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Pre-Match Assistant Referee Instructions Guidance

Referees will ask their Assistant Referees to carry out their duties in accordance with the following instructions, based on the requirements of Law 6. The below are guidelines that can be used where appropriate and where the referee and assistants feel comfortable to deliver according to these instructions.

Pre-Match

The Referee will determine the time and routine for warming up which the Assistant Referees will be expected to take part

Players' equipment shall be checked by the Assistant Referees prior to entry to the field of play.

Goal nets will be checked by the Assistant Referees in their half of the field of play prior to the coin toss.

During the Match

It is important that the Assistant Referee offers assistance at all times and not interference to the Referee. Assistant Referee priorities include the assessment of offside situations, the determination of the ball out of play, and support to the Referee in all other situations where their advice and input can improve and enhance the decision making and control of the game. Positive eye to eye contact between the Referee and Assistant Referee is essential.

Flag technique

It is recommended that an Assistant Referee holds the flag in their hand nearest to the field of play by switching hands whenever they change direction of movement so that the flag is visible to the Referee at any time.

Offside

To ensure correct judgement of offside offences, an Assistant Referee should not raise the flag before considering the following criteria, so called "wait and see" technique:

Movement of the ball (direction, speed, distance, any deflection, etc.)

Involvement of the player in active play by:

interfering with play or

interfering with an opponent or

gaining an advantage.

It is better to be slightly late and correct, than to be too quick and wrong.



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Having determined that a player is in an offside position the Assistant Referee is to indicate this to the Referee using the appropriate flag signal as shown in the Laws of Association Football. The flag should be in the hand closest to the goalkeeper when raised and the Assistant Referee should stand 'square-on' to the field of play.

If a flag signal for offside is given and is not seen immediately by the Referee; the Assistant Referee must keep signalling until it has been recognised or the ball is clearly in control of the defending team.

Ball out of the field of play

Whenever the ball leaves the field of play, the flag signal of the Assistant Referee should show clearly the correct restart and direction. In clear throw-in situations, the Assistant Referee can directly show the direction (along the whole touch line). But if they have any doubt about the direction, the Assistant Referee should simply raise their flag, make eye contact with the Referee and follow the Referee's signal.

Whenever an Assistant Referee signals the ball out of the field of play (even if players continue to play the ball) they must retain the signal until acknowledged by the Referee taking action.



When the ball enters a goal

To confirm a valid goal has been scored, an Assistant Referee should display clear movement down the touchline towards the centre line but maintaining eye contact into the field of play. In borderline cases, this movement should be a clear sprint to be recognised by the Referee accompanied by the flag pointing towards the half way line, parallel to the ground.

If in their opinion a goal has not been scored correctly, the Assistant Referee should stand still, retaining any signal already given. The Referee may then choose to consult further if they need additional guidance.

Positioning

Free kick close to the penalty area

At free kicks close to the penalty area, the Assistant Referee should position themselves in line with the second last defender (controlling the offside), but also with awareness of the goal line. The Referee should control the ball and the wall.

After an offside

When possible an Assistant Referee, after a free kick for offside has been given, should position themselves in line with the spot where the ball should be positioned to restart the game. They should then immediately take up a position to control the offside line (level with the second-last defender), which is their priority

Goal kick and goal clearance

For goal kicks and when the goalkeeper is in possession of the ball inside their own penalty area, the Assistant will occasionally check that the ball is correctly positioned or that the goalkeeper does not cross the edge of the Penalty Area line before releasing the ball from their hands. This should be done



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in convenient situations (e.g. second last defender near the penalty area). Control of offside from subsequent play is the priority concern.

Corner kick

For corner kicks, the Assistant involved will take a position behind the flag in line with the goal line.

Penalty kick

When a penalty kick is awarded during the normal course of play, the Assistant should be on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line.

For kicks from the penalty mark to determine the winner of a match, one Assistant should be positioned on the goal line where it meets the goal area boundary line, with the other Assistant controlling the players within the centre circle. The Referee must determine and agree the role of the Assistant Referee on the goal line and his own role in detecting any forward movement from the goal line of the goalkeeper. Referees and Assistant Referees are also reminded that the "inactive" goalkeeper should remain positioned on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line.

Obvious incorrect decision of the Referee

If an Assistant Referee knows that a Referee has made an obvious disciplinary error (e.g. two yellow cards to the same player without sending the player off, red or yellow card to the wrong player, player kicked the ball twice at free kick, etc.) they must intervene immediately (flag and/or even enter the field of play). The other Assistant Referee (or 4th official) should if necessary, also assist in such case.

Offences

An Assistant Referee must use a raised flag signal to advise the Referee that they have seen a foul committed (or unsporting behaviour or violent conduct) when they are better positioned than the Referee and the Referee has not clearly acted on the offence. If the Assistant Referee has additional information, concerning the offence, they wish to give to the Referee a discreet signal may be used, but only to supplement the flag signal already given.

Such action by an Assistant Referee must be taken for all appropriate offences including those committed inside the penalty area.

When a flag is raised for Law 12 offences, it should be unfurled and waved to distinguish from the signal for offside.

Substitution

Assistant Referees are to signal in the approved manner to indicate a substitution.

Control of 9,15 m and 2m at the Throw In

When free kick or throw-in has been awarded close to the Assistant Referee they should assist the Referee in ensuring that the defenders retreat the required distance, but should not enter the field of play in order to do this.

Post Match

The match officials will leave the field of play in accordance with these Directives



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