

Oh,no-oo!!! .. Not a Penalty Kick!!

By Ed Rae SDI MA

"I cannot believe the referee called it!"

"I cannot believe the referee did not call it?"

Referees do not cause PK's. Sustained, skillful and relentless offensive pressure on the defense does. Well, gaze at the USA vs Jamaica World Cup qualifier at Foxboro, MA, October 7, 2001? Landon Donovan taken down. Clean tackle of the ball or foul in the penalty area worthy of PK?

Emotions run high when a penalty kick is called. Why? Because almost always, or so it seems, a sure goal will result. (Ask Roberto Baggio sometime.)

No one wants to see one called against their own team. But if in doubt, call it against the other team, no question!

The penalty kick is awarded- some would say earned-for any foul that would, usually, result in a direct free kick. If it is inside the 44 x 18, committed by a defender in his or her own penalty area then a kick from the 12 spot results.

- Do coaches, players and spectators seem confused on when it should be called? Of two minds?... **Sometimes.**
- Are referees inconsistent here? ...**Sometimes.**
- Do referees cause difficulties for themselves in this call? ...**Sometimes.**
- Do teams want it only when it favors them...**all too often.**

Referees need to be even-handed. If something is not called in the middle of the field, then clearly it should NOT be called inside the 44 x 18. If it is an obvious foul everywhere else on the pitch, then it has to be a PK inside the area.

Some guidelines:

1. Are you sure? No doubt whatsoever?
2. Do you have clear view?
3. Are you close to action? ... **You had better be!**
4. Was it deliberate? On purpose? Obvious?
5. Was it something inconsequential that you might have let go prior?
6. Does it look bad, but really was 'all ball'?
7. Was it ball hitting hand? No call, nothing. (98% of time.)
8. Was it hand (very rare) deliberately hitting ball? Now that is legit! (2% of time)
9. Did player 'dive' into 'box' on contact? Was it really the defender's fault?
10. If you have assistants, did you make eye contact with AR before making call or no call?
11. Finally, was this a call or non call that you consistently had the whole game prior?

The penalty kick is part of the game. It is Law 14. Valid. Real. Historical. Integral to the spirit of the game. If you cannot deal with it, especially at the Amateur level; if your personal courage falters, then refereeing at one particular level may not be appropriate. Consider another level, age, etc.

At long last, you are the referee. You must make a decision. This is why you are here. Decide or be gone.