



Close

Referee Programs

2009 Referee Week in Review - Week 1



The ussoccer.com Referee Week in Review is designed to address the issues facing referees at all levels by using video highlights from professional games as well as the U.S. National Teams. Written by U.S. Soccer Director of Referee Development Paul Tamberino and U.S. Soccer Manager of Assessment and Training Brian Hall, the Referee Week in Review will highlight specific areas of focus and current U.S. Soccer initiatives designed to improve performance and aid in the development of officials across the country.

Week In Review

Week 1 - ending March 22, 2009

WEEK 1 OVERVIEW

In the opening weekend of the professional season, seven games were played. The early season games were entertaining but involved several physical challenges that tested the match officials and their ability to implement the [2009 Referee Program Directives](#). Referees were able to facilitate the entertainment value of games by positively managing the flow of the matches. With only 22 fouls on average called in the seven games, officials made a concerted effort to direct games by finding the right mix of fouls and misconduct.

Here is a summary of game performance:

Fouls: 154
 Average per game: 22.0
 Yellow cards: 25
 Average per game: 3.57
 Red cards: 0
 Average per game: 0

WEEK 1 COMMENTARY

100% Misconduct: Law 12

Video Clip 1: [New York at Seattle \(61:45\)](#)

Referees must be cognizant of calling the first foul so that players do not retaliate or take matters into their own hands. Finding the right mix of the trifling/soft challenges and clear fouls must be at the forefront of referee foul discrimination. Remember, in the "Game Management Model," flow and risk taking are secondary to player safety and 100% misconduct – both components of game control.

In this clip, the referee must have the proper angle of vision to have the best possible view of the challenge. Referees must move faster than any player(s) who may be moving between them and the action thereby ensuring a clear line of vision to any contact between opponents. There can be no obstructed views in a situation that presents sufficient build-up and presents the referee with the opportunity to move to a more strategic position.

Referees must get the first foul committed by Red Bull New York's Pablo Angel. There is no flow or risk taking evident in the fouls committed by Angel. First, Angel pulls the opponent down with a shirt pull that prevents the defender from advancing to get the ball. The second foul is a trip of the defender as he attempts to stand up. In both cases, the referee must realize that Angel's actions are aimed at giving him an unfair playing advantage.

The fact that the referee misses or feels he has missed the initial foul(s) cannot influence the next decision. Additionally, the fact that in the "big picture" of the game, there have been few issues must not play a role in the referee's decision as the tackle is 100% misconduct. The referee must recognize the intimidating nature of the tackle on Angel and must caution the defender for unsporting behavior. Although hard and committed with speed, the defender's feet are on the ground and the tackle is merely reckless in nature and lacks the qualities of excessive force. If the defender's foot was raised off the ground, a red card can be issued. However, in this case, although hard, the tackler's foot is down thereby minimizing the risk of injury. Note, if the leading foot of the tackler is raised from the ground and goes over the ball, the referee should issue a red card for serious foul play.

Should either the near assistant referee (AR) or fourth official have a clear view of the incident, they should feel empowered to use the communication devices to advise the referee that they believe the tackle warrants a yellow card.

Reckless Tackle: Law 12

Video Clip 2: [Colorado at Chivas \(45:59+\)](#)

Just as the half is approaching, Chivas midfielder Sacha Kljestan goes in for a strong tackle in front of the Colorado bench. In this case, the tackle is reckless and a foul should be called as well as a yellow card issued for unsporting behavior. Referees need to distinguish this hard,

reckless tackle from those that are committed with excessive force. Having the ability to distinguish the seriousness of the foul from the reaction of the team bench is a critical success factor in making the correct decision. Keys to interpreting this tackle as reckless are: 1) the shorter distance from which the tackle is initiated which means more control; 2) the position of the foot – closer to the ground and not over the ball; and 3) the fact that contact is made with the ball and not the player's leg.

This is a hard and overly aggressive tackle that is reckless because of the position of the feet and the fact that contact is made with the ball. The tackle is not initiated from distance thereby offering more control by the tackler. The leg is down toward the ground and not aimed over the top of the ball. If the cleats were to go over the ball and direct contact made with the opponent's leg, the tackle should be considered serious foul play.

Stretchers and Injuries: Law 5

U.S. Soccer's 2009 Referee Directives advised match officials to be more aware of stopping play for serious injuries. The directive requires that stretchers enter the field concurrently with trainers and medical staff in professional games. If the stretcher is not needed, then the player may walk off the field on his own. However, in cases of non-serious injury, the removal of the player from the field should be expedited in a positive way by the referee. Referees are reminded:

- Check with the stretcher crew before the game.
- Coordinate an appropriate process with the fourth official to get the stretcher on the field as quickly as possible. However, the entrance of the stretcher should be automatic with the entry of the medical staff (unless only the goalkeeper is involved).
- Except in the case of serious injury, find a positive way to expedite the player's removal from the field either on his own power or on the stretcher.

One of the other 2009 directives deals with the stopping of play for serious injury. Remember, head-to-head contact is a sign of serious injury. In such a case, the referee must be proactive and attempt to determine the nature of the contact and stop play immediately if blood or other signs of injury are present.

Communication Devices

Communication devices are a new tool for match officials. The use of the devices can positively contribute to game control, preventative officiating and to getting the call correct. However, officials must quickly become comfortable with their application and use. Fourth officials and ARs should not hesitate to initiate conversation when a situation dictates. Use the devices to communicate in critical match situations that involve red cards, yellow cards, fouls inside/outside the penalty area, issues in the technical area and other similar events. The only way to get comfortable with the mechanics of their application is to use them.

Looking Forward – Week 2

Match officials should continue the positive implementation of flow in games while ensuring the safety of the players is not endangered. Effective use of preventative officiating techniques to influence player behavior will assist in enabling the referee to manage the game.

ussoccer.com is the official website of U.S. Soccer, the governing body of soccer in the United States

*If you are unable to click on the above links, copy and paste this URL into your browser:
http://www.ussoccer.com/articles/viewArticle.jsp_13795328.html

[Top](#)

© Copyright US Soccer Federation 2001-2007. All rights reserved.