



Assistant Referee Involvement
2009 Referee Program Directives
February 2, 2009

When Assistant Referee Involvement is Required

Referees must establish parameters for involvement during the pregame discussion. Assistant Referees (ARs) must feel empowered to participate in game critical decisions when they are 100% certain. They must also have guidelines which enable their involvement to be supportive rather than appear in conflict with the tenor of the match set by the referee. Simply, ARs must get into the same rhythm as the referee but must also develop a “feel” for the game in terms of being involved when the referee’s rhythm is not sufficient for the game.

In certain circumstances, ARs should utilize the “wait and see” approach prior to involvement. Give the referee the first opportunity to be engaged. If, due to the referee’s attention being engaged elsewhere, the referee is not aware of a critical situation, then the AR is empowered to provide assistance within these guidelines.

There are two types of “involvement:” managing game situations and doing subtle things to support the referee thereby making the referee team successful. The AR has an ***obligation*** to the referee and to the game.

The following list is intended to help officials define the moments in the game **when AR involvement is required:**

1. Game Critical Decisions

Situations in which the AR is 100% certain of what he saw – regardless of the position / attitude of the referee

- Decisions the “game requires” or the “referee requires” vs. simple fouls in the midfield – like a penalty kick
- Misconduct (serious foul play / violent conduct): yellow card, red card
- Foul inside / outside of the penalty area
- Goal / no goal decision
- Denying an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity (DOGSO)
- A team will gain an “unfair advantage” if the referee team does not deal with it
- A “trigger” event occurs that is likely to lead to mass confrontation if not dealt with quickly and firmly (look for a situation that may escalate)

2. Off-the-Ball Incidents

- Behind the referee’s back vs. right in front of the referee

3. Eye contact by the referee
 - When the referee makes eye contact and gives the “what happened” look vs. when the referee signals “play on” or “nothing there”
4. Referee is out of position or far from play
 - The closer to the AR, the greater the likelihood for involvement
 - Proximity to play
 - Counter-attacks
 - Poor positioning on a free kick
5. Referee’s Angle of Vision
 - The referee does not have a clear view of the action due to a poor angle, interposed players, or a counter-attack
6. Mass Confrontation
 - Participation in the “triangle of control”
 - Providing appropriate misconduct information
7. The Management Style of the Referee
 - Adjust involvement accordingly
8. Temperature of the Match
 - Read the game / feel the game
 - Increased involvement in difficult matches to aid in game control
9. Goal Line Decisions
 - On the goal line for ball in / out decisions
 - On the goal line for goal / no goal decisions
 - On the goal line for goal kick versus corner kick decisions
 - Initial indication when action is in the ARs “quadrant,” assistance and confirmation in the referee’s “quadrant”
 - *Note: ARs must sprint all balls back toward the goal line*
10. The Whole Picture Not Seen
 - Despite the referee taking action, he may not have seen the entire incident or the total impact / severity of the action
 - Information about actions which preceded the violation that caught the referee’s attention

Over-Involvement by the Assistant Referee

While ARs need to feel empowered to assist the referee in the critical areas detailed above, they must also show restraint in taking over the game or from being over exuberant in flagging calls that interfere with the referee’s

performance and game flow or risk taking management. Note: over-involvement does not extend to participation in the decisions that the AR is 100% certain and that impact the overall outcome of the game.

The following are situations that may be categorized as the AR being “**over-involved:**”

1. Fouls Called Not Consistent with those of the Referee
 - AR is not reading the game like the referee (out of the rhythm of the referee)
 - (a) Violations which the referee would have considered doubtful or trifling
 - (b) Violations to which the referee would have applied advantage
 - (c) AR must follow the game management style outlined by the referee in the pregame and watch closely as that style is implemented on the field (getting into the rhythm of the referee)
 - (d) Neither the game nor the referee needs the call
2. Over-Extending Beyond the ARs “Area of Control”
 - As distance to the event increases, the ARs involvement generally should decrease, except where 100% sure and game critical
3. The 50/50 Call
 - Decisions that may be too difficult for the AR to sell from his position
4. Flag Because it is Near Me Syndrome
 - Flag will come up after the whistle

Involvement Summation

ARs were asked to think about the following question prior to raising the flag:

“If I raise the flag, do I interfere with the referee, and if I don’t raise the flag, do I fail the game?”

As ARs contemplate involvement and as they answer the aforementioned question, the following two factors should be considered very quickly:

- **Does the referee have a clear view of the incident?**
Was the infraction such that the referee can clearly see the play and make the decision? Where is the referee positioned? Is he close enough to the play to make the decision on his own? If you answer, “no, the referee did not see it” then you can consider the next question.
- **Did I clearly see the infraction?**
If there is any doubt as to what you saw, leave the decision to the referee unless the referee looks to you for assistance because he also senses there

is an issue. If this is the case, then you need to balance your participation based upon your “gut” feeling and how committed you are to the other questions you must answer.

Overall, ARs are empowered to participate in the game if *non-involvement* means you:

- Fail the Game
- Fail the Referee
- Impact the outcome of the game

In many instances, ARs should consider using the “wait and see” approach and refrain from quick flags. ARs should temper involvement until the game or the referee needs you.