

100 Pound Flag

By Ed Rae, SDI



Three experienced officials meet in a pregame conference.

Both assistants have flags with them. They discuss the standard procedures. After they conclude their talk, the ref says,

"Can I ask a favor?"

"Sure," the AR's reply, "what do you need?"

"Do you mind using my flags? They are special to me."

"No, of course not," was the ready response.

The flag looks normal, for one sleek, surprising thing: the shaft. It appeared to be made of cast iron. The referee handed each a flag. As they wrapped their hand around it, they groaned.

"Ouch!" said one, "This must be 75 pounds of iron."

"No, lead., 100 lbs precisely." Incredulously they blurted, "But why?"

"Let me explain. I want you to be unhurriedly hesitant, on all flag signals.. To be slow. To be certain,.. To be solid. To be so sure you are right. Then go ahead. *Be sure you are right, then go ahead.* The weight of the flag will help you to wait. **Weight = Wait.** Of course, at your other games, you can pretend flags weigh 100lbs. It will help your game bump up to another level."

"Wow! But we will get tired, all those throw-ins. Good grief!"

"Let's think about that. Suppose you only signal when it is necessary. Do not signal when everyone knows it's out, players know the direction. How's that? We don't have that many corners, goal kicks at this level, so let's not worry now. We can talk at halftime about those calls signals."

"Ok sounds good."

"What about offside?" "Well let's weight-wait, until we are positive interference has really taken place, in the area of activity. **Be sure there was interference with an opponent, or offside position person played the ball, or prevented an opponent from challenging for the ball. Let's be super certain, advantage has been truly gained, then and only then, raise the flag for offside infraction.**"

"Ok, but what if they are in an offside position, we want to let you know about it?"

"**I want NO flag then, because position does not violate the law.** I only want your flag, when you want me to blow the whistle for **INFRACTION.** Got it?"

"Understood. Interfering while offside or gaining advantage from offside position. Now fouls, will be doing what usually do, yes?"

"Ah, not exactly. Try this mental matrix: Most of the game I, as referee have the action in full view, if I am not screened, am fully sighted on the area of contact, then no flag signal. If it is deliberate act and I cannot see it or behind my back, try to make eye contact with me, this will be rare. If the 'foul' is consistent with what I have been calling so far, by all

means signal foul. If I miss the flag ,I expect the opposite AR to mirror the flag, so I have two shots to catch it.. Obviously you will have no doubt at all, when you flag it. That sound reasonable?"

"Yes I can see that, but what about inside the penalty area, the 44 x 18.?"

"Same is true. I want the non-calls in the middle of the field, to be non-calls there. Deliberate fouls at halfway line, will be fouls inside the 18. Not fair to the players otherwise. So if I am fully sighted, I expect no flag. There will not be too many times, when I am not there. Worry about a few instances. On the other hand, if it is how I am calling game up to then, and my view is blocked, try to make eye contact, then you can tell I did not see it. So clearly unseen, give me a signal."

"I guess we are all set now. Oh, I asked the coaches what kind of a game they expected."

"What did they say?"

"They both said they anticipated the action to be: *heavy*."