

## Law 5 – The Referee

Law 5, the authority of the referee states that each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which he has been appointed. The referee must provide a relevant report to the Football Federation Victoria on matters such as team sheets, pitch conditions and any other issue. The referee's power to do this comes from the laws of the game, as well as the rules of competition.

Page 46 from the Laws of the game states under Disciplinary action, the referee is able to:

- punishes the more serious offence, in terms of sanction, restart, physical severity and tactical impact, when more than one offence occurs at the same time
- takes disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offences
- has the authority to take disciplinary action from entering the field of play for the pre-match inspection until leaving the field of play after the match ends
- has the power to show yellow or red cards
- takes action against team officials who fail to act in a responsible manner and may expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds
- acts on the advice of other match officials regarding incidents that the referee has not seen

## Tribunals and Appeals - Referees Appearing before a Disciplinary Committee

Misconduct reports must be sent to the appropriate authorities within the stipulated time. A referee may be asked to attend a Tribunal or an Appeal Hearing. It is crucial that a referee makes themselves available to attend these requests. In some cases this can be done over the phone, if the referee is unavailable in person.

The FFV is generally successful in obtaining positive outcomes in every case where match officials were in attendance.

It is a referee's duty to acknowledge all correspondence relating to the misconduct report and to advise the hearing panel of their availability to attend a disciplinary hearing or committee meeting when requested.

Such requests are not made lightly and if a referee is invited to appear before the disciplinary committee, they should make every effort to attend. The FFV and the Tribunal has a no tolerance approach and will punish offenders severely.

FFV provides a representative at the Tribunal who will assist referees with their case. Referees will also be assisted by a colleague by their branch (providing they inform their committee).

## Some useful guidelines for attending the tribunal

ALWAYS keep a copy of relevant reports that you submit.

Remember to:

- Take a copy of the misconduct report and your match record card to the meeting. This will help to recall the incident clearly. Carefully reread, revise and re examine your report, and the wording you used. Where a referee relies on information provided by either or both Assistant Referee/s and /or a 4<sup>th</sup> Official, then ALL relevant parties need to submit separate reports.
- If the incident produces a number of reports as a result of the same match. Then bring them along. There may be no need to produce these reports, however, it will help you to recall the details of other incidents from the same match if asked.
- Take pride in your personal appearance, since this will be an indication of your professionalism and will enhance your credibility as a witness. A jacket, shirt and tie are well regarded.
- Arrive in plenty of time and introduce yourself.
- You will be asked if you have anything to add to your report. It is advisable to stand by your original report; however, if you do have anything to add, then this is the time.
- Answer all questions clearly and briefly. You may be asked many questions about your report. Take your time and listen carefully to the questions. If you do not understand any part of the question, ask politely to have it asked again. Sometimes the best answer is a pause. It gives you time to prepare your answer and makes you look confident (even if you think it does not).
- Always remain cooperative throughout the proceedings. Smile with style, not aggression and try to look relaxed, not scared. Do not become involved in discussion, debate or argument with any other party who may be in attendance. Only address the tribunal members. Where possible always answer through the tribunal members, do not look at the person whom is acting for the club whilst answering your questions. They are not there to judge you and will play off your nervousness.
- Stay neutral and keep your emotions out of the tribunal. Do not be vindictive as this will not support your case at all.
- Club representatives have the right to test the report and in some cases may try and put scenarios and words in your mouth that are not in your report. Always refer back to your report and do not submit to this form of questioning. **NOTE:** if a club is represented by a Solicitor, just remember the referee is the expert about the laws of the game and not the lawyer.
- Answerer all your questions in a calm controlled manner, take your time to cast your mind back to the event. **DO NOT** feel pressured to give a quick answer, and a good strategy to reduce anxiety is to avoid looking at the person (more often than not, a solicitor) asking the question. (good point but it is repeated above, maybe reduce)
- Remember that the final decision taken by the Tribunal will be its judgment based on all the evidence presented. It is not for you to pass opinion or judgment on the decision reached.
- After the hearing...
  - Claim **\$25** to which you are entitled.
  - Try not to take the tribunal process 'personally'. Never feel guilt or remorse for reporting incidents to the FFV. It is part of your requirements as per the LOTG. Just remember it is the actions of a player, coach, team manager etc that required you to report the matter.
  - Sometimes it helps to debrief over the hearing with a colleague or friend. Contacting your branch representative and discussing any issues may assist you to learn from the experience.