

ON THE FIELD MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS FOR REFEREES

Why manage? Surely the laws are clear and the players should know it and play accordingly.

- That would be the ideal in an ideal world, however the players don't always play it ideally. The modern game requires that the referee manage situations, in order to provide a better game.
- Refereeing management helps to create an environment ideal for player to exercise their skills level.
- The trick is to manage in such a manner as to ensure a fair contest and yet, to manage preventatively in order to provide as big a spectacle as possible.

How does this gel with the fact that the referee should be in the background and as unobtrusive as possible? Isn't this a contradiction?

- Certainly not a contradiction and certainly possible if done in a way acceptable to the players.
- To manage preventatively in tune with the modern game, the referee need to be in the forefront.
- The trick is to be in position, communicate to the point and address specific players.
- Non-sensible communication is not the way to go and a series of instructions has little effect and in fact, irritates the players and spectators.

A clever person once remarked as follows: "If you ask a group of players - 40% will respond, if you instruct them 60% will respond, but if you penalize them- 100% will respond!"

If this was true, why don't we just penalize all the time?

- As the modern game requires us to not play "spot the mistake", but to contribute positively to the game and still ensure a fair contest.
- What is true about the quote above, is that the modern referee is to use all three methods and in that order, but to the response percentage up in the "ask" and "instruct" departments, through **effective** communication.
- Below a few practical examples to illustrate modern day refereeing management suggestions:

Tackle

| Situation | First Action | Second Action | Third Action |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| A) Tackler doesn't release ball carrier immediately. | Ask: "Let him go" Once only and ensure he hears you. | Play advantage and give the signal. | 1. Play on if advantage is gained. 2. Penalize if no advantage. |
| B) Ball carrier does not place, pass or release the ball. (Provided tackler is not guilty). | Ask: "Play it" Once only and ensure he hears you. | Play advantage and give signal. | 1. Play on if advantage is gained. 2. Penalize if no advantage. |

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| C) Neither tackler nor ball carrier moves away and prevent players from getting to the ball. | Ask: "Roll away" or "Move away" Once only. (Ensure they are not trapped - if so blow up and award scrum as per law.). | Play advantage and give signal. | 1. Play on if advantage is gained. 2. Penalize if no advantage. |
| D) Arriving players goes to ground and prevent the opposition of contesting the ball. | <u>Before they arrive, ask:</u> "Stay on your feet" | <u>Penalize</u> , as there can't be advantage. Allowing play to continue here, will at best provide slow ball and at worst create tramping and a fight. | There can only be advantage in exceptional circumstances here. To get this right you'll have to be very brave and/or highly experienced. |
| E) Arriving players continue to go off their feet and deny the opposition access to the ball, even though (D) was applied. | Say to all: "To many bodies on the ground, you'll not be allowed to do this for the rest of the game" (as an example). | Call the captain and say: "Your team persistently go off their feet, this is negative and I will have to deal with it if you don't." | Deal with it in an appropriate manner from individual warnings, to cards and send offs. Depending on the "heat of the game". |

Scrum

| Situation | First Action | Second Action | Third Action |
|--------------------|--|---|--|
| A) Formation | Once players are ready and the ball is available to be put in, request: "Crouch and hold". | Ensure gap is just wider than hip width, that players are bound correctly, their backs parallel with the touch lines and request: "Engage". | Ensure that front rows bind correctly and that engagement is solid, without a big hit, and scrum is steady. If not, penalize infringing players or if you can't determine, reset! A warning such as: "This is not allowed all day gentlemen" and "get it steady and keep it up". |
| B) After formation | Ensure that all binding by front rows, flankers and eighth men are correct and stable. | Communicate: "Stay bound" and "Remain straight". | Penalize if no response. (Watch for tight heads pulling down, loose heads pushing up or in and hookers turning head and dropping the middle of the scrum. |

Lineout

| Situation | First Action | Second Action | Third Action |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| A) Ensure proper gap | Communicate: "Gap please" or "Open up white". | Play advantage if applicable and if not, Penalize! | Call Captain and say: "Your players refuses to open the gap, I will not allow that to become a pattern". |
| B) Fair contest and positive lineouts | Say: "Contest the ball only" or "Leave the opponent" or "Remain inside the 15 m. until lineout ends" or "Don't play the jumper whilst he is in the air, wait till he is on the ground". | Play advantage if applicable and if not, Penalize! | Call captain and say: "Your players are refusing to play positively at the lineout and is not responding to my requests, if you don't get them to back of, I will have to deal with it.". |

Maul

| Situation | First Action | Second Action | Third Action |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| A) As soon as maul forms | Communicate: "Maul keep it up" or "Don't collapse the maul" and "Stay on side". | Play advantage if applicable or penalize if not. | Deal with as per lineout as repeated infringements. |
| B) As soon as maul becomes stationary | Communicate: " Use it" or Get it out now". | Stop play and award scrum to team that did not set up the maul. | |

Ruck

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| As soon as it forms | Communicate: "Ruck formed" and "Stay on your feet". | Play on if no infringement or play advantage or penalize. | |
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General

| Situation | First Action | Second Action | Third Action |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| A) Repeated infringements | Penalty for offence | Call captain and inform him of your concern regarding the repeated infringements that his team is committing, say: "If this continues, I will have to deal with it in a harsh manner." | Call player and captain and say: "This is persistent and I can't allow it to continue." Issue a yellow card and award a penalty. |
| B) Back chatting or querying | Call captain and ask him to get his players to back off, say: "I need your cooperation to ensure that there is discipline on the field, please handle it or else I'll have to." | Penalize the player and inform the captain that it is because of the ill discipline. (Never get upset or take it personally) | Penalize it and deal with it as if it is persistent or repeated infringements. |

Please note:

- Above are only a few examples of what typically happens on the field, with some management suggestions. The aim is not to create robots out of referees by sounding and looking the same. The suggestions are thus not cast in stone but should be seen as guidelines to convey a message of how to handle certain situations.
- However: The players will experience far better consistency and understanding if similar communication patterns are followed, especially at preventative communication.
 - **As a rule, never:**
 - Be un approachable
 - Give the impression that you take things that are said on the field, personal
 - Give the impression that you are uncertain
 - Give the impression that you are weak
 - Give the impression that you are the authority
 - Consider yourself more important than the players or the game
 - Treat player like children
 - Assume the players know less about the laws than you do
 - Assume the players respect you because you are a referee, you`ll have to earn respect
 - Talk down to players
 - **As a rule, always:**
 - Allow players the freedom to express their talent
 - Give the impression that you are fair
 - Give the impression that you are considered
 - Have empathy with the players and their predicaments
 - Ensure that captains share the responsibility for discipline on the field
 - Ensure proper communication between the captains and yourself
 - Express calmness
 - Stay in control of your emotions
 - Be well prepared
 - **ENJOY**

Happy Refeing !