

When is it Time

By Andy Weiss, SRA

One of the most difficult decisions a referee will ever make is when to hang up his or her whistle. It is a day that no one looks forward to, but is inevitable. The saddest part may be that often the players and other referees can see that day has come for you, and you cannot see it yourself.

Each of us want to stay on the pitch for as long as possible, and as long as we continue to serve the game and get some satisfaction in the job we are doing, then why not? But how do we know when our skills are fading? What are the warning signs for referees to judge when that day might be at hand.

Here are some warning signs suggested by AARP, modified to fit the refereeing world:

1. You have difficulty getting into the right position to see the call. You are resorting to bending to try to see around the players
2. You are not keeping up with play and have to make calls from farther away than you would like.
3. You lose focus and forget to look at the Assistant Referees, and often miss signals from them.
4. Your responses to unexpected situations are slower than they should be.
5. You have a hard time looking over your shoulder when backpedaling and often bump into players.
6. You have an increasing number of scrapes and arguments with players and coaches.
7. You feel uncomfortable and nervous, or fearful when refereeing.
8. You are losing control or close to losing control in matches.
9. You have trouble judging the speed of the ball or the location of where it is going
10. Spectators from both teams are constantly berating your calls, making you angry
11. Fellow referees with whom you have worked in the past no longer wish to do games with you.
12. Your peripheral vision is failing and you have difficulty seeing the sides of the field when looking; straight ahead.
13. You become distracted easily and have a hard time remembering details of the game, such as the score, or previous misconduct, etc.
14. You are getting more formal complaints from coaches
15. You have a medical condition or take medication which affects your ability to referee.

If any or all of these symptoms describe your refereeing, than maybe it is time to re-evaluate your on-field activities. You can also request an assessor watch one of your games. At the very least, see a doctor to make sure there is nothing medically wrong.

No one on the referee committee has the authority to tell you when you must step down. We can and often offer and do get asked for guidance, and we always try to be objective and tell the truth about your relative skills and where you are on your career path, but we

cannot remove you from the list with a stroke of the pen. This is a decision that only you can make.