

Goal Umpiring



Visual Signaling

Visual signaling is one area in which goal umpires are legendary and there are quite a number of signals needed to be learnt. Signals are not only for the benefit of the field umpire but also to assist the goal umpire at the other end who, whilst he is confronted by the tyranny of distance, can at least have some idea of what his partner is doing. Fortunately, the signals are easy to implement and we thank Keith Livingston for his demonstrations below (and, in one instance, John Kristy, live at a match!).

Goal

Everyone knows this one: two fingers pointed horizontally in front of the mid abdomen area, approximately hip width apart. Fingers are thrust out in a firm, snapping manner - no thumbs, no holding up to the eyes - done like so in the photograph.





Behind

Like a goal, but one finger only.

Touched

Used to signal to the field umpire and other umpires that a kick has been touched and becomes a behind instead of otherwise a goal.

Hands raised above head tapped the one on top of the other three times only.



Signal to Partner - Goal!

Umpire sends a second signal (after fingers above) to partner of what score is to be registered: goes to post (goal flags, which number two, bundled together, are always on the right hand goal-post).

Umpire raises flags and holds them momentarily aloft near the post and waits until partner reacts and does same, so as to ensure correct coordination of wave and scores.

Signal to Partner - Behind!

Similar to above, except to signal a behind.

Behind single flag is always kept on left hand side goal post.



"Mine!"

Used generally to signal to the field umpire that the goal umpires asserts that a score has been attained.

But used more specifically and far more usually to signal to boundary umpires who haven't yet reached the proximity of the goal area that a kick has scored a behind and that they therefore needn't run all the way in to the goals to fetch the ball. Essentially, an energy saver for the boundaries! This signal is *not* given when the boundaries are nearby.

Tap three times (only) on the upper breast in a clear, obvious tapping motion - and not too rapid, not too slow!



Score Recording

A specific skill involved here - the pad is held out just below eye level, not down near the chest or navel - this allows the umpire to see in the corner of his eyes if the play rebounds suddenly towards goal.

The umpire must be quick but selective as to when to write the scores - he must be aware of the propensity for play to double back towards goals after a behind is scored.





"Hit the Post"

Signals to the field umpire and other goal umpire that the kick has hit the post.

Tap (three times) on the nearest goal post with up stretched arm.

Recoil - "Not My Decision!"

Seen both, as here, on the behind post and, more often, in the goal mouth, to indicate that the goal umpire is not asserting a decision and that it's left to the field or boundary umpires, as relevant.

A very useful tool for a field umpire on a close-to-the-line mark, goal umpire will recoil and back off.



Non-Kick - Behind

A not-often-seen signal, indicating that a kick has come from the knee or above, such that it doesn't qualify as a "kick" and, therefore, cannot score as a goal

Umpires taps knee three times.

Post Straddle

Position adopted by the goal umpire when the ball is likely to fall close to the goal line, so as to give him best opportunity to view whether the ball has crossed the line, as well as assisting the field umpire in assessing whether a mark is taken legitimately inside the playing surface or not.

Umpire straddles the goal line, often moving into a semi-crouch to view incident closely.



Out of Bounds (Throw in Anticipated)

Signals that the ball has gone out of bounds, but not on the full - used particularly when boundary umpires are not in the vicinity.

Outstretched arm, the one on the outside (nearer the fence)

Out of Bounds (Hit the Behind Post)

Used to signal that the ball is out of bounds (either on the full or not) by reason of having hit the behind post.

Umpire stands outside of behind post and taps it three times, not too slowly, not too rapidly!





Out of Bounds on the Full (1)

Umpire signals to field and boundary umpires that in the area immediately adjacent to the goal area, a kick has gone out on the full. Used particularly when boundary umpires are not present.

Outstretched arm on the side nearest the boundary line.

**Out of Bounds on the Full (2)
Free to the Defending Team**

Indication that follows above signal that the ball was kicked out of bounds by the attacking team and that, therefore, the free kick is to go away from the goal - namely, to be taken by the defending team.

Outstretched arm, pointing away from the goals.



Out of Bounds - Unsure

Used to signal to field and boundary umpires that the goal umpire is unsure as to whether the ball has gone through for a behind or not.

Goal umpire places arms behind back and studiously makes a point of making no other signals.

Will also recoil/back off to signal intention to make no decision.



End Quarter - Ready to Leave Square

The quarter is over and the goal umpire is ready to leave the square to mark to the centre to check scores with his colleague.

He waits at the goal line with all three flags wrapped together, held out wide to his right. When he sees his partner in the same position, they each march off the goal line simultaneously towards the centre.



What did we forget? Yep, the rarely seen changing of the umpire's decision. If a goal umpire wants to signal the change of a decision, he stands in mid goal and holds both flags, crossed, above his head, without any waving action. The other umpire must acknowledge by the same action.



Flag Waving

Flag waving is again a much loved and featured aspect of goal umpiring. It follows a fairly strict technical protocol and is certainly not an "all arm tangle" job or with as many waves and flourishes as one likes. For both behinds and goals, there is one horizontal wave back and across and then the lowering of the flag(s) to the waist area. Flag waving does require considerable practice to achieve a consistent billow and effect.

Goal (Start)

The flags are raised and the umpire waits for his partner to coordinate with him. Once both are ready, the flag wave begins.





Goal (Middle)

Each flag is waved once to the other side and once back again - only! On the return wave, the wrists twist and in a swirling movement the plane of the wave is changed from horizontal to vertical in anticipation of the lowering to the end phase.

It is important to get the speed of the waves correct. Too fast and not enough wind or billow gets into the flags; too slow and they just limply follow the sticks. A good wave will see nice billow in the calicos.

Goal (End)

The flags are lowered from above the head vertically with a firm, snapping motion. The umpire's hands come to rest near his jacket rim and the flags extend lower.



Behind (Start)

Like for goal above, but at least the umpire has the advantage of being able to hold the tip of the flag in place whilst waiting to commence the flag waving action.

Behind (Middle)

Same as for goal, except one flag, one crossing only. Remember, once to the other side, once back, then change planes to lower the flag.





Behind (End)

Same as for goal, except one arm and flag only.

Scoring

Recording the score requires adherence to particular rules, designed for the umpires' convenience and the aim of ensuring that the score is properly recorded. An example of a scorecard is below:

GRADE: 1ST DIVISION (SENIORS) DATE: 18.6.2001

SOUTHERN FOOTBALL LEAGUE
OFFICIAL GOAL UMPIRE'S CARD

MATCH: BIDDLELONIA V SHAGSMIRE

	GOALS	BEHINDS	GOALS	BEHINDS
1st QUARTER	X2	X23	X234	1
	2	(15)	3	4 (25) 1
2nd QUARTER	X234	X2	1	1
	6	(4)	5	5 (32) 2
3rd QUARTER	X2345	X2	X2	X23456
	11	(73)	7	7 (50) 8
4th QUARTER	X2		X234567	X2345
	13	(85)	7 8 9 10 11 12 13	(127) 13

Goal Umpires, at the conclusion of the game, must hand in cards to Field Umpire.

USP 8000

GOAL UMPIRE: *[Signature]*
F. Ferkenberger

1. Scores are marked by consecutive numerals, being struck out with one crisp, neat bar, when a new score of that type is made. NEVER EVER USE "STICK" MARKS TO KEEP SCORE! With the consecutive numerals method, it is easy to count scores at the end of the quarter.
2. Use a clear, good marking pencil for scores during the quarter (so that errors can be erased easily). Overwrite the scores at the next break with ink. Alternatively, use a "spare" card throughout the match and do a replication on the official card at the end of the match.
3. Write the cumulative scores in the boxes like so on the card and then the cumulative points aggregate like so, being circled, so as to highlight it.
4. Note one team here had a big last quarter - this shows what to do in a high scoring quarter, you overflow into the box below. In a "super-high scoring" quarter, common sense indicates that, if you run out of space, you use clear and unambiguous space elsewhere for the extra scores.
5. This system makes adding up easy: you simply observe the final numeral for, say, the goals in the particular quarter. Add that to the cumulative total for the quarter previous and, voilà,



- your total is there.
6. It is helpful to have a "6 Times Table" copied or made up and taped to your "scoreboard" so that multiplications of 6 can be easily done for adding up goals, especially once you go past your school level 12 x 6!
 7. Your "scoreboard" should be a small stiff cardboard or wood preferably backing against which you clip (with a bull-clip or something like that) your scorecard. The "scoreboard" should, ideally, have the capacity to be covered with a plastic flap, in the event of needing to be kept dry on wet days.
 8. One very well prepared goal umpire, that the writer observed, would bring colored pencils to the game and draw in color the jumpers of the playing teams on each side of the card, so as to reinforce his memory of which team is which - it is easy to make an error.
 9. Scores should be written in at the earliest reasonable opportunity. For the umpire at the end scored, the biggest problem is that of registering the score after a behind. The umpire must be particularly vigilant to what is happening with the kick out and the possibility of the ball rebounding for a further score. The umpire must wait until the play is clearly not likely to rebound towards the goals and then mark his score. The umpire should repeat to himself constantly in these circumstances: "Mark the score!" "Mark the score!" "Mark the score!" etc. so that he doesn't forget. (Note the photograph depicted above where the umpire marks the score with the card virtually at eye level, so that he is looking generally ahead, not downwards)
 10. Umpires consult with each other at the end of the quarter. If they agree with each other, they then check the scoreboard and if it is correct, confirm with the scoreboard attendant by one umpire waving a "goal" signal to it.
 11. If the umpires disagree between themselves, a sensible conversation must ensue between them, aimed at trying to ascertain where an error has occurred. Look for quick, consecutive behinds scored, incidents at the goal mouth requiring the goal umpire's attention etc. In the event of doubt, usually the umpire at the non-scoring end should be preferred, because it is he who is less likely to have his attention to score recording disturbed by extraneous events.
 12. If the scoreboard is wrong, the umpires walk towards it and, staying a reasonable distance from the board for their safety, call out to the attendants and advise of the correct score. Once corrected, the "goal" signal is waved.