



Understanding Soccer Through the Referee's Eyes

A Quick Guide for Families and Friends

Want to understand the game from the referee's perspective? While players use their voices, the referee team communicates primarily through *body language, hand signals, and flags*. These visual cues help manage the match, signal fouls or infractions, and indicate who has possession of the ball and the direction of play.

Who Makes Up the Referee Team?

Depending on the age group and level of competition, a referee crew may include:

- **Center Referee (CR):**
The lead official responsible for managing the *flow of the match, calling fouls, enforcing the Laws of the Game, and ensuring player safety*.
- **Assistant Referees (AR1 and AR2):**
Positioned on the sidelines, they help signal *offsides, out-of-bounds decisions, fouls, and possession* using their flags.
- **Fourth Official (when used):**
Assists with *substitutions, time management, bench behavior*, and provides additional oversight from the center sideline.

How Referees Communicate

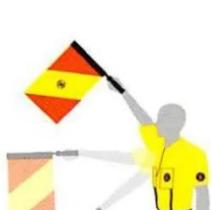
As you watch the match, you can better understand what call is being made by paying attention to the referee team's signals:

- *Hand signals* from the center referee
- *Flag signals* from the assistant referees
- *Body posture or positioning*, which can indicate advantage, stoppages, or cautionary communication

These visible cues tell you what infraction occurred, who gets possession, and which direction the ball will go next.

Scroll down to see example images of the most common signals and start decoding the match like a referee!



ASSISTANT REFEREE SIGNALS	 THROW IN				 GOAL KICK		 CORNER KICK	
	 OFFSIDE		 OFFSIDE LOCATION		 SUBSTITUTION		 FOUL	
REFEREE SIGNALS	 INDIRECT FREE KICK		 DIRECT FREE KICK		 ADVANTAGE 2-ARMS		 GOAL KICK	
	 MISCONDUCT		 CORNER KICK		 ADVANTAGE 1-ARM		 THROW IN	