

Case Study



Recognising and dealing with the early signs of conflict

Bob (coach) and his team have arrived with plenty of time to warm up and for Bob to have a quick chat to the ref about his interpretation of a recent rule change. Today's game is a 'must-win' in order for Bob's team to progress to the play-off round. Bob wants to get it right so any rulings don't go against them and possibly cost them the game.

Tim (the ref) has arrived just in time to start refereeing the game so he's feeling a bit stressed (he was stuck in a traffic jam due to an accident). Bob marches up to get Tim's interpretation of the new ruling before the game starts so he can brief his team. Tim is pretty short with Bob and dismisses his query saying 'there's no time, the game has to start'. Bob shakes his head and walks off muttering to spectators (within earshot of Tim) that 'this ref better get it right'.

Not long into the game Tim rules against Bob's team as he sees it under the new rule. He indicates the infringement with a blow of the whistle and a hand signal. Play resumes and the other team scores.

Bob is obviously frustrated and yells out, 'this is why I wanted to talk to you before the game ref – this could cost us the game mate'!



Case Study Questions



1. What behaviours was Bob showing that indicated he was heading towards a conflict situation?
2. What were the key drivers for Bob's feelings?
3. What could Tim have done to manage the situation and game, to reduce the chance of conflict happening and potentially escalating?

