



## READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following text and choose the correct answer for the questions below.

### New referees urged to aim high

Europe's new international referees have been encouraged by UEFA to reach for the top, as they set out on their career pathway.

You need talent to be a top referee, but you need to work hard to make it to the top. That is the message given by UEFA to the group of new international male and female referees currently taking their first steps on the European football stage. 48 match officials who have gained their international badge, 34 men and 14 women, have been in Malta for UEFA's winter introductory course to familiarise themselves with their duties as a European referee.

The quest for excellence for a top referee involves a variety of elements, starting with the fitness required to be able to cope with the demands of the modern high-level game. "Football nowadays is played with high speed and intensity, so the referee needs to be a top-fit athlete," UEFA's chief refereeing officer, Pierluigi Collina, explained. "Referees might be called upon at the end of a match to take a decision which could affect the final result, so they have to remain lucid. Tiredness can't be an excuse for a wrong decision."

Referees are encouraged by UEFA to study the teams and players who they will be managing on the field, and the European body is deploying match analysts, qualified and experienced coaches, to brief the referees in major men's and women's national team tournaments and club competitions. Anticipation is the byword. "In football today, referees need to know beforehand what is going to happen in matches; they must stay one step ahead," Collina said. "They can't justify a mistake by saying that they were surprised, so they need to gather information about team tactics and player characteristics. It's often the case that teams will use the same tactics in every match, especially at corners and free-kicks. Referees can find out quite easily now if teams use zonal or man-to-man marking, for instance, or which players do what. This preparation will definitely stand them in good stead."

The referees were given vital advice about the mental strength they need to overcome a mistake. "Even the best referees can make errors; they are human, they are not perfect," Collina reflected. "But the target must be to minimise mistakes, in particular those which might affect the outcome of a match. Referees and their assistants must be able to put mistakes to the back of their mind, particularly in the



early stages of a match. They have to be able to move on to the next decision in a match and, of course, after the match, they should learn from mistakes. If they understand the reason behind the mistake, they become stronger people as a result."

Collina insisted on the importance of teamwork between a referee and the assistants. "Even the most talented referee needs to rely on his team-mates," he explained. "The final overall performance of the referees depends on the overall performance of each individual member of the team. So, prepare for matches as a team, support, encourage and motivate each other in every situation."

Collina closed by urging the new referees to be confident in their work. "Trust in yourselves," he said. "If you can say to yourself that you've worked hard, that you've prepared in every way, that you've done your absolute best, you're on the right path forward. And UEFA is here to help you succeed."

## **Questions**

### **1. From the total number of match officials who have become international referees,...**

- a. The number of male referees is lower than the number of females ones.
- b. There are as many female referees as male ones.
- c. The number of female referees is higher than the male one.
- d. The number of female referees is lower than the male one.

### **2. In order to stay one step ahead in matches,...**

- a. Referees are the only ones to study teams and players beforehand.
- b. Referees study teams and players, and sometimes they do it together with other professionals who are in charge of analysing matches.
- c. Match analysts, appointed by UEFA, are just the ones who study the teams and players that referees will manage on the field of play.
- d. Anticipation is not important, so gathering information about tactics and players characteristics is not necessary.

### **3. Getting over mistakes during a match is vital for match officials because...**

- a. They must focus on the next decision.
- b. They are human and not perfect.
- c. If they keep thinking about the mistake they have made, they won't pay enough attention to the rest of the match.
- d. A and C are correct.



**4. The final outcome of a match...**

- a. Depends on the referee, as he/ she is the one who takes the important decisions
- b. Doesn't depend on each individual member of the team
- c. Depends on the referee, as well as all his team-mates
- d. Depends on both assistant referees