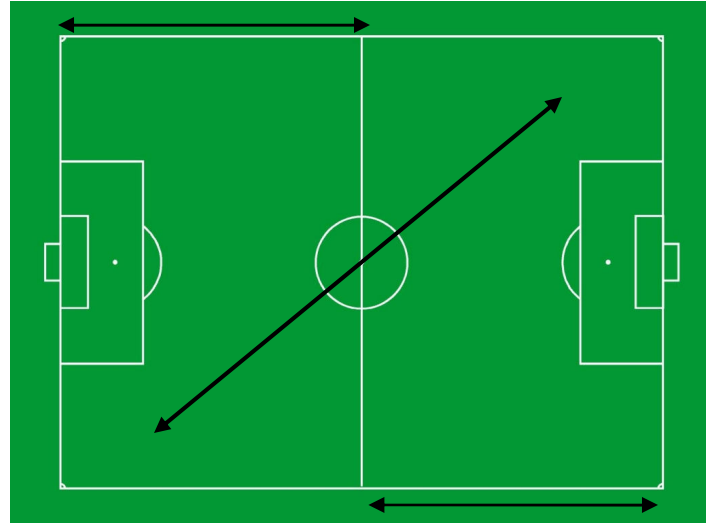


Diagonal System of Control

In the Diagonal System, the referee controls play by patrolling a line roughly diagonally across the length of the field from corner flag to corner flag. The two ARs are positioned on the touchlines on the opposite diagonal, patrolling that half of the touchline farthest from the referee. They assist on the goal line, at corner kicks and at penalty kicks next to their patrol area, and they also act if necessary, as a goal-judge. There are two diagonals that the Referee can choose to run. The most popular diagonal traverses a path from the right corner flag, to the opposite left corner flag at the other end of the field of play (known in the refereeing world as The Right Wing diagonal). The alternative diagonal traverses a path from the left corner flag, to the opposite right corner flag at the other end of the field of play (known in the refereeing world as The Left Wing diagonal). A Right Wing diagonal, places each AR on the touchline, alongside (and monitoring) the attacking team's right wing players. Conversely, the Left Wing diagonal places each AR on the touchline, alongside (and monitoring) the attacking team's left wing players. The AR patrols that half of the touchline that is adjacent to a left back player's position, and so forth.

The great advantage of the diagonal system when it is properly carried out is that there are always two pairs of eyes, watching every movement on the field of play from opposite sides.

The selection of diagonal (Right Wing, or Left Wing) rests with the Referee, and is based on his observation of the position of the setting sun, the condition of the playing surface touchlines, and the positioning of the technical areas etc; for naturally, he will avoid as many drawbacks as possible. When the Diagonal System was originally introduced into The Football League matches, the Referee changed his diagonal at half-time, with the ARs adjusting their positions accordingly.



This was done at the request of the Football clubs, to prevent undue damage to the turf on the sidelines patrolled by the ARs, who used only one half of each touchline length for the whole game. It was not long, before overuse of the touchline areas soon obliterated markings; and in inclement weather, the worn touchlines soon became quagmires devoid of any grass! The modern Referee should train to use either diagonal, depending on circumstances. Modern day playing surfaces are now, less prone to wear and tear. Modern boots are also less prone to damaging playing surfaces, than their hobnailed counterparts.