for offside decisions until you are back in position.

If I am in line with you but haven't given you the signal to go to the goal-line then stay because my main focus isn't offside.

If I decide that I don't want to award the offside for any reason I will give you a signal (demonstrate signal) asking you to bring the flag down and resume your normal position. In this situation please accept my decision in the 'spirit of the game' and if necessary we can discuss it later.

If I miss your flag please stay in position until I acknowledge you or the danger is cleared.

I would appreciate a 'slow flag' so that we can be sure that the person in the offside position is in fact going to be involved in the play.

Positioning

I would like you behind the corner flag (making sure you can see of course) on corners from both sides unless dealing with encroachment as discussed. If the encroachment is from the touch-line side, use your voice loudly and if they don't respond I will come over and deal with it. Don't move up the touch-line.

On a goal kick stay and see that the ball is placed correctly in the goal area and then take up a position either in line with the edge of the penalty area or, if the defenders have moved up, with the second last defender. When the keeper is punting or throwing the ball back into play and the rest of the defense has moved well up field, we need to establish control of situations close to the edge of the penalty area. The object is to get the ball in play quickly, but unlike with the '4 step rule' where we allowed extra steps sometimes, we cannot allow keepers to leave the penalty area with the ball still in their hands.

Initially stay with the keeper and I will pick up the offside. If we don't have a problem you can resume your normal positioning, knowing that we can always go back to the keeper if he goes 'wandering' later in the game. If the keeper is closer to the edge of the penalty area than we would like, then use your voice loudly to let him know that we are watching. If a foul is committed then indicate in the normal way.

If I am significantly behind the play and I blow the whistle for an incident close to the penalty area you are not aware of what I am calling but I need your assistance in determining whether the play was inside or outside of the area. If it was outside, then stand still in line with the edge of the penalty area. If it was inside, then walk slowly towards the goal-line, and as soon as I indicate a penalty kick then take up your position on the goal-line, if I indicate a free kick to the defensive team then resume your normal position.

Signals

On throw-ins just give direction on your diagonal if it is necessary. If you are unsure then look at me and I will be indicating at waist level which way I think and you can go with that. If I'm not indicating put your flag straight up and, as I tend to indicate most of the time, if you know it's one way and I'm pointing the other go with your decision and I will support you.

Throw-ins on my diagonal will be my decision unless I give you a hard look for help. When the ball goes out of play over the touch-line and back in quickly, I need a sharp flag straight up to let me know it's a throw in and where the restart should be taken from.

Goal kick and corner kicks indicate if necessary or, if obvious, take up your position. With plays close to the goal-line raise the flag and then indicate.

For substitutions raise your flag as recommended, at a suitable stoppage in play. Once I have acknowledged the substitution please lower the flag and move to administer the change and I will wait for you to get back in position before restarting. If I think it is easier for me to administer the change I will, let you know verbally.

In a dead ball situation when you give a signal look at me, not at the flag or where the ball is, this is the best time to communicate.

Fouls and Misconduct

If you see a foul, then please look at me. If I am going to blow my whistle, indicating that I am going to allow an advantage or verbally encouraging them to 'get on with it' then please do nothing. If I am looking back at you for help please raise the flag to indicate a foul and then signal direction.

With good positioning I should be able to spot most of the fouls. Where I really need help is when two opposing players are coming in on your diagonal towards you in close proximity to each other. The potential for

me missing a handball or violent conduct is high. In this situation, for a handball, please indicate a foul and the direction, for violent conduct indicate the foul and then gesture for me to come over. When I arrive I want shirt colour, player number(s), the words 'violent conduct' and I will deal with it. We can discuss details for report purposes later.

We will use this last procedure for any incidents behind my back or for verbal misconduct from players or team officials, identify the person and the cautionable or send off offence.

Finally

Enjoy yourself. If appropriate it's OK to smile. "Do you have any questions?"

At this point, having completed our field inspection during the instruction, we leave the field of play for our final preparations. Each assistant will be allocated a team and the responsibility of checking the line up sheet, cards, player permits, equipment etc. It is my wish that all jewelry that can be removed is removed. Jewelry, casts or braces that can't be removed must be covered to the satisfaction of the assistant and/or myself. I take responsibility for any final decisions because the assistant has to 'live' with the bench for the next 90 minutes whereas I am out on the field.

The assistants will tell each coach that the substitution procedure is from the halfway line, only with the referee's permission and that the substitute may not enter the field of play until the player has left.

The assistant will request 2 game balls from the home team on completing his check.

Administration duties complete, a quick warm up and off we go to put the instructions into practice.

I don't issue any instructions to team captains at the toss.

I hope this will help others develop their own pre-game to suit their personality and the games in which they officiate.

Bio

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