



**LES FACETTES DE L'ARBITRAGE**  
**Fabrice Dosseville and Dr. Sylvain Laborde**  
**Paris, Publibook, 2011**

The book «Current Research in Referees», with Fabrice Dosseville and Sylvain Laborde acting as editors, and with the contribution of 21 international academic researchers, is a timely addition to the referee scientific literature. As a first impression, I want to mention that the editors were recently very active in publishing their research concerning referees in international peer-reviewed journals (Dosseville, Laborde, & Bernier, 2012; Dosseville, Laborde, & Raab, 2011; Dosseville, Laborde, Tralet, & Edoh, 2011). Now, I'm going to review what the reader is going to find in the different chapters of this book, which has both the aim of providing a summary of current research in referees, as well as triggering researchers' interests with challenging ideas.

In this book, the authors invite us literally «to dive» into the world of referees. Far from clichés, the reader will find here a scientifically based discussion about referees, and about what makes refereeing so fascinating, if we consider its potential implications on education and citizenship. A crucial concern can be found throughout the book: decision-making. In fact, errors in decision-making are unfortunately the main discussed topic when talking about referees. This book explores the various biases that can influence referees' decisions, and tells us that the first step to solve this issue is to be conscious of these biases, and second to act on these biases, with the help of very innovative ideas presented here. The book is divided in 18 chapters and three main parts: the referee facing himself, the referee facing his/her environment, and the referee facing his/her evolution.

In the first part of this book, the referee facing himself, the reader is invited to share the referee's inner world. Can fatigue influence referees' decisions, and thereby competition outcome? Chapter 1 deals with physical training of referees, in a very detailed fashion, considering the appropriate sessions, including strength, endurance and stretching aspects... It is the first time that the physical training of the referee is examined with such details, with the goal to help the referee to be the best physically prepared before an event. Are the referees cold-blooded persons, insensitive to pressure? Chapter 2 asks if referees have a specific personality, which helps them to withstand pressure. All the elements that can disturb referees are reviewed (i.e., stressors), with advices to deal with them. Chapter 3 examines in detail referees' emotions. In addition, an instrument specifically developed for this book is provided in this chapter, an introspection guide, aimed to help referees to reflect about stress, coping and emotions, alone or with a mentor. Chapter 4 questions if there is a universal definition of the referee, among players, spectators, medias, associations, and referees themselves. Chapter 5 asks whether referees' decisions could be influenced by shirt color. Stereotypes that can influence referees' decisions are reviewed in this chapter, also concerning gender. In a provocative fashion, Chapter 6 explores the mechanisms to become "a referee champion". If many books were written on how to become an expert athlete, this question has not been addressed concerning referees. For example, is it necessary to have practiced a sport to be good at refereeing in this sport?

The second part of this book takes into account the environment of the referee. Is the referee defending life rules as well as game rules? Chapter 7 deals with interactions with coaches, players and officials, questioning also the morality beyond behaviors. What is the ideal position of the referee on the field? The referee is supposed to perceive moving situations, and chapter 8 shows the implication of referee positioning on his/her decisions, giving also precious advices in order to reduce this bias. Is the video the referee of tomorrow? After the debate concerning the positioning of the referee, Chapter 9 questions the use of the video in assisting referees. Between those who are in favor of the absolute objectivity of the result, and those who say that that will create too much differences between elite and non-elite athletes, as well as disturbing the pace of the games, who is right? This chapter will help the reader to build his/her own opinion on this hotly debated topic. Are the red and yellow cards the unique solutions in front of aggressiveness? Chapter 10 looks into those aggressive behaviors in players directed to referees, from the roots of aggression, to see whether it comes more from a real hostility from the player, or whether it is more a way to influence the referee. Very practical advices are then given to help referees to face such behaviors, and also to promote them in referees' and players' education. Could the home advantage be explained by referees' behavior? Chapter 11 explains the role that

referees could play in this phenomenon. Is refereeing more an art or a science? Should the referee protect the game spirit, or rather strictly apply the rules? It is often reproached to the referee that he/she does not interpret correctly the rules, or that he/she is too strict. Chapter 12 asks whether the referee is the last guardian of the sport culture. Does the referee try to protect the suspense of a competition? Chapter 13 deals with competitive intensity, based on result uncertainty, which is related to suspense. The reader will then learn whether the referee acts as a game director, trying to balance his decisions throughout a competition, taking into account the criticisms he has to face when making a potential error. The reader will discover here the role of the referee in the sport show.

The third part of the book is considering the referee regarding the evolution of the function, from an historical, juridical and citizenship perspective, directed toward education. In chapter 14, the reader is invited to an historical journey in the world of refereeing, and will learn whether referees were there when sports were created. Chapter 15 examines the juridical aspects of refereeing, in particular whether referees' decisions can be discussed in justice. Is learning to referee a pathway to access citizenship? Chapter 16 questions the education of referees, and how to integrate referees' education at school and among young athletes. Chapter 17 provides ideas about referees' education, and how important it is to use video simulations in such settings. Chapter 18 wonders whether the error in refereeing is actually an error, questioning the elements that allow us to say that a decision was the correct one. The important added value of this chapter is to provide ideas to train decision-making in referees.

In summary, I have to say that I liked particularly this book, because beyond the scientifically grounded debate, it provides very insightful advices to referees, in order to help them to face the different issues they could potentially be exposed to during their practice. It questions also essential issues, such as: what are the motivations to become a referee, what are the moral values beyond this function? I personally believe that this book has the potential to change people's opinions concerning the role of referees, as it helps to see the referee as another human being, with his/her weaknesses, which mirror ours. Behind the message of this book, the reader can perceive what referees are really looking for: respect. Currently, too many of them are dropping out, because of physical and psychological threats from athletes, coaches, medias and fans. This was not their dream, this is not ours neither, and this book lights the path to change this situation.

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Catherine Garnarczyk  
*University of Caen, France*