

THE TEN KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL REFEREEING

Advice passed on from Ricardo Valenzuela, FIFA Referee, who received it from Esse Baharmast, former FIFA Referee and USSF Director of Advanced and International Referee Development. Original author unknown.

1. BE IN CHARGE

The referee and assistant referees are in charge of the game and their calls will dictate how the game will be played. Do not allow things to get out of hand early on. Avoid advantage until game control is established.

2. THE TAKE-OFF AND LANDING

There are certain key periods during the game when the referee must work extra hard to stay on top of things. The first fifteen minutes of each half is essential as the referee establishes game control and flow. The last fifteen to twenty minutes of each half is even more demanding as fatigue becomes a factor, resulting in mistakes and frustrations.

3. STAY CLOSE TO PLAY

Try to stay within five to ten yards of play where possible. Imagine that a television camera is following the play. You want to be on the fringes of the picture and to the side, so that you get a good view of the action.

4. AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE

Prevent violence by preventing frustration. Calling the simple holding fouls will reduce a player's tendency to lash out at the player holding him with an elbow. Once game control has been achieved, then the referees can allow the game to flow more freely.

5. ELIMINATE VIOLENCE

Stamp out serious foul play and violent acts that have no place in the game, including over the ball tackles, tackles into the Achilles tendon, elbows to the head and off the ball fouls.

6. STOP DISSENT

Dissent cannot be tolerated. These include abuse of the assistant referees, visible gestures, confrontations in the face of the referee, and packs of players chasing an official.

7. GET TEN YARDS

Get ten yards during all free kicks. Failure to do so undermines the credibility of the referees and results in the erosion of control.

8. COMMUNICATE AS A TEAM

Communication and teamwork with assistant referees is vital. Make sure that eye contact is established and information exchanged at every stoppage.

9. RECOGNIZE THE SEEDS OF VIOLENCE

Read the body language of the players. Deal with trash talking, prevent off the ball holding and pushing, and diffuse aggressive attitudes that do not belong in the game.

10. PROTECT THE SAFETY OF PLAYERS

All players must be protected. Referees insure that skillful players will have the opportunity to exhibit their athletic abilities. If we provide a safe environment for talent to be showcased, then the game will flow and that is what makes the game a joy to watch.