



Kent County Rugby Football Union

Guidance for Selection and Use of Touch Judges

Over the season several issues and misconceptions have been exposed during disciplinary proceedings regarding the selection, role and status of Referees and Touch Judges in Adult and Age Grade games. In particular, there is a general failure to understand that Referees and Touch Judges appointed by clubs are afforded the same status and protection in regulations as it appertains to match official abuse as Society or RFU appointments.

This document has been drafted in consultation with the KSRFUR to provide guidance to clubs, coaches, spectators and referees, whether Society appointed referees or not. The purpose is to ensure the requirements of Regulations 12 and 19 of the RFU Regulations and expectations of Kent RFU are understood to improve support to referees and reduce incidents of match official abuse. While the guidance is drawn from Adult regulations the principles will apply to Age Grade games regardless whether the referee is a Society appointment or not.

Role

- To aid the referee by indicating when and where a ball (or player carrying the ball) is in touch or is touch-in-goal.
- To assist the referee in determining whether a penalty kick at goal or conversion has been successful.
- To indicate to players where the offside line is at set piece.
- NOT to indicate foul play.
- NOT to enter the field of play without the consent of the referee.

Appointment

- In the absence of a RFU or Society appointed Assistant Referee “*each Club shall provide a competent touch judge who should not be a replacement. In an emergency and with the consent of the Referee, a replacement may act as a touch judge*” Regulation 12.1.1 (g).
- ‘Replacement’ is any player considered to be a substitute for the game.
- ‘Competent’ is generally considered to include:
 - An understanding of the role and relevant laws.
 - Physically fit enough to run touch for the level of game.
 - Not under the age of 16 (for adult games).
 - Is not under the influence of drink or drugs.
- Should be appropriately attired.
- Should not wear team playing strip.
- Accepting that touch judges are club appointments they should refrain from overtly partisan behaviour or reactions.

Status

- Is a match official for the purposes of match official abuse.
- The match referee should satisfy themselves that the appointment requirements have been met in respect of each Touch Judge before the game commences, including a pre match briefing. Where the requirements are not met the referee should draw this to the attention of the captain and coach of the relevant team to resolve the issue.
- Where a Touch Judge is subject to behaviour or comments from players or spectators which may amount to disrespect or abuse, this should be drawn to the attention of the referee as soon as practicable. The referee will consider what steps are appropriate and necessary to deal with any reported abuse, including drafting an MOA report in support of a submission by the Touch Judge should it be necessary after the match.