



# BENCHMARK



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### DISSENT CLAMPDOWN

By now we've all seen on TV the long overdue clampdown. *The same clampdown on dissent must happen for the good of the game at all levels of the game.*

For years referees have warned players about dissent and then done nothing. If you act on this Law within your game you will enjoy your activity on the field far more than when players are continually shouting at you.

We all know of at least one referee somewhere who has finished officiating because of the dissent in football. Colleagues have let that referee down. The game has probably let the referee down.

*We've always had the tools to deal with such behaviour from players, because it's written in the Laws of the Game.* Maybe it has been our blind faith, hoping that players, managers and spectators will stop their dissent, that caused us to hope it would go away.

*Players are aware of the clampdown, so do not be fooled that they don't know.* If you give one chance to a player, that should be the only chance offered.

You will benefit, your colleagues will benefit and, most importantly, the game will benefit.

*Sheffield RA Chairman Simon Hall*



**WITH EVERY NEW SEASON COMES A NEW CHALLENGE**

***This year there are several new and important challenges***

***ARE YOU READY TO FACE UP TO THEM?***

## THE 'NO NONSENSE' REFEREE IS AN OFFICIAL TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

During a recent game the Referee came across from the first whistle --- the blast which called the captains for the toss --- as someone who was determined to stamp his authority on the encounter straight away. The forthright blast brought the captains to the centre-circle AT ONCE, and this is something which does not happen before every game.

There were firm handshakes for both captains, as if to say '*Good afternoon, skipper. I am today's game-manager. Have confidence in me to do my work properly.*' Soon the proceedings were underway and the early promise looked as if it would continue. The first infringement received a confident whistle, not the half-apologetic one that you sometimes hear. The next foul received a similar reception, and things moved into a pleasing pattern where the players got on with their playing, leaving the Referee and his two Assistants to get on with their officiating. Nobody queried the Referee's interpretations of the Revised Laws of the Game, Why? Because they trusted him after his firm and confident start to the game.

It was noticeable throughout a game that produced just one justifiable caution that the Referee, and hence his colleagues, had won and retained the respect of the players. It had been clear from the kick-off that '*no nonsense*' was to remain the order of the day, and even though it was a totally justifiable caution there was none of that querying, moaning and blatant dissenting that often blights a game of football. It hardly needs to be added that neither was there any stupidity or noisy impolite shouting from the two bench-groups.

One of the commendable techniques that the Referee used came most effectively into operation on the three occasions when he awarded an attacking free-kick near to the edge of the penalty-area. The defending players started lining up their wall --- ten yards back, not the frequently seen eight! --- and each time the Referee said something firmly and politely before he blew the whistle. Correction, he said it TWICE --- once when he ensured from the free-kick position that the wall was correctly positioned, and then again just before he blew the whistle from the position he had taken up to see the next phase of the game.

So what did he call out that worked so well for him THREE TIMES in this game in circumstances which often leave other Referees in trouble?

He told the defenders this --- "*If any of you move forward before the ball is kicked, the then free-kick WILL be taken again.*" You see, he had gained sufficient respect right from the start of the game that he did not need to go into details about only having the kick taken again if the attackers didn't score from the kick, and so forth. Simply, the players KNEW that the Referee meant what he said. He had been accepted by both teams as a **NO NONSENSE** Referee.

There was no shirt-pulling or simulation --- in other words, no stupidity.

How enjoyable the game was for everyone concerned, spectators included!



\*\*\*\*\* *The lesson to be learned is surely this ---- set yourself a sensible benchmark regarding what you will tolerate, put the message across in a firm but courteous manner, stay by what you have said you expect, and treat the players like men and not like boys.*

## THE MATCH OFFICIAL'S THREE R'S

**Respect for self**

**Respect for others**

## **Responsibility *for your own actions***

***WHEN REFEREEING, ALWAYS EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED***

## CRABBING, SIDE-SKIPPING ---- call it what you will! It's useful!

Many a match official becomes **very** competent when, as an Assistant Referee, he develops the art of crabbing or side-skipping. This technique enables him to keep on looking infield as he moves quickly up or down the touchline to keep in line with the potential offside situation. It is, unfortunately, sometimes evident that not all officials who are called upon to run the line incorporate such movement into their fitness training. But if they do, then on match days there is certainly much benefit to be seen.

A good Referee should notice in the first minute or so of a game in which he is working for the first time with a particular Assistant whether his colleague with the flag is capable of such sideways movement. If he realises at this early stage in the game that such movement is consistently forthcoming, the Referee knows that here is an Assistant whose eyes will rarely, if ever, be off the main action on the field of play.

If this is your technique as an Assistant, then please keep it going and work on it until it becomes both second nature and a fine art. You will be a real asset to match control.

Now, think of the value of such movement when you are refereeing rather than lining. You will probably be able to move faster than if you prefer to indulge more in lots of backward running. You will be able to avoid those annoying situations where you move

backwards only to collide with a player or even catch your heel in a pot-hole and cascade backwards.

When you are refereeing alone, perhaps on a Sunday morning, you will be able to move briskly towards the halfway-line to deal with a substitution and while you are making your way there you will be able to keep the rest of the players, or at least most of them, clearly in view. *So much happens in some games when the Referee's back is turned, and this can easily escalate into trouble.*

Side-skipping, or 'crabbing' as it sometimes called, is a valuable technique for both Referees and Assistant Referees. If it is not part of your style when refereeing, then why not work on it during your training sessions so that you are ready to become a better match official?

You will not regret it.



### \*\*\*\*\* ***So you love your football, especially the refereeing bit, don't you?***

Who washes your kit after your games? Your wife? Your mother? Your partner? For most referees it is a task they don't do themselves. They rely on somebody else --- a **VOLUNTEER!**

A **VOLUNTEER** is someone who willingly gives of their time to **HELP** someone else, without any desire to be rewarded. But that doesn't mean that if a **VOLUNTEER** has helped you in some way, you should take that person for granted. The rock-bottom minimum you should do is say a very heartfelt 'THANK YOU'.



**Volunteers! Where would we be without them? Struggling to survive, in all probability!**



## IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Imagine you are the Referee here and this is the view of the incident you have. Does it look like a tripping offence or a dive? If you are out there refereeing on your own, you have no option but to make an immediate decision. How would you communicate it to the players? Just using your arms? Using your voice? Both? If you shouted, what words would you

use?

If you are fortunate enough to have the help of Assistant Referees, would an Assistant on the right flank have a useful view of this incident, in your opinion? As Referee, exactly how would you communicate with him/her to seek a second opinion? If you were the Assistant, how would you communicate with the Referee? By flag? By eye-contact only? What sort of discreet signal would you expect from your Referee? Should there have been useful discussion pre-match about this kind of possible incident? What kind of a discussion might be held after the game? How might an Observer be able to offer advice, if any?



## True Story

## HOW TO MOTIVATE PEOPLE, or how *not* to!

It was a game in one of the area's most senior Sunday leagues. One of the teams was trailing by three goals to nil at half-time and was clearly second best in the game. The players made their way rather dispiritedly to their meeting-point off the field near the halfway line, where one of the more level-headed club officials tried to raise a few heads and get the players in the right mood for the second half.

Another official from the club paced around and said nothing, though during the first half he had spent ninety percent of the time pacing up and down two or three yards inside the touchline, moving back only when play came near him. During that forty-five minute period he clearly had quite enough to say, or rather shout, about his team's performance.



When the chap who was trying to motivate his players had finished, up chimed the guy who had grumbled all through the first half. Without shouting this time, but making sure his words were loud enough for his players to hear, he told them that they were all '*f\*\*\*ing s\*\*te*'. He uttered these words not once, not twice, but three times in quick succession, emphasising that he meant *all* of the players. He then wandered away from the crestfallen group who put in a reasonable effort in the second half but conceded two more goals.

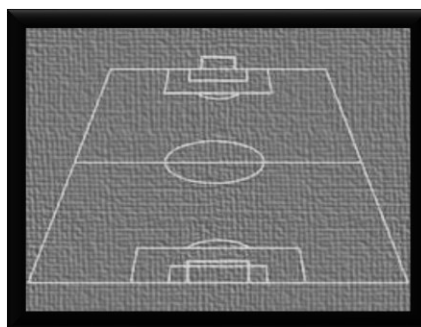
It is more than likely that their second half efforts were made for the man who had genuinely tried to encourage them and not for the other obnoxious character. Is there any wonder that an experienced Referee recently said that he thought that when you go out to officiate on a Sunday morning you need to be as much a kind of social worker as a Referee?

*Thought* --- If someone can use such unsavoury language when supposedly motivating his players, what sort of respect do you think he is likely to have for Referees?



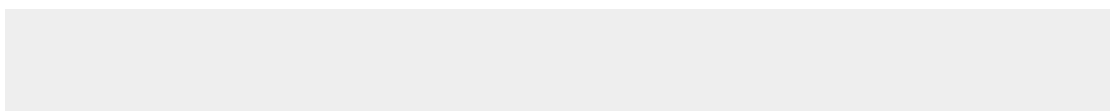
## **This is your workplace!**

Use it wisely. Learn how much the markings can help you find better positioning and viewing. Know the distances demarcated by the lines.



You spend a lot of time there, so make best use of it.

**Which markings are absent in this diagram?**



## **THE ENHANCED RA INSURANCE POLICY**

Here are just a few important reminders about the RA Insurance Policy.

### **1) Extent of Cover**

Members are covered for accidents/injuries/losses/etc. in respect of matches at which they officiate (subject only to normal insurance provisos plus T&Cs):

- whilst travelling to the game;

- during the game, both on the field of play and off it;
- whilst travelling home afterwards.

The same applies in respect of attending Referee Meetings, training sessions, and similar activities.

## 2) Notification of potential claims

**Any matter which might give rise to a potential claim must be ‘flagged’ as soon as possible after the match or event in question, even if subsequently no actual claim is ever submitted.** This is standard insurance practice, as it eliminates the risk of a later occurrence (especially one that is totally unconnected with refereeing) being backdated to a previous football match or event for the purposes of making an advantageous financial claim which is fraudulent and/or invalid.

**The important point for all RA Members to take on board is that any potential claim matters must be ‘flagged’ immediately after they have arisen, and not left until later when the claimant has, for example, returned to work and/or officiated in further football games.**

Believe it or not, the vast majority of claims made under our Policy are in fact honoured in full, the few exceptions being for (a) matters outside its scope, (b) where the normal conditions of acting as “prudent insured” are not observed, e.g. leaving kit unattended outside a clubhouse, or (c) where the matter has not been ‘flagged’ in a timely manner.

## 3) Terms & Conditions (T&Cs)

The main T&Cs remain unchanged in principle.

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**WHEN READING ABOUT REFEREEING, ALWAYS EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED!**

An ex-referee on the Reading and Hellenic Leagues, as well as a Reading Referees' Association Life Member, **Brian Palmer** is still selling his unique collection of refereeing and football funnies.

Have you had a look yet at his *“Football Referees? You Must be Joking!”* It is believed to be the first book devoted entirely to funnies about *football referees*. Or even his own French version created primarily for colleagues and friends over the Channel - *“Arbitres de Foot? Vous blaguez!”*

Both are published by Amazon for a mere £4.99 each and the (modest) royalties all go to charity. “It’s not for profit, it’s just to raise a few laughs,” says Brian.

If you follow this link you can even turn a few pages of both before you decide whether to invest!

With Christmas not too many weeks ahead, here is your chance to drop a timely hint to your loved one!

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Brian-Palmer/e/B00N6OC0LO>



## YOU MUST HAVE SEEN THAT ONE, REF!

Most referees will have been urged at some stage in their career to ‘get a grip’, to take firm control of the proceedings in the field, to take proper charge of the game.

Such a ‘request’ by an aggrieved player comes when certain types of tackles or rough behaviour have been allowed to go unpunished. If we are honest, we know in our hearts that the player makes his plea with ample justification. There are, quite simply, times when we let things happen and seconds later we wish we hadn’t. We might say to ourselves that *next time* we shall do something about it. But *next time* is not easy to define, even in our own thinking. Do we mean next time the same sort of behaviour occurs? Or when the same player does it again? Or do we mean next time anything at all done by any player of either team looks a bit nasty or provocative?

The sad thing about it all is that we have been negligent and the game has, as a result, suddenly taken on a different character. One of the hardest things for a Referee is to get back match control when it has gone away from him/her. It may be too late, so that we pray for the final whistle to come round. At best, when we lose control we know that we have to try many aspects of our man-

agement skills to try to get things back on something like an even keel.

We can do far worse than think back over what has happened in a game where things have gone sour. OK, we as Referees are not the ones who have actually committed the violence or the crude tackle, but we may very well be the guilty party in the respect that when it happened we stood back and did little or nothing about it. We have allowed things to get out of control by our negligence, and we certainly need to adopt a firmer approach in future games.

There are some fine Referees around, as we all know, just as there are others who have many of the basic qualities to be top-notch officials yet they lack that ‘certain something’. It can be said --- and it probably will be by some people! --- that some potentially top-notch Referees lack a degree of ‘nastiness’ on the field. The word is deliberately placed inside inverted commas because we do not want to create a team of downright bullies dressed in black uniforms. That would be totally unacceptable.



But what we could do with is a few more pleasant officials who knew how to be more intolerant of bad behaviour and insubordination. More Referees who do not almost every time give the benefit of the doubt to the player who is walking the thin tightrope. It needs to be remembered that some players are pretty skilled tightrope-walkers and they know how to exploit such generosity in the Referee. We need to know what is expected of us as Referees --- and that is not always to automatically give the benefit of the doubt to someone who is playing it tough.

We mentioned earlier the problem of trying to get back control of a game when things have spun into mayhem. Well, how much better it would be if we did all we could to make sure the mayhem either didn't occur, or if it did for reasons quite out of our control, we

nipped it well and truly in the bud. The sort of thing we might have in mind is the 'leg-breaker', the two-footed lunge at a player in possession of the ball. There is absolutely no place for such tackles in the game of Association Football, and when it happens the only punishment for the offender is immediate dismissal from the field of play. No benefit of the doubt, no second chance, no word of warning, or even a soft yellow card --- just immediate dismissal. That is expected by the Laws.

So, although a whole book could be written about this sort of thing, let us all make the resolve right now that we, as individual Referees, will toughen up and stand no nonsense whatsoever from players who are intent on getting away with any thuggery they can.

The '**benchmark**' is surely to get out there and do your job properly!



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*That's it for this issue from **BENCHMARK**. We hope you've found it interesting and useful.*

**Our next issue is due in November 2016**