Positioning

How to be in the right place, at the right time
The Goal

To be within 20 yards of play at all times.
To have the optimal line of sight all times.
To be in a position to lend presence when needed.
To get the call right.
Positioning is a Balance

Fitness

Positioning

Reading the Game
(Anticipation)
What is the best position?

One that is

FLEXIBLE

and

INTELLIGENT
Difference Between Positioning and Mobility

• Mobility = being able to get “somewhere” (fitness)

• Positioning = knowing where that “somewhere” is
Diagonal System of Control

- Referee works on a flexible diagonal from one corner of the field to the opposite
- Often results in referee being “far from play” due to strict adherence to the diagonal
Diagonal System of Control

View of play obstructed.
Too far from the next phase of play.
Diagonal System of Control

In the way of play
Can’t see situations elsewhere on the field
Extreme Position

Too far from quick counter-attack
The Rectangle Guideline

• A new guideline in which to apply the principles of the *Diagonal System of Control*

• "The Rectangle" is merely a *suggestion*, not a place where you "*must be*" and "*must remain."

• The Key? Adapt to your game!
Rectangle Guideline
Why the Rectangle?

- Assists in keeping you within 20 yards of play through “channels of running”
- Prevents you from taking extreme positions during normal course of action that put you out of position for the next pass, cross, or decision
- Allows you to see through active play and onto the next sequence of the action
- Allows you to be closer to decisions in the Penalty Area for the critical call
- Enables active AR involvement through clear AR areas-of-control
AR Area of Control
Channels of Running

One channel to the left of play . . .
Good angle of vision out of the passing lanes
Channels of Running

One channel to the left of play . . .
Further distance due to proximity to AR’s area of control
One channel to the left of play . . .
Good angle of vision out of the passing lanes and not interfering inside the penalty area
Ball in wide channel but referee stays in rectangle with good line of sight.
Channels of Running

Ball in wide channel but referee stays in rectangle with good line of sight
Pass Through zones

The gray areas indicate areas where the referee should move through quickly if he/she needs to pass through them at all. These are prime passing, shooting, and clearance lanes!
Presence Lends Conviction… …Positioning Lends Presence

• The referee must move to the point of the foul — so if there are issues you are on your way there
• If there are no issues, you can move to the next phase of play or the drop zone
• You need to be close enough to communicate with the players (i.e. “If they want 10 yards?”)
• Adapt to changes in players and tactics
Principles of Good Positioning

• Work to create the best angle of vision
• Read the likely course of play
• Find the angle that allows you to see daylight between the players making the challenge
• Stay close to play, but do not interfere with play or players
• Be ready for the next phase of play
• Run/walk/jog for a purpose
The Four Conditions To Correct Positioning

1. I can see play and the potential problem area
2. I can see through two challenging players
3. I am *not* occupying space the players need
4. I am able to be ready for next phase of play
Movement

• Let play develop and you follow
• Do not duplicate coverage by AR
• Adapt – be flexible in changing circumstances
• If you cannot see the action, you cannot make the call:
  – Remember the angles!
  – Move inside/outside play to see
  – Stay close to play without being in the way
Remember

• Look for the best viewing position. . . but remember that no position is entirely optimal

• Let’s look at “good” positioning and “poor” positioning . . .
What is a “Good” Position?

• One that is flexible and intelligent
• You or the AR can see the play on the ball
• You can quickly establish presence by moving to the point of the foul
• You are ready to move to the next phase of play
What is a “Poor” Position?

• Too many players are blocking the field of vision (i.e., cannot see play ON THE BALL!)
• Cannot see where play will go
• Same view as AR
• Too extreme position off the field and not ready to cover next phase of play
Note For Field Diagrams

• Suggested area of field coverage
• Suggested area for referee positioning during play

Adapt to the needs of the game!
Kick-Off
Dynamic Play

Allow play to develop and follow…
get the angle
Dynamic Play

Allow play to develop and follow… get the angle for the next phase of play.
Dynamic Play

Close to decisions in the penalty area with a clear view
Dynamic Play

Close to play but not in the way… don’t take away passing or shooting lanes
Dynamic Play

Angle of view on active play + angle of view on next play (cross)
Dynamic Play

Angle of view on active play + angle of view on next play (cross)
Anticipate the drop zone... what the goalkeeper has done on other punts should help you judge where to position yourself on the field.
Dynamic Play – GK Punt

Anticipating the drop zone… Age and skill level should help you decide how far up field to set up
Dynamic Play - Transition

Close on play get an angle to see play move

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Turn and let play go by you. When you have a safe distance between you and ball, move so you can see daylight between players.
Dynamic Play - Flowing

Stay with play as they change speed and direction you do too, just like a player, but you do not touch the ball.
Dynamic Play- Flowing

Move with players staying so you can see day light between the players. (ready to make a critical decision)
Dynamic Play- Leading

Close to action in front of the bench
Positioned in preparation for the next phase of play.
Throw-In

Anticipation of a short throw
Throw-ins into the penalty area should be treated like a corner kick!
Anticipating a long throw the players are showing you that the play is going to be middle of the field
Free Kicks

Take a position where you can see the wall and the drop zone and are in good position for a counter-attack.
Free Kicks
Free Kicks
Anticipate the drop zone... this may vary with age of players or skill level.
Similar to free kicks, take a position that allows you a clear view of the drop zone but in a good position for a counter-attack.
Corner Kick

Start wide with all the players and move as they move.
Counter Attacks

- The ability to see between players is very important on counter attacks.
- The first several yards need to run left or right to get the maximum line of sight between player.
- Do not run directly behind the play and attacker.
- Go get a side view of the play.
- Must close down play using speed as quickly as possible.
Quick Counter Attack

Move quickly to the side to have the best view... close the distance after you have the best angle.
Quick Counter Attack

This may even mean that you need to be on the same side as your AR to get the best and quickest view of light between players.
Buildup in the Midfield

• Do not immediately go wide and deep
• Move with play, but keep an angle to see what is going on
• Consider the player’s options
• Adjust your pace to the situation
• Don’t ball watch keep your feet moving
Reasons for Going Out of Rectangle

- Your presence is needed and the risk is greater if you do not
- Potential for collision with goalkeeper
- Attacker taking the ball into corner late in the match, waste time
- Play gets physical and you need to be there
- Hard challenge in front of benches
Principles of Positioning

SUMMARY

• Stay to the left of the ball whenever possible
• Try to be 20 yards or so from play
• Work hard to “close down play” – attempt to move at the same pace as play
• Create a good angle of vision to see light between the players
• Don’t go into the wide channels (outside the rectangle) unless you smell a problem
• Anticipate and read play to position self for the next phase – never be flat footed and always be moving
• The center circle and penalty arcs are “transit zones” – referees should not stand in either area but should use them to move quickly from point a to point b