

## THE SCRUM

Good knowledge of the scrum is essential to positive refereeing in this key area.

The objectives of each team in the scrum are fundamentally different; and the roles of the front row players change depending on which team is throwing-in.

### 1. What is the scrum?

- A restart
- Contest for possession
- Contest for quality of possession
- Contest of strength and of technique

The last two issues govern the essential objectives of each team.

### 2. What are the primary objectives of each team?

#### 2.1 The throwing in team

- Solid, steady scrum
  - Slight nudge forward
  - Well controlled channelled ball
  - Quality possession.
- By achieving these, the throwing-in team are well placed to retain possession in attack; or to clear the ball in defence.  
- Failure to achieve will lead to poor possession and pressure likely to lead to loss of possession.

#### 2.2 The non-throwing-in team

- Disrupt the quality of possession
- driving forward  
- wheeling  
- pressure from the tight head  
- pressure from the loose head

2.3 The primary and critical objective of the referee (*following safety*) is to ensure that *the contest is fair*, and that legitimate pressure is allowed; and that illegitimate pressure is not. This requires high levels of:

- Observation
- Awareness
- Input

To ensure that:

- The engagement sequence is correct, and the teams do not go in before you call 'set'.
- Equal distance from the mark.
- The mark is protected
- Binding is correct
- Props are 'straight'
- Following engagement the scrum remains steady; i.e. no pre-scrummaging.
- The scrum remains parallel to the touch line. (Both teams may have a reason to wheel when the scrum has started.)

2.4 As the match develops, the referee must remain alert to occurrences and patterns, i.e 'evidence.'

- What front row is under pressure?
- [A team who are rock solid on their throw-in; but the scrum is very unstable on opponents throw-in are likely to be dominant.]
- Is a particular player under pressure?
- Is the pressure legitimate or not?
  - Binding
  - Body angles
  - Head/shoulders position
  - Standing up

### 3. Problems

#### 3.1

- Multiple resets
- Crabbing
- Collapse
- Stand up
- Incorrect body angles
- 'Whip' (very fast) wheel
- Incorrect binding
- Replacement front rows
- Back row

#### 3.2 Repeated problems:

- Front rows to start in standing position.
- Front rows to be clearly no more than arm's length apart.
- Input all of 2.3 above.
- Be positioned where the problem is.
- Address both teams.
- Use down-time.
- Low tolerance.
- Sanction.

#### 3.3 Management/Sanction

- Resets
  - Speak to both front rows/props
  - repeat requirements
- Why Sanction?
  - to penalise a clear offence
  - to change player behaviour

While a clear offence is a sanction, a logical sequence could be:

- Management (communication/prevention)
- Sanction

(collapse after put-in is PK, if/when sanction is applied.)

### 3.4 Specific warning to Props re: yellow card:

- with correct and logical management and sanctions, this should rarely be necessary.
- clear communication, (include captains) that a yellow card is 'next'.
- Deliver.

### 4. Pre-match Communication

[Agree with coaches]

- Brief, to the point.
- Engagement sequence.
- Square on.
- Binding.
- Straight push.
- Remain steady prior to throw-in
- Straight throw-ins.

### U19 Variations:

- Correct distance apart is crucial (arm's length)
- No.8 must pack between the locks
- 1.5 M push
- 45 degree wheel – Reset- Same team put in
- Must be even numbers at all times
- When there are reduced numbers, both teams must setup:  
7 Man Scrums: 3-4  
6 Man Scrums: 3-2-1  
5 Man Scrums: 3-2

### 7's Variations:

- 3 Players from each team
- All bound in – until the scrum ends
- Cannot intentionally kick the ball out in direction of the opponents goal line (PK)
- Backs must stay back 5M until the scrum ends