



PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION IN REFEREEING

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INTRODUCTION

Working Areas in Psychological Training

Performing at elite level in Refereeing is a high demanding and complex task. The referee is asked to perceive, interpret and make decisions on the wide range of actions and interactions that take place during a football match. Therefore, this perceptive-interpretative-decisional sequence becomes still more complicated if we consider that, often, this triple function must be taken in a fraction of a second in ambiguous perceptual situations and under mental pressure.

Therefore, adequate preparation of the referees requires the training and development of, at least, the following psychological skills (*):

- a) Game-related skills. They refer to those capabilities that are directly involved in the assessment of the performance of the players compared to the *Laws of the Game* during the match and, when appropriate, take decisions accordingly. In particular, they incorporate skills related to the triple process (perceptive-decision making- executive) that is, from a psychological point of view, the task of the referee on the field of play.
- b) Personal skills of inner regulation of behaviour. They refer to the skills linked to the management of internal psychological states whose self-regulation is necessary for the adequate implementation of the skills mentioned in the previous point. Among them we can highlight: motivation, emotional control, confidence, concentration, shifts in focus...
- c) Teamwork skills: decision-making takes place in a shared context that requires a coordinated work of the members of the Referees Team so that its function is developed in a cohesive and coherent manner.

(*) The intervention referred to in subparagraph b) has a more exclusive psychological aspect, while the headings a) and c) must be addressed as interdisciplinary task in collaboration with the physical and technical areas.

