

United States Soccer Federation



The Duties of the Fourth Official

OBJECTIVE

You will understand the duties of the fourth official and be able to apply this understanding the next time you are assigned as a fourth official.

WHAT IS A FOURTH OFFICIAL?

The fourth official may be appointed under the rules of a competition and shall officiate in the event of any of the three match officials being unable to continue

Who decides who will take over?

The organizer, prior to the start of the competition, shall state clearly whether, in the event of any referee being unable to continue, the fourth official would take over as the match referee or whether the senior linesman would take over.

What does FIFA say about the fourth official's duties?

The fourth official shall assist the referee with any administrative duties before, during, and after the match, as required by the referee.

The Fourth Official is an integral part of the officiating team

- **The same:**
- **Knowledge of the Laws and rules of competition**
- **Professional conduct and dress**

Duties prior to the game

- **Arrive with the officiating team**
- **Participate in field inspection**
- **Be prepared to officiate**
- **Wear appropriate track suit**
- **Obtain number kit**
- **Obtain game balls**

Duties prior to the game

- **Contact competition security**
- **Assist in checking lineups and player passes**
- **Assist in checking of player equipment**
- **Do not enter the field, go directly to your station**

Duties prior to the game

- **Observe and record appropriate information on the log sheet**
- **Assist in the control of the benches**
- **Control substitutions**

At half time

- **Gather equipment**
- **Go to the dressing room or with the referee**
- **Compare game notes**
- **See to refreshments for the officials**
- **Return directly to your station**

Substitution Mechanics

- **At the halfway line**
- **Substitute behind fourth official**
- **Linesman signals for sub**
- **Referee acknowledges**
- **Fourth displays player number, drops it when player moves**
- **When exiting player is off and referee signals, sub may enter**

When a goal is scored

- **Control the benches**
- **Allow no one to enter the field**
- **Record time, team, and player**

If an injury occurs

- **Control the bench**
- **Go to the person(s) most likely to enter the field**
- **Prevent entry until the referee signals; allow only authorized persons**
- **If the player is replaced . . .**
- **If the player leaves for attention**

Player sent off to adjust equipment

- Have adjustment made**
- Check to see it is correct**
- Bring player to the halfway line**
- Keep player off until referee grants permission**

When a serious foul, caution, or sending-off occurs

- **Go to the appropriate bench area**
- **Maintain calm and control**
- **Meet sent-off player and escort to security**
- **Record time, team, player number, reason for action, location**

Near the end of the game

- **Look for security**
- **Continue to observe**
- **Record any misconduct or incident**
- **When the referee leaves the field, gather all equipment and follow him**

Kicks from the Penalty Mark

- **Assist in keeping players of record on the field**
- **Keep substitutes off the field**
- **Control the bench during the taking of the kicks**
- **Record the results**

Review of major responsibilities

- **Bench control**
- **Control of substitutions**
- **Record keeping**
- **Source of neutral information**