



WORKING WITH ASSISTANT REFEREES: A RESOURCE FOR HEAD REFEREES

As the head referee, all ultimate decision making responsibility lies with you, but you cannot be everywhere at once. At times, you will need to rely on the judgment of your assistant referees.

The most important first step in establishing a working relationship with assistant referees is to have a meeting with your officiating team before every match.

- Judge the officiating experience and comfort levels of each assistant referee. Invite honesty without judgment; if this is their first time officiating, let them know you will keep an eye on them to help out. That being said, if you are not comfortable with the skill level of the assistant referee, you can replace them.
- Go over important rules and signals.
- [Review third bludger-guarding.](#)
- Make sure they know how to get your attention, and are comfortable getting your attention at any time.
- Let them know your expectations. If you want them to focus on a specific region, tell them so. For example, you can have your assistant refs watch the beaters within their quadrant or follow the ball.

When holding a referee conference, you should:

- Stop play.
- Quickly gather your referees in a location away from players and spectators.
- Discuss all the information needed to administer the penalty.
- Administer the penalty (or announce that there is no penalty):
 - Show the appropriate card.
 - Send the player to the box.
 - Perform the hand signal for the penalty.



- Ensure the scorekeepers have recorded the player's number, as well as the card.
- Once the player is in the box (or once you have announced there is no penalty), start play.

It is important to confer with assistant referees when:

- [An assistant referee makes a delayed call](#). At the next change in possession you should stop play and confer with that assistant referee in order to find out more.
- A goal is scored, if there is a question about (1) if the quaffle went through the hoops or (2) whether the scoring player was beat before throwing the quaffle. You should stop play and confer with your goal referee, as well as any assistant referees who were in the area.
 - Only stop play only if you have real doubt; if you saw clearly that the goal was good, you do not need to call a conference because your goal referee disagrees with you.
- You called a penalty but did not have a good viewing angle for the action, you can stop play in order to confer with your assistant referees and make the right call.

You should not confer with your assistant referees when:

- You are confident with the call you made. In this case, you do not need to confer with your officiating team to explain the call. At most, you should tell them you had a good angle and that you are certain, and move on.
- Making a difficult call. Some referees are reluctant to hand out cards for certain types of calls; fight that instinct! When you see something that you know is a penalty, call it. There is no need to confer with your team to give yourself affirmation; doing so will only show to the players that you are unsure of yourself.



- A player or coach disagrees with a call. You are under no obligation to explain your calls; be confident in your call and do not let others bully you to change your mind. The less information you give, the better, when it comes to these potentially hostile interactions. “Initiated contact from behind: yellow card” is far better than saying “You pushed him on the left side of his back with your forearm for a few seconds.” If you misspeak slightly in the moment, you will give the appearance that your entire call is wrong when that is not the case.

When you confer with a referee, it’s important to minimize the amount of stoppage time.

- Be organized and take charge of the meeting. Do not let everyone speak at once, but rather indicate who you want to hear from and when. If there was a delayed call, ask that referee to explain what they saw, find out if anyone else saw it, and make the call.
- Be decisive. Do not spend too long discussing something you did not see. Trust your assistant referee and make the call they saw, or if you have reason to believe their call is incorrect, explain your reasoning and move on.
- Do not allow anyone else in the meeting. Players, coaches, or event staff may try to listen in or weigh in on a call; do not let them. Form a circle with your team away from play (the players should not be moving during any stoppage).
- Make a call. Sometimes you will not be able to remember the exact rule or there will be a debate about a ruling. As the head referee, you are the ultimate arbiter. While wrong calls may happen, it is better to keep the game going and maintain command of the pitch than to spend any time at all searching for a rule or arguing with other referees or players.
- Be respectful of your fellow referees. While you want to keep conferences brief, it is equally important to let your assistant referees express themselves. If you think they are making a wrong call, you can let them know respectfully why you disagree with them, but do not cause a public scene; just make the call and move on.



- The only time a referee conference should be longer than a simple listing of information is if two referees disagree. In such a case, you have to make the final judgment call. Gather as much information as you can with brief direct questions (e.g. “tell me what you saw on the beat”), then make the decision.
- After the conference, make sure everyone - players, coaches, scorekeepers, and spectators - knows the final decision. Administer the penalty (or announce that no penalty occurred), get players in the right position, and move on with the game. While it is critical to be clear about what you are calling, you do not need to give an explanation as to why. If a coach wants to dispute a call, they should do it once play has resumed and you should not permit them to get into an extended argument with you.