

MHSA OFFICIALS BULLETIN



Positioning as an Assistant Referee

The diagonal system of control allows for the referee to adjust his/her positioning to keep each assistant referee in sight on that half of the field during dynamic play. This allows for two sets of eyes to be focused on play at all times. During play, the assistant referee should be keeping in line with the second to last defender or the ball, whichever is closer to the goal line in the attaching half, so there is a limited amount of the field that you can supervise. However, these areas are important for the assistant referee to monitor so that the referee can focus his/her attention on a more manageable amount of the field.

The best position for the assistant referee to be in is the one that will allow him/her to make the correct decisions necessary for the job at hand. A few requirements, however, are necessary for the assistant referee:

- The AR must be in line with second to last defender, or the ball if closer to the goal line.
- The AR must also face the field of play and should side-step when monitoring the offside decision, unless required to sprint if dictated by play.
- The AR must effectively be able to transition quickly from side-step to sprinting and should push off with the leg opposite the sprint direction in order to maximize power and speed.
- When signaling, the AR should stop his/her motion, face the field of play, make eye contact with the referee and then signal with the correct hand.

Simply put, these are some of the basic requirements for proper positioning that we all know and understand. What is often not discussed is our reasons for being out of these basic positions. This is where we must focus our attention, learn from our habits to correct the mistakes that lead to poor decisions and difficulty in selling our calls. Following are a few simple suggestions to keep in mind regarding our positioning during dynamic play:

- When the ball is not in our quadrant, where is our focus?
- Are we watching the ball and game, or is our focus behind the referee to catch those events that are out of his/her sight.
- Are we using our peripheral vision to maintain contact with play while giving the majority of our focus on the line of the second to last defender, or is our peripheral vision focused on this line and eyesight on play?
- As play nears the AR's quadrant, are we shifting more of our focus on play as it approaches, or are we continuing to keep our head on a swivel to maintain both positioning and concentration?

As assistant referees, we must be cognizant of the decisions we make that could affect the outcome of a game. Is making an out of bounds call at midfield more detrimental to play than missing a critical offside decision because we are 3 or 4 yards out of position with the second to last defender? Remember, we must be focused, prepared and attentive to the responsibilities of the assistant referee at all times. We are not present to watch a soccer game, we are field-side to consistently apply the laws of the game!

Rules Review: A2 is fouled just outside of the opponent's penalty area and the referee signals to play on. What should the referee do (if anything) if (a) A2 stumbles and within a couple of seconds, falls to the ground? (b) A2 keeps the ball and gets off a shot that sails wide? (c) A2 continues and is immediately fouled again inside the penalty area.

Ruling: In (a), award a direct free kick from the original foul since the advantage did not materialize. In (b), no additional action since the advantage was gained even though the shot was missed. In (c), award a penalty kick since the second foul results in a greater penalty.