

“Breaking the Bread and Building Blocks ”-

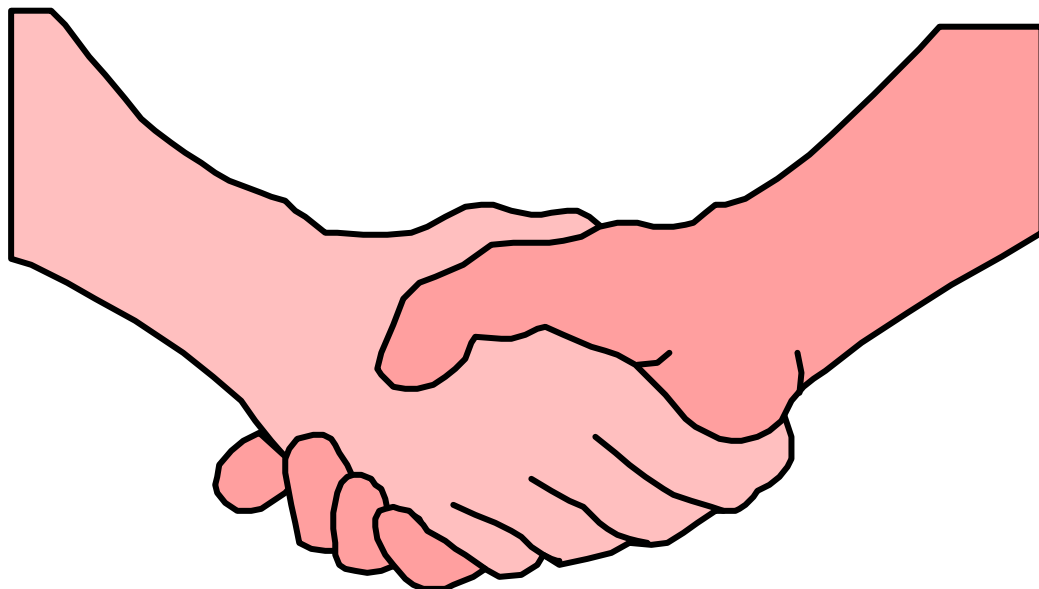
Examining the Game through the Eyes of Coaches and Referees

“Coach and Referee- Your job gives you authority- Your Behaviour earns you respect.”

Quote attributed to Jack Gibson, Premiership Winning Coach, Rugby League

“Rugby Union is a sport which involves physical contact. Any sport involving physical contact has inherent dangers. It is very important that players play the game in accordance with the Laws of the Game and be mindful of the safety of themselves and others. It is the responsibility of those who coach or teach the game to ensure that players are prepared in a manner which ensures compliance with the Laws of the Game and in accordance with safe practices.”

IRB



Rugby is a players' and spectators' game. The role of the Coach and Referee is a significant factor in ensuring this aim is realised. They are visible stakeholders and their collective contribution as pivotal partners is fundamental to our game growing and achieving a high status profile in the competitive arena of World Sport.

The major premise of this study was to examine the perspective that Referees and Coaches have in regard to the management of the game and to identify areas of commonality that could be developed for the greater good of the game. It also seeks to examine trends or themes that suggest divergent thinking in regard to how each partner operates and the degree of interaction (positive or otherwise) prevalent in the game at this present point in time. There was also provision for people to present views on how our game could be improved as a spectacle and a package in what is increasingly becoming a commercially orientated and driven market place in global sport -take note International Rugby Board, if nothing else it makes for interesting reading.

Having only been a player or coaching participant until this year I recognise that my view of the game was naturally slanted and I did not fully appreciate the job description or demands that go with being the "*man in the middle*" until I experienced it first hand. This proved to be the catalyst and personal motivation in the construction of the sample survey.

Survey Composition:

Four Step Task:

- 1. Construction of Dual Questionnaires-brainstorming questions & format**
- 2. Collecting the Data**
- 3. Sorting the Data into a Summary**
- 4. Analysing the Data**

Survey Period: July 19- August 30 (7 weeks)

Referees: 17 questions (13 multiple choice, 1 ranking, 3 written responses)

Coaches: 17 questions (12 multiple choice, 2 ranking, 3 written responses)

The theme was developed from a two tier parallel perspective and questions were initially constructed to address the perspective that coaches and referees may have on the state of the game and their relationship and role. Certain questions were similarly stated with the word coach or referee substituted accordingly. (Or words to that effect) Most of the presented questions stem from areas that provoke comment in pre or post match discussion.

I wanted to identify:

- Why the respective parties choose to do what they do
- What they regard as key qualities to fulfill their role
- How they view each other and the degree of interaction involved
- An inspection of laws, critical areas of the game and recommendations
- The degree of experience and commitment to the game

- Any prejudices or subjectivity that may get in the way of healthy relations between the parties

I originally intended to make the questionnaire open-ended so respondents wouldn't be unnecessarily influenced by my perspective and direction and could comment freely. In hindsight I was being overly optimistic in making the assumption that respondents would be happy to devote a sizeable amount of time to writing their thoughts on various issues without guidelines or parameters. The time factor, level of computer literacy, and also apathy towards the questionnaire format might prove to be a deterrent.

I sought the advice the Australian Rugby Union Coach Education Manager who suggested the need to make it more user-friendly by incorporating questions primarily using a multiple-choice framework. Thus it evolved; it was challenging to pose a suitable selection to choose from under each question criteria. It is an interesting and ambitious exercise to construct a survey without a lot of background experience in formatting of questions. To gauge general opinion I presented a number of random questions to rugby enthusiasts to seek their opinion or interpretation and I also trialled the questionnaire with several coaches and referees to determine the validity and overall ease of responding. I was then able to make some subtle changes and issue it for general consumption. Most surveys can be completed in a 15-minute time frame.

Sample Coverage: 33 Responses each for Referees and Coaches- Total 66

In order to get a nation wide response I made contact via e-mail and the telephone with various State contacts from the Australian Rugby Shield seeking their assistance in circulating both the Coach and Referee Questionnaire (NSW Country, Victoria, Western Australia, Northern Territory) I also sought assistance from the Australian Rugby Union, the Queensland Rugby Union and the Queensland Referees Association and sent the surveys to regional Queensland. I also promoted the questionnaire on the Internet using a number of rugby related links in pursuit of a global perspective.

Collated responses have come from Referees and Coaches in New South Wales, Western Australia, Victoria, Metropolitan Brisbane, Regional Queensland, and two international responses from the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Percentage rankings have been rounded to the nearest whole number and grouped accordingly. I have endeavoured, where possible to group collective comment responses as they may pertain to a key theme.

Components of the Report:

The composition of this document is made up of Master Copies of the Questionnaires; A Summary Statement of collated Information and a Report outlining my observations based on the findings. There is also a note acknowledging all those who have made a contribution.

Trends and Features of Responses:

The major thrust of my report will focus around interesting features and trends that I have identified and outlined in the summary statement. I will not be commenting in detail on each question but readers do have a reference point if they wish to view the collated responses. No doubt there will be something of interest for all parties.

This report in no way attempts to state a right or wrong way of operation for how coaches and referees should approach their role. It simply states what respondents had to say about their experiences at a certain point in time.

A pertinent general statement that pertains to the core study is to recognise that responses are very much dictated by the respondents' level of experience and expertise in their role and whom they are primarily focusing on in their role as a coach and referee. The elite referee or coach is going to have a different perspective, agenda and mind set to a fledgling offsider that is responsible for coaching or refereeing junior school boy rugby. This was borne out in the responses when I compared someone coaching or refereeing in senior ranks with someone involved in a recreational capacity. Priorities change depending on the domain you participate and operate in. A number of respondents were involved in various levels of the game and commented that their focus varied depending on the situation and their primary role. The statistics do not necessarily reflect this important point in the format that I have produced.

Age and Years involved in a Coaching and Refereeing capacity reflect a genuine long term commitment with 67% of Coaches being involved for more than 7 years and 61 % indicated for Referees. Such roles still appear to be a male preserve with only one female response. It should also be noted that there is a significant allegiance to schoolboy rugby by both parties. Coaches who had a referee qualification registered 48% and referees with a coaching qualification recorded 52% suggesting a positive awareness of the dual roles.

The motives for coaching and refereeing were spread across the stems. Enjoyment, love of the game, player development, fitness coupled with success and the associated challenges suggest a long-term affinity for the game. You can also factor in that certain personality types may be influenced to take up a role that reflects or suits their disposition.

The most important qualities of a coach and referee were determined by a first and second past the post model where Rugby knowledge and People skills were the mutually agreed predominant stand out elements. Coaches saw People skills as slightly more important whereas Referees regard rugby knowledge as the foremost quality. Surprisingly the "Desire to Achieve" was not a motivational force for Coaches and "Tolerance" was not viewed highly by the referee fraternity.

A significant percentage of coaches saw Player Development as the their most important role and this was also suggested by the referees. This highlights the importance and need for coaches to be involved in coaching education on an ongoing basis to keep pace with the development of the game. It is interesting to note that referees viewed Player Safety as their most important role, is this indication of the growing concerns associated with litigation?

Has there been a deliberate move away from the traditional role of ensuring the game is controlled through the enforcement of the rules, which would see player safety paramount anyway?

A number of referees commented on the dilemma they encounter in managing the game to suit the players and the rules and the fact that this compromises their execution of duties. There is also the element of subjectivity and the human factor involved in interpreting the laws, which causes confusion due to inconsistency from game to game and this also extends to the coaching viewpoint with regard to interpretation.

Referees overwhelmingly perceive coaches as viewing their whistle blowing status as a necessary evil. (60%) It could be suggested that this is a negative connotation whereas Coaches believe Referees view them as people who are focused on player development and dedicated servants of the game (84% combined) suggesting a positive spin as far as the coaches are concerned.

Both Referees (93%) and Coaches (73%) share a collective belief in the value of discussing various elements of a game in post match mode. Controversial and technical issues account for 64% of discussion in terms of the referee's stance. Coaches saw technical issues, team performance and a general post mortem of the game accounting for 76% of the focus for discussion. This is a healthy forum and a good example of interaction and debate that should be mutually beneficial rather than having exclusive value. There is no formal mode or system in place for post match analysis and this operates traditionally on a goodwill scale.

Both Referees and Coaches were strong supporters of pre match meetings. Referees would primarily focus on Game Management and Interpretation of the Tackle Rule (72%) The question of scrum engagement and obligations at the tackle and breakdown tend to be spelt out as well as establishing a "face" with regard to the captain when it comes to on field discussions. The Coaching Fraternity had a different motive. They have an interest in specific scenarios that have been played out previously and want to gauge how the referee will rule on such issues. (44%) Determining the type of personality and manner a referee may project and briefing the team accordingly was weighted at 20% and regarded as part of the pre-match preparation from a coaching viewpoint.

It is encouraging to see Coaches involving Referees in the education of players. (85%) Sixty One per cent of Referees had some form of invitation to work with teams. This empowers player knowledge regarding laws and coaches utilise this to their advantage in clarifying key technical issues and employing and testing out strategies from a tactical point of view and having a referee perspective on what they can and can't do. It also promotes a better working relationship between the parties as everyone is working together rather than being in opposite camps. At the elite level such as Super 12 many coaches invite referees to work on areas of the game where there is a perceived need. This is definitely an area worth exploring in a broader sense from a coaching viewpoint in regard to tactical advances.

Laws, Rules and Roles that both parties would like to see changed were many and varied. Significantly the "Other" column was more prominent than my suggested stems. Forty Four per cent of Referees did see a need to review the point scoring system and the Advantage Law. Conversely Coaches only recorded 24% in respect of this.

There is a lot of conjecture over the whole issue of the tackle and this was highlighted and a common thread through commentary response in a number of questions. There is a lot of emphasis on having more “live game time” from both parties and a condemnation of negative or spoiling play. With reference to point scoring it was clear that to score a try deserved a greater numerical value and that points achieved from kicking should be down graded.

Referees’ and Coaches clearly identified the Tackle as the hardest law to enforce based on the dynamics of the situation and the fact that there is so much to look for. Although the law may be clear in its intent- (the following are essential elements)

1. *When a player tackles an opponent and they both go to ground, the tackler must immediately release the tackled player*
2. *The tackler must immediately get up or move away from the tackled player and from the ball at once.*
3. *The tackler must get up before playing the ball*
4. *The tackled player must make the ball available immediately*
5. *The tackled player must immediately pass or release the ball. That player must also get up or move away from it at once*
6. *After a tackle, all other players must be on their feet when they play the ball*
7. *After a tackle or near to a tackle, other players who play the ball must do so from behind the ball and from behind the tackled player or the tackler closest to those players goal line.*

Elements extracted from current Law Book

The tackler and tackled player plus supporting players from both sides tend to make this high intensity contact situation open to debate regarding ruling. Coaches will claim there is too much subjectivity in making a ruling yet the referee has to act and make split second decisions and has to consider 19 possible scenarios with regard to the actual Law. Perhaps the Lawmakers could look at simplifying this Law to make it easier to rule considering the fact that it is challenging for the players, coaches and referees. Not surprisingly, this was an area that coaches want Referees to scrutinize in the game situation. Offside play and infringements around the ruck area was also deemed important for referees to pay particular attention to highlighting the need to penalise teams that play negatively. A number of comments related to player safety suggested that this message is filtering through and that foul play has no place in our game. Set pieces such as the scrum and lineout registered twenty-eight per cent from the referees as difficult to enforce and twenty percent of Coaches also saw this as hard to police.

An interesting question and response was the one pertaining to Law Knowledge of the respective parties. Both parties projected a positive report of each other Referees rated Coaches 55% as having a satisfactory understanding of the Laws and 21 % as being good. (76% in total) Twenty Four per cent believed they were either unsatisfactory or poor. The coaching fraternity was fairly complimentary of the Referees with 84% viewing referees as being satisfactory or good in their control of the game. An additional question that could be asked in respect of Coaches would be “*Do you have a current law Book and refer to it on a regular basis?*”

I asked the question of Coaches directly in regard to how a Referee could contribute to a good match both as a spectacle and from a playing viewpoint. Using the scale of first and second past the post 3 key areas were identified-

1. Consistency in decision making
2. Healthy interaction with the players
3. Good knowledge of the game and its principles

Common sense elements, the point of interest I wish to comment on are the importance of consistency from a coaching perspective. Coaches much prefer rulings that extend to both sides in terms of interpretation and remain consistent during the course of the game even when you may have a different view of the decision making from your vantagepoint. Players enjoy a referee who has control but treats them in a respectful manner rather than from an authoritarian stance. Obviously it is vital to have a good understanding of the game and its principles and players also can sense this in the manner, positioning and dialogue, which a referee conveys during the course of the game. Coaches don't want to see excessive and vigilant use of the whistle.

I was also interested in how a Referee can determine the variables that will suggest a side is well coached. Originally I had opted for a question that examined good and bad indicators but I wanted to put a positive slant on this and so reworded it accordingly. Team Discipline was a stand out feature as was playing structure and amplified by ability to maintain possession for extended periods of time. The referee is stating that he wants to manage the game without undue interruption and wants to see the game flow. Game knowledge and organisational efficiency of performing teams was also a factor and this contributes to extended passages of play.

Both parties show an extensive commitment to updating their qualifications and abilities on an ongoing basis (88% for coaches and 97% for referees) They are involved in wide ranging activities from informal to formal programmes designed to cater for personal development. There is a lot of interaction/discussion/observation with fellow members and this creates an incidental-mentoring situation that operates on a goodwill basis. There is also the opportunity for specialist support along more formalised lines as required by the accreditation criteria. A noticeable feature was also the significant number involved in educating their peers and offering expertise. It is encouraging to see Coaches and Referees inviting various sources of expertise and accepting opportunities for further growth and not perceiving themselves to be sitting in Ivory Towers assuming they are the font of all knowledge and being insular or threatened in their status. The use of video and technological support is becoming more evident as coaches and referees prepare in their respective roles and is used as a self analysis or assessment tool.

The question related to recommendations to improve the game drew a huge response in terms of how the game should be managed and played and appreciated in terms of spectator appeal. A number of views echoed had a contrary stance to what someone else might advocate which in itself promotes healthy debate and animated discussion within the rugby community ranks. I have chosen a few areas to comment on that I found personally interesting. A lot of emphasis was placed on promoting positive play and rewarding teams who set out to play the game in a pro-active manner.

Again areas such as the breakdown/tackle/foul play and advantage received a lot of scrutiny regarding how rules should be enforced with the definite intent of favouring teams who were taking the initiative. There are calls for more “live time” to provide greater audience value. Point scoring was a reference point for promoting the value of a try and reducing goal-kicking options and kicking in general play. There was the usual call for a hybrid version of Union and League with less numbers on the field and experimentation with interchange. Aligning interpretation of the laws between the Northern and Southern Hemisphere was echoed. Aside from simplifying the laws there is also a school of thought that would like to see a period of stability in regard to not tampering with the laws and seeking no change to the Law Book. Compare the volume of Laws related to the game with other team sports to see the degree of complexity and content that everyone is required to understand. There was a plea for more emphasis on grass roots rugby and committing to investment in terms of dollars and expertise in developing areas of the world. There is a perception that professionalism at the top level in terms of revenue does not appear to filter down in developing junior and schoolboy ranks. To secure our future and the advancement of the game we can't afford to live in the “here and now.” We need to continue generating more emphasis on coaching and referee education and targeting key areas such as schoolboy rugby and the transition between under age and open playing ranks. To achieve a quality product rating you have to empower people to be quality participants and we need to have motivated and competent people in place to bring this through at grass roots level.

The final question in the survey focused on aspects that could be developed to promote a better working relationship with the other party. Referees felt that coaches need to be educated in regard to the challenges associated with blowing the whistle in a game situation (51%) and this was echoed by the coaches who saw the need to have a greater appreciation and understanding of the current laws. (38%) It is also worth noting that coaches saw a need to display greater tolerance and acceptance of decisions. (34%) These two indicators illustrate that coaches are becoming more conscious of the demands required in controlling the game. It also provides an opportunity and invitation for communication and meaningful dialogue between the two parties on an ongoing basis to clarify and revise thinking on mutual issues related to the game.

In conclusion, although this survey does not attempt to solve or resolve issues or roles pertaining to Coaches and Referees it does provide a sample window of how each party thinks, how they perceive each other and how they view the game. It is clearly evident both parties want to promote a game that has appeal for all stakeholders and with this in mind there are certain themes that can be pursued for the betterment of the game. The mutual exclusivity they tended to operate in is becoming a relic of the past and although stereotypical notions will always exist the mindset is changing and both parties recognise the need for a degree of commonality. While having different agendas in terms of primary roles there can be a meaningful co-existence based on a shared passion for the game and a willingness to share information for the mutual benefit of both parties, thus the breaking of bread and providing building blocks for the future. There is a healthy respect for what both parties do and their motive for doing it. With continual contact and better education the barriers of communication are declining because both parties can see genuine merit in having a closer relationship. Coaches can see the value in referees working with them to master techniques and law interpretations and players and coaches can appreciate the degree of difficulty involved in making decisions on the run.

Referees have the opportunity to view first hand on the training paddock what teams are trying to achieve in terms of tactical strategy and this adds a heightened awareness to the match situation. As an observational aside it is interesting to note the increasing number of referees who do their fitness training in conjunction with teams. There is definite value in coaches and captains being invited to a pre season summit to hear the approach that referees will be taking in controlling fixtures for respective competitions. Such a focus ensures the coaching and playing fraternity is conscious of what needs to be stressed to teams in regard to aspects such as game knowledge/law education, safety, discipline. Traditionally coaches and referees have operated in an informal capacity and I don't know if it is necessary to formalise or introduce systems of contact but I do believe that there is undoubted value in propagating networks that invite ongoing contact so that both parties are more informed and better educated about each others roles. I believe this is a fundamental component for advancing our game in the future.

“An educated man should know everything about something and something about everything.”

Summary Analysis of Data Collated

Refereeing Questionnaire

Background Information:

Age :

20-30	31-40	41-50	50+	Male	Female	Total
3	12	10	6	32	1	33
<u>Occupation Stated:</u> (optional)						
HR Consultant Financial Analyst Information Technology (2) Barrister (2) Student/Builder Teacher (2) Chaplain/Teacher Draughtsman Full time student				Doctor Professional Referee Manager IT Projects- Virgin Blue Manager (4) Sales Taxation Officer Engineer Company Director Supervisor		

Years Refereeing Rugby:

1-3	4-6	7+	Years Stated	Not Stated
5	6	20	8 10 (2) 11 (3) 13 14 20 22	2

			26
			30
			33
			35
			44

Current Refereeing Status:

(Some respondents overlap in matches officiated)

Elite	Representative	First Grade	Schoolboy	Recreational	Novice
1	2	5	18	18	1

Current Refereeing Accreditation Level:

No Accreditation	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	15	15	2 Referee Coach
			3

Current Coaching Accreditation Level:

No Accreditation	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
16	10	7	0

General Questions:

Q 1. Why do you Referee?

(Some respondents have recorded more than one response)

Enjoyment		Putting something back into the game		Fitness		Success and challenge		Other	
Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
22	29	23	31	16	21	11	15	3	4

Related Comments

- Contributing to safe educative approach for Junior Rugby
- Wish to become an elite referee
- Try to ensure every team gets a fair go

Q 2. What do you regard as the Most Important Qualities a Referee should Possess?

Stem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Rugby Knowledge	12	9	8	1	1	2		
People Skills	10	7	5	6	6			
Enthusiasm	1	3	1	6	7	6	3	4
Consistency	5	5	9	6	4	2		1
Sense of Humour		1	4	2	5	4	9	7
Vision		2	1	5	2	7	9	6
Good Preparation and Fitness	3	5	5	4	7	7	2	

Tolerance		2		4	1	4	8	14
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Other and Related Comments (5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Passion for the game and empathy for what players are trying to achieve (2) ➤ Dedication ➤ Fairness without bias ➤ Safety priority

Q 3. The Most Important Role of the Referee

(Some respondents have recorded more than one response)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Ensure Player Safety	12	32
Ensure the Game is for the Players	10	27
Maintain Control	7	19
Enforce Rules of the Game	6	16
Educator	2	5
Mentor	0	0

Q4. The Role of the Coach as you See It

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Player Developer	30	28
Technical Strategist	27	25
Educator	26	24
An Organiser	25	23
Other (specified)	1	1
➤ Mentor in some cases		

Q 5. How do you think Coaches View Referees in General?

(Some respondents have recorded more than one response)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
A Necessary Evil	21	60
Dedicated Servants of the Game	7	20
Other (specified)	5	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Views are too diverse (3) ➤ Necessary and influential in terms of possible game tactics, i.e. play to the referee's interpretation ➤ They lack understanding of game principles and team/ strategies/ tactics and the impact they as referees have on them ➤ Someone who contributes to the enjoyment of the game at their best and someone who can destroy the game at their worst 		
Frustrated Ex Players	1	3
Coaches don't have a viewpoint on Referees	1	3

Q 6. Are you Happy for Coaches to Approach you Post Match to Discuss Aspects of their Team's performance?

	Total	Percentage
Yes	32	97
No	1	3

What is Discussed?

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Controversial Issues	18	34
Technical Issues	16	30
General Post Mortem of the Game	8	15
Team Performance	7	13
Discipline	4	8
Other	0	0
Related Comments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Would like to have coach comments but invariably those who do comment are those who want an argument ➤ Inconsistencies from one referee to another 		

Q 7. Is there Value in Coaches and Referees meeting before a match to discuss Rule Interpretations and generalities?

	Total	Percentage
Yes	27	82
No	6	18

What would you Focus on from a Referee's Perspective?

(More than one response recorded in some cases, where applicable)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Game Management	17	37
Interpretation of Tackle Rule	16	35
Other	8	17
Advantage Clarification	5	11

Related Comments-

- Interpretation of tackle/ruck laws and scrum engagement (2)
- Discipline of team (2) Positive attitude
- Gain a rapport with the captain. Discussion of laws and interpretation should be limited (2)
- Obligations at breakdown
- Checklist for decision making in contest situations where there may be doubt as to a players intentions or actions
- Open lines of communication only
- Aspects of the rules that have had problems with other teams

Q 8. Have you been Positively Involved and Invited by Coaches to Educate Players?

	Total	Percentage
Yes	20	61
No	13	39

The Prime Focus

(More than one response recorded in some cases where applicable)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Revision and Clarification of key Technical Issues	12	35
Player Education	12	35
New Law Changes	8	24
Other	2	6
Comments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scrum Safety- at Junior Level (2) ➤ At lower schoolboy level-safety in play, Tackle/Ruck/ Maul issues (2) ➤ Planning new game patterns & advice on coaching tactics, ploys and testing law interpretations 		

Q 9. What Law / Rule / Role would you like to see Changed and Why?

(More than one response recorded in some cases/some failed to respond at all)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Other	16	50
Point Scoring System	10	31
Advantage	4	13
Numbers participating in the game	1	3
Role of Touch Judge	1	3

Related Comments-

- Interpretation of Advantage is always difficult but have no idea how to achieve this
- Advantage too inconsistent- needs clarification e.g. South African advantage too long
- Clarify and standardise the minimum advantage required
- Ruck- to be clearer for players and referees but I don't know how
- Penalty shots at goal- too long a stoppage- speed up game
- Wheeling of the scrum- its harder for a ref to manage especially where safety is concerned
- All games should allow unlimited interchange so as to maximise participation and provide tactical options to coaches
- Reduce playing numbers by 2
- Offside line at tackle should be extended across the field. At all scrums backs have to be back 5 metres. At Under 19 level halfback can't follow the ball in scrum past middle line
- Defending halfback not to advance in front of tunnel
- Offside Rule for kick where team catching ball can put offside players outside
- Tackle / Ruck / Maul (2)- Clearer definition and implementation. So the game is faster and more tries are scored. The penalty count is up. This shows the players aren't interested in scoring stacks of tries but they are interested in winning
- Tackle Law-a clearer interpretation of who receives the benefit of doubt (4) Needs to be more refined so as the contest is maintained
- Role of Touch Judge-" I wish we average refs had them" Get more involved
- Less points for penalties (5) Field goal-2 points. Try value-6 or 7 points (2)
- Greater emphasis on tries scored
- Quick" Lineouts that use an existing loophole in the law
- Walla, Mini and Midi Lineout- distance from touch needs to be reduced by 2 metres
- 25 metre drop outs (protecting the last man in defence when under pressure)
- Time the ball is in play

Q 10. What Law/Rule do you think Referees find Hardest to Enforce and Why?

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
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Tackle	21	54
Lineout Offences	6	15
Scrum Offences	5	13
Other	4	10
Offside	2	5
Advantage	1	3
Related Comment-		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tackle - so many things to look for/ speed and dynamics (13) ➤ Tackle - when it is over and a ruck is formed ➤ Lineout- because there could be up to 5 or 6 penalties at most lineouts and it is difficult to reach a manageable level to let it allow a fair restart without disrupting the game flow (4) ➤ Ruck- players are not aware of what a ruck is! They don't know the laws well enough ➤ Foul Play- judiciary admonishment too light ➤ Discipline ➤ Many referees have little idea of what players want in a game. Players generally want to run with the ball, not have a game frequently stopped by law enforcers ➤ Scrum-much to observe at the same time and illegalities easy to hide. Significant technical knowledge required to accurately and consistently referee ➤ Because offside occurs and providing it does not interfere or deny an option to the ball carrying team then it can be perceived as "unchecked" and lead to frustration and a feeling of inconsistency ➤ Offside- span of view required specifically on kick 		

Q 11. How would you Rate the Law Knowledge of Coaches you have had Greatest Contact with this Year?

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Satisfactory	18	55
Good	7	21
Unsatisfactory	6	18
Poor	2	6
Excellent	0	0
Comment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Professional Referee stated law knowledge is unsatisfactory at club level and satisfactory at Super 12 and Test Match level 		

Q12. In your opinion what Law /Rule causes most Confusion for Players and Coaches?

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Tackle	25	63
Other	5	13
Offside	4	10
Substitutions/ Replacements in regard to Sin Bin	4	10
Advantage	2	5
Related Comment-		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tackle/Ruck/ Maul combined. More when it is a ruck, when players can handle (6) ➤ Tackle - obligations of players involved/offside. Lack of player knowledge (3) ➤ Tackle - variety of referee approaches especially at a lower level ➤ Who is entitled to a scrum feed after stoppage for ruck or maul 		

Q 13. Can you Specify any Elements on the Field that Suggest a side has been Well Coached

Related Comment-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No backchat- decisions are understood and/or discipline installed (19) Lack of foul play ➤ Knowledge of the rules (3) ➤ A respect for the game and the referee (2) ➤ Forwards and backs linking up to put points on the scoreboard rather than individual efforts or over concentration on set moves ➤ Structure and organisation on the playing field/ ability to maintain possession (16) Communicating about next phase ➤ How well they try to make the ball available at the engagement or the tackle situation (6) ➤ Kick off structure (both receiving and delivery) ➤ Game Preparation (2) ➤ Few penalties generally, especially at tackle/ruck/maul (4) Players talking each other out of infringements. Knowledge of Tackle/Ruck/Maul ➤ Turnovers ➤ Scrums formed early ➤ Backs align quickly & with correct positioning ➤ Backs perform moves and players know where to go ➤ Players adapt their technique or style of play

Q 14. How often do you Seek to Update or Evaluate your Refereeing Performance?

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Ongoing through the season	32	97
Every 4 years	1	3
Never	0	0

Comment on Types of Activities-

- Regular attendance at Referee Meetings (14)
- Discussion with Referee Coach (7)
- Level 2 Referee Course (6)
- Regular attendance at Referee Training (5)
- Review of Coaching reports (5)
- Discussion with other or Senior Referees on issues (6)
- Coaching/mentoring of junior/new referees/touch judges (4)
- Regular review of Law Book (6)
- Visit “Rugby 365” and QRU websites for discussion of Law Issues (2)
- Reading Monthly Referees Association Newsletter
- Watching the performance of Referees in Super 12, Test Matches and Brisbane Premier Grade, other games (2)
- Citing Commissioner at World Rugby 7’s
- Attended a level 2 Touch Judges Course (3)
- Attended 3 days as a finals selector/assessor
- Did 3 field tests as part of the referee accreditation process(2)
- Fitness (3)
- Mental Skills (3)
- Attending player training sessions (3)
- Annual update on laws (2)
- Coach and player feedback after games
- Record and analyse statistics and game/Video Self analysis (2)
- Personal Performance assessment/ set objectives (2)
- Lecture Presenter (2)/Facilitating referee/touch judge courses

Q 15. Referee Recommendations to the IRB

- Stop skimping on judiciary /citing issues as the professional game demands the best
- Reduce negative play- it should not be rewarded (2)
- Change point scoring system, to reduce penalty points generally but increase penalty points for professional fouls
- Revision of scoring for tries and kicks (2)
- Make a try worth 6 points
- Make penalty shots at goal drop kicks to speed up the game. Penalties and Drop goals - 2points
- Reduce value of penalty and field goals
- Once advantage has crossed the gain line or gone through 3 sets of hands or kicking team regathers- advantage over
- Standardised advantage rule
- A simplified ruck for when a tackle ends and a ruck begins (2) Simplification of the maul
- Get rid of the wheeling of the scrum
- Align Northern and Southern interpretation of the laws (2)
- Don't change the rules every year (4)
- Provide more information with law changes especially audio visual material to support in-service of referees, coaches and players
- Referee the laws more astutely "when the game requires"- the present trend to make "decisions of compromise" at the highest level does little to educate and develop at all levels.
- Reintroduce the concept of contestability by maintaining Law, its interpretations and adaptation of player technique. Change some offside lines, remove a couple of inconsistencies in laws that exist, eliminate 2 bites of the cherry and keep it simple. Referee advantage as both territorial and tactical, so that there is an element of risk associated with it and a full hearted attempt has to be made. The myopic view that advantage is one less stoppage has to go.
- Keep Rugby traditions
- Reduce the number of very technical laws
- Eliminate higher salaries. Cap salaries to make it cheaper for the spectators to watch games
- Play "real time" as in American Football. Lets get \$\$\$ value back into the punters ticket
- Encourage referee improvement through remuneration to attract people to the ranks
- Decrease the amount of test rugby played. Administration will not appreciate the \$ loss but maybe the public is becoming overloaded and will eventually become blasé.
- Don't assume you can continue to starve the bottom end of the game of funds for ever (2)
- Encouragement/improvement/support for local competitions around the world
- Display matches in countries that don't have a strong following with players, referees, coaches, touring schools and clubs to improve their competition and game standing
- Reduce the number on the playing field by 2
- Allow unlimited interchange
- Interchange maximum 12. Similar to League
- Substitution/ Replacements in relation to huge number of injury stoppages
- Get rid of pedantic free kicks e.g. Numbers in Lineout
- Abolish marks and kicking out from inside the 22. Make the defender play the ball
- Stop lifting in the lineout
- Allow lifting in the lineout
- Attempt to clarify the tackle law- who should be penalized for going off their feet, rolling on the ball (attempting to slow the flow of possession to attacking teams) (4)
- Make the offside line at the Tackle/Ruck/Maul one metre wide
- Defence line 5 metres behind the scrum /ruck/maul (6) Scrum half to remain behind the hind most foot
- Clean up the tackle area...allow only a certain number of players to immediately contest the breakdown. Combine that with a 5 metre offside rule from scrum/ruck/maul and see how the game would open up
- Stop the clock when the ball is dead
- 22-Drop outs to travel 10 metres to allow attacking team access to possession more cleanly.
- Age level ceiling for Senior referees- 45 years old

Q 16. If there were One Aspect of your Performance as a Referee in Terms of your Relationship with Coaches you would like to Develop what would it Be?

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Educating coaches regarding the challenges associated with “being in the middle.”	19	51
Not being afraid to accept justified criticism	5	14
Other	5	14
A willingness to have a more open mind over their viewpoint	4	11
Greater social exchanges	4	11
Comment-		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a mutual respect for each other’s commitment to the game and have regular referee/ coach forums (at least 3 per year) to gain a greater empathy for what player’s are trying to achieve (2) ➤ I’m happy with my coexistence, I’ve had no problems ➤ Coach assessment each week of referee performance to determine referee appointments ➤ Referees generally, would get more from coaches if they were seen to have a balanced viewpoint and be a good role model for their team and club. They should also understand what it is they want to achieve by the exchange before initiating it. ➤ Break down the barriers- open dialogue 		

Summary Analysis of Data Collated

Coaching Questionnaire

Background Information:

Age:

20-30	31-40	41-50	50+	Male	Female	Total
3	7	17	6	33	0	33

Occupation Stated (optional)	
Teacher (7) Tourism Marketing Company Businessman (2) Director (2) Area Service Manager National Sales Manager Engineer Director of Rugby	Rugby Manager (2) Rugby Development Officer (London) University Lecturer Sports Scientist Plasterer Screen Printer Self Employed

Years Coaching Rugby:

1-3	4-6	7+	Years Stated	Not Stated
3	7	22	10 (4) 12 (2) 14 15 (3) 17 18 20 21 (2) 22 (2) 26 30 33	1

Current Coaching Status:

(Some respondents overlap in matches officiated)

Elite	Representative	First Grade	Schoolboy	Recreational	Novice
4	8	9	15	4	2

Current Coaching Accreditation Level:

No Accreditation	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
0	7	17	9

Current Referee Accreditation Level:

No Accreditation	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
17	12	4	0

General Questions:

Q1. Why do you Coach?

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Enjoyment		Develop Players and Improve the standard of Play		Love of the game		Success & Challenge		Other-Work	
Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
33	27	32	26	30	24	28	23	1	1

Q 2. What do you Regard as the Most Important Qualities a Coach should Possess?

(Some responses not recorded in every category)

Stem:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Rugby Knowledge	8	12	8		2	1	1	
People Skills	12	7	4	7	3			
Enthusiasm	6	6	7	4	4	4	2	
Confidence	1	2	1	5	7	9	7	
Sense of Humour	1		2	1	8	3	4	12
Vision	2	2	4	4	3	5	8	4
Good Preparation	2	8	6	11	1	2	2	
Desire to Achieve	1	1	3	1	4	3	4	15

Q 3. The Most Important Role of the Coach

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Player Development	20	56

Educator	8	22
Mentor	3	8
Relationship Builder	2	6
Manager	2	6
Technical Strategist	1	3

Q 4. The Role of the Referee as you See It

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Sanctioned Manager of the Game	17	52
The 31st Person on the Field	7	21
Other (please specify)	5	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Facilitator (2) ➤ Match participant that is essential for the enjoyment and structure of the game (2) ➤ Protector of the standards of the game ➤ Ref the game within the spirit of the laws 		
The Sheriff on the field	2	6
Responsible for ensuring stringent compliance with the laws of the game	2	6

Q 5. How do you think Referees View Coaches in General?

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
People keen to ensure players perform to the best of their ability	22	54
Dedicated servants of the game	15	30
Other (specified)	7	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All referees try to do the best for the game, however they forget the key stakeholders “The Players.” It’s about the players enjoying the game & the referees have the responsibility to ensure this happens ➤ A bit of a nuisance (2) ➤ People who want their team to win ➤ Potential critics ➤ No idea ➤ Policemen 		
Frustrated Ex Players	4	8
Referees don’t have a view on coaches	2	4

Q 6. Do you Actively seek out Referees to get Feedback on your Team’s Performance?

	Total	Percentage
Yes	24	73
No	9	27

What is Discussed? (If applicable)

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Technical Issues	13	35
General Post Mortem of the Game	8	22
Team Performance	7	19
Discipline	5	14
Controversial Issues	4	11
Other	0	0
Related Comments-		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussion on areas my team can improve 		

Q 7. Is there Value in Coaches and Referees Meeting before a Match to discuss Rule Interpretations and Generalities?

	Total	Percentage
Yes	30	91
No	3	9

What would you Focus on from a Coaching Perspective? (If applicable)

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Actual Scenarios based on previous matches to determine interpretation	18	44
Determine the type of personality involved through routine questioning and brief team accordingly	8	20
Interpretation of Tackle Rule	5	12
Perceived indiscretions by the opposition that you want the referee to be aware of	5	12
Advantage Clarification	4	10
Other	1	2
Related Comments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Charging out from the tryline for a conversion ➤ Idea would be to meet at the beginning of the season as the referees and coaches do at Super 12 ➤ Scrum Engagement- (approach/ timing) 		

Q 8 . Have you invited Referees to Educate Players on Rule Changes and Interpretations?

	Total	Percentage
Yes	28	85
No	5	15

The Prime Focus (if applicable)

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Player Education	14	41
Revision and Clarification of key Technical Issues	11	32
New Law Changes	9	26
Other	0	0

Q 9.What Law would you like to see Changed and Why?

(More than one response recorded in some cases, some have not responded at all)

Stems:	Total	Percentage
Other	19	59
Advantage	5	15
Point Scoring System	3	9
Foul Play	3	9
Numbers participating in the game	2	6

Q 9. What Law would you like to see Changed and Why?

Related Comments-

- Rucks- killing the ball/ playing the ball after the tackle (2)
- Play ceases when a player goes to ground- rule is abused at senior level
- Tackle- the interpretations of this law are many and varied (4)
- Tackle- because it aids the defending team
- Position of tackler in both rucks and mauls regarding his ability to immediately play the ball without first having to approach from the defending side of the advantage line
- The offside rule off a kick, when players are in front of the kicker- needs to be relaxed to some extent
- Breakdown/offside: To give ball carrier's side the initiative for positive play
- Advantage tends to be based on subjectivity rather than a clear definition
- Advantage in opposition half. If points not scored should revert to original penalty
- Advantage- needs to be clarified i.e. time in possession or ground made forward
- Automatic sin bin for professional fouls. It is a very negative tactic that robs the attacking team of advantage most of the time. Players will continue to perform professional fouls until the perceived disciplinary action is greater than the result of not committing the offence. (2)
- Reduce the value of penalty shots
- Penalties in the 22 worth more e.g. 5 points
- Allow unlimited interchange to maximise participation and provide options as a coach
- A 13-aside game would create space and time to allow a more free running game. The paying public wants to be entertained. It would also allow players to take on a more challenging role; e.g. the backs would now have to be the primary ball winners at the breakdown.
- Obstruction- not an offence when no advantage accrues
- Uncontested scrums need to disadvantage the side calling for them. Suggest one player short/penalty/or points disadvantage
- Screwing scrum- usually done by team not putting ball in- should be penalised
- Lineout- too cluttered and illogical
- Kicking out in the 22 on the full

Q 10. What Law do you think Referees find Hardest to Enforce and Why?

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Tackle	18	46
Scrum Offences	6	15
Advantage	5	13
Offside	4	10
Other	4	10
Lineout Offences	2	5

RelatedComment-

- Ruck Infringements (4)
- The tackle situation is dynamic & no two breakdowns are the same. Tough to control and manage (11) There is too much subjectivity to the adjudication (2)
- Tackle - allowing time to place the ball without getting penalized
- Tackle - players cheat and coaches don't coach within the laws
- Often teams trying to keep the ball alive are penalized by teams doing their utmost to slow up the game and disrupt the flow of possession (2)
- Usually little tactical idea of what constitutes advantage
- Advantage- differs from referee to referee
- Lineout- there are so many infringements that can occur (2)
- Offside- tend to look close to the "pile" or set pieces and miss those slightly further out who may impede the movement into the wider channels (2)
- Offside- not vigilant enough at set pieces
- Scrum- lack of understanding/ technical knowledge,feel/dynamics (2)
- The difference between Under 19, Junior and Senior Laws

Q 11. How would you rate the Law Knowledge of Referees you have had Greatest Contact with this Year?

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Good	16	48
Satisfactory	12	36
Unsatisfactory	3	9
Poor	1	3
Excellent	1	3

Q 12. How can the Referee contribute to a Good Match both as a Spectacle and from a Player Point of

View?

Stem:	1	2	3	4	5
Keep whistle blowing to a necessary minimum	6	1	9	14	4
Good knowledge of the game and its principles	8	10	11	3	1
Healthy interaction with the players	10	8	7	5	3
Consistency in Decision Making	8	11	6	7	1
Vigilant in identifying Offences	2	1	3	4	22

Q 13. What are the Critical Areas you want to see a Referee Scrutinize Closely in a Game Situation?

RelatedComment-

- Infringements around ruck area (6)
- Give advantage for positive play (2)
- Engagement of scrum/ safety angle- (5)
- The scrum- ensure that it is a fair contest but safe at the same time
- The tackle- using common sense in managing the breakdown to ensure the attacking team has full advantage (5)
- Tackle area- point of engagement (12)
- Offside (13) Entry of arriving players at the tackle
- Offside in the kickchase
- Foul Play/ especially high tackles (4)
- Offences behind play- off the ball
- Set pieces
- Tackle/Ruck/Maul (3)
- Infringements- killing the ball, slowing the ball down
- Positioning around ruck and maul before making a decision
- Maul- allow to progress
- Lineout
- Player safety/discipline
- Consistent approach throughout the game
- Don't blow the whistle if it does not influence the outcome of the game

Q 14. How often do you seek to update or evaluate your Coaching Performance?

Stem:	Total	Percentage
Ongoing through the season	29	88
Every 4 years	3	9
Never	1	3

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Types of Activities involved in the Last Calendar Year

- Bower Bird approach by watching and using the skills and drills of other coaches (7)
- Coaching/Professional interaction (11)- Meeting with National and Provincial Coaches
- Work with a coaching "panel" for 1st and 2nd xv's
- Speak to the Senior State Coach regularly for ideas
- Upgrading qualifications (9)

- Assessment of coaching and team performance with mentor coaches (2)
- Inviting people of expertise to coaching sessions
- Recruitment of players, mentoring new coaches, organising school program, parent involvement, game promotion targeting younger age group
- Carnivals - regional and state
- Interacting with Wallaby staff, attending Camp Wallaby. Reading books by Rod McQueen, Rick Charlesworth, Wayne Bennett and attending Sportscoach 2000 conference in Canberra
- Evaluation of Super 12 teams - Brumbies/Reds/ Blues
- Watching professional teams train
- Coaching forums/clinics (4)
- Lecturing and Presenting at level 1 and 2 accreditation courses/coaching clinics (2)
- Mentoring young coaches. Mentoring coaching sessions. (4)
- Doing guest sessions for a variety of teams, mostly rep teams
- Career planning with some young players
- Mainly video and reading material (5)
- Self reflection and analysis
- Attendance at ARU safety coaching course (2)
- “Smart Sport” (2)
- Game review with referees (2)

Q 16. Coach Recommendations to the IRB to Improve the Game

Comment-

- Reward positive play through generous advantage. Let the game flow
- Define advantage (2)
- Foul Play, negative play, slowing the game down- automatic yellow card, 2nd offence- red card (7)
- Should not be able to carry the ball over the sideline intentionally- kills the game
- Consistency of rule definition between the different countries especially Northern Hemisphere
- Increased focus on grass roots rugby. Money spent on schoolboy and junior club- investment in developing areas (3)
- Now the game has gone professional, start paying lower/junior grade officials to encourage more participants
- Give coaches more incentives so that ex players stay around
- Increase support and funding for minor countries to raise competitive standards
- Teams trying to keep the ball moving should receive the benefit of doubt in referees mind as opposed to teams trying to play negative football e.g. trying to hold up/slow down play by lying on the ball/playing offside continually
- Be 31st person on the field
- Simplify the laws by removing inconsistencies - e.g. crooked throw in lineout versus crooked feed in scrum
- Stop changing the laws
- Make a simple basic ruling on the breakdown- anymore than 2 attackers and 2 defenders then the ball can not be played with the hands (2)
- Improve the breakdown laws
- Move defensive line back at breakdowns
- Have all players coming to a ruck and maul from an onside position
- Allow hands to be used to clear the ball from the ruck
- Remove bridging over the ball in a ruck- too dangerous and is copied by junior players
- Allow unlimited interchange
- Legislate to reduce the attractiveness of general kicking. Abolish marks & kick out from inside 22
- Encourage try scoring
- Increase point value of try
- All conversions in front of posts
- Points system- 1point for field goal, 2points for a penalty
- Monitor the reemergence of mauling watching out for obstruction
- When players are in front of the kicker, as long as they do not move actively forward or interfere with the team receiving the ball then it should be play on
- No lifting in lineout
- Simplify lineout laws
- No wearing gloves
- Review of uncontested scrums to still consider duty of care but to penalise a team unable to provide props currently being abused
- Screwing scrums -offenders to be penalised not given scrum feed
- Institute a mid way point between a penalty try and a straight penalty to give the referee an option where the scoring of a try was probably foiled
- Would like to see a trial done whereby the clock is stopped whenever the ball is out of play, much the same as basketball. I think we waste too much time
- Provide more dispensation for recreational and social rugby in the laws
- Have control of a group of contracted referees on a 3 year package
- Seek out the advice of the LEAD COACHES of the WORLD and what they feel are the important ingredients for successful and adventurous rugby
- Trial a pre-season 13 aside competition and evaluate the results
- Obstruction not an offence when no advantage occurs
- Under 19 play Open Rules

Q 17. Aspects of your Performance as a Coach in Terms of your Relationship with Referees you would like to Develop

(More than one response recorded in some cases)

Stem:	Total	Percentage
A greater appreciation and understanding of the current laws	12	38
Greater tolerance and acceptance of decisions	11	34
Other	7	21
A willingness to have a more open mind over rulings	2	6
Related Comment-		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Believe I already have a good relationship➤ To understand what they see and what we see as a coach➤ To be honest and straight➤ Invite them more often than a couple of times a year to attend and advise players➤ Take the time to fully review the match with the referee seeking his input.➤ Understand decisions by referee are made under pressure➤ Understanding of the way players are trying to play the game		