



REFEREEING

RUGBY

INSTRUCTOR MANUAL

USA Rugby has developed a course to bridge the gap between non-contact rugby refereeing and contact rugby refereeing. The course introduces referees to the game of rugby and skills required to provide a safe and fun game of rugby to those players participating. A special focus on safety and basics of refereeing allow participants to learn actively while focusing on key safety areas.

After the course, referees will have a strong base in rugby refereeing and be ready to shadow, assistant referee or potentially referee contact games. Additionally, referees will have access to online resources, continuing education and local mentorship to further their learning.

Course Delivery:

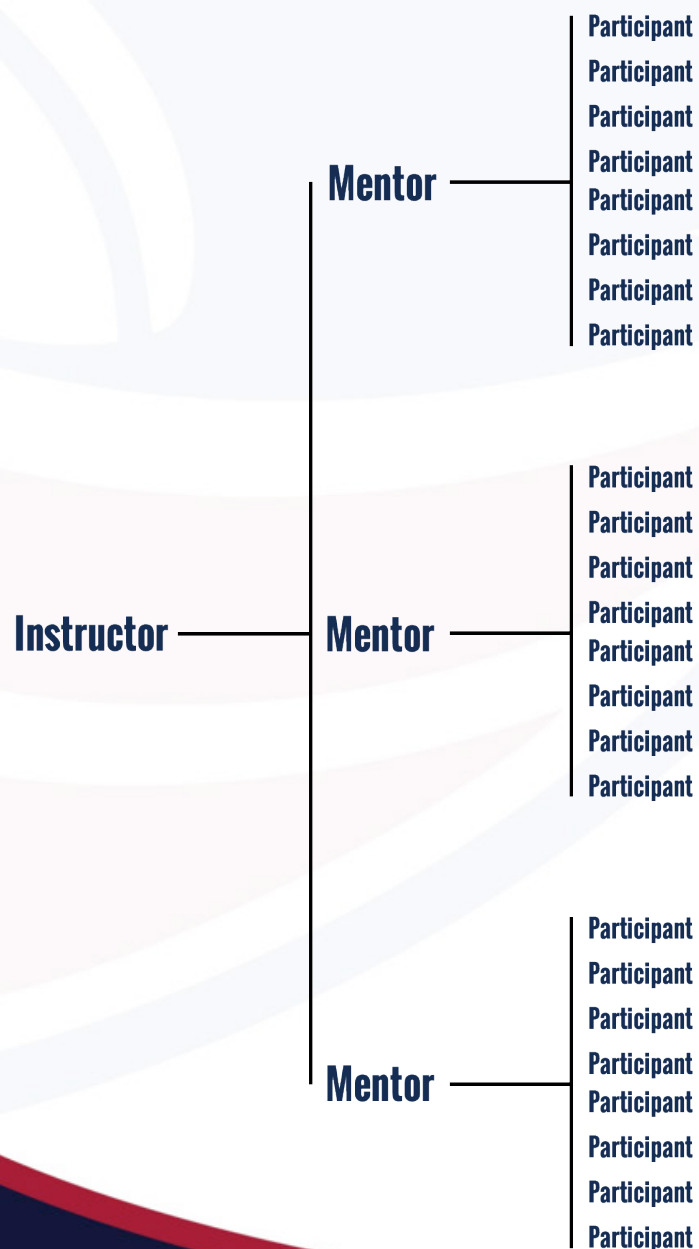
1. USA Rugby website
 - a. Pre-Course packet completion
2. Locally managed and delivered Introduction to Refereeing Session
 - a. Active demonstration
 - b. Experiential learning by participants

Each course is led by an Instructor. They are in charge of implementing the training sessions and guiding discussions throughout the session. They will also prep the Mentors prior to the session to ensure consistency of education.

Best practice is to have Mentors at each referee course. These Mentors are experienced rugby referees responsible for overseeing a small group of participants. The best ratio is one Mentor for every eight participants (1:8). They will help new referees develop their player management, game understanding and technical skills.

Mentors will work with participants both during the course and in the months following the session. This relationship is key to success with the new referee.

The graphic below represents an example of the Instructor/Mentor/participant structure during the referee course:



Course Sample Schedule:

Pre-Course Video (20 minutes)

For participants new to rugby, a video of a game will be shown to illustrate the flow and general concepts of rugby. The preference is a video of an actual game from the league these new referees will be refereeing. This helps the participant conceptualize their role on the field.

Course Begins:

Introduction to the Course and Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

Good vs. Bad Referee Discussion (10 minutes)

Review of Homework (40 minutes, likely will not need the entire time. Homework needs to be emailed to all participants and completed before arriving at the course)

Active review of match cards (50 minutes)

1. Kick off
2. Tackle
3. Ruck
4. Maul

Break (10 minutes)

Active review of match cards (50 minutes)

5. Try
6. Scrum
7. Lineout
8. Penalty Kick

Break (10 minutes)

The Flow of the Game (10 Minutes)

Discussion of the Tackle Contest (15 minutes)

Discussion of the Scrum (15 Minutes)

Safety (10 minutes)

Touch Game refereeing (15 minutes)

Conclusion and Questions

Follow up - Mentors work with participants weekly moving forward



Pre-Course Video and Intro (25 Minutes)

During the introduction, the instructor welcomes participants to the course, explains the logistics of the day (time, restrooms, etc.), and get participants interacting.

- Instructor introduces self and role with the hosting organization
- Instructor has the participants introduce themselves including refereeing experience.

Ice Breaker - It is always great to run an ice breaker to kick off the day. Some examples could include:

1. Have them order themselves oldest to youngest without saying a word
2. Play a tournament of rock paper scissors
3. Bring your own idea!

The instructor will then use this opportunity to introduce participants to rugby. First, check how many participants have watched rugby video. Ask a few questions about the history of Rugby and allow time for questions. The instructor will then play a video of half a game of Sevens Rugby (or video of a game from the league these new referees will be refereeing). During the video:

- Pause for questions regarding the commentary or the game play
- Highlight the elements during the game that will be taught in the course
- Check comprehension by using questions to ensure an understanding of:
 - Types of scoring
 - Why there is a scrum
 - Why there is a kick-off
 - Why there is a lineout

Good vs. Bad Referee (10 Minutes)

Have participants go to page #1 of their homework and ask what they wrote for the questions “What makes a good referee?” and “What makes a bad referee?” If there are no volunteers to share their answers, select participants to share their thoughts. Make sure to ask participants sharing their answers WHY they believe that quality, action or attribute makes a referee good/bad. When participants are finished sharing, give your thoughts on what makes a good/bad referee. Allot time for participants to ask questions.

Make a running list of these qualities on a whiteboard or easel for participants to refer to during the course.

Review of Homework (40 minutes)

The instructor should review modules in the “Introduction To Rugby Refereeing” homework to check for comprehension and understanding. Ask a few questions about the content in the homework and allow opportunities for participants to have questions throughout the discussion.

The recommended modules to review during this time slot are:

- Module 1: The Role of the Referee
- Module 2: Game Organization
- Module 3: Whistle! Signals! Talk!
- Module 5: The Kicks of Rugby
- Module 10: Offside and Onside in General Play
- Module 11: Foul Play
- Module 12: Advantage, Free Kicks, and Penalty Kicks
- Module 13: Assistant Referee and Touch Judge
- Module 14: Method of Scoring: In-Goal

Active Review of Match Cards (50 minutes)

Instructor will lead the session but much of the time should be spent on discussion between the Mentors and participants. After a quick introduction for each session break into the small work groups.

Match Card 1 - Kick Off/Restart Kicks

1. Walk players through a kickoff and the key items on the match card
2. Special attention to safety areas like players jumping in the air to retrieve the ball
3. Review Checklist for kickoffs, including counting players, checking with both captains, starting your watch and whistling for the kick off
4. Allow a player or two to try a kick off, including the running line from kickoff to first tackle

Match Card 2 - Tackle

1. Review a tackle and definitions around this important area. Review items on the match card
2. Discuss safety keys around the tackle and the potential for injury.
3. Review Checklist for tackle situation
4. Break into work groups and discuss in detail

Match Card 3 - Ruck

1. Stay in work groups when transitioning to the Ruck Match Card from Tackle
2. Review the Ruck match card and definitions around the ruck law
3. Discuss the Ruck checklist and review safety areas around the Ruck
4. Have each participant write out their checklist from Tackle through to Ruck completion

Match Card 4 - Maul

1. Only complete the Maul Match Card if pertinent to the league they will be refereeing
2. Review Match Card, Safety and Checklist for the Maul

BREAK - 10 Minutes

Important to allow for breaks after this much information

Active Review of Match Cards (50 minutes)

Match Card 5 - Try

1. Review the Try Match Card
2. Special attention to safety areas like players diving on each other after a try
3. Review Checklist for tries and scoring, including process for awarding a try
4. Break into work groups and demonstrate tries and some focus areas

Match Card 6 - Scrum

1. Review the Scrum Match Card
2. Discuss in detail some of the safety issues that arise at a scrum. Most will be refereeing 3v3 scrums, but detail potential issues and the referee's responsibility at the scrum
3. Break into work groups to review scrum process, check list and key focuses
4. Each participant should demonstrate setting a scrum for the mentor

Match Card 7 - Lineout

1. Review the Lineout Match Card
2. Discuss in detail some of the safety issues that arise at a lineout. Most will be refereeing 2v2 lineouts, but detail potential issues and the referees responsibility at the lineout
3. Break into work groups to review lineout process, check list and key focuses
4. Get participants setting up lineouts so mentor can discuss

Match Card 8 - Penalty Kick, Drop Goal

1. Only complete the Penalty Kick and Drop Goal Cards if pertinent to the league they will be refereeing

BREAK - 10 Minutes

Important to allow for breaks after this much information

The Flow of the Game (10 minutes, optional)

Take 10 minutes to walk the participants through a match, utilizing the field and course participants standing in as players. Break into work groups and start with a kickoff and finish with a try.

Kickoff - Have one participant stand in as the referee and talk the group through the checklist. Have them whistle for a kickoff, have the ball kicked off and actually jog to the mark of the first tackle to illustrate running lines.

Tackle/Ruck - Switch participants, then run through the tackle area positioning and checklist. Focus on finding the ball and talking about anticipating where the ball will travel next.

Open Play - Switch participants and run through checklists on open play, flowing with the ball. Discuss ball line running and following the passes.

Scrum - Switch participants and run through setting a scrum, focusing on the checklist and safety. Discuss positioning and how to follow the ball.

Finish with any additional items needed to complete the flow of the game.

The Tackle Contest (15 minutes)

For this module, the instructor will emphasize that the game of Rugby continues after a player is tackled. To retain possession of the ball, it is necessary to win the Tackle Contest. The instructor will remind participants of the ruck from the Introduction to Rugby Refereeing module before teaching the skills of refereeing the Tackle Contest.

Tackle Contest - KEY REFEREEING POINTS

1. Approach from attacking side of tackled player
2. Identify a tackle has been made
3. Move 45 degrees off to one side of the tackle, staying on the attacking side of the ball
4. Adjudicate the tackle contest in order
5. First tackler must release then away from the ball, second the ball carrier has to pass, place or play the ball. Lastly, monitor the arriving players

Maul

In Rugby, when a ball carrier is unable to go to ground a different type of Tackle Contest happens called a Maul. If the offense is unable to get the ball out of the Maul, the referee stops play and gives possession to the other team (similar to a jump ball in basketball). During this introduction to contact Rugby, the emphasis is placed on winning the ball with a ruck to provide more opportunity for players to develop playing skills. This is a reference for instructors during the course if a participant asks questions.

Refereeing the Maul - KEY REFEREEING POINTS

1. Players must be positively participating in the maul, not trying to pull it down or topple it over.
2. Players must enter the maul from their own side of the ball; side entry is not allowed.
3. Players must make an effort to push the maul forward, any other direction and referee should stop the game and reset the situation with a scrum.
4. No lifting of players' legs is allowed; safety is key
5. Players must not grasp opponents around the neck or head.

Introduction to the Scrum (20 minutes)

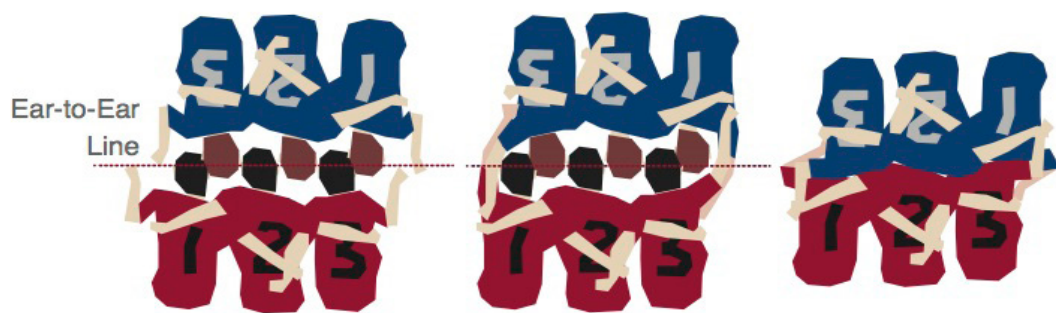
The scrum is used to restart the game after a minor infraction (forward pass, ball fumbled forward). Review the safety and structure of a scrum with the participants to ensure their knowledge and ability to set a safe scrum. Utilize the work groups to allow each participant to both talk through and actually set a 3v3 scrum.

Review the Individual Body Position - KEY SAFETY POINTS

1. Feet positioned shoulder width apart
2. Head in a neutral position, eyes looking forward
3. Knees bent
4. Bend forward at the waist with flat back and shoulders above hips
5. Core tensed and weight balanced on both feet

Front Row Binds - KEY REFEREEING POINTS

1. Hook (middle person in the front row) sets the scrum on the referees mark
2. Hook has right foot staggered in front of the left
3. Loose head prop (left of hooker) binds on the back of the Hook with a strong bind and the Hook binds on the Loose head prop the same way
4. Tight head prop (right of hook) binds on the back of the Hooker with a strong bind and the Hook binds on the Tight head prop the same way
5. The arms of the Loose Head and Tight Head should not cross
6. Front crouches together using the Key Factors of Body Position
7. Hook calls in Second Row (optional)



Engaging the Scrum

1. 'CROUCH' – Call 'Crouch' then monitor that both front rows get into a position to scrum. Strong body position, core tight and firm binds
2. 'BIND' – Call 'Bind' then monitor that Props bind to the back or side of the opposition prop's jersey
3. 'SCRUM' – Call 'Scrum' once all players are stable and ready to scrum. Front rows should lean into opponent with good pushing position, Front Row heads go to the left of direct opponent
4. After engagement, props keep their binds in place and knees are bent in a pushing position
5. Heads are neutral, back is flat and eyes are looking forward
6. Feet remain shoulder width apart
7. The ball is rolled between the two front rows in a straight line by the scrum half

Second Row Binds

1. The Second Rowers Bind together as the Front Row get set up
2. Each Second Row places the inside knee on the ground
3. Shoulder of Second Row is under the buttock of the Prop
4. The Second Row should bind between the legs or around the hips of the Prop to hold the shoulder to the buttock
5. Keep head up and eyes looking forward between the hips of the Prop and Hook
6. Feet remain shoulder width apart during the scrum
7. On the call of "SCRUM", the Second Rowers lean forward on the props and move feet to a pushing position shoulder width apart
8. The core is tensed with a flat back

Safety (20 minutes)

Safety is a referee's first priority and concern. Decisions before, during and after the match should be made in a framework of **safety first**, then consideration to law and other items.

Review the Responsibility

A referee has the responsibility to ensure safety before the match by checking the field space, the player's ability to safely participate in the match, and any cleats, braces and additional equipment. Some keys to remind referees:

1. Fields should be checked for any dangerous areas and proximity to unsafe surfaces such as cement.
2. Players should present their cleats, any protective braces and mouth guard for inspection. Braces should not include ANY metal or hard plastic even if it is covered with soft material.
3. Familiarize yourself with the rules and regulations of the league. Local variations are in place for safety and consideration of the players participating. Be familiar with these items before the match begins.

Discuss the Match Time Responsibility

During the match, the referee holds the responsibility for the safety and welfare of the players on the field. Rugby can be a fast-paced and fun sport if refereed with a constant focus on safety. Here are some keys to discuss with the course participants:

1. A referee has the responsibility to stop the match and evaluate the welfare of a player at any time their safety is in question. Although not in law, stopping the match is best practice in the case of injury or instances that look unsafe or dangerous.
2. A referee can remove any player from the field at any time. This can be due to an injury or if the player is unfit to continue the match. Special regard to head injuries is key to making sure we keep players safe.
3. Do not allow non-players on the field during the match, including fans, bystanders, etc. The players, medical staff and potentially coaches are the only participants allowed on the field during a match.

Optional: Play Ruck Touch (15 minutes)

To help participants attempt actual refereeing, the instructor will set-up a grid that is two 30x30 squares with the center-line shared to be the half-way line. The object of this game is for the instructor to help participants develop a feel for rugby refereeing. For some participants this may mean they will need to watch before participating, but for others this will mean learning by making mistakes. Try to allow participants to self-correct and limit the number of times the game is stopped for coaching. The instruction should split the group into teams of five or six. Try to set up as many mini games as possible to get each participant a chance to referee.

Conclusion and Questions (10 minutes)

To conclude, the instructor will gather the participants together. Give participants the opportunity to make comments or ask questions. Finally, explain the resources available to the participants:

1. USA Rugby website for the technical videos and additional resources.
2. SRO referee development structure
3. Next steps in the process. Emphasize the relationship with the Mentors as a mechanism to continue their education.
4. The next step of certification is the USA Rugby Level 1 Referee Certification and USA Rugby Professional Development Clinics
5. IRB Rugby Ready
 - www.irbrugbyready.com



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