



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:	9 February 2006
Subject:	MS001/06

"So the off season is at an end! Did I hear someone say "what off season?"." That is a direct quote from the first of these memos back in March 2003. The more things change the more they stay the same.

During the "off season" I was seconded into the role of NSWRL Premier League Squad coach. As you could imagine, this came as somewhat of a surprise but nonetheless gives me an opportunity to help teach young NRL hopefuls all the things they need to know to advance to the elite level of our game. It will also allow me to practice what I always preached in the Level 1 and 2 courses which we have all done.

The down side, and there is always one isn't there, is that I will have little time for things such as running Coaching Match Officials courses. David Jay has already run Level 2 courses and will now take that role which I previously held and along with Richard Johnston, Mark Crampton, Alex Mangovsky, Barrie Keenahan, Rob Peard and others, the program is in excellent hands. But it is wise to remember that the program in the end is only as good as its graduates and their performance with their referees.

AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION SCHOLARSHIPS

Warrick Bowden from Group 9 and James Brown (I feeeel good!) from Group 4 won scholarships that will enable them to train with the NRL squad on several occasions during the season and be de-briefed by squad members for matches in Sydney and at home. This is a terrific initiative by the ARL and NRL to assist with the development of talented referees from the bush. We will keep you informed of their progress.

NEWS FROM NRL

The NRL coaches met with Robert Finch and others last week and the outcomes of that meeting are detailed below.

- a. *“New referees structure introduced by Referees Coach Robert Finch.*
- b. *Highlights*
 - i. *9 full-time referees, 2 part-time referees*
 - ii. *12 month contracts for full-time referees*
 - iii. *Reviewed annually*
 - iv. *Premier League and Jim Beam Cup referees now under coaching direction of NRL referees*
 - v. *Genuine career path for referees*
- c. *Problems in Premier League and Jim Beam Cup should be referred through the NRL Coach to Robert Finch in the first instance. Matters may then be referred to Mick Stone.*
- d. *Referees are available to attend NRL and Premier League training session to work with teams on relationship building and rule interpretations.*

2. Proposed Rule Changes / Interpretations

a. Restarts of Play – Unsuccessful penalty goal kicks

- i. *Rational – to balance the benefit to the attacking side by returning the ball to the defending team if kick unsuccessful.*
- ii. *Discussion centred around the potential negative impact on the non offending kicking team.*

Outcome - no consensus for change

b. Free Kicks 20metres in from Touch

- i. *Rational – to do away with the 10mt line and create a larger blind side*
- ii. *Discussion centred around why change is necessary.*

Outcome - no consensus for change

c. One-on-One Strip results in Neutral Ball

- i. *Rational –*
 1. *Neutral ball after strip allows play on*
 2. *Less stoppages of play*
 3. *Takes pressure off the referees*
 4. *Six more tackles for defending and attacking teams if possession recovered*
- ii. *Negatives –*

1. *Players could reach around the ruck merely to dislodge the ball without risk of knock-on*
 2. *Play close to goal line may result in defenders merely striking at the ball instead of attempting tackles*
 3. *More instances of attempted stripping may lead to more pressure on referees*
 4. *Any attempt to differentiate between stripping and striking for the ball would require more discretionary decisions by referees potentially leading to inconsistency*
- iii. *Current refereeing interpretations from 2005 season have resulted in fewer problems with this rule*

Outcome - debate progressed full circle - no consensus for change

d. Grapple Tackle

- i. *It was agreed by all that a much tougher approach is required where contact with the head or neck occurs. The current Key Performance Indicators used by the referees (i.e second motion, locking action, twisting or pulling of the head or neck) is not adequate to eradicate this type of tackle.*
- ii. *It was agreed that all examples shown on the video from 2005 season should have resulted in penalties*
- iii. *It was agreed that any unnecessary contact with the head or neck should result in a penalty on the field of play, regardless of any additional action that may be taken by the Match Review Committee in serious instances.*

Outcome – unnecessary contact with the head or neck, particularly involving any type of wrapping action at any stage of the tackle will result in a penalty.

NOTE:

Clubs should be prepared for an increased number of penalties in early rounds until players adjust to the new interpretation.

A further video of tackles will be compiled and distributed demonstrating what is and isn't acceptable in 2006.

3. Judiciary Amendments

a. High tackles involving the shoulder

Changes to the Judiciary Chairman's Directions were outlined and a video example discussed.

b. Lifting Tackles

Changes to the Judiciary Chairman's Directions were outlined and a video example discussed.

A further video explaining these changes will be distributed to Clubs as soon as possible.

4. General Business

Several other issues were raised as potential concerns including:

Player held in upright tackles continuing until forced to ground

Referee should call 'held' if ball carrier has won the contest except if he is clearly still trying to offload the ball.

Ball carrier being picked up and carried backwards

Caused by players being permitted to stand too long in tackles. Adjustment needed to the timing of the 'held' call from the referee, particularly if the ball carriers team mates lend weight to prevent the push, or when the ball carrier has been lifted and has no control over his momentum but is simply being carried.

Players tackling their own team mates

It was pointed that this is simply a tactic to add numbers to the tackle and slow down play-the-ball. Referees should be aware of this as a delaying tactic. Referees Coach to monitor and address as necessary."

HEARTRATE THRESHOLD TRAINING

Training at the NRL is based on heart rate threshold. At the recent CRLRA camp at Wollongong, the NRL squad demonstrated a drill which elevated the heart rate prior to a practical decision making exercise. Later, in a class room demonstration by Ben Cummins and Tony De Las Heras, several guinea pigs were put under stress on a rower and asked to make decisions both visually and in written form. Given that the NRL squad are required to complete 15 reps and the Guinea pigs only 2 because of time constraints, the point was still emphatically made that under pressure and fatigue situations a referee will make a higher percentage of errors. Klinton Hoare, our Athletic Performance manager, offers the following.

"The closer training can resemble the actual heart rate zones recorded during the refereeing of an NRL fixture the more specificity of training. Also the closer we can train at or above your Anaerobic Threshold Heart Rate (ATHR) the higher your achievable maximum sustainable heart rate (MSHR). And the higher your MSHR is the faster you can officiate and the greater the ability of your body to pump oxygenated blood to working (fatigued) muscles, ultimately allowing you the ability to concentrate at a far more focused level and for longer durations

allowing the NRL official to minimize mistakes and ensure more decisive decision making processes under fatigue.

Heart rate levels can be influenced through outside interference (electrical waves) also the amount of arousal e.g. atmosphere of crowds and particular level of anticipation of a game e.g. State of Origin compared to a trial match. Also environmental factors such as humidity, heat, wind etc and dehydration or illness. But more commonly the inability to sustain a certain Heart Rate Threshold is due to lack of fitness.

Country Rugby League Development Camp

We need to take three examples of age predicted maximum 20, 25, 30 from the group and have them work on a drill that gets their heart rate level to the zone I have below Anaerobic Threshold. Then get them to drop the heart rate to their recovery zone and have them then repeat exercise drill getting their heart rate to ATHR again repeat the process 3 times and then get them to complete questionnaire or visual decision making drill.

Maximum Heart Rates = 220 – age (20, 25, 30)

Maximum HR for 20y/o = 200beats per minute

Maximum HR for 25y/o = 195beats per minute

Maximum HR for 30y/o = 190beats per minute

Anaerobic Threshold Heart Rate Zone

= 82% – 88% Of your Maximum Heart Rate

Anaerobic Threshold HR for 20y/o = 164bpm – 176bpm

Anaerobic Threshold HR for 25y/o = 160bpm – 171bpm

Anaerobic Threshold HR for 30y/o = 155bpm – 167bpm

Recovery HR for 20y/o = 130beats per minute

Recovery HR for 25y/o = 126beats per minute

Recovery HR for 30y/o = 123beats per minute

Maximum Heart Rate Formula used within the NRL

= 210 – ½ your age – 5% Body Weight + 4 (male)

Heart Rate Threshold Zones used within the NRL

Aerobic Threshold Heart Rate Zone

= 75% – 82% Of your Maximum Heart Rate

Anaerobic Threshold Heart Rate Zone

= 82% – 88% Of your Maximum Heart Rate

Match Threshold Heart Rate Zone

= 88% – 92% Of your Maximum Heart Rate
Red Line Threshold Heart Rate Zone
= 92% – 100% Of your Maximum Heart Rate”

It is worthwhile applying the principles to your training sessions to see what eventuates.

DOMINANT AND SURRENDER TACKLES

At the Talented Match officials camp at Narrabeen held in January, some discussion ensued re dominant and surrender tackles. Luckily, CRL Development Officers, Harold Sutton and Pat Walsh were present and determined to have the practice of identification of these tackles put in place this season. This is no longer an issue of “do it if you like” or “that’s not in the book” etc. In a recent letter, Mr Geoff Carr, CEO of the ARL had this to say:-

*“Through the International Rugby League Federation the major competitions throughout the world (NRL, Super League, etc), have agreed to use this terminology (dominant and surrender). The RLIF and the ARL would encourage the use of the same language at the **grassroots level** to avoid confusion and to tidy up the play the ball at all levels.”*

If you, as coaches, refuse to embrace this change, you risk retarding the progress of the young referees in your care, and if you do that, you need to question the reasons why you are in the game. The ARLRA Board should make a direction in line with the ARL’s wishes, a body with whom they are affiliated.

LAWS OF THE GAME

I have been horrified at the lack of knowledge of the modern day referee. At the Premier League, we have tested the referees on five separate occasions and given them a Research paper of 70 questions to research the Laws of the Game. They are showing a distinct improvement in their knowledge and understanding of the Laws.

I have attached a simple quiz that I think you will find interesting. Answers will be supplied in the next edition. Try it on your referees.

In the meantime, if you won’t change, don’t stop others doing it.

MICHAEL STONE
NRL REFEREES’ CO-ORDINATOR
ARLRA PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE CONSULTANT
ARL LAWS COMMITTEE MEMBER
NSWRL PREMIER LEAGUE HEAD COACH
ARL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNERS MENTOR
ARLRA MEMORANDUM EDITOR

NAME

NRL QUIZ #1 2006

Q1 From a goal line drop out by Blue the ball lands in the field of play and rolls into touch at the Red 40 metre line.

Q2 Red restarts with a 20 metre optional kick, runs 5 metres and is tackled by an offside Blue player.

Q3 Red kicks off and the ball travels 10.1 metres forward. An onside Red player who has run 9.8 metres regathers the ball.

Q4 Red grubber kicks into the Blue in-goal. The Blue fullback knocks on and the ball enters the field of play. Another Blue player also in-goal but in front of the Blue fullback runs out and picks up the ball.

Q5 Red drop kicks a differential penalty which goes over the Blue crossbar and is caught on the full by Blue. Blue then steps on the dead ball line.

Q6 On the last tackle, Red kicks the ball which hits the Blue corner post on the full.

Q7 Red punt kicks a free kick which is caught on the full by Blue in the Blue in-goal. Blue forces the ball in the Blue in-goal.

Q8 Red attempts a penalty kick for goal. The ball hits the uprights and goes into touch on the full.

Q9 Red attempts a drop goal which is unsuccessful and the ball goes over the dead ball line. The kicker is fouled on the Blue 30 metre line.

Q10 Red punt kicks the ball on the last tackle. The ball hits the uprights of the Blue goal posts and is caught by a Blue player on the full 15 metres out from the Blue goal line. The Red kicker is late tackled on the Blue 20 metre line.

Q11 On the last tackle on Red the ball bursts.

Q12 The half time siren sounds and the ball emerges from the scrum incorrectly and no fault can be attributed to either team.

Q13 The full time siren sounds and Red deliberately throws the ball forward and it bounces over the touch line.

Q14 From the kick off by Red, the ball passes over the crossbar of the goal posts and is caught on the full by a defending Blue player in the Blue in-goal.

Q15 From a 20 metre drop out by Red, the ball bounces over the Blue dead ball line.