Game Management Model

Flow, Risk Taking and Game Control
Objective:

– More game flow and fewer stoppages

– Play through: trifling, minor, soft challenges

For example: taking risks and applying more advantage in the defensive third of the field.

Michel Platini, UEFA President tells BBC Sport:

"Football is based on speed, pace, and rhythm. And if you interrupt the flow of the game, you kill the game’s spirit."
Game Management Model

BIG PICTURE

GAME CONTROL

SAFETY
ENTERTAINMENT
100% MISCONDUCT

FLOW

RISK TAKING
The Big Picture

The circle is the big picture, which relates to the atmosphere or environment surrounding the match as it is played out and the referee’s feel for what the game needs at a given moment.

If an act by a player could be interpreted as a foul, a possible cautionable offense, or if the act could be interpreted as either a yellow or red card, the referee needs to consider the big picture surrounding the match.
If implemented correctly, the results can be positive:

**MLS 2008:** 3.5+ fewer fouls per game average

Results in - **Approx 2 minutes more time ball in play**

Results in - **More time for players to exhibit skills**

Results in - **Increased enjoyment**
What is the CORE?

Referees must find the right mix of flow, risk taking, and game control so that these 3 core factors are not negatively impacted.
What is the CORE?

**SAFETY**
- Safety of the players must take precedence over Flow and Risk Taking

**ENJOYMENT**
- Game flow/less stoppages increases enjoyment
- Think “player enjoyment - fun

**100% MISCONDUCT**
- Misconduct is misconduct – cannot ignore
- NO gray areas: discipline is clearly needed
- Mandated by the Laws of the Game
- Situations that require yellow or red card be issued
What is the TRIANGLE?

The 3 points must work in harmony to ensure that the core is protected.

The more game control that is needed, the less risk taking the referee engages in.

Referees need to find the right balance between taking risks and allowing flow and game control.

Each point of the triangle represents an important ingredient for game management.
What is the TRIANGLE?

RISK TAKING

Identify the types of small/minor challenges that the players will accept.

• the ability to manage the game in a manner that maximizes the time the ball is in play by eliminating unnecessary stoppages.

• must choose the right opportunities to take risks by not calling the borderline/minor challenges (trifling) that do not affect game control.
What is the TRIANGLE?

RISK TAKING

Appropriate risks are ones that make sense given:

• The location on the field
• The type of challenge committed
• The opportunity for a successful result from the application of flow
• The eventual impact on game control given the “big picture” of the match
What is the TRIANGLE?

FLOW

• The ability of a referee to manage the game so that the ball is in play by eliminating unnecessary stoppages

• Correctly differentiating the trifling challenges from the careless/reckless fouls, officials can ensure more rhythm to the game.

Remember this?
The game is meant to be played with as little interference as possible. Constant whistling for “trifling” or doubtful offenses brings the game into disrepute and spoils the pleasure of the spectators.
What is the TRIANGLE?

GAME CONTROL

The ability of the referee to find the right mix of risk taking and flow

- How you set the tone for what is acceptable in the game and what is not acceptable
- Presence and how the referee projects his personality on the game
- More game control is needed when the players’ actions indicate they do not want to play within the spirit of the Laws of the Game

*High* level of game control = *more* risk taking and flow

*Low* level of game control = *less* risk taking and flow
What is the TRIANGLE?

GAME CONTROL

The ability of the referee to find the right mix of risk taking and flow

• How you feel about your ability to “tighten up” on the game
• How confident you are about communicating with the players
• How confident you are about reading the responses of the players
• Take small steps

*High* level of confidence = more risk taking and flow

*Low* level of confidence = less risk taking and flow
Atmosphere and mood of the match

The referee’s “feel” for what the game needs at a given moment.

If an act by a player could be interpreted as either a foul or a possible cautionable foul … or if the act could be interpreted as either a yellow or red card (the act falls within a gray area), the referee needs to consider the BIG PICTURE surrounding the match.
The **BIG PICTURE** is applicable to situations where there is some discretion that can be exercised by the referee in determining his action.

- Is the foul just called a hard foul with a stern warning or is it a cautionable foul?
- The foul borders a yellow card or red card (the “orange card”)

The referee does not have a gut feeling either way relating to the two aforementioned examples. In this rare instance, the referee should consider the **BIG PICTURE**:

- The atmosphere of the match to that point
- The behavior and conduct of the player to that point
Does the player need the card?

Consideration should be given to:

• the player’s prior behavior prior to that point in the game and

• the intent of the player’s act.
Does the game need the card?

• Consideration should also be given to the temperature of the game until that point.

• Must quickly analyze where the game has been and where it is headed based upon player conduct until that point.
100% Misconduct

Cautionable Foul or Hard Foul?

Yellow Card? or Red Card?

There are NO gray areas

Cannot use the BIG PICTURE as an excuse or reason for not giving the appropriate misconduct in situations of 100% Misconduct
Trifling, Minor, Soft

- Player’s safety is not jeopardized

- Not careless, reckless, or with excessive force

- Examples of trifling, minor, and soft fouls
  - Upper body challenges (no use of arms)
  - Tugs and holds (simple and non-tactical)
  - Incidental contact
Warning Signs

- Excessive fouls on skillful player
- Escalation in the “severity of fouls”
- Frustration level of players increasing
- Dissent increasing
- Player feedback from both teams indicating “we don’t want flow”
- Score and time
Warning Signs

- Fouls near team benches / parents
- Wet field - comfort level to make tackles increases
- Tackles extending from 3 to 7 yards
- Cluster fouls - sequence / succession / repetition of challenges in a short time span
- More body contact
- Mismatched body contact – e.g. feet versus chest or head versus knee
Warning Signs

- Change from containment defense to high pressure and chase
- Challenges on goalkeeper
- Near touchline and no way out challenges
- Retaliation fouls after play restarts
- Player going into the goal to retrieve a ball after goal
- Winning team protecting ball (at corner flag) to use time
Advantage

“4 P Principle”

P ossession of Ball: Control by player or team

P otential for attack: Ability to continue a credible and dangerous attack

P ersonnel: Skill of attackers, numerical advantage

P roximity to opponent’s goal: Closeness to goal
Considerations

- Recall previous actions
- Know player’s skill – give the talented players more opportunity to show their skills
- Quickly calculate probability of success vs. risk
- Use wait and see approach
- Consider warning signs
- Consider ability to play through the contact
- Correctly use the advantage signal – sends visual message that infraction was seen
Discretion

Proper Use of Discretion Leads To Game Flow

All fouls are challenges, but
All challenges are not fouls

Advantage is flow, but
Flow is more than advantage

Foul discrimination leads to flow

*Use your discretion*
Brain Teaser #7

Which of the following is not a warning sign or flash point that the referee needs less flow and more game control?

A. Fouls committed near the team benches

B. Retaliatory tackles

C. Mismatched body contact (i.e. feet versus chest, head versus knee)

D. A trifling foul with incidental contact
Brain Teaser #8

Which of the following elements are at the core of the game management model?

A. Safety, equality and enjoyment

B. Safety, entertainment and 100% misconduct

C. Equality, entertainment and enjoyment

D. Safety, safety and safety
What are 100% misconduct situations?

A. Misconduct situations that the referee was 100% sure took place

B. Clear cut situations requiring yellow or red card
What does the term game flow mean?

A. The tempo or pace of the game

B. How many times the referee has stopped the game to enforce the Laws of the Game