



**NORTHERN
NSW
FOOTBALL**



READY TO REFEREE

Northern NSW Football – Referees' Department

Tips for the 1st-year referee or for parents, coaches or players who have been press ganged into picking up a whistle. Includes advice on some 2019-2020 Law Changes.



This booklet is intended to be a guide for parents, players and coaches who volunteer to referee football matches in the absence of an official referee. It is also intended to be a useful guide for qualified referees at the beginning of their refereeing careers. It must be read in conjunction with the Laws of the Game and is not intended to replace any of those Laws or the Guidelines that are included in that book. It is certainly not intended to replace the necessity to have a thorough understanding of those Laws.

ARE YOU READY TO REFEREE?

Do you have:

(a) The correct uniform. If you are qualified, looking like a referee is a major part of the way to establishing credibility which is vital for good control. If you are not qualified then try to look as if you belong on a football field. Wear clothing that will be comfortable to run in and looks neat.

(b) Two whistles (you may drop one at a crucial moment) and carry the whistle in your hand; not your mouth or your pocket.

(c) A coin.

(d) A stopwatch as well as an ordinary watch. You never know when you may forget to restart your stop watch after a break in play. Of course watches which have both functions are available.

(e) Pens or pencils. There is nothing more embarrassing than going to record a goal being scored and realizing that you have nothing to write with.

(f) And if you are an official referee you will need your yellow and red cards just in case you have to use them.



START OF THE GAME

1. Check the field by measuring the distance from the Goal Line to the Penalty Spot. You should be able to pace this out. Check the measurements of the penalty Area and the Centre Circle using the same method. Ensure that the flags are correctly positioned and that the nets are securely fastened. Walk over the field to ensure that there is nothing on the ground that could be a danger to the players such as broken glass or pieces of wood. You can of course delegate some or all of these duties to your Assistant Referees if you have them.
2. Talk to your Assistant Referees. Tell them your preferences regarding Offside rulings and positioning at Penalty Kick and Corner Kicks. If you are an official referee you should be aware of the different responsibilities of Club Linesmen and official Assistant Referees.
3. Check the players' equipment. This can be done at any time but should be carried out before play commences. In particular look for dangerous footwear, rings, watches, and any other jewelry, including body piercing items. Ensure that players are wearing shin pads and their socks are pulled up.
4. Call the captains to the Centre Circle, introduce yourself and your Assistants and issue any instructions that you think are necessary. Ask one captain to toss the coin while the other calls. Allow the correct caller to choose which end of the field they will attack or whether they will take the kick-off.
5. When the teams are assembled for the start of play check that:
 - (a) All players are in their own half of the field;
 - (b) All the defending players are at least 9.15 metres from the ball;
 - (c) Each team has no more than eleven players, one of whom is the goal keeper.Remember that to begin play each team must have at least seven players.
6. Check the time of starting play and make a note of it. Start your stop watch. Blow your whistle and ensure that the defenders do not encroach inside the Centre Circle until the ball is in play (has been kicked and moves). Ensure that the player who kicks off does not touch the ball again until it has touched by another player. Ensure that all players, with the possible exception of the player taking the kick-off, are in their own half of the field until the ball is in play. The player taking the kick-off is allowed to stand over the line.



THE GAME IS NOW UNDERWAY

POSITIONING

You need to ensure that that you are always in the best possible position to view play. The better your position then the easier it is for you to keep control of the game.

The ideal position for the referee is to be at an angle to the play and between 10 and 15 metres from it. This enables you to see what is happening and to be close enough to any incident to enable you, if necessary, to sell your decision to the players. In order to maintain this position you have to move with play. You may not always be able to achieve this ideal position but you should always aim at achieving it. Sometimes you have to move forwards, sometimes backwards and sometimes to the side but you should always keep moving. The referee who stands still and watches play move away from them is asking for trouble.

TIMING

The length of the match will depend on the age of the players involved in the game. For games involving senior players a match (community football) should consist of two equal halves of 40 minutes. For any age group, in any competition, matches must consist of equal time in each half. In Community Football matches you should **not** allow extra time for stoppages.

BALL OUT OF PLAY

In Football the ball is out of play only when it has completely crossed the sideline or the goal line. If part of the ball is on the line then it is still in play. This must be remembered when awarding throw ins, goal kicks, corner kicks and goals.

Of course the ball is also out of play the instant the referee blows their whistle to signal play to stop.

The ball is also now out of play when it hits a match official, remains on the field of play and a team starts a promising attack, goes directly into goal or the team in

possession of the ball changes. This new rule might prevent embarrassment for referees who have had that happen to them and inadvertently scored a goal or changed the direction of the game. In this instance play is of course restarted with a dropped ball.

GOAL KICKS

1. Make sure the ball has completely crossed the goal line and that it was last played by an attacker (and that a goal has not been scored).
2. Point to the goal area. Only bother to blow your whistle if there is some doubt that the ball is out of play.
3. Ensure that the ball is placed in the Goal Area. Check the correct placing for junior grades as they are sometimes allowed to place the ball outside the goal area.
4. Position yourself up field and in line with the ball.
5. Ensure that the ball is stationary before it is kicked.
6. If necessary, signal for the kick to be taken. This means blowing your whistle or waving play on.
7. The ball is in play once it has been kicked and moves. It no longer has to leave the Penalty Area to be in play. Opponents must be outside the Penalty Area until the ball is in play unless the kick is taken so quickly that they do not have time to retire. This also applies to Free Kicks taken by the defending side in their own Penalty Area .

CORNER KICKS

1. Make sure the ball has completely crossed the goal line and that it was last touched by a defender.
2. Point to the corner from which the kick is to be taken. Do not blow your whistle unless there is likely to be some dispute as to whether or not a corner is to be awarded.
3. Ensure that the ball is completely within the quadrant and that any defenders are 9.15 metres (about ten paces) from the ball before the kick is taken.
4. Position yourself so that you can see any infringements which might take place when the ball lands in front of the goal. If you have no assistant referee than you will have to stand on the goal line on the far side of the goal to ensure that the ball does not cross the goal line after it has been kicked. Watch for infringements by players before the ball is kicked. Players may engage in physical contact as they jostle for position. You cannot award a free kick for this as the ball is not yet in play but you can warn players or even take more serious action.
5. You may need to signal for the kick to be taken by blowing your whistle or waving play on.

6. Watch for the ball crossing the goal line and for physical contact by players as they compete for the ball.



THROW IN

1. Point in the direction of the throw after first ensuring that ball has completely crossed the sideline.
2. Ensure that the thrower takes the throw in at the place where the ball went out (or very close to it).
3. Ensure that the player throwing the ball does so with:
 - a) Both hands behind their head
 - b) Both feet on the ground
 - c) Both feet on or behind the sideline;
 - d) The ball being thrown forward and
 - e) an opponent not obstructing the thrower.
4. Opponents must be at least 2m from the point on the sideline where the throw in is to be taken, even if the thrower is back from the line.

WHEN A GOAL IS SCORED

1. Look to your Assistant Referee (if you have one) to ensure that you have not missed an infringement that would prevent a goal being scored.
2. Check that the ball has completely crossed the goal line in the air or in the ground, beneath the crossbar and between the uprights (hitting the back of the net is a good indication).
3. Point to the centre circle and record the goal and scorer in your note book or on your match card. There is no need to blow your whistle because the minute the ball has crossed the goal line it is out of play. There may be an occasion where there is some doubt that the ball has

crossed the goal line and you may need to blow your whistle to stop play but this is very unlikely.

4. Wait for the players to position themselves for a kick off and blow your whistle to restart play.

FREE KICKS

1. Blow your whistle and point in the direction of the free kick.

2. Point to where the kick is to be taken. If the kick is to be an Indirect Free Kick then signal this by raising your arm straight up in the air.

3. Ensure that the ball is stationary when it is kicked. Retake the kick if it is not.

4. Ensure that the defending players are at least 9.15 metres from the ball; unless the attackers wish to take a quick free kick and do not give the defenders time to retire. If the defenders have time to retire but do not do so then they must be Cautioned. Signal for the kick to be taken.

5. If the kick was Indirect leave your arm in the upright position until the ball is played by another player then lower it.

DIRECT OR INDIRECT FREE KICKS

The simplest way to distinguish a Direct Free Kick from an Indirect Free Kick is to remember that if an offence is a physical action, committed against an opponent, then you award a Direct Free Kick. You also award a Direct Free Kick for the offence of Intentionally Handling the Ball. You must be certain that the handling of the ball was deliberate and the best way to judge that is to note whether the hand or arm moved towards the ball or the ball struck the hand or arm which has not moved and whether or not the hand or arm which struck the ball is in an unnatural position. And you still might be wrong.

The more technical offences, non-violent ones, such as Offside, Dangerous Play, Obstruction and the many offences against a goal keeper (e.g. holding the ball too long, handling the ball again after releasing it into play and receiving the ball directly when it is kicked or thrown in to the keeper) are penalised by the award of a Indirect Free Kick.

Remember that a goal can be scored directly from a Direct Free Kick. For a goal to be scored from an Indirect Free Kick it must be touched by a player, other than the kicker, from either side, before it goes into the goal.

A Direct Free Kick awarded against a team, in its own Penalty Area, becomes a Penalty Kick.

PENALTY KICKS

1. Satisfy yourself that the offence was committed in the Penalty Area. Check with your Assistant Referee if necessary and if you have one.
2. Blow your whistle, loudly, to stop play and point to the Penalty Spot. Then move away from the defenders who will probably want to discuss your decision with you. A good position is in the top corner of the Goal Area.



3. Ensure that:
 - a) The goal keeper is standing on the goal line
 - b) All players except the kicker and the goal keeper are outside the Penalty Area, 9.15 metres from the ball (outside the "D") and are behind the Penalty Spot
 - c) The kicker does not play the ball until it has been touched by another player (bouncing off the post or upright is not another player) and
 - d) The Assistant Referee is on the goal line watching the goal keeper's feet (one foot has to be on the goal when the kick is taken) and is ready to judge whether or not a goal is scored.
4. Tell the kicker to wait for the whistle. When you blow the whistle to signal for the kick to be taken you have to watch for the following:
 - a) The goal keeper does not move his forward of the goal line until the ball has been kicked (they can move along the line)
 - b) Nobody enters the Penalty Area until the ball has been kicked
 - c) The kicker does not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player and
 - d) The ball crosses or does not cross the goal line.

Remember that the only time when you may deliberately and legally extend the length of the match is allow for a Penalty Kick to be taken. The game then ends when a goal is scored or a goal has obviously been saved (or missed).



OFFSIDE

When deciding whether or not to penalise a player for being in an offside position you must consider whether or not that player was involved in active play by interfering with play or an opponent, and most importantly, is deliberately trying to gain an advantage by being in that position. Also, they must have been in the Offside position when the ball was last played by one of their own team, not when they receive the ball. If you are in doubt you must allow play to continue.

Remember that for a player to be in an Offside position they must have their body behind the second last defender when the ball was last played by a team mate. If they are level then they are onside.

ADVANTAGE

The referee should NOT stop play to award a free kick if, by doing so, they will provide an ADVANTAGE to the team which has committed the offence. Stopping play to award a Free Kick for a foul, which has not resulted in a player losing possession of the ball may well be an advantage to the player who has committed the foul.

The best way to decide whether or not to play advantage is to consider whether the award of a free kick will be of more benefit to the non-offending team than allowing play to continue. Do they still have possession of the ball and do they have the opportunity to make use of it? The only person who can decide this is the referee.

The advantage of allowing play to continue lessens the closer the offence is to the offending team's goal. No advantage should be played for an offence which is committed in the offending team's Penalty Area. The award of a Penalty Kick is definitely of more advantage than allowing play to continue.

If a foul is committed and you allow play to continue, but the anticipated advantage does not occur before the next phase of play, then you should stop play and award the Free Kick, and take any other necessary action, where the original offence took place. And if you do not award the free kick and if the foul was worth a Caution or Send Off you can then administer the appropriate card at the next break in play, which sometimes comes as a shock to offenders who might have thought they were getting away with something.



MANAGING SUBSTITUTIONS and INTERCHANGE

Interchange and Substitutions relate to players being replaced during the game. The difference between the two is that when a player has been substituted they cannot take the field again and when a player has been interchanged they can return to the field. Whether your game has Substitution or Interchange will depend on the local rules. Most of our local competitions use Interchange with only the top Premier League games having Substitutions.

1. A player who has been replaced may leave the field at the nearest point on the boundary line unless directed otherwise by the referee but the player entering the field must enter at the halfway line.
2. Have the team officials indicate to you or your Assistant Referee when they want to replace players.
3. At the next break in play blow your whistle and hold up your hand in the Stop Sign to indicate a pause in play (e.g. free kick, throw in, goal kick, corner kick or dropped ball).
4. Beckon the incoming players onto the field but do not allow them to enter until the player they replacing has left the field. If they do, blow your whistle and send them back.
- 5, For Substitutions you and your Assistant Referee should record the number and name of the players who are leaving the field and those who are entering it. This is usually not necessary with Interchange but you do need to ensure that the same number of players both leave and enter the field. I suggest you count them off and on. Sometimes over enthusiastic youngsters will run onto the field without their coach knowing.
6. When the exchange of players is complete blow your whistle to signal the restart of play.



END OF THE GAME

1. Check the time on your watch and also check with your Assistant Referees.
2. Blow the whistle a couple of times so that players are aware that the game has ended and you are not blowing to stop play for a Free Kick and point to the centre circle, or the dressing rooms.
3. Wait in the centre of the field for your Assistant Referees to join you and be prepared to shake hands with the players. However, do not allow yourself to get involved in unnecessary discussions with players or coaches regarding decisions which occurred during the game. Remember you are still in charge until you have left the field.
4. Submit your record of the game as soon as possible, to the appropriate authority, ensuring that all details are correct and, most importantly:

ENJOY YOURSELF

