



REFEREE GRADING MANUAL 2013

Published: October 4, 2013

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is your handbook with all the information you will require to write reports based on your observations of the referee to whom you were assigned. These reports may be conducted on a web-based format or generated as a word document on your personal computer. Whichever product you are using, the basic guidelines contained herein apply. It is most likely that B panel referees and above will be generated on the USA Rugby Game system. This system has some specific guidelines that are contained in the report pages. Referees approaching B panel and those below that grade will probably be reported using the word file format below.

When watching the referee, all observations material to the conduct of the referee should be time specific. The competency requirements of each grade will be familiar to you. As you will know the grade of the referee before you begin, make sure you are cognizant of the competencies of the grade above so that you can observe those that the referee demonstrates. This is meaningful information and will be part of the narrative should you attribute an above grade performance.

When using the Territorial game system, the competencies of a B panel referee are your starting point no matter the grade of the referee. When using National game system, the competencies of a National panel referee will be your starting point.

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COMPETENCE BASED METHODOLOGY

There are four principles that guide the game of rugby.

Safety - Observing fair play - Playing according to the laws - Sporting spirit

The referee must protect the safety of the players. The remaining three principles are taken directly from the Object of the Game as it appears in the Law Book

The laws determine the parameters within which players and referees are expected to conduct themselves. The laws provide a platform for the game, but they are not the game itself. **It is important that referees do not referee the laws; they must referee the game.**

A referee's abilities are evaluated in **Continuity, Restarts, and Management**. Continuity is a very important aspect of the game. Continuity contains the components Tackle, Advantage, Ruck, and Maul. The Restart components are Kicks, Scrum, and Lineout. The components of Management are Control and Communication. In total, there are eight components considered in evaluating a referee's performance. Each component is called a Unit of Competence. Within each unit of competence, there are key elements that a referee must apply.

(1) Key elements for various levels of referees

The system is for use in evaluating referees of grades C1 through National Panel. It recognizes the fact that lower-grade referees do not master certain key elements. As such, the key elements to be mastered by each grade of referee are delineated. Notice the distinction between lower-grade key elements using the word "observed" and higher-grade key elements using the word "ensured" or "managed." "Observed" means the referee saw what happened and reacted accordingly. "Ensured" or "managed" says the referee anticipated a problem and acted to prevent its occurrence. This clarifies the progressive steps in each key elements for the improving levels of referee grades within each unit.

(2) Onside

Offside by non-participants in scrum, lineout, ruck, and maul is included in that element. Offside in general play, such as might occur in kick situations is in the "GENERAL KICKS & OFFSIDE" unit.

(3) Foul Play

Infringements of Law 10 (foul play e.g. obstruction, unfair play, repeated infringements, dangerous play and any misconduct) belong in Control.

(4) Positioning

In the system, positioning is to be primarily shown as a coaching point, rather than being marked as a key element. For instance, the referee may not have had problems with immediate release of the ball after tackle situations even though he was too far away to manage the problem should it have occurred. The players simply played according to the spirit of the game and didn't challenge the referee. Since there was not a non-compliance, the evaluator can insert a coaching point to encourage the referee to approach the tackles more consistently. The system allows the evaluator to help the referee be better prepared for the challenge in future games.

The object of breaking the referee's performance down into units using key elements of competence is to ensure a consistent approach to evaluation. There are elements within each unit that have not been identified as a measure of competence. These elements should not be ignored, but they have a lower priority. This competence-based system does not generate a comprehensive review of all the units and all associated elements of competence. But the vital few messages i.e. the key elements must not be lost in a trivia of detail (minor elements). It is expected that the evaluator will be consistent and fair with each referee.

LIST OF COMPETENCIES

CONTINUITY

TACKLE

Key Elements of Competence

C1 Elements

- Observed arriving players leaving their feet.
- Observed tackler playing the ball while on the ground.
- Observed ball carrier playing the ball while on the ground after releasing it.
- Did not permit pileups to continue after ball was buried.
- Awarded scrum put-in to the correct side when ball became unplayable.
- Observed killing of the ball by tackler and ball carrier.
- Observed players lying on the ground interfering with ball availability.
- Observed players lying on the ground interfering with players on their feet.

Coaching Points

- Positioned out of the way of arriving players.
- When play is stopped, positioned close enough to administer effective corrective action.

B-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Observed and prevented tackler infringements that delay the immediate availability of the ball. It is recognized that at lower-level territorial matches the speed with which the tackler conforms to expectations will be slower than at higher-level territorial matches.
- Observed and prevented ball carrier infringements that delay the immediate availability of the ball. It is recognized that at lower-level territorial matches the speed with which the ball carrier conforms to expectations will be slower than at higher-level territorial matches.
- Observed and prevented infringements by other players (i.e. non-tackler and non-ball carrier) that cause the ball not to be immediately available.
- Able to distinguish between other players entering the tackle with the intent to remove players on the ground and make the ball available and who may themselves end up on the ground (a legal action) versus other players leaving their feet when they enter the tackle to secure or slow ball recycle (an illegal action.)
- Able to recognize and prevented illegal zone entry. Understands that the tackled ball carrier does not have to release to a player who entered illegally.

* *Observed and prevented* was chosen because it best expresses the expectation of a B-Panel referee. Failures in observation are clear errors and are scored as such.

Preventative actions fall into two areas:

- Actions taken at each tackle (preventative voice and/or positioning). These are treated primarily as coaching points.
- Actions taken to prevent patterns of offenses. These are addressed in the control section.

Coaching Points

- Initial position is close enough to manage the immediate availability of the ball.
- Final position anticipated which team would win the ball.
- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent tackle infringements from becoming material during the final stage of the tackle.
- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent infringements during the formative stage of the tackle.

ADVANTAGE

Key Elements of Competence

C1 Elements

- Recognized distinctions of advantage for penalty kick infringements versus scrum infringements.
- Did not return play to the original infringement after territorial advantage had been gained.
- Played advantage with consideration of players' safety.
- Played advantage in all appropriate situations.
- Communicated advantage with voice and signal (without reference to specific details as listed below).
- Did not stop play before the non-offending was afforded the time to establish a tactical advantage from an obvious opportunity.
- Played advantage gained once the non-offending team had an obvious opportunity to play the ball as they wished.
- Did not bring play back when the non-offending team had gained a tactical advantage but then made an unforced error prior to capitalizing on the opportunity.
- Played advantage based on a clear and real opportunity rather than on a hope for some opportunistic event.
- Played advantage without putting non-offending players under pressure.
- *Communicated when advantage is being played with signal and specific communication regarding the reason for the advantage (scrum or penalty)

B-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Recognized when infringements were not material and allowed play to continue without playing advantage.
- Played advantage with proper consideration for the preference/temper of each team.
- * Identified the player, team and infringement while communicating that advantage is being played (e.g., "Blue 10 leaving his feet").
- * Communicated when advantage was gained.
- Communicated to offender (and usually the captain) about the infringement if an advantage was gained.
- Communicated to offender (and usually the captain) about the non-material infringement if play had been allowed to continue after the infringement.

Scoring note

*Communication elements (marked with *) should not be scored as individual errors. Rather they should be viewed as a competency that is either met or not met. One omission does not impact scoring. This is a one-time glitch. More than one omission counts as one error.*

RUCK

Key Elements of Competence

C1 Elements

- Observed flagrant illegal collapsing of the ruck.
- Observed other unsafe play.
- Observed offside by defending non-participants, including loiterers.
- Awarded scrum put-in to the correct side when the ball became unplayable.
- Observed players who failed to remain on their feet.
- Observed players who used their hands to win the ball in a ruck.
- Observed players who joined the ruck from in front of the hindmost teammate.
- Observed players who obstructed in advance of the ball.
- Observed defenders who unbound and affected play.

Coaching Points

- Positioned out of the way of arriving players.
- Initial position was appropriate to manage the contest for the ball.
- Final position was appropriate to manage offside by participants and other destructive play by participants.

B-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- * Observed and prevented players from entering the ruck with their heads and shoulders below their hips.
- * Observed and prevented tactical illegal collapsing of ruck.
- * Observed and prevented attackers who loitered at the side of the ruck (“Sentinels, Pillars, Posts, etc.”).
- Immediately and accurately (Not at a tackle or hug) communicated *ruck*.

* *Observed and prevented* was chosen because it best expresses the expectation of a B-Panel referee. Failures in observation are clear errors and are scored as such.

Preventative actions fall into two areas:

- Actions taken at each ruck (preventative voice and/or positioning). These are treated primarily as coaching points.
- Actions taken to prevent patterns of offenses. These are addressed in the control section.

Coaching Points

- Positioned out of the way of the outlet pass.
- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent ruck/maul infringements from becoming material during the final stage of the ruck/maul.
- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent ruck/maul infringements during the formative stage of the ruck/maul.

MAUL

Key Elements of Competence

C1 Elements

- Correctly managed static mauls (including mauls moving laterally).
- Observed flagrant illegal collapsing of the maul.
- Observed other unsafe play.
- Observed offside by defending non-participants, including loiterers.
- Awarded scrum put-in to the correct side when the ball became unplayable.
- Observed obstruction during the formation of the maul.
- Observed players who failed to remain on their feet.
- Observed players who joined the maul from in front of the hindmost teammate.
- Observed players who obstructed in advance of the ball when players roll off the maul.
- Observed defenders who unbound and affected play.

Coaching Points

- Positioned out of the way of arriving players.
- Initial position was appropriate to manage the contest for the ball.
- Final position was appropriate to manage offside by participants and other destructive play by participants.

B-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- * Observed and prevented players from entering the maul with their heads and shoulders below their hips.
- * Observed and prevented tactical illegal collapsing of maul.
- * Observed and prevented attackers who loitered at the side of the maul (“Sentinels, Pillars, Posts, etc.”.)
- Immediately and accurately (Not at a tackle or hug) communicated *maul*.

* *Observed and prevented* was chosen because it best expresses the expectation of a B-Panel referee. Failures in observation are clear errors and are scored as such.

Preventative actions fall into two areas:

- *Actions taken at each maul (preventative voice and/or positioning). These are treated primarily as coaching points.*
- *Actions taken to prevent patterns of offenses. These are addressed in the control section.*

Coaching Points

- Positioned out of the way of the outlet pass.
- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent ruck/maul infringements from becoming material during the final stage of the ruck/maul.
- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent ruck/maul infringements during the formative stage of the ruck/maul.

RESTARTS

GENERAL KICKS & OFFSIDE

Key Elements of Competence

C1 Elements

- Observed restart kicks (i.e. penalty kicks, free kicks, kickoffs, dropouts) that were taken incorrectly (method and place).
- Observed non-kicking team players who failed to retire 10 meters or who were not put onside by actions of other players at restart kicks.
- Observed offside kicking-team players at restart kicks.
- Observed forward passes and knock-ons.
- Observed players lying on the ground (Law 14) interfering with ball availability.
- Observed players falling over a player on the ground with the ball.
- Observed offside players in open play when ball was kicked ahead.
- Observed accidental offside in open play.
- Recognized willful knock-ons.
- Facilitated quick tap penalty and free kicks.

Coaching Points

- Proactively prevented offenses at static restart kicks from occurring.
- Positioned even with ball carrier with suitable adjustment in anticipation of next phase.
- Positioned even with the front wave of players approaching the receiver of a kick.

B-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Proactively prevented offenses at quickly taken restart kicks from occurring.
- Proactively prevented offenses in open play from occurring.

SCRUM

Key Elements of Competence

B Panel & C1 Elements

- Awarded scrum at the correct position.
- Observed and ensured fair competition for the ball.
- Enforced proper engagement procedures.
- Observed and ensured that after engagement, the scrum was stationary and square to touch until the ball was put in.
- Did not allow repeated collapsing or lifting of scrums.
- Used and acted upon "Use it or lose it" at static scrums.
- Observed and ensured scrumhalf remained onside and stayed out of the pocket.
- Observed back row unbinding early.
- Observed offside by non-participants.
- Final position was appropriate to observe offside and destructive play.

- Body orientation & scanning provided good view of all non-participants.
- Observed and ensured binding between opposing props was correct.
- Observed and ensured that heads and shoulders were above the hips until the scrum was over.
- Observed and ensured that the body and feet of all front row players were in a normal position to make a forward shove.
- Observed illegal wheeling.
- Did not have repeated reset of scrums. In other words, the problems causing reset scrums were identified and solved.
- Ensured back rows remained bound until the scrum was over.
- Ensured non-participants remained onside.

Coaching Point

- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent scrum offenses from occurring.

LINEOUT

Key Elements of Competence

B Panel & C1 Elements

- Awarded the lineouts at the correct place.
- Established correct positioning of the thrower, the thrower's opposite and the receivers (if any) prior to the throw.
- Observed improper numbers of players in the lineout
- Observed unfair competition for the ball.
- Observed jumpers jumping early or remaining supported in the air prior to the throw-in.
- Observed destructive offenses across the lineout and made this a priority.
- Observed offside infringements by participants.
- Observed illegal support of jumpers.
- Observed offside by non-participants when ball was held in the lineout.
- Observed improper quick throw-ins.
- Ensured jumpers did not jump early or remain supported in the air prior to the throw-in.
- Ensured there were no destructive offenses across the lineout.
- Ensured participants remained onside.
- Ensured proper support of jumpers.
- Ensured non-participants remained onside when ball is held in the lineout.
- Ensured that players of the team throwing in do not obstruct prior to forming of a maul at a lineout.
- Managed quick throw-ins.

Coaching Point

- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent lineout offenses from occurring.

MANAGEMENT

CONTROL/COMMUNICATION

Key Elements of Competence

C1 Elements

- Observed dangerous tackles (e.g. high or no-wrap).
- Observed late tackles on kicker.
- Observed early tackles on the receiver of a kick.
- Controlled unsafe behavior and foul play promptly and effectively.
- Candidly admitted mistakes, but did not try to compensate for them.
- Behaved professionally both on and off the playing enclosure.
- Observed trampling of players at tackles
- Whistle tone was distinctive according to decision.
- Primary signal (penalty kick, free kick, or scrum) was clear and given simultaneously with whistle
- Observed late or early tackles.
- Observed obstruction and players who obstructed prior to a maul being formed.
- Observed use of a teammate as a "pick" or shield.
- Observed unfair play and applied the appropriate punitive measures.
- Observed dangerous play and misconduct and applied the appropriate punitive measures.
- Observed individual acts of cynical infringements and applied appropriate sanctions, including caution and sin bin and/or penalty try (without prior warning).
- Used appropriate punitive measures.
- Communicated with captains/players so that they complied with his requests upon formal prompting (i.e., players were compelled to comply).
- Remained calm in tense situations.
- Secondary signal was clear and given simultaneously with verbal explanations promptly after the whistle was blown and explanation for penalty was concise, specific and clearly understood by players.

B-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Identified flash points and dealt with them effectively.
- Managed observed repeated team infringements effectively by applying appropriate sanctions, including caution and sin bin (usually after prior warning has been given). Repeated team infringements can be:
 - A number of similar offences in a short period of time
 - A pattern without time limit (e.g. offences occurring close to the goal line throughout the match)
- Managed observed repeated infringements by individuals by applying appropriate sanctions, including caution and sin bin (usually after prior warning has been given). Repeated infringements by the individual are without time limit. Once a warning has been given it stands in effect for the remainder of the game
- Recognized when infringements were not material and managed them, without stopping the game, so they would not recur.
- Resolved problems without continually penalizing for the same offense.

- Communicated with captains/players so that they willingly corrected problems upon formal and informal prompting.
- Communicated no infringement had occurred in situations where there was a possibility of doubt.
- Communicated effectively with other match officials.
- Demeanor was one of confidence.

Coaching Point

- Communications applied at the moment of infringement should not be repetitive. For example, *Ruck* or *Hands off* (at a ruck) should be said only once.

NOTE:

Certain aspects of COMMUNICATION are found within other units. For example:

- Communications in TACKLE, RUCK, MAUL, GENERAL KICKS & OFFSIDE, SCRUM, and LINEOUT that pertain to the preventive nature of infringements at the moment of the infringement.
- Communications in ADVANTAGE that are designed to facilitate play after an infringement has been observed.

COMPETENCE-BASED EVALUATION SUMMARY

The reason for establishing criteria (key elements of competence) within each aspect (unit) of the game is to ensure consistent measurement of every referee's performance. Within each unit, the key elements of competence are sorted based on the expectations for each grade of referee. The expectations escalate as the grade of the referee increases. The choices and definitions of the words for each element are meant to reflect this increasing level of expectation.

An example of this is reflected in the following discussion of the tackle unit:

A C1 referee ensures pileups do not occur by keeping arriving players on their feet, but he may still not have the ball available due to actions of the tackler or tackled ball carrier. The C1 referee however, should be able to observe ball killing. A Territorial Panel referee is expected to ensure the immediate availability of the ball. B-Panel referees will display a range of abilities in this area as they gain experience and expertise.

There are elements within each unit which have not been identified as key elements of competence. These items should not be ignored, but they have low priority. This competence-based system is not meant to generate a comprehensive review of all the units and their associated elements of competence. The vital few messages (key elements) must not be lost in the trivia of detail (minor elements).

In the course of a game, there are a great many things to observe. If the referee got all the key elements of competence correct but missed a few minor points, then you might talk to him about the minor points after congratulating him on a fine performance. If the referee had some minor points that he missed but if he also missed a few key elements of competence, then the conversation should focus on the key elements. The important thing to remember is that the evaluator must apply the same standard to every game. That standard is defined by the key elements of competence for the referee's current grade listed within each unit.

GRADING THE PERFORMANCE

GRADING CRITERIA FOR EACH UNIT OF COMPETENCE

The competence-based system is designed to facilitate the grading of a referee's performance. The game is broken down into eight units with each unit having key elements that must be met. The key elements are tabulated so that it is clear what is expected for each level of referee. The descriptors of the key elements are brief, but the concepts have specific meaning. For instance, if the referee is expected to "observe" an event, this is different from the expectation that he "manage" the event. Observation has two meanings: (1) actually see the event, and (2) penalize it when no advantage has been gained. Management of an event means applying other criteria to avoid penalizing the event as well as applying preventive refereeing to avert the occurrence or reoccurrence of the event.

Each unit of competence has its own set of key elements that are categorized by expectations for various levels of referees. A referee of a given level is expected to meet the criteria for his level. The score awarded for each unit ranges from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest level of performance and 1 being the lowest. The score must be an integer – decimal points or fractions are not permitted. The score must be awarded based on how the referee performed with respect to the key elements. There are many expectations for each unit that have not been identified as key elements. Performance of the referee in adhering to elements not identified as key elements should not be considered in determining the grade for each unit. The evaluator may elect to discuss non-key elements with the referee, but only key elements should be used to determine the grade for each unit.

Six of the units can be scored by counting the number of incidents of non-compliance. These units include tackle, ruck, maul, restart kicks/open play, scrum, and lineout. The first table on the following page lists the scoring criteria for these units. Errors that contribute to determining the score in a unit must be documented in the report.

Two of the units (advantage, and control/communication) cannot be scored by counting incidents. Instead, they must be scored more qualitatively as indicated by the second table on the following page.

SCORING CRITERIA FOR TACKLE, RUCK, MAUL, RESTART KICKS/OPEN PLAY, SCRUM, AND LINEOUT

Unit Score	Performance criteria for an individual unit of competence
5	Complied with the key elements on almost all occasions during the game. Complied with the key elements for his grade with no more than 1 lapse during the game. In order to get a score of 5 the referee must also demonstrate an understanding of the key elements for the next level of requirements. If there are no such infringements in the game, then the referee should be credited with a unit score of 5.
4	Complied with the key elements on most occasions during the game. Complied with the key elements for his grade with 2 to 4 lapses during the game.
3	Some evidence of non-compliance with the key elements during the game. Complied with the key elements for his grade with 5 or 6 lapses during the game.
2	Non-compliance with the key elements on many occasions during the game. Complied with the key elements for his grade with 7 or 8 lapses during the game.
1	Non-compliance with the key elements throughout the game. 9 or more lapses during the game.

SCORING CRITERIA FOR ADVANTAGE AND CONTROL/COMMUNICATION

Unit Score	Performance criteria for an individual unit of competence
5	Complied with the key elements for his grade 95%+ of the time (on " nearly all occasions ")
4	Complied with the key elements for his grade 85% to 94% of the time ("most occasions")
3	Complied with the key elements for his grade 75% to 84% of the time ("regularly")
2	Complied with the key elements for his grade 65% to 74% of the time ("not regularly enough")
1	Complied with the key elements for his grade < 65% of the time ("too infrequently")

Note:

It is anticipated that most of the time a referee who is performing at grade will get unit scores of 4. A unit score of 5 should reflect extremely meritorious performance. A unit score of 3 will indicate some problems, but nothing significant. **Unit scores of 1 or 2 reflect significant problems and should be noted on the front page of the written report.**

OVERALL GRADE

The overall score places greater emphasis on some units than others. Each unit score is multiplied by its appropriate weighting factor as tabulated below:

Tackle	Unit Score	x	4	=	Weighted Score
Advantage	Unit Score	x	2	=	Weighted Score
Ruck	Unit Score	x	3	=	Weighted Score
Maul	Unit Score	x	2	=	Weighted Score
Restart Kicks/Open Play	Unit Score	x	2	=	Weighted Score
Scrum	Unit Score	x	3	=	Weighted Score
Lineout	Unit Score	x	1	=	Weighted Score
Communication/Control	Unit Score	x	3	=	Weighted Score

The **Overall Score** for the match is the sum of the eight weighted scores.

Once the overall score is calculated, the next step depends on the current grade of the referee. For B-Panel (and higher) referees, only the score is reported. For a Local referee (C1), the evaluator needs to determine the match grade. The grade awarded defines the referee's performance for that game only. It is not the same as the grade an evaluation committee awards the referee at the end of the season based on a series of observations.

On page 16 is a table that identifies match levels and indicates the match capability for each referee's grade. We would expect a referee to be overly challenged by matches that are higher than the standard for the referee's grade and inadequately challenged by matches of a lower level. In awarding a match grade, one must consider the match standard of play in relation to the referee's grade. **The evaluator needs to gauge the quality of play in the match and has the right to assign a match level other than the one indicated by the match level table if appropriate. In this case, there needs to be a clear explanation as to why the assigned match level is different from the table.**

It is very difficult to assign a match grade for an overall score when the disparity between the referee's grade and the match standard is large. If the referee is officiating a match that is within one level of that which is appropriate for the referee's current grade, the table on page 17 may be used. **The table is meant to serve as a guideline, not an arithmetic recipe.** If you feel the match grade should be different than what is indicated by the table, assign the match grade you think is appropriate.

The table reflects the following premises:

- The referee will have increasing problems as he officiates matches increasingly above his match capability.
- The referee will have few problems if he officiates a match within his match capability.
- It is very difficult to assign a match grade above the referee's current grade if the referee is officiating a match that is one level below his match capability.
- Matches that are more than one level below a referee's match capability are not reliable in terms of a grading process. The evaluator may be able to provide feedback, but grading is difficult.

2013 USA RUGBY MATCH LEVEL TABLE

MATCH LEVEL	MEN				WOMEN			COLLEGE MEN				COLLEGE WOMEN			U19 BOYS		U19 GIRLS	REF GRADES
1	FINAL SEMI																	N1
2	✓	FINAL SEMI						FINAL SEMI	FINAL SEMI									N1
3			FINAL SEMI		FINAL SEMI					FINAL SEMI								N2/N3
4		✓		FINAL SEMI	✓	FINAL SEMI		✓	✓		FINAL SEMI		FINAL SEMI		FINAL SEMI	FINAL SEMI		N3/B/C1
5			✓				FINAL SEMI			✓			FINAL SEMI	FINAL SEMI				C/C1
6				✓		✓				✓	FINAL SEMI		✓		✓	✓	FINAL SEMI	C2
7							✓						✓			✓		C3
	ELITE CUP	DIVISION 1	DIVISION 2	DIVISION 3	WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE	DIVISION 1	DIVISION 2	VARSAITY CUP	DIVISION 1A	DIVISION 1AA	DIVISION 2	DIVISION 2	DIVISION 1	DIVISION 2	DIVISION 3	CLUB HIGH SCHOOL	BOYS HIGH SCHOOL	GIRL'S HIGH SCHOOL
	MEN				WOMEN			COLLEGE MEN				COLLEGE WOMEN			U19 BOYS		U19 GIRLS	

✓ Median for the Competition

The USA Rugby Match Levels Table is meant to serve as a guideline, not an absolute. If you feel the intensity of the match level deserves a higher or lower level than indicated by the table, assign the match level you think is appropriate. Your rationale for assigning it should be included in the Description of the Game section.

MATCH GRADE MATRIX

For use in awarding a match grade for local referees (C1) and for promotion to B-Panel based on the level of the assigned match and the overall score for the referee's performance. Referees below the grade of C1 should not be formally evaluated. Coaching reports together with recommendations should be sufficient for promotion purposes.

Grading Matrix for C1 and B Referees

Referee Grade	Match Level	Below Grade	At Grade	Above Grade
C-1	3	70 or lower	71-75	76 or higher
C-1	4	70 or lower	71-80	81 or higher
C-1	5	75 or lower	76-85	86 or higher
C-1	6	80 or lower	81-90	91 or higher
Referee Grade	Match Level	Below Grade	At Grade	Above Grade
B	2	70 or lower	71-75	76 or higher
B	3	70 or lower	71-80	81 or higher
B	4	75 or lower	76-85	86 or higher
B	5	80 or lower	81-90	91 or higher

Referees should not be evaluated for scoring purposes in games that are two levels or more below the standard match level for their grade. (Standard levels are: C-1 = Level 5; B = Level 4)

USA Rugby is now using a generic B-Panel referee grade for territorial referees. The grades of B3, B2 and B1 are no longer applicable. This matrix is used to guide the match grade awarded in evaluations on locally graded referees.

There is a range of match levels the B-Panel referee may be assigned to. When writing an evaluation, the evaluator will report on the match level and the numerical score achieved. The evaluator will not assign a Match Grade, as ranking B-Panel referees as well as promoting or demoting them, is the purview of the Territorial Selection Committee.

For Territorial Panel referees, a score of less than seventy (70) indicates a below grade performance.

The table is meant to serve as a guideline, not an arithmetic recipe. If you feel the match grade should be different than what is indicated by the table, assign the match grade you think is appropriate. Listed below are three examples of factors that may cause an evaluator not to follow the guidelines.

The level of play may not conform to the standard indicated in the match level matrix. For instance, a Division 1 A-side may field a mixture of A & B players and play at a lower level.

External factors such as weather, crowd pressure, and importance of the match may affect the challenge faced by the referee. For instance, it is very difficult for a referee to perform well in freezing rain on a muddy pitch.

Unit grades of 1 or 2 may override the overall score. For instance, the referee may have failed to detect the cause of 10 collapse scrums (unit score for scrum = 1), and in such a circumstance it may cause his match grade to be lower than indicated by the overall score.

WRITING THE REPORT

THE WRITTEN REPORT

The written report becomes a permanent record for use by a wide variety of parties:

- **The Referee**
The referee uses this report as reference for development
- **The Evaluator**
The evaluator uses this report to document his observations for all parties, himself included.
- **The Referee Society**
The Referee Society uses the report to help the referee by providing the appropriate resources.
- **The Evaluation Committee**
The Evaluation Committee uses the report in making its recommendations to the Selection Committee for the promotion and relegation of members of the National Panel and Territorial referees. It uses the report internally in its consideration of an evaluator's future appointments and promotion possibilities, as well as for meeting requirements for the evaluator's re-calibration.
- **The Evaluation Review Subcommittee**
The Evaluation Review Subcommittee reviews territorial level reports for internal consistency. The subcommittee handles Territorial and National Evaluators' requests for report reviews for DVD re-calibration.
- **The Appointments Committee**
The Appointments Committee uses the report to develop the referee by providing appropriate matches.
- **The Selection Committee**
The Selection Committee uses the report to decide whether the referee meets promotion or relegation criteria.

The report needs to be approached with a great deal of care. Evaluators are trying to inform, guide, and counsel a number of independent persons or groups so they may help the referee improve. In view of this fact, the evaluator should meet the following requirements for his report:

- He needs to be honest
- He should be clear in his choice of words, thus avoiding ambiguous interpretation
- He should clearly differentiate between fact and opinion
- He should distinguish the important from the trivial
- He should be consistent with what he said to the referee after the match

The evaluator must own his report – it is his report and it bears his signature. The fact that the referee may not agree with all or part of the report should not influence the way the report is written. In each report, the evaluator's credibility is on the line and he must not be afraid to stand behind his opinions. It is important the evaluator makes the report worthy of himself.

The report should be constructive – anybody can be negative, not everybody can create. Such comments as “offside missed” offer little value. A more constructive comment would be “offside around rucks/mauls missed due to being too close to play.”

The report is two pages (or more): the first page provides an overview and the following page(s) provides the commentary and scores for each of the eight units of competence and the supporting data.

On page one, the section dealing with the description of the game is meant to provide the reader with a general view of how the game was played. It is not meant to discuss the referee's performance. That part of the report is covered on subsequent pages. The discussion on the description of the game should remark on such things as

- Playing conditions
- Players' attitude
- Players' skills
- Playing styles of each team
- Significant moments, such as flashpoints

The Comment section on page 1 of the report should be used to discuss the referee's performance on a general basis. Mention areas that were handled particularly well, as well as those that caused unusual problems, including noting those components for which a unit score of 1 or 2 was given. A unit score of 1 or 2 makes “above grade” unlikely regardless of the scores in other units. If the match grade does not follow the matrix, there should be an explanation. The observer should also include a prognosis based on this observation.

(Examples)

- This referee is capable of higher-level matches.
- This referee is comfortable at this level match.
- This referee needs further development for this level match.

In filling out page 2 of the report, it is important that the remarks for each unit of competence be consistent with the score awarded. The statistics for each unit must be calculated, and the comments need to be written **before** a score is given – the words should lead to the grade.

Coaching Advice

Any coaching advice should be offered in the narrative for the relevant unit. It should be presented as a separate paragraph(s) so that the advice is not intermingled with the observations being reported. The referee is, of course, free to accept the advice or not, but evaluators bring a wealth of experience to the table and should feel free to offer suggestions if they can.

Required Supporting Data

The following is the minimum required data to validate the unit scores and to assist in analysis of patterns in the match (time-specific means to nearest the minute):

- A time-specific list of all penalties, free kicks and successful penalty advantages
- Time specific notation of all referee errors that affect scoring the report
- Number of advantages played and number of advantages gained
- Number of scrums and scrum resets including the time and the reason for the reset

REPORT DISTRIBUTION

WHERE TO SEND REPORTS ON NATIONAL PANEL OR DOMESTIC APPOINTMENTS

- On national appointments, a *.pdf* of the report should be submitted within 3 days to:
 - The referee,
 - The Chair of the Evaluation Committee,
 - The Chair of the Evaluation Review Subcommittee, and
 - The Chair of the referee's Territorial Referee Organization.
- When evaluating a National appointment or National Panel referee, written reports need to be submitted to the High Performance Referee Manager in addition to those listed above.
- Any International exchange referees reports are to be submitted to the High Performance Referee Manager and Evaluation Committee Chairman ONLY. Other than at the debriefing, the referee's performance should not be discussed with anyone other than the two named above.
- C1 referees appointed to USA Rugby events will have the fixture in the Territorial Game System. The referee will be evaluated using the B level competency standards.

Should you have a sense that a National or Territorial's performance is trending well below his competency requirements, do not abandon your game review but continue to collect the data. At the debriefing, if you wish you may provide coaching points and be prepared to follow up with a coaching report. Contact the National Development officer and/or the Chair of the Evaluation Committee to ascertain how you are to proceed with the report.

APPENDIX: GRADE CHARACTERISTICS

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF REFEREE GRADES

LOCAL REFEREE ORGANIZATION GRADES

Ref Grade	General Characteristics	Match Level
C3	This is the first formal grade for a referee. Typically, this referee has significant development needs in some very basic aspects. He may be new to refereeing and just beginning to gain a feel for the game. He lacks mastery of the Laws of the Game. He has significant positioning problems. His communication skills will need some improvement.	
C2	This referee has a basic understanding of the laws. He knows the letter of the laws and applies them within his abilities. He may have significant problems in any aspect of the game, which can be corrected with coaching. Typically, his perspective and decisions are affected by inconsistent pace or positioning or by an over-zealous application of the letter of the laws.	6
C1	Fitness is a requirement for this referee. He may lack pace in quick play, but he knows running lines to get himself into position. He is able to manage games without significant problems in the games appropriate for his level. He may influence the way the game is played, but he will be consistent and fair to both sides. The players will have to adjust to some areas of the referee's application of laws, but having done that, they will be able to play the game accordingly.	5

TERRITORIAL GRADES

Ref Grade	General Characteristics	Match Level
B-Panel (entry)	This referee has begun the transition from officiating a game according to his standard to allowing the players to play according to their abilities. There may be instances of imposition of his standard, but they are the exception, not the norm. Pace has been added to fitness. He applies advantage well in games that are played in good spirit. He is learning how to use advantage while maintaining control of an intense, fast-moving game.	4
B-Panel (mature)	This referee is able to prevent, as well as correct, problems. He has developed a style and a philosophy of refereeing that consistently work for his personal characteristics. He consistently gets players to perform according to their abilities and desires for the day. He is learning how to help players lift their game to a higher level than they may have manifested early in the match. He knows what it means to be a leader on and off the field in any level of national competition. His exposure to international competitions will help him develop the experience and confidence to represent his country well. He is learning what it means to be an ambassador for his country.	3

NATIONAL GRADES

Ref Grade	General Characteristics	Match Level
National Pools 2 & 3	This referee has mastered the art of refereeing. He consistently creates the best game of rugby at all levels of competition except those higher levels of international competition where the players refuse to respond to his clear efforts to enhance the game. He is continually refining his style to lead players out of their uncooperative spirit. With his refinement, will come the ability to consistently create the best game of rugby in the most competitive international test matches. He is an ambassador for his country and a leader both on and off the field.	2
National Pool 1	This referee always creates the best game of rugby even at the highest level of competition. He is calm and effective even in the tensest moments of international competition. He is an ambassador for his country and a leader both on and off the field.	1

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF REFEREE GRADES

Local Referee Organization (C-Panel) Referees

In defining the characteristics of the Local Area Union (L-Panel) referees, it is recognized that these referees are progressively learning to manage the fundamentals of the game. The general themes in determining the distinguishing characteristics for Local referees are as follows:

- A C3 referee is still learning the game and in a given match may have problems with any aspect of the game.
- A C2 referee should be able to manage the safety aspects of the game. He should be able to apply the whistle/signal sequence of communication. He should be positioned correctly at scrums, lineouts and situations that occur near the goal line. He should be able to prevent pileups after tackles, but he will have problems in dealing with the initial players arriving at a post-tackle situation. He should conduct himself with good demeanor both on and off the playing enclosure.
- A C1 referee should be able to manage all of the above items as well as those aspects of the game that relate to offside. He should be able to manage the participants arriving after a tackle, but he may have problems ensuring the ball is immediately available. He should provide concise and specific explanations for penalties that are clearly understood by players. He should be fit and in proper position for all aspects of play with the possible exception of faster-paced tackle situations. He should be confident in his management of the players, and he should establish clear priorities for the players.

The distinguishing features of Local referees are compared and contrasted in the table entitled *Distinguishing Characteristics for C-Panel Referees* on page 24.

Territorial (B-Panel) Referees

In defining the characteristics of Territorial referees there are three areas of law which discern the level of the referee:

- Ball availability (tackle situations)
- Space to play (offside and onside)
- Game flow (advantage and management of players)

The distinguishing features of B-panel referees are compared and contrasted in the table entitled *Distinguishing Characteristics for B-Panel Referees* on page 25.

National (N-Panel) Referees

A significant part of reaching the top level in refereeing is the ability to achieve mastery of all the key elements across the complete spectrum of team styles and tactics. The fundamental feature of top-level performance is consistency of excellence independent of the skill level or attitude of the players. The top-level referees promote the best games the players are capable of, independent of their attitude for the day.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS FOR C PANEL REFEREES

Aspect of Game	C3 Referee	C2 Referee	C1 Referee
Positioning	Inconsistent	Positioning at set pieces is correct as well as at rucks and mauls that are slow in recycling the ball. Properly positioned at goal lines. Some inconsistencies in positioning at tackles and quick rucks due to lack of pace or poor running lines.	Fitness is a requirement for this referee. He may lack pace in quick play, but he knows running lines to get himself into position. His arrival time for tackles or quick rucks will be satisfactory, but his choice of initial position may be inconsistent with respect to seeing the ball or being out of the flow of players.
Scrum & Lineouts	Inconsistent	At scrums, there may be some instability caused by front row maneuvering that go uncorrected, but the scrums are kept safe. The scrumhalf is kept onside, out of the pocket, but flankers may unbind, and backs may encroach the offside line. At lineouts, destructive (across the line) offenses are detected, but there may be inconsistencies in managing other offenses.	Competency in all aspects
Ball Availability (tackles)	Inconsistent	Pileups are not permitted and safety of players on the ground is protected. There will be inconsistencies in keeping the next participants on their feet as well as making sure the ball is immediately available.	Arriving players will be kept on their feet. This referee is learning how to make the ball immediately available and is able to do so when play is slow. Faster paced play will cause him problems.
Space to Play (offside & onside)	Inconsistent	Flagrant offside is detected, but generally speaking this referee is inconsistent in controlling both forwards and backs.	All offside at scrums and lineouts are detected, as is flagrant offside at rucks/mauls. Some inconsistencies at rucks and mauls may occur.
Game Flow (advantage & management)	Inconsistent	This referee has a basic understanding of the laws, but inconsistent positioning or an over-zealous application of the letter of the laws may affect his decisions. Advantage is usually applied inconsistently.	This referee is able to manage games at his level without significant problems. Players will have to adjust to his application of law; but having done that, they will be able to play accordingly. The referee may have only one standard for advantage that will not be adjusted to the game.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS FOR B PANEL REFEREES

Aspect of Game	B-Panel Referee (entry level)	B-Panel Referee (mature level)
Positioning	Competency in all aspects	Competency in all aspects
Scrum & Lineouts	Competency in all aspects	Competency in all aspects
Ball Availability (tackles)	This referee will be properly positioned for ball killing tactics. In faster paced games, he will be inconsistent in identifying the real culprit. He may often set a scrum for dead ball rather than identifying the problem.	This referee has gained the ability to identify and deal with the causes of killed ball as well as subtle slowing of ball availability. He is able to influence play to make the ball available.
Space to Play (offside & onside)	This referee is consistent in his application of the offside law, but he may have difficulty with the more subtle forms of spoiling play in rucks and mauls such as side joining and tactical collapsing.	This referee not only corrects the problems leading to loss of space he is also able to influence play to create space for tactical execution.
Game Flow (advantage & management)	This referee will make good use of advantage, but there may be inconsistency in his application of it in multi-phase recycling of ball at rucks and mauls. This referee may try to achieve flow through allowing advantage when he should be pulling the game in to reduce the temper of the game.	This referee is able to create a flowing, open game through his consistency of decisions, his communication, his positional presence, and his management skills. He seldom has a bad game. His biggest challenge is to avoid being frustrated by particular team tactics or approach to the game at the high-skill levels of play.