

"Fair Play"

Vol. 15, Issue 3 - November 2005

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1) FROM REFEREE TO COACH/MENTOR

By Sandra Hunt

In 2003, U.S. Soccer's Referee Department began an initiative within the Assessment Program known as the "Coach/Mentor Program." The goal of the Coach/Mentor Program is to help the development of referees by preparing assessors to act more as coaches and mentors in their interaction with referees.

While the development of referees has always been the mission of the assessment program, sometimes that mission is lost in the need to pass critical judgment on a referee's performance and issue a pass or fail score. A coach/mentor or assessor still issues a pass or fail score, but there is a greater emphasis on developing the referee – examining what went wrong in the game, how it went wrong, how things could be done different and how to improve.

There are currently 21 Coach/ Mentors within the assessment program, all of whom had distinguished careers at the highest level while active referees. Coach/Mentors often attend Referee Academies, clinics, tournaments and other events to work with less experienced officials during the earlier stages of their career.

The program is currently being used in professional league games with a small group of National Assessors and the referees who are working those games. One of the most noticeable differences is the pre-game "coaching" which takes place between the officiating crew and the Coach/Mentor. Another job of a Coach/Mentor is to identify referees they feel have potential to participate at the highest levels of the sport in the United States.

Often for MLS games, Coach/Mentors arrive into the city early enough to join the referee crew for a pre-game lunch where information is exchanged to ensure the proper pre-game homework has been accomplished. It is expected that the lunches will improve the crew's teamwork during the match. For games where the Coach/Mentor is not in the city, phone contact is made between the referee and C/M prior to the match. For these games, an In-Stadium Observer (ISO) is used to compile an on-site report of the match. ISO's are also experienced National Assessors. The ISO and Coach/Mentor are in contact with each other following the game, sharing information before the formal assessment is completed.

At the end of each match the Coach/Mentor talks with the crew and provides feedback and suggestions. The Coach/Mentors also complete an online assessment including a score for the referee and the assistant referees in the same format as all other referee assessments within U.S. Soccer.

Fair Play asked Robert Sabella, Ali Saheli and Mohammad Zarrabi, three of the newest National Assessors trained with the Coach/Mentor concept, a few questions about their new role. When not acting as a National Assessor, Sabella, of Antioch, Calif, is a pilot for Japan Airlines. Saheli, who lives in Columbia, Mo., is a computer programmer and analyst at the University of Missouri, Columbia, and Zarrabi, who lives in Woodinville, Wash., is a procurement planner with Boeing Company.

Q. What is most difficult in transitioning from active referee to the role of Coach/Mentor?

RS: "Switching from player to ref was hard, to assessor was harder, especially after spending 16 years as a referee. I was still thinking and feeling like a referee until I was invited by my very patient, and current, Coach/Mentor, Farhad Mansourian, to every game he was assessing. He makes sure I am learning and transforming slowly but surely."

AS: "The challenge, in my opinion, is in the re-definition of relationships and roles. We have to build on old and new relationships and convey the message that only working towards the same goals guarantees our success. As long as each party keeps this goal as one of the main and most important goals and there is mutual respect, the rest will fall in place smoothly."

MZ: "The most difficult part, for me, in transitioning from referee to assessor is the change from judging players' conduct and performance to judging the conduct and performance of my fellow referees. Another challenge is learning to communicate with fellow referees most effectively so they learn something useful from each game."

Q. Your observations in the first year of being a Coach/Mentor?

RS: "I would like to assure everyone concerned that the response from the referees I have worked with so far is that this Coach/Mentor program supersedes the old hammering style. I believe our future results will show that we are developing better Referees with the Coach/Mentor program."

AS: "The key issue, which is individual coaching, is emphasized. It is fundamental and the backbone of this program. It requires patience and full participation from all individuals: Coach/Mentors, referees and, especially, administrators to ensure our success.

"Referee to Coach/Mentor is similar to a soccer coach and his/her players in the way they combine forces to tackle their obstacles and pursue solutions. It requires openness and trust between all parties."

MZ: "To do this job right there are many responsibilities. Meeting with the Referees, watching the matches, writing the reports and assessments all take a lot of time. I like that Coach/Mentor's form more of a relationship with the Referees they work with locally and often

nationally. This program allows us to be more involved in the long-term development of referees. I am glad I was given the opportunity. I am working to become better at the job as I gain more experience.”

Q. Since “Mentor” is part of your designation, were there people who mentored to you as you were gaining experience as a referee?

RS: “Just a couple of years into my referee career I fell into the ‘brutal hands’ of a great mentor/FIFA assistant referee, George Noujaim. He taught me that a very good job was simply not good enough. Additional special thanks to Fernando Alvarez, Dave Jones, Farhad Mansourian and Esse Baharmast, for believing in my ability and their support during the different stages of my career.”

AS: “There were many people who helped coach me throughout my referee career. People like Dr. Richard Warder, Dr. Jim McCartney and Gebe Egigu in the early stages. Casey Frankewicz, Dr. Holly Hollingsworth and Dr. Herb Silva gave me a chance in the professional games. Fernando Alvarez shared so much of his knowledge and experience as I moved from professional referee to international referee. Dr. Mort Sajadian, Farhad Mansourian and Dr. Moz Rahmatpanah. Of course my brother Amir - we spent hours on the phone about my games. Aside from all those mentioned, there was one more that helped shape me more than anyone else. His patience, dedication, work ethic and high standards were a big force and guiding light: Esse Baharmast.”

MZ: “There are so many people to whom I am grateful. Without their help I would not have been successful on the field. Of course the national and local programs were essential to my growth and development starting out and continuing through this day. At the national and international level, of course, I admired Esse Baharmast and what he stood for. He accomplished great things for all American referees. For many years locally, I was supported and advised by Mr. Bob Pettingill, retired SDA of Washington. Also, I enjoyed the support and camaraderie of a wonderful group of National Referees from Washington State for many years. Frank Gorog, Sandy Hunt, Oscar Myre III, Mohammad Saghakhaneh and myself worked, studied and trained together for many years.”

Q. Are you involved in other roles within USSF?

RS: “I also mentor, instruct and assess with local up-and-coming referees in both Cal North and my adopted home state, Alaska.”

AS: “I have been an instructor for nine years, an assignor for seven years, serve on the Missouri State Referee Committee and assist the Missouri State Referee Administrator as a District Administrator.”

MZ: “I am still a registered referee but I only referee local youth and lower-level amateur games now. I am also a registered instructor.”

One of the goals of the Coach/Mentor Program is to utilize top level experience as a National or FIFA Referee to train and develop the next generation of referees hoping to move into those top assignments. The U.S. Soccer National Program for Referee Development will also utilize many

of these same individuals as the instructional and assessment support assigned to the regional and national events of U.S. Soccer's affiliated members.

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2) PLAYING THE BALL IN THE GOALKEEPER'S POSSESSION

By Jim Allen, National Instructor Staff

This article is designed to help make referees and players aware of what constitutes goalkeeper possession and what opponents may and may not do when the goalkeeper has possession.

What Does "Possession" Mean?

While the ball is in the possession of the goalkeeper, it cannot be played by an opponent. Any attempt to do so may be punished by a direct free kick. "In the possession of the goalkeeper" is defined as the goalkeeper having the ball trapped between one hand and a surface (which may include the other hand, the ground, a goalpost, or the keeper's own body). International Board Decision Two of Law 12 emphasizes that the hand includes any part of the hand or arm.

However, as stated in the Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game (Advice 12.16 and 12.17), the goalkeeper is also considered to be in possession of the ball while bouncing it on the ground or while throwing it into the air. Possession is given up if, while throwing the ball into the air, it is allowed to strike the ground.

Once the goalkeeper has gained possession (also known as "control") of the ball, an opponent may not interfere with or block the goalkeeper's distribution of the ball. For example, players have a right to maintain a position achieved during the normal course of play, but they may not try to block the goalkeeper's movement while he or she is holding the ball and trying to distribute it. Nor may opposing players do anything to hinder, interfere with, or block a goalkeeper who is throwing or punting the ball back into play. The goalkeeper has already gained possession and is granted up to six seconds to release the ball back into play by other players. A goalkeeper in the act of distributing the ball may not be challenged under these circumstances. (This includes trying to head a ball out of the goalkeeper's open hand or playing a ball being bounced or tossed into the air by the goalkeeper.) An opponent does not violate the Law, however, if that player takes advantage of a ball clearly released by the goalkeeper directly to him or her, in his or her direction, or deflecting off him or her nonviolently.

When is Possession Lost?

The critical question is when the goalkeeper has released the ball into play and thus has allowed the ball to be played by an opponent. Based on traditional interpretations of this issue and the International Board's Questions and Answers, the referee should consider the ball as having been released into play after leaving the goalkeeper's hands only if the goalkeeper has completed a throw or kick (punt) and the goalkeeper is not able directly to possess the ball again in his or her hands. Thus, the ball is not playable by an opponent during the entire time it is being held by the goalkeeper (including when the ball is being bounced on the ground) or during the entire process of being released into play (including the action of throwing or kicking/punting the ball). In

short, opponents may play the ball only if the goalkeeper has clearly distributed the ball by kicking or throwing it.

"Parrying" Versus "Saving"

The concept of "parrying" is still in the Law; however, parrying is no longer seen at the higher levels of play, because it is no longer an effective tool for the goalkeeper, who has only six seconds to distribute the ball after achieving possession. "Parrying" should not be confused with making a "save." "Parrying" occurs when the goalkeeper controls the ball with the hands by pushing it to an area where it can be played later. By parrying the ball, the goalkeeper has done two things simultaneously: (1) established control and (2) given up possession. The ball is now free for all to play and the goalkeeper may not play it again with the hands. Referees must watch carefully to see that the goalkeeper does not use a parry (disguised as a "save") in an attempt to hide the fact that he or she has established possession.

When the Goalkeeper Releases the Ball

Since the overhaul of the Laws in 1997, other players may not attempt to play the ball while the goalkeeper has possession of the ball or is attempting to release the ball so that others may play it. Attempting to do so with the foot is punished as either kicking or attempting to kick. The goalkeeper gives up possession if, while throwing the ball into the air, he allows it to strike the ground. The goalkeeper also gives up possession by clearly releasing it for general play. It is playable in such a case as soon as it hits the ground. (NOTE: The released ball must hit the ground to be playable. If the goalkeeper is punting the ball, the opponent may not interfere or attempt to play the ball.) Any attempt to kick the ball while it is in the possession of the 'keeper may be punished by a direct free kick (and may be subject to caution or send-off, depending on the circumstances).

If the goalkeeper has control—but not full possession—by means other than the hands (e.g., dribbling with the feet or holding the ball against the ground with his body or feet), an opponent may challenge the goalkeeper in any permissible way. As there are very few permissible ways to play a ball trapped by the goalkeeper's body or legs, the goalkeeper must either release the ball immediately or rise and play the ball immediately. Failure to do so could result in the awarding of an indirect free kick against the goalkeeper for playing dangerously, and, if this illegal control persists, possibly a caution and yellow card for unsporting behavior.

Why Are These Provisions Important?

These provisions are important because the IFAB wants the ball to be playable as much and for as long as possible. Anything that reduces legal challenges for the ball must be strictly limited. That is why there are rules against the goalkeeper establishing second possession (also known as second touch) or handling a ball that has been deliberately kicked to him or her by a teammate, handling on a throw-in from a teammate, and even the basic limitation of six seconds. They are all designed to keep to a minimum the time an opponent may not challenge for the ball.

What the Referee Looks For

The referee's perception of goalkeeper possession should be tempered by the players' skill level. At very young ages, possession of the ball should be defined broadly to include having a hand on the ball, other than purely incidental contact. Once the goalkeeper is in possession of the ball,

opponents must stop challenging or attempting to play the ball. Any attempt to kick, head, knee, or otherwise play the ball in the goalkeeper's possession must be considered as an action directed at the goalkeeper and therefore should be considered as a direct free kick offense. If contact is made, the referee might consider that the kicking player committed serious foul play and might then send off the player and show the red card.

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3) QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Feinting at a Penalty Kick

Q. May a player taking a penalty kick stop and restart his/her approach to the ball? I've seen MLS games recently and penalty kicks have been scored and counted twice after the kicker came to a complete stop before finishing his run to the ball and then shooting. Not only was it counted, but the question about the approach wasn't even brought up in the analysis of the kick.

A. FIFA clarified in 2002 that the kicker may seek to misdirect (or feint) at the taking of a penalty kick. USSF, in a memo dated October 14, 2004 on this subject, identified four specific actions by the kicker that could constitute misconduct:

- delays unnecessarily after being signaled by the referee to proceed,
- runs past the ball and then backs up to take the kick,
- excessively changes direction during the run to the ball, or
- makes any motion of the hand or arm which is clearly intended to misdirect the attention of the goalkeeper.

In such cases, the referee should suspend the procedure, caution the player involved, and then signal once again for the kick to be taken. If the kick has already been taken, the referee should order it retaken only if the ball enters the goal. The player must still be cautioned for his misconduct regardless of the outcome. If the kick is not to be retaken (see above), the game is restarted with an indirect free kick for the defending team where Law 14 was violated.

Subject to the judgment of the referee, anything else may be fair.

Simultaneous Offenses

Q. Law 5 says that the referee "punishes the more serious offense when a player commits more than one offense at the same time." How does that apply to the following situation: A player is standing in an offside position. The instant the ball is played by a teammate, the player in the offside position tries to collect the pass, but cannot do so because the defender reaches out and holds the player's jersey and prevents him from collecting the ball. Is this a simultaneous foul situation in which the more serious foul (for example, holding) would be enforced, or is the offside enforced?

A. The old saying remains true: a player must not be rewarded for an infringement of the Laws. Punish the offside with an indirect free kick for the opposing team and caution the defender for blatant holding (unsporting behavior).

And no, this is NOT an example of a simultaneous foul (now called "simultaneous offenses"). That reference in Law 5 is to a situation in which the SAME PLAYER commits two offenses simultaneously (in other words, the same act constitutes two different infractions of the Law). Examples: The player who just took a throw-in rushes onto the field and deliberately handles the ball (second touch plus deliberate handling; the handling takes precedence) or a player who dissents an official's decision using abusive language (caution plus red card for abusive language; the red card takes precedence).

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4) KNOW THE LAWS! – PENALTY KICK

By Alfred Kleinaitis, Manager of Referee Development and Education

Referees must read and understand the Laws of the Game to do their job properly. Even at the highest levels of the game, this is sometimes a problem, as seen in the recent World Cup qualifying match in Asia between Uzbekistan and Bahrain on Sept. 3, 2005. In that match, a referee made an extremely critical "technical" error that led to FIFA ordering the game to be replayed in its entirety, despite the fact that the winning team was the one that protested the referee's inaccurate decision. The protest was raised because the winning team wanted the game to be replayed from the moment of the error, when they should have been awarded a retake of a penalty kick. The reason was that the protesting team, Uzbekistan, wanted the extra goal in the away game against Bahrain to pad its goal difference, which was important in this two-game series. The referee's error was a critical one that quite possibly could have cost Uzbekistan a place in the 2006 World Cup. Neither team had ever qualified for the World Cup finals previously and, the winner of this series would play the fourth-place team from CONCACAF (Trinidad & Tobago) for the right to go to Germany for the 2006 FIFA World Cup.

In the initial game of the series, the referee awarded a penalty kick to Uzbekistan in the 38th minute, with Uzbekistan already leading 1-0. The Uzbek player took the kick and the ball entered the goal. However, the referee decided that one of the Uzbek's teammates had entered the penalty area before the kicker had taken the kick. The referee ruled that the goal would not be scored and ordered an indirect free kick for Bahrain.

After an Uzbek protest, FIFA ruled on Sept. 6 that the referee had clearly made a "technical error" in disallowing the Uzbekistan goal and awarding Bahrain an indirect free kick. The correct call in this situation (when a player enters the area illegally before the kick) would have been to have the penalty kick retaken. Because of this misapplication of the laws, FIFA ordered that the game would have to be replayed in its entirety.

All of this occurred because the referee apparently did not fully understand one of the two simple changes to Law 14 for 2005-2006. Referees must study and know the Laws to call the game correctly to avoid such critical errors!

What must the referee do to call Law 14 correctly?

1. The referee must look to see who infringed the Law—whether it was the kicking team or the defending team.
2. The referee must consider what the outcome of the kick was. In other words, whether the ball entered the goal or did not enter the goal.
3. The referee applies the following guide in making the decision:
 - a. If an attacker (including the kicker) infringed the Law and the ball entered the goal, the penalty kick is retaken. If the ball did not enter the goal, the referee awards an indirect free kick (from the place where the infringement occurred). (Please note that this change occurs twice in Law 14, under infringements by the kicker and infringements by a teammate of the kicker.)
 - b. If a defender (including the goalkeeper) infringed the Law and the ball entered the goal, the goal is awarded. If the ball did not enter the goal, the penalty kick is retaken.
 - c. If both an attacker and a defender infringed the Law, the penalty kick is retaken.

Click here (http://dps.twiihosting.net/USSF/doc/content/doc_6_364.pdf) to download the June 13, 2005, USSF position paper on penalty kicks. It contains an easily understood chart that shows how to make the correct decision.

And, in case you didn't hear the ultimate outcome of the series between Bahrain and Uzbekistan, the ending was predictable: In the first game, the teams tied in Uzbekistan, 1-1. In the second game, the teams once again tied, 0-0, in Bahrain. By virtue of the goal they scored in the away game, Bahrain advanced to the playoff against Trinidad & Tobago for a spot in the World Cup finals in Germany. All because of a major error by a referee!

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5) FROM PLAYER AND COACH TO REFEREE

The U.S. Soccer Referee Department is always interested in adding referees to the program who have high-level playing experience. One such individual is Victor Petroni. Petroni was the 1985-86 MISL Goalkeeper of the Year. He is also a former college coach and is currently the Director of Coaching at Atletico Flames Futbol Club in Elizabethtown, Ky. Victor was a registered Grade 5 Referee and is currently a registered Grade 7 Referee Assessor.

Can you outline what you emphasize when working with young officials?

VP: "My main focus with all the young referees is, not just understanding and applying the rules, but to remember that this is a player's game. We need to place ourselves into their shoes and play and feel the game in our minds and hearts. We need to look at their eyes and read what they are thinking. Many of us have the fitness, intelligence and hutzbah to look and present ourselves as qualified referees, but do we actually live and breathe the sport and give it its due respect and love? Soccer is a very passionate sport, no matter if it's played at the World Cup level or at the Under-9 level. To the players it always matters."

How did becoming an official impact your play as a professional?

VP: "As a professional player, I found that, once I began to officiate and understand the mentality of the officials, my game was elevated to a point that I was able to achieve All-Star

status. It helped me to see how much control and influence they had, read their body semantics and understand the rules and how they would apply.

What do you believe are important characteristics of good officials?

VP: “When I work with my younger peers, I tell them that perhaps the most important characteristic for an official is to have played the game at a high level and to constantly keep themselves fit and alert. Of course, you have to have excellent managerial skills and be composed under pressure, but, without playing the game, we will never be able to understand the true dimension of those that we work for.”

“Many of my fellow referee friends are constantly amazed at how the players that I officiate always seem to have a tremendous respect for me. I tell them the reasons are:

- 1) You must be humble,
- 2) You should always be willing to admit your mistakes and be ready to correct them if need be,
- 3) Work as hard as you can to give them the best game of their lives,
- 4) Be strong of will but pure of heart,
- 5) That you don't always have to be right, just make them think you are,
- 6) Know the rules, how and when to apply them,
- 7) Remember Law 18, and, lastly,
- 8) HAVE FUN!”

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6) ENDING A PERIOD OF PLAY

By Jim Allen, National Instructor Staff

Law 5 empowers the referee to act as timekeeper and to keep a record of the match. Law 7 instructs the referee to add time (at his or her discretion) for time lost in either half of a game or in any overtime period for the reasons listed in Law 7. Those reasons are: substitution(s), assessment of injury to players, removal of injured players from the field of play for treatment and wasting time, as well as “other causes” that consume time, such as kick-offs, throw-ins, dropped balls, free kicks, and replacement of lost or defective balls. Many of the reasons for stoppages in play and thus “lost time” are entirely normal parts of the game. The referee takes this into account in applying discretion regarding the time to be added. The main objective should be to restore to the match any playing time that was lost due to excessively prolonged or unusual stoppages. Law 5 tells us that the referee's decisions regarding facts connected with play are final.

The Laws do not say precisely when the referee should end a period of play, but common sense suggests that the referee should weigh the factors listed above regarding time lost and then make the decision on how much time to add—and thus when to end the period. Although not written in the Law, common practice throughout the world is to wait until the ball is either out of play or is in an area from which a goal is unlikely to be scored in the next several seconds.

There is no requirement in the Laws for a half (first, second, or any overtime period) to be ended only while play is continuing. The only restart which must be completed even though time has elapsed is a penalty kick (Law 14). The referee is the sole judge of the amount of time remaining in a game. If the referee has added extra minutes to compensate for time lost during the period of play, then the referee is also the sole judge of when that extra time is completed.

Note:

As to ending the game exactly when the “required” minutes have expired: At least one famous FIFA referee suffered for ending play while the ball was still in play and a scoring opportunity existed. At the World Cup of 1978 in Argentina, this referee let Brazil take a corner kick versus Sweden and then blew the whistle just before the ball entered the Swedish goal. He retained his FIFA badge, but this was his last international assignment.

We all need to remember that there has never been a game played in which time was not lost somehow and needed to be made up.

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