



Referee Manual

2019 – 20

This manual is aimed at helping new and experienced referees by giving them an understanding of the main priority areas of refereeing. It explains and simplifies the Laws of the Game with a focus on their practical application.

Better Refereeing

Through better refereeing we can facilitate a better and more enjoyable playing environment for our players. This helps to produce better and more enthusiastic players at all levels of the game. Better refereeing also helps maintain the core values and principles of rugby union.

Principles of Refereeing

- Safety
- Consistency
- Fitness
- Control and Communication
- Law Knowledge





IRFU Concussion & Injury Guidelines for Match Officials

The safety of players is paramount and the referee must blow the whistle and stop play if:

- Any situation appears to be, or is, dangerous.
- A player is, or may be, seriously injured.

Safety takes precedence over any other aspect of the game!

If a player is injured in age-grade rugby the referee should not restart the game after a stoppage until that player is fit to continue or has been removed from the field of play.

At all levels, if an injury appears serious, then extreme caution should be exercised. Do not attempt to move the player and seek medical assistance immediately.

If a player has a suspected concussion they **must** be removed from the field of play and not be allowed to return. Knowing your role as a referee in managing this is paramount. You need to be familiar with **World Rugby Law 3.22.C** and the **IRFU Concussion Guidelines for Referees**.



LAW 3 Team

22. A player is deemed to be injured if:

- c. The referee decides (with or without medical advice) that it would be inadvisable for the player to continue. The referee orders that player to leave the playing area.

IRFU Concussion Guidelines for Referees

What is concussion?

- **Concussion is a traumatic brain injury.** It is a complex process in which forces are transmitted to the brain and result in temporary impairment of brain function.
- Concussion can have a significant impact on the short and long term health of a player if not managed correctly.



Concussion must be taken extremely seriously.

- Ignoring the signs and symptoms of concussion may result in death, a more serious brain injury or a prolonged recovery period.
- Returning to play before complete resolution of the concussion exposes the player to recurrent concussions that might take place with ever decreasing forces.
- Repeat concussions could potentially shorten a player's career and may have the potential to result in permanent neurological impairment.
- There is no such thing as a minor concussion or "knock to the head".

What causes concussion?

Concussion can be caused by a direct blow to the head or body and / or from an indirect force such as whiplash type movements of the head and neck that can occur when a player is tackled or collides with another player or the ground. Immediately following a suspected concussion, the brain is susceptible to further significant damage in the event of another impact.

A player with suspected concussion:

- **Must be immediately REMOVED from play.**
- **And must NOT RETURN.**

THERE IS NO HEAD INJURY ASSESSMENT IN THE DOMESTIC GAME



Concussion - if in doubt, sit them out



Recognise & Remove - The Handover of Care.

The referee's role is crucial in the recognition of concussion and the removal and handover of care of the injured player. The referee must be aware of the visible clues and the signs and symptoms of concussion. **Should there be any suspicion of concussion the player must be removed.**

A useful phrase in this situation could be:

"I am removing this player from the field of play with a suspected concussion. This player needs to be monitored and should be assessed medically".

Should there be disagreement (even by a medically trained person) with the referee's decision to seek the removal of the player, the referee must apply Law 3.22.C and order the player to leave the playing area. The situation should always be handled courteously and in a sensitive manner with all involved.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

- Loss of consciousness
- Seizure or convulsion
- Balance problems
- Nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Player is more emotional
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Fatigue or low energy
- Player is more nervous or anxious
- Confusion
- "Don't feel right"
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Feeling slowed down
- "Pressure in head"
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Amnesia
- Feeling like "in a fog"

What are the visible clues of a suspected concussion?

- Lying motionless on ground
- Slow to get up
- Unsteady on feet
- Balance problems or falling over
- Grabbing/Clutching head
- Dazed, blank or vacant look
- Confused/Not aware of plays or events
- Suspected or confirmed loss of consciousness
- Loss of responsiveness



A player removed with a suspected concussion MUST not return



Consistency



Lack of, or perceived lack of consistency by a referee is an area of the game that frustrates players, coaches and spectators. Poor consistency within a referee's decision-making process will eventually lead to control problems. It is important to ensure that you as the referee are clear in the standards that you apply. Early arrival at the breakdown is essential to ensure you are able to pick up the first offence.

Setting your standards.

You must set your standards early in all aspects of the game in order to establish control. This is not achieved by awarding penalties for minor offences that have no impact on play. Instead you must set your standards through hard work on the following:

- Only seek to penalise clear and obvious offences that impact on play.
- Use relevant and precise preventative communication.
- Quality use of downtime.

If players see that there is consistency in your decision-making and communication, they will understand the parameters they need to operate within sooner. This should lead to greater compliance from the players with fewer control problems throughout the game.

Start Positively

Arrive early

Warm up well

Be focused come kick off

Set your standards early

Poor preparation can often be the cause of poor consistency and standards in decision making. Late arrival prior to the game or not warming up properly can often see a referee struggling to be in control from the beginning.

Fitness



Being fit is a fundamental requirement for all referees. Your fitness training should reflect the level that you are refereeing. It is vital that you are fit enough to get to each breakdown as early as possible without being out of breath. This should allow you to be in a good position to communicate your requirements to the relevant players when needed and to apply the correct sanction if required. Your fitness training should incorporate a mixture of speed and endurance.

Branch Referees - There are fitness advisors and resources available to you within your association / society.

Club and School Affiliate Referees - It would be advisable to consult with strength and conditioning coaches involved within your club or school.

Nutrition is also very important. The IRFU have good guidelines specific to referees which can be found on the www.irishrugby.ie/referees

What good looks like:

Able to keep up with play

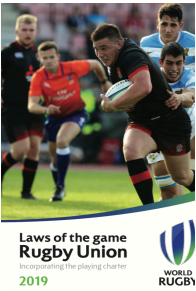
Fast to breakdown

Good speed off mark

High work rate when required

Mentally alert throughout

Law Knowledge



Referees must have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the laws of the game. With this knowledge the referee will facilitate the game with effective management and quality decision-making. World Rugby Law books are distributed every season and are also available online at <http://laws.worldrugby.org>. Continued workshop and meeting attendance is also very important in ensuring consistency and continued development.

Communication



Effective communication is fundamental to successful refereeing. Good communication allows the players to understand your decisions. Poor communication often leads to players becoming confused and frustrated. This in turn can lead to control issues. The referee's communication of decisions needs to be clear and concise.

Whistle

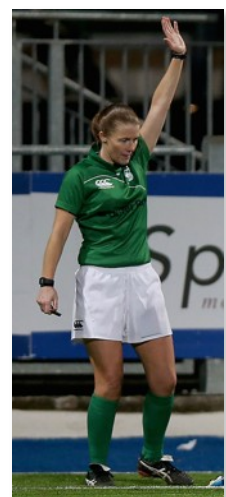
Your whistle is a vital communication tool. To use it effectively requires the correct tone to be used for each particular offence or stoppage in play, for example:

- Penalty - Strong Whistle
- Knock on - Light Whistle
- Foul Play - Very Strong Whistle
- Safety Issue - Very Strong Whistle

Signals

The better your signal delivery the more likely your decision will be accepted by players, coaches and spectators. This is because you will come across as accurate and decisive.

- Signals must be clear, accurate and decisive.
- Primary signals are always delivered first and immediately.
- Secondary signals generally should not be delivered more than twice.
- Signals should be followed up with a brief verbal explanation when possible.
- Be alert to quick taps when signalling a free kick or penalty.



Verbal Communication

Your voice and how you use it plays an integral part in helping you to facilitate the game.

Preventative Communication - If you have the opportunity to prevent an offence you should take it. But for this to happen you must be at the breakdown as early as possible. You must also make sure what you say is accurate and relevant. You must not fall into the trap of running from breakdown to breakdown issuing generic instructions that are not required. The players pick up on this and your communication quickly loses impact.

Downtime - Rugby is a game with frequent stoppages. These stoppages can be used by the referee as a chance to communicate to players in order to reinforce parameters and required standards. The referee should only use downtime when required and not for the sake of it. The tone used should generally be low key and reflect the situation at hand.

Formal Warnings - This is when a referee issues a warning to a team or player (usually through the captain) that if there is no change in the teams behaviour that you will have to issue a yellow card. Be prepared to follow through on your warning. Not doing so impacts on your credibility. However, give the team the opportunity to adjust their behaviour. If they react to your warning and adjust their behaviour for a tangible period of time you do not have to go to a yellow card the next time they infringe. However, do consider repeating the warning.

Note: This approach does not apply to foul play or cynical offences. The awarding of a yellow card for these offences is judged individually on a case-by-case basis.

Body Language and Presentation

- Your body language will be read, intentionally or otherwise, by players, coaches, club officials and spectators from the moment you arrive at the ground.
- Look confident, relaxed and in control.
- Be friendly and polite when meeting people.
- Be approachable - Offer yourself but never impose.
- Look the part and dress appropriately.

Remember Good Communication Can Help:

- Change player action.
- Shift the focus from you onto the offending players.
- Establish a rapport and good working relationships with the players.

Verbal Communication

Never be rude

Be friendly and approachable

Be assertive when required

Avoid calling players by their first names

Don't touch players



Poor communication often leads to control issues

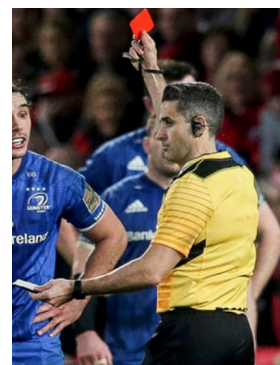


Control



Maintaining control is a fundamental aspect of rugby refereeing. Poor control can lead to safety and discipline issues. Good refereeing strategies include:

- Being authoritative but not officious. There is no place in rugby for referees who are “control freaks”.
- Have empathy and understanding for what the players are trying to achieve.
- Set your standards early with quality decision-making.
- Be in tune with the tone and temperature of the game.
- Be on full alert for flash points and foul play, even at stoppages.
- Be clear and decisive with your communication.



Flash Points

The referee must be aware of potential flash points and act accordingly. Flash points are heated areas and aspects of the game that if not managed correctly can lead to (further) foul play. Examples of potential flash points include:

- Players bundled into touch.
- Just after a try has been scored.
- Scrum popping up.
- Fiercely contested rucks or mauls.
- Players being verbally abusive towards opponents.

It is very important that you do not turn your back or switch off to these situations.

DEALING WITH FOUL PLAY - STEP BY STEP	
1 Loud Whistle	Stops play which is important for safety and to prevent retaliation and escalation.
2 Stay Calm	Players are looking for you to re-establish control.
3 Separate Teams	Prevents further escalation and allows situation to calm.
4 Speak to Offender	You can involve the captain but speak directly to offender.
5 Card Delivery	Hold in the air long enough so players, coaches and spectators can see.
6 Afterwards	Avoid discussing foul play after the game other than to confirm the offence to coach or captain. Sending offs must be reported to your branch.

Preparation



A correct match approach achieved through thorough preparation is key to successfully facilitating a game and delivering on the principles of refereeing.

Before the game it is important to:

- Check your kit. Have a checklist so you do not forget anything.
- Aim to be at the ground at least one hour before kick off. Arrive early taking into account potential traffic problems. Late arrival can impact on your focus and overall performance. It can also have a negative impact on how the players, coaches and spectators perceive you.
- Ensure the pitch is safe to play on. The surface should not have solid parts or deep puddles.
- Ensure the pitch is correctly lined and has the necessary flag posts. The earlier you bring a problem to the attention of the home team the less likely there will be a delay in fixing the issue.
- Organise the stud check early and at a time that is convenient to each team.
- Front row chat. You may offer to speak to the front rows but a team do not have to accept your offer. Keep your front row chat brief and to the point.
- You **must** be in possession of a legible and signed team sheet from each team prior to kick off. Ask for this early to avoid the kick-off being delayed. The replacement front row players must be marked LH (loosehead prop), H (hooker) and TH (tighthead prop). Your branch may have specific regulations pertaining to front row replacements and it is important to know them.
- The law relating to front row replacements is very detailed and important. You should familiarise yourself with Law 3. Ensure you understand how this is also applied to matches where rolling substitutions are in use.
- If you do not have branch appointed touch judges you will need to seek a touch judge from each team. Organise this early and answer any questions they may have. Their assistance is confined to touch, touch in goal and kicks at goal. They cannot report foul play.
- Ensure you are warmed up and focused come kick-off.
- Just prior to kick-off ensure that both teams take to the playing enclosure before you.
- Ensure that both teams are in compliance with the technical zone regulations and that there are no supporters inside the playing enclosure. Handle any technical zone matters calmly and courteously and report any serious problems to your branch.

During the match it is important to:

- Keep the score and the time.
- Keep the time on sin bins and note the number of players yellow carded.
- If you issue a red card take note of the player's name, number, the current score and the time that you sent that player off. These details are required when filling out a sending off report.
- Throughout the game ensure that technical zone regulations are respected.
- If there is a serious problem with a coach or team official, such as continued verbal abuse, you may order that person to leave the playing enclosure. The matter must be reported to your branch.
- Try to avoid engaging with coaches at half time. However, be mindful they may wish to simply advise of a replacement or substitution.
- If a coach or captain, at any point throughout the game, asks you to go to uncontested scrums you **must** do so for the remainder of the game. The subsequent issue of the match result is not your concern.
- Make sure you report any uncontested scrums to your branch and the reason why.

After the match:

- Try to thank the captains and the coaches.
- Be available and approachable to reasonable queries and questions.
- Remain polite and courteous and do your best to try and avoid any conflict and confrontational situations.
- Do not discuss any foul play matters that may or may not have occurred during the match. You can, if asked, clarify with the relevant coach, captain or player the reason for the sending off. Take note of any comments made as you may have to include this in your report.

Rugby Union has positive values and wishes to maintain these values. Any serious abuse of you in any match official role before, during or after the match is unacceptable and should be reported to your branch.



Framework for Penalising



Rugby Union is fluid and free flowing. Throughout a game there are many offences that may occur particularly at the breakdown. However, if the referee was to penalise every offence then it would be a very stop start affair and not an enjoyable experience for the players, coaches, spectators and even the referee. On the other hand, if the referee was to let every offence go unsanctioned, then the game would quickly deteriorate and this in turn could lead to control and safety issues. It is about finding the correct balance between what to penalise and what not to penalise that is one of the key skills a referee needs to understand and develop. This balance is often referred to as the framework for penalising.

There are three key rules to awarding a penalty:

1. You saw the offence.
2. It is clear and obvious.
3. It has a material impact on play.

Referee facilitates:

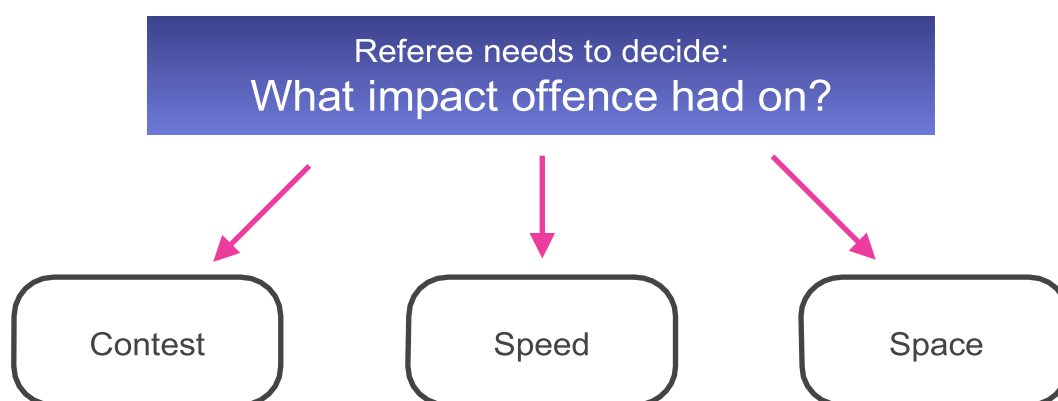
Speed of play

Space

Contest

Materiality of offences.

As already mentioned, there are lots of offences committed throughout a game of rugby. The referee should look to penalise offences that have an impact on play. For offences that have no impact, the referee should use downtime to let the player know that the offence was spotted and that they should be careful not to do it again or they may be penalised.



The above framework for penalising does not apply to foul play offences. Foul play offences are judged independently and almost always result in at least a penalty.



Advantage



The advantage law is short yet creative and very valuable. It allows the referee the opportunity to seek continuity of play to the benefit of the non-offending team. However, there are many variables to consider if you are to referee advantage appropriately.



The referee should:

- Understand that the opportunity to gain advantage is not sufficient. If there is no clear tactical or territorial advantage the referee will return for the original infringement.
- Take into account if the advantage is being played for a penalty offence or a knock on offence.
- Generally, avoid playing advantage at foul play offences. However, if there is an immediate try-scoring opportunity the referee may consider playing advantage if the situation is safe to do so.
- Signal when playing advantage both verbally and with a horizontal arm.
- Signal verbally when advantage is over and lower the horizontal arm.
- Avoid playing advantage if the non-offending team is under pressure.
- Only play advantage if safe to do so.

Good Advantage

Be confident

Be consistent

Signals & voice are essential

There are certain situations where advantage must not be played:

- The ball or a player carrying it touches the referee.
- The ball emerges from either end of the tunnel in the scrum without first being played.
- When the scrum has been wheeled more than 90 degrees (45 degrees U19 Law).
- When a scrum has collapsed. The referee must blow the whistle immediately.
- When a player in a scrum is lifted in the air or forced upwards and has no support on the ground. The referee must blow the whistle immediately.

Kick Off & Restarts



The kick-off occurs to start the match and to start the second half. Restart kicks occur after a score.

Key Points:

- All kick-offs and restarts are taken by a drop kick at the centre of the half way line.
- The ball must reach the opponents 10 metre line unless the opponents play it first.
- If the ball reaches or crosses the 10 metre line but is blown or curls back over that line the referee will play on.
- If the ball goes directly into touch the opposition may choose one of three options:
 1. Have the kick retaken.
 2. Have a scrum at the centre of the half way line.
 3. Accept the kick and take a lineout.
- If the ball is kicked into the opposition in-goal area (without touching a player) and goes dead or is immediately made dead, the opposition team may (i) have a scrum at the halfway line with their put in or (ii) have the ball kicked off again. If the receiving team play the ball and delay making it dead, they have elected to play on so you should award a 22 metre drop out.

Here is a quick reference table for possible kick-off outcomes and the options that the opposition have for each one.

Kick Outcome	Retake	Scrum	Lineout
Not 10	✓	✓	✗
Directly into touch	✓	✓	✓
In-Goal (Grounded or made dead immediately)	✓	✓	✗
Goes out via touch & goal / Dead Ball Line	✓	✓	✗
Ahead of kicker	✗	✓	✗
Wrong kick / place	✓	✓	✗



22 Metre Drop Out



A drop out is taken by the defending team and may be taken anywhere on or behind the 22 metre line.

Key Points:

- It must cross the 22 metre line. If it fails to do so the opposition can (i) have the drop out taken again or (ii) have a scrum at the centre of the 22 metre line.
- If the ball crosses the 22 metre line and is blown or curls back over the line the referee will play on.
- When the ball fails to cross the 22 metre line the referee should be aware of the possibility of advantage to the opponents and should only blow when it is clear that no advantage will occur.
- If the ball is kicked into the opposition in-goal area (without touching a player) and goes dead or is immediately made dead the opposition team may (i) have a scrum at the centre of the 22 metre line from where the ball was kicked with their put in or (ii) have the ball kicked off again.

Here is a quick reference table for possible drop out outcomes and the options that the opposition may have for each one.

Kick Outcome	Retake	Scrum	Lineout	Free Kick
Wrong type of kick	✓	✓	X	X
No crossing the 22 (subject to advantage)	✓	✓	X	X
Directly into touch	✓	✓	✓	X
In-Goal (Grounded or made dead immediately)	✓	✓	X	X
Goes out via touch & goal / Dead Ball Line	✓	✓	X	X
Ahead of kicker	X	✓	X	X
Delay	X	X	X	✓

The Breakdown



The tackle and ruck are often referred to as “The Breakdown”. It is one of the most dynamic and physical aspects of rugby. It requires very high levels of alertness and accuracy in decision making for it to be refereed correctly. As a referee you must fully understand what constitutes a tackle, ruck and maul and then what the players can and can’t do. Your focus should be to ensure the safety of the players and to facilitate a legitimate contest, the speed of ball, and the space that players are entitled to.

The Tackle



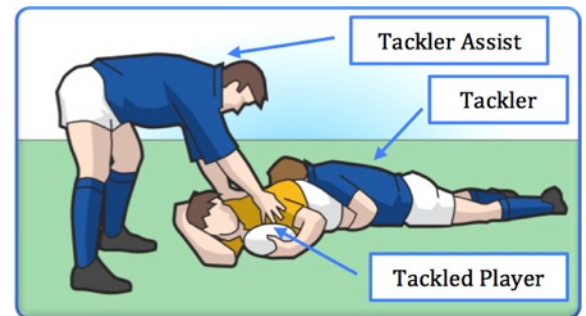
Key Components & Players

Tackled Player - This is a player who while in possession of the ball is held by an opponent and brought to ground. Brought to ground means at least one knee is on the ground.

Key Points:

- Must release the ball once isolated.
- Must release the ball before getting back to feet.

Tackler - This is a player who goes to ground with the tackled player while making a tackle.



Key Points:

- A. Must release the ball and / or tackled player.
- B. Must roll / move away from the tackle.
- C. Must enter the tackle from an onside position (through the gate) should he/she wish to contest for the ball.

Tackler Assist - This is a player who pulls an opponent in possession of the ball to ground but remains on their feet. By remaining on their feet this player is not considered a tackler but has still completed a tackle.

Key Points:

- Must release the tackled player and / or the ball once brought to ground.
- Must enter the tackle from an onside position (through the gate) should he/she wish to contest for the ball.

Arriving Players - Are players not involved in making a tackle but who arrive at a tackle and contest for the ball. They must remain on their feet and must enter through the gate.

Ruck



A ruck is a phase of play where one or more players from each team who are on their feet are in physical contact over the ball, which is on the ground. A ruck usually develops from a tackle so it is important to be clear when a tackle has ended and a ruck has begun.



Key Components:

- Players entering a ruck must do so from an onside position (through the gate).
- Players must remain on their feet when joining and while in a ruck.
- Players cannot charge dangerously into a ruck. They must attempt to bind onto a player in the ruck.
- Players who are on their feet and bound in a ruck can use their feet to move or release the ball but cannot kick the ball. If they make contact with a player's head, they run the risk of a red card.
- Players must not handle the ball in a ruck particularly while a contest for the ball is taking place. However, if a player firmly has his / her hands on the ball before a ruck has formed that player does not have to release the ball.

Ruck Offside - Once a ruck has formed there is an offside line at each hindmost foot. Players from both teams who are not taking part in the ruck must remain behind the hindmost foot on their side of the ruck until the ruck has ended.

5 Second "Use It" - If the ball is available to be played the team in possession must move the ball away from the ruck. If they do not the referee calls "use it" and the team in possession now have 5 seconds in which to move it. If they don't then the referee will award a scrum to the opposing team.

Unplayable - If the ball becomes unplayable at a tackle or ruck the referee should award a scrum to the team who were moving forward immediately prior to that tackle or ruck.



If any situation is or appears dangerous or a player is in a dangerously prone position the referee should blow the whistle immediately and loudly to stop play.



Maul



A maul is formed when the ball carrier is held upright by one or more opponents, while at the same time being bound onto one or more teammates. Therefore, a minimum of three players is required to form a maul.

- Players joining the maul must do so from behind or alongside the hindmost player on their own side of the maul. Players must not swim along the side of a maul.
- Players who entered the maul correctly can force their way through the middle of the maul to challenge for the ball.
- Players must not jump on top of the maul.
- Defending players must not collapse the maul.
- Players cannot charge dangerously into the maul. They must attempt to bind on entry.
- The offside line for players not bound to the maul is the hindmost foot on their own side of the maul.



Obstruction at the maul

Prior to the maul forming the ball carrying team must not have players in front of the ball carrier preventing the defending team from either tackling or forming a maul on the ball carrier. This is a form of obstruction and can often happen at maul formation at a lineout or at a kick off or restart reception. A “ripper” who is securing the ball from the player at the front of the maul must attach to that player. The ball must be transferred hand to hand to the back.

Once the ball carrier detaches from the maul that maul is now over. This player must not have teammates in front of him / her obstructing or blocking potential tacklers.

End to a maul

When the maul has stopped moving forward it may do so again provided it does so within 5 seconds. When it stops a second time if the ball is available to be played the referee allows a reasonable time for the ball to be played. However, if it is not played or cannot be played the referee will order a scrum to the team not in possession when the maul formed.

When a team is defending, they may try to hold the ball carrier upright in order to form a maul. If this maul stops moving forward and the ball cannot emerge then the referee will order a scrum to the team not in possession at the formation of the maul. If a maul legally goes to ground and the ball must be immediately available to be played. If it is not immediately available to be played the referee will award a scrum to the team that were not in possession of the ball at the formation of the maul.

Positioning Breakdown



Step 1 - Arrival

- Arrive early.
- Locate the ball.
- Position yourself to the side of the ruck standing roughly on the hindmost foot of team in possession.
- Always face forward to the defence.
- Issue preventative communication if possible and applicable.



Step 2 - Scan

- Once contest is over move into scan position.
- The scan should only take place just prior to the scrum half picking the ball.
- The scan should focus on inside players first before moving to wider players.
- Scan should be completed quickly so that your eyes are off the breakdown for the shortest time possible.



Step 3 - Post Scan

- Once scan is completed you must immediately focus back on the breakdown.



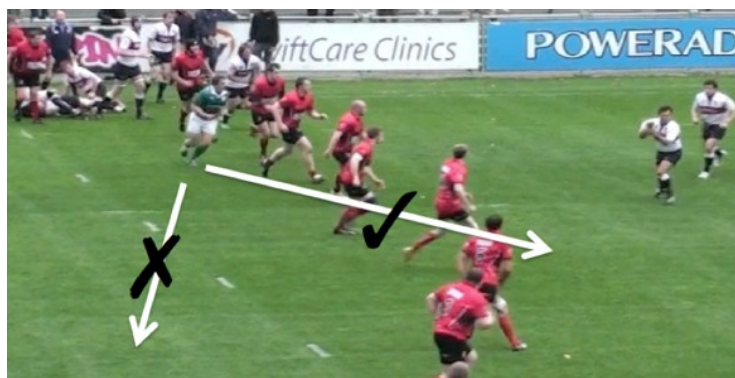
Step 4 - Pass From Ruck

- If the ball is passed towards the side of the ruck you are standing, then you should step forward with your outside foot and pivot so that you keep the ball in view as it is being passed.
- The step forward will allow the defensive players to push up past you.
- If the ball is passed to the opposite side to where you are standing then you should simply move and follow play as the ball is passed.



Step 5 - Movement To Next Breakdown

- Move and follow play.
- You should generally move in the direction of the pass as it is moved along the backline. This keeps you in line with play.
- You should not move away downfield (unless you are following a break), as you will probably be out of position at the next breakdown and you will have to move backwards to get late into position.





Key to successful refereeing of the lineout is establishing and maintaining the correct gap while being vigilant for offences particularly foul play.

Quick Throw - Once the ball has gone into touch you must remain alert to the possibility of a quick throw.

- It must be the same ball.
- The thrower is the only person (apart from the player who carried it into touch) who may have handled it.
- The thrower must not step into the field of play when throwing in the ball.
- It must be thrown past the 5 metre line either straight or towards the thrower's teams goal line.
- The player throwing in may be anywhere outside the field of play between the place where the ball would be thrown in at a formed lineout and the players goal line.
- It cannot be taken quickly once the lineout has formed which involves at least two players from each team standing on or around the line of touch.

Tip: Once you are happy that a quick throw cannot be taken you should try to keep as many players as possible in view as you make your way to the lineout.

Lineout Setup - When setting up the lineout it is good to have a checklist:

- Ensure a one metre gap. It is best to get the players at the front to organise this.
- Check that the non-throwing in team do not have more numbers in the lineout.
- Ensure that the non-throwing in team has a player standing two metres from the line of touch and two metres from the five metre line. This player is often the non-throwing in hooker, but it can be any player. This player cannot move from this position until the ball leaves the throwers hands.
- Receiver (scrum half). Should a team choose to have a receiver that player must stand two metres back from the lineout. This player cannot move into the lineout until the ball leaves the throwers hands.
- Ensure neither team jump for the ball before the ball has been thrown.
- Ensure that the player throwing in the ball does not dummy the throw in.
- Ensure that players who are not taking part in the lineout (usually backs) are back at least 10 metres from the line of touch.

Tip: Organise the lineout setup early to avoid delaying the teams.

Lineout Beginning

After the ball is thrown you should:

- Ensure the ball has been thrown in straight and travels at least 5 metres.
- Be vigilant for any foul play particularly while players are in the air.
- Ensure that players of both teams remain onside until the lineout has ended.



Lineout Ending

The lineout ends when the ball or a player carrying it leaves the lineout.

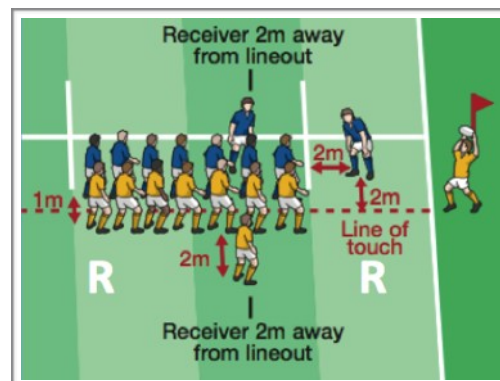
This includes the following:

- When the ball is thrown, knocked or kicked out of the lineout.
- When the ball or a player carrying the ball moves into the area between the 5 metre line and the touchline.
- When a lineout player hands the ball to a player who is peeling off.
- When the ball is thrown beyond the 15 metre line, or when a player takes or puts it beyond that line.
- When on the formation of a ruck or maul the hindmost foot of the ruck or maul moves over the line of touch.



Lineout Positioning

The diagram to the right shows the front and back position to take up at each lineout marked with R. You should try and vary your position between the front and back of the lineout on the throwing in side. There are a number of factors to take into account such as weather conditions, skill levels of the players, sun in your eyes and the position of the lineout on the pitch.



Lineouts Inside 22 - For every lineout inside the 22 you should stand towards the back on the goal line side. You should take up this position regardless of which team is throwing in. This position will ensure you are still able to adjudicate on all aspects of the lineout but you are in a prime position should the attacking team make a successful break for the goal line.

Lineout Offside

Participating players are:

- Players in the lineout.
- The player throwing in the ball and immediate opponent.
- The players of both teams who are in the receiving position.

For these players the offside line is along the line of touch and the 15 metre line.

All other players are non-participating players (usually the backs and forwards not in the lineout) and their offside line is 10 metres back from the line of touch or the goal line if that is nearer. They must not move past this offside line until the lineout is over. **Exception:** They may move forward in anticipation of a long throw in.

Lineout - Key to Success

Alert to quick throw

Establish and maintain the gap

Be vigilant for offences particularly foul play

Keep players inside

Offside - Open Play



In open play a player is offside if that player is in front of a team mate who is carrying the ball or who last played the ball.

Offside means that a player is temporarily out of the game. Such players are liable to be penalised if they do one of three things:

- Interfere with play.
- Move forward towards the ball.
- Fail to comply with the 10 metre law (Law 10.4.C).

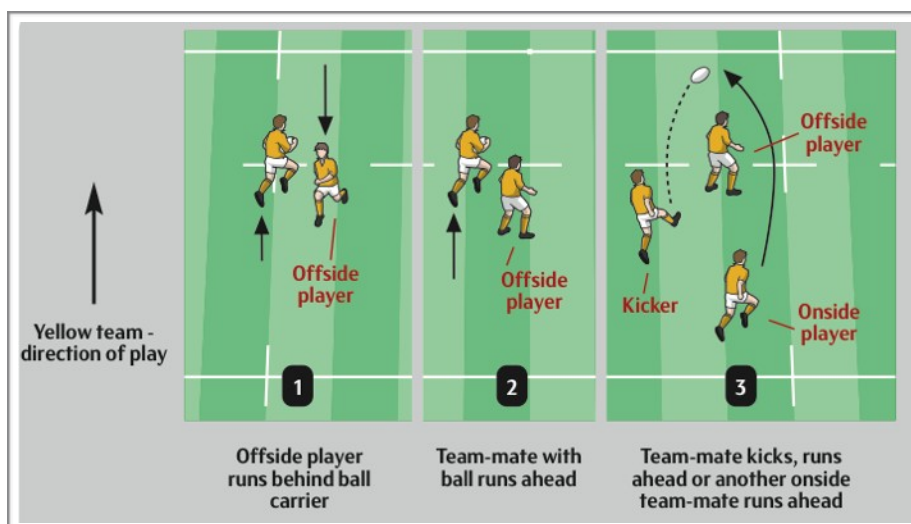
Note:

- A player who is in an offside position is not automatically penalised. The player should only be penalised if that player takes part in the game.
- An offside player who receives an unintentional throw forward is not penalised.
- A player can be offside in general play in in-goal.

Offside players may be put onside by several actions.

Actions by own team:

- The offside player runs behind the teammate who last touched, kicked, or carried the ball.
- When a teammate carrying the ball runs in front of the offside player.
- When the kicker or a player who was behind or level with the kicker when or after it was kicked runs in front of the offside player.



Offside Management - Key to success

Use preventative
communication where possible

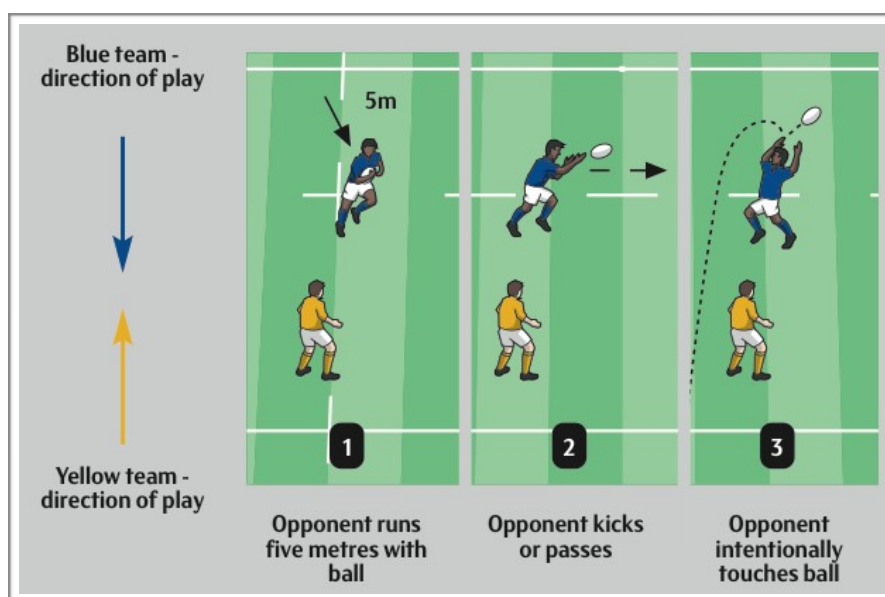
High awareness levels

Be sure - No guesswork

Know your law

Actions by opposing team:

- When an opponent carrying the ball runs 5 metres.
- When an opponent kicks or passes the ball.
- When an opponent intentionally touches the ball but does not catch it.



Being put onside under 10 metre law:

- The offside player must retire behind the imaginary 10 metre line across the field, otherwise that player is liable to be penalised.
- While retiring, the player can be put onside before moving behind the imaginary 10 metre line by any of the three actions of that players own team listed above. However, the player cannot be put onside by any action of the opposing team.

Scrum



Safety is the number one priority when refereeing the scrum. It is also important that the referee facilitates a fair contest with any material offences appropriately managed or sanctioned.

What is a scrum?

A scrum is a restart after a minor stoppage or infringement. It can only take place in the field of play. The middle line can be no closer than five metres from the goal line and touch line.

Players & Positions

- Scrum consists of 8 players from each team.
- 3 Players make up the front row (see picture).
- 2 players make up the second row.
- 3 players make up the back row and must bind onto a second row player.
- One of the back row players packs at the back of the scrum and is called the number 8.
- The scrum half throws the ball into the scrum.



Scrum Begins: When the ball leaves the hands of the scrum half.

Scrum ends:

- When the ball comes out.
- When the hindmost player unbinds to pick up the ball.
- When the ball is on or over the try line (cannot happen in U19 law).

Forming a scrum - Step by step:

1. Blow your whistle and give primary signal.
2. Then give secondary signal.
3. Make a light mark on the ground.
4. Check that the scrum half is ready with the ball.
5. Ensure backs are onside.
6. Ensure both packs are ready with No. 8 bound before you call crouch.
7. The referee can now begin the engagement sequence.

The Engagement Sequence

It is very important that the engagement sequence is performed correctly. Problems in the scrum can often be traced back to issues with the engagement sequence. If the engagement sequence is performed correctly problems are less likely to occur and when they do it is easier for the referee to identify their cause.

"Crouch"	"Bind"	"Set"
		
Tips for match officials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On the request to "crouch" all three players across the front row must be at the same height• Both front rows must be at the same height• Shoulders must not be below hips• Second rows must be bound to the props• Check that the number 8 is bound and not standing off to try to increase the force on engagement• Aim for ear-to-ear position• Ensure heads are ready to go into the appropriate slot - no head on head	Tips for match officials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is illegal for a prop to pull an opposition player into the engagement• The tight head binds on the body of the opposition loose head anywhere from the arm pit or along the body• The tight head MUST NOT bind on the shoulder or arm of the opposition loose head• The loose head must bind on the body of the opposition tight head	Tips for match officials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There will be some movement on engagement and the players will be "loaded" ready to push• Use the voice to stop the movement• Instruct the scrum half not to throw the ball in until the scrum is static• Ensure players are pushing straight and not on an angle• Give signal/voice when scrum square and stationary

Throw In

- The scrum must be square and stationary prior to the throw in.
- The scrum-half must throw the ball in straight, but they are allowed to align their shoulder to the middle line of the scrum, therefore allowing them to stand a shoulder width towards their side of the middle line.
- No signal from the referee.
- One front row player from the team who put the ball in must strike for the ball.

Scrum Wheel

If the middle line of the scrum wheels beyond 90 degrees (45 degrees in U19 Scrum Law) the referee will reset the scrum. The same team will throw in.



Safety - The referee must stop the engagement sequence if a player looks in difficulty or asks to stop the sequence.



Managing Problems

Through understanding and appropriate management, a referee can help insure a safe scrum with a fair contest.

Your approach

- Clear and obvious infringements that are causing problems should be penalised.
- Minor offences that have little or no impact can be dealt with through management. If the problem persists you should move to penalty.
- If there are continuous collapses and stand ups that you cannot manage you should consider ordering uncontested scrums.

Unsafe Mismatches

A team should not be penalised for legally having a stronger

scrum than their opponents. However, they must ensure that they are not creating a safety concern through their scrum dominance.

- A referee may ask a team to control the power of its drive so that the scrum can remain safe, viable and upright.
- If this fails to happen the referee may penalise that team and ultimately move to uncontested scrums.
- The referee should involve the captain and pack leader in this process.
- The same management approach can also apply to a particularly dominant front row player.

Props

- Must bind on the back or side of opposing props jersey.
- Must not exert downward pressure with bind.
- Must not grip arm, chest, collar or sleeve of opposition prop.
- Must drive straight. A prop angling outwards off his / her hooker can often be an indication of an incorrect drive.
- Must not drive upwards or downwards.

What we want:

Engagement sequence performed correctly.

Scrum is steady and parallel to touch lines prior to throw in.

Front row players drive straight and horizontally.

Correct binds.

No whip or snap wheeling of the scrum.

Backrow remain bound until scrum ends.

Scrum half and backs remain onside.

Under 19 Scrum Variations

Under 19 Variations apply to all age-grade matches from U13-U19. These variations also apply at certain grades in the adult game domestically.

Key points:

- Scrum cannot be pushed more than 1.5 metres.
- Ball must be moved from the scrum once it is clearly won and at the feet of the No.8.
- Teams cannot deliberately wheel.
- Scrum cannot wheel more than 45 degrees. Reset and the same team throw in.
- If a team has 22 or more players in their squad that team must have at least 3 players who can play in the front row along with their starting front row so that each of the front row positions has appropriate cover.
- The No.8 must pack between both locks.
- Scrums must always have the same numbers. If one scrum has to reduce in numbers the opposing team's scrum must do the same and they remove a player who stands in the backline. Both scrums must pack without a player in the No.8 position. See the law book for the permutations for reduction of more than one player.

Front Row Chat

Agree with coaches

Keep it very brief and to the point:

- Engagement sequence

- Steady & Straight

- Legal Binding

- Scrum half throw in

Uncontested Scrums

The referee should order uncontested scrums in the following instances:

1. **There are continuous collapses and problems the referee cannot manage.**
2. Coach or captain ask the referee to go to uncontested scrums.
3. Front row replacement issues.

In Practice:

- The team putting it in must win it.
- There is no push or wheel.
- The No.8 can play the ball.



IRFU Referee Department

Dudley Phillips – Head of Referees

David Wilkinson – National Referee Manager

Neysa Herity – Referee Coordinator

Julie Moran – Referee Coordinator

IRFU Referee Development Staff

Peter Fitzgibbon – Connacht

Referee Development / Education Manager

Peter.Fitzgibbon@irfu.ie

Sean Gallagher – Leinster

High Performance Referee

Sean.Gallagher@irfu.ie

Chris Harrington – Munster

Referee Development Manager

Chris.Harrington@irfu.ie

Richard Kerr – Ulster

Referee Development Manager

Richard.kerr@irfu.ie