



FOOTBALL  
**SOUTH  
AUSTRALIA**



# TIPS FOR NEW REFEREES

## **Tips for New Referees -**

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**TIP 2 - USE YOUR COACHES/ MENTORS**

**TIP 3 - USE THE HALF HOUR PRIOR TO KICK-OFF EFFECTIVELY**

**TIP 4 - KEEP YOURSELF AND YOUR GEAR SAFE AND DRY**

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**TIP 6 - INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE COACHES**

**TIP 7 - INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO TEAM MANAGERS**

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**TIP 10 - GIVE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS TO CLUB ASSISTANTS**

**TIP 11 - ENGAGE WITH GROUND STEWARDS**

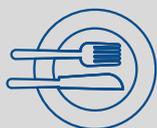
**TIP 12 - CONDUCT A PLAYERS TALK AND CHECK THEIR EQUIPMENT**

**TIP 13 - START THE MATCH WITH A CONFIDENT LOUD WHISTLE**

**TIP 14 - KNOW WHERE TO GO TO GET ADVICE OR INFORMATION**

## ***Preparation starts the night before a game!***

Preparation - the night before / morning of the game:



Make sure that you get a well-balanced meal the night before your match. It should include all food groups but definitely sufficient carbohydrate.



Avoid consuming too much caffeine leading up to the game as it is a diuretic.



Get your equipment clean and ready to go on the evening before matches. Have a few spare bits and pieces in your bag. Pack a water bottle for the match.



Have a look at the weather forecast and in particular check that the Hot Weather Policy does not apply.



Bring something to protect your equipment (which will often be left out in the open) if it is needed. A rubbish bag? Include a hard surface (a clip-board?) which will protect your team sheets and allow you to complete them clearly.



If it looks as if you may have to consider calling a match off because of weather/pitch conditions, plan to arrive even earlier than a good half hour before kick-off to allow plenty of time for the pitch inspection and conversations with officials.



Make sure that you know who is playing, the importance of the game (e.g. first vs second – last round), playing times, anything else special (e.g. a Cup tie), etc.



Before you go to the venue, spend just a few minutes practising the skill of blowing the whistle clearly (not in a breathy manner) and experimenting with different volume and dynamics. A signal is also more apparent if it is clipped; starting and stopping sharply and clearly.



Leave in time to arrive at least half an hour before the kick-off. Allow for possible delays.

### ***Be open to learn!***

Good Referees have a willingness to learn and keep up to date with the Laws of the Game.

Coaches and Mentors are appointed to your match to help you! They have volunteered to do this. They do not mind if you use the contact details that they have given you if you need help/advice. They like it if you ask questions at the games. They have all experienced what you are feeling right now!

- Make sure you have their contact details in your phone.
- Make sure that you have enabled your contact details to be visible in Schedules so that the other officials appointed to your game can see them and use them if needed. Your colleagues are obligated to support you and each other!
- Tell your coach/mentor how you would prefer your feedback – this is under your control. You will generally get written advice anyway (as this is usually required) but let them know what you would prefer to happen at the break or after the game.

**[Note:** During the game, you are the referee. Under the LOTG, a coach or mentor cannot make game decisions for you.]

- Involve them in your planning and personal reflection. You can upload a self assessment to Match Official System (MOS) which can be reviewed by a coach or mentor.

### match official system

Match Official System (MOS) is the program which Football SA use to dispatch all coaching reports. There is also a self assessment function.

***Do you have access to MOS? If not please contact the Referee Department!***

## *Use the half an hour prior to kick-off to your advantage!*

Thirty minutes is just enough time to:



Identify a safe place to change/stow your belongings.



Introduce yourself to the coaches.



Meet with and collect team sheets from the team managers.



Meet and instruct the club assistants (with both together)



Meet and instruct the club stewards (with both together)



Inspect the pitch, goals, balls and surrounds.



Complete an effective warm-up.



Briefly check player's equipment.

Others involved with the game have only one main task but you have several. Doing them all well before the game will help to settle any nerves and help to inspire confidence in all others at the game.

It is recommended that match officials arrive 30/45 minutes prior to kick-off to ensure that they have penalty to complete their pre-match duties.

### ***Be smart about where you put your gear!***

The facilities for referees vary greatly!

At a senior NPL game, you will generally find a relatively secure, dedicated referee room with stewards and a match day commissioner ready and able to look after you. You may even have the luxury of being able to shower and change before a subsequent event!

In other divisions and at junior games there may be a referee room available but it is often not secure. It may be out of the way, a store-room, a corner of an equipment shed, a disabled toilet or similar. A deserted and unlocked room is a very quiet place during a game.

There will be pitches where you are the only official appointed and there is no club room, toilet or permanent structure of any kind within the vicinity.

This need not be a problem if you are prepared. Consider:

- Packing a water proof cover for your gear (a sturdy garbage bag over the top works fine).
- Storing your valuables in a secure place. For example if you are with a family member or friend, leave items like your wallet, mobile phone and car keys with them. Theft is rare but you may be an opportunistic target for people passing by who have nothing to do with the game.
- Enlisting the aid of your coach/mentor if present.
- Enlisting the aid of a home club steward.
- Packing at least a small towel/change of clothes for wet days.
- Only bringing what you need to the pitch at the KO. Your \$1700 iPhone should be in a safe, dry but accessible place!

### ***You never get a second chance at making a first impression!***

What do you look for when you meet anyone (and especially an official) for the first time?

Do you want him or her to present a positive or a negative image?

Which is more likely to trigger a good reaction from you?

You can't take a first impression back!



The referee needs to appear confident and calmly in charge of the preparations for the match. An early arrival, a neat uniform (shirt tucked in) and confident presence make a great first impression to all present.



The pitch, goals, flags, etc. need to be inspected and jogging to different positions as you do so is both a part of an effective warm-up and a good look for watching players, officials and spectators.



Warming up properly and stretching is vital to reduce the risk of injury and assist an alert beginning for the match.

Referees will make mistakes during a game! They are human!

Players and others are more likely to accept an unfortunate incident if they can see that the referee has done everything possible to do their best to officiate competently and conscientiously.

### *It is important to build relationships with coaches!*

The coach is often the first club official you will meet. Make sure his or her first impression of you is one that will get them on your side.

Some advice on introducing yourself to coaches:

- Introduce yourself to both of them briefly.
- The referee is in charge. Interrupt politely when necessary if, for example, the coach does not pause during conversations with players when you approach.
- Ask them to point out the team manager.
- Remind them to set up in the technical areas on the same side of the pitch (even if they are not marked – everyone knows where they should be).
- If it looks like preparations are running late, warn them that you may have to shorten both halves. Try to start on time and finish on time.  
[Note: Especially in junior games, parents often plan their supervision and transport of other children around known times. Respect this requirement.]
- Inform them if the pitch may be unplayable. Get out onto it, kick a ball yourself and check that it is safe to play.
- Wish them luck in the game.

You may need to politely answer any questions they have about the game. Do not enter into conversations about the other team or incidents you have not seen.



**An information sheet on Forfeited and Abandoned fixtures can be found in the Football SA Match Official Education Hub!**

### ***Touch bases to ensure you get the team sheet on time!***

The team managers should approach you but in practice this is often not the case. Don't take it personally if you have to chase them up. They are often parents or supporters who have been organised to help out with little training or background in the game.

Get the team sheets and check them carefully. Look particularly for:

- Shirt numbers.
- Total number of players listed.
- Names of all club officials.

The Team Manager should also supply:

- Match balls.
- Your Club Assistant Referee and Ground Steward.

[Note: DO NOT START ANY GAME WITHOUT CLUB ASSISTANT REFEREES OR THE GROUND STEWARDS.]

If there any problems before the game (corner flag posts, damaged nets, poor or missing line markings) ask the manager to act.

Make sure that you thank them for helping the game.



**A guide how to fill out a Community Team Sheet can be found in the Football SA Match Official Education Hub!**

### ***Check the team sheet prior to the match!***

Checking, completing and sending in the team sheets is an important commitment of your refereeing role. It must be done in a careful and timely manner.

If correct results are not received by the FSA:

- Team standings may be affected.
- Players who have been carded may not miss games as required by the competition rules. This could lead to serious consequences for the team concerned.
- Trophies for best players and top goal scorers may be wrongly awarded.
- Competition administrators may not be able to verify that clubs are fielding correctly registered and eligible players.

In particular

- Make sure that scores are entered clearly, legibly and correctly for the right team.
- Make sure that goal scorers and cautions are recorded against the correct names on the team sheets.
- Make sure that at least one club representative (generally the manager) signs the completed sheet before you leave.
- Complete any further reports (e.g. for red cards or other match incidents) as described in the Match Operations Guide.
- Use a waterproof clip board or similar to store team sheets and allow the proper entry of data.



**A guide how to fill out a Community Team Sheet can be found in the Football SA Match Official Education Hub!**

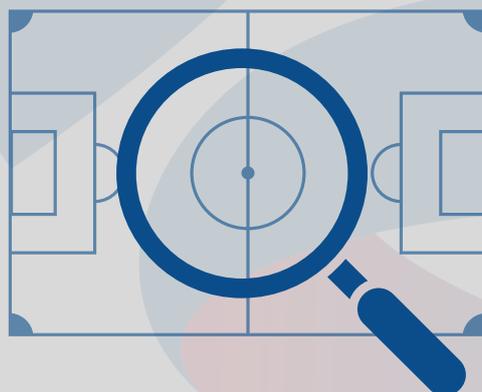
### ***Warm-up while you are conducting your pitch inspection!***

The players warm up to make sure they are alert and ready to go both mentally and physically from the kick-off and to minimise risk of soft tissue injury. So should you!

In addition, you need to ensure that the safety of all players is not compromised by any pitch conditions.

- The pitch, goals, flags, etc. need to be inspected and jogging to different positions as you do so is both a part of an effective warm-up and a good look for watching players, officials and spectators.
- Ground conditions to look out for in Junior matches often include making sure that:
  - the goals are secure (push and pull on a post to check)
  - the ball will not fit under or through a loose net beside the posts
  - the centre flags are not placed on the touchline (if present – rare these days and not required by the Laws of the Game)
  - flag posts are secure and safe (not pointing at the field, no exposed foot pegs)
  - cricket pitches are safely covered with sand
  - there are no dangerous holes or loose sprinkler covers

If there are any problems, approach the home officials to have them fixed. Do not try to do this yourself. You have enough to do.



### *Help them help you by letting them know what you expect!*

Give a few clear instructions to the club assistants together. This can vary depending on a quick assessment of their skills and experience but it is often useful to remind them to help by:

- Flagging for out balls by pointing and holding the flag out in the correct direction while holding their position.
- Holding position with the flag straight up if they consider there is an offside offence
- Staying level with the second last defender (counting the keeper) during play
- Running their own team's defence on your right wing.
- Remembering that it is the referee who makes final decisions on off side situations in terms of whether players are affecting play.
- You may wish to assure them that you will talk to them if there is any doubt about communications.
- Noting that they are not able to advise you on other incidents, apart from balls out of play and off-sides; even though they may consider them as foul play; as they are not official assistants.

Remind them that they should not barrack or coach their own players as they are your assistants in the game.

Club assistants will generally be keen, helpful and fair but they may not always be in good position or have a complete understanding of the laws of the game. Be prepared to over-rule if necessary. Try to acknowledge their signals throughout the match.

Make sure that you thank them for their help!

### ***Do not start a game without a Ground Steward from both teams!***

The correct number of ground stewards MUST be in attendance before a game can proceed. This is described in the Football SA Match Official Operations Guide.

Introduce yourself to the ground stewards (together) and thank them for their assistance.

Remind them to:

- Make sure that their own spectators stay back clear of the touch lines.
- Monitor the crowd (and this is particularly the case in junior games) to ensure that comments remain positive and that there is no abuse of players or officials.
- Take action if there is any sign of trouble.
- Support you if necessary.



### ***Show your confidence and knowledge by conducting a player talk!***

A brief address to younger teams in particular is a very useful strategy. It is an early step in establishing your authority and showing them that you are there to do a good job.

- The referee should stand facing or across the sun so that players are not looking into it when pre-match instructions are given (obviously less of an issue if it is overcast).
- Referees may remind players to listen to any instructions during the game, be careful in their tackles (especially if it is wet) and “play to the whistle”. Do not make statements that you may not follow up like “I will caution/yellow card you if you swear” because someone will be hit in the face by a ball in the first minute, say “s—t” without thinking and then what does the referee do? The LOTG are known!
- Players’ equipment can be quickly checked. It is usually OK but it helps to establish the authority of the referee. Moulded soles are not a problem but look for shin pads, incorrect “skins”, jewellery, spectacles, watches, wrist bands and so on. Remember that jewellery cannot be taped up. A Medic Alert bracelet, on the other hand, must stay on and must not be taped and hidden (in case it is not noticed – it can be secured with tape). Shirts should be tucked in for the start of play by both players and the referee.
- Comments on enjoying the game are always a good idea. Soccer is fun, a sport, a leisure activity and this is always worth remembering and stressing. Practise speaking in a clear and confident manner. Make eye contact with the players. Add any special matters where match, weather/pitch conditions make it necessary (not too many).
- Always speak clearly, firmly, loudly and without hesitation. Take up a neutral stance and do not shuffle your feet. Wait for players (or officials) to pay attention and tell them if they do not do so. Coaches will help. Make eye contact. Plan a positive final sentence. Say just enough. Avoid “Ahs”, “You knows”, “Yeahs” and “Umms”.
- It is simple to look confident (even if you do not feel it – and this is natural in your first game) if you smile, keep your head up and your bearing erect. It is one of the early links you establish in your chain of agreement with all concerned.

### ***Confidence breeds respect, hesitancy creates doubt!***

Make it a good start but take your time too:

- Start on time if at all possible.
- Walk out to the middle with the ball when you have completed all of your duties and give it to the player taking the kick-off to place on the correct spot.
- Take a deep breath.
- Make sure you have a clear understanding of how the teams have lined up (e.g. red attacking the change rooms!).
- Count the players.
- Check that the Club ARs have taken up the correct starting position (level with second last defender, on your right wing, running their own defence). Make sure that they are easy to see (i.e. wearing something bright and obvious and different to the team colours – this is generally a safety vest). Give them a signal that you are ready to start.
- Check that the teams are in position and ready to go (e.g. wait if a keeper is still getting his or her gloves on).
- Take up your starting position – i.e. left of the centre circle and a few metres behind the ball for the team taking the KO.
- Take another good breath and blow your whistle so that everyone at the game can hear you.



***Its alright to not know something! Follow it up and learn the correct information!***

You may be the only official appointed to a game (juniors, lower divisions of adult competitions, lower divisions of CSL games, etc.) BUT you are not on your own.

Match day assistance:

- Your coaches/mentors if present or at the other end of a phone conversation if they are available.
- The Ground Stewards.
- The Football SA Match Officials Operations Guide 2022 – either printed pages or on your phone.
- The Football SA Match Official Education Hub
- Football SA Referee Department

Most people involved in football respect the game and will help you in any way they can if you need it.

It is a good tip to enter useful numbers into your phone before you go to the game.

