



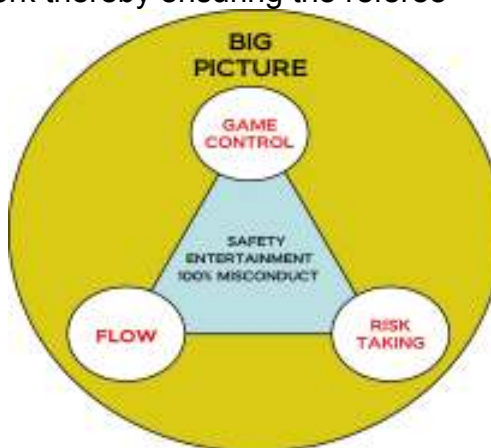
Game Management Model: Flow, Risk Taking and Game Control
2009 Referee Program Directives
February 2, 2009

Game Management: The Model

The diagram at the right represents the model that should be used, at all levels, to guide officials in their approach to managing the game. There are several critical components that make the equation work thereby ensuring the referee implements the concept without negatively impacting the game.

- The Core: Safety, Entertainment, and 100% Misconduct

At the core of the referee's management of the game are safety, entertainment value for spectators/players and 100% misconduct. Referees must find the right mix of flow, risk taking, and game control so that these 3 core factors are not negatively impacted.



- (1) *Safety*: Referees must find the right mix of game control, flow and risk taking without endangering the safety of the players. Should the safety of the players be jeopardized, the referee must reconsider his approach to game management.
- (2) *Entertainment*: By providing flow and fewer stoppages in the match, the ball is in play longer, which increases the entertainment value of the game.
- (3) *100% Misconduct*: Referees are presented with situations in the game that require a red or yellow card be issued. The referee cannot ignore these situations and, for the good of the game, must administer the appropriate misconduct (yellow or red card) to the player(s) in question. 100% misconduct situations are those in which the Laws of the Game mandate that a yellow or red card be issued. These are situations that are clear-cut, there is no gray area. When confronted with a 100% misconduct situation, referees are obliged to deal with the misconduct and *cannot* use the "big picture" to determine whether a card should be given or not.

- The Triangle: Flow, Risk Taking and Game Control

Each point of the triangle represents an important ingredient for game management. The 3 points must work in harmony to ensure that the core is protected. In other words, risk taking and flow go hand-in-hand with game control. The more game control that is needed, the less risk taking the

referee engages in. Hence, referees need to find the right balance between taking risks and allowing flow and game control.

- (1) *Risk Taking*: Refers to the referee's ability to identify the types of small/minor challenges that the players will accept. In other words, the ability of a referee to *manage the game* in a manner that maximizes the time the ball is in play by eliminating unnecessary stoppages. Referees must choose the right opportunities to take risks by not calling the borderline/minor challenges (trifling) that do not affect game control. Appropriate risks are ones that make sense given the location on the field, the type of challenge committed, the opportunity for a successful result from the application of flow, and the eventual impact on game control given the "big picture" of the match.
- (2) *Flow*: The ability of a referee to manage the game so that the ball is in play by eliminating unnecessary stoppages. By reducing the number of fouls called by correctly differentiating the trifling challenges from the careless/reckless fouls, officials can ensure more rhythm to the game.
- (3) *Game Control*: Represents the ability of the referee to find the right mix of risk taking and flow. Game control is directly related to the referee's management of the game and how he sets the tone for what is acceptable in the game and what is not acceptable. Presence and how the referee projects his personality on the game is a significant factor in game control. More game control is needed when the players' actions indicate they do not want to play within the spirit of the Laws of the Game.

High level of game control = more risk taking and flow

Low level of game control = less risk taking and flow

- The Circle: "Big Picture"

The "big picture" relates to the atmosphere and/or environment surrounding the match as it is played out and the referee's "feel" for what the game needs at a given moment. If an act by a player could be interpreted as either a foul or a possible cautionable foul or if the act could be interpreted as either a yellow or red card (the act falls within a gray area), the referee needs to consider the "big picture" surrounding the match. In the few instances when similar borderline cases arise, referees should consider asking themselves:

- (1) **Does the player need the card?**

Consideration is given to the player's prior behavior (the overall conduct of the player to that point) in the game and the intent of the player's act.

- (2) **Does the game need the card?**

Consideration is given to the temperature of the game (the overall atmosphere of the match) to that point. The referee should quickly analyze where the game has been and where it is heading based upon player conduct to that point.

The “big picture” provides the referee with a framework for decisions but it must not be an excuse for a referee’s failing to deal with 100% misconduct situations or a referee’s inability to ensure the safety of the players.

Considerations for Implementation

- The referee must recall the previous action / incidents: the “big picture”
- Know the player’s skill on the ball and give the talented players more opportunity to show their skills
- Quickly calculate the probability of success of the risk on each play
- Use the “wait and see” principle
- Consider the “Warning Signs”
- “Feel” (“fingerspitzengefühl”) the attacker has the opportunity to “play through” the contact
- In cases where the referee is applying the advantage clause, the advantage signal should be used to demonstrate that the game is being allowed to flow. Use of the advantage signal sends a visual message to the players/spectators that the referee saw the infraction, thereby mitigating potential negative feedback

Trifling / Minor / Soft Challenges: What are They?

1. Player’s Safety *Not* Jeopardized
2. Not careless, reckless, or using excessive force
3. Attacking player stops playing
 - Player has been the target for a “pattern of fouls” which has caused him to anticipate or be fearful of a possible next foul
4. Examples of flow:
 - Upper body challenges not using arms (nonviolent)
 - Tugs and holds (simple and non tactical)
 - Incidental-type contact

Warning Signs a Referee Needs Less Flow / Risk Taking and More Game Control

The following list are some of the “warning signs” or “flash points” in a game that should resonate with officials and provide direction regarding overall game/situation management:

- Foul near the team benches
- Wet field – comfort level of players to make tackles increases
- Tackles extend from 3 yards to 7 yards
- Sequence / succession / repetition of challenges in a short time span (cluster fouls)
- More body contact

- Mismatched body contact (feet versus chest, head versus knee)
- Change from containment defense to high pressure and chase
- Challenges (including 50-50) and apparent challenges on the goalkeeper
- Near the touchline and no way out for the ball or the player
- Retaliation foul after play restarts
- Player into goal to retrieve ball after a score
- The winning team protecting the ball at the corner flag to use time
- Excessive fouls on the skillful player (play maker and scorer)
- Escalation in the “severity of fouls” committed
- Frustration level of players increasing, player acceptance of decisions decreasing
- Dissent increasing
- Player feedback from both teams indicating “we don’t want flow”
- Score and time

Advantage: The “4 P Principle”

When considering the application of advantage, the following principle is provided as a guideline for officials. Remember, advantage application may differ depending upon the skill level, age level, and general atmosphere of the game.

The “**4 P Principle**” of Advantage Application:

1. **Possession of ball:** control by team or player.
2. **Potential for attack:** ability to continue a credible and dangerous attack.
3. **Personnel:** skill of attackers, numerical advantage.
4. **Proximity to opponent’s goal:** closeness to goal.