



MENTOR AREA

STAGE 3: Your first match in the middle

PART 1: Preparing for your first match

As with anything you do for the first time, refereeing your first match will seem a nerve-racking prospect. This, of course, is only natural, but being fully prepared to take to the field for the first time should go some way to help settle those nerves and ensure a smooth beginning to your refereeing career.

The first step is to receive the details of the game you will be officiating. Depending upon the individual league/competition, the method of learning of your appointments may vary but is often through e-mail. Upon receiving the appointment, you should ensure that it contains the relevant details including the teams competing in the fixture; the venue of the game and the time of kick-off. Some leagues require the referee to confirm their appointment with them or have some form of communication with the competing clubs prior to the match. If you are unsure about any pre-match administration duties then you should contact the competition's Referee Appointment Officer and ask for clarification.

It is then often a good idea to familiarise yourself with the competitions rules. These can normally be found on the league/competitions website or some competitions may supply you with a handbook. There may be modifications to the Laws of the Game in terms of the duration of matches, number of substitutions allowed or size of the pitch so it is important to ensure that you are aware of these leading up to the match. Matches in junior, veteran or female leagues often will have specific competition rules. It may also be prudent to look over any parts of the Laws of the Game (L.O.T.G) if you feel the need to look over something again. The sections of the L.O.T.G concerning fouls and misconduct, offside and a referee's signal may be particularly appropriate areas to have a look at.



An essential part of preparing for any game is ensuring that match day kit is clean and ready for use. This should consist of a black referee's shirt, shorts, socks, suitable footwear, two watches, a whistle, a coin and flags. Some officials also take spare items such as shirts or whistles with them in case of any damage or loss of any items, though this is down to individual preference. Ensure that this kit is checked before leaving for the game to make sure nothing is missing. This should help to offer piece of mind that you have everything needed for your first match.

Attention should then turn to travel arrangements for the game. If the match is in a area/location that is unfamiliar then it is highly advisable to plan a route in advance using a map or online applications such as Google Maps. If possible it may be a good idea to have a practice journey to the location as well to make it easier to locate on the day itself. When travelling to the game, give yourself plenty of time to arrive at the ground and take into consideration any weather conditions or excess traffic that may impact your journey time. Many competitions will have a regulation time in which referees must arrive prior to the match, but if there are no regulations supplied then aim to get there at least 20-30 minutes prior to kick-off.



You should also ensure, like with any form of active participation in competitive sport, that you are in good physical condition ahead of the match. Make sure that you have a good night's sleep and something suitable to eat prior to setting off, leaving ample time to digest it properly. It is also a good idea to take water and/or an energy drink with you to the game.

Following the advice above should result in effective preparation for your first game, and help to settle the inevitable nerves that you will no doubt be feeling!

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