

## 9/6 Topic of the Week – Assistant Referee

Mentor's on the field each weekend provide the assignors with feedback regarding game day, and make suggestions for our weekly educational TOW (Tip of the Week). This week our focus is the Assistant Referee! Many of you may prefer the job of the AR; are you working hard for your referee crew?

The job of the Assistant Referee cannot be discounted. The AR has a very important role in helping the referee manage the match. I challenge those who believe that the job of the AR is easier! The center referee controls the match with the HELP/ASSISTANCE of the assistant referees. To assist the referee manage the match assistant referees must work hard. This begins with the pre-game; AR's must have a clear understanding of what the referee expects from you. During the pre-game; ask questions if in doubt. Assistant Referee must focus and concentrate throughout the match.

AR's need to be aware of "tone" the referee has set for the game, you must be "engaged" in the game at all times! To help manage the match AR's cannot be anxious and "over-power" the referee, however you cannot lose focus or let your mind and eyes wander during the game. AR's must focus on the game in front of them, and be involved. Make frequent eye contact to communicate. AR's must know where the referee is positioned on the field. Referee position is important to you as AR's in deciding whether the referee may need your help with a decision or not.

### **Critical Points for Assistant Referees**

- Position is crucial! You are to be even with the 2<sup>nd</sup> to last defender or the ball, whichever is closer to the goal line at all times, do not "ball watch" as you will get caught out of position.
- AR's must be in proper position to make accurate offside decisions. Offside decisions can affect the outcome of a match, you need to concentrate and be in position to make these critical decisions.
- Side step! Stay square to the field/ face the field as much as possible. By staying square to the field you have a wider angle of view, you are able to keep most of the players in your view, and you are better positioned to judge offside.
- When you have judged a player(s) offside – stop, face the field, raise your flag and hold your position until acknowledged by the referee. You must hold your position and signal until the referee acknowledges you. In the event your flag signal is missed, use verbal communication with the referee. Never put the flag down until you are certain there is not potential for an attack to continue. If opponents gain possession of the ball and clearly play moves in the other direction this only time you should lower the flag and return to position.
- AR's MUST follow the ball to the goal line. Your signal for goal kick, corner kick, and critical goal decisions are made from the goal line. Questionable goal? You must be at the goal line to judge whether the ball wholly crossed the goal line, under the cross bar

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and between the goal posts. Your referee will look to you for assistance on these close decisions. Again – position is critical!

- The flag is an extension of your arm, make flag signals with your arm fully extended, be assertive and make your signal with confidence.

Those who prefer the assistant referee position must also gain some experience as the center referee. Keep in mind that in the event a center referee is unable to continue (ie: injured) an AR must step in to finish the game. If you have not worked as a center referee you may find this a difficult scenario, there is no such certification as AR only. We encourage everyone to work games as the center referee whether it be recreational games age 9 & 10 or a lower level competitive game. You must have experience with the whistle!

These are some key points to remember when working as an Assistant Referee regardless of your experience level. However this is not a “complete job description”, to review more about the importance of the AR and review your duties – visit this link from FIFA – Interpretations of the Laws of the Game & Guidelines for Referees. Law 6 – Assistant Referee  
<http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/worldfootball/clubfootball/01/37/04/22/interpretation%5flaw06%5fen.pdf>

Keys to success –

Position, concentration, follow every ball to the goal line, eye contact, and stay focused on the game! Work hard out there! We will see you on the fields!