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## Referee Programs 2009 Referee Week in Review - Week 2



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 2 – ending March 29, 2009**

#### WEEK 2 OVERVIEW

After the first two weeks of the season, a number of the matches have tested the referees and their ability to properly apply the “Game Management Model” to ensure player safety and let the games flow properly. A [summary of the “Game Management” philosophy can be found on ussoccer.com](#) as part of the 2009 U.S. Soccer Referee Program Directives.

#### WEEK 2 COMMENTARY

##### **100% Misconduct: Law 12**

**Video Clip 1: Real Salt Lake at Seattle (45:00)**

The idea of 100% Misconduct is an important concept as it relates to game management. Both referees and assistant referees (ARs) must be cognizant of situations that, as they play out, meet the criteria for misconduct whether it be a yellow or red card. Often times the player or players involved, the score, the location on the field and the game atmosphere play a role in providing warning signs of impending misconduct.

In this clip, Seattle is winning 1-0 in the 45th minute. The attacker who is fouled had been on the receiving end of other physical challenges prior to this foul. As the game unfolds, the referee should be maintaining a databank of information that will enable him to anticipate potential issues and respond appropriately. In this game, there were a few warning signs related to the challenge in the clip:

- **Score:** The player who commits the foul is losing 1-0 as the teams get ready to enter the halftime break.
- **The attacking player:** The attacker had been on the receiving end of prior hard challenges (one of which resulted in the opponent being cautioned).
- **The manner in which the attacker is holding/shielding the ball:** The attacker is using his upper body in a fair manner to shield the ball from the opponent.
- **The field location:** The incident is close to the signboards and, hence, there is potential for a safety issue.

As the attacker holds/shields the ball, he is being pressured from behind. As the two players move closer to the touchline, the AR should be prepared to assist the referee. The safety of the attacker is jeopardized as the two players move closer to the signboards. Watch as the defender not only trips the attacker by clipping his leg from behind but follows that foul by recklessly shoving his opponent in the back. The shove occurs off the field of play and results in an unsafe situation near the signboards which are only a few inches away from the falling attacker.

Due to the reckless nature of the off the field push, the defender must be cautioned for unsporting behavior. The message being sent by the defender must be matched with a commensurate message by the referee (the yellow card).

This situation lends itself to AR involvement due to the proximity of the situation to the AR and the fact that the AR may be required to intervene to keep the situation from escalating into game disrepute and mass confrontation.

##### **Game Disrepute: Law 12**

**Video Clip 2: New England at New York (47:16)**

Similar to clip 1 above, this example involves a situation where player safety is paramount. Two players are approaching the touchline and the signboards at a high speed. Both are jostling for the ball. As the ball leaves the field, New England player no. 7 (blue jersey) holds the arm of the New York player no. 11 and thereby causes him to push back. These two actions then lead to further pushing by both players.

Quick intervention by the AR defuses the situation and prevents the game disrepute from escalating. Watch as the AR pats his pocket indicating the referee should consider a yellow card.

Following the [2009 Referee Program Directive on Game Disrepute and Mass Confrontation](#), the referee correctly applies the concept of

“punishing uniformly” and cautions both players for unsporting behavior. Given the fact that the actions occurred outside the field and while the ball was out of play, the restart would be a throw-in.

As part of the referee’s decision to caution both players, the referee should ask himself the following two questions. These questions will help the official assess the temperature of the game and guide the decision to caution. If the referee believes the use of personality and presence to address the two players will provide the same result as two cautions, the referee can exercise discretion.

1. **Does the player need the card?**

In this case, the referee can consider the past actions of the two players involved and, based upon this assessment, decide if the best course of action to modify their behavior is a caution.

2. **Does the game need the card?**

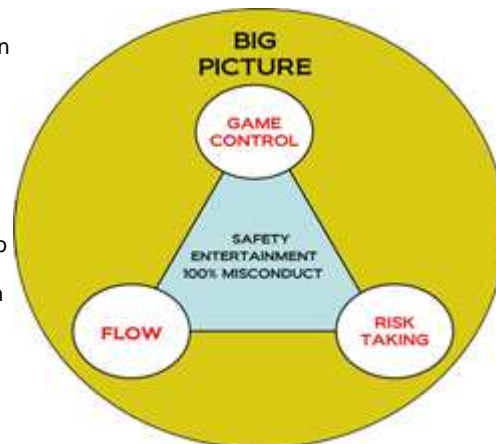
The history of the game to that point and the referee’s assessment of where the game is going can factor into the referee’s decision. Based upon the referee’s “feel” for the game, the official may exercise some discretion in deciding whether the game needs the two cautions to ensure future game control.

### **Flow, Risk Taking and Game Control: Law 5**

#### **Video Clip 3: Chicago at DC United (75:05)**

The “Game Management Model” (diagram to the right) is the focus of this game situation. In this clip, the referee correctly decides to take a risk and allow the game to flow by applying advantage despite the fact that a foul occurs in the defensive third of the field. This is a calculated risk that works for the game and for the referee.

In situations in which possible flow/advantage is originating in the defensive third of the field, the referee must do a cost-benefit analysis. In other words, the referee must analyze and quickly calculate the benefits to the team that has been fouled by giving them the advantage versus calling the foul. At the same time, the referee must calculate the costs (to the team retaining possession of the ball) or negative aspects of applying advantage from such a deep position so far from the goal. Consider the criteria in the “**4 P Principle**” when evaluating situations for the application of advantage:



1. **Possession of ball:** control by team or player.
2. **Potential for attack:** ability to continue a credible and dangerous attack.
3. **Personnel:** skill of attackers, numerical advantage.
4. **Proximity to opponent’s goal:** closeness to goal.

This clip only lacks the “proximity to opponent’s goal” criteria because it occurs in the defensive third. However, the three other criteria are clearly evident. Despite being in the defensive third, the attacking team has a good advantage opportunity as illustrated by the fact the fouled player is facing forward with the ball, he is not under immediate pressure from the opponent and there is sufficient space in front of him to advance the ball forward. Consequently, this situation is a good candidate for taking a risk and has more benefits than costs.

Watch as the referee signals advantage to indicate to the players and the spectators that he is aware a foul has occurred. Ultimately, though, the referee is forced to stop play to award a free kick due to a subsequent foul that occurs approximately seven seconds after the foul that leads to the application of advantage. The referee has exhibited a good sense of the “game management model” as the foul leading to the advantage was an upper body hold and the safety of the attacking player was never in question.

### **Looking Forward – Week 3**

Continued execution of the “Game Management Model” will continue to promote a positive game. Officials should continue to review all the 2009 Directives especially key directives such as “Contact Above the Shoulder” and “Handling the Ball.” Regular review of the directives will help to ensure they become second nature. In addition, match officials should spend time during their pregame conferences discussing the directives and how the team of officials will address each topic if they unfold during the match.

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