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Memorandum

To:	ARLRA Referees' coaches
From:	Michael Stone
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Subject:	MS005/06

DEALING WITH THE DIFFICULT CUSTOMER

A new component of the Level 2 course has been counselling the difficult referee module. It started out as a guest speaking topic but has evolved into a full blown topic.

It is very important to deal efficiently with the difficult customer for a number of reasons. Firstly, if you fail to get your message across, the chances are that you will fail in your main job of improving the official's subsequent performances. Secondly, you may in fact alienate the official completely which erodes his confidence in you and leads to tension and a lack of confidence in later dealings. Thirdly, your own self esteem/confidence may be affected should your counselling session not be effective.

So what is the first step towards having an effective counselling meeting? When you did your accreditation you would have discussed things like the venue where you would hold a meeting. Non-confrontational, neutral and non threatening. Next, the introduction to the meeting. Perhaps some small talk, tension easing banter. Something that the official can relate to and ideally agree with. Everyone likes to say "yes".

By this time you should be able to sum up the mood of the official. This is a very important aspect of what you do next and how you will approach the meeting. I find it helpful to ascribe a name to the mood. "Passive, no speakies" is a classic situation that you will no doubt often find yourself in. In yesteryear, officials were supposed to be passive no speakies while being lectured to by the Appointment Board. You dare not offer an opinion! How times have changed. We in fact encourage the official to talk by asking questions.

So how do we identify this character and how do we deal with him?

PASSIVE, NO SPEAKIES



This official nods, will try to make eye contact and silently acquiesces to any comments you make without actually contributing to the conversation. He accepts unreservedly anything which you offer.

Problem? Has he taken anything in? Will he be a better official as a result of the meeting? Can he hear anything?

This official needs to be encouraged to talk, to state a point of view, to disagree if he does disagree. You will not discover anything about him unless you take some time to ask questions about him and his game and encourage him to discuss matters. Once he opens up you may be able to determine his exact needs and tailor his training or preparation to suit his specific needs.

AGGRESSIVE, NO SPEAKIES



This guy will freeze a room at Dairy Farmers Stadium. He is sulky, makes little or no eye contact, his body language will be confrontational or evasive. Arms folded, turned sideways whilst awaiting his report.

Problem? He may actually hate you. But probably not. More than likely it comes as a result of low self esteem driven by some past event(s). How do we get him to listen – or do we want to waste our time anyway?

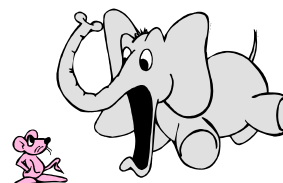
You need to gain this official's confidence. Perhaps deferring the meeting at all to a mutual time and place rather than doing it there and then would be better. Sometimes an anecdote can better illustrate the story.

St George v Souths, Kogarah Oval. Stone the referee. Terrible game, two in the bin, one sent off, re kick at goal due to attempts to distract the kicker, biting allegations. This one had it all. Immediately after the match, in walks Eric Cox, Director of Referees. Referee Stone sees him and immediately says something totally inappropriate. Eric, who had absolutely nowhere to go or anything better to do, said, "I have to go home immediately, I'll call you later."

Eric wasn't avoiding trouble, indeed we had a subsequent meeting. What he identified was an aggressive official who was probably at that point in time not about to listen to some very pertinent and important coaching advice. A better tactic is tactical withdrawal so that the official is able to compose himself and the coach able to discuss matters in a more rational and sane environment. But remember, you must always follow up on the situation.

TERRIFIED

Well, perhaps overawed is a little more like it. It happens a lot. Some officials aren't fazed by a match or players. It is the prospect of the dreaded report that really gets to them. Particularly if the reporter is someone who the official fears or is daunted by. A good many senior referees would fall into that category I'm sure.



There won't be a lot of eye contact, the facial expression will say it all. The official can't wait to get away.

Problem? This official, far from ignoring or failing to hear advice, is likely to overcompensate. "If he says that it must be right. I'll change everything", just as long as I can get out of here.

Be friendly, pick the issues that you want to deal with and definitely use the sandwich approach. You know, "good thing, bad thing, good thing." The important thing is to gain the official's confidence and home in on the most important issues that require attention. Don't try to change the world in one session. This official is most likely to be young, inexperienced and therefore most vulnerable to stressful situations. Go very easy. He is a valuable commodity.

More types next issue.



ANSWERS TO QUIZ #4

- A1. Scrum 20 metres in from where the ball entered touch. Loose head and put in to Red.
- A2. Goal line drop out.
- A3. 20 metre optional kick to Red.
- A4. Take the kick at the nearest practicable point provided there is not advantage to either team with the opposition being informed of the decision and is fully aware of the point from which the kick is to be taken.
- A5. Free kick to Red 10 metres in from where the ball entered touch.
- A6. Goal line drop out by Blue.
- A7. Penalty to Blue for deliberately propelling the ball forward.
- A8. Scrum for the rebound off Blue but no closer than 20 metres from touch and 10 metres from the goal line. Loose head and put-in to Blue.
- A9. 20 metre drop out by Blue.
- A10. Handover the Blue where the accidental offside occurred.
- A11. Award goal, award further penalty in front 10 out. Must be kick for goal. Whether successful or not, go to half way.
- A12. Not in the act of scoring a try. No 8 point try but may dismiss or otherwise deal with the offender.

A13. Penalty for Obstruction.

A14. Penalty for Grapple tackle, or deliberate contact with the head.

A15. Penalty to Blue. Red offside.

Quiz #5 follows.

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

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ARLRA PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE CONSULTANT

LAWS QUIZ #5 2006

NOTE: For an answer to be correct please provide the correct decision and indicate where it should be enforced. For scrums nominate where it is formed and who has feed and loose head.

1. "A Team kicks off and the ball goes over the cross bar and over the dead ball line on the full.

Decision: _____

2. "A" Team kicks off, the ball travels 10 metres forward and then rebounds forward from a defending player into touch without landing in the field of play.

Decision: _____

3. A defending player in possession runs into a referee in his own goal area. He drops the ball which is fallen on by an attacking player who claims a try.

Decision: _____

4. "A" player kicks the ball on tackle 3 from general play to the B player standing on the touch line who knocks the ball on and it lands in the field of play.

Decision: _____

5. "A" player kicks the ball from a penalty kick. The ball in flight crosses the touch line then swerves back in field and drops on the touch line 30 metres further down field.

Decision: _____

6. "A" player kicks the ball from general play to a B player standing on the goal line who catches the ball on the full and forces it in goal.

Decision: _____

7. The attacking team kicks the ball from general play into the opponent's in goal area where it stops just short of the dead ball line. A defending player standing on the dead ball line places a hand on the ball.

Decision: _____

8. An attacking player knocks on in the field of play and the ball eventually rolls into the in goal area where it is made dead by a defending player.

Decision: _____

9. "A" player is called on to play the ball after the first tackle. He drops the ball to the ground and kicks the ball up against the legs of the "B" player marking. This player makes no attempt to play at the ball and it rebounds to another A" player who gains possession and is immediately tackled

Decision: _____

10. In regard to scrum penalties where are the penalties awarded?

- (a) After incorrect feeds _____
- (b) halfback fails to retire _____
- (c) breach by backs _____

11. "A1" kicks the ball and in following up his kick he is obstructed at the halfway line by a player from "B" team. The ball lands at "Bs" 20 metre line.

Decision: _____

12. "A1" kicks the ball towards "Bs" goal line. He is following up his kick when he is obstructed by the "B" player at halfway and the ball lands on the corner post on the full.

Decision: _____

13. A player in possession of the ball gives a dummy pass. The referee is deceived and blows his whistle in anticipation of a forward pass but the player regains possession and goes over for a try.

Decision: _____

14. Following the fifth and last play the ball, the acting half runs and then kicks the ball which accidentally strikes the referee, play being irregularly affected. How would you restart the game?

Decision: _____

15. The lock forward from the non feeding team breaks from the scrum prematurely and no advantage is gained by the team in possession.

Decision: _____
