

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF THE REFEREE COACH REPORT FORM

The Referee Coach Report Form is a working document that is used to record what takes place between the Referee and his/her Coach for each match. Both strengths and areas to develop should be recorded where appropriate and it is not required to limit the record to one side of paper. It does need to be legible, preferably typed and distributed by email.

Potential Pre-Match Context/Difficulties

It is important that the potential challenge of the match to the Referee is considered and recorded. Both the internal and game relating influencing factors as well as the non-game related external factors should be considered. Some of the internal factors could be previous experiences, good or bad, between the referee and the teams, as well as the history between the teams in previous matches. Examples of external factors could be problems at home or work, difficulty in getting to the match, poor preparation by the referee. Both the negative and positive influencing factors could either increase or decrease the challenge of the match for the referee.

Game Management and Personality

This is very much an individual factor, and is perhaps the most crucial skill for referees at the top level. Teaching referees the 5 styles of interaction: forcing, avoiding, collaborating, compromising, and accommodating allows them to develop a broad array of conflict management skills. Identify how well the referee manages the game through both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. The verbal behaviour can be interpreted through understanding of the VAPER model where we focus on the **volume, articulation, pitch, emphasis and rate** of verbal communication. The non-verbal behaviour can be identified through the referee's posture, position and proximity, gaze, face, gestures, appearance, physical contact, body shape, expressions, movements and location. Finally, did the referee appear impartial, confident, focussed, composed and competent? If not, how can we enhance his ability to appear so?

Contextual Judgement

Contextual judgement is often the skill that distinguishes the good referee from the great referee. Recognising and having empathy for the players' state of mind and the temper of the game allows referees to make decisions that are appropriate to the specific game context. Therefore, did the referee recognise the antecedents to critical incidents and what did the referee do or what could the referee have done to prevent these incidents from occurring? I.e. did the referee utilise the ABC (antecedents, behaviours, consequences) effectively?

Application of Laws

This section is very straightforward. Simply, did the referee apply the laws in a coherent manner in line with RFU law or were there clear errors?

Fitness

Referees require an ability to not only 'keep up with play' and position themselves adequately but also to make effective decisions that can be negatively affected by physical fatigue. By identifying the referee's agility, speed and endurance throughout the game, fitness-training programmes can be developed to improve the particular dimensions that are deemed weak. Therefore, did the referee look slow off the mark, did the referee keep up with play adequately and did the referee fatigue in the latter periods of the match?

Action Points

Referee development is attained through training the trainables. By identifying 3 main action points, the referee can focus attention on developing the key aspects of his game that will bring the greatest improvements. By having only three main action points, it is easy to both remember and manage. Having more action points would leave the referee with too much to focus on. Therefore, from the previous identified sections, what are the 3 main areas that can improve refereeing ability? These may stem from either the "to work on" (negative points) or the "good" (positive points), since as well as developing the referee's weaknesses, it might be just as advantageous to focus on the positives in order to really excel in that area. Remember to make these action points specific and measurable. It should also be possible to re-evaluate them so that they are progressive.

Action points have to be very specific. For example if a referee talks to the players too much at the tackle, it is not specific enough to list the action point "communicate less at the tackle". A more focused and defined action point (obviously individually tailored to the specific referee) would be - say the phrase "back-foot" no more than twice, before penalising. Clearly, this is measurable since you've established a quantitative entity in the form of establishing 'no more than twice'.