



National Rugby League Limited
Fox Studios Development
Lang Road, Moore Park NSW 1363
Postal Address:
GPO Box 3498 Sydney NSW 2001
ABN 23 082 088 962
Internet: www.nrl.com
Telephone: (02) 9339 8500
Facsimile: (02) 9339 8508

Memorandum

To:	ARLRA Referees' Coaches
From:	Michael Stone
Date:	22 December 2003
Subject:	MS 001/04

MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE

It is hard to believe just how much can happen in an off season. Coaches sacked, new coaches installed. Laws changed. Policy issues debated. Work continuing on career paths for referees. Establishment of an NRL Development Squad under the care of the NRL Referees co-ordinator. Proposals for Welfare Officers to assist with the relocation of referees when necessary. Meetings and agreements in principle with the NSWRA for use of appropriate Country referees in Junior Rep games and the *modus operandi* involved in bringing that about. Plans for the first satellite Academy Programme well advanced and date for the launch set for 4 March 2004. Presenters and curriculum also into overdrive. Candidates for the pilot programme to be run through the Hunter Academy of Sport to be selected mid January. Plans made. Budgets submitted. Training well underway. I can hardly wait for the new season to start!

NEW RULES

Two Law changes were recommended NRL Laws Advisory Committee. The first involved an attacking player held up in goal. As usual, there was support for the defending team gaining some advantage out of the situation.

The Committee considered the English recommendation that a scrum be formed and the tackle count be allowed to continue. However, with all scrums set at least 20 metres in from touch, this would give the attacking team options on both the open and blind sides of the scrum even though the player may have been held up only centimetres from touch. It also gave more attacking options with the forwards having to remain in the scrum until the ball emerged. The Committee took this one step further and suggested that the play should resume with a

play the ball 10 metres out directly in line with where the player was held up. The tackle count would continue from where it left off as with their proposal. This would also have the advantage of play continuing almost immediately rather than delaying the restart while a scrum is being formed. This recommendation was forwarded to the ARL for its consideration.

Coin Toss.

This rule has remained unchanged for many years and has probably not retained its relevance to the modern game where field position is so important. Under the current rule the winner of the toss only gets to choose which end to defend, while the losing team has to kick off. It was felt that a more suitable outcome would be to give the winner of the toss the choice of ends **or** to elect to kick off. If the toss winner elects to kick off, the loser of the toss would receive the choice of ends.

This was also put to the ARL. It is likely that both laws will be endorsed in time for the 2004 season as the feedback from England is positive and the next RLIF meeting is due in February.

In the NRL next year, when a ball is stolen by a defender in his own in goal, a penalty try will not be an option. The action may be penalized as it is still illegal, however, no penalty try.

RULINGS

Geoff Carr recently referred a touchy subject to me from Richard Johnston. It involved a number of scenarios where the ball is knocked on in the field of play, rolls into the in goal area, and something else happens. Defender runs and is tackled, or throws a forward pass, or drops the ball for an attacker to force, or passes the ball backwards for an attacker to force, or kicks the ball out on the full. After much consultation, this was my reply. It will not be without controversy.

“Generally speaking, the advantage is deemed to have been taken if the non offending team has had sufficient opportunity to take advantage of a breach by the opposing side, and has indeed attempted to do so. The six scenarios mentioned by Richard Johnston in his memo of 7 August last, involve a breach in the field of play by the attacking team and the ball rolling into the opponent’s in goal area. A defending player then attempts to either pass or kick the ball to gain an advantage.

In the past, whether the action takes place in the field of play or in goal was immaterial. If a defender had an opportunity to take advantage and attempted to do so, the advantage was deemed to have been taken irrespective of where the action took place. This gave rise to some unfair results and indeed, inconsistent interpretations by individual referees.

There is a school of thought that if the defending team don't make it into the field of play, then they have not had a genuine opportunity to take advantage of the breach by the attacking team. Therefore in all of the scenarios raised by Mr Johnston, the resultant ruling is a scrum for the knock on by Red. In my opinion, given the predictability of the scrum in the modern game, this is the preferable decision."

SATELLITE ACADEMY PROGRAMME

A pilot for the Academy Programme will be launched by the Hunter Academy of Sport in Newcastle on Thursday 4 March 2004. I have sought names and CV's of appropriately credentialed referees from Newcastle, Lower Hunter, Maitland, Group 21, Group 3, Central Coast and Northern Sydney Associations for consideration as the first intake into the Programme. I hope to make an announcement of the successful nine candidates at the CRLRA camp in February.

The candidates will be required to attend sessions each Thursday night between 6pm and 9pm in Newcastle commencing 11 March and finishing 1 July. They will then referee Academy fixtures in July before graduation in late July. Presenters will be provided by the HAS and the NRL. All the NRL squad will be involved in presentations to the candidates.

The commitment required of the candidates is considerable. In 2005, we anticipate extending the programme to places like Riverina, North Coast and Western Sydney. Currently, the syllabus looks something like this:-

Thurs 4 March 10am	J Brady, M Stone	Launch of the programme.
Thurs 11 March 6pm 7-30 pm	K Clifford M Stone	Orientation Understanding Key Performance Indicators
Thurs 18 March 6pm	Roger Peters Tony Archer	Motivation KPI's and their application in various areas
Thurs 25 March 6pm 7-30pm	Roger Peters Mick Stone	Goal setting and Time management The Laws and their practical application
Thurs 1 April 6pm - 9pm	Trent Elkin	Essential Warm Up & Stretching Routines Fitness Testing (1)
Thurs 8 April 6pm	EASTER BREAK	
Thurs 15 April 6pm	Jim Hall Tim Mander	Judiciary Issues Match Preparation
Thurs 22 April 6pm 7-30pm	Susan Walton Paul Simpkins	Sports vision Identifying and Recognising signs

Thurs 29 April 6pm 7-30pm	Wendy Archer et al Steve Lyons	Handling difficulties involved with officiating at the local level The importance of laying the platform for your game
Thurs 6 May 6pm 7-30pm	Sandy MacNeill Keith Onslow	Coping with pressure when refereeing at the top level Understanding the game (1) Skill Drills
Thurs 13 May 6-9pm	Trent Elkin	Fitness Testing (2) - Lifting personal standards
Thurs 20 May 6pm 7-30pm	Harry Criticos Steve Clark	General communication/ Dealing with the media "Vocab" - its use and importance
Thurs 27 May 6pm 7-30pm	Robert Finch Shayne Hayne	Understanding the Game (a) Theory (b) Practical
Thurs 3 June 6pm 7-30pm	Sean Hampstead Michael Ryan	Movement. Positional Play Referee Specific Skill Drills
Thurs 10 June 6pm 7-30pm	Phil Cooley Phil Cooley, Steve Carrall, Steve Clark	The Art of Touch Judging Teamwork - Match Officials
Thurs 17 June 6pm 7-30pm	David Merchant Mal Graham et al	Open forum session - Handling a difficult Officiating Situation The coaches viewpoint on officiating
Thurs 24 June 6pm	Trent Elkin	Setting the Bar - An NRL Training Session
Thurs 1 July 6pm 7-30pm	Bill Harrigan Mick Stone	A Refereeing Career Program Review, Going Forward
July School Vacation	Graduates	Officiating in Academy of Sport games
TBA	Graduates	Hunter Academy of Sport Graduation Ceremony

I'll bet there are some young hopefuls that can hardly wait.

JUNIOR REPS

The cream of youthful Country referees can look forward to an invitation to officiate in the Junior Representative Competitions of the NSWRL. These comps are run in a very professional manner and the scrutiny under which referees perform and are judged is an eye opener for the kids coming through. Having passed through the Academy programme, we know that they will be ready for it.

I have had some discussions with the NSWRA re the *modus operandi* pertaining to getting the kids down and looking after them. Discussions centred around billeting possibilities, Welfare Officers to

look after them, and length of stay in the city etc. Tony Danks and his Board are committed to the vision of Country referees officiating at the highest level possible and are determined to successfully implement the programme. Incidentally, whether refereeing at Junior Reps or being graded into the NSWRA ranks to referee Premier League, I am assured that these guys **always remain Country referees**. There will be no necessity to join a Sydney Association.

NRL DEVELOPMENT SQUAD

This squad is comprised of members of the NSWRA who officiate at the Premier League or Jim Beam Cup level. They have skills sessions on Monday evenings and train with the full NRL squad on Thursdays, as well as training with the NSWRL squad on Wednesday. This squad is involved in a high performance camp from Sunday 18 January to Wednesday 21 January when we break camp to officiate at the World Sevens Qualifying Tournament at St Marys.

Included in the Camp will be Justin Eastwood and Adam Neale from Queensland, and Craig Pascoe from New Zealand. We welcome these guys as potentially NRL recruits in the future. When these guys are needed to step up to the NRL we want them ready for anything.

ACCREDITATION

Thanks to Peter Corcoran and Richard Johnston, it is highly likely that in the very near future, you will all be accredited coaches with the Australian Sports Commission. Congratulations to you two gentlemen for a lot of good work getting it done.

SYDNEY LEVEL 2 VIDEO PROJECT

The latest level 2 course attendees are looking at videos to compile a specific video on referee communication. Should be good – if they get around to doing it. Only four of the 14 participants have completed their tasks. Could I have the rest of the tapes returned by **14 January** at the latest please. That will have given you two months to view two games, not a big ask one would think.

Also, you need to get your business plan to me to be accredited. Please do so.

That's enough for now. Merry Christmas.

MICHAEL STONE
NRL REFEREES' CO-ORDINATOR
ARLRA PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE CONSULTANT

