



MENTOR AREA

STAGE 4: Your first match on the line

PART 1: Preparing for your first line

You've received an appointment to a cup semi-final or final as an assistant referee in your league, or maybe you've been given a game on the line in a tournament or county competition. Whatever the occasion, the role of an assistant referee is a crucial one and like with assuming the role of a referee requires careful preparation in the build up to a game.

As with refereeing in certain leagues/competitions, you may need to confirm your appointment with the appointment secretary and/or the home club. In many instances, the referee will often make communication with their assistants in the days leading up to



the match. Typically they will outline how long before kick-off they wish you to be there, address any questions you may have and alert you of any expected dress-code, for instance some competition finals require their officials to arrive in smart dress (shirt, tie and so on). In the absence of any

communication from the referee, there may be guidelines laid out on the competition handbook which you can consult or indeed you could contact your appointment secretary/the referee yourself to enquire about desired arrival times and/or dress code.

It's highly likely that you will not have practised the signals of an assistant referee since your Basic Referee's Course. Therefore, it may be prudent to revise these signals as part of your preparations for your first game on the line. Visit the website to see a video on all the signals you will need to know as an assistant. It's also worth looking over the appropriate signals in the Laws of the Game (L.O.T.G), and then standing in front of a mirror and performing them with one of your flags. You could also find it beneficial to read over the sections of the L.O.T.G relating to the duties of an assistant referee and offside to aid your preparations. In addition, getting your positioning right is crucial in order to make effective decisions in this role. The L.O.T.G contains many useful diagrams which should be carefully studied in the build up to the match but you can also find an

excellent video on the subject of assistant referee positioning in this section of the mentor area that can help this process.

You should go about preparing your match day kit in the same way you would do for any game; ensuring you pack all of the usual equipment such as cards, whistle and coin. Even though you have not been appointed to take charge of this match, there are several reasons you should still be fully equipped. Firstly, it may be that the referee wishes for

you to keep a full match record (cautions, goals etc.) as part of your duties during the match, a task that would require your notebook. Secondly, the referee himself may have forgotten an item such as cards or coins so by you possessing the appropriate equipment, you can help to ensure the professional appearance of the refereeing team. Furthermore, the situation could arise by the



referee was unable to take charge of the match for whatever reason and in their absence. For the reasons outlined, it's therefore important that you prepare your kit as you would if refereeing match. You may also be required to prepare smart clothes to travel in, if as mentioned earlier your competition requires you to do so.

Travel arrangements also must be considered. Will you be travelling to the game alone? If so then you will be travelling to the ground as you usually would do but remember to give yourself to get there as you are potentially keeping the other officials waiting if you are later than expected. Alternatively could group travel be feasible? This might be something worth discussing with your fellow officials, particularly if they live close to yourself.

Finally, as with any match, make sure you are in good condition ready to officiate, the role of assistant referee requires much sprinting and stamina so make sure you are thoroughly rested up and suitably fed and hydrated in the lead up to the game. It may take a bit of a time to adapt to the role of an assistant referee, but if you are well prepared then your first experience in this role will be much easier!

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