

International Referee Development Program

Referee Professionalism Guide



Foreword

While the job of a referee starts when one gets to the field, a referee's professionalism must extend to all of their referee related interactions. This aspect of professionalism is most needed in online and in-person interactions with the sport's community at large. While most referees recognize the need to be professional at events, quidditch has a large number of online groups and communities in which referees participate, and must be careful to present themselves online similarly to how they present themselves at a tournament. This packet will offer referees a guide to conducting themselves in a positive, professional manner.

Community Interactions

First among requirements for community interaction is the necessity to not call out or insult other referees. All referees are fallible, and will make mistakes. However, while acknowledging that another referee may have missed a call is acceptable, deriding them for such missed calls, a series of missed calls, or an entire bad game is not. Public shaming of a referee not only hurts the respect that the individual referee gets, but it also lowers the respect that referees receive as a whole. Referees should always be careful not to cross the line from commenting to deriding. If a referee does not know where that line is, they should err on the side of not commenting. If a referee is concerned about the performance of another referee, they should talk to that referee directly, or submit a constructive review, rather than call them out publicly.

In addition to not deriding the performance of other referees, all referees should refrain from comments about the attitudes of specific players or teams towards referees. Publicly shaming players for their disrespect of referees or “dirty” play will only serve to lower their respect for refs further, and it may serve to lower the respect given by their friends and teammates. As with correcting an issue with a referee, potential work or relevant comments should be provided in private.

Finally, there are often times when a referee is asked questions about the rules of the game. Sometimes the referee may think the answer completely obvious. Other times they may not know the answer. In both situations, the referee must be sure to answer both respectfully and correctly. Assuming this is not during a game, if the referee is unsure of the answer, they should learn the correct answer and get back to the asker. While it seems counter intuitive that admitting that one do not know, or is not sure would be professional, admitting your own fallibility can be well respected if the instances are few and far between especially when followed by a promise to correct that failing.

Conversely, when the referee believes that the answer to the question is obvious, they must not give in to the temptation to ask how the questioner does not know the answer or why they have not read the rulebook. It is far better to simply answer the question respectfully and move on than it is to insult the questioner’s lack of knowledge. Disrespect only breeds disrespect.

Being a Referee and a Fan

A referee should strive to have as few reasons to root for any one team as possible. However, the IRDP recognizes that in this community and the early days of the sport that is not always going to be the case. Not only are some referees often players on teams, they may also have strong connections to other teams or have favorite teams that they root for for any number of reasons. While refs should make efforts not to become fans of specific teams, they should always be aware of what to do if they are fans.

While referees may be fans of certain teams, it is important (with some specific exceptions for a team they personally are on), to not flaunt that loyalty. When at events that they are officiating, referees should refrain from wearing any marker of any team (other than their own if they are a player). If they are a player, they should always change into their referee attire (covering or removing all team markers) before arriving at a pitch to officiate. They should also limit their public comments about expectations of teams other than their own both before and at the event.

Many referees may feel confident that they can overcome conflicts of interests, even when refing a team of which they affiliated with or a fan of, but for some referees it is impossible, regardless of their actual intent. Some referees overcorrect (becoming biased against the team of which they are a fan), while others cannot beat the more conventional bias. However, being able to avoid actual bias is only half the battle. The appearance of bias, whether it is present or not, is a significant issue on its own.

If a referee is a fan of a team, whether publicly known or not, they should make the potential conflict of interest known to both the Tournament Director and the teams in question, and should, if at all possible, recuse themselves from any games involving that team. Referees should also at least attempt to recuse themselves from any game that has a significant known impact on the outcome of their own team, (refereeing games of other teams in the same pool of their team,) or a team of which they are a fan (though, if there is a shortage of refs, this may not be reasonably possible).

Equipment

Before a referee heads out to a tournament, they should always make sure they have all of the proper equipment. This includes

- A standard referee jersey, (All Referees if possible)
- A whistle, (HR and SR ONLY)
- A standard set red and yellow cards (not made from scratch) (HR ONLY)
- A penalty flag or marker (HR ONLY)

If they do not have these items with them, it will become necessary to request to borrow them off of other referees. Not only does this make the referee seem unprepared, it can also delay the start of the game. Both of these hurt their appearance as a professional official. Typically, a Head Referee should do what is possible provide back ups to their referee team in case anyone forgets their equipment.

Working with Other Referees

Before the Game

When arriving at the pitch, one of the first things a Head Referee must do is to gather their assistant refs to discuss expectations and ensure consistency. While there are many important things to discuss to make sure they are on the same page, all present referees should check to make sure their fellow officials are presenting themselves professionally as well. If other referees on the game are wearing team attire or markings, it is good to suggest that they replace or cover them. Also, if any referee is wearing a shirt of a color that could blend in with one of the teams in that game, suggesting a change would be good as well. However, if they decline to change on the first request, pushing them further is not advised, especially if the official suggesting the change is not the Head Referee. At that point the dissention caused by the pushing further would outweigh the potential problems caused by the attire.

During the Game

Mid-game, there will be many times when referees must interact with one another. It is important to respect one's fellow officials throughout the game. Non-Head Referees, while making sure to communicate as needed, should also accept and respect the decisions of the Head referee. Assistant or Snitch Referees may at times advise the Head Referee, but must always be careful not to cross the line between advising and instructing or demanding. Never, at any point during the game, should an Assistant or Snitch Referee show frustration with the Head Referee in any way that can be perceived by the teams or spectators.

The Head Referees must also respect and believe the observations of their team of officials. While the Head Referee should feel free to override the rules interpretations of members of their team, they should always act on observations of their team as if they saw the play in question themselves, unless they actually did *clearly* see the play themselves and disagree that a foul occurred.

Never should a referee lessen punishment of a call because it was an Assistant Referee who saw the play. At no point during the game should an Head Referee openly chastise, complain about, or yell at members of their referee team.

Post Game

After the game, any referee who offered to give an explanation of a call should go do so. The Head Referee should also approach each captain or coach separately and ask them if they have any questions, concerns or observations. The referee should listen to these concerns respectfully, without interruption, regardless of the validity of the stated concerns. If they ask for a response or explanation, or if the referee deems one to be appropriate, they should calmly and confidently give it. However, at no point should the referee allow themselves to become involved in a heated argument. At the end of these meetings, regardless of the referee's performance in the game, the referee should remind the captain or coach of their ability to review the members of the referee team, and give them instructions on how to do so. All IRDP certified referees can use either their unique qr code which can be found when logged into their account at <http://refdevelopment.com/qr> or they can provide the following link: <http://refdevelopment.com/review>.

Interacting with Team Members

During the course of nearly every game, members of the teams, particularly captains and coaches, will approach various members of the referee team to communicate concerns. Often this is done calmly and respectfully. When this occurs, the referee should acknowledge the concern stated. If the referee saw the play differently than the player or coach, they may simply state, "That's not how I saw the play." If they can make a quick explanation without delaying or disrupting the game, they may do so. If the team member wants a longer explanation, the referee can offer to give one after the game. An in-game explanation can be helpful, but is not required. If the player or coach is asking the referee to keep an eye out for an opposing player or consistent foul from the other team, they may tell them that you will keep an eye out for it. The referee may even want to thank the individual that alerted them.

Sometimes, however, the player or coach will not back down, or will keep talking with the official even after their concern was acknowledged. The official's attention should be on the game, but if the team member cannot be placated, the referee should calmly request that the player or coach stop talking with them. If the talking persists, the referee may ask them to stop while informing them that the penalty for continuing is a yellow card. If this does not work, the referee should follow through on the punishment, or, if the referee in question is not the Head Referees, inform the Head Referee of the situation and ask them to give the card. Head Referees informed of this situation, upon confirming that the coach or player was asked to leave and warned of a card, should take this as fact and give the card.

Unfortunately these interactions are not always done calmly and respectfully. In cases where the official is being berated, or otherwise disrespected, there is a temptation to return the hostility. All referees must resist this temptation and must remain calm and respectful in the face of this hostility. The referee should attempt to acknowledge the concern and respond in a similar way to how they would have done so in a calmer situation. If the player or coach persists, a stern tone of voice

informing them of the potential for a card will often be enough to get them to stop. If this is not the case, the referee should be prepared to follow through on the card, and be prepared for an angrier player or coach. While the card seems to make the immediate situation worse, not following through has more long term consequences, and may extend to future games with that team or that referee.

Finally, it is important for the referee to remember during these conversations that they may be wrong and the player or coach may be right. The referee may have seen something wrong, they may even be wrong about the rules. They should always strive for perfection, but never believe they have reached that point. They should remember this to prevent them from acting as though they are infallible. A referee should never say that a coach or captain saw a play wrong. Nor should they allow a player or coach to influence or change a call. They should simply say along the lines of "This is the call." Referees should converse with players and coaches with the humility, but should not waiver in their decision making.

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