

Borders Rugby Referees' Society – General Information

Welcome

Welcome to the Society – we are a welcoming bunch, as are clubs, and you will be supported on your refereeing journey.

Administration

Now that you have decided to join the Society, we will be in touch to ensure you are signed-up for Whos the Ref (WTR) – our allocations and administration system.

We charge an annual membership fee of £15.00 (£5.00 for those in full time education) – this contributes to running the Society and kit. Our Treasurer will be in touch with the Society bank details. We are flexible and can accommodate a payment plan to suit all needs.

Supported by Scottish Rugby, we pay travel expenses for all fifteens games throughout the season (not Sevens). The Treasurer will ask for your bank details when you join to ensure you are paid at the beginning of the month in arrears.

Support

We have a team WhatsApp where we share experiences, advice and ask questions. We also regularly send information by email.

We meet as a group each month to discuss various topics and to share experience. We'll provide you with the details, including times and locations.

You will be allocated a coach – use the coach to support your development. Set goals with them, review performance and take advice on improvements you can make.

Use experienced match officials to ask questions or to seek clarity on decisions or processes or general administration.

Preparing for a Game

Okay, admin out the way, time for your first or perhaps 100th game – either way, we prepare the same.

Like teams themselves, it is important for match officials to prepare appropriately for any game – it doesn't matter the context of the game or the level, you should approach all games with a degree of preparation.

Ahead of match day:

- Ensure you have accepted your appointment on Who's the Ref. If you have any last minute challenges making the game, then get in touch with the allocations secretary or a coach as soon as possible.

- Make sure you have had contact from a club representative confirming the kick-off time and location – remember this could be slightly different from Who's the Ref, so it is important to check.
- Research how to get to the ground – check maps and estimated driving time or public transport arrangements and remember to take into account potential delays or traffic.
- Pack your bag – you'll need your kit (make sure you know the home and away team shirt colours and arrange with the kit manager if you need an alternative colour refereeing shirt), a metal Acme [58 or 58.5 model] thunderer whistle (and a spare), something to write the score on, red and yellow cards and two watches.
- Read up on the laws – it's good to regularly familiarise yourself with the law book generally – any age-grade variations, and the variations for the league in which you are refereeing e.g. reserve leagues play u19 scrum laws. Refer to Annex A for age-grade variations.

On match day:

- Set off on your journey to the ground sharp – check traffic and any accidents and allow yourself extra time.
- Aim to arrive at the ground approximately one hour before kick-off and no later than 45 minutes before kick-off – it's amazing how quickly the time goes in.
- Introduce yourself to someone at the club and let them know you are refereeing and they will show you to your changing room.
- Once you are ready, head out to where the teams are warming up and identify the coach to arrange a time to check studs and to speak to the captains.
- Check studs – making sure there are no abrasive studs and identify any jewellery – if you encounter anything that isn't right, let the captain and coach know and let them take responsibility for rectifying it.
- You don't need to speak to every member of the team to tell them how you will referee the game – they all know the laws and what is expected.
- You may wish to speak to the captain of each team and set standards of behaviour. For example, emphasising you are happy to work together and, if needed during the game, provide clarity on a particular decision but noting this will only happen at downtime and you wouldn't expect consistent questioning or a commentary from the team.
- You must ensure you have received fully completed hard copy team sheets from both the home and away team – remember they must identify the players in the squad who can play in the front row.
- If for any reason there is insufficient players to complete a full team, then the teams may agree in advance to play by Game On rules. Remember, any agreement to play by Game On principles must be agreed in advance of kick-off by both captains and the referee.
- And remember to do the coin toss – try to do this ahead of going out for the game, rather than on the pitch.

During the match:

- The most important thing to remember is to enjoy the game from start to finish.
- Be clear and consistent with your decisions and give them with confidence.
- Build up a rapport with players and mutual respect. Remember you might not get all your decisions right, but sell them with confidence and gain the buy-in of the teams.
- Utilise the captain throughout the match – if there are issues or if there is backchat, put the responsibility on the captain to deal with it.
- All teams must ensure coaching staff, support staff and replacements utilise the technical area – they must not roam the touchlines and coaches are not permitted to enter the playing enclosure, only physios/ medical staff can do this at any time.
- If you issue a yellow or red card, then make sure you note down the key details (player number and position, offence, time on the clock and score at the time).

Immediately after the match:

- Make sure you stay around immediately after the match on the field of play and proactively shake hands with players and coaches.
- You are entitled to have time to yourself after the game to change and reflect – no one from either team should enter your changing room without permission or talk about the game or decisions until you are ready to do so. You are entitled to politely ask them to leave and indicate you will speak to them in the clubrooms.
- You might wish to think about the game in general, in preparation for any post-match discussion with teams, but don't deliberate too much on decisions you made during the game.
- Proactively join the teams and committees in clubrooms – they will probably get you something to drink and offer you food. You might wish to talk about how you found the game and be on hand to answer any questions they have – more often than not, they will just be looking for a bit of clarity on decisions made for their own developmental benefit.
- No official, coach, player or supporter should give you any abuse – this is not acceptable. If you feel this is the case, you should ask them to stop, ask another member of the team or club to deal with it and then speak to Austin Ramage the following day to progress the formal match official abuse form.

24 hours following the match:

- It is natural to reflect on the game and your performance and any feedback from teams.
- If you had a referee coach watching you, then it is a good idea to get in touch with them for feedback if you didn't manage to speak immediately after the game.
- Remember to complete the score on Who's the Ref.
- If you issued a red or yellow card during the game, then make sure you complete the report on Who's the Ref. Always stick to the facts of the matter and don't bring in personal sentiment or your own suggestions on sanction by the discipline committee.
- If you issued a red card, make sure you complete the form on Who's the Ref, save the report in draft form and get in touch with Austin Ramage. Austin is here to help make sure you have captured all the facts and details. Austin is not here to question

your decision or whether it was or was not a red card offence, he is there to support accurate recording of the situation.

- If you experienced match official abuse on or off the field then, again, you should get in touch with Austin to discuss the process to complete a Match Official Abuse Form which is then sent to the SRU to be dealt with, in a similar way to a red card, by the discipline panel.
- Remember to complete the relevant forms within 24 hours. However, you should sleep on the game before completing the forms – you will want to avoid having emotion influence your report.