

The society will support all match officials development by supply a coach to those with potential to reach the highest level of community rugby, a mentor to those which require support at either getting up a level or at the start of their refereeing career or a performance reviewer/referee advisor to support those on a game by game basis. The society encourages all match observers to complete the RFU Develop the Developer course which will enhance their skills.

The society encourages all match observers to shadow different roles to get an understanding of best practice. This can be done within the society or can be done with various R1 society members.

The role of a Performance Reviewer/Referee Advisor (The Match Reviewer)

Compared with a Coach, whose role is a much closer relationship with the referee over a longer period, the Match Reviewer's view of a match provides a snapshot of a Referee's skills on the game they have been appointed to.

The relationship between Referee and Match Reviewer should be built on trust and a belief that feedback will be honest, straightforward and will ultimately help to improve the Referee's skills.

The Match Reviewer will use a variety of skills to analyse the Referees individual performance, and suggest ideas to improve results by utilising:

- excellent knowledge and experience of rugby union
- good communication and literacy skills
- analytical skills (video debrief)
- good people skills
- open questioning skills

The Match Reviewer will use follow something similar to the below for appointments

Days before the game

- Pre-match, a conversation would usually be had by telephone that prepares the way for the appointment face to face in the ensuing days.
- An outline of the fixture will have been gleaned from the host club (usually via the Referee) and that would be shared with the Match Reviewer.

At the ground

- On the day, it would be expected that both parties would arrive at the ground in good time – often an hour to an hour and a half before kick-off.
- Radio comms kits are readied for the game.
- It would not be unusual for the Match Reviewer to either attend the team briefing in person or, to listen in, via a radio communication kit.
- It is important that the Referee should be allowed to go about their pre-match routines and warm up uninterrupted further by the Match Reviewer.

- When taking the field, a Referee will carry out a radio check with the Match Reviewer.

During the match

- The Match Reviewer will record occurrences on the field of play in the manner that they are used to doing.
- This will form a part of the evidence that can be used when putting together a match summary for the “hot debrief” afterwards, and also to provide some components of the written report.

Post-match

- Having gathered thoughts together, a meeting with the Referee would be organised in a quiet place after there has been time for the Referee to shower and unwind.
- A simple review might then take place where there should be opportunities for the Referee to contribute to a two-way conversation.
- The Match Reviewer would be expected to employ an open questioning style, which should allow the Referee to give considered answers to these. This style is vital when engaging with a Referee as it helps build a relationship and greater trust.

The days following

- If a video of the match has been made, both the Referee and Reviewer will have an opportunity to check through this, which will ideally confirm Reviewer observations (or change them) and help to provide further evidence for use in a Report.
- A Reviewer will have put together a “Timeline” (confirmed by the match video) and will utilise this in adding the evidence on each facet of the game in the form.
- Once a draft is complete, the report is shared with the Referee for it to be perused and contributions are invited to be added by the Referee. This might involve explanations as to how the Referee had seen the “Challenge of the game” and make “Match Summary” comments.

As a Match Reviewer you will see multiple MO’s throughout the season & the ability to change between levels & games are key to the role. If you are lucky enough to watch a referee more than once in a season, have a look at the old report to see how they have improved on what you have mentioned.

The Coach

The role of coach is to help all match officials (MO - referee, coach, mentor or performance reviewer) to reach their potential. A coach will be partnered with a MO for a period of time & not just a game. A coach needs to be able to understand the match official’s strengths and weaknesses, working with them to improve all areas of their game. The coach is not expected to be at all games & will select, with their MO, the best suitable games to be at.

The coach will use a variety of skills to analyse MO’s individual performance, and suggest ideas to improve results by utilising:

- excellent knowledge and experience of rugby union
- good communication and teaching skills
- analytical skills (video debrief)
- problem solving abilities
- good people skills

Having the ability to empathise and inspire is also key, as a coach's influence could have a profound impact on those they are coaching, both in terms of their sport, and in relation to their future career and life skills.

Unlike a Match Reviewer the coach does not have set duties to follow as it is what best works for the Referee.

The coach will discuss aspects of the game with their MO throughout the season & will have multiple ways of working with the referee. As they are not with the MO at all games, they must be able to have an understanding of how to get information from the MO to get a feeling of each game.

The Mentor (or Peer Mentor)

A mentor could be given on a game by game basis or a period of time. Mentors should have a genuine interest in helping a match official to achieve their personal development aims.

A mentor should ensure that they:

- Have the skills and experience to mentor
- Share experiences to provide knowledge of how you can help
- Provide different perspectives on problem solving, career options and opportunities
- Be a role model and provide connection with other role models, Be a Friend
- Deal professionally with any conflicts of interest

Like the coach, the mentor does not have set duties to follow as it is what best works for the Referee.

A mentor can be given to a referee for various different reasons. These can be to improve a referee up a level or give them more confidence, but most are given to our first year referees to help them transition into senior rugby.