



# ASA Guide to Being a Fourth Official

# The Fourth Official

Described in *Law 6; The Other Match Officials (IFAB Laws of the Game)*, a fourth official's purpose has evolved over time to allow a broader level of support beyond just bench control. Teamwork, awareness and organization are the key factors to success in every game.

The following information provides duties and basic strategies to help understand areas in which a fourth official can best support their crew.



## Positioning and Movement

The fourth official area is situated at the halfway line, between both team benches. Some fields may provide a table and chair for convenience.

To display an engaged appearance and create the ability to proactively move to support any situation, a fourth official should remain standing throughout the game.

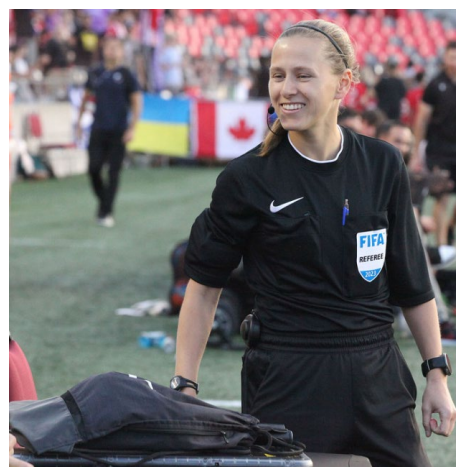


Always be cautious to stay close to the confines of the technical areas unless absolutely needed. Moving from this area may lead to situations occurring out of your visibility.



# Duties Prior to the Match

- Greet coaches and staff prior to game
  - o Creates a positive relationship.
  - o To be completed as a crew.
- Collect and prepare game balls and team colors
  - o Check for damage and correct air pressure in balls.
  - o Enquiring about jersey, shorts, socks and goalkeeper colors for both teams.
    - Ask to see if possible.
- Game sheets and ID Checks from Teams
  - o Visual check that players ID matches the information written on the game sheet, as well as correct player presented in photo.
  - o May be completed by any member of the crew as required.
- Technical area setup (if required)
  - o If technical area not visible, discussion with coaching staff to determine boundaries.
  - o Use of cones or other safe objects may be used to visually show technical area (Law 1 Field of Play – “The Technical Area”).
- Bring extra materials to field as required
  - o Extra flags, coin, paper or 4<sup>th</sup> official form for notes, pencil/pen, ball pump and gauge will allow fixes to be completed quickly as needed.
- Warm up area
  - o Determine with coaching staff the areas for substitutes to warm up, as well as any other details required (ex. No use of game balls for substitute warm up, etc).
- Check goal nets after warm-ups completed
  - o Once players leave field for final preparations, quickly check nets for any damage (ex. Holes wide enough for ball to go through, metal pins pulled out, etc.)
- Substitutes wearing pinnies or colors that distinguish them from on-field players
  - o Prevents AR2 from confusing a player on the bench from a player on the field for offside purposes.
- General equipment checks of players (as early as possible)
  - o Cleats are safe.
  - o Shin pads worn and covered.



- Undershirts and shorts align with IFAB Laws of the game and competition rules.
- No jewellery.
- All player equipment is safe.

## Duties During the Match

### - Keep record of information

- Scorers, substitutions, cautions and send-offs, major injuries, etc.
- Always record time of game for each occurrence and which half it occurred in.
- Tracking of substitution slips, if applicable.

### - Substitution procedures followed correctly

- Alerting ARI or referee directly when substitute is ready.
- Check of substitutes equipment (removal of pinnie).
- Once approval is given from referee, allow substitute to alert on field player they are substituting.
- Ensuring substitute does not enter field until on field player leaves over a boundary line.
- Secondary count of on field players before play restarts.



### - Coaching staff and bench behaviour

- Maintain consistent visual checks of both benches for any potential issues, which may include:
  - Substitutes warming up incorrectly (ex. Use of game balls, etc).
  - Substitutes not wearing pinnies while sitting or warming up.
  - Multiple coaches giving verbal instructions at the same time.
  - Coaches standing outside their designated technical area.
  - Players or staff questioning or showing public dissent towards on-field scenarios.
  - Objects thrown or kicked in technical area or onto field (law 12)
- Based on pregame instructions, alerting the referee if required of warnings or misconducts to bench staff or substitutes.

### - Watching on field play

- Observe play for additional information to assist the crew.
- Watch for players persistently causing issues.
- Temperature changes in the game.
- Foul counts for both teams.
- Awareness of players with cautions.
- Players' numbers during advantages or mass confrontations.

- Fouls occurring near the technical area.
  - Any information that can be provided to crew at half time that would benefit the second half of the game for control.
  - If mass confrontation occurs, work with AR1 to monitor benches.
  - Eye contact with referee for potential of Athletic trainers being called onto the field during serious injuries.
- **Assistance to the Referee and AR(s)**
    - Responsibility should be discussed thoroughly in the pregame instructions to avoid confusion during the game.
    - A fourth official should look to assist, not insist. Providing information through discussion or subtle signals will allow the Referee to make an informed and correct decision.

## Duties After the Match

- Stay with crew and leave the field together.
- Bring all fourth official equipment back to dressing room.
- Return all game balls, or alert teams to where they are.
- Confirm with entire crew goals, cards, substitutes, completed times and any additional information.
- Complete game sheet and confirm details with crew before returning and allowing teams to review.
  - Keeping organized notes during game will avoid mistakes when completing game sheets.
- Submit any documents required to league or competition.

## General Strategies

- Always remain calm and professional in every interaction.
- Encourage 'cooperation' from the benches but be ready to 'lay down the law' when required.
- Be proactive with any equipment, substitution or bench instructions. The earlier you work with the coaching staff, the less issues you will have.
- Show early presence beside the corresponding bench if incidents are occurring or coaches are becoming vocal.
- Avoid providing irrelevant information to the crew, as it may cause distraction rather than support.
- Due to weather changes, bring track pants, jacket and gloves as required to keep safe and comfortable.
- Keep thorough knowledge of Law 12 – *Misconduct to team officials*.

