



## PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION IN REFEREEING

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### SKILLS RELATED TO PLAY (1): PROCEDURE FOR TRAINING

The final target of refereeing has to do with effective, consistent and trustworthy decision making for the game. For this reason, it is expected that the team of officials *perceive, interpret* and *decide* to what extent the actions of the players are, or not, in accordance with the Laws of the Game and take action when infringement takes place. This triple task, the perceptive-interpretative-decisional sequence is extraordinarily complex not only for the perceptive-spatial conditions in which it is executed (multiple actors, high speed, simultaneity of action, distance, situational ambiguity) but also for the adequate speed of reaction.

From a psychological point of view the training programs of the perceptive-interpretative-decisional mechanism must be implemented taking care of each one of the following aspects<sup>(\*)</sup>:

1. **Perception:** for the training of this skill some exercises of game situations must be created to allow changes in attention and concentration demands. This aim can be obtained by designing exercises that increase the ambiguity of stimuli, by increasing the distance or the number of players involved in action, by incorporating obstacles that increase the difficulty of the line of vision, introducing stimuli to distract concentration or by making continuous changes in the attention center.
2. **Decision making:** the perceptive process ends up with decision making. The key is the automation of this decisional process. To achieve this aim a deep knowledge of the Laws of the Game combined with massive practice, as well as a suitable feedback on decision, both in training and real matches.
3. **Teamwork.** In this section the training exercises must point at the improvement of the coordination of the information-action between the referee and his assistants, as well as at the increase of the confidence within the team of officials.

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(\*) A detailed explanation of this type of training can be found in the “Handbook of Integrated Exercises and Body Language for football Referees” published by the Real Federación Española de Fútbol (2012)

