



## Run Forrest! Run!

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I was a tad excited. Okay, I was really excited to be on the field for a WCAC game between two very skilled teams. It stayed a one goal game nearly all the way through and I was running my tail off. So much so that my Referee and boss, Charlie Obermayer, took notice. By halftime he asked me when Forrest Gump had joined the crew.

I was getting so far ahead of the play as the New Lead in transition that I couldn't help him out on two contested plays near the substitution box when clears were broken up. On one of those plays it appeared that one player was playing from out of bounds and then the ball went out shortly after. Charlie looked my way for confirmation, saw that I was in no position to confirm or deny and then he definitively signaled blue ball.

We talked after and he said it would have been better for me to be closer so he and I could nod up the situation and be doubly sure of what happened. Because I was at GLE by the time the play left the far attack box I wasn't able to help.

Speed may be my friend, but over running the play is not and this critique went right to the top of my list of things to get better on. So I took Charlie's advice and paced my positioning out a little bit when going from Trail to Lead in a three person crew:

**Top of box > midline > opposite cone or wing line > top of opposite attack box > GLE**

Pausing at each of those positions lets me gather myself and gauge the developing play. If the clear slowed up I was in better position to assist my partners. If a wide open midfielder caught a streaking pass then I was still far enough ahead of the ball to run hard to GLE while keeping my eyes on the player running towards the goal. I noticed this small pacing change made me more relaxed on the field because I was more focused on the play instead of uber-focused on getting to GLE first.

The other benefit that I gleaned from being more deliberate advancing up the field is that I see much more of the field in transition. I'm still getting to where I need to be, I'm just being a lot smarter about how I get there.

Crew communication is also better since the distance between the Trail, Single, and Lead is tighter even with a stretched field, and I'm getting better angles on contested plays near the midline and the bench side wing line that I know I didn't have as firm a handle on in earlier games this season.



Every season I discover one change that drastically impacts my comfort level on the field. Last year I picked up mentally noting when on the game clock every penalty was supposed to release (thanks to Mike Hyland's 2013 and 2014 Convention presentations for that, [click here](#) to listen to his 2015 presentation!). This season being smarter in my pacing up the field in transition on three-person crews is hands down, the adjustment that has helped me the most.