



MEMORANDUM MS011/06 TO ARLRA REFEREES' COACHES

13 JULY 2006

MOVING INJURED PLAYERS

You may have noticed a disturbing trend arising in NRL matches of late. Players who believe opponents are feigning injury and pulling them to their feet, appears to be coming more frequent. The Chief Operating Officer, Graham Annesley, has circularized NRL clubs but the content is just as relevant to grass roots matches as it is to the game at higher levels. Our major concern should always be safety of players. Whilst some of the following is relevant only to NRL, I publish the memo in full lest it lose context.

“Over recent weeks a number of incidents have occurred where players have physically moved injured opponents in the belief that the injury is being feigned. Even if such actions are in a genuine attempt to assist an injured player the practice can be extremely dangerous.

All players are to be immediately instructed that such actions are not only in breach of the rules but could also have serious liability implications if any injury is exacerbated as a result of their actions.

NRL Chief Medical Officer, Dr Hugh Hazard, issues the following advice to all Clubs and Players:

- Players and match officials are cautioned against making any assessment that a player, apparently injured and unable to regain his feet, is seriously injured or not.*
- Under no circumstances should any player lay hands on, or attempt to drag to his feet, a player who fails to regain his feet after a collision or tackle.*
- Even if a player is obviously unconscious, other players should not attempt to roll him into the recovery position.*
- If a player has sustained a cervical spine injury, a potentially serious injury can easily be converted into a catastrophic spinal injury by inappropriate intervention.*
- If a player is injured and unable to regain his feet, it should be brought to the attention of the referee.*
- The game can be stopped by the referee, allowing proper assessment by the*

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REFEREES' ASSOCIATION

Head Sports Trainer (Orange).....”

A CONDUCTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

One of the best thinkers and coaches of referees in my time has been Richard Johnston, currently DO with the QRL. From an education background, his motto has always been “publish or perish”, the academic’s mantra. I always find his offerings compelling reading, and the following is no exception.

“They say the day you stop learning is when you die! A rather fatal statement!

Providing a pro-active learning environment where people take responsibility for their actions but also now know and understand why a particular response is far more acceptable is not a pipe dream. This is the responsibility of all Associations to cultivate such an environment where people are eager to learn, are challenged and as a result enjoy their role as a match official. After all, people who take up the challenge of officiating do so because they are required to make decisions.

The resources available for match officials today far exceed what was presented back in the 80’s and if used wisely the young referees of today can readily be fast tracked to higher levels of responsibility. Unfortunately some Associations have been remiss in addressing their core responsibilities viz: quality lectures, training of relevant skill related drills and quality mentoring. It is an Association’s duty to ensure all match officials are provided with the opportunity to reach their true potential and as Mick Stone states “If you won’t change, don’t stop others doing it!”

Just stop for a moment and reflect on what is available.

- *Coaches of Match Officials (Level 1 and 2)*
- *Video and DVDs*
- *Laws Tests on the ARLRA website*
- *Key Indicators clarified on CDs*
- *Regular Memos to keep people abreast of current trends*
- *Forums for debate on websites.*

We are always keen to have performance reviews of a referee’s on-field performance. It is now the time for such a review to be made of individual Associations.”

Richard has dished out an interesting challenge to Referee’s Associations everywhere. How about some feedback from YOUR Association about THEIR internal review system and the results.

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INFLUENCES ON MATCH OFFICIALS PART 4

Remember your Level 1 course when we talked about “personal characteristics” of a successful referee? To recap, they were **Integrity, Courage, Self-confidence, Decisiveness, Consistency, Even tempered, Humility, Understanding human nature, Control and Urgency**. We also said that the list was not exhaustive. We talked about identifying those character traits. Bill believes that as coaches, it is not our job to tell match officials what is right or wrong but to lead by example with our own character based standards. This allows the official to observe that our teachings are a way of life and not simply “do as I say”. Our communication both directly and indirectly must continually reinforce the character traits that we are trying to develop.

Bill says *“We along with the parents, friends, colleagues simply by association become “[The circle of Influence](#)” for these people. As we look upon this group as a positive circle of influence it is also reasonable to assume there are other circles of influence that philosophically oppose everything we believe to be correct. Hence this becomes the negative circle of influence to the individual and to the ideals we are trying to instill in them.”*

As coaches, we can and do have a very strong influence on our match officials. Once they step outside the refereeing environment though, can our teachings and philosophies survive the scrutiny and direction of modern society?

Bill observes *“Of all the skills of personal development that we can help them with probably the most important is the skill or the discipline of self-discipline. Because the job of any teacher is not to make the student dependant upon the teacher but to make them totally independent so they may survive outside of the insular controlled surrounds that the teacher’s environment allows.*

If we want the best for these (match officials) we must give them and show them the best, we must at all times “walk the talk” not just “talk the talk”.

For as time marches on the amount of communication on this development of character I believe is getting less and less. As with any situations there is always an acceptance to the rule but for mine the positive [circle of influence](#) to teach the young people of society about character development is becoming greatly reduced.”

For a perfect example of a negative circle of influence, simply look to recent comments by a leading administrator in the game. If we as coaches, don’t take on the added responsibility of educating our match officials in some of the areas which we have outlined, it won’t get done to the standard that we need for the development of our match officials. I have often said that we as match officials

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must always [hold the high moral ground](#). Again, refer to that administrator's comments for an example of the contrary position.

Bill concludes:-

“As Mikhail Gorbachev once said, “Those who educate themselves are the ones that have longevity of success in their chosen field”. If you put this in the context of what we are outlining, not only is it important for us to teach the athletes these skills it is also critical to encourage and educate the athlete to become hungry for knowledge, sports, academic and life related. If they become thirsty for knowledge they take control of their own destiny and growth and they take ownership of the responsibility that life brings. This is an outcome that all teachers regardless of what field of endeavour should strive for. Independent, motivated, self disciplined students.”

Based on the paper “Is society complimenting what we ask of our Sports People” written by Bill Nelson.

I attach a full transcript of the paper.

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

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