

THE FOURTH OFFICIAL – An Exercise in Teamwork

The 4th Official is a critical member of the officiating crew. Professionalism must be maintained by every member of the crew, including the 4th Official. He/She must be fully prepared to replace or assist other members of the crew. Primary role of the 4th is set in the Laws of the Game. The 4th is the main liaison between Referee/ARs and Facility Managers, Security, Broadcasting and Team Officials. The 4th must act early to resolve issues that arise. He/She must always maintain composure and a professional appearance. Focusing on core duties must be maintained, and avoiding distractions is essential. Among the professional duties of the 4th are to;

- Manage Bench/Technical Areas
- Endeavor to prevent unauthorized entry onto the field
- Provide an additional “set of eyes” for anything that happens
- Act under general authority of Referee and in the Referee’s name
- Resolve issues, to the extent possible, without recourse to Referee
- Involve the Referee as a last resort.
- **Ensure any pitch side monitors aren’t readily visible to technical areas.**

The 4th being “fully prepared” means;

- Physically fully prepared
- Mentally fully prepared
- Uniform and Equipment fully prepared
- Fully prepared for Pre-Game Coordination

The 4th being prepared to “replace” means;

- What is provided for in;
 - The rules of competition
(What is the order of priority if an official is unable to continue?)
(Who is replaced by whom?)
 - The laws of the game
“In the absence of any pertinent Rule of Competition: The Fourth Official can replace the referee or either assistant referee.”

“Assist” means what is provided for in:

- The Laws of the Game
- Guide for Fourth Officials
- Referee preferences and needs

Specifically named responsibilities under Assistance;

- Administrative Duties
 - Inspection of Field
 - Introduction to team officials
 - Inspection of Game Balls
 - Briefing of Ball Persons
 - Inspection of Bench/Technical Area
 - Facility Security
 - Retrieval/Securing of equipment at game breaks
 - Location/readiness of Facilities for officiating team

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- Review with team officials general procedures for warming up, activities in technical area, Etc.
- Ensures any pitch side monitors accessible to technical areas are moved.
- Substitution and Equipment Checks
 - Confirms Identity and proper paperwork
 - Inspects Uniform/Equipment
 - Ensures substitute doesn't enter until permitted
 - Gain attention of assistant referee for substitution signal
 - If both team substitution:
 - Keep teams separated
 - Handles only one team at a time
 - Properly Manage Substitution Board (if used)
 - Maintain substitution Log
 - Ensure substitutions are in accordance with Rules of Competition
- Replacement match balls
 - Maintain control of match balls not in current use
 - Provide replacement ball from reserve supply when needed (this duty is affected by whether “ball persons” are used in the match)
- Delegated inspections
 - Correction of illegal equipment
 - Bleeding or blood on the uniform
 - Responsibility established in pre-game
 - Procedures settled for:
 - What must be inspected
 - When inspection successfully completed
- Critical Observations
 - Wrong player cautioned
 - 2nd Caution but no Send Off
 - Violent Conduct out of view
 - Irresponsible behavior, Bench/Technical Area
- Reporting responsibilities
 - Confirms Major events at mid-game break and at end of match
 - Submits independent match report of violence not seen

Additional Resources for the Fourth Official;
Laws of the Game (“The Fourth Official”)
Guide for Fourth Officials
Guide to Procedures