

Skillful Thinkers
What the Game Expects

A presentation for the Raritan Valley Soccer Officials Association
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November 6, 2020

Thank you to Barry Towbin for his assistance with the material.

The slide features a background image of a soccer field with a large, semi-transparent graphic in the center. The graphic is a 2x2 grid of colored squares: top-left is red, top-right is yellow, bottom-left is yellow, and bottom-right is red. The text is overlaid on this graphic.

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Jill Ellis, former USWNT Head Coach

“I want players that are Skillful Thinkers.”

“We want Referees that are Skillful Thinkers”

Slide 2

The slide features a background image of a soccer field with a large, semi-transparent white rectangular box in the center. The text is overlaid on this box.

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How is our game changing?

- Players are getting
 - Faster
 - Stronger
 - More skilled
- The game is getting
 - Faster
 - More organized
 - More technical
- The demands on the referee are greater than ever
 - Position
 - Decisions *...and...*



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Luis Suarez first of his name, member of house Uruguay, biter of men and lord of the goals

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Professionalism

- On the field
 - Appearance
 - Dealing with
 - coaches,
 - players, and
 - spectators
- Off the field
 - Maturity
 - Dependability
 - Character



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Match Preparation

- Complete focus on the match
- Visualization of match critical situations
- Equipment: Everything in top shape.
- Travel Arrangements
- Last minute problems



The Five P's
 Proper Planning
 Prevents Poor Performance

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Advance Knowledge

- What are the teams like?
- What are the conditions of the game?
- It is up to you to be prepared!
- Where can you find this information?



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Consistency

- Everybody wants every official to be consistent.
 - within the game,
 - within the season,
 - game to game,
 - Ref to Ref,
 - player to player
- A common level of consistency can be expected, but...
- Critical self analysis of consistency is mandatory.

**Consistency
is only a virtue provided
you are not a screw-up.**

- Dan Paolini

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Match How Players Play

- Let the game flow.
 - “Players love you when they’re playing.”
- Do not stop the game for trifling or doubtful fouls.
- Do not fail to call deliberate breaches of the Rules.

One Challenge:

When the two teams have contrasting styles—especially when one is extremely physical, and the other is extremely technical.

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Fitness

- Presence lends conviction-BE THERE.
- Sell that critical call.
- Fatigue reduces your ability to concentrate.
- Fitness is not an asset; it is a necessity.
- The players must be fit - so must you!
- We should be Athletes officiating Athletes.

“Get in shape to officiate, do not officiate to get in shape.”

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Reading Play

- Do not focus on the ball.
- Scan, read, anticipate and move.
- Do not get caught in the passing lanes.
- Stay out of those curved areas on the field: the center circle, the penalty arcs, and....



The center of a confrontation circle!

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Assistant Referees

- Playoff Games, Night Games, High-profile Games
- Referees - Never forget your Assistants.
- Pre-game Instructions must be clear and unambiguous.
- Cooperation equals successful team performance.

Assistant Refereeing is not that stuff you do until you get a chance to blow the magic whistle again.

A game with two poor Assistant Referees is often worse off than a game with only a single Referee.



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Misconduct

Managing Misconduct is Easy—provided you do it.

Once you show that your determination to manage the game is greater than the player's or coach's determination to destroy it, you will likely turn a difficult game into a considerably easier one.



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Game Critical Moments

- What is a game critical moment?
- Must be dealt with to prevent retaliation and/or escalation.
- Do not hesitate to use a card to keep matters under control.
- If you do not act, 'Pay-back' time will come, sooner or later!



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Cautions and Send Offs

- Do not be too quick with your cards.
- A quiet word, or a stern admonition, might suffice.
- Do not hesitate, however, if a card has been earned!



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Control

- These can all lead to a loss of match control:
 - Lack of professionalism
 - Inconsistent calls
 - Lack of fitness
 - Poor player management skills
- There should be no doubt about your competence, authority, or knowledge of the "Rules of the Game".
- Understanding the game in front of you
 - What is expected?
 - What will be accepted?
 - What is needed for game control?



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Control

- Be flexible.
- Use common sense
(Rule 18 is permitted by Rule 5).
- Enjoyment is contagious.

The official is responsible for

- SAFETY
- FAIRNESS
- ENJOYMENT



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Absolute Rules

- You Referee Who You Are.
- It is not "Can you officiate?", it's "Can you be accepted as an official?"
- Your ability to deal with injustice, unfairness and criticism determines if you will find happiness in officiating.
- It is their game, but it is your responsibility. Pour no gasoline on their game.



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Balance

While soccer is a major part in the life of practically every successful official, one's love of, and devotion to, the game should never be permitted to overshadow the even more important responsibilities we have to family and work.



STAY FOCUSED

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Skillful Thinkers

Final Questions?

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