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Memorandum

To:	ARLRA Referees' Coaches
From:	Michael Stone
Date:	7 April 2005
Subject:	MS 006/05

MATCH PREPARATION

Proper preparation is everything in sport. If we don't prepare ourselves physically and mentally for the upcoming event, the chances of our succeeding is minimal. You may get away with it on occasion, but unless you recognise the deficiency and set in train processes to eliminate the possibility of it happening again, it will come back to bite you.

In the NRL, video referees have a set process when the central referee signals that he wishes to refer an incident to us. If the referee doesn't give the tackle count, the video ref is to ask for it and not move on until he gets it. This came about as a result of an incorrect restart last year in one match. In my match last week, I didn't ask for the tackle count and didn't get it. Whilst it was not important in the scheme of that decision, I had not followed the proper process.

The next step is to determine what happened and what happens next. We travelled together to Auckland, and to the match together the next day. I arrived in the box in plenty of time and completed the normal pre match formalities in a timely manner. Everything seemed in order. So the normal pre match formalities must change. Included now for me will be visualization drills including the decision making process step by step including the inputting of the decision through the DVD player which we take to the ground. Let's hope that does the trick.

On the subject of match preparation, Richard Johnston has provided the following which will assist your referees to focus on the task at hand prior to matches.

ARE YOU READY?

“When a top match official is asked “how he did it.” you are likely to hear him say “everything came together on the day”. Body and mind seemed to work in perfect harmony. Top performances are characterised by feelings of control, inner calmness, physical relaxation, confidence and enjoyment. In addition skill execution seems automatic and effortless. To assist a referee to start competition in a state of flow we need to focus upon pre-performance routines.

Pre-performance routines are sets of logically sequenced, planned and practical activities that match officials use to help them prepare effectively. They generally consist of relaxation, imagery and self-talk. Well established pre-performance routines provide match officials with a sense of control and readiness when entering a match. This leads to an increased ability to focus and block out distractions.

What to include into a Pre-performance Routine

What does a match official need to do to perform well? His routine should focus on the process rather than the outcome. The content of such routines will be influenced by

- *The nature of the task.*
- *Skill level of the match official.*
- *Individual preferences.*

Nature of the Task

Here a match official may recall the tempo and movement patterns of the game. The need to identify players and adjust accordingly. We need to ensure mind and body are ready to execute.

Skill Level of Match Official

Here the focus is on how to perform the skill. Cues may be beneficial e.g. holding players on the 10 metres. Feeling the right movement, using the correct words to achieve the desired outcome may be beneficial elements of a pre-performance routine.

Individual Preferences

Know what works for you by reflecting on past peak performances and noting what you were thinking and feeling. Of course you could keep a performance log.

General Guidelines

Only include strategies in the pre-performance routines that are under the match officials control and not reliant on others.

There needs to be a logical order in the routine.

Practise, practise and practise and do everything exactly how you would do it before a game.

Ensure you are familiar with techniques such as imagery, relaxation, positive self-talk to be able to apply them effectively into a pre-performance routine,

Remember people don't plan to fail, they fail to plan."

Coincidentally, our strength and conditioning trainer, Klinton Hoare, is in the process of devising some drills to ensure that we are more prepared for our games in the future.

SOME RULINGS

David Jay tells us that Ricky MacFarlane is up to date with my previous memos.

"An interchange player was sent off in a Jim Beam Cup match at Storey Park Asquith last weekend. The player showed his disappointment in Touch Judge, Smith's decision by showering him with a water bottle. Needless to say the player was reported by Smith and referee Ricky McFarlane had no hesitation in dismissing the player from the field. Following the correct process, see Mick Stone memo MS008/04, the bench was reduced to 3 players, with the team playing with the full compliment of 13 on field."

And now a blast, rightly so, from Steve Toms. On Friday night, Preston Campbell kicked through close to the Parramatta line. He was then obstructed by Glen Morrison and the ball landed in the in goal area and went dead. Morrison was rightly reported and penalized for his indiscretion. Unfortunately the penalty was awarded one metre from the goal line and not 10 metres out opposite where the ball first crossed the line. The referee when confronted knew the correct position of the penalty but on the night got it wrong. As a team, everyone must take responsibility for this lapse in concentration. There are three of you there, make sure the right decision is made, because if you don't, Tomsy will get ya.

SIDELINE OFFICIALS POSITIONING

Last memo it was Kevin Riolo. This time it is Phil Gould querying the positional play of our Sideline Officials. Phil has a point. The SO concerned was marking the ten metres on the long side and was some eight to ten

metres in field. Phil said that a dummy half 50 metres away will quickly look and count heads. If the SO is in field he may be counted as a player and disturb the attack of the team in possession. Now I know that some will say that is drawing a long bow, but I agree with him. If the SO needs to be on the field during the run of play for any reason, he should retreat to the touch line ASAP.

FOCUS ON PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION

“Life; the ultimate challenge is not a race to the finish but rather a progression of continual growth”. Klinton Hoare

When we set out to achieve our goals we must be active in the pursuit. My tip is to focus your energies on progression not perfection. Forget the concept of perfection, chasing after perfection is as futile as trying to discover the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Perfection is an illusion. With a more realistic mind set of ‘practice makes progress’ we are more likely to stay committed and this realistic approach gives the needed confidence to stay on course to reach your desired goal.

Think about the athlete who is having an amazing game, perhaps he or she is reaching for that perfect game until fatigue sets in and a mistake is made. All of a sudden the athlete can plummet from extreme confidence to uncertainty and ineffectiveness. If the athlete is unaware of how to get their confidence back they’ll fall into a slump, lose energy and perhaps they’ll even stop playing to win.

Confidence comes through progression. Athletes, businessmen, artists, actors, all of us operate best with confidence, with certainty you can use your talent, drive, energy, judgment, insight to turn your lives around. If your focus is on progress then even when you don’t get things right you will feel strong, you’ll maintain confidence and move through your day with momentum.

I know it has been said before, however life is a journey, not a destination and to have an ability to act now or forever dream you must accept and understand that success should also be seen as a journey not a destination. Your success is ultimately tied up in your little thoughts, the little moments, the little disciplines, the little habits. It is your little actions played out today that will determine your big achievements tomorrow.

Each day those who have woken to live their dream act out the little so that one day they can achieve the big. Successful people find out what it costs to make their dream come true – then make it happen. They don’t complain about the work it takes. They make the dream a reality!

Few people realize success is within their reach right now!

The secret of your success is determined by your daily agenda, push perfection to the side and relish the opportunity to progress through life.

*This motivational is taken from the book “**Act Now or Forever Dream**”
Klinton Hoare Copyright ©2004”*

MORE ON PREPARATION

“When it comes to success, whether in business, a sporting contest or in our case match officiating, preparation is the key to a positive outcome.

It has been said that 'to be the best one must not only train as if they were the best but more importantly one must prepare for a match as the best, meaning it is now clear that NRL match officials in their quest to increase performance levels, can no longer leave a stone unturned, mentally, physically or emotionally. As the NRL competition increases in professionalism, there has become a higher emphasis from clubs towards all-round game preparation and now this is having a positive flow on effect through to NRL match officials.

No longer can Referee's just turn up and officiate on the day, there has been a shift towards being 'on before they're on'. There is a mantra from clubs sides that 'preparation helps avoid desperation' meaning if clubs cover all their bases in the lead up to a game then they are more likely to have positive outcome to the contest they are in. Within the NRL official's ranks, we are now introducing specific hydration loading, leading up to match day as well as increasing the emphasis on pre game warm up which has been designed to introduce concentration / focus drill's, reaction drills and specific physiological sideline and referee drills, all with an emphasis on having match officials 'switched on' before they run on the field to officiate.”

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It only remains to be said, don't take your eye off the ball.

MICHAEL STONE
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NRL REFEREES' CO-ORDINATOR