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## Memorandum

To:	ARLRA Referees' Coaches
From:	Michael Stone
Date:	16 June 2005
Subject:	MS 0011/05

### **NEWS FROM NRL**

Shayne Hayne came upon an interesting article on motivation, author unknown.

*Every weekend sports officials unravel under the pressure of competition. No matter what your sport, you may want so much to excel, even to establish a sense of superiority, that you think too much and too hard. Anger and frustration conspire to hamper whatever skills you possess. The more upset you become, the more errors you make.*

*Officiating with poise is essential to top-notch performance in any sport. But to officiate at your best, you must master the art of relaxation. We've all marvelled at professional officials who stay unruffled enough under stress, most elite officials thrive on adversity.*

*Until recently such ice-in-the-veins grace under fire was regarded as an inborn characteristic, a lucky draw of the genetic cards.*

*But today most officials are discovering that 'cool' can be acquired by practice. They have found out that the most important piece of sports equipment is the human mind, and that the mind is also the playing field where the real game takes place.*

*"We're always our own worst enemy in sports — or our own best friend," says veteran sports psychologist Bruce Ogilvie of San Jose State University in California, who also counsels executives 'on how to deal with pressure. "Your body is an idiot. It will do whatever your mind tells it to do. That's why it's so important to train yourself mentally to handle competitive pressure."*

*You can develop your emotional resources By practicing techniques for self-control, in order to engage — rather than grind — your own gears. .You can convert pressure from a liability into an asset. You can*

*enhance your chances of pulling off heroics. Anyone who is under pressure — officials, athletes, executives, students or housewives — can learn to perform more effectively at both personal and professional levels.*

*"It's important to train yourself mentally as well as physically," says Ogilvie. "You want to engage in the right thinking to enhance performance. Mental conditioning can determine whether you succeed or fail."*

*Professional officials are probably more likely than amateurs to crumple under duress. The trick is to read the alarm going off in your mind to minimise the risk of 'choking'. Only then can you stay calm enough to perform well in the presence of tension and anxiety. To deal well with excitement, you must set your competitive flame at just the right temperature.*

*To deal effectively with pressure, try the following techniques. This approach known as 'imaging' or 'visualisation' lets you act on your own script in advance. Body builder Arnold Schwarzenegger achieved better concentration and co-ordination after learning visualisation. No less a competitor than Jack Nicklaus once wrote:*

*"I never hit a shot, even in practice, without having a very sharp, in-focus picture of it in my mind"*

*One unorthodox method for keeping cool is to talk to yourself. By doing this, you can actually become your own confidant and consultant. With such 'self-talk' you can give yourself technical advice ("Keep your knees bent") and even pep talks ("Let's make a comeback now"), as Billie Jean King and Jimmy Connors often did. It's a means of holding your actions in perspective, almost as if viewing yourself from outside. If you've missed a first serve, for instance, you can turn a negative thought ("I'm going to double fault") into a positive one ("I'm going to ace this guy"). A more conventional system for anxiety therapy is progressive muscle relaxation. Research on exercise shows that muscles are more relaxed after being tensed. This reaction is electrochemical, the squeezing out of calcium from your muscle fibre. All you do is take time before competition — or even during — to tense each of your major muscles for at least five seconds, then relax, going in sequence from ankles, thighs and buttocks to abdomen, chest, arms, shoulders and neck. Once stretched, your muscles will become more limber, putting you more at ease.*

*Most important, to reap the richest rewards, you should practise whichever techniques appeal to you, day in and day out. None of the methods is a panacea guaranteed to shake off the jitters after a 15-minute experiment. Gradually you'll learn to regulate your breathing, to visualise, to relax your muscles, to carry on conversations with yourself and even, if necessary, to go under a hypnotic spell. Soon you'll do a better job of metabolising stress in your central nervous system. With*

*experience, you'll form a virtual immunity against choking in a tight spot.*

*The best competitors treat pressure not as a weight on the shoulders but as a kick in the behind, as an opportunity to meet a new challenge, stretch themselves and grow. Through a well-refined alchemy, they absorb pressure transforming frustration and anger into motivation and ambition. With the pressure on, the trainer and tough-minded competitor vaults to new heights.*

***Maintain a degree of composure when playing sports and you'll be able to concentrate better.***

## **THE UMPIRE STRIKES BACK**

Did you catch the Board's response to Ricky Stuart's disgraceful article in the Sunday Telegraph recently?

*"I have been instructed by the Board of the Australian Rugby League Referees' Association (ARLRA) to write in protest against the hate campaign launched against referees by Ricky Stuart and the Sydney City Roosters in the Sunday Telegraph last weekend.*

*The damage Mr Stuart will cause at the grass roots level of the game as a result of his article is inestimable. It is disheartening that a person with one of the highest profiles in the game has caused it, a premiership winning player and coach, and current mentor of the NSW state representative team. We won't attempt to reply to the vitriol that he directed at Tim Mander - Tim can look after himself. But the vast majority of our 2500 members around Australia do not have the support of the NRL to comfort them, nor do they have the privilege of security guards to protect them at their grounds. They referee because they love the game and do it for the kids who play and watch at their local grounds, a concept that Mr Stuart and others obviously don't understand.*

*Promoting hate against people whose only crime is that they love the game and want to help does untold damage to the game of Rugby League, and indeed to ALL sport having difficulty in the recruitment and retention of its officials. Mr Stuart's ill conceived and vicious attack on refereeing generally, suggesting that people should hate match officials, is a shocking indictment on our game.*

*ARL Development (ARLD) has recently released a program in an effort to attack the very real problem of sport rage at the grass roots level. They also recently released a Code of Conduct covering all facets of the game. It is interesting to note that the Roosters CEO Brian Canavan sits on the Board of ARLD. While he clearly supports these programs for other areas of the game, it puzzles us that he allows his own coach to rage against match officials with apparent impunity, giving the impression that it's OK to denigrate referees. We would question Mr*

*Canavan's position on the ARLD Board when he does not appear to support its own objectives. Surely this is not the message that these high profile "gentlemen", in particular Ricky Stuart, should be sending to the rugby league fraternity generally and especially to the youngsters in our game (players and referees alike). As role models they leave a lot to be desired. The NSWRL would gain many supporters if it looked for a more suitable role model to lead its State team in particular.*

*ARLD, through Graham McNaney, is currently looking at problems associated with the recruitment and retention of match officials. They should look no further than the actions of Mr Stuart and Mr Canavan, which have served to promote hate campaigns against referees. All this while the Roosters team commits a total of 46 errors and missed tackles. Stuart says in his article that if his players make errors, then "we go away and fix the problem". Well, he has 46 of them to fix from that game alone. We suggest he leaves referees alone and gets on with it.*

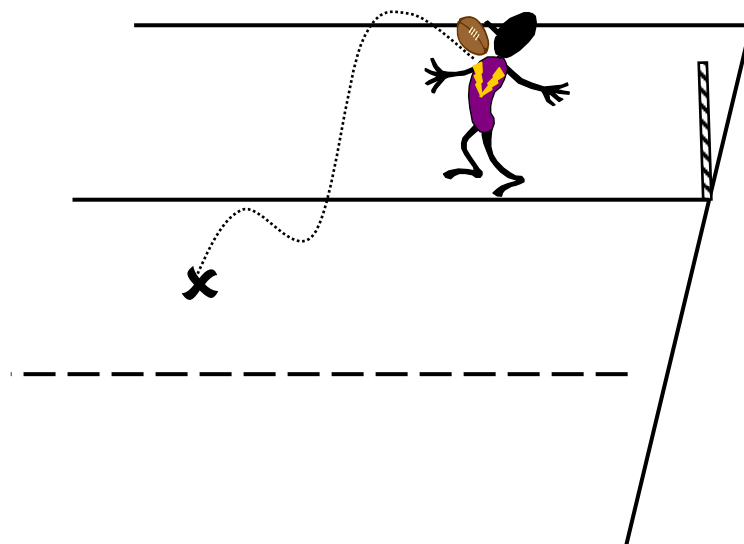
*Lastly, while the ARLRA fully supports the NRL in taking action in this matter, fining someone like Mr Stuart the paltry amount of \$10,000, then expecting that to change anything, is like leaving the porch light on for Harold Holt. Nothing is going to happen."*

Incredibly, there has been some negative reaction to the Board's bold reprimand. I think that they showed commendable restraint in the face of a disgracefully self serving article. And they did it for their membership. You.

## **RULING OF THE WEEK**

A player standing in his own in-goal attempts to field a kick on the full. The ball strikes him on the shoulder and goes forward into the field of play. The player picks up the ball and runs downfield.

*What is your ruling?*



The Laws

***N.B. Not all of these can apply to this situation. You must first determine what has happened before making a ruling.***

Section 2. Glossary

*KNOCK-ON - means to knock the ball towards the opponents dead-ball line with hand or arm while playing at the ball.*

Section 8. 4. *The game is restarted with a dropout by a defending player from the centre of his goal-line if:  
(b) a defending player accidentally infringes in the in-goal area.*

Section 12. 1. *A scrum is formed to restart play whenever play is not restarted with a kick off, a drop-out (Section 8), a penalty kick (Section 13) or a play the ball (Section 11).*

Anyone who wishes to follow in Parramatta's footsteps and have something innovative included in the Newsletter, send it in. Otherwise, don't take your eye off the ball.

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