

“The Box”.



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Assessors are supposed to observe and provide insightful suggestions, and reinforce behaviors. Several years ago it became obvious there was a disconnect between what was said by the assessor and heard by the referee. Consequently there was not much follow-through by the referee after the assessment. This ppt is to give you an idea of the perspective we'd like you to achieve in order to manage the game. Before you can do that, you'll need to be able to manage yourself.

If we tell you what we are looking for ahead of time, we think you'll have a greater likelihood of demonstrating it to us.

Referees often are told to:

- "think outside the box",

- "don't get boxed in"

when they are having/reviewing problems
in a game. This is supposed to help.

How does that help you?

We have to define the words:

What is “the box”?

What is “inside the box”?

What is “outside the box”?

How do you get out of the box?

Is there a reason to go inside the box?

“The box” is usually the PA. The big box can mean the PA, and the little box refers to the GA- when used by parents, coaches and new Grade 9 referees.

“Inside the box” can mean inside the PA- the referee’s instruction to give him first look at anything “in[side] the box”.

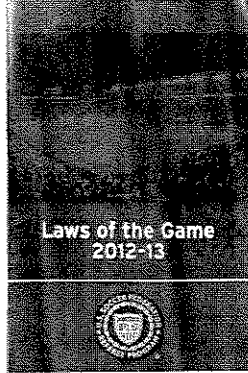
“Outside the box” usually means outside the PA on the FOP.

“How do you get out of the box?” We need a new, workable definition.

“Is there a reason to go inside the box?” We have to know what the box is before we can go back- or even leave the box.

What is “the box”?

The box is the LOTG, in black and white,
exactly as written.



“inside the box” means

- Applying the LOTG as written, in black & white. Word for Word.
- No grey areas. No overall concepts.
- No understanding of a tactical foul (sees simple foul) or use of advantage.
- If you do not see which Law specifically applies, you do not know what to do.
Or, you assume play is “ok”.
- When asked why you did/didn't do something, you will cite the relevant Law (1-17). Or, believe the coach is harassing you.

“Inside the box” means the referee sees play as separate events which he may or may not respond to.

The referee does not see the flow of ongoing play developing.

(example: the referee is at the beach and just sees waves crashing onto the beach, or barely making it onto the beach. the

referee does not see beyond the waves at his feet to the swells that generate the wave and the strength of the wave.

The referee does not look for what leads up to the wave (the player's behavior).

“outside the box” means

- Understanding the Spirit of the Game
- Knowing the difference between the LOTG and the Spirit of the Game
- The LOTG are printed in soft cover only. You should know why.

(So they are flexible (and when necessary) can be bent...)

Back to the wave example, outside the box means looking at the swells and what generates them, in order to have an idea of what to expect (looking for the wave). From this perspective, managing players, referee positioning, reading the temperature of the game and hotspots, produces advantages for the referee to manage the players.

Reading the waves, being outside the box, is where the Spirit of the Game exists. While the LOTG tell us what to do if we see “X”, the Spirit of the Game tells us that knowing why something happened is more important in managing the game than only knowing what the punishment is (LOTG).

Reading the swells, is where the surfer should be in order to predict/manage the waves. Reading the players and the temperature of the game is where the referee should be to predict/manage the players.

The FLOW OF THE GAME lies in players, the temperature of the game, and the referee’s skills- not in the moment when the referee whistles.

How to get outside the box.

-Apply the Spirit of the Game with common sense, without excessive interference

Practically speaking, don't just know how to ride the bike, be able to ride the bike.

-Apply Law 18, the ultimate goal in refereeing

“without excessive interference”

What does that mean? How much is too much? How little is too little? Parents and coaches yell at you to let them play, and then yell at you for not blowing the whistle.

You need to have the experience from games, and make the judgment for each game, multiple times/game. Your decisions are based on the players' skill level (or lack of), their tolerances, and the temperature of the game. Not the coaches or parents' screams.

In short, the referee needs to be able to read the flow of play and the players' temperament, and take calculated risks to manage the flow of play, and manage temperments.

Law 18

“Intelligence in the perception of the game, the attitude of the players, the place and moment of the offense.”

FIFA Magazine, June 1997

How to stay outside the box

- 1) Understand why* the Spirit of the Game and Law 18 provide reasons for you to temper or minimize applying the LOTG.

*so you are able to adapt to new situations as they evolve, and maintain the integrity/flow of the game despite player behavior to the contrary.

2) Manage what players will/might do,
rather than react to what they did.

3) Look for what is coming, the developing
flow; don't look for what was.

Looking for what is next, looking at the flow, is dynamic, active, gives you hints/insights upon which you base your willingness to engage in risk taking. Risk taking applies to not only what you do (or don't do) but how long you do (don't do) take the risk.

The following slides are examples of "inside the box" vs "outside the box"

Inside vs Outside the box

- player on breakaway misses the goal, uses the "F" word and only you can hear.

inside: show red for foul language. It occurred.

outside: no red card. perhaps you do not react.

- player vents (dissents), you know why he's upset.

inside: yellow for dissent. It occurred.

outside: no yellow card, just a quiet word.

According to the LOTG, the word would result in a red. You know what lead to the emotional reaction. He should be

frustrated. No one else is affected. Interrupting play (flow) to issue any card would cause more disruption than the

"f word" did. Going by "the book" is counter productive in this event.

Your handling of dissent is one way to take a risk, not only with that player, but with the 20 others on the field.

- U10 player shows with only a white t-shirt.

inside: does not play. Needs a jersey.

outside: use tape/magic marker for a number and he plays.

- time expires during a shot on goal.

inside: whistle. No time. Game over.

outside: no whistle. you find a reason to add time for the outcome.

- Tripping foul.

inside: whistle, delay restart for 10 yards

outside: you see a quick re-start is more advantageous to the attack than a whistle + yellow would be.

-Players without jerseys and numbers should not play. You can allow use of a magic marker. At the u10 level, little risk and

your reputation suffers if you require a jersey+number. In an MSPSL game taking this risk could cripple your reputation

and lead to management problems before the game begins.

-According to the LOTG when time is up, it's up. However, you know that the LOTG allow you to add time at your discretion.

According to the Spirit of the Game, you have to allow the scoring effort to culminate with the outcome of the shot. So you

add time. We are talking about seconds, not minutes.

If you allow the restart you lose the opportunity to card.

Last example

An attacker goes for quick throw-in and subs are waiting.

inside: whistle to stop throw-in, restart only after the last player is off the field with a whistle.

outside: the quick throw-in is taken because you “forget” to look for subs and don’t remember seeing the signals from both AR’s.

While you cannot deny a substitution that is ready at the permitted opportunity, you also know the attacking players know the sub is there. If they wanted the sub, or needed the sub, they’d delay for the substitution. If there appears to be a scoring opportunity (inside the 18, goalie not in the goal, etc), you know the higher calling is to allow the quick throw-in. You forget to acknowledge the sub, and at the next opportunity allow it.

In your pre-game, you tell the AR’s if there is a quick restart with subs, but there is a scoring opportunity, do not be surprised if you forget to look at them and a substitution does not occur. An additional instruction is for them to signal for a sub, but not be overly demonstrative in the signal. A correct but low-key signal could plausibly be overlooked in the quick tempo.

At times, for the good of the game it is appropriate to not respond to all we see and hear...

Is it ok to go inside the box?

YES, under some circumstances:

When the players cannot handle: the advantage; a higher bar for fouls in older ages; or they stop playing soccer and just want to fight, or;

When the players are too unskilled or inexperienced to benefit from the advantage, or too young for the higher bar-

Then the referee crew focuses on just what they see at the time; calls made as written in the LOTG-
inside the box.

Two Facts:

The referee crew manages (they do not control) the players, substitutes, and substituted players as needed, to the degree needed.

You can't penalize in anticipation of a problem.

You can't manage/change behavior that already occurred.

Manage what is evolving before you!!!!

Referees manage coaches, but to a lesser degree. (ask, tell, dismiss.)

Managing means reading the flow and temperament of the game and players, and basing your decisions on the interplay between the two. While you cannot punish for what someone will do, you can manage what you currently observe to avoid or minimize the result you anticipate.

Your game presence, is your best tool for game management: before, during, and after the game. Personality and position allow you interact with players during play without interrupting play, and lend credibility to what you decide to do/not do, and how you do it.

Your game presence arsenal includes: your physical presence; eye contact; body language (a nod or head shake, use of the arms, hands, whether you turn your head or entire body towards someone, etc), how approachable the players think you are;

whistling when needed instead of every time; varying the intensity and length of the whistle; a quiet word or public word(s) to a player; moving during stoppages rather than catching up; coordination with your AR's.

Outside vs Inside Perspectives

A referee inside the box will react to control the problem that exists at that moment in front of him.

A referee outside the box will recognize a problem is developing and manage play to avoid (or minimize) the problem.

A reason to move inside the box is that so many things are going wrong, it is a last effort to play the game before terminating the game.

Thinking outside the box, is your willingness to make and take, calculated risks in the game.

2 major criteria to calculate risk are:

- How much will the players be able to handle; and
- Do **YOU** have the patience and skill to manage that level of play?

Work with an assessor to develop your skills at reading play and temperament, and your personality to project your presence.

It is not enough to let players go to the edge- they will tend to go there anyway. You must be able to rein them in, and if necessary, pull back. Without losing them.

Your game presence from start to finish gives you the credibility to interject yourself into play to manage, divert, rein in players. You cannot be absent for the first 30 minutes and abruptly interject in the 31st minute and have credibility.

If the game goes well, people will say the players did well, were well coached, and met the challenge head-on.

If the game does not go well, they will say the referee ruined it, did not blow his whistle, or would not stop blowing his whistle.

- Before you can manage play at a higher level, you must be on that level-
- That is why assignors should match a referee a game level, and make calculated risks in assigning a referee to upper level games (push the comfort zone).
- Assessors look for risk taking, its outcome, and how the referee responds to discrepancies between what he permits and what the players/coaches do .

Summary

Each of us has "a box".

For some, it is more like a fort- they do not stray outside.

For others, the box is like a float- most of the time the referee is in the water, and the float is just used to recharge before diving in again.

For some, most of the time is spent within arm's reach of the float or fort- ready and able to retreat inside.

Working in (and out of) the box, is a fact of life for referees. "out of the box" does not mean you do not manage the game- in fact, you will probably work harder outside the box than inside the box. You need to have a transition game for movement in and out. Moving in the box should appear to be a response to the game demands, rather than an admission your skills are inadequate for the game.

Push yourself, and help others, to use the box as a float, not a fort. Your game, your confidence, and your management skills will improve and be more enjoyable when you are able to be outside the box. The goal of GVSOA, your assessors, instructors, mentors and assignors is to help you define the dimensions (limitations) of your box, and then exceed them.

We can assess, mentor and instruct you. We want you to expand your comfort zone- not leave it behind.