



GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 2010



INCLUDES REFEREE NOTES
**ASSISTANT REFEREE
GUIDELINES 2010**



GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 2010

Introduction

USA Rugby Referees' management has established guidelines to refereeing at all levels in USA Rugby. These guidelines enable players and referees to have a clearer approach to the game, to enable consistency in Law application throughout the country. They also reflect directives from the iRB, particularly in relation to the tackle/ruck.

The guidelines were first established for the USA Rugby Super League in 2008, and upon its success, it was further developed for the 2009 season, and for the Women's Premier League 2009.

These guidelines are to be distributed and applied nationally to all referees, referee observers, referee coaches, players/teams, coaches and administrators for 2010

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Appropriate U19 Law Variations are in green italicized text.



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GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 2010

The Principles of the Game

It is through discipline, control and mutual respect that the spirit of the game flourishes and, in the context of a game as physically challenging as rugby, these are the qualities which forge the fellowship and sense of fair play so essential to the game's ongoing success and survival."

It is imperative that we, as a community, stand together and work together to grow rugby in the United States. It will be through mutual respect and support that we develop the game.

We urge that players and team administrators do not verbally abuse the officials, and vice versa, nor make any derogatory public remarks or comments, as this behavior is not beneficial to the development and growth of the game.

It is important that officials, players, coaches, etc. share their thoughts and experiences with one another for the betterment of all

REFEREE NOTES

Be professional and open to discussion with players and coaches, and supportive of colleagues. Promote the reputation of the game. You are accountable for your actions on and off the field. Do not discuss any issues with referee evaluators during halftime, unless the evaluator feels the need to communicate an issue regarding safety. If you want to communicate with your referee coach, that is acceptable - referee coaches are to be aware that their advice should not completely alter the foundation that the referee has set in the first half. Refrain from discussions with coaches, etc. during the match, at halftime, and immediately after the match if a "cooling off" period would be the better option.

Tackle / Ruck

A. The Tackle

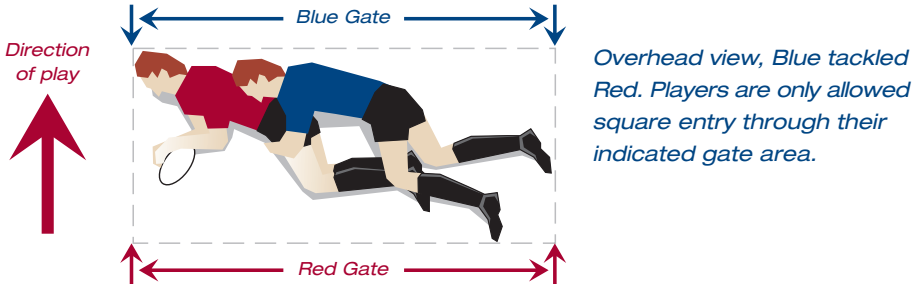
1. Tacklers have to release the tackled player immediately, and move away or get to their feet. **PK**
2. Tackled player must exercise their options immediately. **PK**
3. Players that slow the ball down should be penalized immediately. **PK**
4. Referees may instruct the players, i.e. "release the ball", "roll away", etc., as long as these players have not already slowed down ball availability.

Referees are to approach a low tolerance level at the breakdown and should penalize early in the match to establish compliance. **PK**

Tackle / Ruck

B. The Gate

1. All players have to enter the tackle through the gate, referred to as a square entry, shoulders parallel to the goal lines. No part of a player's body (including the arms), may enter the tackle through any other area. **PK**
2. Failure to enter through the gate should not be tolerated. **PK**



C. Arriving players

1. Players are to enter the tackle on their feet. **PK**
2. At a tackle, arriving players are allowed to play the ball with their hands after an opposition player binds onto them, if:
 - a. They arrive at the tackle legally,
 - b. Remain on their feet, and
 - c. Have possession of the ball prior to the contact occurring (i.e. was grasping/holding the ball - this should be a positive action to gain possession of the ball, not merely putting one's hands/arms over the ball).

NOTE: Thus, a ruck has not yet formed.
3. No players may bind/grasp onto the tackler/tackled player who is on the ground. **PK**
4. Players who secure the ball without their weight fully on their feet (i.e. bound onto OR leaning on the tackler/tackled player on the ground) OR who go to ground head first, or dive over players on the ground, OR dive over players on the ground with the ball between them should not be tolerated and penalized. **PK**

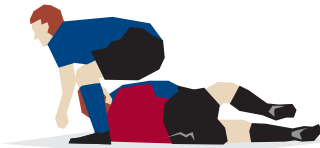
Tackle / Ruck



Red tackled Blue, Blue player arrived at the tackle on their feet, through the gate, but is binding on the tackler/tackled player on the ground to secure possession.



Blue tackled Red, Red player has secured possession by binding onto the tackler/ tackled player on the ground. This is NOT allowed.



Red tackled Blue, Blue player arrived at the tackle on their feet, through the gate, is NOT binding on players on the ground, remaining on their feet and preparing for contact at the tackle area.

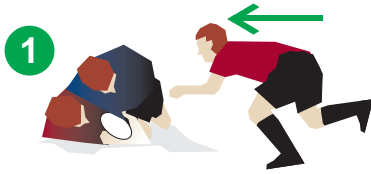


Red tackled Blue, both players that arrived at the tackle are on their feet, arrived through the gate, and are contesting for possession. A ruck has formed.

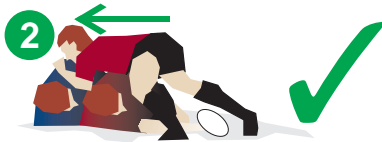
5. If players enter the tackle in conformance with the required criteria and subsequently go to ground during the process of removing a tackler or because the opposition was unable to retain its position at contact, these players should not be penalized because they did not willfully go to ground. The ball should be available to be played. If these players obstruct the ball from being available to be played, they should be penalized. **PK**

6. If players enter the tackle in conformance with the required criteria and make contact with the tackler or tackled player and subsequently go to ground during the process, **BUT HAS MADE THE BALL AVAILABLE TO BE IMMEDIATELY PLAYED**, it will be allowed. Arriving players of the team who have secured the ball may either play the ball or bind onto their players, even if their players are on the ground, to maintain possession.

Tackle / Ruck



[1] Blue tackled Red. The RED player arrives, makes contact with the Blue tackler, and



[2] subsequently goes to ground, AND HAVE MADE THE BALL AVAILABLE TO BE PLAYED. Red players who arrive thereafter may



[3] bind onto their players (that are on the ground) to maintain possession already secured.

REFEREE NOTES at the TACKLE

Get to the tackle as quickly as possible. Know where the ball is at all times - create a presence at the breakdown. Approach to the game should be to facilitate contest for possession. Players are to remain on their feet, and enter the tackle through the gate. Set your standard from the outset, and maintain consistency to enable quick ball availability. It is important to maintain a high work rate throughout the match. There is a place for unplayables to be used as a management tool to communicate your expectations to the players. If you play a penalty advantage for an infringement at the tackle, the ball must be immediately available OR a score probable.

D. The Ruck

1. Referees are to communicate when a ruck has formed, by using the term "Ruck". This communication should be used to facilitate the ruck, and to enforce the ruck offside lines around the fringes and for the backlines. If the ball is immediately won and a ruck is formed, the referee should communicate "Ruck". If required, the referee should use the term "No Hands" to indicate to players that they should no longer use their hands, prior to calling "Ruck".

NOTE: Referees should allow the contest to develop at the breakdown, and should not call "Ruck" until a ruck has clearly been formed.

2. Once a ruck is formed, it continues even if all defenders leave or fall to ground?

Scrum

A. Mark and Engagement

1. The referee will make the mark indicating the center of the scrum to the two hookers.
2. Engagement protocol is four separate instructions, “Crouch, Touch, Pause, Engage”.
3. Players should crouch when they are ready.
4. “Touch” means a full extended arm, touching, with the hand, the opposing prop on the shoulder and withdrawing their arms (holding onto the opposition player prior to engagement is not allowed).
5. Teams are required to ensure they maintain their position (hold their weight) upon engagement.
6. Early engagement, failure to engage, and standing up should not be tolerated and be penalized, by Free Kick, or a Penalty Kick if the referee deems it to be deliberate, dangerous and/or a repeated infringement. **FK**
7. #8 is to bind on the locks’ body with at least one arm up to the shoulder prior to engagement.

U19: #8 is required to bind between the two locks.

NOTE: The engagement process has been implemented to maintain safety. If at any point, the process is not followed by players the referee should blow the whistle, and restart the engagement procedure OR penalize players if they repeatedly do not comply.

B. Set and Feed

1. Scrum is to remain stationary until the feed. **FK**
2. Scrum feed should be straight into the tunnel between the front rows. **FK**

REFeree NOTES at the SCRUM

Set your standard early at the scrum. Minimize resets. Free kick early engagement immediately. Safety is paramount and an immediate whistle at a collapsed or popped scrum is essential. Differentiate between a popped scrum on the mark and a deliberately popped retreating scrum. Manage one player at a time - a collective reprimand has less effect. If you notice an issue at the scrum, but it has no immediate material affect, ensure to address it at the following scrum. If you are unsure as to the responsible party that is creating problems, slow down the engagement procedure - inform players of this action. If problems continue, bring the front rows closer together prior to engagement. Do not allow an early shove, nor early wheel - the scrum should be stationary and square until the feed. The 15th slight wheel before the feed by the non-throwing in team should be managed initially, and penalized if it continues. Keep backlines inside (5m) for the entire duration of the scrum, defenders and attackers.

Scrum

C. Wheel

1. A scrum has only wheeled through 90° if the line between the front rows has gone through 90°. *U19: Intentional wheel is not allowed. PK / Unintentional wheel through 45° to be reset (original team to throw-in).*
2. A whip-wheel is not allowed - this is when the scrum turns/spins on its axis. The wheel has to occur with a forward motion for it to be legal (and not dangerous). **PK**
3. If the referee is unsure as to who has wheeled the scrum (in a whip-wheel), the scrum should be reset with the original team putting the ball in.

D. Scrumhalves

1. Scrumhalves are not to touch/push one another. **PK**
2. Defending scrumhalves are not to position themselves in the 'pocket' area between the flanker and #8, and should be managed by the referee before penalizing. **PK**
3. Defending scrumhalves who decide to take up a defensive position on the last line of feet of their side of the scrum have to start next to their opponent at the put-in (scrum feed), and then move to the last line of feet once the scrum has commenced. They need not remain close to the scrum and may roam across the field, behind the last line of feet of their players in the scrum. If they choose not to be next to their opponent at the put-in, their offside line is the same as for players not participating in the scrum which is 5m behind the last line of feet of their scrum. **PK**
4. The scrumhalf who's team has possession of the ball after the scrum has commenced, must also remain onside by being on their side of the ball. If they deliberately remain in front of the ball to obstruct the opposing scrumhalf, to allow their #8 to play the ball, they should be penalized. **PK**

U19: A player must not intentionally keep the ball in the scrum once the player's team has heeled the ball and has control of the ball at the base of the scrum. FK

- E. General** *U19: A team may not push the opposition back more than 1.5m. FK*

Lineout

A. Formation

1. The defending team has to have a player in the 5m area - if they do not, the referee will instruct them to do so before continuing - this player may not support a jumper in the lineout, and must be 2m from the line-of-touch and 2m from the five-meter line until the lineout commences.
2. If a team selects to have a player in the receiver (scrumhalf) position, the receiver must be 2m from the lineout at the moment of the throw.
3. The team that is to throw the ball into the lineout determines the maximum number of players in the lineout. Referees should manage this rather than penalize.

NOTE: Many aspects of lineout infringements, i.e. formation, closing the gap, ball not traveling 5m, early jump, etc. could be managed by referees by resetting rather than penalizing, unless the infringement substantially benefits the offending team, or is continually repeated. FK

B. Support & Obstruction

1. The immediate players supporting the jumper in the air may NOT position themselves between the jumper and the opposition. **PK**

C. Quick Throw-In

1. Referees are to be more aware of quick throw-ins, within law, and that the throw does not have to be straight, but may not be forward, and has to travel 5m.
 - Ball not thrown 5m = opponents' option scrum or lineout
 - Ball prevented from traveling 5m or played before going 5m. **FK**
2. A player that deliberately prevents a quick throw-in from traveling 5m, must be penalized. **FK**
3. Players who hold onto the ball, or throw the ball away, when in touch, to prevent a quick throw-in should be penalized, on the line of touch, 15m line. This should not be tolerated. **PK**

D. Lineout Start & End

1. Once the lineout has started, referees are to keep one arm raised to indicate that the lineout is in progress, and players who are not part of the lineout need to remain 10m from the line of touch. Only when the lineout is over will the referee lower their arm.



Lineout

E. No Maul

1. If the defenders decide not to engage to form a maul at the lineout, referees should communicate to the team in possession to get the ball out, rather than penalize for obstruction.

REFEREE NOTES at the LINEOUT

Always be aware of a quick throw-in - know your law. Communicate early what is expected at the lineout - start at the front: numbers, gap, non-throwing hooker in position, backlines 10m, no early jumping, receiver 2m from the lineout, immediate formation with no delay, no dummy throw - keep the player throwing in, in your vision. There is no need to continuously talk to prevent disorder at the lineout, throughout the game. Keep the backlines and players in the lineout onside for the duration of the lineout.

Ball Out

A. Ruck

1. The ball is out when there are no bodies over the ball from a bird's eye view.
2. Whilst the competition for the ball in a ruck is ongoing, hands by players in the ruck, are NOT allowed. **PK**
3. Once the ball has been clearly won, pushing the ball back by using the hand, by a player of the team that have won possession of the ball is permissible, AND, digging for the ball, by the player of the team who has won possession of the ball, who is in the scrumhalf position and not part of the ruck, is permissible and the BALL IS NOT OUT.
4. If a player in the scrum half position is not retrieving the ball, but holding the ball, with one or two hands, the BALL IS OUT.
5. Players in the ruck may under no circumstance slap the ball out of the scrumhalf's hands or interfere with the scrumhalf. **PK**

B. Maul

1. Players in the maul may under no circumstance slap the ball out of the scrumhalf's hands or interfere with the scrumhalf. **PK**

C. Scrum

1. The ball is out when there are no bodies over the ball from a bird's eye view, or it has been handled by a player of the team in possession (scrumhalf), or handled by a player of the team in possession that is no longer part of the scrum.
2. If the #8 detaches from the scrum (both shoulders) with the ball at the feet, and attempts to pick up the ball, the BALL IS OUT.

Maul

A. Pulling the Maul down / Collapsed Maul

1. Pulling down the maul and/or collapsing the maul is NOT allowed. **PK**

B. Joining/Leaving/Ending the Maul

1. A maul is only over when a player carrying the ball, or the ball, leaves the maul, or if a ruck forms (ball goes to ground or ball carrier goes to ground and places the ball on the ground), not when all the defenders leave the maul voluntarily. If a maul has formed, and moving forward, and the defenders leave the maul voluntarily, the team in possession should not be penalized for obstruction, as the maul continues. Defenders who then join the maul again, should do so from the last line of feet.
2. If defenders leave the maul involuntarily or are unable to remain bound, and there are no more defenders attached to the maul, the maul is over and the team in possession should not continue to move forward with their players bound around the ball, as this may constitute obstruction. Referees are to communicate that the maul is over.

*NOTE 1: If the team in possession does not comply with the referee's request that the maul is over, and remain bound around the ball carrier they should be penalized. **PK***

NOTE 2: If a maul is moving towards the goal line, and the defenders drop off the maul, prior to the maul reaching the goal line, as they are unable to stop the driving maul, the team in possession should not be penalized for obstruction if they then immediately enter the in-goal area due to the momentum gained from the drive and ground the ball. A try should be awarded.

3. If a maul becomes stationary OR is moving parallel to the goal lines OR is moving backwards, referees will instruct players to "USE IT", and give that team ample opportunity to comply within Law.

REFEREE NOTES at the MAUL

Work around both sides of the maul to prevent players joining from the side and collapsing the maul. Please be sure that you are aware of the Law regarding "use it or lose it".



Advantage

A. Communication & Signals

1. Referees will only indicate advantage when there is the possibility that advantage may accrue.
2. When an infringement occurs, referees will indicate that they have seen it, and communicate, i.e. “Knock-on + team color”. Then they will either blow the whistle for the infringement, or play advantage, signal and communicate:

“Advantage + Scrum + team color”;

OR

“Advantage + Penalty + team color”

The team mentioned is the team you are playing advantage for.

3. When advantage is gained, the referee will call “Advantage Over” - there is no signal for advantage over.

B. No advantage

1. If the scrum collapses, pops or a player is lifted off their feet, an immediate whistle is required to prevent injury, whether for penalty or reset.
2. If a player deliberately kills the ball on the ground, no advantage should be applied, unless a clear scoring opportunity or an obvious advantage is likely. That player should be admonished/cautioned in both instances.

REFEREE NOTES for SIGNALS

Always indicate the primary signal first, followed by the secondary signal.

GAME MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 2010

Foul Play

FOUL PLAY IS NOT WITHIN THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME AND HAS NO PLACE IN RUGBY. IT SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED.

A. Tackle

The following are not acceptable practices:

- Leading with the shoulder (making deliberate contact with the shoulder first, and then wrapping with the arm/s), or swinging the arm into contact
PK and admonishment and/or suspension
- Not grasping an opponent **PK and admonishment and/or suspension**
- Spear tackle (Lifting a player from the ground, turning the body parallel to the ground or more, and driving the player into the ground, whether deliberate or accidental) **PK and RED CARD**
- Lifting a player from the ground, turning the body parallel to the ground or more, and throwing the player to the ground **PK and RED CARD**
- High tackle (including a chest high tackle where the arm eventually makes contact above the shoulders) **PK and admonishment and/or suspension**
NOTE: If a player bends forward/down, and is then tackled above the shoulders due to this action, the tackler should be given the benefit of the doubt if their intent was not to tackle high/dangerously
- Tackling a player in the air **PK and admonishment and/or suspension**

B. Feet on bodies

Players may not stamp, trample or kick opponents.

PK and admonishment and/or suspension

C. General

1. Deliberate/cynical offenses should result in a suspension. This can be a first offense without prior warning, a player that re-offends or a team that re-offends.
PK and suspension
2. Repeated offenses can be team and/or individual, and should be addressed sooner rather than later. Repeat infringement patterns, i.e. offenses close to the goal line, AND repeated infringements by an individual player are both without time limit. Repeat team infringements in particular aspects (e.g. tackle), may warrant another admonishment rather than moving up to a suspension if sufficient time has passed without infringement.
PK and admonishment and/or suspension



Foul Play

3. Cheap shots/off the ball offenses are unacceptable and should result in a suspension. **PK and suspension**
 4. Holding/obstructing players off the ball. **PK and admonishment and/or suspension**
 5. Perpetrators and retaliators are responsible and are to be dealt with - the last offence is to be penalized. **PK and admonishment and/or suspension**
 6. Players disputing the referees decision should not be tolerated. Awarding a PK or advancing an already awarded PK 10m is appropriate.
PK and admonishment.
-

Restarts & Open Play

1. Players are expected to remain behind the ball at all kick-offs and drop-outs (except quick drop-outs as Law allows). Referees are to manage this phase, however, players are aware that they need to comply.
2. Players who obstruct the opposition from getting to the ball carrier should be penalized. **PK**
3. Players who bind onto their player (that has possession of the ball), and so position themselves between their player and the opposition, are obstructing and should be penalized. **PK**

REFEREE NOTES at RESTARTS

At all restarts, signal with your arm, and communicate verbally to players to remain behind the ball. Be reasonable, and manage these phases.

Penalty Try

A penalty try should be accompanied by either a severe admonishment, a yellow card or a sending off to the offender. A penalty try should only be awarded if foul play by a defender prevents a try from being scored or prevents a try from being scored in a better position.

If the offense that prevented the try is a suspension offense, a yellow card should be issued to the offender.

ASSISTANT REFEREE GUIDELINES 2010

You are the Assistant Referee, NOT the referee. What is expected of you is different to refereeing. Do not try to referee the game from the side of the field.

Be aware of what each referee expects from you. They differ, and it is of utmost importance that you are able to work within each referee's requirements. These are specific to each referee and they should instruct/brief you before the game. Be clear on how, when, and to what extent the referee wants your input.

Keep running time and score.

Lead and trail (e.g. if you split the field in half between the two touch lines, the half on your side is what would more or less determine whether you lead or trail). If the game is on your side, lead, and if the game is on the other side, trail. Always be aware to ensure that players that remain when the ball and play has moved away, resume play without incident – “clean up” behind the referee.

Do not react to sideline comments. If you are having problems with certain people, and they do not comply with your requests, bring it to the referee's attention.

Communication

Be very sure, and precise if you need to communicate with the referee. Timing and importance of the communication is imperative. Always be calm, accurate and concise. If you feel the need to say something – a good opportunity is at a lineout or if there is an injury near you, or during downtime when using a communication system - be sure to be specific, i.e. “Blue number 6 is coming off the scrum early”, or “Red backline is pushing the offside line at the rucks and mauls”. Do not say something vague like “scan more”, or “the tackles are getting high”, however, do bring up negative tendencies such as “ball recycle is slow”. You are there to assist the referee – if you feel that the referee is not open to your comments, etc., do not take it personally, continue with your duties as you were instructed/briefed.

Kick Off

AR nearest forwards to take up a position on the 10m line, the other AR on the 22m line. Focus on the ball receiver, are they allowed to land before they are played. If the ball is kicked directly out, raise your flag, then point it to the halfway line. If the ball is kicked dead (touch-in-goal or over the dead ball line, wave your flag from side to side horizontally, then point it to the halfway line.



Touch / Line out

Immediately raise your flag as soon as the ball is in touch, and keep your flag raised. Ensure that you know the laws of when the ball is in touch, and when a quick throw-in is allowed. Discuss this with the referee beforehand, but at times, a referee could just relax for the split second that the ball has gone into touch, so if a legal quick throw-in does occur, drop your flag and call “play-on”.

Be aware that players keep the gap throughout the match – if it is not maintained bring it to the referee’s attention when you have the opportunity – the referee should instruct you before the game on your involvement here, as some would not want you to start telling players what they should do. The hooker must throw in the ball on the line of touch. Be aware of delayed throw-ins, a double movement or stepping into the field of play before throwing (this would be better to communicate to the referee at the next opportunity, unless requested otherwise by the referee). Look for line-out obstruction, whether the ball travels 5m, is the ball thrown in straight (again as requested by the referee). The AR on the far side must mark the 10m for the defending backline. Be aware of players moving up before the lineout is over.

If there has been an infringement in the line-out, the AR on the line of touch must keep the line of touch mark for the referee to come back to if need be.

When running along the touch line, be aware to keep your head as still as possible to ensure you get the touch call correct. Many people’s heads “bobble” when they run which makes it difficult to focus on a specific point - work to keep your head as still as possible. It is always best to either have play coming towards you and you are standing still or if you are running that play is ahead of you and you can clearly see if there is contact with the touch line. Running next to players close to the touch line makes it more difficult to get the in touch call correct, especially when a player passes the ball as they are about to go into touch.

Open Play Kicks

Look for the late tackle, then obstruction on players following the kick. Remember where the kick was taken from, in the event that the kick goes dead and you need to mark the scrum back position. Ensure the receiver is not illegally challenged in the air. If the ball goes dead at a kick or in any event, always indicate this by waving your flag horizontally.

Foul Play

Continue with your duties, with your flag raised horizontally and parallel to the goal lines until the play has stopped. Communicate to the referee, the team that infringed, the player number, and what the offense was. If you do not have a number, still communicate this to the referee. The referee will repeat what you said and suggest the course of action – only if you are sure the course of action is not appropriate, then repeat the infringement to the referee. Often you may be an Assistant Referee at a match that may be a higher level to what you have refereed - understand that the referee is in charge and will ultimately manage the game as they see fit. If an incident occurs, especially fighting, the referee should, in most instances, consult you to get your perspective. If play continues after a foul play incident, ensure that fighting, etc. does not continue.

FOWL PLAY PROTOCOL

The AR shall signal for foul play irrespective of whether the AR believes that the referee has seen the offence(s). Once play has stopped, the AR and referee must then communicate in the following manner:

1. AR gives number and Team of offending player (or team only if the player cannot be identified. However, it is important for ARs to focus on the offence/offender to ensure you have witnessed the incident in its entirety and that the number of the player can be identified.)
2. The AR gives an accurate description of offence.
3. Referee may request a sanction recommendation i.e. "Severe reprimand", "Formal caution and temporary suspension" or "Send off".
4. Referee repeats number and team of offending player and confirms the sanction.
5. Referee takes the required action and delivers the sanction.

This procedure is designed to ensure:

- Correct information and action
- Clarity and speed of communication

NOTE: It is important that the process is followed to ensure the outcome is correct, but do be conscious not to spend too much time discussing it.

Referee and AR should always consult:

- AR may have additional information on an offence which the referee has seen
- Referee should never overrule AR without consultation

Scrum

Look at the front rows' binding, pulling down, pushing up. In the event of a collapsed scrum, only communicate information to the referee if you are sure who is at fault. Keep an eye on the back row players for early unbinding and sliding up the scrum, as well as props grabbing flankers. It is best for the AR nearest the scrum to hold the attacking team's 5m mark as the probability of them moving into the 5m area before the scrum is over would more than likely be on the blind side. The other AR that holds the mark for the defending team should be on the open side, as backlines are used to responding and working with ARs on that side, from lineouts.



Tackle/Ruck

Be aware of the following: that players are entering the breakdown through the gate; joining correctly; cleaning out legally; staying on their feet; and releasing the ball in good time. Look for stamping on players, the short offside (offside around the fringes of the ruck/maul), players creeping up, backlines outside. Always stand in line with the last line of feet of the defending side to see if they are pushing the boundaries of the offside line.

Maul

Note if players join incorrectly. Look for players grabbing legs or collapsing the maul, and try to get the number. Look for the short offside, players creeping up, backlines outside. Always stand on the last line of feet of the defending side to see if they are pushing the boundaries of the offside line.

Open Play

Be alert for late tackles, especially from a pass, and early tackles or obstruction on the receiver of a pass. Look for obstructive running, holding players back, high tackles, spear tackles, stiff arm tackles, no arms tackles, etc. Never assume the referee saw an incident and let it go, unless you see the referee indicate 'play on' and you agree the incident needs no further attention. However, if an infringement is dangerous/illegal, raise your flag horizontally for foul play and bring it to the referee's attention at the next stoppage.

Always be aware when the referee is playing advantage, and keep the reference point for the referee. If advantage does not accrue line up the referee to the mark where the infringement occurred. It is very important to be correct in this, especially if points could be scored from a Penalty Kick.

Knock-ons and forward passes – the referee will be very specific on your input here – remember, the referee will make the final judgment as they are on many occasions in the better position, closer, and moving with play.

Penalties/Free Kicks

If the mark is nearer to your touch line, indicate the mark for the referee first, then quickly moves 10m for the players. If there is a Penalty Kick for touch and you are anywhere near the corner flag you have to be positioned by the flag to make the call – players do kick 50/60m. The AR on the far side will hold the 10m.

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Kicks at Goal

Make sure you have a clear vision of the ball, your post (be right in line with the ball and the post), and the other AR. The AR who is closest to the post that the ball passes, leads the call. The AR nearest the kicker should take a position close to the post and the other AR take the other post but stay back from the post, beyond the dead ball line. The reason for the AR positioning at the kick is, if play continues near you at a missed kick, you need to stay out of the way – if you are at the post, you can ensure you are out of the way, if you are beyond the dead ball line, you are out of the way. Resume your duties asap.

Use this opportunity if you need to communicate and share information with the other AR. At times play is predominantly on one side of the field, and if you have noticed tendencies/problem areas in the game that you want to communicate to the referee but have been unable to do so – tell the other AR to communicate it to the referee, if you do not have a communications system.

If the kick is successful, communicate with the other AR (verbally, loud and clear) and raise your flags simultaneously. If it is not over, do not indicate anything, however, at a missed penalty goal, and the ball goes into touch in goal or over the dead ball line, indicate this by a horizontal movement of the flag.

In-goal

Most referees will be precise about your positioning here. A good option is for ARs to get into the best position to see whether a try has been scored, however, being right next to the referee is not efficient team work. All angles need to be covered and always be in a complimentary position to the referee. Cover the area where the referee would not be able to. If a try is scored be precise in your communication – there is no rush, the importance is to get the call right.

Often at attacking lineouts close to in-goal the referee will take up a position at the back of the lineout – the front becomes the ARs responsibility. Again, it is most important to get the call correct in a scoring situation.

Conclusion

Assistant Refereeing is very different to refereeing, and a good Assistant Referee is always aware of what is happening on the field, wants to be part of the game, NOT referee the game from the side, and understand that they are there to ASSIST and SUPPORT the referee.



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