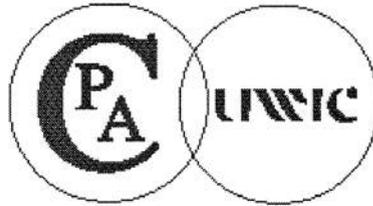


CENTRE FOR PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS



UNIVERSITY OF WALES INSTITUTE, CARDIFF

Report

**pre-match review of referee
appointed to Argentina v Wales
match - June 1999
referee: Brian Campsall
(England)**



TO:GRAHAM HENRY

FROM: CORRIS THOMAS

**REVIEW OF REFEREE for Argentina v Wales match
– 12 June 1999**

REFEREE: Brian Campsall – England

- 1 The last international match between the senior countries that Brian Campsall refereed was two and a half years ago. It was

Ireland 12pts v Australia 22pts 23/11/96
- 2 Two and a half years is a long time in refereeing – over such a period, approaches can change somewhat, instructions to referees by the IRFB can change the way they referee certain areas and so on. Nevertheless, a review of the above match has been undertaken together with a recent game he refereed in this years English Allied Dunbar league – Harlequins (17) v London Irish (22). It was played on 23 January and has been examined to see if this game and his earlier performance could provide a pointer to the way he is likely to referee an international, albeit club matches are a somewhat different proposition from an international.
- 3
 - a **Ireland 12pts v Australia 22pts**
 - i the penalty count was 26
 - ii there was 1 penalty for foul play
 - iii there were therefore 25 technical offences in the game which around the average for IB matches.
 - iv of the 26 penalties, Ireland were penalised 12 times while Australia was penalised 14 times.
 - v Ireland – the home team – was therefore awarded 54% of the total penalties awarded.
 - b **Harlequins 17pts v London Irish 22pts**
 - i the penalty count was 21

- ii there was 1 penalty for foul play
- iii there were therefore 20 technical offences in the game which is well below average for domestic matches.
- iv of the 21 offences, Harlequins were penalised 8 times while London Irish were penalised 13 times.
- v Harlequins – the home team – was awarded 62% of the total penalties awarded.
- vi From these matches, it can be assumed that the penalty count will not be as high as some referees – around 26-28 can be expected. He did however give 30 in an earlier international in 1996 where, like the Harlequin game, 66% went to the home team.

Based on the available evidence, there is a clear indication that home teams usually receive a favourable penalty count. In the Harlequins game there was a barrage of penalties in their favour towards the end of the match when they were trailing by 12 points that eventually resulted in what proved to be a consolation try. This is mentioned because he has been seen to referee in a similar way on previous occasions. In one match he refereed, I successfully managed to forecast which team was going to be awarded the next penalty on 9 consecutive occasions. It was not because I am a clairvoyant but it was simply because it was pretty clear that he was not going to be satisfied until one particular team scored a try. It eventually came about - it was an extremely doubtful try – and then he refereed with rather more parity.

Again, his refereeing of the Brive v Llanelli European Cup match in 1996 was quite breathtaking and has become a mini legend. I am not sure that I have ever seen such a barrage of inexplicable early penalties given against an away team. The result was that Brive kicked 7 penalties to Llanelli's 0. Llanelli's management have an interesting theory on the reason why.

- 4 The penalties in each game were given in the following groups or categories:

	I v A	H v LI
Line out (free kicks)	0	0
Line out- disruptive offences	6	0
Scrummage (free kicks)	1	1
Scrummage - disruptive offences	1	2
Ruck/tackle	10	10
Maul - collapsing	1	0
Offside backs @ ruck/maul/scrum	1	1
Offside forwards @ ruck/maul/scrum	3	3
Obstruction	1	0
Foul Play	1	1
plus 10 metres	1	1
Deliberate knock on	0	2
total	26	21

a **Lineout**

In the Ireland v Australia game, he awarded 6 penalties. This is a very high figure but is probably of not much significance since 28 out of 37 lineouts were contested (76%) including 9 of the first 10 when most of the penalties were awarded. As a contrast, in the Harlequins game, he gave none which is almost certainly a reflection of the fact that since 1996 far fewer lineouts are contested – and this game was no exception. If players adopt a fairly disciplined approach therefore, there shouldn't be too many problems.

b **Ruck/Tackle**

There was no clearly discernible pattern to his refereeing of the ruck/tackle situation in the Ireland v Australia game. Again, it was all pretty much hit or miss.

There was a dramatic change in the Harlequins game however. **Every single penalty went in favour of the team in possession.** He fell over backwards to ensure that the team in possession kept on to the ball. If red team was in possession, he would shout out “dig it out red” while at the same time saying “hands off the ball green”. Not only was did he allow hands in the ruck, but he was only allowed one side to do it – the team taking the ball in. It meant

that the team in possession was allowed to fall on or bridge and get away with it on every occasion. Players need to be made aware therefore of what they may be allowed to do when they are the team in possession and what they are not allowed to do when they are not.

A caveat needs to be put in here however. He is one of the 16 referees chosen to officiate in the 1999 Rugby World Cup, all of whom have been sent IRB guidelines and videos on several areas including tackle, ruck and maul which are operative for all international matches in June, July and August. I understand from the IRB that they stress that they are looking for an equal contest for possession especially at ruck/tackle. He may therefore feel he has to change his ways, and he may start with the Argentina/Wales game. His approach will need to be tested carefully therefore in the early part of the game. (Incidentally, your team manager should also have received a copy of the referee guidelines by now)

His instinct however is clearly to favour the team in possession. **In the Harlequins game, all 21 penalties went in favour of the team in possession** – which may be a record.

c Scrum

His refereeing of the scrum is far looser than certain other referees. On the evidence available, he does not go about flashing penalties at the first sign of trouble. If things are not right, his instinct is to allow the scrum to reform. Penalties only seem to arise after they've been reformed a couple of times. He's also pretty relaxed once the ball is in – scrums are allowed to wheel and break up without penalty as long as the ball looks as if it is going to emerge.

One word of caution – and this is now general. The scrum half need to be especially careful when putting the ball into the scrum since I understand that the IRB guidelines are going to insist on the ball going down the middle of the tunnel i.e. at the junction where the shoulders of the front rows meet. As mentioned in one of my earlier reports, referees could become very fussy in this area. Scrum halves need to be warned.

d Open play

Previous reports on referees have also referred to the fact it is now a characteristic of modern refereeing that when backs are penalised for being offside, on almost all occasions, they are not offside in law – they just look offside. This is particularly hard on players who, justifiably, advance as soon as the ball is in open play only to find themselves penalised because of a misjudgement – albeit a sometimes fractional one - by the referee. If the backs can hold themselves back a yard or so, the chances are that they will concede fewer penalties.

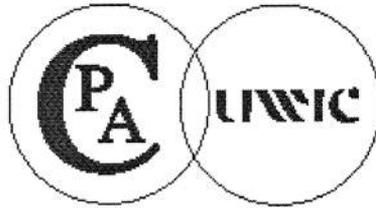
The final point concerns quick tap penalties. **He told the players that he allows them after a scrum only if the front rows have disengaged.**

SUMMARY

From an analysis of the 2 matches, the players need to be alert to the following:

- a listen to the referee when he asks for the ball to be put in down the middle of the scrum - be especially careful in any event
- b at a tackle, support players may well be allowed to do things when in possession that they may not be allowed to do if they are defending. The referee's approach should become clear within the first 15 minutes or so – it needs to be monitored.
- c at scrums, players may find themselves having more opportunity than usual to get themselves into the position they want or get out of positions that they are not happy with both before and after the ball has been put in.

CENTRE FOR PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS



UNIVERSITY OF WALES INSTITUTE, CARDIFF

Report

**pre-match review of referee
appointed to Argentina v Wales
match - June 1999
referee: Chris White (England)**



TO:GRAHAM HENRY

FROM: CORRIS THOMAS

**REVIEW OF REFEREE for Argentina v Wales match
– 5/12 June 1999**

REFEREE: Chris White – England

- 1 The only international match between the senior countries that Chris White has refereed has been

Scotland 10pts v South Africa 35pts 21/11/98

- 2 Since it can be difficult to make an assessment of a referee on one game only, an additional game has been looked at - an English Allied Dunbar league match – Harlequins (42) v Saracens Irish (28) that he refereed on 17 October 1998.

- 3 a **Scotland 10pts v South Africa 35pts**

- i the penalty count was 23
- ii there was 1 penalty for foul play
- iii there were therefore 22 technical offences in the game which is on the low side for IB matches.
- iv of the 23 penalties, Scotland were penalised 7 times while Australia was penalised 16 times.
- v Scotland – the home team – was therefore awarded 70% of the total penalties awarded. This fits in with a frequently seen profile of the losing team being awarded more penalties than the winning team with an even more emphatic imbalance when it is the home team that is losing. Whether, however, this is a characteristic of this referee cannot be determined at this stage since this was his one and only international.

- b **Harlequins 41pts v Saracens 28pts**

- i the penalty count was 32

- ii there were no penalties for foul play
- iii there were therefore 32 technical offences in the game which is well over the average for domestic matches.
- iv of the 32 offences, Harlequins were penalised 14 times while Saracens were penalised 18 times.
- v Harlequins – the home team – were awarded 44% of the total penalties. This is however somewhat misleading in that the away team was awarded 10 of the last 11 penalties when they were a long way behind. Before then the penalty count was 13 – 8, a favourable home percentage rate of 62%. Here again, a common characteristic appears to have come into play – penalty after penalty going to the losing team at the end of a game when they are a long way behind. Brian Campsall showed the same characteristic in his games.
- vi Of the two matches being reviewed, the first saw far fewer penalties than average being awarded while there were many more than average in the second – at this stage therefore, it is not possible to forecast what the penalty count is likely to be at his next international. **In fact, it is difficult to forecast what to expect, so different were his performances in the two games.**

4 The penalties in each game were given in the following groups or categories:

	S v SA	H v S
Line out (free kicks)	1	0
Line out- disruptive offences	3	2
Scrummage (free kicks)	0	0
Scrummage - disruptive offences	1	2
Ruck/tackle	7	14
Offside backs @ ruck/maul/scrum	3	5
Offside forwards @ ruck/maul/scrum	4	4
Obstruction	2	0
Foul Play	1	0
plus 10 metres	1	4
Dangerous tackle	0	1
total	23	32

Scotland v South Africa

Overall, this game was refereed in a way that was understandable and, despite the apparent imbalance of penalties, neither team could have had too many complaints.

He gave 4 penalties for lineout offences, all of which were deserved since 3 involved taking out and were clearly destructive - while in the fourth, the back marker took an early flier and was right on top of the outside half long before he should have been.

His approach to the ruck/tackle area was also more understandable than many other referees. If players entered this phase of play on their feet and from their own side, he allowed them to put their hands in an attempt to get the ball even though they may end up lying on top of their own player. He was keen for tackled players to release the ball so that of the 7 penalties given for ruck/tackle offences, the majority (4) were given against the team in possession. The message was pretty clear therefore.

He played good advantage and ball in play time reached 40% - a very high figure for internationals. Overall therefore, it was not a bad performance although he did give a couple of penalties that were causes for concern – one for backs being offside when he had his back to them and they clearly were not offside, and the other for an obscure obstruction that was a mystery to all 30 players. They were also given right in front of the posts and both resulted in 3 points – harsh results for highly marginal and trivial offences which, even if correct in law, make life difficult for players. Whether or not these are characteristics of his refereeing, only future games will tell.

Harlequins v Saracens

This was one of those future games – and it confirmed the reservation outlined in the previous paragraph. My notes are full of statements like “irrelevant”, “pedantic”, even “ridiculous” on certain occasions.

The game showed little appreciation of priorities. Backs were penalised 5 times for being offside which, even if they had been (and they were not), were frequently of minimal consequence in the passage of play since there was no way in which they could have had an effect on the opposition's options. Again, players were penalised at ruck/tackle when they simply found themselves quite innocently in a marginal position. On one occasion, the scrum half held on to the ball for 3 seconds before

deciding what to do but was rewarded with a penalty when the opposing flanker, quite rightly assumed, the ball was now in open play. All this made life hard for the players. Many of the referee's decisions appeared to be based more on whim than balance and relevance, especially towards the end when the penalties suddenly all went one way.

On the more positive side as far as players are concerned, he is not especially fussy at scrums. In both games, he allowed players to get comfortable, and was happy to let scrums reform if there were problems. When he did penalise, in both games it was because of collapsing – and it looked and sounded as he penalised the tight head on each occasion. He referees the lineout better than most in that he picks up dangerous play such as tipping up and barging on the jumper. As for ruck/tackle, unlike his international, he sometimes penalised players who had gone in on their feet, and from their own side for then handling the ball. It was all somewhat confusing.

One way or another, therefore, there are few, if any areas of play where the referee's approach can be predicted with any confidence. However, by the time of the international, this could possibly change somewhat since you will have had the benefit of seeing him referee the Buenos Aires game. He is also one of World Cup referees and therefore he may adhere more to the instructions contained in the guidelines which will have been received by the team manager. Meanwhile, the backs should be told to be ultra careful before advancing on the opposition ball and all players told to make the ball available as soon as possible when they are pulled to ground.

Best of luck.

Corris Thomas
Hyder Project, Centre for Performance Analysis, UWIC
May 1999

