



## **MEMORANDUM MS02/07 TO ARLRA REFEREES' COACHES**

**8 March 2007**

### **LAWS QUERY- PLAYER DISTRACTS KICKER**

An interesting question arose during a recent Laws discussion at the NRL. A player from Blue team is taking a penalty shot for goal. As he moves in to kick the ball, an opponent directly in front of him, waves his arms around and yells out "missy, missy maggot" in an attempt to distract him. The kick misses.

Now we know that it is illegal to distract the attention of a player who is kicking for goal (Law 9, Section 6, Page 14 2006). However, do we merely give the player another kick for goal or do we advance the mark 10 metres, there having been further misconduct (see Law 1(a), Section 13, Page 33). And if you do advance the mark, is the non offending team impelled to kick for goal or may he elect to do otherwise?

Don't be afraid to debate this with your peers as I am sure that they will have an opinion. Our view next time.

### **MORE ON IMAGERY – MATCH DAY AND TRAINING**

Imagery may be used to feel and practice moves and positioning perfectly within your mind. Experts say that this helps program and strengthen nerve pathways within the brain that control the correct execution of the skill. It can also give a feeling of experience, of "having been there before" the very first time that you officiate at a higher grade.

It can also be used to program your mind when weather conditions do not suit, you have an injury that prevents training, or on match day to practice various skills without tiring the body.

Imagery works best as a way of practicing and improving known skills, with known feelings and body positions. Whether or not it is an effective way of acquiring new skills is debatable at best, and doubtful at worst.

I heard a story about a US officer who was captured during the Vietnam war. His captors attempted to brain wash him and kept him in solitary confinement for much of the several years in prison. Each day he maintained his sanity by "playing" eighteen holes of golf in his mind. He was a single digit handicapper.

**AUSTRALIAN RUGBY LEAGUE REFEREES ASSOCIATION INC** ABN 83 389 089 125

Chief Executive Officer: 32 Parnell Ave, Quakers Hill NSW 2763 Mobile: +61 416 053 043

Tel: +61 2 9837 6480 Email: ceo@arlra.org.au Internet: www.arlra.org.au



After he was released at the end of the war, he was rehabilitated back home. Some time later, he was asked to play in a charity golf day and played to his handicap, notwithstanding that he had been mistreated physically and psychologically for years prior.

### *Imagery in training*

You can significantly improve the quality of your training sessions by effective use of imagery. By performing the skill or issuing the caution, or awarding the penalty in your mind before the match commences, you can focus on all the important parts of the event.

Imaging an activity before doing it has certain advantages.

- It forces you to focus and concentrate on execution of a drill when you might otherwise simply go through the motions.
- It reminds you what to concentrate on to come up with the right result.
- It allows you to compare the physical movement with the perfect image in your brain. This will help you detect faults in your technique. And, if the technique was better than the image, the image can be adjusted.

In addition, imagery can be used in training to practice sports psychology skills. Imagine you are controlling a match before a very hostile crowd. Using imagery techniques, you can experience the symptoms of anxiety and stress that this stressor generates. Within your mind you can practice any number of stress management skills to modify the impact of the stress.

You can use imagery to practice pushing through pain barriers or when you feel utterly exhausted, but must still keep going and make quality decisions. You can effectively use imagery to practice such skills as Communication, imagining a hostile captain approaching and how you can handle him. Again, use of all senses is vital. Hear the crowd baying behind the captain, smell the linament, feel the wind and perhaps even his hot breath. Imagine your reaction and practice in your mind the effective strategies that you will employ when that happens for real next time. AND, when it does happen for real, you will be ready because in your mind, you have done it dozens of times before.

(Ref [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com))



## **MENTORING – WHAT IS IT?**

For the next 6 to 8 months, I will be acting as a mentor to two Queensland based referees as part of the Australian Sports Commission's National Officiating Scholarship Programme. But as coaches, we are all full time mentors, aren't we? At the beginning of the season, it is probably appropriate that we review what it means to be a mentor. The following is based on the thoughts of David Levens, former AFL Umpire and Coach, published in the ASC booklet "Advanced Level Officiating".

Mentoring involves a relationship between two people, the person being helped (the match official) and the helper (the coach). Mentoring is when one person helps another to grow and develop skills and attitudes.

*"Behind every successful person, there is one elementary truth; somewhere, somehow, someone cared about their growth and development. This person was their mentor" (Dr Beverly Kaye 1997).*

### ***What do mentors do?***

Each mentoring relationship is unique and will vary according to the skills and needs that are brought to the table. For example, my two Queensland Referees are totally different individuals who I need to get to know before I can assist them. I can assist them by

- Identifying their strengths and weaknesses
- Clarifying what goals and needs they have
- Identifying other options and directions
- Determining action plans to achieve their goals
- Identifying and overcoming barriers to performance
- Teach the skills and knowledge they require to move on.

### ***The mentoring process***

The mentoring process involves a number of steps:

- Goal setting
- Establishing an arrangement between the parties that outlines expectations of the parties
- Empowering the match official. It is vital that the Match Official understands that it is he who drives the relationship



REFEREES' ASSOCIATION

- Observation – the mentor observes the Match Official in action.
- Analysis – the mentor analyses the performance and evaluates what is done well and what requires attention.
- Questioning and feedback. Discussion between the parties where the match official tries to identify aspects that were handled well and why/how. The mentor then reinforces those aspects, and questions the Official about areas for improvement, always remembering that the MATCH OFFICIAL DRIVES THE PROCESS.
- Action planning – identify actions required to achieve stated goals. The Match Official will implement these.
- Review the discussion.

### ***Mentor's roles***

The mentor serves as a sounding board. Listening, posing relevant questions, and providing constructive feedback and advice.

The tendency in the past, hopefully prior to the advent of the CMO courses, has been to focus solely on the technical content of refereeing – the decisions a referee make, rather than how they do it. Mentors should also ensure that the focus is also on improving the quality of how the official controls a match, HOW they make decisions, and HOW they communicate.

The mentor can play a number of different roles in a relationship.

- Coaching. *In my case, evaluating match performance on Mondays at Telstra Stadium.*
- Facilitating – suggesting ways for an official to use new skills or help them move towards their goals
- Counselling – the mentor should listen, probe, clarify and provide advice when asked. *In my case, ongoing conversations throughout the year.*
- Sponsoring – promoting or referring the official to others. The mentor can provide access to a wider network of people who can assist the official. *In my case, the entire NRL refereeing squad is at my disposal as well as Sports Psychologist, Alan Mantle, who is on retainer.*
- Supporting – encouraging the official to grow by providing support, acceptance, inspiration and challenge. The mentor should be empathetic to the official and share experiences.

(Ref Advanced Level Officiating, General Principles Manual, 2006, written by David Levens)



Welcome to all new coaches to a pretty unique fraternity. I trust that you will enjoy the journey.

Although it is our 100<sup>th</sup> year, let's still look young and enthusiastic!

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