



Change History	
February 6, 2011	Lesson Plan First Developed
December 12, 2011	Update
July 25, 2012	Update
September 1, 2013	Reviewed
October 13, 2013	Customer Service Pod added
October 30, 2015	Customer Service Pod subtracted; various updates; PowerPoint presentation added
November 2016	Reviewed files

1. DESCRIPTION

This workshop provides participants with field work that will help them confirm knowledge and improve techniques related to US Soccer mechanics and signals for Referee and Assistant Referee communication.

2. GOALS

- a. Review basic assistant referee (AR) signals.
- b. Review the concept of field quadrants and referee/AR signaling.
- c. Discuss the importance of subtlety in AR signaling and how its importance increases in higher level games.
- d. Discuss the importance of the Trail, Lead, Center (TLC) mechanism for recording goals scored and for communication among referee and ARs.
- e. Discuss things that could be added to or changed from the standard US Soccer mechanics during a pre-game conference.
- f. Discuss and demonstrate good referee positioning.

3. PREREQUISITES

None

4. STUDENT MATERIALS

Assistant referee flags

5. INSTRUCTOR EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- a. An assistant referee flag
- b. A whistle
- c. An open area, rectangular in shape, large enough for students to practice AR signals while standing side by side but small enough for the instructor to be heard and keep the students engaged.
- d. If the instructor elects to hold the class indoors, the accompanying PowerPoint presentation may be used. Attendees should still be encouraged to use their flags to demonstrate signals when the PowerPoint prompts them, and to modify signals when corrected by the instructor. Muscle memory helps support mental memory.

6. INSTRUCTOR NOTES

None.

LESSON PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION (5 min)

Introduce yourself and any instructors/assistant that will help facilitate the session. Introduce the topic and explain why proper officiating team mechanics (positioning, signaling, and communication) are important.

II. BODY

- A. Discuss the importance of the pre-game conference in getting all three officials “onto the same page” right from the start.
 1. Suggest that when working with experienced assistant referees, the referee should not cover basic material but should instead indicate that USSF procedures will apply, and then cover any exceptions and additions.
 2. Ask the attendees for examples of officiating team responsibilities that aren’t covered in US Soccer procedures and that should be discussed in the pre-game conference (e.g. responsibilities on a throw-in, a penalty kick, a free kick in the attacking third).
- B. Review the basic assistant referee positioning and signals.
 1. The three basic AR positions: even with the halfway line, even with the second-to-last defender, or even with the ball.
 2. The importance of following the ball all the way to the goal line when it matters.
 3. How and where to hold the flag.
 4. Signaling throw-ins, goal kicks, corner kicks.
 5. Signaling offside.
 6. Signaling a substitution request.
 7. Fouls called by the AR. Stress what should run through an AR’s mind before the flag is raised:
 - Did the referee see it?
 - Is it trifling?
 - Would the referee have called it had he had seen it?
 - Should advantage be considered?
 8. A penalty kick called by the AR. Stress the same points above for fouls signaled by the AR, as well as the importance of giving the referee the first chance to call it. If the referee does not call the foul,

the AR should consider whether the foul is worthy of a game changing event before signaling it himself.

- C. Review the concept of field quadrants and referee/AR signaling using quadrants.
1. Ball clearly out of play over the goal line in the referee's quadrant: referee signals first; lead AR mirrors or corrects the call.
 2. Ball clearly out of play over the goal line in the lead AR's quadrant: lead AR signals first; referee mirrors or corrects the call.
 3. Ball clearly out of play over the touch line in the referee's quadrant: referee signals first; trail AR mirrors the call.
 4. Ball clearly out of play over the touchline in the lead AR's quadrant: lead AR signals the call. Referee may choose to mirror the lead AR's call or corrects the lead AR if there is unseen ball contact.
 5. Point out that many ARs do not follow this standard US Soccer mechanic but instead raise the flag and signal before the referee has signaled. Demonstrate what can happen if this mechanism is not followed: with the instructor acting as the referee, simulate a ball out of play over the touchline in the referee's quadrant and have the students to signal for a throw-in in one direction... just as the referee points in the opposite direction. Describe the trouble this might cause the officiating team.
- D. Discuss the importance of subtlety in AR signaling and how its importance increases in higher level games.
1. Signaling fouls by waving the flag with the hand that will later indicate the free kick direction.
 2. Not waving the flag for a bad throw-in (this sounds like a serious foul or misconduct to a referee).
 3. Communicating "I don't know which way to signal."
 4. Signaling the color of the recommended card for misconduct.
 5. Signaling that time has expired.
 6. Lead AR signaling a foul or offside infraction when a goal is scored by a teammate.
- E. Discuss the importance of the 'TLC' mechanism for recording goals scored and for communication.
1. The ball is out of play and emotions may be high. Nothing good happens while the ball is out of play.
 2. Stress that the intent of TLC is to have at least two pairs of eyes watching the players and the sidelines at all times.

3. Point out that this is another standard USSF mechanism that many referees and ARs do not follow, but should.
- F. Discuss things that could be added to or changed from the standard US Soccer mechanics during a pre-game conference.
1. "I saw it and think we should keep playing."
 2. AR signal for an indirect free kick foul.
 3. Subtle AR direction signal for a throw-in in the referee's quadrant (e.g. flag held down and slightly forward in the hand that would be used to signal direction if the signal were given).
 4. Positioning and duties on a free kick in the attacking third. There are three main things to watch for (goal scored, offside, fouls/misconduct) and two officials to watch for them. Discuss the pros and cons of:
 - The AR covering offside and the referee covering the goal line.
 - The AR covering the goal line and the referee covering offside.
 - Whether fouls and misconduct in "the wall" require significant attention from the referee in most AYSO games.
 5. AR positioning on a penalty kick. Discuss the pros and cons of the AR coming to the intersection of the penalty area line and the goal line versus remaining at the corner flag.
 6. How the request for the lead AR to mirror signals by the trail AR requires the lead AR to occasionally look at the trail AR.
- G. Demonstrate good referee positioning.
1. On the diagonal during dynamic play for Regional and Intermediate Referees, looking through play at an AR ("Boxing Play").
 2. Wider and deeper during dynamic play for more experienced referees and for Advanced and National Referees. Emphasize the need for the referee to go where he/she must in order to stay close to play, especially:
 - Into the penalty area when opponents are fighting for a ball on the goal line.
 - Across the center of the field to be close to play when it is in front of the lead AR.
 - Stress that good referees have no 'invisible magic lines' on the field that they cannot cross.
 3. Referees should look:
 - At the lead AR every time the ball is played forward by the attackers.

- At the lead AR before signaling a goal.
 - At the appropriate AR whenever the ball has come perilously close to being out of play.
 - Quickly at the trail AR whenever there's an opportunity (e.g. when the ball is slowly passed across the field; when an attacker has the ball with no defenders near).
 - At both ARs during each stoppage in play.
 - At the players near the spot where the ball is played from for a moment after the ball has been played – lingering look.
 - At the players behind them every once in a while with an unpredictable head swivel or body turn.
 - At the players where the ball is expected to land, once it has been played and is up in air, rather than watching the ball.
4. On set plays.
- Throw-ins: don't stay where the thrower is; move closer to where the thrown ball is anticipated to land.
 - Goal kicks: at the start of the match, the referee's position should be far enough down field to allow the kicked ball to drop about 10 yards in front of the referee. As the game progresses, adjust positioning if the goal kicks are shorter or longer than previously anticipated. Occasionally abandon this positioning in order to walk back slowly with the players who are retreating for the goal kick, in order to hear what's being said and gauge the temperature of the match.
 - Free kicks: the typical position is far enough downfield to be in the general vicinity of the ball when it lands, out of the way of players who are waiting for the ball, and angled so as to be looking through play at the lead AR. Vary this position as required to deal with special situations (e.g. staying close to problem players, dealing with problems in the wall, covering the goal line on a close free kick).
 - Corner kicks: start with the US Soccer-recommended position and then move as required to see what needs to be seen (e.g. the goalkeeper, players who are closely marking opponents) and to stay out of the players' way. Position variance should happen automatically to obtain the best view of the ball and the players contesting for the ball, and to avoid allowing players to anticipate where the referee will be.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Provide time for questions and answers.
- B. Summarize the topics covered.
- C. Remind everyone that “In AYSO, it’s about MORE than the game.”
- D. Thank the attendees for coming.