

Module four - Referee coaching in practice

4.1 Competencies

4.1.1 Concept

Continual growth and interest in sport has created enormous demand for high quality sport officials. This has resulted in administrators, at all levels of sport, constantly seeking people who are competent at officiating. However, it would seem that the determination of what constitutes a competent official, and their subsequent identification and development, is far more complex than simply finding someone who exhibits a thorough knowledge of game laws.

Skills related to communication, athleticism, decision-making, legal responsibilities and player management, are increasingly being viewed as necessary. Additionally, issues such as referee coaching and assessment, stress, and referee retention, are now inextricably linked to modern officiating.

From within this context, a clear and concise description of what constitutes effective officiating has proved elusive. Relatively few attempts have been made to quantify systematically the criteria by which practitioners interpret and assess effective or desirable performance in sport. In this regard, officiating is no exception. This is surprising, given that officials are pivotal to the orderly conduct of a sporting contest.

Part of the problem lies in defining the role of the official. Various descriptions have ranged from 'crisis containment', to 'facilitation', to 'maintaining social order'. However, no substantive agreement has been reached.

Despite such lack of clarity, the most recognisable role of the referee is to uphold the laws of the game. Yet, in upholding the laws, their strict application may not necessarily be seen as 'good' officiating. It is maintained that referees should exercise some degree of discretion in their rulings, even though such discretion can lead to numerous complications. Moreover, the complexity of the referees' role multiplies when controlling sporting contests which are contextually based, yet framed by specific and

objective rules. This is particularly so in rugby, where game dynamics ensure that very few, if any, decisions are based on exactly the same set of circumstances.

Referee competencies are a set of parameters that a referee must adhere to in order to ensure that the game is refereed by the laws. They provide the framework for coaching a referee. The question a referee coach should ask about a new referee's performance is, in the majority of situations, "Did the referee display the required level of competence?"

It is important to effective referee coaching that the **competencies** are used. This provides referees with consistent feedback.

4.1.2 Identification of competencies

The framework on which to build sound coaching advice is the International Rugby Board key result areas, key components of referee performance and the competencies attached to each of these key components. Also used are touch judging key components and their competencies. These competencies have been developed in consultation with international referees, and international performance reviewers.

Elements of the game are under the headings of Technical and Management.

Key Components of an official's performance have been identified. These are the broad areas that make up the Technical and Management facets of the coaching function.

Competencies make up the framework of the Key Components, and indicate the expected outcomes from the official's performance. Essentially these are related to technical elements of the game.

For example, under the **Element** heading of **Technical**, we will see (in a later section) a **Key Component** entitled **Tackle**. Then, under **Tackle** we have these **Competencies**:

- Ensured that the tackler released and moved away.
- Ensured that the tackled player made the ball immediately available.
- Ensured that the arriving players did not voluntarily go to ground.
- Ensured that arriving players entered the tackle 'phase' from the correct position.

For each key component, competencies have been produced which indicate the expected outcomes from the official's performance. It is in these that the official is required to be proficient. In the tables in section 4.1.5 are five headings. The first is '**Required competency**', which has been explained above.

The second is '**Indicators of non-compliance**'. This assists you in linking events during a game to the competency area.

The third is '**Possible causes**'. This will give you a possible cause of the non-compliance with the competency.

The fourth is '**Law cross reference**'. This gives any laws which bear relevance to the issues being discussed.

Lastly is a '**Coaching hints key**' column. It is linked by keys to the coaching hints table that follows in section 4.2. The letters in the 'coaching hints key' column correspond to the key in the table. By looking up the key in the appropriate table, it will give you the nature of the shortcoming of the referee or touch judge and some suggestions for coaching hints which may rectify the problem.

If you apply the competencies and the information contained under the other headings, along with the explanation of keys diligently, it will contribute greatly to a consistent approach to the coaching of officials.

It would be impossible, without frequent reprints, to incorporate law changes in this publication. This section emphasises coaching, not law knowledge, which is implied in any coaching that is performed. It is the duty of referee coaches to stay abreast of law changes, interpretations and rulings.

4.1.3 Relevance and relativity

Too often, refereeing skills are described in one of two ways. Firstly, they may be written in general terms. While such descriptions usually encompass the entire domain of refereeing work, they are broad based and cover only the general aspects of referee performance. Secondly, competencies may be written in very specific terms. This method enables explicit and precise descriptions of refereeing work. Sometimes, during the course of a game, the occurrences of certain competencies is minimal (this can open questions of competency relevance).

Nevertheless, no matter how competencies are described, they need to be relevant to specific sports. The differentiation between generic officiating skills and sport-specific skills is important. While there are underlying competencies that all officials require, there are specific skills needed by officials to excel in their chosen sport. Consequently, officiating criteria that are sport-specific require identification and clarification.

More deeply, the identification of the essential skills required by officials is fundamental in two emerging areas of officiating - coaching and assessment. Firstly, effective coaching programs for officials require clear, unambiguous and relevant performance criteria. This ensures focused and relevant curriculum for all officiating levels. Secondly, officials should only be coached with, or assessed against, criteria that are specific and important to sport.

The following section contains the table, as described above, showing the required competency and the associated coaching material to assist the referee and you, the referee coach. These competencies are very specific in relevance to the game being watched, reviewed and processed in accordance with the coaching process described earlier.

However, there exists a further array of more generalised competencies which the referee and mentor should also be aware of. These tend to address the more personalised aspects of a referee's skills and personal make-up, as well as the 'relativity' towards other people involved in the game of rugby, e.g., other officials, player/team coaches, the players, administrators, the media, etc.

4.1.4 Generalised competencies

Management

- Judge player indiscretions consistently.
- Be impartial with all players (e.g. ignore personality clashes, player status, etc.).
- Organise the mechanics of set plays (e.g. make sure the scrum packs safely).
- Work with touch judges collaboratively (e.g. making decisions, player management, etc.).
- Utilise captains and senior players to manage difficult players or situations (e.g. chat on the run).
- Be aware of field marking anomalies.
- Discourage negative tactics (e.g. sledging, time-wasting).
- Provide a safe environment for players (e.g., check studs for sharp projections).

Communication

- Demonstrate composure when communicating to players. Develop a positive rapport with:
 - players
 - coaches
 - administrators
 - officials (other referees and touch judges)
 - support staff (e.g., trainers).

Decision making

- Demonstrate consistency in applying the laws.
- Adapt decision-making to the specific conditions of each game (e.g., weather, interpretation of laws, playing surface, skill levels of different grades).
- Adjudicate fairly and correctly throughout the game based on accurate law knowledge.

Game preparation and analysis

- Demonstrate outcomes of undertaking specific training programs (e.g., physical, psychological).
- Display a professional appearance at all times (e.g., dress on and off the field, calm and controlled manner).
- Prepare physically for each game (physically, psychologically, nutritionally).
- Demonstrate a level of athleticism appropriate to the standard of the game.
- Evaluate performance through:
 - self analysis (e.g., video, worksheets, referee coaching reports)
 - referee-coach reports
 - player feedback
 - coach feedback.
- Demonstrate a willingness to implement suggested feedback (an action plan) to improve performance.

Law knowledge and game understanding

- Take appropriate actions which are applicable to specific situations (e.g., injury, collapsed scrums).
- Understand strategies and techniques used by players (e.g., player organisation in scrums and line-outs, variations of binding, etc.).
- Understand what the players in various positions are trying to do. What are their key factors to fulfill their roles?
- Display effective positional play (e.g., best view of critical incidents, avoid player movement).

4.1.5 Refereeing competencies in detail

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
TACKLE				
<p>Ensured that the tackler released the tackled player and moved away.</p> <p>Ensured that the tackled player made the ball immediately available.</p>	<p>High unplayables count, or conversely, high penalty count; slow or non-existence of ball emerging.</p> <p>Pile-ups; feet on bodies.</p> <p>Few multiple phases of play occurring.</p> <p>Ball not being re-cycled effectively.</p> <p>Tackler's second movement is towards or on top of tackled player, rather than away from.</p> <p>Tackled player, when turned or facing opposition, tries to turn back over whilst still holding the ball. Tackled player, isolated from support, delays release. Conversely, tackler, isolated, prevents quick release.</p>	<p>Speed/mobility deficiency.</p> <p>Incorrect running lines; poor positioning on arrival.</p> <p>Timing of, and/or place of, departure from previous phase.</p> <p>Little or no constructive communication; too much ineffective talking.</p> <p>Poor position and vision of release.</p> <p>Not focussed on players actions.</p> <p>Not reading game / players' intent.</p> <p>Trying too hard for continuity.</p>	<p>15.4</p> <p>15.5</p>	<p>K</p> <p>F</p> <p>P</p> <p>C</p> <p>CL¹⁴</p>
<p>Ensured that the arriving players did not voluntarily go to ground.</p>	<p>Players going to ground or diving over.</p> <p>Players (on their feet), entitled to the ball, can't get access.</p> <p>Frequent pile-ups; ball 'sealed off'.</p> <p>'Plane landing.'</p> <p>'Plane taking off.'</p>	<p>Not focussed on arriving players actions (from both sides)</p> <p>Poor communication; late arrival.</p> <p>Poor position, wrong angle of arrival.</p> <p>Cannot differentiate between driving through (taking off) and diving over (landing).</p>	<p>15.6</p>	<p>P</p> <p>C</p> <p>F</p> <p>K</p>
<p>Ensured that arriving players entered the tackle phase from the correct position.</p>	<p>Players arriving from opposition's side, or in the side.</p> <p>Ball getting 'sealed off' because of body position of players from the other team.</p> <p>Player frustration / retaliation.</p>	<p>Not focused on arriving players actions (from both sides)</p> <p>Poor communication; late arrival. Poor position.</p> <p>Wrong angle of arrival.</p>	<p>15.6</p>	<p>P</p> <p>C</p> <p>F</p> <p>K</p>
<p>Awarded scrum put in to the correct team if the ball became unplayable and there was doubt about which player did not conform to law.</p>	<p>Feed given to side not entitled.</p>	<p>Wrong application of law.</p> <p>Not aware of reason for unplayable. Not reading play. or conscious of which team "moving forward" and when.</p>	<p>15.8</p>	<p>L</p> <p>K</p>

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
ADVANTAGE				
Played territorial / tactical advantage in accordance with the spirit / nature of the game.	Inconsistent application, i.e., same infringement treated with differing application of advantage. Showed uncertainty, e.g. by sometimes staying at place of infringement. Indefinite signalling of advantage. Player frustration with application. Made little or no distinction between penalty and non penalty infringement. Did not or could not read the game.	Confusion regarding what constitutes an advantage Inability to read the game. Not understanding tactical v territorial. Weather and ground conditions not being taken into account, also skill levels of players. Lack of confidence to back judgement. Inability to recognise either team's strengths and weaknesses (e.g., strong scrum, weak line-out).	8.1	K CL ²⁰
Did not return the original infringement after territorial / tactical advantage had been gained. Managed advantage so that 'ball-in-play' time was maximised.	Referee travelled long distances to return to original infringement. Inability of team to capitalise on their advantage caused by their own inadequacies / mistakes. Inconsistency / confusion between clear advantage opportunities rather than possible advantage opportunities.	Non-appreciation of skill levels, and when and how advantage is able to be taken. Not taking weather and ground conditions into account.	8.1	K
Played advantage without putting non-offending players under undue pressure.	Made no distinction regarding field position and/or player numbers, playing similar advantage irrespective of attacking / defending status of non-offending side.	Inability to accurately read the game. Non-appreciation of skill levels, and when and how advantage is able to be taken. Not taking weather and ground conditions into account.	8.1	K
Communicated advantage by signal and voice (including advantage over).	Did not communicate advantage via voice or signal. Hesitant or unclear hand signals.	Does not appreciate importance of signalling / advising players that advantage is being played or is over.		K C

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
RUCK / MAUL				
Ensured that players joined from on-side positions.	Ball/ball carrier being 'sealed-off' from support players. Melées developing with players on wrong sides from either team. Frustration / retaliation from players already correctly joined/bound. High count of unplayables and turnovers. Players not in ruck being taken out of play.	Inadequate communication. Late arrival, poor positioning on arrival (probably too close). Not focused on players arriving. Lack of understanding of the 'clean-out' - one metre limit. legal v illegal (shoulder charge).	16.5 17.4	C P K CL ¹⁵
Ensured that participants and non-participants remained on-side.	Players (both attacking and defending) loitering in offside positions. Players. not bound. coming through/around before ball out. Players detaching. not retiring. fringing. Team entitled to possession not being able to clear the ball quickly/cleanly.	Inadequate communication. Poor position to see offside lines, and players' positions relative thereto (e.g., too square on, too far from breakdown, or too close, etc.). Lack of understanding of Law as to when ruck/maul is over.	16.5 17.4 11.8 16.6 17.5	C P
Ensured that players hands were not used in the ruck.	High number of unplayables / penalties. Players on the ground playing the ball. Increasing levels of player frustration / infringements.	Lack of understanding re the formation of a ruck. Late arrival / poor positioning on arrival. Lack of meaningful communication (that a ruck has formed).	16.4	L C P K
Ensured that rucks / mauls were not collapsed and players did not voluntarily go to ground in a manner contrary to law.	Players engaged in a moving maul suddenly go to ground. Players trying to pull participants out of maul / ruck. Maul stops / moves sideways / backwards and allowed to proceed. Pile-ups and melées occurring after ruck formed.	Lack of directions re release of ball ("use it or lose it"). Lack of understanding of law and mauling techniques. Poor reading of the game - difference between a re-started maul and a new one formed. Cannot differentiate between driving through & diving over.	16.3 17.2	C L K CL ¹⁶
Awarded scrum put-in to the correct side when the ball becomes unplayable.	Player frustration. Confusion whether the phase was a ruck or a maul. Feed given to side not entitled.	Law knowledge lacking re definitions and requirements. Inability as to the type of phase (ruck or maul, collapsed maul or pile-up after a tackle).	16.7 17.6	L K

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
KICKS & GENERAL PLAY				
Ensured that all restart kicks (kick off, drop out, penalty kick, free kick) were taken correctly (method and place), and players remained on-side.	<p>Execution of the kick, or place where taken, not correct.</p> <p>Quick taps being missed / incorrectly called back.</p> <p>Kicks being taken behind referee's back.</p> <p>Referee is missing players ahead of kicker - often evidenced by infringing player's early arrival to where the ball alights or where the receiver is positioned.</p>	<p>Poor positioning at KO / DO.</p> <p>Speed of restart not being recognised / acted upon.</p> <p>Not anticipating timing / direction of kick.</p> <p>Not reading game - quick restarts v tactical - planned moves from kick-off.</p> <p>Insufficient communication.</p> <p>Law knowledge lacking.</p> <p>Lack of concentration / application.</p> <p>Speed of game not being embraced, e.g., quick taps.</p> <p>Game knowledge lacking.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>21</p>	<p>L</p> <p>I</p> <p>K</p> <p>C</p> <p>P</p>
Ensured 10-metre space available to non-offending side at penalty kicks and free kicks.	<p>Observation of kicker and opposing players' positions.</p> <p>Ball carrier being obstructed after quick tap - not being allowed to make ground (10m).</p> <p>Players slow to retire after penalty / free kick awarded.</p>	<p>Lack of meaningful communication / direction to players to stay out of play.</p> <p>Behind / ahead of play - unable to accurately assess 10 metre space.</p> <p>Not correctly managing the situation, especially in the 'red zone'.</p>	21	<p>F</p> <p>C</p> <p>K</p>
Ensured that players were on-side at kicks taken in open play.	<p>Players ahead of kicker, or 'down-town', being allowed to move towards receiver / position of alighting of the ball.</p> <p>Blind-side chasers getting a head start.</p> <p>Players of kicker's team not beyond the imaginary line drawn ten metres in front of the player waiting to play the ball, ball receiver being put under pressure.</p>	<p>Referee watching the ball and/or not focussed on players of either side.</p> <p>Ahead of or behind play too far, not able to assess positions of key players.</p> <p>Not looking behind to check blind-side chasers.</p> <p>Too close to have good breadth of vision.</p> <p>Not communicating with players in offside positions to stay out / back or stop moving.</p>	11	<p>P</p> <p>C</p> <p>F</p> <p>CL⁹</p>
Ensured that all obvious knock-ons and forward passes were detected.	<p>Player / crowd reaction.</p> <p>Players slowing up, looking to referee in anticipation of advantage whistle.</p> <p>Player frustration.</p> <p>Angle / position of hands / arms of the passer indicating forward momentum.</p>	<p>Running lines not straight.</p> <p>Too far ahead of, or behind, play - mobility problems.</p> <p>Too far away from play - view being obstructed by traffic.</p> <p>Little help from touch judges if appointed.</p>	12	<p>C</p> <p>L</p> <p>K</p> <p>CL¹⁶</p>

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
SCRUM				
Ensured that the mark was indicated and scrum engagement procedure of “Crouch, Touch, Pause and Engage” was followed.	Numerous resets for poor engagement. Hesitation by the front rows as to when to attempt engagement. One side going early. Front rows and scrum-halves constantly seeking referee’s attention or asking questions. Players being allowed to dictate the engagement. Engagement process too fast. Front row is showing uncertainty as to where the mark is.	Lack of understanding / appreciation of the mechanics of a scrum. Insufficient confidence to communicate with the tight five re engagement issues. Unable to detect relative strengths and weaknesses of either scrum. Lack of forcefulness / conviction when making the prescribed calls, changing the engagement call during the game, and not applying the appropriate sanctions when regular non-compliance is evident.	20.1	K C CL ¹⁷
Ensured that, after engagement, the scrum was steady and square to touch until the ball was put in.	Again, numerous resets, often for wheeling. Scrum already at an angle when ball being fed, often finishing up being wheeled. Scrum fractures due to initial unsteadiness. Scrum half is moving as he feeds the ball, again due to unsteadiness.	Not concentrating - or not applying standards consistently. Lack of confidence in the phase, applying a ‘let’s get it over with’ approach. Not staying close to scrum, on centre-line, to verbally manage the process. Lack of appreciation of the physical advantage of a team being able to wheel and hence get a turnover. Communication to tight five not effective, or maybe inappropriate. Lack of detection of relative strengths of the two scrums.	20.1	K C P
Ensured that all front row players were bound correctly until the scrum was over.	Numerous resets, usually for collapsing or unsteadiness / poor engagement. Scrum being allowed to finish, but still collapsing, even after ball out. Front rows being too far apart at time of engagement.	Not looking at the full picture - concentrating on ball. Not managing pre-engagement enough, particularly re positioning of front-rows relative to each other (angle / distance). Post-engagement, moving away to back of scrum too quickly, giving poor view of non-feeding tight five.	20.3	I K

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
SCRUM (continued)				
Ensured that there was a fair contest for the ball, including throw-in, foot up and delayed throw-in.	Ball going under hooker's feet. Non-feeding hooker gives up striking for the ball. Scrum-half approaches the scrum on the right shoulder of the referee (who should be standing at the tunnel on the centre line) and feeds the ball from that position. Stance of feeding scrum-half not square, and hand / arm movements not in equilibrium. Positioned too close to scrum.	Sanctions not being applied for regular occurrences. Requirements not made known either pre-match or at the early scrums. Movement away from the tunnel / centre line too early, i.e., too quickly towards the number 8, rather than backing away level with the middle of the scrum. Lack of concentration / intensity.	20.6 20.7 20.8	C I P CL ¹⁸
Managed and applied appropriate sanctions for collapsed (and standing up) scrums.	Non-compliance by one or both scrums with the required engagement sequence, causing repeated collapses. Scrums too far apart (collapse) or too close together (standing up of front rows) prior to engagement. Front rows not square on to each other (one prop overtly leading in), or props boring in on opposition hooker. Front rows standing up during the scrum when being shunted backwards. Props on side opposite to the referee slipping their bind, especially if being pushed backwards. Incorrect binding evident, either before or during.	Not managing the pre-engagement properly. Lack of understanding of the mechanics of a scrum. No allowance made for ground conditions. Poor reading of the game regarding the relative strengths / weaknesses of the two scrums. Pre-match instructions not issued, or not applied. Lack of confidence in applying sanctions - too many resets of the same scrum for the same reasons. Has not sought assistance from touch judges. Poor understanding of the law, especially regarding fractured scrums, popping, etc.	20.1 20.2 20.3 20.9	K C L
Ensured that participants (eg. back row binding) and non-participants remained on-side.	Scrum-half crowded while clearing the ball. Flankers harassing fly-half too quickly. Flankers / No 8 standing up. Screwing scrum being assisted by flanker pulling scrum around. Flankers joining back-row movements too early.	Poor positioning / angle at post-engagement - remaining static / too ball-focused. Lack of communication. Not maintaining overall vision - probably ball-focussed, or overly attentive to the non-participants. Not concentrating sufficiently - using the scrum as a 'rest'. Not communicating with the loose forwards.	20.3 20.10 20.12	P I C

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
LINE-OUTS				
Managed quick throw-ins and quick line-outs effectively.	<p>Evidence of law not being complied with, re who has handled the ball, same ball etc, and also position for same.</p> <p>Not aware of quick throw-in happening, or has allowed one when a formed line-out already exists.</p> <p>Referee has not sought assistance from the touch judges (when appointed).</p>	<p>Sanctions not being applied for regular occurrences.</p> <p>Requirements not made known either pre-match or at the early scrums.</p> <p>Movement away from the tunnel / centre line too early, i.e., too quickly towards the number 8, rather than backing away level with the middle of the scrum.</p> <p>Lack of concentration / intensity.</p>	19.2	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; margin-bottom: 2px;">I</div> <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; margin-bottom: 2px;">K</div> <div style="background-color: lightblue; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">L</div> </div>
Ensured that there was no delay in line-out formation.	<p>Formation of 'huddles'.</p> <p>Undue delay from one team.</p>	<p>Using delay as a 'rest' time.</p> <p>Lack of communication of requirements, either pre-match or during.</p>	19.7	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; margin-bottom: 2px;">C</div> <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; margin-bottom: 2px;">I</div> <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">K</div> </div>
Ensured that there was a fair contest for the ball / including maintaining the gap.	<p>Players of non-throwing side jumping early, probably due to feinting / balking by the thrower.</p> <p>Catcher or throwing side has to lean off the vertical and towards his own receiver, to secure the ball.</p> <p>Non-throwing side not jumping at all, implying persistent crooked throws.</p> <p>Thrower being permitted to take up a position not on the line-of-touch prior to throwing.</p> <p>Evidence of a reasonable gap initially when line-out formed, but movement of players causes closing prior to ball being thrown in.</p> <p>Players jumping for the ball are being impeded by opposition jumpers.</p> <p>Players falling dangerously, due either to being obstructed whilst off the ground, or supporters being barged.</p>	<p>Lack of communication of requirements, either pre-match or during.</p> <p>Not remaining diligent throughout the game - letting standards drop as game progresses.</p> <p>Poor position at the line-out, unable to effectively monitor the thrower / throw-in.</p> <p>Lack of understanding of the line-out technique.</p> <p>Not remaining diligent throughout the game - letting standards drop as game progresses.</p> <p>Drop in concentration and using line-out as a rest time.</p>	19.5 19.6 19.7	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="background-color: purple; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; margin-bottom: 2px;">P</div> <div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; margin-bottom: 2px;">C</div> <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; margin-bottom: 2px;">I</div> <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">K</div> </div>

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
LINE-OUTS (continued)				
Ensured that across and along the line-out offences were managed or penalised.	Players fall dangerously or awkwardly due to supporters being obstructed / impeded. Players regularly appearing on their opponent's side of the line-out after the throw-in	Poor positioning, obstructing a view of the line-out in progress. Too focused on the ball, not getting a broad enough view. Lack of appreciation on the techniques in a line-out, especially in relation to obstruction, barging etc.	19.9 19.13	P K
Ensured non-participants remained on-side	One or both backlines, or individual backs, obviously inside the 10m from line-of-touch whilst line-out still in progress . Throwing team's players advancing as ball thrown in without regard to where the ball is being thrown. Forwards, who have withdrawn from the line to reduce the numbers, returning to the line-out when the ball is thrown in. Non-recognition of a ruck or maul being formed from the line-out, and still not having crossed the line-of-touch and non-participants advancing.	Lack of directions to players during progress of the line-out to stay on-side. Law knowledge deficient, especially restart and end of a line-out, participating vs non-participating players etc. Drop in concentration / diligence. Poorly positioned to see all aspects.	19.10 19.12 19.15	C L P CL ¹²

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
CONTROL				
Used appropriate preventative measures to control the game.	<p>Game gets heated and no steps taken to restore balance.</p> <p>Little or no preventative action on potentially explosive confrontations, non-recognition of rising levels of off-the-ball obstruction, potential flashpoints, retaliation and over-reaction to hard tackles, etc.</p> <p>Little or no effort to initially try to 'manage' first before penalising.</p> <p>Misses opportunities to be pro-active to foresee potential problems, and convey the information to the captains / players.</p>	<p>Lack of ability to recognise when the game is getting heated - due possibly to poor game knowledge combined with inadequate person-management skills.</p> <p>Inability to vary between 'short' game when play gets heated, and 'flowing' when play settles down.</p>	<p>19.9</p> <p>19.13</p>	<p>K</p> <p>C</p> <p>I</p> <p>CL²²</p>
Used appropriate punitive measures to control the game.	<p>Penalising of foul play inconsistent relative to the infringements.</p> <p>Shows hesitancy when firm action required.</p> <p>Opportunity for the players to 'play rugby' being hindered by many penalties / little advantage, etc.</p>	<p>Lack of knowledge of coaching trends; poor law knowledge.</p> <p>Lack of balance between decisive and conciliatory approach.</p> <p>Inability to relax - too tense.</p> <p>Lack of confidence to apply stern measures when warranted.</p> <p>Poor concentration / attention to actions of players away from the ball / breakdown, etc., or out of play.</p>	<p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p> <p>10.3</p> <p>10.4</p>	<p>L</p> <p>C</p> <p>K</p>

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
CONTROL (continued)				
Managed foul play (dangerous play and misconduct) effectively, utilising admonishment, cautioning and temporary suspension, and sending off, appropriate to the offence.	<p>Players who deliberately and/or repeatedly infringed not penalised accordingly.</p> <p>Inappropriate / inconsistent sanctions relative to the infringement, including dangerous tackles, players on the ground in rucks not being protected, players charging into side of rucks / mauls.</p> <p>Repeated foul play.</p> <p>Control deteriorating.</p>	<p>Lack of confidence to apply stern measures when warranted.</p> <p>Inability to set / apply standards of discipline for the entire match.</p> <p>Poor law / game management knowledge, and the requirements of the foul play provisions in the laws.</p>	<p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p> <p>10.3</p> <p>10.4</p> <p>10.5</p> <p>10.6</p>	<p>C</p> <p>L</p> <p>CL²¹</p>
Managed and/or applied sanctions for incidents of obstruction / unfair play and repeated infringements effectively.	<p>Consistent infringements (especially at the breakdown) of a similar nature, and particularly in the 'red zone', being penalised but no other communication evident.</p> <p>No use of temporary suspension available for such occurrences.</p> <p>Non-distinction between 'professional fouls' versus other infringements, again particularly in relation to the attacking /defending status of the teams, and tactical and territorial implications.</p> <p>Kickers being (repeatedly) checked / bumped etc.</p> <p>Frustration / retaliation evident from kicker / kickers players / chasers.</p> <p>Legitimate chasers impeded; not arriving as expected.</p> <p>Receiver, focussed on the ball, unexpectedly no longer in position, or out of play, indicating obstruction / physical interference.</p>	<p>Lack of game knowledge; inability to spot slowing-down, obstructive and negative tactics /techniques.</p> <p>Insufficient skills in reading the game relative to conditions, player skill levels, state of the game, etc.</p> <p>Ineffective or non-existent communication.</p> <p>Attention not directed to appropriate area, in accordance with the sequence of kick / chase /receive. Takes eye off kicker too quickly, or watches the ball in the air, or does not anticipate approximate area of alightment; finishes up either too close to receiver, or at wrong angle or position to see receiving of the ball.</p> <p>Other players preventing a good view of proceedings.</p> <p>Not communicating with players to stay away and not impede.</p>	<p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p> <p>10.3</p> <p>10.4</p> <p>10.5</p> <p>10.6</p>	<p>K</p> <p>C</p> <p>I</p> <p>P</p> <p>F</p>

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
COMMUNICATION				
Communicated effectively with the whistle and voice. Demonstrated ability to vary communication.	Whistle muffled, monotonous or difficult to hear. Play often continuing after whistle blown. Tone of voice not varied. Player confusion and/or dissent evident.	Hasn't had any instruction / advice re whistle usage. Lack of confidence. Lack of appreciation of effective voice control and body language to assist level of positive communication.		<div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">C</div> <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">K</div>
Communicated effectively with signals (primary / secondary / tertiary) and non-verbally in accordance with protocol. Communicated effectively with other match officials.	Body language / outcomes (especially at the breakdown) indicating inadequate voice communication from the referee, or non-specific as to player(s) (e.g., colour / number) or potential infringement (hands, etc.). Players / spectators unsure whether infringements have been detected. Arm signals indecisive or inconsistent. Arm signal dropped then reappears for same advantage, etc. Discussions with other match officials / captains / players drawn out and excessive, or conducted at inappropriate times / locations.	Lack of game knowledge / techniques as to players intentions at the various phases leading to inability to be pro-active / preventative. Lack of knowledge re prescribed signals (law book). Lack of understanding of the protocol, and 'team of three' concepts.		<div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">C</div> <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">K</div> <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">L</div>
Ensured that interactions with captains / players were effective.	Decisions difficult to decipher players / captains often querying reasons for penalties / stoppages / determinations of put-ins, etc. Body language of referee indicates little player rapport with referee. Communication attempts with captains not producing the desired outcomes.	Lack of communication skills and protocol.		<div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">C</div>

4.1.5 Touch judge competencies in detail

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
FOUL PLAY				
Detected incidents of foul play, and signalled such incidents in the correct manner.	Incidents in play incorrectly reported as foul play. Uncertainty or hesitation in signalling foul play. Undue delay in reporting incidents of foul play. Seemingly obvious incidents of foul play not being reported. Frequent occurrences of the referee not acting on the reports. Inconsistency of reporting / non-reporting.	Poor positioning to detect the incident. Lack of game knowledge / confidence to recognise foul play as opposed to hard but legal play. Inability to read the game, and to detect changes in the tone of the game.		<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px;">K</div> <div style="background-color: #800080; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px;">P</div> </div>
Communicated foul play reports to the referee in accordance with accepted protocol.	Reporting process drawn out, with referee often requiring more information, asking a lot of questions. Wrong players called out, or captain called out because no number given. Inappropriate action / sanctions applied for the offence. Overly demonstrative descriptions / demonstrations during the reporting process.	Poor positioning to detect the incident. Inability to focus on clarity and brevity whilst reporting. Lack of game knowledge / reading of the game. Lack of confidence in adequately describing the severity of the incident. Inability to remain detached and give a calm, balanced report, maybe reacting to crowd / player pressure.		<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #800080; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px;">P</div> <div style="background-color: #ffcc00; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px;">F</div> <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px;">K</div> <div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px;">C</div> </div>

Required competency	Indicators of non-compliance	Possible causes	Law cross-ref	Coaching hints key
COMMUNICATION				
Communicated correct information to the referee for assistance with in-goal decisions.	Actions / signals / movement near or in in-goal not consistent with the referee's decision. Referee appears to lack confidence in TJ's advice. Timing of arrival into in-goal makes it obvious that touch judge could not have been of assistance. Positioning totally inappropriate for the type of play that led up to the in-goal action (e.g., rolling maul , front-of-lineout, pushover scrum, etc., compared to a defending side's error, intercept, long distance backline movement and so on).	Lack of anticipation. Poor reading of the game / game knowledge. Low levels of concentration / application. Inappropriate movement upfield away from in-goal, or getting caught in 'no-man's land'. Following play into in-goal, rather than being there to observe play coming in.		K I F
Communicated essential information to the referee for assistance with set play and general play management.	Referee often seen to be seeking help / assistance with little or none being forthcoming. No teamwork evident with the other touch judge re marking of positions for restarts, detection of other TJ's flag out for a report, etc. Frequent infringements by players on referee's blind side not being acted upon. No communication between referee and TJ during breaks in play, or during line-out formation.	Positional play, and or fitness / mobility deficiencies. Poor reading of the game, conditions, skill levels, etc. Lack of understanding / appreciation of the 'Team of three' concept. Lack of game knowledge, especially re set play infringements (e.g. props boring in, lineout barging, etc.).		P F K C

4.2 Coaching hints in detail

Key code	Nature of shortcoming	Coaching hints
K Knowledge	Knowledge of game, ability to read the game, understanding of techniques applicable to the various phases. Appreciation of / adapting to ground / weather conditions.	Attend team training sessions, observe what coaches are instructing their players to do at each phase. Obtain a player coaching accreditation. Talk to (selected) players / captains / coaches. Keep abreast of playing / coaching trends. Watch / talk to higher level referees.
F Fitness	Slow to, and late arrival at, the next phase. Lapses of concentration, especially late in each half.	Regime of exercises - sprint training and endurance training in right mixture. Consult fitness coaches, colleagues, etc.
P Positioning	Positioning at the phase, movement from the previous phase, running lines, angles. Problems with 'traffic'.	Build appreciation of importance of running lines, speed, anticipation. Understand differing requirements relative to field position, attacking / defending offside lines. Appreciate positional issues relevant to each phase. Watch and talk to other (experienced) referees. Understand requirements for positioning at in-goal v others.
C Communication	Communication / player management. Ineffective / non-existent communication. Poor signals, whistle technique.	Watch video recordings of higher level refs. Develop knowledge of effective verbal communication at each phase, and vary it so that it doesn't become overly repetitious. Work on confidence levels by improving game and law knowledge. Seek advice on, and practice, whistle skills.
L Law	Inadequate law knowledge. Poor application.	Re-sit law examination(s). Fine-tune law knowledge by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presenting modules in Level 1 ref courses - study associated documentation, such as consolidated rulings, game management documents, etc.
I Intensity	Poor application. Lack of concentration.	Acquire discipline for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pre-match preparation - personal triggers / check-points used during the game. - seeking assistance of other match officials if appointed.
CL Check list		Refer to the coaching checklists which appears below in section 4.3.

4.3 Checklists

Check list no	Elements
9	<p>Checklist 9 - Kicks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Check that the kicker is not late tackled or obstructed. Remember that when the team mate of an offside player has kicked ahead, the offside player is considered to be taking part in the game if that player is in front of an imaginary line across the field which is 10 metres from the opponent waiting to play the ball. Watch for attacking players in front of the kicker continuing to move forward. Note the exact location from where the kick was made and where it will land or be caught - in case players are offside. Watch for the kicking team's players being put onside, especially by a player who is not the kicker. Watch the outside backs (including any that may be behind you), putting their opposing players onside. <p>Don't forget the various ways a player can be put onside either by his own team or opponents.</p>
12	<p>Checklist 12 - The line-out</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Watch for incorrect support in the line-out - a jumper being abandoned in mid air. Watch for players jumping early across the line-of-touch, and thereby being offside. Check that the ball is thrown in at least five metres. Check that the last feet of a ruck or maul cross the line-of-touch before the backs advance across the 10-metre line. Check that forwards in the line-out join an ensuing ruck or maul from the back. Watch for forwards from the line-out not joining the ruck or maul becoming offside. <p>Know when a line-out ends and when players not in the line-out can advance. Be prepared for the quick throw in.</p>
14	<p>Checklist 14 - Tackle, ruck and maul</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Watch for the ball carrier being brought to ground and observe whether the ball touches the ground. Observe whether the ball carrier is held by an opponent when brought to ground. Check that the tackler releases the tackled player immediately. Check that the tackled player passes, places or releases the ball immediately. Check that both players move away and endeavour to get to their feet before playing the ball again. Watch for either the tackler or the tackled player interfering with the ball on the ground. Check that players joining, or the next player handling the ball, are on their feet. Check that players joining the tackle come from behind that part of the body of a player from their own team which is closest to their own goal-line.

Check list no	Elements
15	<p>Checklist 15 - Ruck</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Check that the ball is on the ground. Check that all players involved in the ruck are on their feet. Check that players joining the ruck enter from behind the rear feet. Watch for players coming in over the top. Watch for incorrect binding on players, especially when holding the ball in the back row of the ruck. Watch for rucking of the player and not the ball. Watch for hands in the ruck.
16	<p>Checklist 16 - Maul</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Check that the ball is in possession of a player. Check for the correct formation (ball carrier and one from each team). Note the person or team responsible for taking the ball into the maul. Watch for the maul becoming stationary and not moving forward again within five seconds. Watch for the ball being grounded and the maul becoming a ruck. Check that players joining the maul enter from behind the rear feet. <p>Remember</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Only a ruck can develop from a tackle situation. A line-out does not finish until the hindmost feet of a ruck or maul cross the line-of-touch. As for a scrum, the ruck and maul finishes once the ball has crossed the goal line.
17	<p>Checklist 17 - Scrum</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Check that the scrum is put down at the correct place, e.g., five metres in from the touch line. Ensure that eight players from each team form the scrum if each team has 15 players. Check that numbers in the scrum are the same for each team - for U19s. Check that all players are bound on fully. Check that front rows with the hooker are bound correctly. Manage distance between front rows. Ensure players have heads and shoulders above hips. Ensure no crutch binding by U19s.
18	<p>Checklist 18 - Scrum</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Check that the ball is thrown in straight down the centre line. Watch for the ball being twisted towards attacking side when thrown. Check that the ball lands beyond the width of the nearest prop's shoulders. Check that the scrum-half stands one metre back to put the ball in. Watch for the attacking side breakaway moving out to obstruct the opposing scrum-half following the ball through the scrum. Watch for back row forwards without the ball breaking from the scrum before it has ended. Ensure all forwards remain bound correctly until the scrum has ended. Watch for the defending backs creeping up offside. Watch for excessive wheeling (90 degrees for seniors, 45 degrees for u19s) Remember the U19s rules which states not more than 1.5 metres shove.

Check list no	Elements
20	<p>Checklist 20 - Advantage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> After foul or dangerous play near the goal-line don't play advantage, especially for U19s games. Consider a penalty try in lieu of a penalty, especially if a try would have been scored. If dangerous play occurs in general play, don't play advantage. Establish guidelines to decide whether the advantage has been obtained. Should the play return to the original infringement or continue? (e.g., if an advantage is being played and a further knock-on occurs.) This will come with experience. A good practice is to ask, "What advantage did the non-infringing team gain?" <p>As well as playing advantage referees should call "playing advantage" and "advantage over".</p>
21	<p>Checklist 21 - Caution & temporary suspension</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the offending player by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of the player. The team the player is in - by colour if that is easier. The position of the player / description of the player and any other assistance for identification if there is no number on the jersey or it is not easily seen. Identify the offence. Remember in a fracas, the third person in should be identified. Record where the offence occurred. Invite a recommendation if the report is from a touch judge, e.g., temporary suspension and penalty.
22	<p>Checklist 22 - How to caution / send off a player</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Give a loud blast on the whistle. Step well back from the incident, out of earshot of the players. Listen to the touch judge's report and then send the touch judge back to the touchline. Call out the offending player/s and the captain/s. Clearly state the nature of the offence without elaborating or getting into an argument. Issue the necessary caution, temporary suspension or send off. Show the red or yellow card, if necessary. Proceed to the position of the incident and award the necessary penalty.