

# Refereeing with Fewer than Three



Change History	
August 27, 2006	Lesson Plan First Developed
July 19, 2008	Emphasize goals, clarify essential flow of lesson, add PowerPoint.
December 12, 2011	Update
August 31, 2012	Update
August 5, 2013	Reviewed
October 13, 2013	Customer Service Pod Added
October 7, 2014	2013 Customer Service Pod Removed; update

## 1. DESCRIPTION

This lesson plan provides instruction and guidance for officiating matches when fewer than three trained (neutral) officials are available.

## 2. GOALS

Attendees will review/learn the principles of the Diagonal System of Control (DSC) as it is applied with three trained officials and learn how to adjust the responsibilities of the officials when fewer than three are available. After learning the material in this workshop, students should be able to apply the principles of the DSC in matches where fewer than three officials are present.

## 3. PREREQUISITES

- A. Attendees should have completed the Basic Referee Course.
- B. Ideally, attendees should have some game experience.

## 4. STUDENT MATERIALS

**There is a single optional handout.**

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** When this lesson plan is presented at an AYSO EXPO, alert attendees if handouts for this class are included in the AYSO EXPO Workbook which all registered attendees will receive at registration. Instructors should review the workbook contents prior to the class to determine what materials for this class are contained in the workbook. If the lesson plan handouts include scenarios, the workbook might contain the recommended answers to the scenarios.

## 5. INSTRUCTOR EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- A. PowerPoint presentation, computer and projector.
- B. One or two AR flags for demonstration (see page 5)

## 6. INSTRUCTOR NOTES

The time available to cover the material in this workshop is very limited. When preparing and delivering this workshop, pay close attention to the suggested timings, and be prepared to adjust time.

The lesson plan is quite detailed, but as with all AYSO National Referee Program lesson plans, the instructor may condense the presentation as long as the content is preserved and the goals of the lesson are achieved. However, *it is essential that the instructor understand and preserve the overall flow of the lesson:*

- The DSC is designed to maximize the likelihood that the referees are properly positioned on the field so as to be able to observe any event on which a decision must be made.

- The duties assigned to the three referees in the DSC support this method of officiating. With only two referees, not all events can be effectively observed. Some events are more important than others, so the referees must give priority to the ones that are most important and be prepared to miss some less important events.
- With only one referee, further compromises are required, since the referee has no assistance with judging offside infringements.
- The lesson leads the students through the above sequence by first looking at dynamic play, which introduces the principle of prioritization (that is, what events are most important and most in need of the attention of the referee(s)), and the attendees learn concretely what the priorities are. The lesson then gives the attendees the opportunity to work out the priorities themselves and analyze how the priorities identified affect the positioning of the referee(s). (This includes suggested positioning on restarts.) It concludes with a brief section on non-play issues (player and spectator management) with fewer than three referees. *If this sequence is not respected, the attendees will have great difficulty understanding the point of the workshop.*
- The PowerPoint slides contain instructor notes that supplement this Lesson Plan; instructors should read them in advance. The notes provide instructions for using several of the slides that contain field diagrams.

This workshop is ideally meant to be presented by an Advanced Referee Instructor, not because of the technical level of the material, but because of the substantial challenge of covering this material within the constraints of the prescribed time.

## 7. INSTRUCTOR NOTES

- A. Diagrams at the end of the lesson plan are contained in the accompanying PowerPoint and are referenced throughout the plan at appropriate points.
- B. An optional handout summarizing the material of the lesson plan is included at the end of the lesson plan for instructor reference. A separate file containing only the optional handout is provided.

## LESSON PLAN

### I. INTRODUCTION [2 minutes]

- A. Introduce self and co-instructors
- B. Introduce topic: how to officiate a match with fewer than three trained referees

## II. BODY [71 minutes]

### A. Why (Spirit) [3 minutes] (Slide 2)

1. To make the match safe, fair, and fun, referees have responsibilities that are listed in Laws 5 and 6.
  - a. The referee has overall responsibility for what happens on the field.
  - b. The assistant referees assist the referee, chiefly by providing information.
2. To carry out his responsibilities, the referee must be able to see what happens on the field, evaluate it, and act on the results.
  - a. "Seeing what happens" includes receiving information provided by a neutral, trained assistant
3. The Diagonal System of Control (DSC) is a set of "mechanics" – that is, techniques for positioning and communicating on the field – that enable the officiating team to carry out their responsibilities.
4. The DSC is designed for three neutral referees, but sometimes three referees are not available. Referees need to understand how to apply the principles behind the DSC and adjust their priorities and their mechanics when three referees are not available.

### B. Principles of the DSC [5 minutes] (Slide 4)

*Note to Instructor:* What follows is a review of the DSC, emphasizing principles, not details of mechanics. The purpose of emphasizing these principles is that with fewer than three referees, priorities and therefore the usual positioning must be modified in order to still carry out the principles. This section of the lesson plan should not devolve into a discussion of DSC mechanics; rather, they should arise later in the

1. To understand how to apply the DSC with fewer than three referees, we must first understand the principles on which the DSC is based and how those principles are applied with three referees.
  - a. Over-arching principle: Using the DSC, referees constantly alter their positions to ensure (or, more properly, maximize the likelihood) that they are positioned to observe any event on which a decision must be made. They then communicate their observations as appropriate.
    - i. Often, two or even three referees may be positioned to see a significant event, in which case they communicate (using signals of various kinds and even voice, on occasion) to share information in order to make the best decision.
    - ii. The ARs have the responsibility to communicate what they observe to the referee, who decides how to act on it. No official is solely responsible for observing any particular class of event.
      - (a) Thus, although the referee generally calls an offside infringement as a result of a signal from an AR, he may choose to do so purely on the basis of his own observation.

- (b) Similarly, although the referee normally calls fouls based on his own observations, the AR may indicate to the referee that a foul should be called.
2. The DSC is designed to allow the referees to carry out their responsibilities of the referees under the Laws. What are those responsibilities? (Slide 5)
    - a. *Ask: What are the events that referees need to monitor? Guide the audience to the following list, in the following order of priority: scoring of a goal, fouls/misconduct, offside, ball over boundary line (other than a goal), technical infringements (chiefly on restarts). Put this list up where it can be seen throughout the remainder of the workshop.*
    - b. *Ask: Who has responsibility for each of these events? This question will produce some "absolute answers", e.g., "AR calls throw-ins" or "referee calls fouls". Guide the audience to the answer that, while the referee has ultimate decision-making responsibility for everything, the referees operate as a team, with ARs communicating information to the referee who makes the decision.*
  3. Begin the transition to the discussion of the impact of having fewer than three referees:
    - a. *Ask: What events become more difficult to judge if there are fewer than three referees? Guide the audience (i) to the items in the list you made above and (ii) to recognizing that the usual things that present challenges in a game become even more of a challenge when there are fewer than three referees. If necessary, help the audience identify the "usual things" by mentioning offside, ball in and out of touch, recognizing fouls, and game control.*
    - b. *Ask: What's the impact of having only one or two referees? Guide the audience to an answer that includes: (1) that the referee(s) must determine what their priorities are, because with fewer than three referees, the number of events that can be observed is reduced; (2) that the priorities will change, depending on the age and skill level of the players, as well as how the game develops; and (3) the priorities selected will affect the positioning of the referee(s).*
- C. Application and Modification of the DSC [30 minutes]  
Application of the DSC with three referees [5 minutes]: Use PowerPoint slides 6-14 to discuss with the students the DSC with three officials. Make certain that there is maximum student participation.

**Note to Instructor.** If participants are familiar with DSC, only Slides 6 and 7 should be used.

1. Application of the DSC with only two referees [20 minutes]: Use PowerPoint slides 15-20 to discuss with the students the DSC with two officials.
  - a. One is the referee, the other is an AR.

- i. Discuss briefly what changes to the pre-game instructions might be given to the assistant referee.
- ii. Changes might include asking the AR to assume greater responsibility for observing infringements at his end; asking the AR to watch players behind the center's back; and alerting the AR that the center referee will be firmer than usual. (Some of these points are discussed more below, in the portion of the lesson plan that deals with older players' game.)
- b. If possible, the referee recruits a club linesman (a spectator). A club linesman is not a trained or a neutral person; the referee instructs him/her to give a signal (raise the flag) only when the ball has passed completely over a boundary line. (Slide 20)
- c. Emphasize that even though it takes time, recruiting a club linesman is encouraged.
  - i. Spectators sometimes need to be made aware that help is needed. For example, if the referee doesn't ask for a linesman, spectators might conclude that the referee does not want any help in judging the touchline.
  - ii. Club linesmen can be a good source of referee recruits.
  - iii. Remind participants to confirm that linesmen know:
    - (a) When the ball is out of play
    - (b) That their duties include indicating whether the ball has crossed the touch line AND the goal line
  - iv. *Ask:* What do you think of asking a linesman who is not able or willing to move along the touch line to position himself along the goal line, in order to focus on whether the ball has gone over the goal line?
  - v. *Ask:* What do you think of asking a linesman who is anxious to help with calling offside to move so as to always position himself on the offside line?

*Note to Instructor:* If the audience is already familiar with the technique for recruiting a club linesman, the following demonstration can be omitted.

- d. **Briefly demonstrate recruitment:** use a flag and a student from the class to show how this pre-game recruitment might be done. The instructor should do this ad-lib, but here's an example that illustrates what should be covered:

"Hi! I'm John Doe and I'll be refereeing the match today. What's your name? *Student responds, say "Jill."* "Glad to meet you, Jill. Thanks very much for agreeing to help me out. Have you ever run the line before? No? Well, you only have one thing to do, and you get an unobstructed view of the match. Here's a flag. All you have to do is raise that flag when the ball crosses the line in front of you. I'll decide who gets the throw-in, and be responsible for which direction the play goes. I need your help to raise this flag over your head when the ball crosses the line. Everything else is my responsibility. That's easy

enough, right? Let me show you exactly what I mean by crossing the line. The ball has to be entirely outside the field — if any part of it is on the line, you keep your flag down. If the ball rolls down the gutter, or the line, then it's still in play — no flag. OK? Let's practice one — here comes the ball, and you hold up your flag when it's out-of-play. That's it — you've got it! That's all there is to it. Oh, one more thing. If you raise your flag, and I don't see it right away, just keep it up there. I'll see you eventually — probably after everyone else starts yelling at me. Thanks very much for your help — I'll see you at half-time."

- e. Remind attendees that in AYSO, the dual referee system is not approved.
2. Application of the DSC with only one referee: [5 minutes] Use PowerPoint Slides 21 - 23.

D. Group activity [15-20 minutes]

1. *Up to this point, the lesson plan has covered the essentials of dealing with dynamic play with fewer than three referees. This next activity addresses restart situations when the referee does not have an assistant referee to handle the usual duties on a restart.*

**Note to instructor:** *If there is sufficient time, this activity should be organized as a case study, that is, as individual groups working on problems and reporting back to the overall group. This is the preferred approach, but the limited time available for this workshop may make this infeasible. The instructor should be prepared to adjust the number of groups accordingly or, if necessary, abandon the group format and guide a discussion that addresses them.*

2. *Divide the class into groups. Use PowerPoint Slides 24-30 to demonstrate these points. Ask each one to consider a specific restart and how the referee should change his normal actions due to the absence of an AR. The restarts are:*
  - a. Corner kick at A
  - b. Corner kick at B
  - c. Direct free kick at C
  - d. Direct free kick at D
  - e. Penalty kick (at E)

*Each group should briefly confer, choose a leader, and report their findings. Instructor should confirm correctness of answer or guide to correct answer as needed. If the audience is too small or time is too short to permit five separate groups, emphasize a, c, and e, possibly having one group handle both corner kicks, one handle both direct free kicks, and the third handle the penalty kick.*

E. People management [8 minutes] Use PowerPoint Slides 31-34

1. When there are fewer than three referees, the quality of the overall officiating is inevitably lower. It is important to manage expectations of everyone

- involved, which can help the referee maintain control when the eventual less-than-perfect situation arises. This is handled differently depending on the age group.
2. In younger players' games, it is more important to manage the adults on the touch lines than the players.
    - a. The parents and coaches are more likely to become vocal about perceived but uncalled offside infringements and ball out of play. To set expectations before the match, the referee can have a brief pre-game discussion with the coaches. *The instructor should demonstrate ad-lib; the following example gives the gist of it:*
      - i. "I'm working without assistant referees today, which means that it will be more difficult for me to judge offside and ball out-of-bounds. I'll call the obvious ones, but otherwise I will generally let the game proceed. Please let your players know. I'd also appreciate it if you'd let your spectators know, so we all know what to expect. Even though I don't have assistant referees, I assure you that the kids will have a good time, which is what we're all here for, right?"
      - b. If there is time, discuss other ways to manage expectations before a match.
        - i. *Ask:* What do you think of asking the coaches to call balls in and out of play along the touchline?
        - ii. *Ask:* What do you think of asking the players to be honest about whether the ball is in or out of play and which team take the throw-in?
        - iii. *Ask:* Does having fewer than three referees affect the instruction to "play to the whistle"? (*Note to Instructor:* If players are "on their honor" regarding ball out of play, the whistle will be used primarily to indicate fouls or injuries; it won't be used to indicate that the ball is in touch. Players might not be clear on this point, if they've been told to "play to the whistle" on this point in prior games.)
  3. In older players' games, the focus should be on the players, not the coaches or spectators. The referee's failure to detect fouls and offside can quickly lead to a loss of control. When fewer than three officials are present, the referee needs to manage players somewhat differently, recognizing this possibility.

***Note to instructor: If the audience consists of referees who will not be officiating older players' games, this portion of the material may be omitted.***

- a. At the outset, the referee may bring the team captains (not the teams or coaches) together and say something like this: "I'm on my own today, which means that it will be more difficult for me to judge offside. I will generally let the game proceed unless the offside is obvious. If you play

the offside trap, be aware of that. And remember that what's obvious to the defenders may not be obvious to me, especially on a quick break. Are you OK with that?" The players will agree, since they haven't any alternative. Thus, they have signed up for the expectation that the offside will not be called, and gives the referee something to point back to later if they object later.

- b. Fouls off the ball are a problem in older players' games. The referee must develop a strategy for dealing with them at the end of the field without an AR. This is difficult and cannot be done entirely satisfactorily. If the nature of the match suggests that such fouls are likely to be a problem, the referee should:
  - i. Identify as early as possible players involved in dubious challenges.
  - ii. Lag behind play somewhat in order to be nearer to such players.
  - iii. Where possible, take a somewhat wider position on the field in preference to a deeper one (when on the side without the AR).
  - iv. Ask the AR to watch players at the far end of his touch line (i.e., in the lower left area of the field in Diagram 8/Slide 33), who will be behind the referee's back when play is at the upper left.
  - v. Speak to players often to maximize their sense of the referee's presence.
  - vi. When incidents occur off the ball, be firmer than usual. It may be necessary to caution a player in circumstances in which the referee might otherwise let him off with a chewing-out, perhaps with a comment of the form "I'm too busy in this match to put up with that kind of behavior."

### III. CONCLUSION [2 minutes]

- A. Summarize: Use PowerPoint Slide 35
  1. Refereeing with fewer than three trained officials is inevitably a compromise.
  2. The DSC provides the principles for adjusting normal positioning to accommodate fewer than three officials.
  3. The referee must prioritize and choose positions that maximize his ability to judge goals, fouls, and offside. Other calls are on a best-effort basis.
  4. The dual system is not authorized for use in AYSO.
- B. Call students attention to the handout on the DSC included in the AYSO EXPO Workbook (if it is included). If the handout is not in the Workbook or if this workshop is used in another setting, the instructor should distribute the handout at this point.
- C. Bridge to next lesson, if appropriate.

## Handout: Refereeing with Fewer than Three

### SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP

The overall principle of the Diagonal System of Control (DSC) is that referees constantly reposition themselves to maximize the likelihood that they will be able to observe any event on which a decision must be made. This principle is retained with fewer than three referees, but fewer events will be observed, the referee(s) must prioritize what they will watch for. This decision affects the referee positioning.

- Referees “box” play to have four eyes on the area of active play. With one (neutral) Assistant Referee (AR), the “box” can be maintained for half the field, but the referee becomes the sole observer at the other end.
- The referee must prioritize and choose positions that maximize his ability to judge goals, offside, and fouls. Other calls are on a best-effort basis. In older players’ games, game control is paramount, and the referee’s positioning should be chosen with that in mind.
- With one AR, the referee adjusts at the other end of the field, getting wider and deeper in order to be closer to the goal (to judge scoring) and to observe offside infringements. The referee often must make a trade-off between going wider and going deeper, depending on his conditioning and the speed of the game. A deeper (but less wide) position inevitably limits the referee’s ability to patrol close to the touch lines (a club linesman, if available, can help by signaling ball-out-of-play). It also limits his ability to recover a normal position when play moves to the AR’s end of the field, so the AR assumes greater responsibility for observing infringements at his end.
- With no ARs, the referee must get as deep as possible at both ends of the field, which might further compromise his ability to go wide. Regardless of how deep and wide the referee can go, offside decisions will be difficult, especially in older players’ matches. The referee should establish expectations with the teams in advance (and tolerate no dissent).

Remember that refereeing with fewer than three trained officials is inevitably a compromise. Focus on the important matters; let the others go.

### **The dual system of officiating is not authorized for use in AYSO!**

- The problems created by having two whistles are greater than those created by a missing neutral AR. The inherent lack of consistency and division of authority put game control at risk and spoil the game for the players.
- The DSC should be used for all AYSO matches, with adjustments in the referees’ positions as necessary when fewer than three are available.

## Handout: Refereeing with Fewer than Three

### DIAGONAL SYSTEM OF CONTROL - BIBLIOGRAPHY

The AYSO National Referee Program contains several modules that include material on the application of the Diagonal System of Control in the Basic and Intermediate Referee Courses. The following sources contain additional material on positioning and mechanics for referees and assistant referees:

Schwartz, Carl P. *Soccer Officials Guidebook For a Crew of Three Officials*. Referee Enterprises, Inc., Franksville, WI, 1999. Available through USSF.

Harris, Paul E. Jr., and Harris, Larry R. *Fair or Foul: The Complete Guide to Soccer Officiating*. 6th edition. Soccer for Americans, Manhattan Beach, CA., 1995, ISBN 0-916802-25-6.

Mathurin, D.C. Emerson. *Linesmanship: The Art of Enhancing a Referee's Performance*. The Sporting Press, Essex, England, 1995.