

## **HAMPSHIRE RUGBY REFEREES**

### **SEASON 2024/2025**

#### **Hampshire Rugby Referee (HRR) - Club Protocol**

The purpose of this document is to lay out the protocol that HRR expect of their Referees, Clubs and Coaches to follow for the season 2024/2025. Referee abuse is becoming a major problem in the game of rugby, particularly at the mini/midi and junior levels; there is also an increase in the level of abuse from Coaches, Club Officials and Spectators.

Clubs should be aware that the HRR is conscious of its duty of care to its members, and is now asking its members to highlight issues of Referee abuse they experience at all HRFU affiliated Clubs, be it from Players, Coaches, Club Official or Spectators.

Referees, the same as players, do make mistakes in the game. The number of incidents where Referees have had to abandon matches due to poor player discipline and/or abuse, or Coach/Club Official/Spectator abuse is also increasing. Clubs should be aware that the RFU recommended sanction for an abandoned game is a 25-point deduction. (A-League club's 2<sup>nd</sup> team could get its first team that sort of deduction.)

The following are guidelines and what the HRR and the HRFU expect from each of the categories listed:

#### **HRR & Club Referee Best Practice**

- Referees will reply confirming receipt of communication with the Club Referee Liaison.
- Referees should, where possible, arrive at the ground no later than 60 minutes before kick-off. This is to ensure that all the safety checks required can be done in time. They should, on arrival, make contact with the Captains/Coaches/Home Club Official to enable these checks to be carried out in good time before kick-off.
- Referees will referee the game according to the Laws of the game and will expect the Players and Coaches of the teams involved to have an understanding of the Laws of the game.
- Referees will engage with the Team Captains/Coaches and mutually agree on a suitable time in which the referee can carry out his pre-match brief and stud check. At the pre-match brief, the Referee will check the studs of all players, including replacements, brief the half-backs, and go through the scrum engagement sequence with the respective front rows.
- Referees will insist that all replacements from both teams are on the same side of the playing enclosure due to the regulation re-rolling replacements (if applicable). Replacements will only be allowed to come on from the halfway line with the permission of the referee.
- Referees will brief the touch judges on what they expect from them (touch and conversion/penalty kicks).
- Referees will be available to coaches up to 15 minutes before kick-off for questions on the game but it is up to each referee as to whether he/she wishes to answer any of them.
- Referees may, if they wish, speak to the Captains of each side at half-time as part of their game management strategy.
- Referees will not be available to Coaches/Club Officials from 15 minutes before the game until 30 minutes after the end of the game including halftime. These timings are flexible if the referee indicates he is happy to talk.

## **Coaches Best Practice**

- Coaches should not approach the referee from a period of 15 minutes before the start of the game until 30 minutes after the final whistle. (They may during the game indicate to the referee that they want to make a replacement.) These timings are flexible if the referee indicates he is happy to talk.
- Any dialogue with the referee during the game should be made via the Captain. In mini/midi and junior matches (under 14 and below) where this is not applicable then the Coach may be allowed, at the discretion of the referee, to discuss playing matters at halftime.
- Coaches should restrict themselves to the technical area, if there is no Technical Area then to a point between the halfway line and the 10-metre line.
- Coaches should at all times be well beyond the touchline and **should not walk or run up and down the touchline.**
- Coaches who stand behind the posts may do so provided they are well outside the playing area and where a barrier is provided behind that barrier.
- Coaches should be encouraged to give positive playing instructions to their players but should not shout at the referee. Continual shouting at the referee can be considered abuse/harassment and as such can be reported to the appropriate disciplinary authority.
- Referees appreciate the time and effort put into the game by the coaches and they will of course not always see decisions the same way. Referees are encouraged to speak to coaches, and there is no reason why a discussion cannot take place in the clubhouse after the game.
- If the coach has any issues with the referee's performance in the first instance, he should seek to discuss with the referee 30 minutes after no side. If they remain dissatisfied, they should contact HRR Secretary in writing (email).

## **Clubs Best Practice**

- Clubs where possible should provide a barrier between the playing enclosure and spectators for the safety of both the players and the spectators. This is a requirement for league matches. This will also restrict access to the playing enclosure.
- If this is not possible the Club must ensure that spectators and/or parents are aware that they must not come into the playing enclosure.
- Clubs at all levels must ensure that a Technical Area is clearly marked on the side of the pitch. If not marked a temporary area can be marked with the use of cones therefore there is no excuse for non-compliance with this regulation.
- Clubs have all signed up to the HRFU Good Conduct Code and have a responsibility to ensure that players, coaches and spectators are all fully aware of its contents and how to behave.
- Clubs should have a process by which they can deal with members who regularly have behaviour problems with match officials or who verbally abuse referees.
- Clubs should bear in mind that some referees are under 17 years of age and verbal abuse is treated very seriously by the RFU/HRFU and the Hampshire Referees.
- Clubs should be aware that Referees Hampshire will actively back and support club referees who are subject to abuse/ behaviour problems when refereeing games.
- Clubs should not mention the referee by name in any match reports or Social Media feeds concerning decisions. Praise for the referee is welcome. There should not be disparaging comments or commentary about their performance either explicit or implied.

## **Club Fixture Sec & Referee Liaison Good Practice**

### Appointing

Any Club affiliated to the Hampshire Rugby Football Union, or School affiliated to the Hampshire Schools Rugby Football Union, shall have call on the services of the HRR Match Officials for home matches, upon a fixed charge per match and subject to the following conditions:

- Most appointments are ported in from GMS and no action is required from the club. Any status changes should be communicated to the Appointments Team.
- Club fixture secretaries can have access to WTR and raise fixtures rather than working through GMS. If you want to take up this facility please contact [tim.bailey2@ntlworld.com](mailto:tim.bailey2@ntlworld.com)
- Clubs shall not engage, or seek to engage, the services of the HRR referees for all matches, except through the Appointments Secretary/Re-Appointments Secretary. Any Club found, to the satisfaction of the Executive Committee, to have broken this rule shall be liable to have referees withdrawn from officiating at their Club for a period not exceeding 28 days.
- On receiving notification of the appointment of a Match Official(s), the Club shall communicate to him/her no later than 5 pm on the Friday before the fixture:
  - The teams involved
  - The time of kick-off and venue
  - The colours of the teams, including the home team's change colours
  - Directions to the ground
  - Any Club failing to contact the Match Official(s) by 5 pm on the Friday before the Fixture will have the services of that Match Official(s) removed, and the Match Official(s) will be re-appointed to another Fixture.

### Charges & Cancellations

Match Fees shall be payable on request and are reviewed each season.

- The rates for Season 2024/25 shall be:
  - Adult matches £38 per game
  - U16 £23 (HRR will endeavour to cover all U16 Div 1 matches)
  - All-day tournaments are £70
  - Other arrangements can be made for charity events, please contact us
- An additional charge of £38, plus any expenses incurred by the Match Official(s), (including mileage expenses at 45p/mile) on top of the Match Fee, shall be payable, on the 1st occurrence, if:

- Any Club fails to inform; the Appointments Secretary/Re-Appointments Secretary and the Match Official(s), that a game has been cancelled by 5 pm on the Friday before a Fixture is due to be played.
- A Club fails to inform the Match Official(s) of a change of kick-off time, and/or venue.
- An 'Out of County' Club fails to fulfil a fixture, by cancelling after the 5 pm deadline on the Friday before a Fixture is due to be played. The Home (Hampshire affiliated) Club will be responsible for 'Claiming' any charges from the 'Out of County' Club for any cancellation charges incurred.
- For all subsequent 'Late Cancellations' the Club responsible for the cancellation will incur an additional charge of £15, plus Match Official(s) expenses.
- For the purpose of this 'Rule' the Term 'Match Official' refers to any, or all, of the following:
  - Match Referee
  - Assistant Referees (where appointed by the HRR)
  - Match Observer
  - Referee Coach
- NOTE: The above will NOT be invoked if cancellation(s) is due to abnormal weather conditions.