

International Referee Development Program

Referee Communication Guide



Forward

Quidditch is a very fast-paced and intense sport with many different moving parts. The Head Referee is in charge of, and has jurisdiction over, all of the balls, players, and referees on a field. This can be a very daunting task as stoppages of play must be quick and efficient, and more is happening than one person could take in at any given point in time. The key to keeping control of a field is communication. There are three groups that a Head Referee must communicate with: Scorekeepers/Announcers, Players/Coaches, and other referees. Assistant Referees should know these principles but also have some issues specific to their job as well.

Communicating with Scorekeepers and Announcers

It is very important for the Head Referee to communicate quickly with the scorekeepers and announcers, and that they make sure the information is received correctly. The Head Referee is in charge of communicating when a goal is good, when a goal is called off, and when any penalties are given. It is important that, at any point, a Head Referee knows the score of the game so that the accuracy of the scorekeepers can be checked. To communicate a good goal, the referee must use both a hand signal (both arms raised above the head) and a whistle signal (one long blast); to check, the referee must get visual confirmation that the goal has been added to the scoreboard. Head Referees should train themselves to make checking the scoreboard a part of their in-game routine. It is also useful to shout out what the score should be after a good goal so the scorekeeper knows what the scoreboard should read, and the teams are clear on where they stand. Do not rely on the scorekeepers nor announcers to be up-to-date, the Head Referee is the one in charge and needs to own that responsibility.

It is often part of a tournament's structure that a player receiving a certain amount of red cards, straight red cards, or yellow cards will be ejected from the tournament, or suspended for a game. Scorecards require the scorekeeper to record all fouls, the type of foul, the team, and the number of the player. This also allows scorekeepers to assist in making sure a second yellow card to the same player in a single game are shown and enforced as a red card. To accurately convey the foul, a referee should familiarize themselves with the hand signals located in a league's iteration of the rulebook. To adjudicate a foul, the Head Referee should stop play by blowing their whistle in paired blasts until all players on the field have stopped moving. At this point it is important for the Head Referee to be understood by scorekeepers, announcers, captains, and other players on the field. The referee should loudly announce the team name, and the player's number. Then the referee should loudly announce the type of penalty. For instance, if a player is shown a yellow card for initiating contact from behind, the Head Referee should hold one finger in the air announcing this penalty will result in one minute of penalty time and communicate the foul both vocally and with the appropriate

hand gesture the nature of the penalty. All Head Referees should make a habit of communicating all of this information.

Players/Coaches

There is an art to communication with those who are playing under a referee's watch. Be too loud and it can come across as argumentative and irritated, leading to angry players and coaches. Too quiet and not only will the referee be docked points on their field test, but players and coaches will become angry from not knowing what's going on. Just like with the scorekeepers and announcers referees need to be able to communicate to those under their watch quickly to not interrupt the pace of play. All of these things may seem to add up to a thin line to walk, but do not fret. There are a few easy ways to make sure a referee takes advantage of every inch that line has.

First off, louder is better. Nobody has ever complained that a referee was too loud. As long as they do not have anger in their voice or word choice, they will come off as confident in all calls. Especially if a referee has to reverse a call from a beat before the shot call or from an Assistant Referees informing the Head Referee with what they saw from a better angle, being loud will make sure everyone on the field knows what is going on. Players and coaches like clarity, and the first step to that is being able to hear what's going on. When communicating loudly, a referee needs to use their diaphragm, rather than their throat. This will allow for greater projection and will help to prevent a referee from losing their voice.

Second is speak and explain clearly. Sometimes Head Referees need to make sure they are making the right call, but they should not stand in the middle of the field. Instead, when play is stopped, the Head Referee should go to or gather the other referees and confer with them for a moment, that way each second has purpose. Then, when they have decided on the call to be made, a referee should be loud and clear with the call and the penalty, if applicable. If anyone has questions about the call, do not waiver. Remain calm and explain the call quickly and clearly. Some players and coaches will get mad at referees for enforcing the rules, but a good referee will not fight fire with fire; instead, a referee should be calm and resolute, while still remaining focused on their job: to make sure the game is played safely and fairly.

Other Referees

The other referees on the field are all there to help the enforce the game. Unfortunately, even the best Head Referee will miss calls, as they cannot be everywhere at once. The other members of the Referee Team are how Head Referees can minimize those missed calls and have eyes all over the field. How they treat one another is as important as players would treat a teammate on the field. At no time should a Head Referee yell at the other referees out of distress or anger. If there is something that needs to be said to that referee then find an acceptable moment to inform them, or if it is major, talk with them during a proper stoppage of play. Part of what we at the IRDP hope to do is ensure that Referee Teams are all trained and knowledgeable about the rules. So when there's a referee that needs direction, the other referees should be calm and respectful of them.

A Head Referee should make sure they know the responsibilities of each of their other referees. From the Goal Referees to the Scorekeeper to the Assistant and Snitch Referees, knowing what to expect of them will allow referees to be more effective in how they communicate. It will also help them keep track of who to talk to about an issue that comes up during play, like a player being beat before the release of their shot, etc.. These may seem simple, but they are crucial to keeping the Referee Team together and on the same page.

Finally, a Head Referee needs to make sure they listen to their fellow referees. They are volunteering to do this job, and have passed certification like any other referee. And while they may not have jurisdiction over every element of the pitch, they are knowledgeable about the rules pertaining to their job. If a Head Referee disagrees with a call, explain why if time allows, (they should also be available to speak to Assistant Referees after the game,) so they can learn and grow as a referee every time they step onto the field. In this manner each Head Referee is also shaping the future of refereeing in quidditch, and having a good foundation of referees is what will remove one layer of controversy from close competitive games.

Snitch/Assistant Referees

While being an Assistant Referee, in addition to the points above, individuals need to be able to talk with the Head Referee effectively. Being clear in what Assistant Referees need the Head Referee to understand is crucial in making sure everyone has a positive impact on the game. While it is important to make sure they are accurately describing the situation and the call they think should be made, stoppages of play need to be as short as possible. An Assistant Referee should always structure their explanations in some form of "Red Chaser A hit Blue Chaser A from behind and they should receive a yellow card". If more description is necessary, an Assistant Referee must be prepared to provide it, so remember the details and describe calls as best as one can when asked. This can help determine if a technical foul needs to be raised to a card or if a snitch catch is called good or not.

Snitch Referees must be able to communicate with the snitch runner and seekers very well. Seekers should be able to tell when a snitch is not catchable due to being down, or a snitch catch was called no good. When a snitch catch is no good, the snitch referee may use the same hand signal for a goal that is no good. After a bad snitch grab, an egregious alteration of the snitch's equipment, or a snitch going down the snitch is granted three seconds "head start". In order for seekers returning from a back to hoops or from off pitch (depending on which rulebook) to know when to stop pursuing the snitch, the snitch referee must count down loudly as well as raise three fingers above their head and count down using them as well. Remember, seekers who pursue the snitch during this time should be sent back to hoops.

Snitch Referees should have a whistle and have the ability to stop play. Under IQA Rulebook 7, the snitch referee has the ability to stop play when they believe a good snitch catch has taken place. To stop play, the snitch referee should blow their whistle in paired blasts until all players have stopped moving. Under USQ Rulebook 8, the snitch referee has the ability to stop play when they believe a good snitch catch has taken place, the snitch runner is injured, the snitch equipment needs to be replaced, or the snitch runner needs to be replaced.

Assistant Referees need to be confident and unwavering in their calls, regardless of a player, coach, or captain's attempt to influence the referee. The only person with a higher authority than an Assistant Referee is the Head Referee and they are there to work with every referee. Saying that, Assistant Referees need to not take it personally if the HR overrules a call they saw or how they feel it should be handled. Head Referees have been trained for this job and are ready, willing, and able to lead this Referee Team. They just need the other referees to help them do so.

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