

## **A Guide to Referee Competencies**

The introduction of a competency based referee assessment scheme provides everyone concerned in the game with several benefits. It is recognized that a District Referee seeking promotion to Regional Referee should display certain skills in key areas such as application of Law and movement around the field of play. A referee seeking promotion to Provincial Referee should display an enhanced level of skill competence across all the key areas. This scheme clearly identifies the key skills required for each level of referee to progress.

This allows the referee to understand what is required to progress as well as providing the assessor with a method of determining the official's potential more closely against clearly laid out criteria.

The introduction of this scheme also creates a career pathway for assessors who can move toward a more senior level of football depending upon the quality of their written reports.

### **Pre- and Post- match competencies**

It is an expectation of officials at all levels to be able to display the following competencies, which will encourage best practice from an early stage in the official's career. Not all of these competencies will be measured and commented upon in the assessment. However, they will ensure the appropriate management of any situation.

#### **Pre-match**

- Acknowledge fixtures
- Leave enough time to travel to the ground
- Politely meet the clubs' representatives
- Inspect the field of play
- Inspect players' equipment: jewellery/footwear/undershorts/club colours.
- Meet and instruct assistant referees where appointed or provided by the teams

#### **Post-match**

- Be prepared to meet/speak to club representatives (if behaving appropriately)
- Be prepared to meet the match assessor (when appropriate)
- Ensure all reports are completed and dispatched appropriately

## Skills within each Competence appropriate at Levels of Refereeing

*This section outlines the elements of each competence, and gives some guidance as to what the assessor should be looking for to confirm that the element of that particular competence has been met.*

### 1. Application of Law (contains decision making accuracy)

**District Referee** is able to:

- i. Know when and how to start / stop the game
  - Checks appurtenances and players' equipment prior to the game
  - Stops when an expectation exists
- ii. Differentiate between penal and technical offences
  - Appropriate stoppage and correct signal
- iii. Recognise when to take action regarding Sending Off/Caution/Misconduct
  - Assessor's judgment on what the referee should have seen and followed up with action
  - Dissent is dealt with appropriately
- iv. Make an appropriate award for restart of play
  - Apply Law with a corresponding method of restart
  - For offside offences

**Regional Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and:

- i. Use the correct caution/dismissal manner & procedures
  - Achieves desired outcome through: being calm, courteous and confident; following defined procedures; accurate and assertive
- ii. Appropriately manage and deal with  
Offensive Insulting Abusive language and/or gestures  
Dissent
  - Referee responds in context and to the situation
- iii. Distinguish between careless-reckless-excessive force
  - Appropriate sanction implemented

- iv. Recognise offside accurately
  - Able to recognise offside position with an awareness of the position required to judge
  - Exceptions in law recognised
- v. Apply the laws consistently
  - Having set appropriate standard, benchmark is maintained

**Provincial Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and appropriately deal with;

- i. Serious Foul Play / Violent Conduct / Denial of an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity
  - If recognized correctly, is the appropriate sanction given as an outcome?
- ii. Mass confrontation
  - Has the instigator and anyone escalating the situation been identified as the protagonists with the situation defused, the desired outcome achieved and the game restarted successfully?
- iii. Determine & appropriately deal with persistent misconduct
  - Having spoken to a player is appropriate action taken at further offences?
- iv. Recognise offside and implications of passive / active play
  - Are all Assistant Referee signals responded to automatically?
- v. Accurate awards on holding / pushing / pulling and or impeding
  - Is the referee in contact, and in position to judge with the correct differentiation between holding and impeding, with the correct restart?
- vi. Correctly manage the occupants of the Technical Area where appropriate
  - Are the Laws of the Game and regulations of competition rules managed accurately?
  - Are substitutes managed, including warm up?
  - Is any misconduct dealt with appropriately?

## **2. Positioning/Fitness/Work rate**

**District Referee** is able to;

- i. Face play at all times

- ii. Display a commitment and willingness to be involved in the game
- iii. Demonstrate movement around the field of play utilising the use of time when play has stopped; also move toward the location when an offence has been detected and penalized.

**Regional Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and;

- i. Obtain reasonable viewing positions with the Assistant Referees
  - Were signals missed?
  - Was the referee looking through play?
  - Did the referee have the Assistant Referee in view when appropriate?
  - Did the referee anticipate play?
  - Did the referee adjust position in accordance with the pattern of play?
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- ii. Have knowledge of set play situations (utilize time when the ball is out of play):
  - Anticipate the 'drop zone'
  - Maximize position
- iii. Maintain activity throughout the game:
  - Proximity to play
  - Mobility and movement
- iv. Obtain credible distances from play:
  - Too close to play
  - Too far from play
  - Constantly having to avoid the ball and players
- v. Awareness of next phase of play:
  - Take into account the pattern of play
  - Adjust position when necessary

**Provincial Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and;

- i. Anticipate open play
  - Proximity to play
  - Remaining with the pace of the game
  - Moving off patrol path if/when necessary
- ii. Adopt a position to detect or prevent offences
  - Viewing position
  - Side on view for challenges especially in the dropping zone
  - Utilize dead ball time

- iii. Right place/Right time
  - Adjust patrol path when necessary
  - Penetrate the penalty area when required
  - Continue movement – run through play
- iv. Use extremities of the playing area when required
  - (as per right time/right place above)
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- v. Display a willingness to go the extra yard
  - Work rate
  - Body language
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- vi. Demonstrate an ability to change pace
  - Acceleration
  - Regain position
  - Realise the need to make ground

### **3. Alertness and Awareness (includes management of stoppages)**

**District Referee** is able to

- i. Display concentration and awareness of open play
- ii. Restart the game correctly and with a reasonable degree of accuracy in positioning
- iii. Able to manage injury situations appropriately

**Regional Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and;

- i. Understanding the skill level of players
  - Advantage – players frustrated when not played or played too much
  - Fussy over trivialities
  - Empathy with the game
- ii. Act decisively
  - Body language
  - Signals
  - Timing of decisions
- iii. Restart play quickly
  - Players frustrated when restart delayed
  - Awareness of what is going on

- iv. Accurately keep time (including correct allowance for stoppages)
  - Disparity in time
  - Amount of time played took account of substitutions, injuries (assessor can only estimate amount of time for these stoppages – acknowledging that the referee is sole judge of time)

**Provincial Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and;

- i. Be proactive and not reactive
  - Communication with players
  - Intervene early to sort out problems
- ii. Utilize the trailing eye
  - Did he slavishly follow the ball
  - Second look – to Assistant Referee.
  - Retain visual contact with the original challenge whilst aware of what is going on in next phase of play
- iii. Utilize peripheral vision
  - Distance from play
- iv. Manage injuries
  - Safety
  - In accordance with Law
  - Treatment for injured player – then caution if necessary
  - Sense of urgency
  - Awareness/recognition
- v. Manage substitutions
  - In accordance with Law
  - Teamwork
- vi. Managing time wasting/delay to restart
  - Proactive
  - Verbal communication with players
  - Take action when necessary – in accordance with Law

#### **4. Communication**

**District Referee** is able to

- i. Make signals
  - Are they made too little? Too often? At appropriate time? Made so that everyone is in no doubt of the ownership of the next phase of play?

- ii. Use a whistle audibly
  - Can it be heard? Is it effective?

**Regional Referee** is able to demonstrate all above, and;

- i. Make signals
  - Clear differentiation between direct / indirect free kicks and directional indication. Straight arm for indirect free kick held appropriately
- ii. Vary the tone of the whistle appropriately
  - Does the tone match the severity of the offence?
- iii. Restart the game correctly
  - Correct method direct / indirect, after injury, (and the drop ball for the unexpected)
- iv. Have positive body language
  - Appears confident, moves purposefully around the field of play and has a friendly smile; enjoying themselves

**Provincial Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and;

- i. Utilize preventative communication
  - Effective use of voice to aid communication and prevention of potential trouble
  - Proactive awareness, short strong blast of the whistle when noting potential conflict between players
- ii. Converse with players
  - Use of the quiet word, e.g. when player incorrectly stands in the opponent's half prior to the start of play
  - Niggles between players: seen to have a firm word
  - Response to player questioning or comment: depending on timing look to build relations and respond, communicating with assertiveness and confidence

## **5. Teamwork**

**District Referee** is able to

- i. Make effective use of Assistants Referees
  - Encourage provision of assistants and provide instructions to obtain support to aid control
- ii. Generally acknowledge signals from Assistant Referees
  - Be seen to communicate, respecting their support

- iii. Give adequate pre-match instructions to Assistant Referees
  - Some communication achieved

**Regional Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and;

- i. Acknowledge and overrule as appropriate
  - As observed by the assessor

**Provincial Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and;

- i. Show satisfactory support for Assistant Referees where appointed
  - Encouragement provided to actively gain support
- ii. Demonstrate team leadership skills
  - Promote communication through eye contact and provide "unseen advice" on marginal decisions

**(Where no assistant referee is appointed, or provided by the team in accordance with local competition rules or by-laws, the referee is to be awarded a mark of 5 in this competency)**

## **6. Advantage**

**District Referee** is able to

- i. Demonstrate when advantage is being played
  - Some communication provided to the players incorporating the arm and voice

**Regional Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and;

- i. Use the correct arm signal supported by the voice when playing an advantage
  - As observed by the assessor
- ii. Demonstrate recognition of when to play advantage
  - Does not play advantage to the detriment of fair play and control, i.e., a reckless challenge

**Provincial Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and;

- i. Carefully/correctly select advantage in terms of:
  - Possession or advantage. Is able to distinguish between advantage and merely possession
  - Position on the field of play. Takes due regard of where the ball and other players are positioned before applying advantage

- Did advantage accrue? Stops game and awards a free kick when advantage does not accrue
- Mood of the game. Adjusts use of advantage to the mood of the game
- Sanctions applied if appropriate. Applies appropriate sanctions during the next stoppage in play

## **7. Overall Match Control**

**District Referee** is able to

- i. Display involvement at an accurate level for the game
  - As evidenced through earlier competencies; an empathy with the game

**Regional Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and;

- i. Display actions to gain respect from the players
  - Consistent application of Law
- ii. Is at ease and confident with their game
  - A game plan that provides direction for management
- iii. Display the appropriate level of concentration
  - As seen through maintaining awareness
- iv. Effect correct and successful control of the game - proactive in doing so
  - As seen through applying communication skills to those of awareness

**Provincial Referee** is able to demonstrate all of the above, and;

- i. Display the relevant level of tolerance.
  - Understanding of acceptable application of Law
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- ii. Approach players correctly and deal with them using a positive attitude/ body language.
  - Commensurate use of proactive communication skills
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- iii. Manage major issues.
  - Retain composure to accurately manage unusual situations
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- iv. Demonstrate and use experience to solve difficult situations.
  - Seen to operate to an effective game plan
- v. Identify the mood/temperature of the game.
  - Awareness that ensures an adjustment to pace and involvement to prevent problems

- vi. Identify tensions in the game and effect solutions, before they escalate, through preventative actions.
  - Implementation of prevention of problems
  
- vii. Inspire respect from the players.
  - Through sensitive management of players