

FLAGGING TIPS *by Julian Carosi:*

1. When standing at the halfway line, and when play is in the other half of the field of play, Assistant Referees should always hold their flag in the hand that is nearest to the halfway line. This ensures that when play breaks back into their half, the Assistant Referee (when he turns to **run** down towards the corner flag) will already have the flag in the correct hand facing inwards towards the centre Referee.
2. Never roll the flag up. Always have it unfurled, with as much of the flag's surface area visible to the centre Referee. Keep the flag as motionless as possible whilst running.
3. When making the 'substitution' flag signal, do not hold it in front of your face. If you do, you may miss an incident. Hold it slightly to one side of the face to allow you visibility.
4. When signalling for a goal kick (or a corner kick), hold the flag in the hand that is **nearest to the goal line**. This will prevent you obscuring the centre Referee from your vision and will open up your body position so that you are correctly facing towards the field of play. This will also give a greater eye contact line with the centre Referee.
5. **When signalling for a throw-in, use the correct hand. If the throw-in is to the right, use the right hand. If the throw-in is to the left, use the left hand. DO NOT use the right hand to indicate a throw-in to the left, and do not use the left hand to indicate a throw-in to the right. In other words, do not cross your flag arm across your chest, or turn your body unnecessarily when making signals.**
6. Always hold the flag in the hand that is nearest to the field of play. This will enable the centre Referee to view it easier. Whilst switching hands, keep your hands low.
7. When signalling, **stop, face the field of play, stand erect** and try to locate and make eye contact with the centre Referee.
8. If the centre Referee acknowledges the flag, drop it immediately and continue to move with the ensuing game.
9. Be **sharp** with the flag when you are raising it. When you bring it down, do it gracefully!
10. Assistant Referees must learn the correct flag signals, and use them properly.
11. Whenever the ball leaves the field of play, the flag signal of the Assistant Referee should show clearly the correct restart and direction. In clear throw-in situations, the Assistant Referee can directly show the direction (along the whole touch line). But **if he has any doubt about the direction, the Assistant Referee should simply raise his flag, make eye contact with the referee and follow the referee's signal**. On very tight decisions, when the ball stays in play, a discreet hand signal could give valuable support to the Referee.
12. Whenever an Assistant Referee signals the ball out of the field of play (even if players continue to play the ball) he must **retain the signal** until acknowledged by the Referee taking action.
13. When the ball enters a goal: To confirm a valid goal has been scored, an Assistant Referee should display clear movement down the touchline towards the centre line. In borderline cases, this movement should be clear (sprint) to be recognised by the Referee. To confirm a goal, **the Assistant Referee should not raise his flag**. If in his opinion a goal has not been scored correctly, the Assistant Referee should stand still, retaining any signal already given. The Referee may then choose to consult further if he needs additional guidance.

14. An Assistant Referee must use a raised flag signal to advise the Referee that he has seen a foul committed (or unsporting behaviour or violent conduct) when he is better positioned than the Referee and the Referee has not clearly acted on the offence. If the Assistant Referee has additional information, concerning the offence, he wishes to give to the Referee or if the Referee has not seen his flag signal the electronic beep signal should be used if available, but only to supplement the flag signal already given. It was emphasised that such action by an Assistant Referee must be taken for all appropriate offences including those committed inside the penalty area. There is benefit in the Assistant Referee being seen to be aware and signalling for any offence in his immediate vicinity and this practice is recommended. When a flag is raised for Law 12 offences, it should be unfurled and **waved** to distinguish from the signal for offside.

15. If a flag signal for any offence is not seen immediately by the Referee, the Assistant Referee must keep signalling until the Referee acknowledges him or he recognises a clear advantage to the team against which the offence has been committed.

16. Eye-contact and discreet hand signals from an Assistant Referee may be helpful in passing information to a Referee e.g. type of offence, next action etc. This would reduce the need for the Referee to come across to the Assistant Referee for consultation. Where direct consultation is necessary between the Referee and Assistant Referee, the information should include, as concisely as possible, what happened, which players were involved, the precise location, recommended action and the re-start of play. It is recommended that in such cases the assistant referee advance towards the referee by 4 to 5 metres. During consultation, the Assistant Referee and Referee should both face the field of play. It is usually appropriate to avoid the consultation being heard or understood by others.

17. Offences of violent conduct seen and signalled by an Assistant Referee must be acted upon in accordance with the Laws of the Game by the Referee. If play has been stopped for the disciplinary action (even if the signal has not been seen immediately and play has continued), the restart must also be in accordance with the Laws (free kick / penalty kick). However, if the Assistant Referee's signal is not seen immediately and play has been restarted for a subsequent situation, only the appropriate disciplinary action can be taken against the offending player.

18. Where a Referee seeks guidance from an Assistant Referee concerning the exact location of an offence near the boundary of the penalty area the action of the assistant referee should be as follows:

(a) If the offence is inside the penalty area – the Assistant Referee moves visibly down the touchline towards the corner flag.

(b) If the offence is outside the penalty area – the Assistant Referee stands still having moved to be in line with the edge of the penalty area.

19. If an Assistant Referee knows that a Referee has made an obvious disciplinary error (e.g. two yellow cards to the same player without sending him off, red or yellow card to the wrong player, player kicked the ball twice at free kick, etc.) he must intervene immediately (flag and beep or even enter the field of play). The other Assistant Referee (or 4th official) should if necessary, also assist in such case.

20. Control of the 9.15m distance: When a Referee chooses to use the help of an Assistant Referee on the field of play to control the 9.15m distance from the ball at free-kick, it is recommended that the Assistant Referee does not physically measure the 9.15m but rather asserts his control from the position of the ball. This exceptional on field involvement of the assistant referee is recommended only for free kicks very near the touchline.

21. Positioning:

(a) Free kick close to the penalty area

At free kicks close to the penalty area, the Assistant Referee should position himself in line with the second last defender (controlling the offside), but also with awareness of the goal line. The Referee should control the ball and the wall.

(b) After an offside

When possible, an Assistant Referee, after a free kick for offside has been given, should position himself in line with the spot where the ball should be positioned to restart the game. He should then immediately take up a position to control the offside line (level with the second-last defender), which is his priority.

(c) Goal kick and goal clearance

For goal kicks and when the goalkeeper is in possession of the ball inside his own penalty area, it is advised that the Assistant Referee occasionally checks that **the ball is correctly positioned or that the goalkeeper does not cross the 16 metre line before releasing the ball** from his hands. This should be done in convenient situations (e.g. second last defender near the penalty area). Control of offside from subsequent play is the priority concern.

(d) Corner kick

For corner kicks, it is recommended that the Assistant Referee **involved takes a position behind the flag in line with the goal line.**

(e) Penalty kick

When a penalty kick is awarded during the normal course of play, the assistant should be on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line.

(f) Kicks from the penalty mark to determine the winner of a match:

One assistant should be positioned on the goal line where it meets the goal area boundary line, with the other Assistant Referee controlling the players within the centre circle. The Referee must determine and agree the role of the Assistant Referee on the goal line, and his own role in detecting any forward movement from the goal line of the goalkeeper. Referees and Assistant Referees are also reminded that the "inactive" goalkeeper should remain positioned on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line.

(g) Substitution

When substitutions take place, they shall be supervised by the 4th official (if available) in co-operation with the Referee. Therefore, the Assistant Referee does not need to move to the halfway line if a 4th Official is available.