

# Assistant Referees

The assistant referee is responsible for helping the referee to officiate a match. In professional games, two assistants patrol each touchline. They each take responsibility for half of the pitch, diagonally opposing each other. The assistants officiate in situations in which the referee is not in a position to make the best decision. While their expertise is often crucial, the referee's decision is always final.



## The Role of the Assistants

The more senior of the two assistants usually oversees the side of the pitch that contains the technical areas, so that he or she can help supervise substitutions. Typical duties for either assistant include signalling for offside and determining which team should be awarded a throw-in.



## Offside

The flag is held above the head to signal for an offside offence.

## Offside Position

A high flag is used for far offside, a horizontal flag for middle offside, and a low flag for near offside.

## Flag Signals

The flag is the assistant's most important piece of equipment, as flag signals are the standard form of communication with a referee (although a buzzer system is sometimes also used). The distinctive red and yellow chequered design of the flag has been proven to be the most eye-catching colour combination over a long distance. The following signals (see right) are most commonly used during a match.



## Best Behaviour

The referee has the power to relieve an assistant of his or her duties – and make a report to the appropriate authorities – if an assistant acts in an improper way.

## Throw-In

A flag is held out to one side, pointing in the direction of play of the team awarded the throw.

## Substitution

A flag is held above the head with both hands to indicate a substitution.

## Flag Carrying

The assistant referee carries the flag unfurled so that any signals can be clearly seen.

## Other Signals

As well as using flag signals and a buzzer system, the assistant referees employ a variety of other forms of communication. Discrete hand signals, for example, let the referee know that a close ball has not gone out of play or that no offence has been committed. In return, the referee can use hand signals to inform an assistant the direction in which a throw-in should be taken if he or she is unsure.



## Calling Time

A clenched fist on the chest means 45 minutes have elapsed in the half.



## No Offence

He assistant referee shows a lowered palm to indicate that no offence has been committed.