This manual is aimed at helping new referees by giving them an understanding of the main priority areas of refereeing. It is designed to explain and simplify the Laws of the Game with a focus on their practical application. More experienced referees should also find this manual a useful reference.

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 game. Better refereeing also helps maintain the core values and principals of rugby union.

Better Referee = Better Game = Better Players

Principals of Refereeing

- Safety
- Consistency
- Fitness
- Communication & Control
- 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 underage 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.

If any 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 3.9 and the IRFU Concussion Guidelines for Referees.

Law 3

Number of Players - The Team

3.9 THE REFEREE’S POWER TO STOP AN INJURED PLAYER FROM CONTINUING

If the referee decides – with or without the advice of a doctor or other medically qualified person – that a player is so injured that the player should stop playing, the referee may order that player to leave the playing area. The referee may also order an injured player to leave the field in order to be medically examined.
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 (brain) 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.

**Therefore the player with suspected concussion MUST be immediately removed from activity and MUST NOT return.**
Recognise & Remove - The Handover of Care.

The referees role is crucial in the recognition of concussion and then the removal and handover of care of the injured player. Therefore 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 phase in this situation could be:

“I am removing this player from the field of play with a suspected concussion. He/She needs to be monitored and should be assessed medically”.

Should their be disagreement (even by a medically trained person) with the referees decision to seek the removal of the player then the referee must apply Law 3.9 and order the player to leave the playing area. The situation should always be handled courteously and in a sensitive manor 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

There is no head injury assessment in the domestic game. If a player is removed with a suspected concussion they must not return!
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. So it is important to ensure that you as referee are clear in the standards they you apply. Early arrival at the breakdown is essential as the later you arrive the more likely it is that you will pick up the second or third offence rather than the first one.

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 in sooner. This should lead to more compliance from the player and less control problems throughout the game.

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 start.

Fitness

Being fit is a fundamental requirement for all referees. If you are not fit enough you will struggle to:

• Keep up with play.

• Use effective preventative communication.

• Maintain concentration levels for the duration of the game.

• Make quality decisions.

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 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.
The referee 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](http://laws.worldrugby.org). Continued workshop and meeting attendance is also very important in ensuring consistency and continued development.

Effective communication is fundamental to effective refereeing. Poor communication often leads to players becoming confused and frustrated. This in turn can lead to control issues. So 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.
- 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 to quick taps when signalling a free kick or penalty.
**Verbal Communication** - Your voice 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 the same or similar offences are committed then you will have to issue an offending player(s) with a yellow card. Be prepared to follow though 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.

Note: This approach does not apply to foul play or “professional foul” offences. These are judged individually on a case-by-case basis.

**Body Language and Presentation**

- Your body language will be read, intentionally or otherwise, by players, 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.

**Do’s & Don’ts**

- 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!
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.

• 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 as a referee you do not turn your back on these situations.

DEALING WITH FOUL PLAY - STEP BY STEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Loud Whistle - Stops play which is important for safety and to prevent retaliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stay Calm - Players are looking to you to re-establish control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Separate Teams - Prevents further escalation and takes heat out of situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Speak to Offender - You can involve the captain but speak directly to offender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Card Delivery - Hold in the air long enough so players, coaches and spectators can see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Afterwards - Avoid discussing foul play after the game other than to confirm to coach or captain what offence was for. Sending offs must be reported to your branch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IRFU Referee Manual 2015
A correct match approach achieved through thorough preparation is key to successfully facilitating a game and delivering on the principals 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 1 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. Moulds can be worn but not if they are frayed or have sharp edges.

- 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 legible and signed team sheet from each team prior to kick off. Ask for this early so that kick off is not delayed. The replacement front row are to be marked “P” for prop and “H” for hooker. Your branch may have specific regulations pertaining to front row replacements so it is important know those.

- The law surrounding 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. 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 and 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 cad card take note of the players 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 adhered to.
- If there is a serious problem with a coach, such as continued verbal abuse, you may order that coach to leave the playing enclosure. The matter must be reported to the branch.
- At half time coaches are not allowed to speak to you regarding your performance. However he/she can speak to you briefly to 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.
- You must report all 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 avoid and conflict and confrontation.
- 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.
- Any serious abuse to you before, during or after the match should be reported to the branch.
Throughout a game there are many offences that may occur particularly at the breakdown. However if the referees was 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. So it is finding the correct balance between what to penalise and what no 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.

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 then 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 the 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.

• 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 drop the horizontal arm.

• Not play advantage if the non-offending team is under pressure.

• Only play advantage if safe to do so.

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.

• When players in a scrum have been lifted in the air or forced upwards out of the scrum.

• When serious foul play has occurred (but don’t deny the non offending team a clear and immediate try scoring opportunity by blowing your whistle).
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 drops kicks 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 crossed 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kick Outcome</th>
<th>Retake</th>
<th>Scrum</th>
<th>Lineout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not 10</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✘️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly into touch</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Goal (Grounded or made dead immediately)</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✘️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goes out via touch &amp; goal / Dead Ball Line</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✘️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahead of kicker</td>
<td>✘️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong kick / place</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✘️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 curl 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kick Outcome</th>
<th>Retake</th>
<th>Scrum</th>
<th>Lineout</th>
<th>Free Kick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wrong type of kick</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✘</td>
<td>✘</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No crossing the 22 (subject to advantage)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✘</td>
<td>✘</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly into touch</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
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<td>✘</td>
<td>✘</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahead of kicker</td>
<td>✘</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✘</td>
<td>✘</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay</td>
<td>✘</td>
<td>✘</td>
<td>✘</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The tackle and rucks 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. So 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 the ensure the safety of the players and to facilitate a legitimate contest, the speed of ball the space that players are entitled to.

**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:
- Must release the ball and/or tackled player.
- Must roll away / move away from the tackle.
- Having complied with A & B above, the tackle can play the ball from any direction provided the player is on his / her feet and a ruck has not yet formed.

**Tackler Assist** - This is a player who pulls an opponent in possession of the ball to ground but remains on his/her feet. By remaining on his/her 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.
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 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 can not charge dangerously into a ruck.
- Players can use their feet to move or release the ball in the ruck.
- 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 shouts “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 prone position the referee should blow the whistle immediately and loudly to stop play.
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 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.
- 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 bound 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.

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 this maul legally goes to ground and the ball 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.
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 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 who may have handled it.
- The thrower must not step into the field of play as he is throwing in the ball.
- It must be thrown past the 5 metre either straight or towards the throwers goal line.
- It must be taken from any point along the touchline from where the lineout will be to the goal line of the throwing in team.
- 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.

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

**Lineout set up**

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 can not 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.
**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. In general you should try and vary your position between the front and back of the lineout. 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.

Inside 22 - For every lineout inside the 22 you should stand at the back on the try 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 try 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 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lineout - Key to Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alert to quick throw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get the gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigilant for offences particularly foul play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep players onside</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In general play a player is offside of 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 11.4).

Note:

- An offside player who receives an unintentional throw forward is not penalised.
- A player can be offside in general play in in-goal.
- 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.

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.

**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 there actions of that players own team listed above. However, the player cannot be put onside by any action of the opposing team.

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**Offside Management - Key to success**

- Use preventative communication where possible
- High awareness levels
- Be sure - No guesswork
- Know your law

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IRFU Referee Manual 2015
Safety is the number one priority when refereeing the scrum. It is also important that the referee facilities 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 try 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 (can not happen in under 19 law).

Forming a scrum - Step by step:

1. Blow your whistle and give primary signal.
2. Then give secondary signal.
3. Give 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 engage sequence.
The Engage Sequence

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

Throw In

- The scrum must be square and stationary prior to the throw in.
- The scrum half can only throw the ball in when the referee indicates to do so.
- The scrum half may tap the scrum with the ball before the put in but cannot do so if he has already presented the ball for the throw in.
- The throw in must be straight along the middle line.

Safety - The referee must stop the engage 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.

What we want:

- Engage sequence performed correctly.
- Scrum is steady and parallel to touch line prior to put 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.

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 and 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.
Under 19 Scrum Variations

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

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 teams 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. She the law book for the permutations for reduction of more than one player.

Uncontested Scrums

The referee should order uncontested scrums in the following instances:

- Coach or captain ask the referee to go to uncontested scrums.
- There are continuous collapses and problems the referee cannot manage.
- 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.

Front Row Chat

Agree with coaches

Keep it brief and to the point:

- Engage sequence
- Steady & Straight
- Legal Binding
- Scrum half - Throw in