



MWFRA

Communication Equipment Guidelines

As at June 2019

The below guidelines have been designed to offer advice and guidance on the use of the Communication System. The guidance regarding the use of this equipment should be clearly stated by the referee during their pre-match discussions. When functioning and used correctly, this equipment is an effective tool for Match Officials to communicate with each other and can enhance match control.

Guidelines

Testing the Equipment

In order to fully check that the communication system is working effectively, referees and assistant referees should use the system during their pre-match warm up routine where possible. They should be checked prior to entry to the field of play, re-checked immediately prior to kick off and again immediately prior to the start of the second half.

The Fourth Official

In order to reduce the distraction to the referee and the assistant referees, the fourth official should use a 'push to talk' button. It is also useful for the referee to seek the fourth official's input as to the credible minimum period of additional time to play at the end of each half, and for the official to 'countdown' the time at the end of each half.

Clear Communication

Like most communication systems clarity of information is critical. Match Officials are advised to speak slowly and clearly. Although the 'Communication System' is encrypted and conversations between Match Officials cannot be 'listened' to, Match Officials should be guarded as to what they say. The use of insulting and offensive language is unacceptable. Messages should be repeated to ensure communication is received, e.g. "offside offside", but only two or three times so as not to drown out any other information being received.

Offside situations

It is recommended that the assistant referee does NOT use the words "not offside" when judging whether a player(s) is in an offside position or not. Instead, the assistant referee, in judging whether a player(s) could be penalised for being in an offside position, should communicate to the referee "waiting". When the assistant is sure a player is to be penalised he should communicate to the referee "offside". In the case there is no player in an offside position, silence from the Assistant

Referee could confirm this alone, however some referees may prefer to hear their Assistant Referee say “all good”.

It may be helpful to communicate the player(s) number as this will inform the referee which player(s) is in offside positions. In tight offside judgements where a goal has been scored, it might also be helpful for the referee to know the number of the second last defender who ‘played on’ the attacking player before scoring.

The referee could also advise his Assistant Referees whether a ball (which has gone to a player that may look like they are in an offside position) was played deliberately by an opponent by saying “deliberately played”. This will aid the Assistant Referees in making accurate offside decisions.

Ball in & out of play

Communication between the referee and assistant referees prior to any directional decision is helpful to give an early warning of the decision and to ensure that when decisions are made, the chances of any errors are reduced. It is helpful too, if the assistant referee communicates to the referee ‘ball in play’ so the referee can keep his focus on the potential dropping zone of the ball.

Set play situations

It is helpful to the referee for the non-active assistant to watch the ball at free kick situations to ensure that no infringement is committed by the kicker. At the taking of the free kick or corner kick, communicate ‘ball in play’ so that the referee can keep his focus on the potential dropping zone of the ball.

Disciplinary sanctions

Confirming disciplinary action is very important to all Match Officials – the referee should communicate the number of the player receiving a caution or a dismissal and the reason for this to all other Match Officials. Where the referee is seeking clarification from the assistant referee, the referee should ask “What did you see?” and then make a decision on the advice offered.

In situations where an advantage is played after a cautionable offence, the referee should inform the referee team which player(s) will be cautioned at the next stoppage. This will allow the Assistant Referees to help the Referee locate the players on the field quickly and remind the Referee should they forget the number of the player.

Goal/No Goal

Assistant referees can confirm to the referee that they are happy with a goal and that no infringement has occurred by saying “goal”.

Conversely, where the ball appears to have partially crossed the goal line but not completely, the Assistant Referee should indicate that the ball is still in play.

General communication

Other helpful advice for referees is to communicate when a ball has been deliberately played back to a team’s own goalkeeper. This will alert the assistant referee if there is an infringement by the goalkeeper.

Other situations

Apart from the guidelines offered above, there may be times where the fourth official can use the communication system to provide further assistance. For example:

- A team wishing to make a substitution;
- Safety issues;
- Misconduct by technical area personnel;

Assistant referees MUST be mindful that the Communication System is a supplementary tool and that the flag remains the primary form of communication.