

What does concentration look like when officiating?

Concentration is a limited resource – there is only a certain amount available so it is important it is directed at the most important factors and not at irrelevant distractions. The ability to sustain concentration on the right cues seems to underpin consistent performance. It is a skill – to minimise distractions and maximise attention on relevant or critical cues. It can be improved with practice but is not, however, about trying harder – many people argue concentration is best in a more relaxed state, sometimes described as being in the zone.

The following table describes experiences often associated with good and poor concentration in officiating. Compare it with your own experience.

Good Concentration

	Good Concentration	Bad Concentration
Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Challenged The game is flowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative – what if I make a mistake? Overloaded with information, poor decision making Easily distracted
Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calm Control Sense of anticipation Enjoyment without effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tense, heavy Tired Everything requires a great deal of effort Lack of motivation, going through the paces
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task at hand: the here and now During the game: focus on where the activity is, trusting my instincts and knowledge During breaks: thinking about what's ahead and where improvements can be made, and feedback discussion with other officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ahead: eventual outcome Back: mistakes, incorrect calls made During the game: task irrelevant factors (e.g. the weather, spectator calls) During breaks: task irrelevant factors (e.g. the last error, coaches comments)