

2005 versus 2004/03 GTP Comparison

This document attempts to summarize the changes in the 2005 edition of the USSF “Guide to Procedures for Referees, Assistant Referees and 4th Officials” (GTP) as compared to the previous 2004 AND 2003 editions. Any text samples extracted and included are done solely for educational purposes and so are still bound to the original copyright holder (USSF).

While every attempt was made to make this accurate, this comparison document has no official approval nor review by the USSF, its referee committee, nor the Guide document writer(s). Purely “in the opinion of the referee” that authored this comparison, **major changes** to the GTP philosophy are bolded while *minor changes* are italicized.

It should be noted that it would be best if one simply got a copy of the 2005 document and read and understand it fully. The PDF is posted on the USSF site. To summarize why:

Issue	2005 Edition	2004 Edition	2003 Edition
Content	Extended Guide & 4 th Official (merged in), Positioning diagrams	Guide (4 th Official content extracted to separate document)	Guide & 4 th Official (original, limited text)
Formatting	Illustrated, Color, Multi-column	Color, multi-column	B&W, Single column
Length	44 Pages	24 Pages	14 Pages

With that said, here is an attempt to document the real content changes (ignoring the dropping of the 4th official description in the 2004 edition, minor pronoun changes, and formatting). Changes were introduced in the 2005 edition unless otherwise noted. Items removed in the 2004 edition but restored in the 2005 edition are not mentioned.

*Note: in the 2003 edition, subheadings under each heading were Referee and Assistant Referee (sometimes split to lead and trail assistant referee). This continued into the 2004 edition with a reformatting that put the referee in the left column and assistant referee in the right column of each page. The 2005 edition uses subheadings of Referee Team, Referee, Assistant Referees and Fourth Official; mostly retaining the lead and trail assistant subheadings as well. But the regular two column format has been mixed up – sometimes used and sometimes not. **Key is the 4th Official is more properly made a full member of the referee team with clearer functions and duties that may be assigned to assistant referees if the 4th official is not utilized.***

FOREWORD (page 1)

Dropped short paragraph referring to external 4th official document added in 2004 and added reason for expansion: **includes 4th officials (expanded) and suggested field positioning diagrams at (re)starts in the game. Reminds referees that these suggested positions are not mandated but just initial guides when no other reason to vary from them exists.**

GENERAL MECHANICS (Pages 4-5)

Added 4 paragraphs to the 2004 edition presenting that the referee may delegate tasks, warning of gestures or expressions in multi-cultural matches, and that officials should

understand their respective duties and responsibilities.

Added 7 bullets to provide a new section and general statements about the 4th officials duties and responsibilities.

PRIOR TO THE GAME (pages 6-8)

Arrival at the Field:

Mentions the time to arrive before a match may be set by the referee and should be followed

Inspections and Instructions, 4th official:

Adds 4th official section and includes obtaining and checking game balls, substitution board, and substitution tickets. Adds that 4th official should discuss with coaches matters related to substitutions and injuries, and should be prepared to serve as a referee or assistant referee (as needed and called upon). *Should likely have also added that these duties may be assigned to the assistant referee if no 4th official exists.*

Inspections and Instructions, Assistant Referees and 4th Officials:

Adds bullet to mention “bring to referee’s attention any issues requiring resolution.”

Pre-Game Conference, Referee Team:

Adds that the referee team should “review procedures and mechanics in accordance with this Guide”. Further adds that all “should share and discuss information regarding known team and/or player tactics, strategies, skills and patterns of behavior.”

Fifteen Minutes Before Kick-Off:

Rewrite to state that all issues should be resolved that might hold up the game start.

Prior to Kick-off:

Adds 4th Official section about final inspection of team benches and areas. Two illustrations added.

During Minute before Kick-off, Referee:

Adds that referee should “scans players and the field and ...”

During Minute before Kick-off, Assistant Referees:

Adds “moves to correct position on touch line (in line with second to last defender) ...”
2004 saw the addition to the clause of **when to signal readiness for the initial kick-off:**
“(correct number of players, clearly identified goalkeeper, etc.)”

During Minute before Kick-off, 4th Official:

New section to mention 4th official should make eye contact with referee to confirm readiness. Includes illustration.

KICK-OFF (Page 9)

Referee:

In 2004, replaced “starts watch when ball is kicked and moves forward” with “starts watch and signals for the kick-off to be taken”.

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Added words about where immediate attention should be (on early fouls, misconduct, or a goal). Added position diagram.

4th official:

New section describing how 4th official should watch the field from the designated table area.

GENERAL POSITIONING During Play (pages 10-14)

Referee:

In 2004, added two bullets about being able to observe active play and lead assistant referee, and **“Remains close enough to observe important aspects of play without interfering with the player or ball.”**

In 2005, adds bullet that should “Understands that attention may be needed elsewhere on the field to monitor behavior ...”

Adds note that all position diagrams in book assume a left diagonal. After a new position diagram, adds some words of advice on positioning:

“Remember: The best position is one that is flexible and intelligent based on observed or known player tactics and team strategies!” and “Three conditions for best position: A=I can see play and the potential problem area, B=I can see my AR, C=I am not occupying space the players need.”

4th Official:

Adds 3 pages of material on 4th officials positions and duties. Gives detail on monitoring the bench, technical area, and handling equipment problems and blood. Some of these items are likely be delegated to the AR when the 4th official is not present and therefore should be consulted and mentioned in the pregame conference.

INJURIES (page 15)

Major new section outlining procedures for dealing with injuries during play. Key is details how the referee should quickly assess the seriousness and either give the teams the opportunity to stop play or note the position of the ball to stop play.

GOALKEEPER POSSESSION / PUNT (page 16)

Expanded to include a position diagram and bullets under referee and assistant referee titles. Specifically, for referee, adds “estimates drop point by watching player behavior (**does not look up to spot the ball in the air**).” And for assistant referee adds “able to adjust position if the goalkeeper releases the ball other than by a long punt ...” and “Prepared to assist referee in identifying second possession by the goalkeeper.”

THROW-IN Referee's End of Touch Line (page 17)

Added two position diagrams and, in 2004, a **bullet under Assistant Referee subheading about not signaling unless eye contact from referee indicates help needed and then only signal as instructed during a pre-game conference.** Current GTP video suggests only a straight up flag in the hand appropriate for the direction of restart as a subtle message to the referee when help is asked for.

THROW-IN Assistant Referee's End of Touch Line (page 18)

Adds two position diagrams and some bullets to both the **Referee** and **Assistant Referee** sections. Further **refines limitation (when not to whistle) to only when needed to stop continuing play**. Suggests Referee may need to be prepared to provide assistance, as described in the pre-game conference (that is, what should the center referee do when the AR does not signal?) In 2004, adds that the Assistant Referee should maintain the flag signal even if the referee does not immediately see it, unless a pre-game conference instruction is given to the contrary.

OFFSIDE (page 19)

In 2004, added that **eye contact between the referee and assistant referee must occur before giving the flag signal to indicate the location on the field for the offence**. In 2005, added that the referee should be prepared to act quickly and decisively to prevent and deal with players who seek to engage the assistant referee in details of the call. No position diagram added but note added to indicate that the free kicks position diagrams should suffice to indicate the center referee position to used for the restart. *Still does not mention a subtlety that the AR should move to where the player was judged to be in an offside position before indicating the location. This is only an issue if the offside player was pretty far from the position of the AR at the time the AR raised their flag.*

GOAL KICK (pages 20-22)

In 2004 clarified that **the referee should only signal in their quadrant (likely from the goal post to the left corner flag) and that the assistant referee should only signal automatically in their quadrant (likely from the goal post to the right corner flag)**. Adds text and a bullet to suggest that the referee should stand in preparation for the expected drop point on the field (based on previous observation and likely skill levels of the players). **Adds qualifications and scenarios on multiple places the assistant referee should be depending on the circumstances (at goal area line, at penalty area line, or with offside line)**. Includes three position diagrams for each of these scenarios across two pages.

CORNER KICK Referee's Side of Field (page 23)

Referee

As in other sections, introduced in 2004 to whistle only if necessary [when ball leaves field of play]. Clarified and made consistent that should point upwards at 45 degrees toward the left corner. Added position diagram but suggests variation in position if needed due to observed game tactics.

Assistant Referee

In 2004, clarified that AR should step up field, away from goal line, before pointing the flag to indicate a corner kick. [note: continue to only signal if referee asks for assistance.] Added that following the kick, need to recover to the offside position quickly.

CORNER KICK Assistant Referee's Side of Field (page 24)

Similar clarifications and additions as in the Referee's Side Corner Kick section.

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Referee

In 2004 and 2005, added clarification that should only assist with encroachment if players not responding to AR's directions.

Assistant Referee

In 2004, added about assisting with enforcing required distance of opponents of the kicker. Some minor rewording to clarify flag procedure and position in line with goal line.

GOAL (pages 25-26)

Removed separate section about goal with ball returning to field of play and integrated text into this main goal section. Minor rewrites of numerous paragraphs to clarify procedures. Oddly, **removed text about "keeping players under observation" while back peddling towards center circle after the goal.** New 4th official section and illustration added.

GOAL Apparent Goal to be Disallowed (page 27)

Referee

Rewrote bullet to detail need to confer with assistant referee and maintain focus on the field while doing so. In 2004, introduced that the referee should quickly intervene to prevent attempts by players or others to confront an assistant referee.

Lead Assistant Referee

In 2004, clarified to stand at attention with the flag held straight down at the side (instead of just no flag signal). Added paragraph to signal in accordance with pre-game conference if further information is needed by the referee.

FOULS Observed By Referee (page 28)

Referee

In 2004, clarifies that a separate signal is not needed to allow a quick free kick. Also in 2004 added that a restart should not be allowed to start if a card for misconduct must be shown. In 2005, adds two paragraphs to mention positioning (see positioning diagram added) and to monitor for problems involved with defenders in the wall that interfere with opponents joining or already present.

Lead Assistant Referee

In 2004, clarified to stand at attention with the flag held straight down at the side (instead of just no flag signal). Also in 2004, added that during the pre-game conference, assistant referee may be asked to assist in enforcing the required distance if the assistant is closer, and that may be asked to position to observe offside during free kick.

4th Official

Added paragraph to describe 4th officials duties during free kick restarts.

FOULS Not Seen By The Referee But Indicated By Lead Assistant Referee (page 29)

Referee

In 2004, Added that might need to confer with AR on possible prior infringements or misconduct, in addition to conferring on the nature of the infringement now being signaled for.

Lead Assistant Referee

In 2004, adds wording “that, per the pregame conference, the referee would likely have stopped play for the infringement if it had been seen.” Removed paragraph on moving to the goal line to assume a position for a penalty kick if the foul was by a defender in the penalty area. In 2004, added three paragraphs on special situations that should be covered in the pre-game conference: what to do if referee does not see flag signal, what to do for free kicks near the AR, and where to be and what to do for free kicks in general. Note it is no longer explicit to move to PK position if that is what the lead indicated. *There is no clear signal or action now for the lead AR to indicate a PK. But as this was in conflict with the other section on PENALTY KICK Indicated by Assistant Referee”, this is likely for the better.*

Trail Assistant Referee

Added paragraph in 2004 to indicate that the flag should be mirrored.

Fourth Official

Adds new paragraph in 2005 to describe monitoring the team officials and bench and try to prevent their entry onto the field during critical situations.

FOULS Not Seen By The Referee But Indicated By Trail Assistant Referee (page 30)

Removed “Misconduct” from the title and added “Not seen by the referee but” to make consistent with previous titles. Added illustration.

Referee

Slight rewrite and added wording about conferring with the AR on prior infringements or additional misconduct.

Trail Assistant Referee

In 2004, added lots of bullets and reworded the existing paragraph to mimic the lead AR instructions in the FOULS ... Indicated by the Lead Assistant Referee. Added wording to more bring out that the trail AR should only call fouls that could not be seen by the referee and that the referee would have likely stopped play for such a foul.

Lead Assistant Referee

Slight rewording to bring it more in conformance with the Trail AR instructions in the previous “FOULS ... Indicated by the Lead Assistant Referee”.

FREE KICKS General Positioning (pages 31-34)

Adds 4 position diagrams to this brand new section – no text, just diagrams.

PLAY ON Advantage Applied (page 35)

Lead Assistant Referee

Adds this new section to describe how an AR should not signal a foul if the referee would likely have applied advantage in this instance. And how the AR should bring to the referee’s attention an offense that occurred but was not signaled (i.e. potential misconduct to take care of).

PENALTY KICK (page 36)

Referee

Adds paragraph to intervene quickly and decisively if players engage the AR in the decision. Adds position diagram and bullet on position. **Now recommends position in line with penalty mark and outer edge of goal area.** Recommended top edge of goal area before. In 2004, added paragraph on quickly taking position for restart or next play on the ball if a goal is not scored.

Lead Assistant Referee

Adds wording to **wait for referee to begin supervising the restart before moving to recommended position.** This change, along with change in Fouls section now makes the AR's contribution to explicitly signaling a PK more subdued; thus allowing the referee to carry the decision and weight of the call.

Trail Assistant Referee

New section added in 2004 that states **the trail AR is to move to the "midfield line" (Halfway line?) and monitor player activities that are out of the view of the referee.** Recovers to appropriate position once kick is complete.

Fourth Official

New section outlining areas the fourth official should cover (monitoring the bench area, etc.)

PENALTY KICK Indicated by the Assistant Referee (page 37)

Referee

New paragraph added in 2004 stating the referee should quickly intervene to prevent and control player attempts to confront the AR regarding the decision.

Assistant Referee

In 2004, added several paragraphs to modify the standard procedure and make it consistent with the text on fouls indicated by the AR. First, reemphasizes that only fouls not seen by the referee and ones that the referee would have likely called should be indicated (per the pregame conference). Second, indicates that the AR should, if the referee stops the game, walk towards the corner flag after making eye contact and giving the flag a wave. Previously stated the AR should walk to corner flag and stand in front of it. Now states the AR should take a position for a restart as indicated by the referee – either a penalty kick if confirmed by the referee or whatever restart the referee indicates.

MISCONDUCT Play Stopped Immediately (page 38)

Referee

Adds paragraph to describe that the referee "makes clear verbally and/or by pointing to the whistle that play may not be restarted except by the referee's signal". Adds two illustrations showing the display of a yellow and red card.

Fourth Official

This section was removed in 2004 and reinstated in the 2005 edition. Adds a paragraph about

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recording the event accurately. Reworded and expanded paragraph to monitor the bench and technical area to make sure the player leaves the area.

MISCONDUCT Play Not Stopped Immediately (page 39)

This is a new section added in 2004 and extensively modified in 2005.

Referee

Tells the referee to give an advantage signal and, if possible, to verbally identify the player who committed misconduct. Changed in 2005 (from the original 2004 addition) that at the next stoppage of play, regardless of the cause, directs the attacking team (*presumably the ones with possession on the restart?*) to wait for a signal before the restart. Then returns to the player who committed misconduct and follows the appropriate procedure. (In 2004, had a long paragraph that would still allow a quick restart without displaying the yellow card for a caution if the misconduct was committed by the team not having possession and a quick restart would benefit the team with possession.) In 2005, added paragraphs to explain that any delayed misconduct (indicated after the normally required next stoppage of play) must be explained in the match report and that the card is still displayed if the next stoppage is the end of a period of play.

Assistant Referee

In 2004, added that the AR takes note of the player identified by the referee and provides additional information, if required, at the next stoppage of play.

Fourth Official

Four new paragraphs in this new section in 2005 that explain the procedures of monitoring and recording misconduct that the referee team saw; as well as violent conduct that the referee team may not have seen and need to be made aware of.

SUBSTITUTIONS (page 40-41)

Referee

Clarified in 2004 that the restart “cannot occur except by the referee’s signal (whistle only if necessary)”. Adds in 2004 also that **the referee does not permit the substitution if the substitute is not ready to enter the field or if the team in possession is prepared to restart quickly.**

Assistant Referee

In 2004, adds that the other AR should mirror the initial AR’s flag if the referee does not see it. In 2005, clarifies that the AR should manage the substitution procedure (and describes what it is in the same way still) if no 4th official exists. Removed clause on moving to the halfway line to manage the substitution.

Fourth Official

Greatly expands and details the procedures a fourth official should perform at a substitution. Clarifies that each team substitution, if both performing, should be handled separately. Adds an illustration to show fourth official checking equipment and accepting a substitutes pass.

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TIMING (page 42)

Referee

In 2004, added that the referee should confirm the 4th official or AR's signal of time expiring and/or indicate additional time if near the end of a half. *A common procedure for how the referee indicates this additional time is not described.*

Assistant Referee

Continues to stress that the AR only indicates time left with fingers against the shorts. Reworded in 2004 to indicate using a closed fist against the shorts or across the chest to indicate time over.

Fourth Official

Adds fourth official section that details they help back-up on time and that "his answer to any question from bench or technical area regarding amount of time remaining is clearly understood to be only an unofficial approximation."

HALFTIME BREAK (page 42)

New section added in 2005 with an illustration.

Referee Team

Details how referee team should meet on the field at a pre-determined spot (covered in pregame conference) and leave the field together. Identifies 4th official duties including gathering the game and replacement balls (or the referee team member assigned in the pregame conference). Then details how a half-time conference should cover significant match events, specific player behaviors and team strategies, adjustments that might be needed for the second half, and confirmation of details regarding goals and [misconduct] cards.

END OF GAME (page 43)

Fourth Official

Rewrote and expanded the 4th official duties. Key is added that the 4th official joins the referee team without undue delay and discourages conversation from the benches about the game. Adds the 4th official to the illustration of the referee team gathered at the end of the game.

MATCH DEBRIEF (page 44)

New, separate section added in 2005.

Referee, Assistant Referees and Fourth Official

End of game bullets added in 2004 on the match debrief (confer) was moved to this section from End of Game section. Adds 4th official duties on what to contribute as an equal member of the team on the post-game discussions.

*Randy Harr, USSF Referee, November 2005 (revision 1.0)
Original posted at <http://socref.net/>*

Appendix: Special Note on Pre-Game Conference

There are a number of places in the Guide that mention to follow instructions of the referee as discussed in the pre-game conference. This material, like the old “Mandatory Cautions” memo from USSF, should simply be used as a convenience in finding where the Guide textually highlights the conference. It is an indication to the referee team on a likely source of variances or unspecified behavior they should mention or get clarified in a pre-game conference.

It should be noted that the 2005 edition includes text (in the Pre-Game Conference section) that states the referee team “Reviews procedures and mechanics in accordance with this Guide.” This, ITOOTR, implies that some standard mechanics in the guide should be repeated for emphasis as may be needed.

General Mechanics, 3rd Paragraph of page 5:

“All members of the officiating team must understand their respective responsibilities, tasks, and duties. ... described in this Guide and in the pre-game conference.”

Prior to the Game, Inspection and Instructions, Referee Team, Page 6:

(Referee Team) “At the direction of the referee, carefully inspects field ...”

(4th Official) “At the direction of the referee, inspect player equipment, ...”

Prior to the Game, Pre-Game Conference, page 7:

Where it is defined what the pre-game conference is

Prior to the Game, Fifteen minutes before kick-off, page 7:

“... assignment of specific functions within the referee team are resolved.”

General Positioning, During Play, 4th Official, Equipment Problems ... page 14:

“If in the pre-game conference, the referee has authorized the 4th official to inspect and confirm any correction of bleeding or equipment problems ...”

“Follows the procedure requested by the referee in the pre-game conference to notify him that the problem has been resolved and the player is ready to return ...”

Injuries, 4th Official, Page 15:

“Manages return of injured player to the field in accordance with pre-game instructions ...”

Throw-in, Referee’s end of the Touch Line, Page 17:

“Does not signal otherwise unless the referee makes obvious eye contact to request assistance ... was agreed to in the pre-game conference.”

Throw-in, Assistant Referee’s End of Touch Line, Page 18:

“[Referee is] Prepared to provide assistance if the assistant referee is unable to indicate direction (method discussed in the pre-game conference)”

“If the referee does not see it, maintains the signal in accordance with the pre-game conference.”

“Supervises throw-in elements per pre-game conference.”

Corner Kick, Assistant Referee's Side of Field, Page 24:

"Assists with enforcing the required distance based on pre-game conference."

Goal, Apparent Goal to be Disallowed, Page 27:

"Is prepared to signal referee in accordance with pre-game discussion if further information needs to be given to assist in making the correct decision."

Fouls, Observed by Referee, Lead Assistant Referee, Page 28:

"Per pre-game conference, assist in enforcing the minimum required distance if closer to the restart location."

"Takes position to assist with offside on the free kick ... in accordance with the pregame conference."

Fouls, Not Seen by the Referee but Indicated by the Lead Assistant Referee, Lead Assistant Referee, Page 29:

"Determines that the infringement was not or could not be seen by the referee and that, per the pregame conference, the referee would likely have stopped ..."

"If the referee does not see the signal, continues to hold the flag straight upward in accordance with the program conference."

"Per pre-game conference, assist in enforcing the required distance ..."

"Takes position to assist with offside on the free kick ... in accordance with the pre-game conference."

Fouls, Not seen by the Referee but Indicated by the Trail Assistant Referee, Trail Assistant Referee, Page 30:

"If the referee does not see the signal, continues to hold the flag straight upward in accordance with the program conference."

"Takes position to assist with offside on the free kick ... in accordance with the pre-game conference."

Penalty Kick, Indicated by the Assistant Referee, Page 37:

"Determines that the DFK foul by a defender in the penalty area was not seen by the referee and that, per the pregame conference, the referee would likely have stopped play for the foul had it been seen."

Substitutions, Assistant Referee, Page 40:

"If no 4th Official:

* Supervises the substitution in accordance with pregame conference. ..."

"Assists the referee in determining when the substitution is complete based on the pregame conference."

Timing (Half-time Break), Page 42:

"If possible, meet at location agreed in pregame conference to exit the field together."

"4th official (or other referee team official, per pre-game conference) secures the game ball and replacement balls."

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End of Game, 4th Official, Page 43:

“Secures the game ball and replacement balls (unless this responsibility is reassigned in the pre-game conference).”

Randy Harr, USSF Referee, November 2005 (rev 1.0). Original posted at <http://socref.net/>