

# REFEREES CIRCULAR



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## Management of Free Kicks in Open Play

Recently, the ASRF (NSW Division) and Soccer NSW hosted a delegation of referees from Italy.

This exchange, the second of its type thus far, has provided a valuable interchange of views and techniques between the two organisations.

Of particular interest during this visit was the manner in which these referees managed free kicks in open play. Currently, many of us deal with such situations by moving directly into the location of the free kick and indicating the direction of the kick while often standing over the ball or in close proximity to it.

Invariably this technique places the referee in the centre of the area of immediate conflict and tends to contribute to significant levels of dissent and confrontation that often results in additional sanctions being issued.

The manner in which such situations were managed by the Italians was to stop play in the usual manner but then to continue to move up field in order to position themselves for the next phase of play controlling the actual position of the ball remotely from the new position up field. This technique has a range of advantages that are worth considering.

Firstly, it removes the referee from the area of conflict. This has the benefit of denying players an easy target for their complaints as they cannot argue with someone that is not there therefore limiting dissent and the resultant caution. Additionally play can restart quickly with the referee positioned well into the next phase of play.

Players who choose to pursue the referee in such situations **WILL BE CAUTIONED**.

There are two situations where this technique is not appropriate and should not be used.

Firstly, where the challenge that created the free kick requires a sanction the referee will administer the sanction in the usual manner prior to moving into their next position.

Secondly, at a "ceremonial free kick" in a goal scoring position near either penalty area where it becomes necessary to control the position of the free kick more accurately.

State Referees Coach