



# Guide to Procedures

For Referees, Assistant Referees  
and Fourth Officials

## 2010/2011





## FOREWORD

The United States Soccer Federation adopts the procedures outlined in this pamphlet in order to standardize officiating techniques, signals and mechanics at all levels of play. They have been recommended by a panel of senior referees and instructors and have been thoroughly tested at international, professional, adult and youth levels of competition.

The current edition has been expanded to include guidance in the use of fourth officials and recommended positioning in certain situations. However, given that relatively few referees have the opportunity to serve as a fourth official, this pamphlet does not cover all details of the fourth official's responsibilities. Referees who need further information on this subject should consult training materials available on the Federation's website.

The new field diagrams indicating recommended positioning must be understood as focusing on optimal locations for officials at various times during a match based on extensive research regarding probable player positions, likely subsequent play sequences and an assessment of what aspects of play most need the officiating team's attention. **They must not be taken as mandating any specific position under all circumstances.** In determining where to be, officials must be aware of changing player tactics, team strategies and the specific needs of the match at that time.

Alternate signals, procedures, and methods of communication within the officiating team are not authorized for games under the jurisdiction of the United States Soccer Federation using the diagonal system of control. Other signals or methods of communication intended to supplement those described here are permitted only if they do not conflict with established procedures and only if they do not intrude on the game, are not distracting, are limited in number and purpose and are carefully discussed within the officiating team prior to the commencement of the match.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Alfred Kleinaitis".

Alfred Kleinaitis  
Manager of Referee Development and Education

*Revised June 2010*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



	<b>GENERAL MECHANICS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>PRIOR TO THE GAME .....</b>	<b>6</b>
	Arrival At The Field.....	6
	Inspections and Instructions .....	6
	Pre-Game Conference.....	7
	Fifteen Minutes Before Kick-Off .....	7
	Prior To Kick-Off.....	7
	During Minute Before Kick-Off.....	8
	<b>KICK-OFF .....</b>	<b>9</b>
	<b>GENERAL POSITIONING, During Play .....</b>	<b>10</b>
	Referee and Assistant Referee .....	10
	Fourth Official .....	12
	Monitors Benches And Technical Areas.....	13
	Equipment Problems, Bleeding Or Blood On The Uniform .....	14
	<b>INJURIES.....</b>	<b>15</b>
	<b>GOALKEEPER POSSESSION/PUNT.....</b>	<b>16</b>
	<b>THROW-IN, Referee’s End of Touch Line.....</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>THROW-IN, Assistant Referee’s End of Touch Line .....</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>OFFSIDE .....</b>	<b>19</b>
	<b>GOAL KICK .....</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>CORNER KICK, Referee’s Side Of Field.....</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>CORNER KICK, Assistant Referee’s Side Of Field .....</b>	<b>24</b>



<b>GOAL</b> .....	25
<b>GOAL, Apparent Goal To Be Disallowed</b> .....	27
<b>FOULS, Observed By Referee</b> .....	28
<b>Fouls, Not Seen By The Referee But Indicated</b>	
<b>By Lead Assistant Referee</b> .....	29
<b>FOULS Not Seen By The Referee But Indicated By</b>	
<b>Trail Assistant Referee</b> .....	30
<b>FREE KICKS - General Positioning</b> .....	31
<b>PLAY ON, Advantage Applied</b> .....	35
<b>PENALTY KICK</b> .....	36
<b>PENALTY KICK, Indicated By The Assistant Referee</b> .....	37
<b>MISCONDUCT, Play Stopped Immediately</b> .....	38
<b>SUBSTITUTIONS</b> .....	40
<b>TIMING</b> .....	42
<b>END OF THE GAME</b> .....	43
<b>MATCH DEBRIEF</b> .....	44



# GENERAL MECHANICS



- It is the job of all members of the referee team to perform their responsibilities as efficiently, effectively and unobtrusively as possible.

While every official must develop his or her own style of conduct, it is the objective of this Guide to Procedures to keep such individual styles within a common boundary of standard practices.

- An official's style should not interfere with the flow of the game, result in unclear communication of information to players or fellow officials or cause undue attention to be drawn to the official and away from the match itself.
- Whistle
  - ♦ Referees are reminded that the whistle is a tool of communication and not merely a convenient signaling device. Whistles should be selected carefully for the match conditions, age of players and other factors. It is neither required nor expected that the whistle be used for all stoppages and restarts of play.
  - ♦ A whistle demands attention and should be blown when such attention is needed. Uncontested stoppages (as when a ball clearly leaves the field) should not be whistled — a voice and/or hand signal by the referee or a flag by the assistant referee will normally be sufficient.
  - ♦ Referees should also be alert to the need for variations in the length, force and tone in their use of a whistle to indicate different types of stoppages or different degrees of concern for the event that has just occurred.
- In the diagonal system of control, referees should take every opportunity of less activity on the field to make eye contact with each of the assistant referees and 4th official, to confirm the location of players relative to the officials and to observe portions of the field which may not have received recent attention.
- Signals

All referee hand signals are given with the arm straight at the indicated angle or direction, with the fingers fully extended.



Assistant referee flag signals follow the same pattern with the flag held as an extension of the arm.





# GENERAL MECHANICS



- Officials should be aware that various hand gestures and facial expressions can have unintended, negative meanings in matches involving multicultural participants. Care should therefore be taken in the use of such gestures or expressions.
- Administrative tasks before, during and after the match are the responsibility of the referee but can be delegated by the referee to other members of the officiating team: examples include assisting with inspection of the field, the game balls, player equipment, player credentials, correction of illegal equipment or bleeding and so forth.
- All members of the officiating team must understand their respective responsibilities, tasks and duties. Each official must be able to rely upon the other members of the team to perform their duties in a timely, accurate and responsible manner. In turn, each official should be given full opportunity to perform the tasks described in this Guide and in the pre-game conference.
- Duties assigned in this Guide to the 4th official would be performed by the referee or, at the direction of the referee, by the assistant referees in matches not using a 4th official.

## Fourth Official

- Performs any other duties which the referee requests, consistent with and not detracting from the responsibilities outlined in this Guide
- Is the primary point of contact between the referee team and all persons other than players, substitutes and team officials (e.g., stadium representatives, security staff, broadcast managers, ball retrievers, etc.)
- Performs duties under and with the authority of the referee
- Resolves directly as many matters as possible and only calls upon the referee for a final resolution of any situation as a last resort
- Maintains composure and a professional appearance at all times and avoids being drawn into any conversations with anyone which do not relate directly with the responsibilities outlined in this Guide or in the pre-game conference
- Takes less intrusive actions early when a situation may be resolved without deteriorating into greater tension, conflict and confusion
- Involves the coach and other team officials as much and as early as possible in identifying unacceptable behavior within the technical area and solicits assistance in correcting the situation



# PRIOR TO THE GAME



## ARRIVAL AT THE FIELD

- All members of the referee team are expected to be at the field at the time prescribed by the rules of competition, at the time set by the referee or, if no time is prescribed, at least 30 minutes prior to kick off.

## INSPECTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

### Referee Team

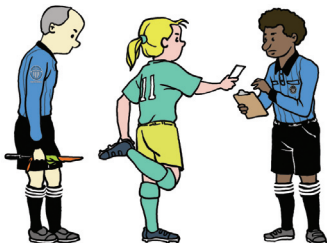
- At the direction of the referee, carefully inspects field to determine adequacy of markings, safety and general playing conditions
- Discusses with ball handlers (if provided) their duties and procedures



### Fourth Official

- Obtains and checks game balls, substitution board (if available) and substitution tickets
- Discusses and confirms with coaches matters related to substitution procedures, warm-up area and injury procedures
- Is prepared (uniform and equipment) to serve as referee or assistant referee as needed and in accordance with the rules of competition

### Assistant Referees and Fourth Official



- At the direction of referee, inspect player equipment, uniforms, player passes and team rosters
- Bring to referee's attention any issues requiring resolution.



# PRIOR TO THE GAME



## PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

### Referee Team

- Reviews procedures and mechanics in accordance with this Guide
- Discusses any special expectations, unusual field or match conditions, special rules of competition (e.g., substitutions, ties) and signals or procedures other than those prescribed in this Guide
- Shares and discusses information regarding known team and/or player tactics, strategies, skills and patterns of behavior

## FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE KICK-OFF

- All issues related to player credentials, uniforms, equipment, field conditions, rules of competition and assignment of specific functions within the referee team are resolved

## PRIOR TO KICK OFF

### Referee Team

- Enters field together and moves to center mark for any pregame ceremonies



### Referee

- Carries match ball, introduces officiating team to captains and conducts coin toss
- Records results of coin toss decision, announces direction and team responsible for initial kick-off

### Assistant Referees

- Have flags furled at side
- Record results of coin toss
- Perform final check of nets

### Fourth Official

- Performs final check of bench and technical areas, equipment and supplies and presence of only authorized persons





# PRIOR TO THE GAME



## DURING MINUTE BEFORE KICK-OFF

### Referee

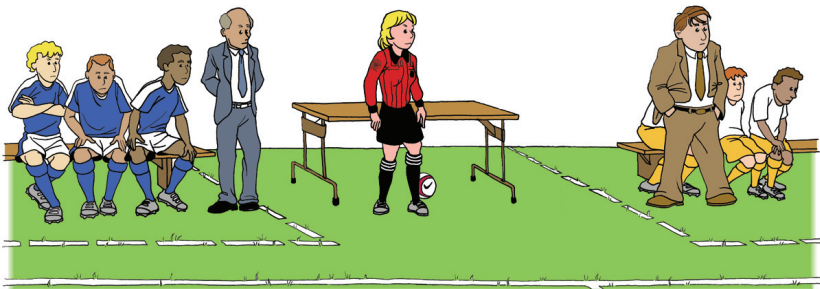
- Scans players and the field and makes eye contact with assistant referees and 4th official to ensure readiness

### Assistant Referees

- Moves to correct position on touch line (in line with second to last defender), unfurl flags and hold them straight down in view of the referee to indicate readiness for the initial kick-off (correct number of players, clearly identified goalkeeper, etc.)
- Responds to eye contact by the referee to indicate that their area of the field is ready and they are prepared for the start of play

### Fourth Official

- Responds to eye contact with referee to indicate readiness of technical areas, benches, substitutes and team officials for the start of play
- Checks each technical area to ensure that all substitutes are wearing colors that prevent confusion with the players, no unauthorized persons are present, and all match balls are secured





# KICK-OFF



## Referee

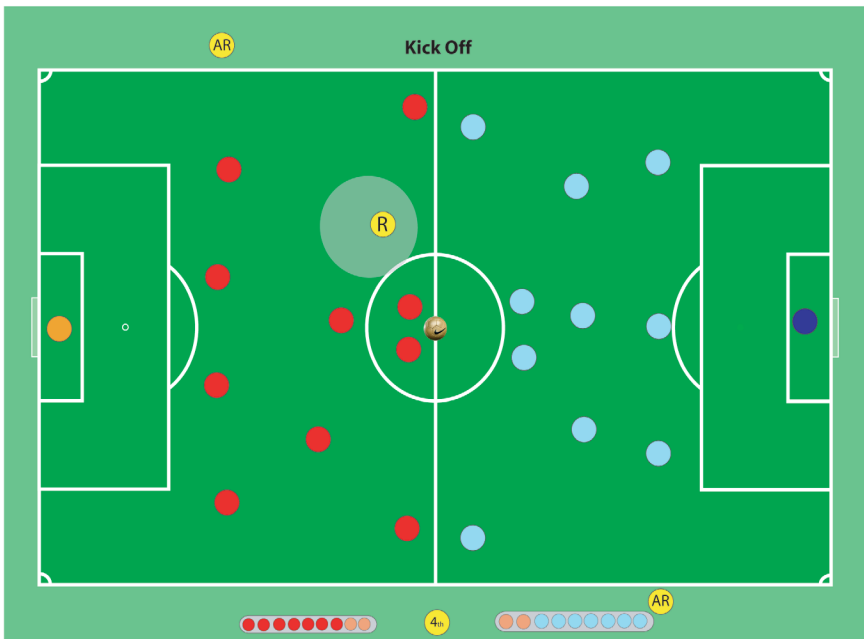
- Reads the players' positioning to determine exactly where to stand, starts watch and signals for the kick-off to be taken
- Attention focused on immediate play and alert to unexpectedly early fouls, misconduct or goal

## Assistant Referee

- Even with the second to last defender

## Fourth Official

- At the 4th official's table or designated area with eyes on the field





# GENERAL POSITIONING

## During Play



### Referee

- Position flexible, using the diagonal system of control
- Follows positioning diagram guidelines during play and at restarts but uses discretion to choose alternate positions when needed
- Able to observe active play and lead assistant referee
- Remains close enough to observe important aspects of play without interfering with player or ball movement
- Understands that attention may be needed elsewhere on the field to monitor behavior of specific players not actively involved with playing the ball

### Assistant Referee

- In line with second to last defender or the ball, whichever is closer to the goal line
- Flag held straight down and always visible to referee
- Sidesteps while facing the field when closely marking the offside position, unless speed is needed in case of a quick breakaway or the ball is being controlled by the team attacking away from the assistant referee
- If a signal is to be made, stops, faces the field, makes eye contact with the referee, and signals with the correct hand

*Note: All positioning guidelines and diagrams assume that the referee is running a standard (to left of goalkeeper) diagonal and that positions would be reversed accordingly if the opposite diagonal were being used.*



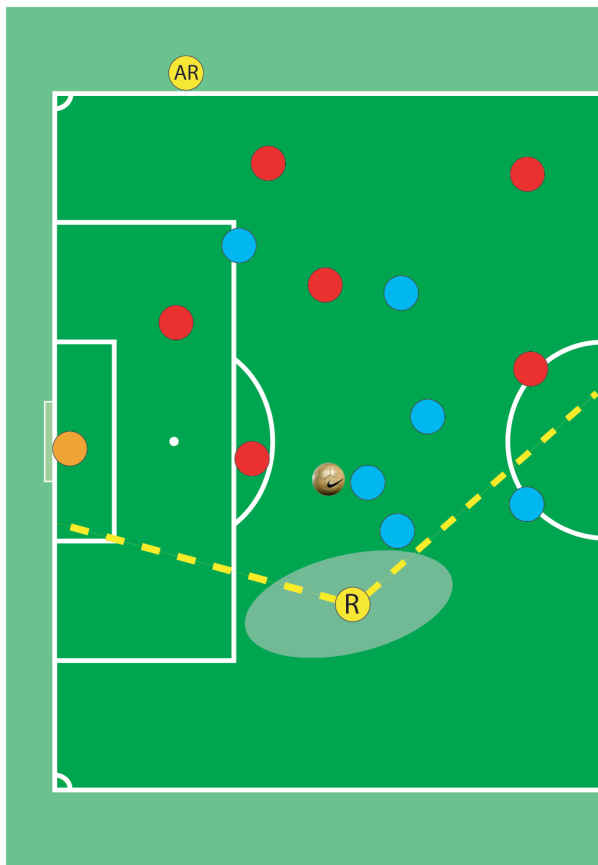
# GENERAL POSITIONING

## During Play



*Remember:*

The best position is one that is flexible and intelligent based on observed or known player tactics and team strategies!



Three conditions for best position:

A = I can see play and the potential problem area

B = I can see my AR

C = I am *not* occupying space the players need

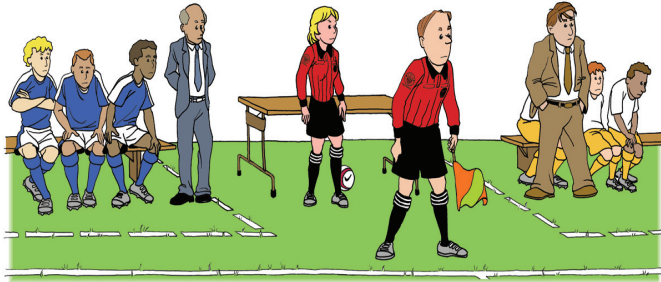


# GENERAL POSITIONING

## During Play



### Fourth Official



- Remains at the 4th's table or designated location unless performing a specific duty elsewhere
- Remains standing throughout the match unless directed otherwise by the referee during the pre-game conference.
- Maintains proper records for substitutions, goals scored, cards displayed for misconduct, injuries and incidents outside the vision of the referee and assistant referees
- Notifies the referee as quickly as possible if a player or substitute has:
  - ♦ Been cautioned or sent off based on an incorrect identification
  - ♦ Not been sent off despite having received a second caution
  - ♦ Committed violent conduct out of the view of the referee and assistant referees
- Is aware of the position and movement of substitutes, coaches and other team personnel



# GENERAL POSITIONING

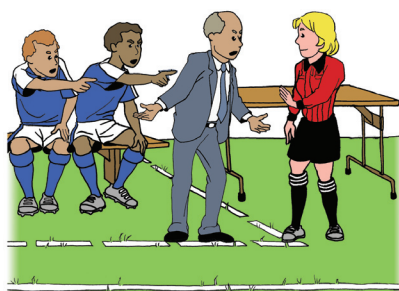
## During Play



### Fourth Official (continued)

## MONITORS BENCHES AND TECHNICAL AREAS

- Keeps both benches and technical areas under observation
- Notes anyone not authorized to be in these areas and brings their presence to the attention of match officials for correction
- Notes instances where a team official moves off the bench to give tactical instructions but does not return (sitting down is not required)
- Is prepared to bring to the attention of the coach any instances of improper behavior by team officials or substitutes on the bench
- Monitors and prevents the practice of throwing water containers of any kind onto the field or to players on the field
- Observes the behavior of ball handlers and ensures that they follow the instructions regarding their responsibilities given prior to the start of play
- Monitors substitutes who are warming up
  - Prevents such persons from interfering with official activities
  - Ensures that such persons are easily distinguished from players (is mindful of the field of vision of assistant referees)
  - Uses this information to prepare for a possible substitution request





# GENERAL POSITIONING

## During Play



### Fourth Official (continued)

## EQUIPMENT PROBLEMS, BLEEDING OR BLOOD ON THE UNIFORM

- Is aware of the referee instructing a player to leave the field due to illegal equipment, bleeding or blood on the uniform and distinguishes this from either a send-off or a substitution
- Does not permit a player to return to the field until:
  - ♦ The referee's instructions have been complied with regarding who must confirm the correction of a bleeding or equipment problem and
  - ♦ The referee has beckoned the player back onto the field
- Monitors efforts to stop any bleeding, replace a blood-soaked uniform or correct illegal equipment
- If, in the pregame conference, the referee has authorized the 4th official to inspect and confirm the correction of any bleeding or equipment problems, ensures that the matter has been fully resolved in accordance with the referee's instructions
- Follows the procedure requested by the referee in the pre-game conference to notify him that the problem has been resolved and the player is ready to return to the field, with the consent of the referee, at the next stoppage of play





# INJURIES



## Referee

- Makes quick assessment of seriousness
- Returns to position if not serious
- Gives teams opportunity to stop play by sending ball off the field (sportsmanship)
- Stops play if injury is serious and notes location of ball for restart
- Signals for team official, trainer or other medical assistance to enter the field
- Confers with assistant referees, if necessary, to determine events leading to injury
- Stays out of the area where the injured player is being attended to
- Monitors time lost
- Encourages timely restarts consistent with the safety of the injured player

## Fourth Official

- Prevents team officials and others in team area from entering the field if not beckoned by the referee
- Monitors general behavior of persons in team areas to assist with match control
- Manages return of injured player to the field in accordance with pre-game instructions (including, if directed by the referee, checking to ensure any bleeding or blood on the uniform problem has been corrected)

## Assistant Referee

- Closest to injury, assists with determination of seriousness
- Closest to injury, provides information to referee regarding related player actions (cause of injury, fouls, misconduct, retaliation, etc.)
- Closest to team areas, prevents entry into the field of persons not beckoned by referee and calms others remaining off the field







# GOALKEEPER POSSESSION/PUNT

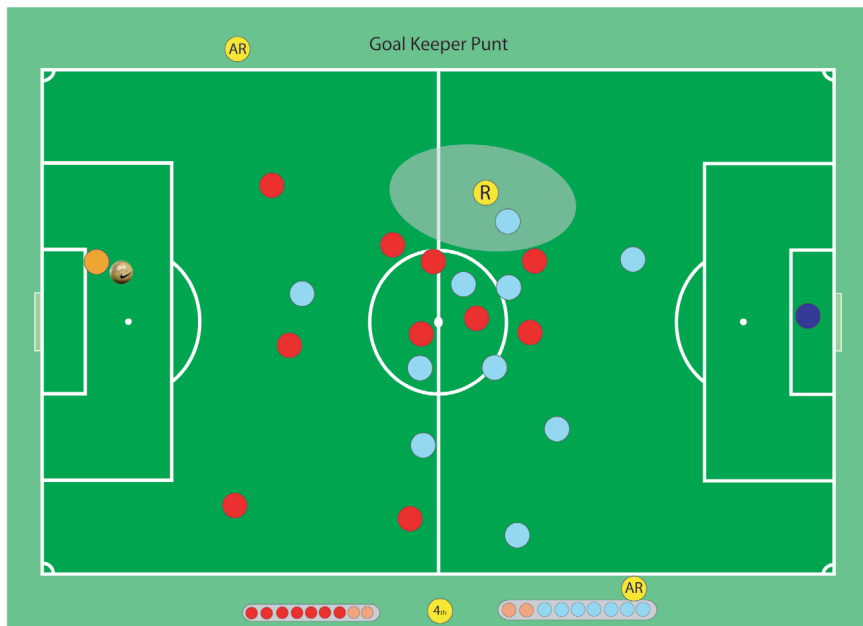


## Referee

- Able to observe where the ball is anticipated to drop
- Estimates drop point by watching player behavior (does not look up to spot the ball in the air)

## Assistant Referee

- Verifies the goalkeeper does not handle the ball outside of the penalty area
- Follows the ball up field to cover offside (may begin moving earlier if obvious that the goalkeeper is not in a position to handle the ball outside the penalty area)
- Able to adjust position if the goalkeeper releases the ball other than by a long punt or throw (e.g., roll, short toss or drop and dribble)
- Prepared to assist referee in identifying second possession by goalkeeper





# THROW-IN

## Referee's End Of Touch Line



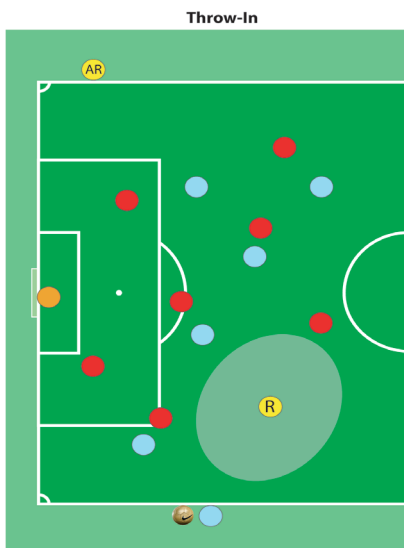
### Referee

- Signals stoppage of play (whistle only if necessary)
- Points 45 degrees upward to indicate direction of throw-in
- Indicates correct location for restart
- Prepared to vary from recommended position (see diagrams) if needed (location of restart is deep or throw is expected to be long) — avoid being in likely target area based on reading team or player throw-in tactics

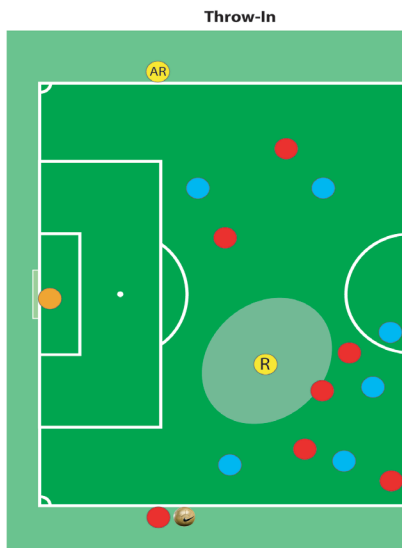


### Assistant Referee

- If ball passes out of play and immediately returns to the field, signals with a vertical flag in the hand indicating the direction of the restart, then drops the flag when acknowledged by the referee
- Provides confirming flag signal after referee indicates throw-in decision. If referee makes obvious eye contact to ask for assistance before indicating a decision, uses signal to establish direction which was agreed to in the pre-game conference, and then provides confirming throw-in flag signal after referee indicates decision.



**Referee Side  
Attacker Throw-In**



**Referee Side  
Defender Throw-In**



# THROW-IN

## Assistant Referee's End Of Touch Line



### Referee

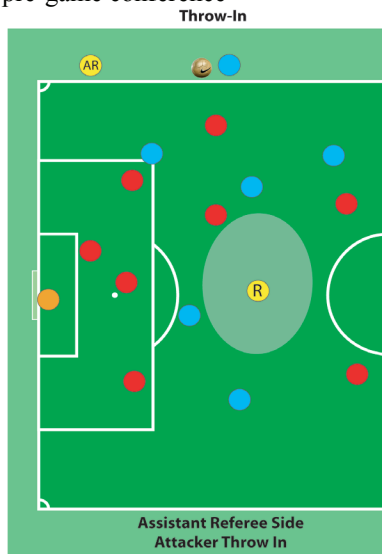
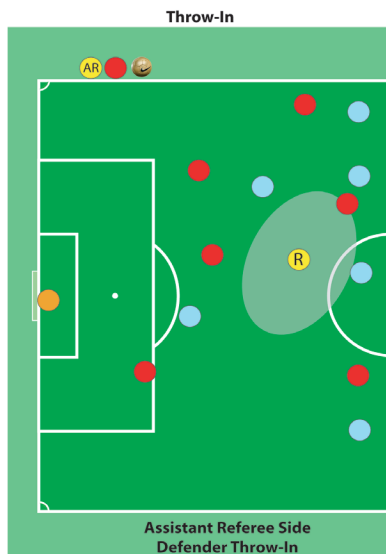
- Whistles to stop play only if necessary (players are continuing to play the ball)
- Points in direction of throw-in only if assistant referee signal needs to be corrected due to unseen contact with the ball
- Prepared to provide assistance if the assistant referee is unable to indicate direction (method discussed in the pre-game conference)

### Assistant Referee

- Signals with flag 45 degrees upward in the direction of the throw-in
- If the ball passes out of play and immediately returns to the field, signals with a vertical flag until acknowledged by the referee, then flags in the direction of the throw-in
- Drops flag when it is clear that restart and direction are established
- If the referee does not see it, maintains the signal in accordance with the pre-game conference
- Moves to the second to last defender, unless this is the thrower, in which case moves slightly down field from the thrower until the ball is in play
- Supervises throw-in elements per pre-game conference



*Note: Assistant referee is between the thrower and goal line, regardless of direction of the throw*





# OFFSIDE

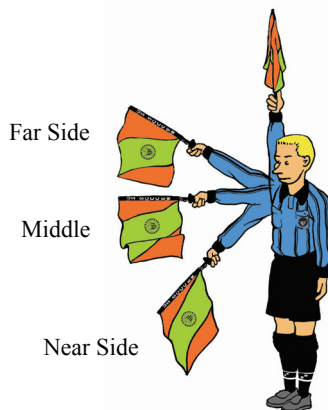


## Referee

- Acknowledges the assistant referee's signal by stopping play or by waving down the flag to indicate play should continue
- If offside is called, gives an indirect free kick signal when it is appropriate to do so and indicates the restart
- Holds the indirect free kick signal from the moment of the restart to when the ball is touched or played by another player or until play is stopped for another reason
- Intervenes quickly and decisively to prevent and deal with players from either team who seek to engage an assistant referee in debate regarding an offside decision

## Lead Assistant Referee

- Raises the flag vertically with the right hand
- If the referee misses the flag, stays at attention with the flag raised until the defense gains clear possession or until a goal kick or throw-in is awarded to the defense
- After making eye contact with the referee, indicates the location of the offense by dropping the flag at an appropriate angle to a point in the field (far, middle, near side)



*Note: For recommended position, see diagrams for free kick restarts*



# GOAL KICK



## Referee

- Signals stoppage of play (whistle only if necessary) if ball crosses referee's side of the goal line
- Points to the goal area



- Takes a position down the field near where the ball is likely to be played (based on skill and strength of the players and observation of prior goal kicks)
- Estimates drop point by observing player behavior (does not look up to spot the ball in the air)

## Assistant Referee

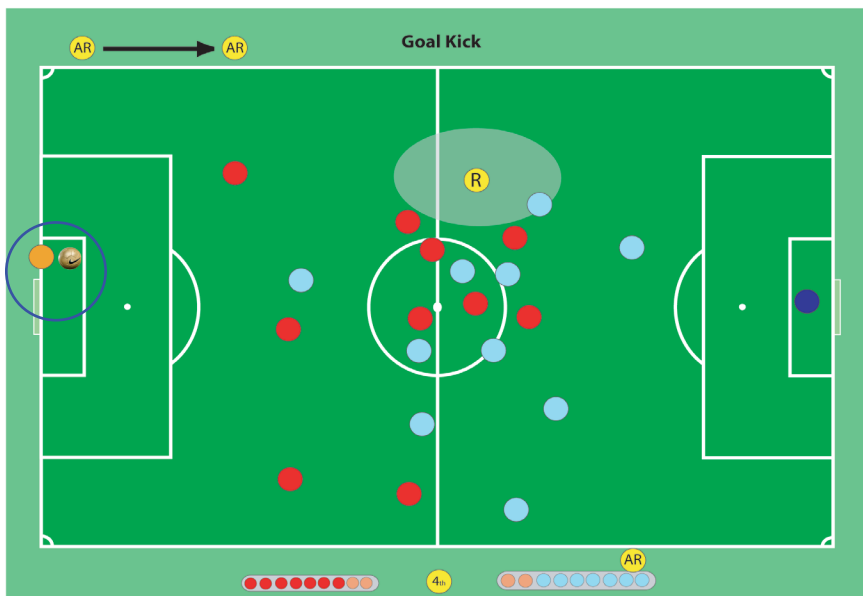
- Points flag horizontally (right hand) toward goal area if ball crosses assistant referee's side of the goal line or if referee makes eye contact to ask for assistance



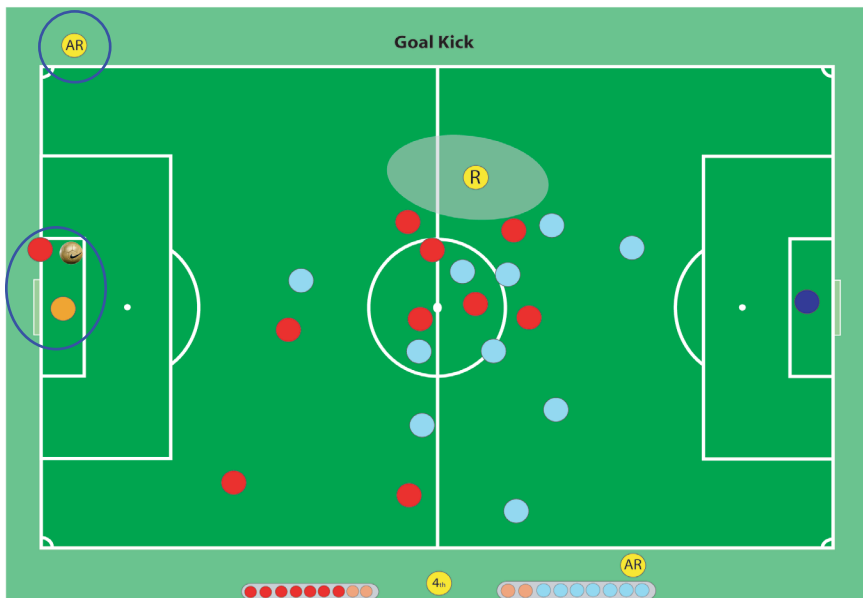
- Provides confirming flag signal (right hand) after referee indicates a goal kick restart when ball crosses referee's side of goal line
- If the ball passes out of play and immediately returns to the field, signals with a vertical flag (right hand) until acknowledged by the referee, then points flag horizontally toward goal area
- Moves to top of goal area to check for proper placement of ball
- If the keeper is taking the goal kick, moves to a position to judge offside
- If a defender other than the goalkeeper is taking the kick, stays with the second to last defender
- Moves to top of penalty area, when needed, to verify that no one plays the ball before it leaves the penalty area and that no attacker encroaches into the penalty area before the ball is in play
- Prepared to adjust position if team changes goal kick tactics (e.g., playing the ball short to the side of the penalty area)



# GOAL KICK



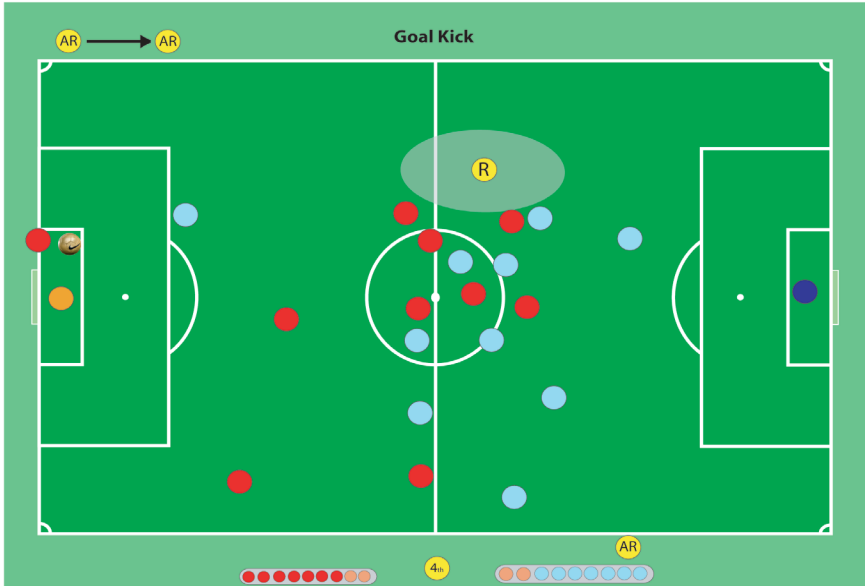
Goalkeeper takes kick



Defender takes the kick



# GOAL KICK



**Defender takes the kick - Attacker near edge of penalty area**



# CORNER KICK

## Referee's Side Of Field



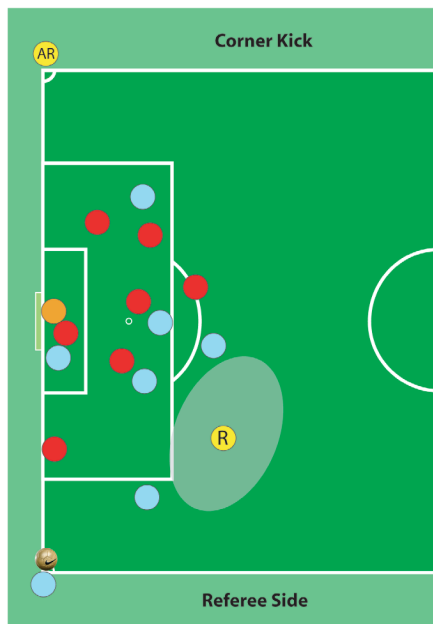
### Referee

- Signals stoppage of play (whistle only if necessary)
- Points 45 degrees upward toward the left (referee) corner
- Ensures that the ball is properly placed within the corner arc
- Enforces the required distance if necessary
- Varies from the recommended position (see diagram) if needed to focus on potential conflicts among players, to control interference with the goalkeeper, or to prepare for an unusual team tactic on the restart (e.g., "short" corner)



### Assistant Referee

- Provides confirming flag signal (45 degrees downward toward near corner) after referee indicates a corner kick when ball crosses referee's side of goal
- If referee makes obvious eye contact to ask for assistance on correct restart, signals for corner kick and maintains the signal as referee indicates decision
- If the ball passes out of play and immediately returns to the field, signals with a vertical flag until acknowledged by the referee, then gives the corner kick flag signal
- Steps upfield from goal line to avoid pointing the flag off the field
- Moves to the near corner and takes position on the goal line behind the flag
- Following the kick, recovers to the offside position as quickly as possible







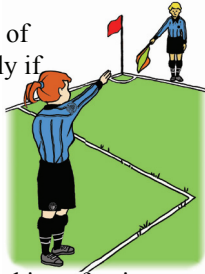
# CORNER KICK

## Assistant Referee's Side Of Field



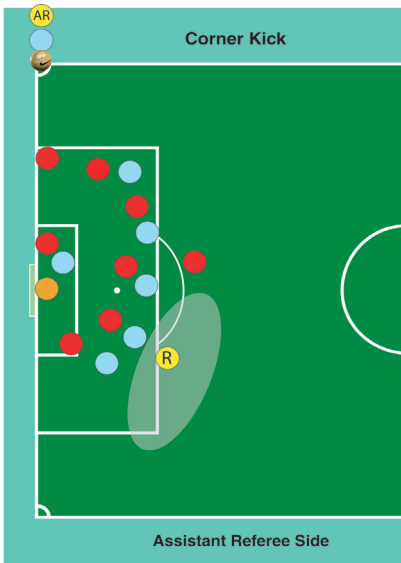
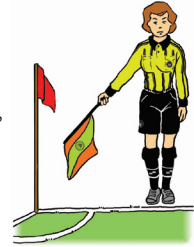
### Referee

- Signals stoppage of play (whistle only if necessary)
- Points 45 degrees upward toward the right (AR) corner
- Becomes involved in enforcing the required distance only if encroaching defenders are not responding to the assistant referee's directions
- Varies from the recommended position (see diagram) if needed to focus on potential conflicts among players, to control interference with the goalkeeper, or to prepare for an unusual team tactic on the restart (e.g., "short" corner)



### Assistant Referee

- If the ball passes out of play and immediately returns to the field, signals with a vertical flag until acknowledged by the referee, then points the flag 45 degrees downward in the direction of the near corner
- Steps upfield from goal line to avoid pointing the flag off the field
- Ensures that the ball is properly placed
- Takes a position in line with the goal line but far enough back to be out of the way of the player taking the corner kick
- Assists with enforcing the required distance based on pre-game conference
- Following the kick, recovers to the offside position as quickly as possible





# GOAL



## Referee

- Checks visually with the assistant referee
- Ensures that view of assistant referee is maintained long enough to see a signal for a goal in cases where the ball is being played close to the goal and may have briefly but fully entered the goal
- Points up field and, only when satisfied that the teams are disengaged and further attention on the goal area is not needed, backpedals toward center circle
- Prevents unnecessarily prolonged celebration
- Intervenes quickly in situations in which players or bench personnel attempt to confront assistant referees
- Records goal when in position for kick-off
- Makes eye contact with both assistant referees before signaling for the kick-off to occur

## Lead Assistant Referee

- If the ball briefly but fully enters the goal and is continuing to be played, raises the flag vertically to get the referee's attention and then, after the referee stops play, puts flag straight down and follows the remaining procedures for a goal
- If the ball clearly enters the goal without returning to the field, establishes eye contact with the referee and follows the remaining procedures for a goal
- Runs a short distance up the touch line toward the halfway line to affirm that a goal has been scored
- Keeps moving to avoid confrontation if approached
- Observes the resulting player behavior and the actions in and around the penalty area
- Takes up the position for a kick-off
- Keeps players under observation at all times
- Records the goal after the trail assistant referee has recorded it



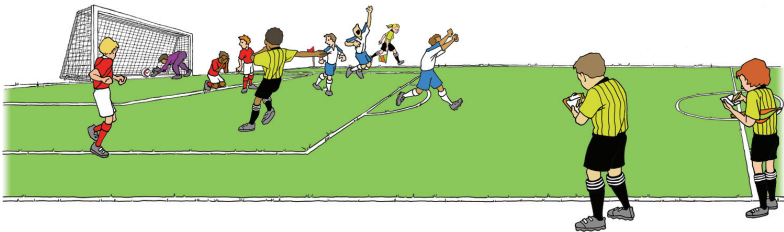


# GOAL



## Trail Assistant Referee

- Records the goal while the referee and lead assistant referee are returning to their positions for the restart
- Observes players while the referee and lead assistant referee make notes
- Keeps moving to avoid confrontation if approached



## Fourth Official

- Records the time and immediate circumstances of all goals (may seek assistance on this information from team officials or bench personnel)
- Checks both bench areas to ensure that non-players are not entering the field
- If celebrating players approach their bench area, encourages them to prepare for kick-off restart without excessive delay



# GOAL

## Apparent Goal To Be Disallowed



### Referee

- Checks visually with the assistant referee
- Confers with assistant referee if further information is believed needed (maintain focus on the field while doing so)
- Signals the correct restart
- Goes to the appropriate referee position for this restart
- Intervenes quickly to prevent attempts by players or others to confront an assistant referee

### Lead Assistant Referee

- Stands in place
- Signals the referee according to the situation
  - ♦ If the *scorer was offside* at the moment the ball was passed to him or her, **signals offside**
  - ♦ If there was a *foul by an attacker*, stands at **attention with the flag held straight down at the side**
  - ♦ If a player *other than the scorer was in an offside position* and, in the opinion of the assistant referee, was *interfering with play or with an opponent*, stands at **attention with the flag held straight down at the side**
  - ♦ Assumes the proper position for the restart indicated by the referee
- Is prepared to signal referee in accordance with pregame discussion if further information needs to be given to assist in making the correct decision



# FOULS

## Observed By Referee



### Referee

- Stops the game with a whistle
- Moves to the spot of the foul if necessary to prevent possible retaliation or misconduct
- Makes eye contact with the lead assistant referee if needed for assistance with determining if a defender *inside the penalty area* committed the infringement
- Indicates the direction of the free kick
- Ensures that the ball is properly placed
- Allows a quick free kick, without the necessity of a separate signal, except where the kicker indicates a need to have the ten yard minimum distance requirement enforced
- Prevents the restart from occurring if a card must be shown for misconduct
- In cases where the restart is interfered with, clearly indicates that a separate signal is now required for the restart and then deals with the interference
- If the kick is indirect, gives the appropriate hand signal for the restart and holds the hand signal until the ball has been touched or played by another player or goes out of play
- Moves to the recommended position (see diagrams) based on the location of the free kick and the known and observed free kick strategies of the kicking team
- Monitors and, if necessary, intervenes to manage problems involving defenders attempting to prevent opponents from joining the “wall” or retaliating against opponents already present in the “wall”

### Lead Assistant Referee

- Responds to eye contact by the referee requesting assistance regarding the location of the foul either by standing with the flag held clearly downward at the side (to indicate that the infringement occurred outside the penalty area)



or...

By holding the flag across the lower body as shown on the right (to indicate that the infringement was committed by the defense inside its penalty area)



- Per pre-game conference, assists in enforcing the required minimum distance if closer to the restart location
- Takes position to assist with offside on the free kick and monitors other player actions in accordance with the pregame conference

### Fourth Official

- Monitors team officials and substitutes on the bench in critical situations where there might be an attempt to enter the field, prevents such entry if possible and identifies for subsequent referee action any persons who do enter the field unbeckoned by the referee



# FOULS

## Not Seen By The Referee But Indicated By Lead Assistant Referee



### Referee

- Acknowledges the assistant referee's signal by stopping play, calling advantage or waving down the signal to indicate that play should continue
- If play is stopped for the foul, indicates the direction of the free kick and ensures that the free kick is taken properly
- Makes eye contact with the assistant referee and the fourth official to determine if misconduct associated with the foul has been observed
- Confers with assistant referee, if necessary, to confirm the nature of the infringement and the possibility of a prior infringement or additional misconduct (keeps field in view while moving to touch line and while conferring)

### Fourth Official

- Monitors team officials and substitutes on the bench in critical situations where there might be an attempt to enter the field, prevents such entry if possible and identifies for subsequent referee action any persons who do enter the field unbeckoned by the referee
- If misconduct is observed associated with the foul, makes eye contact with the referee and advises either a yellow card by placing a hand over the badge on the left jersey pocket or a red card by placing a hand on a back pocket on the shorts

### Lead Assistant Referee

- Determines that the infringement was not or could not be seen by the referee and that, per the pregame conference, the referee would likely have stopped play for the infringement if it had been seen
- Signals with the flag raised vertically in the hand appropriate for the restart direction and, after making eye contact with the referee, gives the flag a slight wave
- If the referee stops play, signals with the flag held 45 degrees upward in the direction of the restart if the foul was committed by any player outside of the penalty area or by an attacker inside the penalty area
- If misconduct is observed associated with the foul, makes eye contact with the referee and advises either a yellow card by placing the free hand over the badge on the left jersey pocket or a red card by placing the free hand on a back pocket on the shorts
- Indicates the location of the restart if necessary
- If the referee does not see the signal, continues to hold the flag straight upward in accordance with the pregame conference
- Per pre-game conference, assists in enforcing the required minimum distance if closer to the restart location
- Takes position to assist with offside on the free kick and monitors other player actions in accordance with the pre-game conference



### Trail Assistant Referee

- Mirrors the lead assistant referee's flag signal if this is not seen by the referee and, upon making eye contact with the referee, directs the referee's attention to the lead assistant referee



# FOULS

## Not Seen By The Referee But Indicated By Trail Assistant Referee



### Referee

- Stops the game with a whistle
- Confers with assistant referee, if necessary, to confirm the nature of the infringement and the possibility of a prior infringement or additional misconduct (keeps field in view while moving to touch line and while conferring)
- Deals with the incident as appropriate
- Indicates the location and direction of the restart
- Signals for the restart and ensures that the free kick is taken properly



### Trail Assistant Referee

- Determines that the infringement was not or could not be seen by the referee and that, per the pregame conference, the referee would likely have stopped play for the infringement if it had been seen
- Signals with the flag raised vertically in the hand appropriate for the restart direction and, after making eye contact with the referee, gives the flag a slight wave
- If the referee stops play, signals with the flag held 45 degrees upward in the direction of the restart if the foul was committed by any player outside of the penalty area or by an attacker inside the penalty area
- If the referee does not see the signal, continues to hold the flag straight upward in accordance with the pregame conference
- Takes position to assist with offside on the free kick and monitors other player actions in accordance with the pregame conference

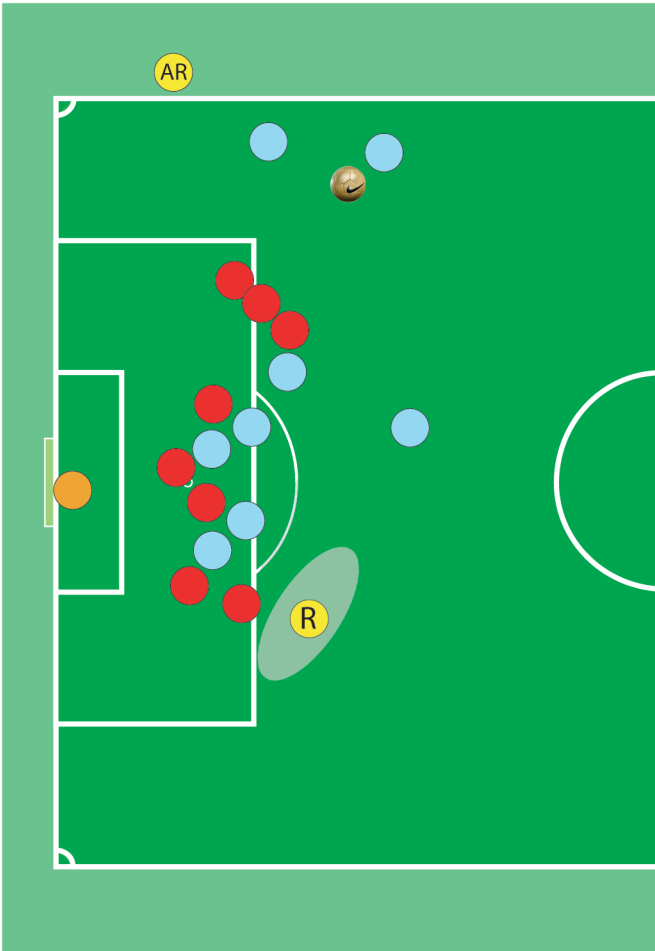
### Lead Assistant Referee

- Mirrors the trail assistant referee's flag signal if this is not seen by the referee and, upon making eye contact with the referee, directs the referee's attention to the lead assistant referee



# FREE KICKS

## General Positioning

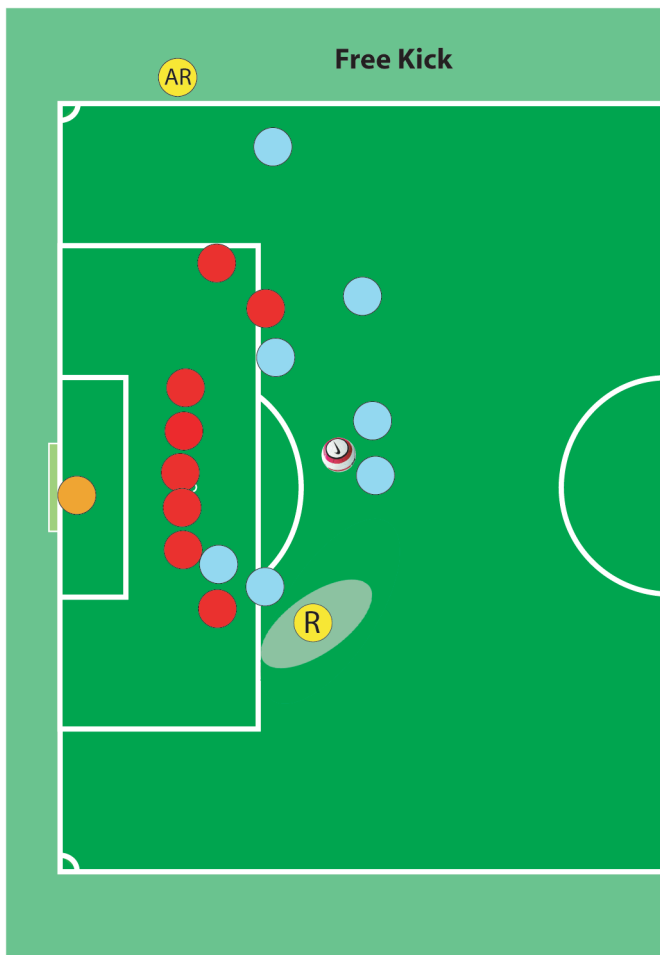






# FREE KICKS

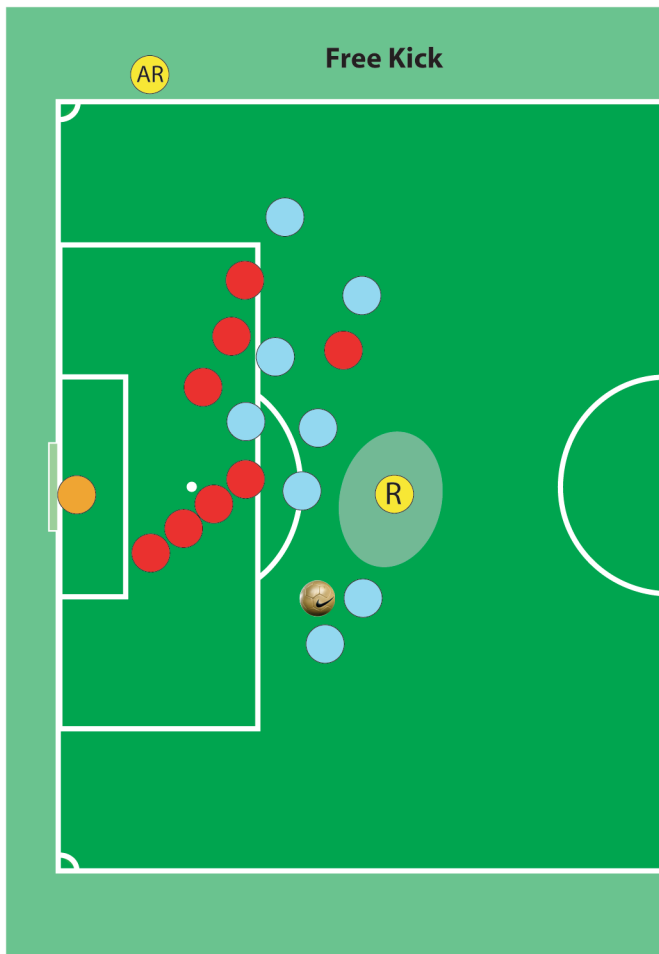
## General Positioning





# FREE KICKS

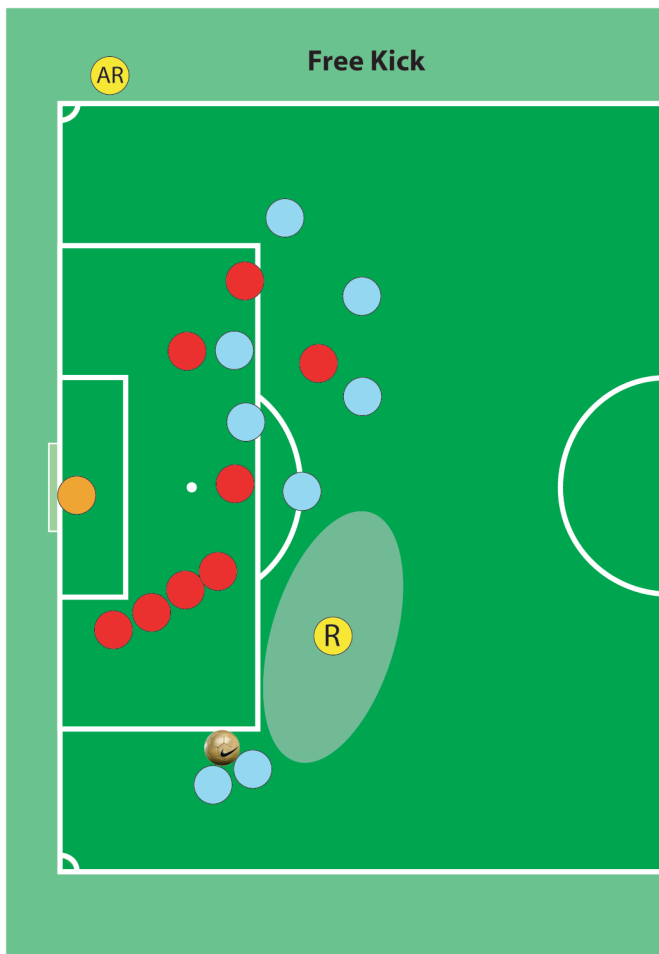
## General Positioning





# FREE KICKS

## General Positioning





# PLAY ON

## Advantage Applied



### Referee

- Declares distinctly “Play on!” or “Advantage!” and moves both hands forward in a sweeping motion at waist level



- Avoids an advantage signal when an incident has been observed which is judged not to be a foul (or a trifling or doubtful foul)

### Assistant Referee

- In the case of fouls or misconduct not seen by the referee, determines whether the referee would not have applied advantage and stopped play for the offense if it had been seen (keeps flag down and does not use the verbal/hand signal for advantage)
- Brings to the referee’s attention any offenses on which the referee should act in some way but for which the assistant referee did not signal at the time the offense occurred (this must be done no later than the next stoppage if the information involves misconduct)

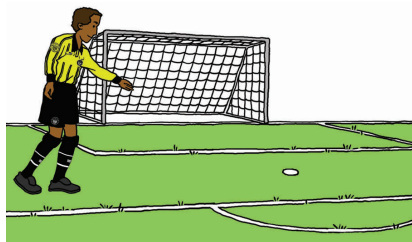


# PENALTY KICK



## Referee

- Whistles to stop play
- Points clearly to the penalty mark and, unless needed elsewhere for game control purposes, moves to the edge of the penalty area near the goal line to discourage confrontation and dissent



- Deals with players who may attempt to protest or dispute the decision
- Intervenes quickly and decisively to prevent and deal with players who attempt to engage an assistant referee in debate regarding the penalty kick decision
- Supervises the placement of the ball
- Identifies the kicker
- Moves to the recommended position (see diagram next page)
- When the ball and all the players are properly in position, signals for the kick to be taken
- If a goal is scored, backpedals quickly up field keeping the area in front of the goal and other players under observation
- If a goal is not scored, quickly takes a position appropriate for restart or next play of the ball

## Lead Assistant Referee

- Moves to the recommended position (see diagram next page)
- Assists the referee in determining whether a goal is scored and whether the goalkeeper has moved illegally
- If the goalkeeper moved illegally and thus prevented a goal from being scored, stays in position and signals by holding the flag across the lower body as shown
- If a goal is scored, keeps players under observation and follows the normal goal procedure
- If play continues, quickly resumes the position to judge offside (cutting the corner of the field if necessary) and keeps play in view



## Trail Assistant Referee

- Moves to near the midfield line and monitors player activities out of the view of the referee
- If a goal is not scored, quickly takes a position appropriate for the next phase of play

## Fourth Official

- Records pertinent details of the event related to the penalty kick decision, to assist in the preparation of the match report
- Monitors team officials and substitutes on the bench in critical situations where there might be an attempt to enter the field, prevents such entry if possible and identifies for subsequent referee action any persons who do enter the field unbeckoned by the referee



# PENALTY KICK

## Indicated By The Assistant Referee

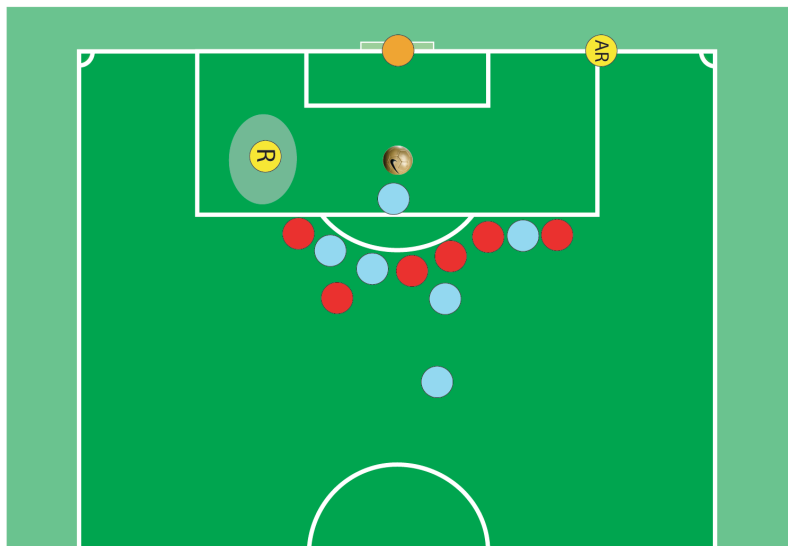


### Referee

- Stops the game
- Points clearly to the penalty mark
- Follows the normal procedures for a penalty kick
- Quickly intervenes to prevent and control player attempts to confront the assistant referee regarding the decision

### Assistant Referee

- Determines that the direct free kick foul by a defender inside the penalty area was not seen by the referee and that, per the pregame conference, the referee would likely have stopped play for the foul if it had been seen
- Signals with a flag straight up
- Upon making eye contact with the referee, gives the flag a slight wave
- If referee stops game, assistant referee first indicates penalty kick by holding flag across the lower body and then begins walking toward the corner flag
- Takes the appropriate position either for the penalty kick if confirmed by the referee or for the next phase of play if the referee orders a different restart





# MISCONDUCT

## Play Stopped Immediately



### Referee

- Makes clear verbally and/or by pointing to the whistle that play may not be restarted except by the referee's signal
- Quickly identifies and begins moving toward offending player while beckoning the player to approach
- Attempts to draw offending player away from teammates and opponents
- Discourages others from approaching, interfering or participating
- Stops a reasonable distance away from offending player and begins recording necessary information
- States clearly and concisely that the player is being cautioned or sent from the field and displays the appropriate card by holding it straight overhead
- If the player is being sent off, delays the restart of play until the player has left the field entirely
- In situations where the event or conduct being penalized includes the potential for retaliation or further misconduct, immediately moves to the location of the misconduct and displays the appropriate card before recording any information



### Assistant Referees

- Prevent others on or off the field from interfering with the referee's procedures
- Record any pertinent information to assist with subsequent reporting of the misconduct
- Monitor the departure from the field of a player sent off

### Fourth Official

- Records pertinent information for any card displayed or for a team official ordered from the field for irresponsible behavior
- If a player is sent off (shown a red card), ensures that the player exits the field entirely and conforms to competition authority requirements for further removal from the area of the field (utilizes field marshal, match official or security staff to assist if necessary)



# MISCONDUCT

## Play Not Stopped Immediately



### Referee

- Gives the advantage signal (verbal and arms swept upward to waist) and, if possible, verbally identifies the player who has committed misconduct
- At the next stoppage, regardless of its cause, directs the attacking team to wait for a signal before the restart, returns to the player who committed misconduct and follows the appropriate procedure
- Includes in the match report any instances of player misconduct which were not handled in accordance with the requirement that the card must be displayed no later than the next stoppage
- Displays the appropriate card upon the ending of a period of play if that is the stoppage which follows the occurrence of the misconduct

### Assistant Referee

- Takes note of the player identified by the referee and, if necessary or requested by the referee, provides additional information regarding the misconduct at the next stoppage of play

### Fourth Official

- Keeps track of players to whose misconduct the referee has applied advantage and, per pre-game conference, assists the referee in dealing with the misconduct at the next stoppage
- Records information for cards issued for misconduct or for actions by the referee regarding irresponsible behavior by team officials
- If a player is sent off (shown a red card), ensures that the player exits the field entirely and conforms to competition authority requirements for further removal from the area of the field (utilize field marshal, match official or security staff to assist if necessary)
- Records information on violent behavior not seen by the referee or assistant referees, brings this information to the attention of the referee or nearest assistant referee at the earliest opportunity and includes appropriate details in the 4th official's match report





# SUBSTITUTIONS



## Referee

- Indicates that the restart will be delayed for substitution and cannot occur except by the referee's whistle
- When the player has left the field, beckons on the substitute
- Takes into account time lost due to excessive delay in performing the substitution
- Does not permit the substitution if the substitute is not prepared to enter the field or if the team in possession on the restart is prepared to restart quickly

## Assistant Referee

- Gives the substitution signal and holds it until eye contact is made with the referee
- Other assistant referee mirrors the signal if the referee is not looking in the necessary direction, directs the referee's attention to the opposite side of the field when eye contact is made
- When acknowledged by the referee, lowers the flag
- If no 4th official:
  - Supervises the substitution in accordance with pregame conference
  - Ensures that the substitute does not enter the field until the player being replaced has left the field
  - Checks equipment, uniform and credentials if the substitute was not present at the start of the match
- Assists the referee in determining when the substitution is complete based on the pregame conference





# SUBSTITUTIONS



## Fourth Official

- Confirms substitute:
  - ♦ Is listed on the official roster
  - ♦ Has an authentic substitution pass
  - ♦ Equipment conforms to Law 4
- Stands at halfway line with substitute slightly behind and on bench side
  - ♦ If both teams are requesting a substitution, keeps the substitutes on their respective bench sides
  - ♦ Performs substitution procedures below for each team separately
- If a numbers kit or board is being used, displays the number of the player being substituted and number of the substitute entering the field
- Requires the substitute to hold the substitution pass until entry to the field is permitted
- When the substitution request is acknowledged, makes sure the substitute does not enter the field until the exiting player has completely left the field
- Takes the substitution pass before allowing the player on the field
- Records the time and the player entering and leaving the field of play for the match report





# TIMING



## Referee

- Makes eye contact with 4th official and assistant referees to coordinate and confirm time remaining in the period of play
- Within the last 2 minutes of regulation time, conveys to the 4th official (or senior assistant referee in the absence of a 4th official) any allowance for time lost, expressed to the closest lower whole minute of additional playing time (e.g., 1 minute 30 seconds expressed as 1 minute)
- Adds further time, without announcement, if more time is lost thereafter

## Assistant Referee

- Indicates time within the last 5 minutes with appropriate number of fingers pointing downward against the background of the shorts
- Displays closed fist on the shorts if time has expired
- If the referee might have difficulty seeing a signal against the shorts, signals instead against the jersey across the chest
- In the absence of a 4th official, senior assistant referee advises both technical areas at the end of each period of play of the referee's decision regarding additional playing time

## Fourth Official

- Assists referee in keeping track of time remaining in the half
- Ensures that his answer to any question from bench or technical area regarding amount of time remaining is clearly understood to be only an unofficial approximation
- If a numbers kit/board is not available, advises both technical areas at the end of each period of play of the referee's decision regarding additional playing time

## HALFTIME BREAK

### Referee Team

- If possible, meet at location agreed in pregame conference to exit the field together
- 4th official gathers equipment (records, paperwork, sign board or kit, etc.) before joining the referee team
- 4th official (or other referee team official, per pre-game conference) secures the game ball and replacement balls
- Halftime conference focuses on:
  - ◆ Significant match events
  - ◆ Specific player behaviors and team strategies
  - ◆ Adjustments needed for the second half
  - ◆ Confirmation of details regarding goals and cards
- 4th official checks teams before the end of the halftime break to determine if any substitutions are to be recorded prior to the start of the second half





# END OF GAME



## Referee

- Signals with the whistle
- Points up field to the center circle
- Supervises the departure of the teams from the field
- Leads the officiating team toward a neutral or safe location on the field away from players, team officials and spectators if the situation dictates

## Assistant Referees

- Join the referee on the field
- Flags are furled

## Fourth Official

- Makes sure all equipment, forms, supplies and other items brought to the field are gathered and taken while exiting
- Secures the game ball and replacement balls (unless this responsibility is reassigned in the pre-game conference)
- Moves to join the referee and assistant referees without undue delay (avoids in particular being engaged in conversation by anyone wanting to discuss events during the match)



## Referee Team

- Keeps players and team officials under observation at all times
- Leaves the field as a team after the teams have departed or have otherwise ceased all competitive activities



# MATCH DEBRIEF



## Referee, Assistant Referees and Fourth Official

- Confer regarding:
  - ♦ Reportable events occurring during the match
  - ♦ Clarify and confirm the accuracy of all reportable facts (e.g., goals scored, identity of players shown cards and other unusual incidents or conditions)
  - ♦ The timely preparation and submission of all necessary reports
- 4th official participates as a member of the referee team in all post-game reviews, discussions and assessments
  - ♦ Brings to the attention of the referee team any significant events which were not observed by the referee or assistant referees and which need to be included in the 4th official's match report
  - ♦ Assists the referee in confirming, correcting or extending matters in the game report regarding which the 4th official has additional information

## THE NATIONAL SOCCER HALL OF FAME



The mission of the National Soccer Hall of Fame is to celebrate the history, honor the heroes, inspire the youth and preserve the legacy of soccer in the United States.

The 30,000 sq. ft. Hall of Fame was opened in 1999 and tells the story of soccer in America through artifacts, photographs, and video clips and features an extensive interactive, youth oriented Kicks Zone where visitors have fun kicking, heading and playing computer trivia stations and video soccer games. Unique and rare artifacts on exhibit range from the world's oldest soccer ball to the FIFA Women's World Cup trophy won by the USA in 1999, Pele's and Mia Hamm's uniforms, Kristine Lilly's golden shoes, NASL championship rings and the original MLS championship trophy. It's all at the National Soccer Hall of Fame.

In addition to the interactive Museum, the National Soccer Hall of Fame complex boasts the Kicks Hall of Fame Museum Shop, a research library, four world-class soccer fields and office/meeting facilities.

The National Soccer Hall of Fame is open every day of the year, except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. We encourage you to visit the Hall and celebrate US Soccer's rich history.

National Soccer Hall of Fame  
18 Stadium  
Oneonta, NY 13820  
☎ (607) 432-3351  
Oneonta, New York  
**WWW.SOCCERHALL.ORG**

This book is an official publication of the U.S. Soccer Referee Department.  
For more information visit the Referee Section at [ussoccer.com](http://ussoccer.com).

# ussoccer.com

## Official U.S. Soccer Sponsors



## Official U.S. Soccer Suppliers



®