

International Referee Development Program

Referee Training Coordinators' Training Guide



Foreword

While refereeing is known to be difficult within the quidditch community, training referees can be an even more arduous task. In order to be effective, each trainer must be able to demonstrate an ability to model the behaviors outlined in this and other IRDP guides. “Do as I say; not as I do,” is never an appropriate philosophy. This guide will take time to describe how to model and earn the respect of referee candidates and trainees. While modeling is a good first step, a trainer must also be able to teach others how to live out the expected behaviors. This can be more challenging than teaching a set of facts. As a result, this guide will explicitly detail methods that have worked in the past and will suggest approaches to maximize retention. Finally, a trainer must be able to fairly test or assess each candidate’s progress and, ultimately, make the final decision whether or not to certify. The feedback process must walk a delicate line between optimism and reality. The goal of the IRDP is to train all interested individuals until they are able to reach and maintain a high standard of performance, at which point certification should occur.

As shown by Neil D. Fleming’s design of the VARK model, there are four different types of learning: Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, and Kinesthetic. Some learn by doing, others by watching, other individuals by reading/writing, and still others by listening. The IRDP encourages all trainers to communicate in all four ways initially to trainees, and to adjust their teaching style according to the trainees learning from them at the time.

This guide will refer to the IRDP Field Test Rubric for head referees to outline the specific behaviors trainers are expected to instill in referee candidates. The focus

here will be to outline the five major tenants that the IRDP has identified as crucial to the success of a referee: Professionalism, Positioning, Consistency, Communication, and Confidence.

Professionalism

Professionalism is all about competence, good judgment, and polite behavior. This is really the idea that referees should look, dress, and act like people trained to manage the game. Preparedness, especially doing things the right way in advance (prior to your arrival at the pitch) is the key to professionalism. See the IRDP Professionalism Guide for more information.

Modeling Professionalism

Professionalism goes beyond being nice to players. It is good to be courteous, but if you show up late; if you don't have stripes to wear, a whistle to blow, or cards to throw; or if you chat excessively with one team prior to the start of a game, you are negatively impacting your perception in the eyes of all those around you, including trainees. Prepare perfectly for each game and you will set yourself up for success on the pitch. Arrive early, and start working on getting a full crew ready as soon as possible. If you are missing something or someone, tell a tournament volunteer before the scheduled start time, or find a solution yourself. If you are proctoring a field test earlier that day, try to spread out the times so that you are not testing back-to-back games. When administering a test, do not shout instructions to the referee testing, especially if that person is in charge of the game. Wait until the final whistle blows and give praise or criticism privately. Make sure you have the necessary materials to record results and inform candidates immediately of a pass or fail. If there is a valid reason for postponing the result of the test, such as needing to confer with other IDP members

regarding a difficult or strange situation, inform the field test candidate, then continue with other relevant praise or criticism.

Teaching Professionalism

When a candidate receives low marks on professionalism, it is typically because that person did not take preparation seriously. Being available prior to a game's scheduled start time and holding an adequate captains' meeting are required. Poor communication and poor confidence can also impact the perception of a person's professionalism. No matter how hostile the environment, a referee can never "lose it" by giving in to the temptation to curse or berate a player, coach, or spectator. Tell candidates they must look the part when reffing, and even if it is their first game, teams should not be able to garner this from the preparation of the referee. Give examples of the difference between an air of confidence and arrogance. Be sure candidates understand that this section alone can cause, and has caused, field test failures, even while receiving acceptable or high marks in other categories.

Testing Professionalism

Be harsh on all aspects of professionalism on the field test. Some areas may seem trivial to you, but the field test is the one time when most candidates receive specific feedback on professionalism. Most often, team feedback to officials will say "unprofessional" and leave out the reasons why; teams may not even realize what made them think a referee was unprofessional. There is no excuse for being unprepared. Tournament schedules may force some rigidity in timing, but try to give candidates a

game off prior to their field test so they can show you their ability to appropriately manage the time prior to the game's scheduled start. We want candidates to be serious about refereeing when taking a field test. As such, penalize a failure to have the proper equipment, especially if that impacts their effectiveness on field (i.e. lack of whistle for a snitch referee causing play to continue longer than it should, no card to show, etc.).

Positioning

Positioning is vital and often overlooked by teams and spectators. Referees must take up appropriate positions for their roles. On the field, that usually means constant movement. Running and sprinting will be required, so injured candidates whose movement is affected should not attempt to referee. See the IRDP Positioning Guide for more information.

Modeling Positioning

As a trainer, you must be particularly aware of your positioning on the field while refereeing. Extra effort, such as a sprinting to keep up with a clear break away and an easy goal, will be noticed and hopefully emulated by potential candidates. Generally speaking, as play moves, you should as well. Except in rare circumstances, staying stationary is detrimental to your positioning. Some ways to maintain and improve good positioning include asking other referees who watch your games for feedback on how you can improve your positioning, keeping personally fit and eating well, wearing appropriate clothing and footwear. When play is stopped, referees should also move the refereeing team away from players and coaches to discuss calls.

Teaching Positioning

Of all five areas, positioning is both the clearest to teach and one of the most complex to learn. There are general principles outlined in the IRDP Positioning Guide, most of which change based upon the number of assistants present. There are often

multiple good and multiple poor positions to take at any given moment, and what was a good position could be poor position moments later if play moves toward that area. Teach candidates to jog backwards sparingly; it is preferred to turn the body to run and turn the torso when necessary. Keep in a “ready position” with knees bent, prepared to change directions at any time. However, if you are ever in a poor position, due to something like a sudden, unpredictable, or unavoidable possession change that causes opposing players to converge towards you, either close your body, (legs together, arms at the side, and turned to make yourself as small as possible,) to signal to the players that you are not moving, or make a clear decision about the direction that you will be moving, so that play can move around or past you.

When making a call with play stopped, physically move toward the scorekeeper when communicating. In a slow-paced game, there may be times when walking up behind the quaffle is appropriate. Running is required for snitch and assistant referees as well. Half of positioning is awareness: knowing where the balls and players for which you are responsible are located. Quickly moving toward pileups is required.

Testing Positioning

This can be the most challenging to grade since there are only a few times someone is clearly in the wrong position. Think instead about the optimal positioning, especially when play is slow, and confirm the candidate is moving and at a decent angle. Awareness, (especially for assistant referees, who should not miss an off-pitch battle in their area,) and physical fitness should be included in this section. Some positions are not optimal due to a failure to anticipate. A head referee should not be sprinting a foot behind a quaffle carrier who is about to encounter an opposing armed beater, due to

the possibility of a collision. An assistant referee who never crosses the pitch boundary is probably not close enough to see all action. Similarly, a quaffle referee who gets trapped outside the quaffle by following play too far to one side is not optimally positioned for a pass across to the far hoop. When play does move toward a referee, is the official's movement predictable or erratic? Are players repeatedly using the referee as a pick? These are all things to keep in mind that are often overlooked when watching a referee.

Consistency

Consistency is the ability to be predictable and to take similar actions in similar situations. It also entails exercising fairness in dealing with different players or different teams. It is extremely rare that two identical situations arise in quidditch, but realizing when similar situations are dissimilar enough to warrant different action is a core competency of a good referee. Avoiding all forms of bias and perceived bias is also important. See the IRDP Consistency Guide for more information.

Modeling Consistency

Trainees will catch on to any inconsistency you exhibit quickly, but it is unlikely they will notify you of it. This makes consistency perhaps the most difficult tenant to exhibit well. Generally, being consistent does not mean treating everyone alike, especially those with different learning styles. As a referee, you must cover the same aspects of the game at pre-game meetings, and you should not take previous experience with a particular team or player into account when assessing penalties in-game. Any act that breaks the same rule should be called similarly.

Teaching Consistency

Referees get reputations based upon their application and interpretation of rules, particularly when they may vary significantly with other referees. The rules should reflect as little room for individual interpretation as possible, but certifying bodies must also instill a consistent approach to training so referees are not working

off an inconsistent base. Completing the same activities in the same order before every game can help officials remember everything and create consistency between games. There should be no “make-up calls,” and it is acceptable for one team to have six yellow cards while the other has one, if the former team fouled more often. A good referee does not try to even up the fouls. At no point should a team that is behind get more leniency from a referee, even if losing by 200 points. Brand-new teams must be officiated in the same way as veteran teams in all games. Also beware of bias against a familiar team or player. Familiarity can lead to harsher decisions from a referee against a player or team that the referee may know on a personal level outside of the match.

Testing Consistency

This area is typically difficult to take points from in field testing, and any inconsistency observed must be treated harshly. Consider automatic failures to send a message, even if the unfairness is only perceived and not substantiated. Fairness is the backbone of the referee crew, as they are only there to apply the rules equally to both teams. Watch for fatigue to impact calls, (or the way the calls are made,) later in the game. Verbal warnings can be effective, but ensure they are only given when appropriate (i.e. if a card is warranted, it must be given). Discuss any possible inconsistencies observed after the game, especially if you feel a lesser penalty of back-to-hoops, “no harm, no foul,” or verbal warning is used in one situation, but not another.

Communication

Communication is the main source of complaints for refereeing crews. Poor communication amongst a referee crew results in misapplied rules and missed calls, while poor communication from referees to teams and spectators creates confusion. Communication includes whistles, verbal commands, and nonverbal signals. See the IRDP Communication Guide for more information.

Modeling Communication

As a referee, it is important to model excellent communication. As a head referee, scan the field often to make sure assistants are not trying to get your attention. If assistants are not focused where they should be, remind them immediately, especially if you cannot watch the same area. Always use the proper verbal, nonverbal, and whistle signals. Ensure the recipient of the message, whether scorekeeper or player, understands before moving on. When training, communicate in a way that makes trainees feel comfortable. You can show candidates that you are a real person with strong emotions, and explain how you keep those in check during games.

When training, make sure you are teaching using more than one method. Always have print outs and scrap paper available for read/write learners. Always instruct verbally and have time for Q&A for auditory learners. Use examples, visualizations, and act out scenarios where appropriate for visual learners. Be sure to have opportunities for kinetic learners to try things and be corrected by a trainer in game-like situations.

Teaching Communication

Teach a standard method for making calls when play is stopped. Emphasize the difference between shouting a verbal command and extraneous communication during a game. Practice dealing with a difficult coach or player by role-playing. Practice succinctness while ensuring accurate transfer of the required information. Request candidates meet in advance with their referee crew to discuss how to get someone's attention during the game and communication preferences.

Testing Communication

This is typically the area where the most points are deducted during a field test. It is challenging to be sure players know why they were carded every time. Score mistakes are often the result of poor communication. Close your eyes and see if you can still understand the call. Then, pretend you could not hear the verbal call. Is the call still clear? Do not give full points if a single signal on the whistle is incorrect. Verbal and nonverbal signals should be purposeful and succinct. Any referee conferences must be necessary and short. Prior to blowing the whistle for a good goal, the head referee should make sure the goal is not being called off by an assistant. Discussions with coaches and captains should be short and persistent questioning of calls should be appropriately discouraged by the referee. Whistle blasts should be loud and clear. Players should be able to hear the referee and respond as required in most circumstances. Be sure to cover all communication errors observed with the candidate immediately following the field test.

Confidence

Confidence is a certainty in your own abilities as a referee. Confidence is instilled through experience and knowledge gained prior to stepping on the pitch, but it is exhibited by specific behaviors on-pitch. It is trusting yourself to correctly apply the rules you've learned. It is not arrogance, which is showing an exaggerated assurance in yourself or a belief that you are superior to others in any way. It is important to be confident, especially in situations which have never been previously encountered, but be careful to avoid a front of arrogance. Be particularly aware of the perception of others in this area. See the IRDP Confidence Guide for more information.

Modeling Confidence

As a referee ensure that you are never swayed by the opinion of coaches, spectators, or captains players in-game. Blow your whistle with conviction and be confident in your verbal commands and calls. Following the Professionalism pointers will also help you appear confident.

Teaching Confidence

As a trainer you will encounter situations and questions where you will not know the answer. It is acceptable to make the candidate aware that you are unsure or do not know the exact answer on the spot. However, if this is the case, it is vital to discuss and the situation with other qualified referees and come to a consensus. After reaching a general agreement about the instance, make sure to convey that information to the

original candidate. It is also understandable and even encouraged to show referee candidates that you are not always as confident as you appear on pitch. Reinforce the importance of making a decision quickly and sticking to it. There are tricks to help make yourself more confident on pitch. Successful ones being used by referees today include taking an extra second or two to replay the action in your head prior to making a call, or quickly looking at an assistant for confirmation. A rulebook should never be consulted during a game stoppage, as that erodes every confidence in the referee for future games as well. Teach candidates that everyone makes mistakes, and it is better to make a confident error in-game than it is to be overly-cautious and correct.

Testing Confidence

Observe the confidence of the candidate and come up with your own perception. Be sure to explain to the candidate specific reasons for your perception, even if they may be initially hurtful. Different types of people can be excellent referees, but some personality types lend themselves to appearing less confident, while others naturally seem arrogant.

Look at the referee's body language when approached by players or coaches. Watch where the referee's eyes and head go...does this person look down or cede authority? Does the candidate's confidence erode as the game goes on, or does it improve? Be sure to share this information with the candidate. The candidate should appear to be listening to questions or concerns raised by coaches and players, while still maintaining a focus on the game, without being influenced by the opinions of those that raise issues.

Close your eyes when the referee is making a verbal command or call and compare and contrast the tone of voice and body language, as this can give a good indication of the overall confidence of a referee.

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