Trend Analysis: Referee Experiences on Rule Interpretation
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Nomination Criteria:

- European Championship = Olympic Qualification
- High interest for the event
- Top Event – Top Referees
- European Cup performance over the past two years
- Neutrality – Impartiality to the participating teams

Preparation:

- Nominations are to be made no later than September
- Consequent nominations in European Cup matches
- Observation
- Contact with National Federations in regards to preparation tournaments invitations
- Implementation of a physical preparation programme
- Written brief outlining concerning the experiences from the 2007 WC in Germany
- Teaching DVD

Meeting before the EChs in Oslo:

- Explanation of the trends in handball
- External/Internal expert sessions
- Casing points on DVD

Meetings and activities during the EChs:

- Regular physical training
- Daily meeting for referees and officials to discuss the matches from the day before
- DVD instances selected by T. Anthonsen and S. Andorka
- There was very little interest shown from the side of the delegates in Stavanger, this had a negative effect
Main experiences in the interpretation of the rules and trends

Progressive Punishments:

- Use of verbal caution and body language
- To whistle initial moments immediately is important to create a fair atmosphere
- Unsportsmanlike conduct to be punished immediately in an appropriate manner (2-min suspension or disqualification)
- It is very important to act accordingly when the faults are more serious
- Hit/blow to the face should result in immediate disqualification
- Pushes to the hip/legs on a wing player should result in immediate 2-minute suspension or depending on the situation, disqualification. This type of foul should not be given a warning

In one particular situation it was noted that the referees tried to find a good line in creating a good atmosphere, but need a more consistent line when dealing with disqualifications. The main task is the safeguarding the health of all players. It is necessary that action be taken in the early phase of the game and stop individual situations from making the game complicated.

Struggle between Pivot and Defender:

- Responsibility of the “goal” referee, cooperation is necessary
- New style of pivot player’s task: they are the ball distributors and the playmakers. They should not be positioned close to the 6m line
- It is very important that from the very first attack, the actions by or against the pivot are correctly observed
- Action must be taken by the referees in the early stages of the game when necessary, clear boundaries need to be set so that all players within the area feel that it is under control

Defence inside the goal area:

- Several teams played an excessive amount of defence inside the goal area and used it, incorrectly, to change positions
- The position before a collision and the touch of the 6m line is not a reason for awarding a penalty throw. This appears too often based on the faulty observation of the referee
- The evaluation criteria of clear scoring chance concern Rule 14.1
- Frequently, there is more than 3 seconds from the referees whistle until the throw is actually completed; this is due to several “tricks” before the throw is executed. This is also a new trend

Offensive Faults, “Hollywood acting”:

- There is a clear tendency for more acting; lots of defence players do this. From the act of provocation by the defender and/or by the attacker to acting/provocation and repeatedly unsportsmanlike behaviour, it is necessary that progressive punishment be carried out. The referees need to show more courage by taking action and punishing players.
Passive play and faults against the opposing team:

- Generally in passive play situation the forward signals come from the referees correctly. Parallel to this, the defending team react and take action against the opposing team/players. The referees react incorrectly – they allow faults – and do not make the right decisions.

Conclusion:

Theoretical and practical preparation is extremely important. Daily meetings, that give reaction to the incorrect trends, need to be implemented as soon as possible. The production of teaching DVD’s with examples from the 8th Men’s European Championship in Norway is planned.