

### ***Tip of the Week - Set-Pieces***

A game of football consists of many - what can best be described as 'set-pieces', or jigsaw puzzle pieces that add up to form the whole 90 minutes. Each 'set-piece', if successfully managed, will result in the Referee maintaining control. One of the first aims of every Referee should be to use 'best-practice' techniques when managing 'set-pieces'. Once the standard 'set-piece' techniques have been mastered, the players' confidence in the Referee will increase, and they will more readily accept those awkward (non-set-piece) match-changing decisions, which seem to crop up in nearly every game. Subsequently, the Referee will feel more confident in the knowledge that at least he has a structured premeditated way to deal with the majority of situations that can occur in a game of football.

In the article below, I will add to the previous set-piece ideas on (1) how to manage throw-ins, (2) how to issue cards, (3) how to manage goal kicks, (4) how to build a positive image, (5) how to establish a rapport with players by gaining their trust via the TRUST triangle, (6) how to deal with simulation, (7) how to manage a penalty kick, (8) how to approach the kick-off at the beginning of each game, (9) how to manage the first 10 minutes of each game, (10) self-evaluation, (11) how best to apply advantage, (12) Assistant Referee tips, (13) using the Give and Go, Give and Sort technique during Free Kicks, (14) advice on Dealing with a Mass Confrontation Melee of players, (15) giving a standard Pre-Match brief to your Assistant Referees, (16) ideas on what to do at the Final Whistle, (17) How to Deal with Injuries via the S.E.R.I.O.U.S. Method, by providing a more detailed look at managing Throw-Ins.

These ideas are not prescriptive; rather, they will hopefully give you some new things to think about, and encourage you towards adopting a consistent approach by dovetailing them into your own style of refereeing to improve your performance.

All the 'Set-Piece' articles can be found on the [www.CorshamRef.org.uk](http://www.CorshamRef.org.uk) web site using the 'Set-Piece' links at the top of all of the web pages.

### **The Throw-In:**

#### **Introduction:**

The throw-in is just one jigsaw piece (constituent part) of the game as a whole that you will have to manage and control. If handled correctly, the throw-in should rarely cause you a problem, but there are a few things that you can do, that will help you when overseeing throw-ins and help you to minimise problems occurring. A throw-in is usually the first decision that you will have to make as a Referee in each half of the game, as invariably, within a matter of seconds, the ball will leave the field of play over one of the touchline boundaries. This offers you a first opportunity to be proactive by unconsciously manipulating players into taking all restarts from the correct position. Below, you will find the following three stages of managing a throw-in.

**Stage 1: Involve yourself 100 percent in the very first few throw-ins in each of the two 45 minute periods of play.**

**Stage 2: Confidant body language and signalling.**

**Stage 3: Consolidating.**

If you can incorporate these three ideas immediately into your game, will get you off to a very good positive start.

**Stage 1: Involve yourself 100 percent in the very first few throw-ins in each of the two 45 minute periods of play.**

As soon as you blow the whistle to start each half, be prepared to make your first decisions. This will very often be simple throw-in decisions. Commit yourself 100 percent to manage these first few throw-ins as if your life depended on it, as this can be your 'tipping-point' in terms of the players beginning to accept your authority right from the very start.

The aim is to impart an early unconscious message to all the players that you;

- are professional
- are dressed correctly and smartly
- intend to take this game seriously from the very start
- expect restarts to be taken from the correct place
- expect players to look to you for decisions if they are unsure
- expect players to be wary of your ability not to be manipulated or too frivolous with Law application
- expect players to look to you for positional instructions if they are not sure where to take a restart
- expect players to recognise your authority as the official Referee of their game
- are as keen as they are to fulfil your part to the best of your ability
- will strive to reach credible monitoring positions by working hard at all times
- not to see you as an official dictator but rather as a necessary part of their game

When you break down the benefits of involving yourself 100 percent in the very first few throw-ins of each half, as shown in the list above, it is not surprising that at least some of them will inevitably be consumed into the players' unconscious mind. This can only be beneficial to you as a Referee as the game unfolds. The ideas in this advice are things that you will physically and mentally have to do - so don't expect players to respect you without earning it.

***Involve yourself 100 percent by:***

- anticipating where your first decision will be made

- working hard to be as close as practically possible
- sprinting adjacent to where the ball has left the field of play
- using your whistle clearly and confidently when making your first few decisions
- using your outstretched horizontally held arm to emphasise where you want the player who is taking the throw to stand
- making eye-contact and looking the thrower in the eye as he prepares to take his throw-in

If you can quietly achieve the above, players will not only look towards you automatically prior to taking the throw-in, but more importantly, they will look towards you on subsequent restarts to check your acceptance.

- only use verbal and additional whistle signals as a last resort to achieve correct positioning by the player. It is very rare that you will need to do this, as your positioning and close attendance is normally all that is needed.

### **Stage 2: Confidant body language and signalling.**

The idea is not to BOSS these early restarts by being overly assertive, but rather to quietly and confidently involve yourself 100 percent. If you are too strong when dealing with the minor trouble-less elements of a game (like these early throw-ins), it will lessen the assertiveness impact that will serve you better when dealing with possible serious incidents later on.

To involve yourself 100 percent without being overpowering, you need to achieve a level of authority that does not end up making you look like a dictator who cares nothing about helping players to enjoy their sport.

You can achieve this during the early restarts by:

- not trying to impose yourself by forcing players to do exactly what you want by using domineering commands
- not executing arm, whistle and vocal signals like a Sergeant Major!
- having the flexibility to interpret the Laws without insisting on applying them in minute detail
- wearing a friendly smile on your face in the early stages
- being slightly relaxed yet focused, by using a good upright posture that exudes a good attitude
- making an effort to get into the correct position and not standing 50 metres away
- demonstrating an enthusiasm and positive attitude for the game
- using early stoppages to show in a quiet way, that if you are 'up for this game'

- always being polite
- acknowledging your Assistant Referees support with quick early subtle thumbs-up signals
- not penalising trifling Law breaches or looking to conjure up deliberate faults when there are none
- quietly saying to a player who was near to committing a fault, for example when he took the throw-in, "Be careful with your feet on the next throw-in." Or, "Make sure you take it from exactly the right place next time."

If you can achieve all or some of the above, it will positively influence the subconscious mind of the players before they have had a chance to try and influence YOU! If you can get into their minds before they get to yours, it will be of great benefit to everyone involved. These actions subtly set the scene of the referee's capability in the players' eyes. Effective communication techniques such as these will subtly guide players into taking throw-ins from the correct place, and this will subsequently lead to other restarts being taken correctly.

### **Stage 3: Consolidating.**

Throw-in consolidation:

- when the ball leaves the field of play for a throw-in, once you have shown the direction with a raised angled arm signal, sprint and position yourself square to where the ball left the field of play
- if you can't remember which way the throwing team is kicking, just shout, "Red throw" or "Yellow throw" etc. until you are confident that your arm direction signals are pointing the right way!
- if you don't know which way to award the throw-in, give it to the defending team, unless you want to invite players to exploit your indecisiveness - but aim to get your first few decisions correct (this is even more important if you are an Assistant Referee)
- be proactive and stop players from taking throw-ins from the wrong place
- raise an arm horizontally and hold it there for a minimum of 5 seconds to show everyone where the throw-in should take place
- only use your whistle to signal to stop play for a throw-in if there is any doubt (but use it for the first few occasions)
- if players gain illegal ground use short blasts on your whistle (peep peep peep) to reposition them correctly
- if the short whistle blasts do not work, use vocal instructions and approach a few steps nearer

- once the thrower is in the correct position, sprint to your drop-zone point to monitor where the ball is likely to land when it is thrown

If you do this for the first three or four throw-ins in each half of the game, you will notice that players will start looking towards you for positive affirmation before they take subsequent throw-ins. As the game progresses, you will find that players no longer try to gain those few illicit metres up the touchline. You no longer need to provide any positioning signal apart from standing square to where the ball should be thrown back in. Eventually, you don't even need to stand adjacent to where the ball should be thrown back, instead you will be able to sprint directly to your drop-zone monitoring position without having to indicate where the throw-in should take place; because the players themselves will go to the correct place automatically. Once this level of control has been achieved, apart from giving the throw-in direction, your involvement only needs to be heightened (or re-established) if there is a disputed throw-in, or if the players' standards begin to slip later on. This subtle proactive technique, covertly guides the players into doing correctly what they should have been doing correctly in the first place!

### ***Keeping the anticipated play area in view.***

As a general rule, try to keep the drop-zone area (where you anticipate that the ball will be thrown) in good view and the subsequent anticipated play area in front of you when positioning yourself to monitor a throw-in. There are exceptions to this of course; one being when the defending team near their goal line, take a throw-in. In the latter case, don't stand on the goal line but take up a position further up the field towards the middle rather than near the touchline.

Keeping the subsequent play area in view (generally in front of you), gives you a better angle of view, and keeps you out of the players' path. And more importantly, stops you straying into the zone where the ball is most likely to go. There may be the odd occasion when you will need to monitor a throw-in from the touchline or a goal line. But placing yourself at the extremes of your patrol path is always to the detriment of optimum positioning, which should consider all possibilities of where the ball could travel if it breaks away quickly.

Finally, closeness to play is always a major factor in decision-making; more so when Club Assistant Referees are being used. For example, it is wise not to stick too rigidly to your diagonal patrol path when the throw-in is near your Assistant on the far side of your diagonal path. Be prepared to compress play by coming 'way off' your diagonal to closely monitor a throw-in, especially if any trouble is expected. Remember - try to be proactive and NOT reactive. The nearer that you are to a decision-making moment, the more readily the players will accept your judgment and the more credible your decision will be. This is also important if you need to 'sell' a decision that you are not 100 percent sure about. Players more readily accept a difficult decision made from a few metres away; this is not the case if you make a difficult or important decision from 50 metres away. This is very important when you make the first few decisions in each half time period of play.

### **Summary:**

Hopefully, if adopted, the above suggestions will minimise foul throw-ins, and encourage players to look towards you (the Referee) for positive confirmation at throw-ins and other restarts. The overall

message is to be proactive and not reactive. Don't wait for a foul throw-in (or any other restart) to occur, when it is so very easy for referees (as guardians and Champions of the Laws) to prevent it.

I have shown how easy it is to be proactive, how to subtly manage the restart positions to minimise infringements, and hopefully, I have encouraged you to be more thoughtful in your positioning and efforts in the very first few minutes of each half. Try using some of these ideas to manage other early restarts and stoppages.

Work hard to quietly/assertively and professionally manage the first few throw-ins in each half by being prepared to subtly guide the players into the correct place to take the throw-in. They will then start to look towards you on subsequent throw-ins, and this is when you can ease off your involvement (but remain watchful).

The overall aim is to show players very early on, that whilst you can allow some leeway and flexibility with restarts, it is you that control the amount of leeway and when to apply it - and not them.

Source: CorshamRef