

Pre-Match Conference

It is vital for the referee and the assistant referees to assemble prior to the start of a match to discuss responsibilities and expectations. This meeting can be conducted while walking around to inspect pitch conditions and the goals, but it should never take place within listening distance of the coaches or players. Some of the issues which should be reviewed and/or decided upon prior to the commencement of play include:

- Which color jersey should the referee team wear? Which type shoes to wear (cleats, turf, vs. flats)?
- What is the level of experience of the referee and the ARs, and are there any particular areas of discomfort for which help/guidance is required?
- Are there any recent changes to the laws which need to be reviewed?
- If working a tournament, are there any special rules which apply to the competition?
- Are there any abnormalities with the pitch, coaches' technical area or the goals which need to be addressed?
- Are there any impending weather-related conditions and how will these be handled?
- Who will be responsible for checking the equipment and passes of the players?
- Who will be responsible for keeping a backup of time, score and cards given?
- How should substitutions be administered by the senior AR? Pennies on players warming up or different color top?
- In the event of a penalty kick, who will have the responsibility for observing the keeper and the goal, who will have the responsibility of watching the kicker and who will have the responsibility for supervising the other players for possible infringements?
- How should we communicate during the course of the match (e.g., what signals should the AR use to indicate such events as if a card should be given, that the AR needs the attention of the referee for a discussion, etc.)?
- If familiar with the teams, are there any coaches and/or players who need to be more closely monitored because of tendencies/incidents observed in previous matches?
- Who or where is the field marshal, if applicable?
- If the referee cannot finish the game, who's going to be in the center?
- Water breaks? If needed, when to take them and for how long to break?