

INTERNATIONAL RUGBY BOARD
OFFICIATING SEVENS RUGBY





Officiating Sevens Rugby

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Terminology

Throughout this resource, the terms 'match official' and 'referee' are used interchangeably. There are many instances where a reference to a 'referee' can also be taken to mean a touch judge or an assistant referee.

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Overview

Foreword

Welcome to the IRB's Practical Guide to Officiating Seven-a-side Rugby. This workbook is designed to be used in two separate ways:

- as a stand alone resource
- to support the Officiating Sevens Rugby course.

The course is designed to provide referees with the skills and knowledge needed to referee Sevens Rugby in the national environment (in major Unions) and to international levels in less developed Unions and/or age grade international competitions.

The presence of sport in a person's life carries enormous benefits for social, physical and personal development while broadening cultural awareness. Rugby is an uniquely inclusive sport, and as a referee you hold a position of genuine influence over the player's safety and game enjoyment.

This IRB Officiating Sevens course builds strongly on the IRB Levels 1-3 Officiating courses and seeks to assist match officials who aim to referee or assist in Sevens. The course relies very much on the participants' input and is delivered using the following structure. Firstly, it uses specific modules to plan for officiating Sevens Rugby:

- What are the principles of Sevens Rugby ?
- Are you prepared to referee Sevens ?

Secondly, a module addresses the technical focus of the course and isolates the specific factors of officiating Sevens Rugby:

- How to referee Sevens

Thirdly, the course concludes with a module that focuses on the skills needed to assist in Sevens Rugby either as an assistant referee or as an in-goal judge:

- How to assist in Sevens

Throughout the course you will be encouraged to practise your officiating skills. Grasp this opportunity for feedback from your IRB Educator and your peers. These opportunities will also form the foundation of your competency-based assessment.

I sincerely hope you enjoy the course and benefit from participation.

Kind regards,



Mark Harrington
Training Manager, International Rugby Board

Acknowledgments

A number of people have contributed to the development of the Officiating Sevens Rugby resource. The commitment and professionalism of these people is gratefully acknowledged.

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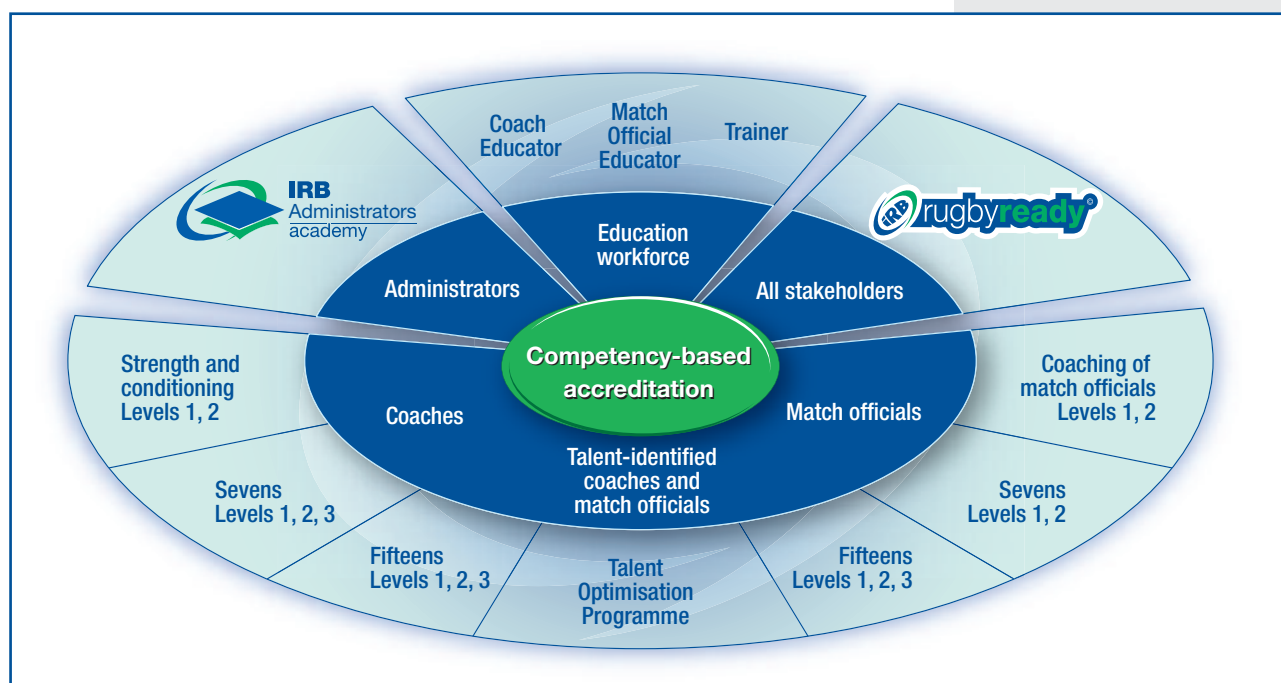
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IRB Training and Education courses



IRB Training and Education courses have evolved since the mid 1990s, and have been updated regularly since then using the expertise in member Unions and the skills of a select number of IRB Trainers who are also ‘content experts’.

Since 2006, the IRB provision has extended to serve more stakeholders, as demonstrated in the portfolio above. All courses are now competency-based, designed to provide learning and training appropriate to the contexts in which coaches and officials are active.

In addition, IRB courses can now only be delivered by IRB licensed Educators who have demonstrated their technical and facilitation skills to prescribed standards. All record keeping and certification is undertaken from the IRB’s headquarters in Dublin, Ireland.

Course structure

This course is designed for delivery at different officiating levels and can easily be adapted to the experience, knowledge and skills of the match officials taking part.

It can be run as a one-day Level 1 attendance-only programme (modules 3 and 4 along with parts of module 1) or a two-day Level 2 accreditation programme (all modules). See the following page for example programmes.

In order for participants to achieve Level 2 accreditation, they need to take part in all modules during a two-day programme. They also need to show competence in all competency transcript descriptors for all modules of the course.

This programme relies on refereeing actual Sevens matches during the course. These matches can be integrated into the programme in different ways and the programme can be modified to meet organisational needs. The course content from this workbook is divided into four modules:

Module	Chapter
Foreword and introduction	Timetable
	General remarks
	Overview
Module 1 Principles of Sevens Rugby	Attack
	Defence
Module 2 Preparing to referee Sevens	Physical demands
	Planning
Module 3 How to referee Sevens	Timing
	Space
	Tolerance
Module 4 How to assist in Sevens	Assistant referees
	In-goal judges

Total course duration: 7 hours

General course information

Entry requirement

For Level 1 Officiating Sevens the entry requirement is an IRB Level 1 Officiating (generic Fifteens) Certificate of attendance. For Level 2, the entry requirement is an IRB Level 2 Officiating (generic Fifteens) Certificate of accreditation. It is beneficial, however, if participants have advanced understanding of Sevens Rugby from their experience as a player, coach or match official.

Resources required

- This 'Officiating Sevens Rugby' workbook.
- The IRB 'Laws of the Game of Rugby Union' book/DVD.

Assessment

In order to be awarded the IRB Level 1 Officiating Sevens the participant must attend all modules of the course.

In order to achieve accreditation at Level 2, the participant must attend all modules of the course and demonstrate competence across a range of criteria as shown in the transcript of competencies.

Delivery methods

This course will be delivered by:

- Practical sessions using explanation, demonstration and practice.
- Presentations and syndicate work with a high level of participants' input.
- Video analysis and problem solving tasks.
- Open forum discussions and scenarios.

Options for delivery

A. The course timetable below is an example for a one-day programme working with relatively inexperienced level 1 match officials:

Sample programme - one-day Level 1 course (certificate of attendance)

9.30	Foreword and introduction	30 min
10.00	Principles of Sevens Rugby	30 min
10.30	Refereeing practice / Sevens match(es)	90 min

Lunch break

13.30	How to referee Sevens	60 min
14.30	How to assist in Sevens	60 min

Break

16.00	Refereeing practice / Sevens match(es)	60 min
17.00	Performance criteria: referee assistance and touch judging	90 min
17.30	<i>Recap, questions & answers</i>	30 min
18.00	<i>End of day's work</i>	

B. The course timetable below is an example for a two-day programme working with more experienced level 2 match officials:

Sample programme - day one of two-day Level 2 course (accreditation)

9.30	Foreword and introduction	30 min
10.00	Principles of Sevens Rugby	90 min
11.30	Preparing to referee Sevens	90 min

Lunch break

15.00	Refereeing practice / Sevens match(es)	
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Sample programme - day two of two-day Level 2 course (accreditation)

9.30	How to referee Sevens	90 min
11.00	How to assist in Sevens	90 min

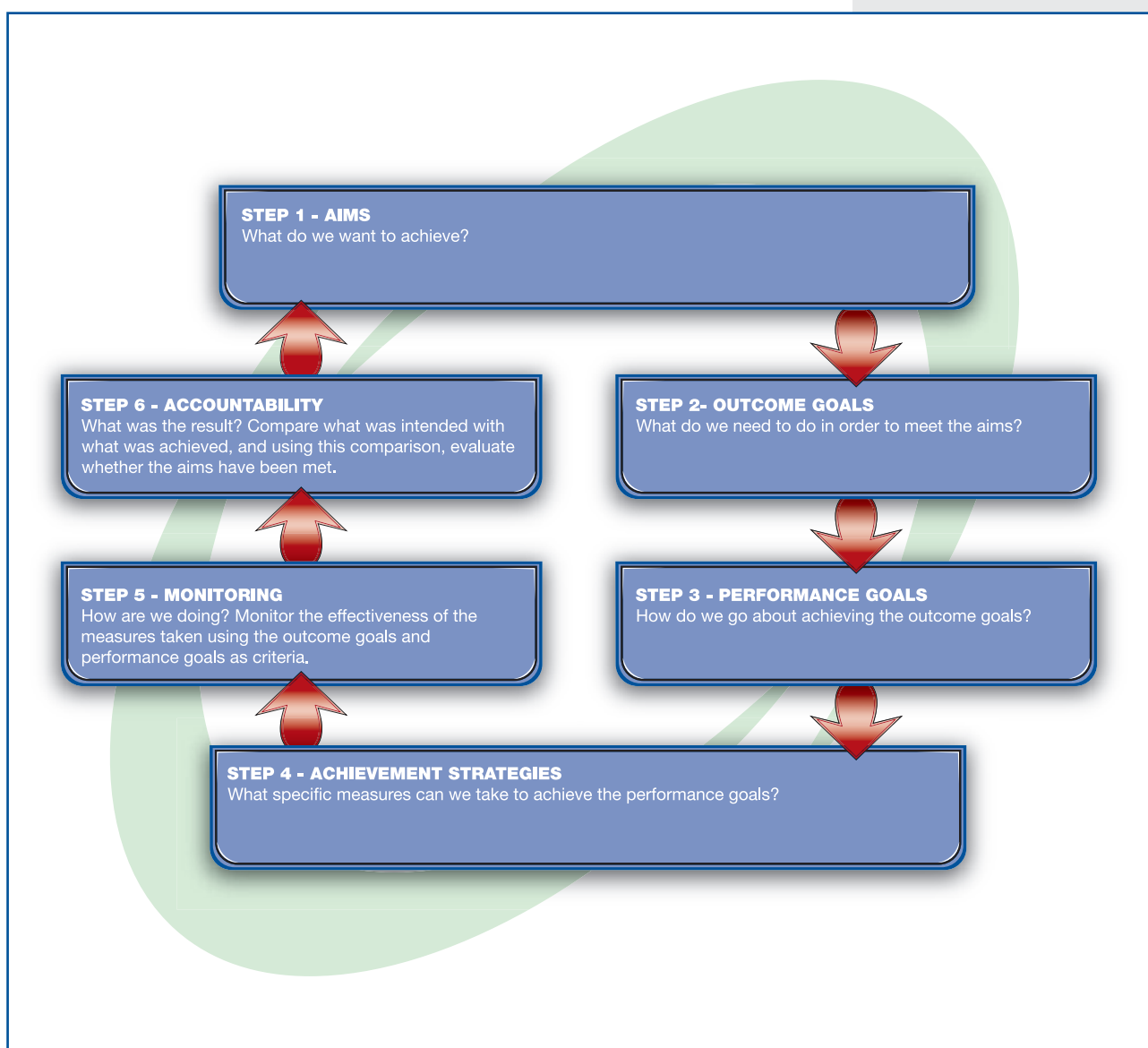
Lunch break

14.00	<i>Recap, questions & answers</i>	30 min
15.00	<i>End of day's work</i>	

The modular framework - understanding the officiating programme

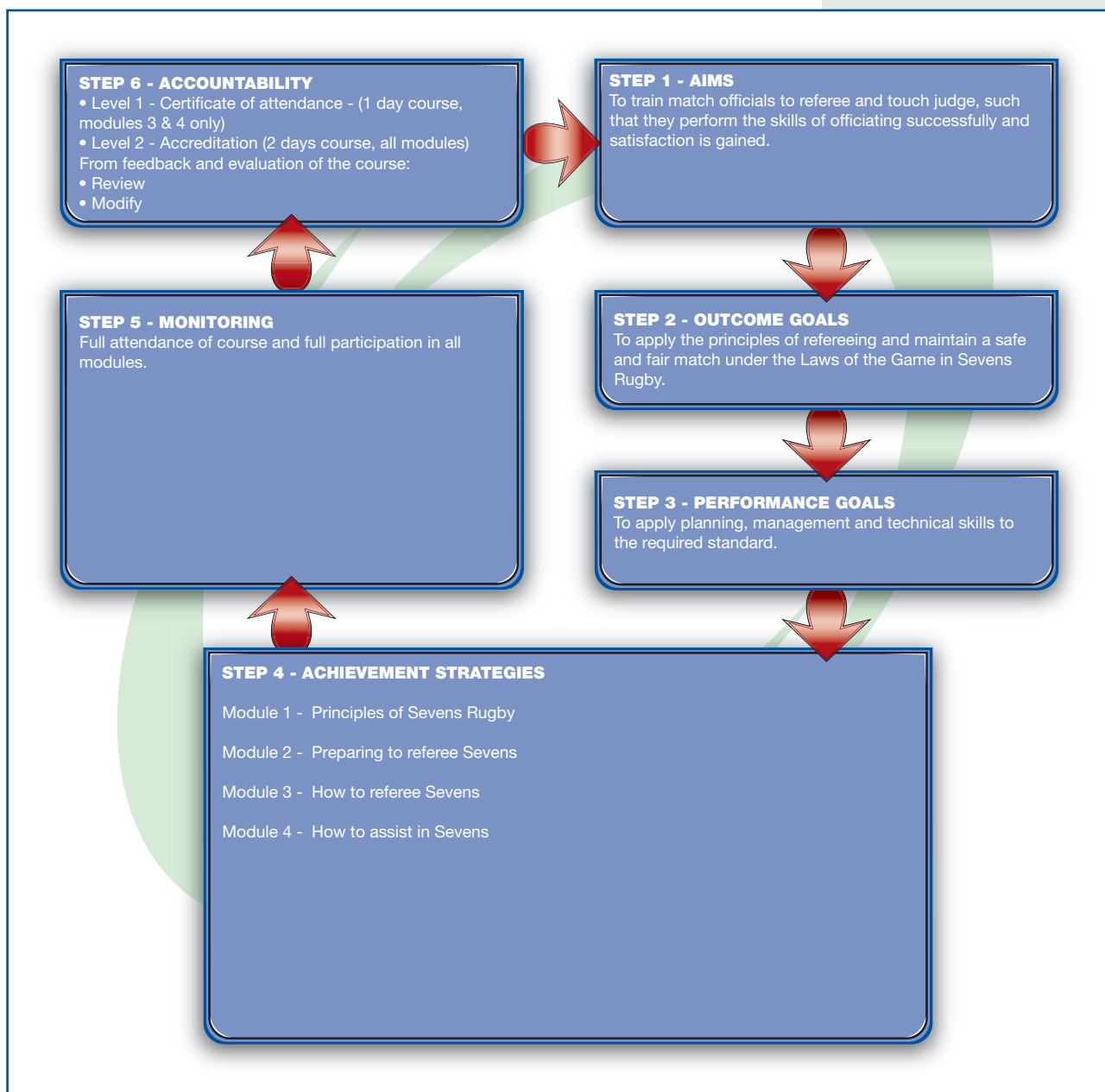
In officiating, the same generic decision-making model as in coaching can be used. This model shows the elements involved in a problem solving, decision-making process.

It is the aim of the model to provide match officials with a logical method of looking into their performance.



The modular framework - understanding the officiating programme

Applying the model to this Officiating Sevens Rugby course:



Glossary of Rugby terms

Achievement strategies

The specific strategies that will be used to ensure the outcomes are met. These may be directly related to the mode of play or peripheral to it. They may be categorised into:

- Game knowledge
- Planning
- Management
- Technical.

Aim

What you are trying to achieve by undertaking this activity.

Game plan

The game plan explains how a team is going to achieve its aims in attack and defence.

Key factor analysis

This is the application of a sequential and prioritised checklist of actions. By performing these actions it can be expected that the outcome goal of each skill will be achieved.

Outcome goals

What needs to be achieved to meet the aims.

Performance goals

How the outcome goals can be achieved.

Patterns of play

The patterns that combine to achieve the team's game plan.

Tactics

The patterns that a team uses against particular opponents. The emphasis within the patterns of play will vary depending on the profile of the opposing team.

The principles of attack and defence

A sequential and prioritised checklist of principles that are used to analyse the play of a team.

Principles of attack

1. Gain possession to
2. go forward with
3. the support of team-mates to
4. maintain continuity
5. applying pressure to
6. score points.

Principles of defence

1. Contest possession and
2. go forward
3. applying pressure to
4. prevent territory being gained
5. supported by or in support of team-mates to
6. regain possession and
7. counter attack.

The principles of the Game

These are:

1. The contest for possession.
2. In attack - continuity of play.
3. In defence - regaining possession.
4. A multi-faceted Game.
5. Rewards and punishments or penalties.

These are the fundamental principles of a Game of two teams.

Note: The principles provide the framework for analysing the Game to ensure that there is a balance between continuity of possession and continuity of play. This is determined by the contest for possession along with its role in creating space.

The principles of the identities of the Game

These form a sequential and prioritised checklist of which actions, when performed, will result in the outcome being achieved for each aspect of the Game, e.g. scrum, lineout, back line attack, defence, kick starts and restarts, phase play, rucks and mauls and support play in attack and defence.

IRB Officiating Sevens Rugby

Video clip inventory

Foul play 1
Foul play 2
Foul play 3
Foul play 4
Foul play 5
Foul play 6
Foul play 7
Obstruction 1
Obstruction 2
Obstruction 3
Maul 1
Maul 2
Ruck 1
Ruck 2
Scrum 1
Scrum 2
Scrum 3
Scrum 4
Scrum 5
Scrum 6
Scrum 7
Scrum 8
Scrum 9
Scrum 10
Scrum 11
Scrum 12
Scrum 13
Scrum 14
Scrum 15
Scrum 16
Tackle 1
Tackle 2
Tackle 3
Tackle 4
Tackle 5
Tackle 6
Tackle 7
Tackle 8
Tackle 9
Tackle 10

Tackle 11
Tackle 12
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Tackle 28
Tackle 29
Tackle 30
Tackle 31
Tackle 32
Tackle 33
Tackle 34
Tackle 35
Tackle 36
Tackle 37
Advantage 1
Advantage 2
Advantage 3
Advantage 4
Advantage 5
Advantage 6
Advantage 7
Assistant referee triangulation 1
Assistant referee triangulation 2
Assistant referee triangulation 3
Assistant referee triangulation 4
Assistant referee triangulation 5
Assistant referee triangulation 6
Assistant referee triangulation 7

Module one - Principles of Sevens Rugby

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Learning outcome

By the conclusion of this module you will be able to identify the principles of Sevens and link them to the skills of the Game. You will have applied them, in a series of scenarios, to your role as a match official.

Introduction

The Sevens version of Rugby has grown in prominence in recent years. Played at all levels of the Game, its features continue to be popular all over the world.

Skill, speed and success

- Rugby Sevens is a Game of huge variety and contrasts that is characterised by excitement, tension, and constant movement.
- Rugby Sevens is a game of speed, skill and strength.
- It is played by Rugby's fastest and fittest male and female athletes.
- A Rugby Sevens tournament is played over one, two or three days with a new match every 20 minutes and is ideal for broadcasters and spectators.
- Rugby Sevens has already proven a successful addition at major multi-sport events such as the World Games, Commonwealth and Asian Games and will feature in the Olympic Games from 2016 onwards.

Passion and youth

- Rugby Sevens tournaments have an energetic, friendly, passionate and youthful atmosphere.
- Rugby's loyal and global fans travel all over the world to follow Sevens tournaments.
- Nearly 500,000 spectators attended the 2009 IRB Sevens World Series.



Task 1

Summary of Sevens characteristics

List some ideas of what you think are the characteristics of Sevens Rugby.

ATTACK

DEFENCE

Principles of play and the teams' game plans

For over 100 years Rugby has evolved into a Game that caters for a variety of players. The range of skills and physical qualities required of players in Rugby Union makes it a unique game. Seldom do other sports cater for such variety. The variety occurs in Rugby because the Game is based on two key principles:

- The principle of contesting possession of the ball
- The principle of continuing play.

The skills required for contesting possession and for continuing play are considerable, and few players are skilled in all aspects of the game to the same level of expertise. This has led not only to specialisation for positions in Fifteens Rugby, but also to the specific Sevens features discussed on the following page.

A. Differences in *game approach*

- Possession is everything.
- Certain teams choose to avoid contact.
- There are more quick penalty taps.
- There are more quick throw-ins at lineouts.

B. Differences in *the Laws of the Game*

- Seven players.
- Times:
 - Two seven-minute halves with a half time interval of not more than two minutes
 - Two ten-minute halves for the major finals.
 - Sin bin duration of two minutes.
 - Conversions must be taken with 40 seconds.
- Conversions and penalty kicks are drop kicks only.
- Kick-offs/restarts are made by team that scored.
- All kick-off/restart offences result in a free kick.
- Scrums consist of three players on each side.
- Only three substitutes are allowed per match.
- In-goal judges were introduced in 1996 to speed up the game.

C. Differences in *athletes*

- Every Sevens player is required to have the skills to take on different functional roles, essentially playing the same position.
- Players who play in the front three are often specialists in contesting the scrum.

D. Differences in *skill sets*

- Mobility.
- More one-on-one tackling.
- The most important contest in Sevens, apart from tackle situations, is the restart.
- Drop kicks.

While the general principles of contest for possession and continuity remain the same, the specific outcome goals for teams in Sevens Rugby are considerably different from the 15-a-side Game. A team's game plan, described as their outcome goals, is structured in the same way, i.e., there is a game plan for attack and one for defence and the categories for each are the principles of play for attack and defence.

The principles are used to analyse a team's play identifying strengths and weaknesses, as well as providing a standard procedure for developing the team profile, game profile, patterns of play and game plan.

As a result of this analysis, match officials involved in Sevens Rugby have to define their own set of outcome goals and performance goals. To perform in Sevens, the required officiating skills have to be adapted by referees, assistant referees and in-goal judges alike.



Task 2

Application of the principles of Sevens

Analyse video footage of a team playing one match. Choose team A or B.
Complete the following table.

The principles of Sevens Rugby

Principle	Game principles - analysis of performance
ATTACK	
1. Gaining possession in order to attack	
2. Retaining possession in order to score	
3. Creating space behind the defensive line and between players in the defensive line	
4. Penetrate using space and kick options	
5. Support to continue play.	
DEFENCE	
1. Contesting possession	
2. Denying space	
3. Tackling the ball carrier	
4. Regaining possession	

Task 3

Key factor analysis and functional roles analysis

Use video examples to identify the principles of Sevens and link them to the skills of the Game

Learning outcome

By the conclusion of this task you will be able to analyse strengths and weaknesses in play by using key factor analysis (KFA) and functional roles analysis (FRA).

Application of key factor analysis

Key factor analysis lists, in sequential order, the actions necessary to achieve the desired outcome of a skill.

This sequential order of the individual actions is in order of priority.

The outcome may be achieved without completing all the actions. However, if the outcome is not achieved, the key factors are a checklist that enables the identification of errors and correction of the skill as well as a tool for coaching the skill.

Consequently key factor analysis can be used to analyse play in matches and to identify how the game profile can be realised.

Application of the key factors to video analysis

1. View each video example in turn and analyse it using the tables provided.
2. Focus on the team your group is using as a case study.
3. Decide if the outcome has been achieved.
4. If the outcome has not been achieved decide which of the key factors were performed successfully (✓), which unsuccessfully (X) and which were not applicable (N/A).

Space is provided for you to analyse up to five examples.

Note: In all examples concentrate on one team, not both, so that you are analysing the players from the point of view of the coach of that team.

Attack

Aim of attack

To gain and retain possession of the ball, to penetrate the defence and to score.

Gaining possession

Outcome

To obtain possession that ensures the team has the maximum options available.

Gaining possession - Kick-offs – kicking team		Video Tries from kick-offs				
	Outcome: To recover the kick					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Height of the kick					
2	Distance of the kick					
3	Technique of the catcher					
4	Technique and positioning of support					
5	Outcome achieved?					

Gaining possession - Kick-offs – receiving team		Video: Tries from kick-offs				
	Outcome: To gain possession of the ball					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Positioning before the kick					
2	Contesting the ball					
3	Recovering the ball					
4	Clearing the ball to space					
5	Positioning to attack					
6	Outcome achieved?					

Gaining possession - Scrums		Video: Tries from scrums				
	Outcome: To obtain possession so that the maximum number of attacking options are available					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Stable engagement					
2	Co-ordinated contact, put-in and strike					
3	Controlled ball delivery					
4	Perform a positive attacking option					
5	Recovery of untidy possession					
6	Outcome achieved?					

Gaining possession - Lineouts		Video: Tries from lineouts				
	Outcome: To obtain possession so that the maximum number of attacking options are available					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Out-manoeuve opponents by moving into space					
2	Throw accurately to the space					
3	Jump and catch the ball					
4	Support the jumper					
5	Deliver controlled ball					
6	Perform a positive attacking option					
7	Outcome achieved?					

Retaining possession		Video: Tries from turnovers				
	Outcome: To retain possession until there is an opportunity to penetrate					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Depth on the ball carrier					
2	Width in formation					
3	Avoid isolation or perform an escape route for the ball upon contact					
4	Recover loose ball					
5	Move to ensure recovery					
6	Outcome achieved?					

Creating space		Video: Defence				
	Outcome: To create lateral space through which a team-mate can penetrate					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Position close to reduce reaction time					
2	Align to create space					
3	Align in depth on the ball					
4	Perform a positive option if depth is lost:					
	a) kick and recover					
	b) kick and chase					
	c) kick to an unmarked team-mate					
	d) go forward to penetrate					
	e) create contact and recycle					
5	Outcome achieved?					

Penetrating - individual players		Video: Defence				
	Outcome: To penetrate the defence to gain territory or score					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Run into the space that the ball has been passed to or draw a defender and use evasive skills to penetrate					
2	Catch the ball					
3	Accelerate through the gap					
4	Perform the best option:					
	a) score					
	b) draw defenders and pass to team-mates in space					
	c) retain possession and deliver to team-mates from a contact situation					
	d) retreat or run sideways to link-up with support					
5	Outcome achieved?					

Penetrating - team as attacking unit		Video: Defence				
	Outcome: To penetrate through the defence to gain territory or score					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Play to a pattern					
2	Pass left or right, whatever side the attack has more players than the defence					
3	Retain space by running correct lines					
4	If the defence drifts out, take the gap					
5	Ball carrier create space by veering in					
6	Next player in the line move out to take the defender away from the gap					
7	Pass to the unmarked player					
8	Outcome achieved?					

Supporting play		Video: Tries from turnover				
	Outcome: To provide sufficient support to ensure continuity of play					
	Key factors - ball carrier	1	2	3	4	5
1	Run to create space for supporting players					
2	Place or pass the ball accurately into the space					
	Key factors - support players	1	2	3	4	5
1	Depth on the ball carrier					
2	Lateral alignment on the ball carrier					
3	Accelerate into the space made available					
4	Catch the ball and continue play					
5	Outcome achieved?					

Defence

Aim of defence

To prevent territory being gained and to regain possession of the ball.

Contesting possession - scrums		Video: Tries from scrums				
	Outcome: To reduce the attacking options at the source of possession					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Delay engagement					
2	Create untidy ball by:					
	a) hooking the ball					
	b) driving forward					
	c) being pushed quickly back					
	d) wheeling the scrum					
3	Break quickly to join the defensive screen					
4	Outcome achieved?					

Contesting possession - lineouts		Video: Tries from lineouts				
	Outcome: To reduce the attacking options at the source of possession					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Challenge the throw or defend the space					
2	Defend to a pattern					
3	Recover loose ball					
4	Outcome achieved?					

Denying space		Video: Tries from turnovers and defence				
	Outcome: To deny the opposition time and space to attack					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Move forward in an aligned pattern					
2	Identify designated ball carrier					
3	Defend inside out					
4	Split vision					
5	Appoint a sweeper					
6	Outcome achieved?					

Tackling the ball carrier - side-on tackle		Video: Defence				
	Outcome: 1) To stop the ball carrier moving forward; 2) To stop the ball carrier from passing					
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Run in a crouch					
2	Head up, back straight					
3	Sight the target					
4	Drive with the legs					
5	Head behind					
6	Wrap with the arms					
7	Complete the tackle					
8	Get to the feet					
9	Outcome achieved?					

Tackling the ball carrier - smother tackle		Video: Defence				
Outcome: 1) To stop the ball carrier moving forward; 2) To stop the ball carrier from passing						
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Move towards the ball carrier					
2	Run in a crouch					
3	Drive up so the shoulder makes contact just above the ball					
4	Drive with the legs					
5	Wrap with the arms					
6	Stop the ball carrier from going to ground					
7	Prevent the ball carrier from passing					
8	Continue to drive forward					
9	Outcome achieved?					

Regaining possession		Video: Tries from turnovers				
Outcome: To regain possession						
	Key factors	1	2	3	4	5
1	Stop the ball carrier running forward					
2	Prevent the ball carrier passing the ball					
3	Assist in completing the tackle					
4	Recover the ball (force a turnover). Options:					
	a) wrestle the ball free					
	b) recover loose ball					
	c) intercept a pass					
	d) force an infringement					
5	Outcome achieved?					

Your game plan

Assuming that the preceding exercise enhances your general Rugby knowledge and Game understanding, the next step is to utilise this knowledge and use the results from your analysis for your own game planning.

How you use your game understanding and analytical skills within your refereeing is absolutely key to your preparation and personal development.

Sevens Rugby exposes the referee on the rugby pitch. Given the nature of the shorter and faster game, it is imperative that the referee be sharp and accurate - sharp mentally and physically, as well as accurate in decision-making.

In Sevens Rugby, the referee must get it right, and must get it right the first time. Experienced match officials, when asked to best summarise the top three requirements of Sevens Rugby, often come up with three key phrases:

- **Fitness (speed and quickness)**
- **Tactical awareness**
- **Accurate decision making**

The referee must remain calm, especially if an altercation becomes heated, and deliver an appropriate adjudication. The additional tension brought about by the shorter, more concentrated Sevens Game (and the more clearly defined one-on-one confrontation) combines with the heightened emotions found in a tournament, where the winner stands to gain more and the team on the brink of being eliminated may play with more reckless abandon.

Referees have to use all of their experience and skills to allow the players to play the game of Sevens at speed, with pace and as quickly as their skills allow. The players will find that similar options as in Fifteens Rugby apply to them, but teams will use these options very differently in Sevens Rugby. Also at the same playing level, two games of Sevens could easily have more variations than two Fifteen-a-side games normally would have.

The best case scenario for the Sevens referee is that they add to the spectacle of the game and, in doing so, do not allow the players' actions - or their own actions - to slow down the game.

It is a major objective for the Sevens referee to increase ball in play time.

Sevens coaching terms

Pocket

All teams must have a playmaker or an outlet player standing in space, directly behind the tackle. The ball can be cleared to this player from the tackle to remount an attack.

Sweeper

A player who covers behind the defensive line is essential to cut off kicks and cover breaks. If a team has pace, the sweeper can come from the opposite wing and they can defend with seven players across the field. If they lack pace, they should defend with six in the front line as they may not expect the wing to act as sweeper. (It is too far for the player to go, should penetration take place.)

One-on-one defence

One-on-one marking is a vital part of good defence. The emphasis should be to concentrate on the player, and not on the ball. (Use peripheral vision to be aware of the ball movement.) Too much ball-watching by defenders can allow their opponents to create openings and overlaps by running off the ball into new positions.

Zone defence

From the outset players will find themselves guarding certain avenues on the field. These will remain their responsibility until a breakdown in play. Players will not always slot into the same area. How well they defend their zone depends on agility, good lateral movement, communication, peripheral vision and decision making.

Task 4

Given your observations from task 3, write down your learning about the two given teams. Use the team's **strengths** and **weaknesses** and the possible effect on your refereeing process.

Strengths and weaknesses	Technical aspect	Refereeing process and personal planning
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		



NOTES

Module two - Preparing to referee Sevens

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Learning outcome

At the conclusion of this module, you will have analysed aspects of your preparation to officiate in Sevens Rugby. You will see that while there are some established tools to assist you in your preparation, the individuality of the referee nevertheless plays an important role.

Introduction

- What does Sevens Rugby ask from refereeing?
- What does officiating in Sevens specifically ask from assistant referees and in-goal judges?
- How do match officials plan for Sevens?
- How do match officials prepare for Sevens?

There is no doubt that, first, you have to acquire the necessary competencies as a match official in Rugby before you can specialise in other forms of the game such as Sevens.

In IRB terms, you need to have a basic set of skills and knowledge which will help you to perform your role.

Secondly, with some experience in your role, you might want to become better in all aspects of the Game and therefore you want to put more effort in your planning and personal development. This includes acknowledging and preparing for the specific features of Sevens, such as the variations in the Laws of the Game.

These distinct features of Sevens Rugby are highlighted when you consider the match statistics on the following page.



Match Statistics (averages per match) from the IRB Sevens World Series 2008/09

Points	36
Tries	6
Ball in play	7 min = 50%
Passes	67
Kicks	4
Rucks / mauls	16 with 79% ball retention
Scrum	4 with 85% possession retained
Lineouts	3 with 75% possession retained
Quick throws	12.5% (1 of 8)
Penalties	6
Yellow cards	1 in 3-4 games (40% illegal tackles/charging)
Tackles	> 40

Task 1

Pair up with a partner. Read the following match statistics and ask your partner for their thoughts on the consequences for the referee. Don't allow much time for thought, instead make it a 'speed' task. Record the answers given in the table on the following page, then change roles and repeat the task.

Match statistic fact	Effect on the refereeing process
<p>1. Ball is in play on average 50% of the game</p>	
<p>2. On average, there are 67 passes per game</p>	
<p>3. On average, there are 6 penalties per game</p>	
<p>4. 1 out of 8 lineouts are quick throws</p>	
<p>5. On average, there are 4 scrums per game</p>	
<p>6. On average, teams will retain 80% of their possession in the ruck</p>	
<p>7. On average, there are 3 lineouts per game</p>	

Task 2

Take your observations from task 1. How do you rate yourself against these observed effects and how do these effects contribute to your preparation?

Effect on the refereeing process	How do you rate yourself?	What is your preparation?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Physical demands in Sevens

Given that one of the objectives of a referee in Sevens is to increase ball in play time, you should consider the following data taken from a referee in the IRB Sevens World Series:

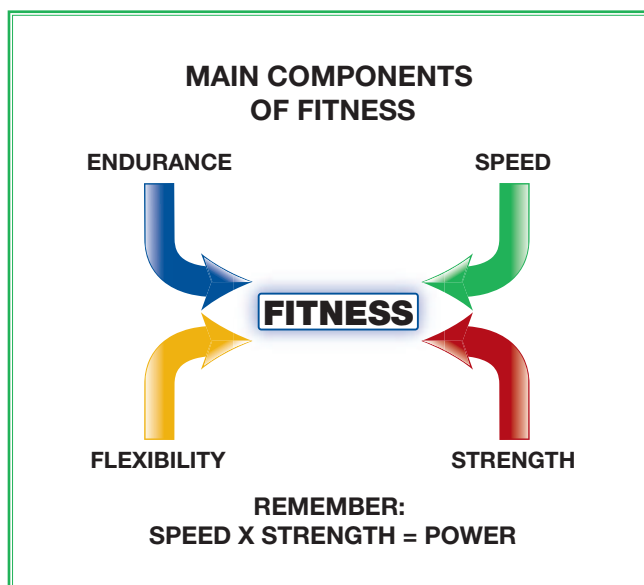
- In one game, the distance covered can extend beyond 2,000 metres
- Average heart rate during a game is around 150 beats per minute
- The maximum sprint speed can be up to 30 km/h

These facts give you an insight into the top end of the Game and though the focus of your training is different when preparing for Sevens, the same training principles apply in Sevens as in Fifteen-a-side. You will organise your training year using periodisation:



Phase	Aspect of fitness
Off season	with recovery and active rest
Foundation	with strength & endurance development
Pre-season	with speed development
Competition endurance	with maintenance of strength, speed, power and endurance

The physical demands in Sevens change the balance of the fitness model used in the IRB education programme.



Whereas in Fifteen-a-side Rugby, the four main components of fitness are of equal importance to your training and competition schedule, in Sevens the balance shifts towards **SPEED** and **STRENGTH**.

Task 3

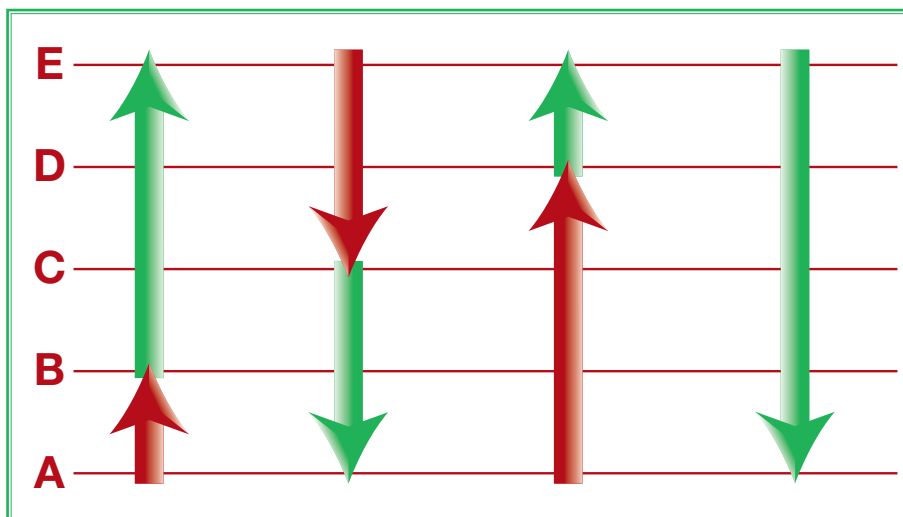
What components of your training target **SPEED** and **STRENGTH**? List up to six components (in addition to the example given) and describe the desired effect of your training and details of your fitness routines.

Training component	Desired effect	Fitness routine
1 Ergometer bike	Strength endurance	30 min with 70%
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Speed, agility and quickness

Speed is about how fast you can run. Speed drills are not just running exercises, mostly they require you to run up to your maximum pace. Please note that you should have developed a good fitness base including strength and endurance training before you enter any speed drills.

Speed sessions should accompany your training regularly, but they are not required every training day and can be limited to a few sessions a week. The “pyramid” drill is a good example of a speed drill and it is also a good example of training in a small group of referees. The following diagram shows a typical layout:



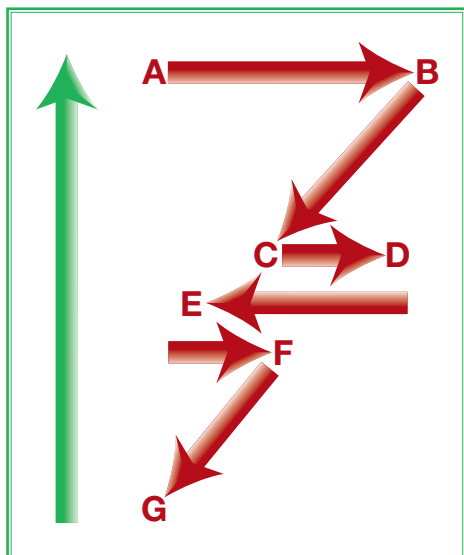
Pyramids

- Place 5 cones A,B,C,D,E at 10 meter intervals
- Start at line A and sprint to B (10 m), then walk the remaining 30 meters to E
- Turn at E and sprint to C (20 m), then walk the remaining 20 meters to A
- Turn at A and sprint to D (30 m), then walk the remaining 10 meters to E
- Walk to A and rest for 2 minutes before you repeat the drill

Agility is your ability to make transitions from one movement to the next movement. The focus is on control and coordination and therefore agility is often more relevant in Sevens than actual flat out speed. Combined with a speed training programme, agility drills will also help you to improve your speed of thought and your co-ordination.

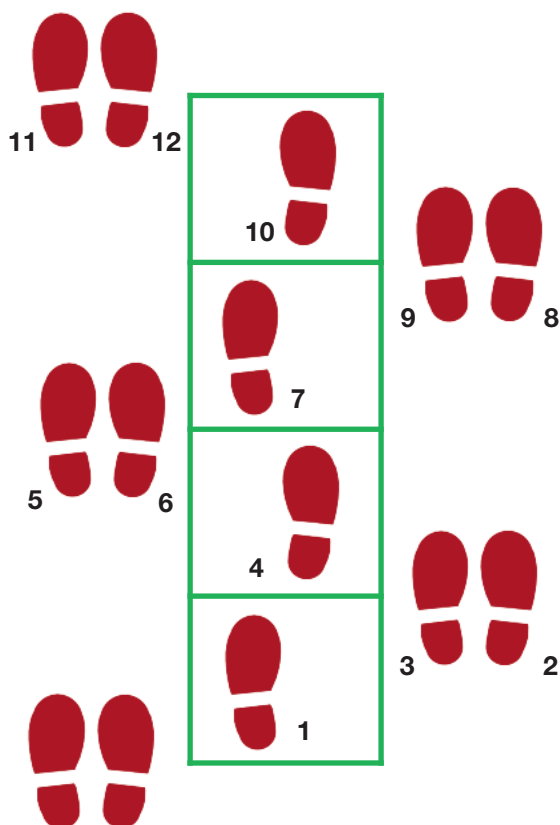
The “Number” drill is a good example of what is expected. The following diagram shows a typical layout for a number 7 run:

Number 7



- Set out a course according to the diagram, using cones to mark A,B,C,D,E,F,G
- Start at point A and sprint to B, change direction to C etc.
- When you reach G, walk from G back to A
- Rest for 2 minutes before you repeat the drill
- Run with your flag or whistle to make it more realistic
- Set out different numbers, vary the size and repetitions to cover varying distances
- Alter the distances and changes of direction, and modify the number of repetitions

Quickness is your ability to move from a starting point. You are quick, if you can achieve your positioning goal in a short period of time. In some situations you just don't have the time to reach maximum speed, so quickness can be very important. An excellent way to improve overall quickness is to use ladder drills. Speed ladder drills are about quality and form rather than producing overload



This diagram shows a typical quickness drill:

- Start with both feet outside the ladder, you can start from left or right
- Perform a step into the first box with your left foot
- Your right foot follows and lands outside the box opposite the starting side
- Your left foot follows and also lands outside the box opposite the starting side
- Perform a step into the second box with your right foot
- Repeat for the full length of the ladder

Task 4

How should you prepare for a Sevens tournament? Identify and describe the major components of your planning and preparation that will differ for a Sevens tournament as compared to a single Fifteen-a-side match. List up to six examples in addition to the example given.

Planning component	Sevens tournament characteristics
1 Number of teams	With up to 24 teams, I'll never know which teams I might referee
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Task 5

At the top level of the Sevens game, the IRB Sevens Series, the referees are asked to specify their planning in detail and to hand in a tournament plan prior to the start of each tournament.

The following task uses parts of this tournament plan. The objective of this task is to ask questions that help you with your self-review and to become clearer about realistic goals for your referee performance on and off the field.

Read through the sample sections 1-3 of the tournament plan and write a short and accurate answer to the questions which precede them. Remember, this task is not about right or wrong, it is about you and your personal goals.

Section 1 - Clarity statement

Question: What are your goals?

- What are your personal goals and aspirations?
- What do you know about the 16 teams?
- What pre-tournament preparation have you done? i.e. specific training, reviewing of DVD's from previous tournaments.
- Have you been involved in any lead-up Sevens tournaments?

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Section 2 - Capability or specific triggers

Question: How do you want to achieve your goals?

- Maintain Sevens positioning, e.g., 'ball in line'
- Create time and space - width
- Rule on first infringement
- Set firm standards early in the game
- Accuracy at breakdown essential

Section 3 - Culture / summary

Question: How does your background help you to achieve your goals?

- Any catch phrases, motivational statements
- Facts not feelings
- Maintain focus
- Work hard at the breakdown



NOTES

Module three - How to referee Sevens

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Learning outcome

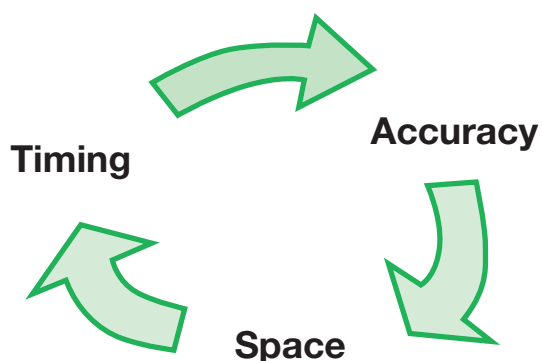
At the conclusion of this module, you will have described the distinct features of four major areas of Sevens refereeing:

- Positioning
- Advantage
- Tackle
- Scrum.

You will have performed practical tasks relating to these areas. You will see that while your experience from Fifteen-a-side Rugby is a very valid tool, many of the required skills have different features in detail when related to Sevens.

Introduction

When match officials with lots of experience in refereeing Sevens are asked about key words to best describe the features of Sevens refereeing, they often come up with the three words in the diagram below:



Timing, accuracy and space are directly related to the way Sevens is played. Sevens Rugby is both a possession game and a pressure game - the link between the two being support.

Possession is 99% of the game. By possession is meant quality possession; once won, it must be retained by good, constant support work and good handling. A match cannot be won without possession and the opposition cannot score without possession.

Sevens is a **pressure** game; when a team has possession of the ball, it will aim to grasp the initiative and challenge the opposition, always being careful to keep the ball away from pressure; and when the opposition has possession it will attempt to pressure them into making errors which in turn force a breakdown.

Positioning

In Sevens, just as in Fifteen-a-side Rugby, there have emerged two different styles when it comes to best practice positioning.

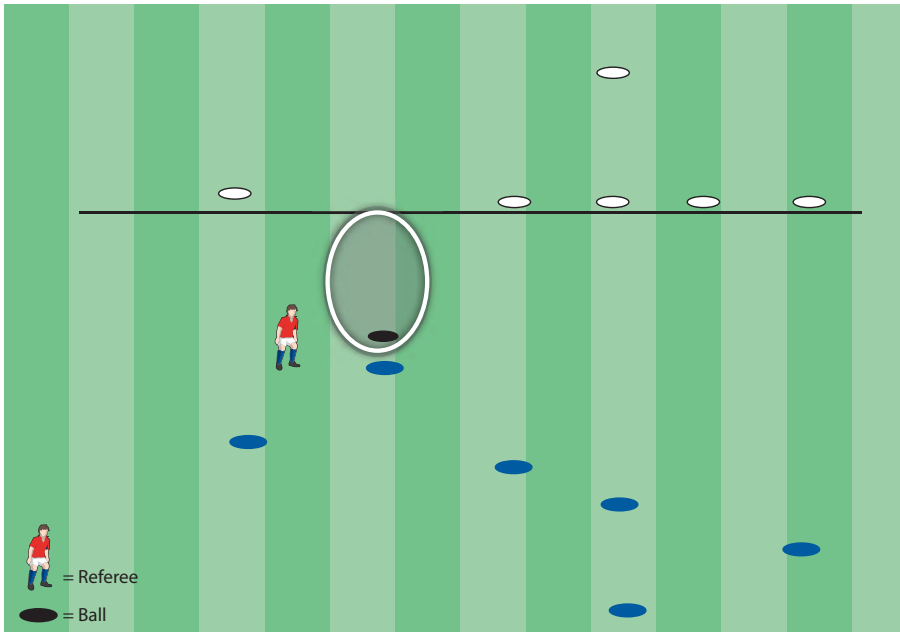
1. Ball in hand - general movement

This system will help you to position yourself in open play and basically involves running in line with the ball most of the time. This is referred to as 'ball-line running'. Ball-line running is fairly easy to grasp and gives the referee a consistent viewpoint from which to observe the game. The general principle of ball-line running means that the referee:

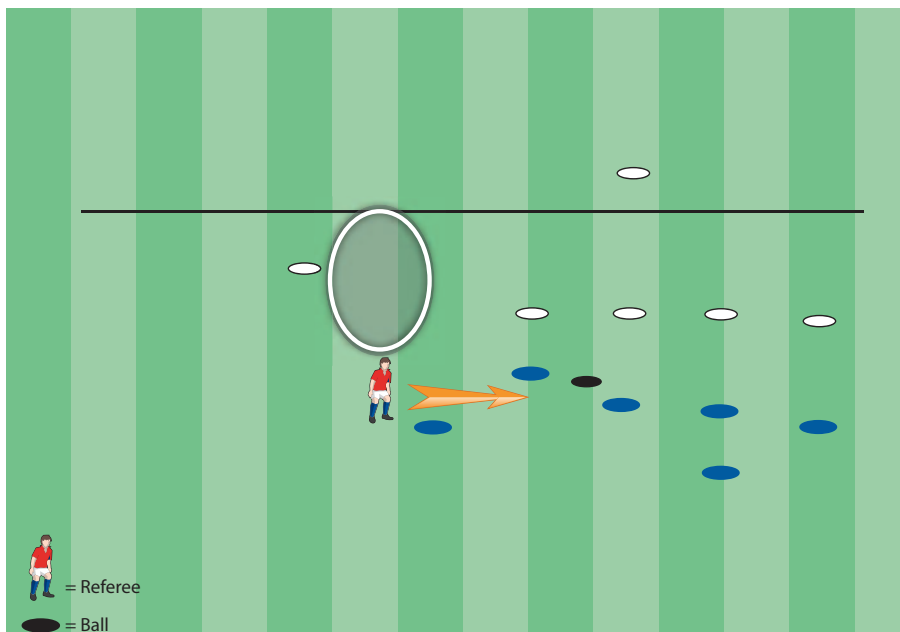
- will either run across field to follow the lateral passing of the ball, or
- will run up field when a player breaks the defensive line
- will not run in arcs or diagonally.

The following four diagrams illustrate the position of the referee as the phase of play develops, and explain the possible implications of ball-line running.

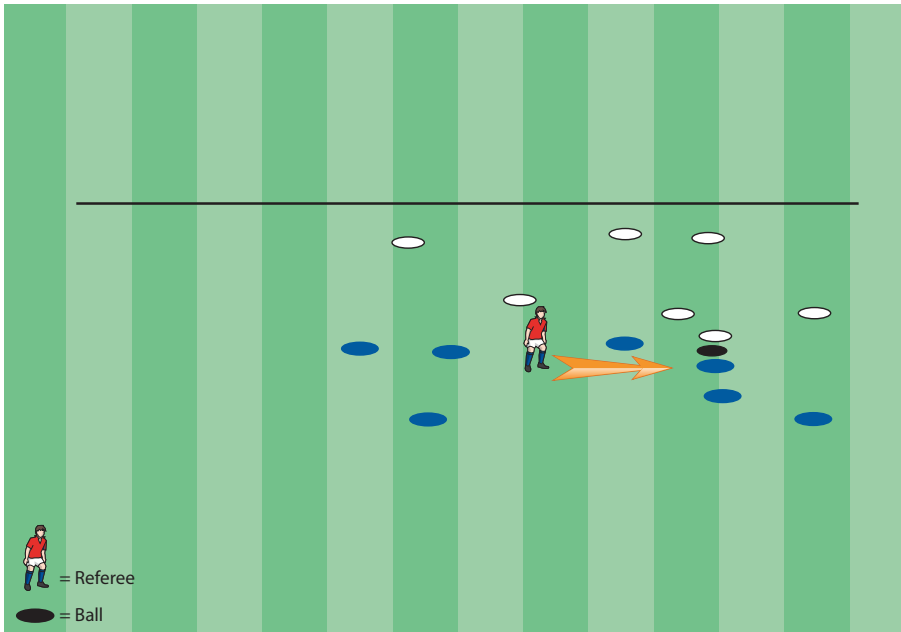
Ball-line running 1



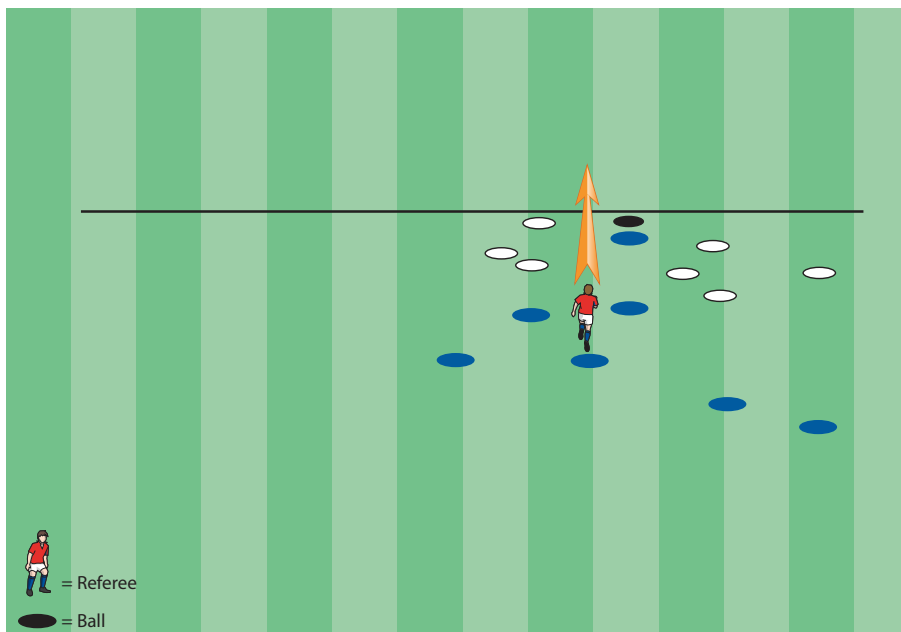
Ball-line running 2



Ball-line running 3



Ball-line running 4



2. Ball on the ground - the contact situation

A system that works particularly well to help you to position yourself at the contact situation is known as 'ball-inside-outside'. The system incorporates the requirements at tackle/ruck situations by encouraging you to be close to the tackler and the tackled player. This enables you to follow the pattern of movement of the ball and the participants in the tackle situation; then possible close offside positions in the inside defence; and finally, possible offside positions in the outside defence. The basic structure of the ball-inside-outside system is as follows:

- Ball (and tackle) first
- Inside defence next, then.....
- Outside defence.

Communication is another key element of this system. At the beginning, you should use body language as a primary tool. After that:

- Always face the defenders' goal line so that you can scan the defenders with a movement of the head rather than the whole body. Leave the situation without a pivot movement of your body if the ball is played wide.
- Avoid facing either of the two touch lines. If you find yourself facing a touch line, you will probably miss offside in the defending back line. Remind yourself and pivot so that your body is facing the defending goal line and you are looking sideways at the contact situation.

As in the ball-line running and ball-inside-outside model described above, the detection of the ball, the attention towards defenders' duties and attackers' duties in the tackle, the observation and control of internal and external positions from defending players are essential factors for cues to find the best position for every phase of the game.

However, the biggest difference in Sevens is the amount of space that is available for the players and the importance of possession, as this remains the players' overall objective.

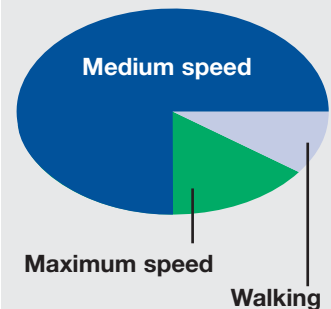
As a result, the major objective of the referee in Sevens is to referee the breakdown, with priority over possible offside positions from outside defenders. If the contest at the breakdown in the sequence of events is not controlled, it is most likely that illegal actions by players will lead to a change in outcome for the contest for possession or will generally result in a slow ball. Secondly, referees that are not in a good position and not applying the Laws correctly might penalise only the second or third offenders and are more likely to miss the first offence.

Do you agree ?

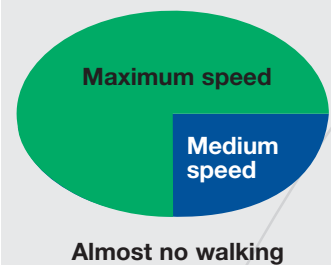
In Fifteen-a-side Rugby, the referee will run 75% of the time at medium speed, 15% at maximum speed and do about 10% walking.

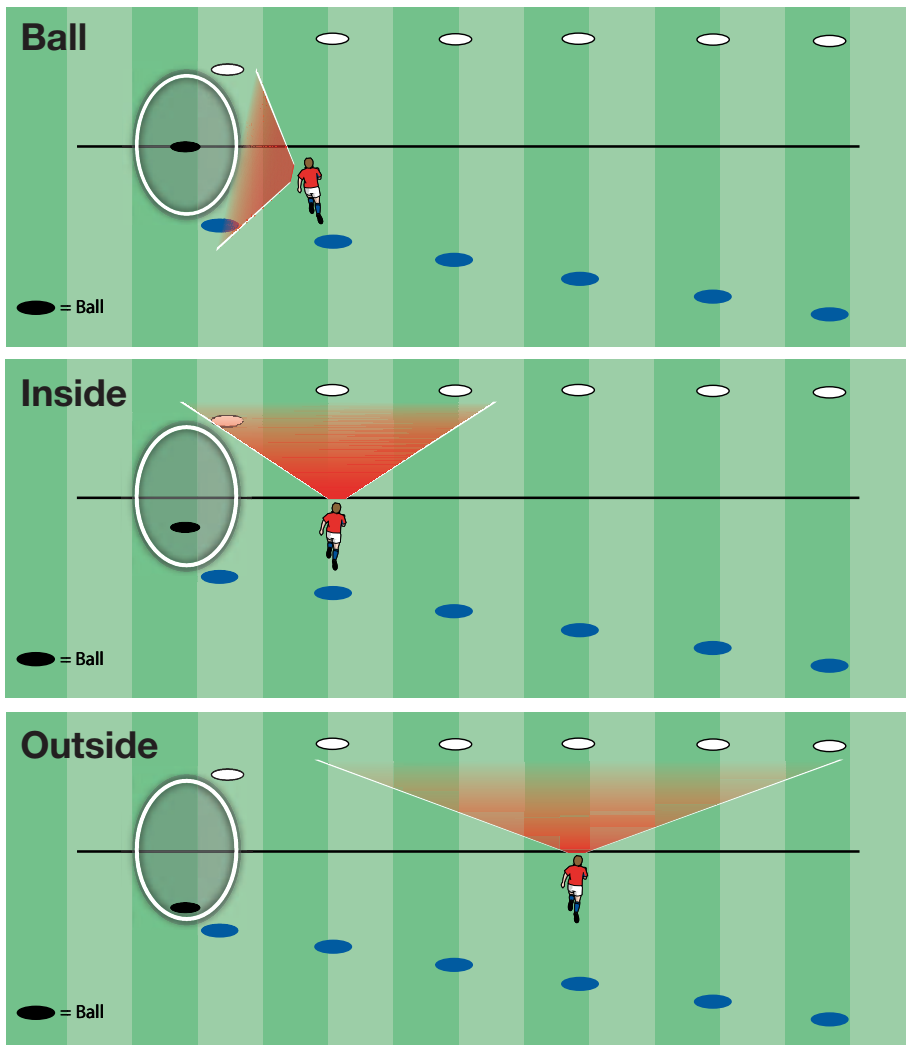
In Sevens, the referee will almost never walk, but runs about 75% of the time at maximum speed, 25% at medium speed.

Fifteens



Sevens





As a referee in Sevens you must approach the breakdown situation as soon as possible and locate the ball very quickly. You must analyse and resolve the situation immediately by either letting play continue or penalising any offenders promptly (or declaring the ball to be unplayable). You cannot spend more than 2-3 seconds on these decisions, which are the only options.

Prevention and reading of the advantage options are essential and often resolve the breakdown situation immediately, but you should not allow long disputes over the ball at the breakdown that always end in penalty kicks.

Other practical positioning tips

Footwork

Sevens referees need to keep moving during a match. Some referees get into bad habits when refereeing less skilled teams and stand still and rely on their speed to catch up with play. However, as the skills and physical abilities of teams increase, this reliance on speed to always catch up will eventually let you down. By moving your feet and continuously working in the direction of play, you will be better able to accelerate and keep up with play as the teams make breaks and sprint down the field. It is far easier to increase your speed when you are already in motion than it is to sprint from a standing start.

Constantly adjust your body angle towards play (always directly facing the ball). You will then already be moving in the direction of the break and save the steps necessary to change direction.

Always be alert

Constantly focus on the overload or the missed tackle. You have a head start, but you will still need to get moving quickly if you want to be in the frame with the try. Follow the interception - you just have to run!

Turnover in open play

When a turnover occurs in open play, you need to quickly take up the mirror-image position from where you have just been. This may be one of the trickiest but most elegant of referee transitions, slipping through both lines without disturbing either.

When following a player who is running free, you should instantly begin checking your 'rear view mirror'. You might be on course to interfere with a defender on the far side of the pitch, just at the critical instant! A small mid-course correction, often by simply slowing down briefly, will allow the pace of the players to decide the outcome.

Always yield to the defenders

For whatever reason, you may occasionally find play coming directly towards you. Stop and hold your position. Be prepared to sidestep the action if necessary; then turn and sprint immediately to keep up with play.

Task 1

Pair up with a partner. Analyse the five diagrams in relation to the field position of actual play, attacking players and defending players. For each diagram, what is your preferred position?

Diagram 1

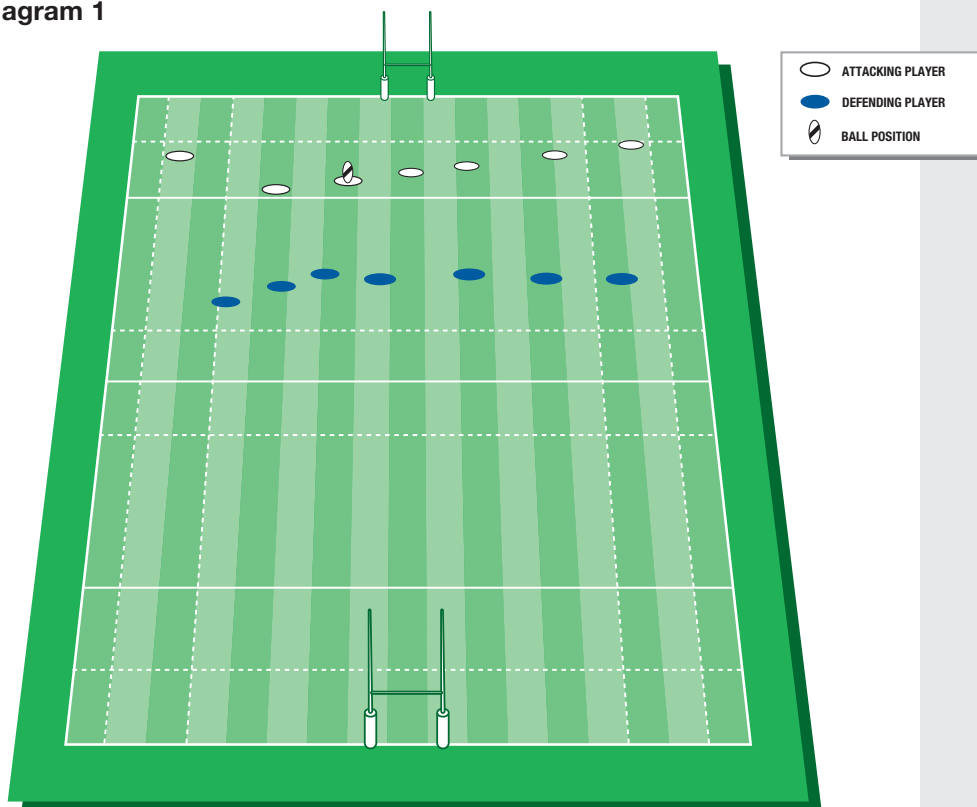
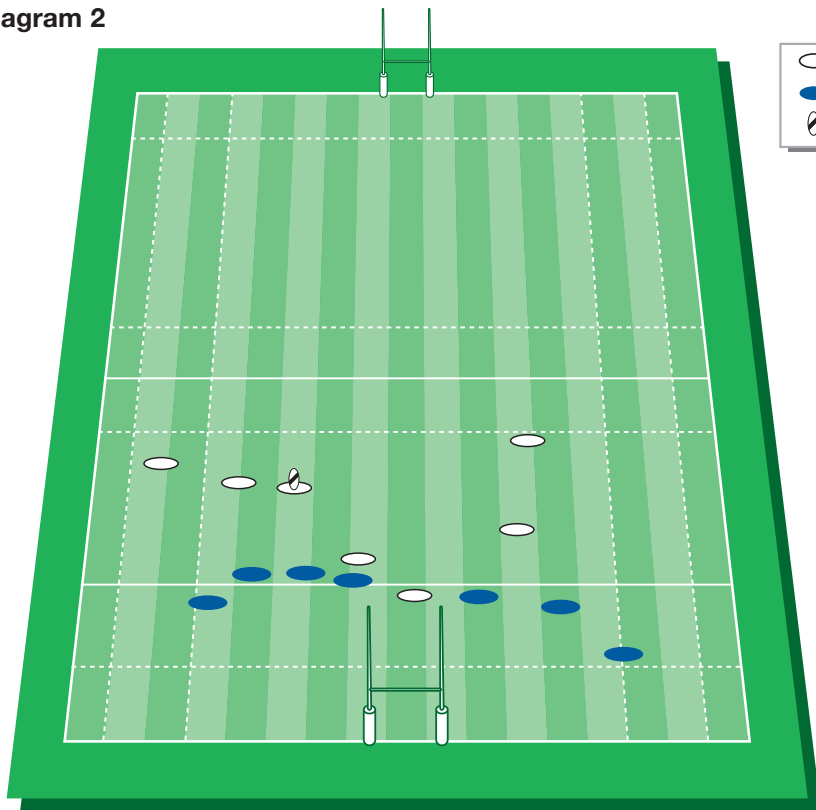
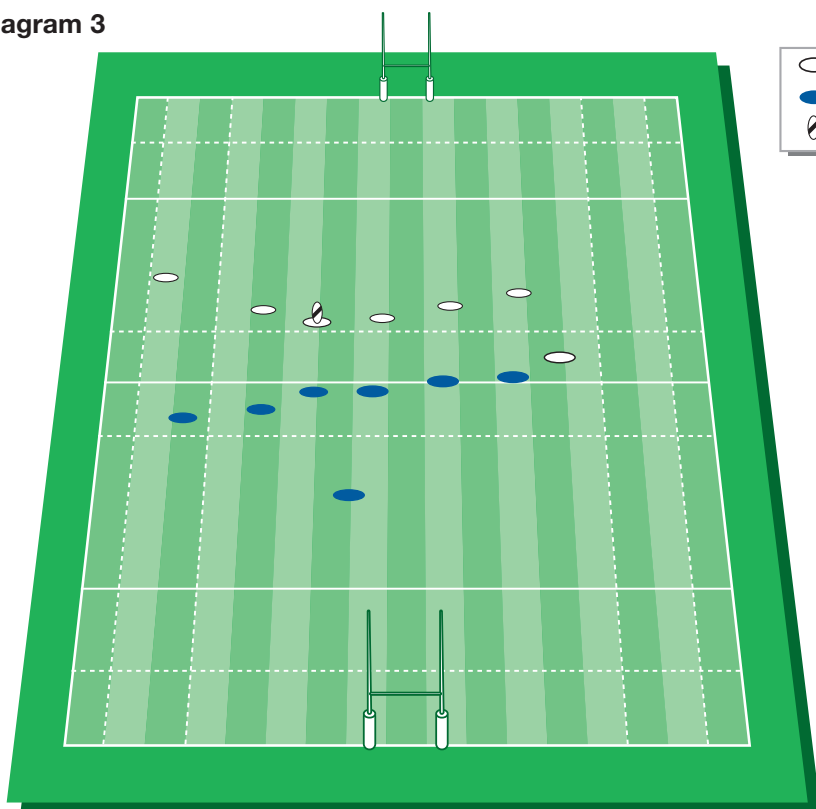


Diagram 2



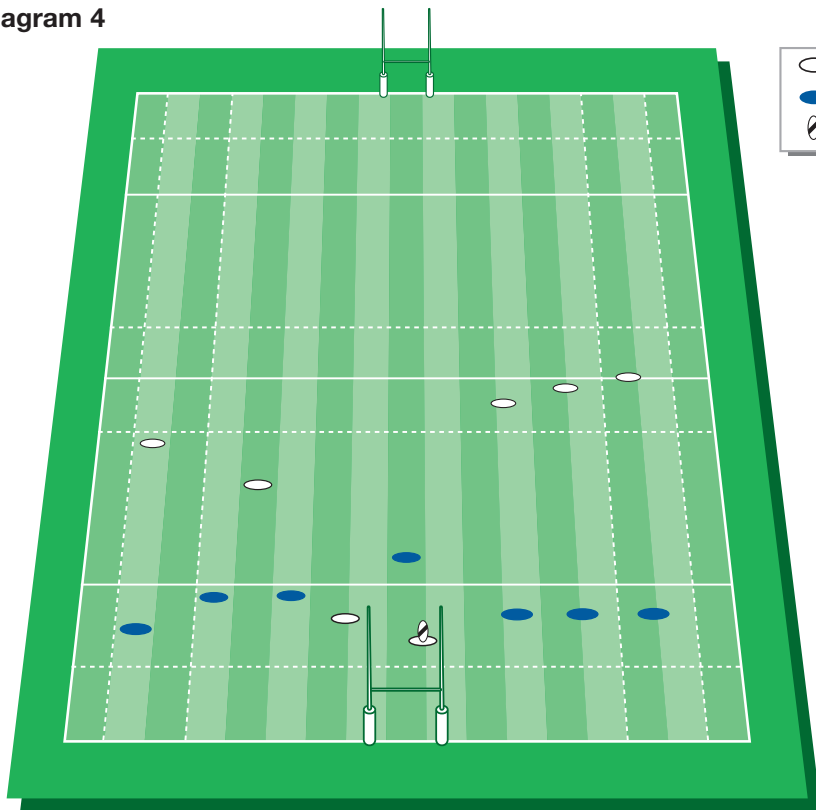
	ATTACKING PLAYER
	DEFENDING PLAYER
	BALL POSITION

Diagram 3



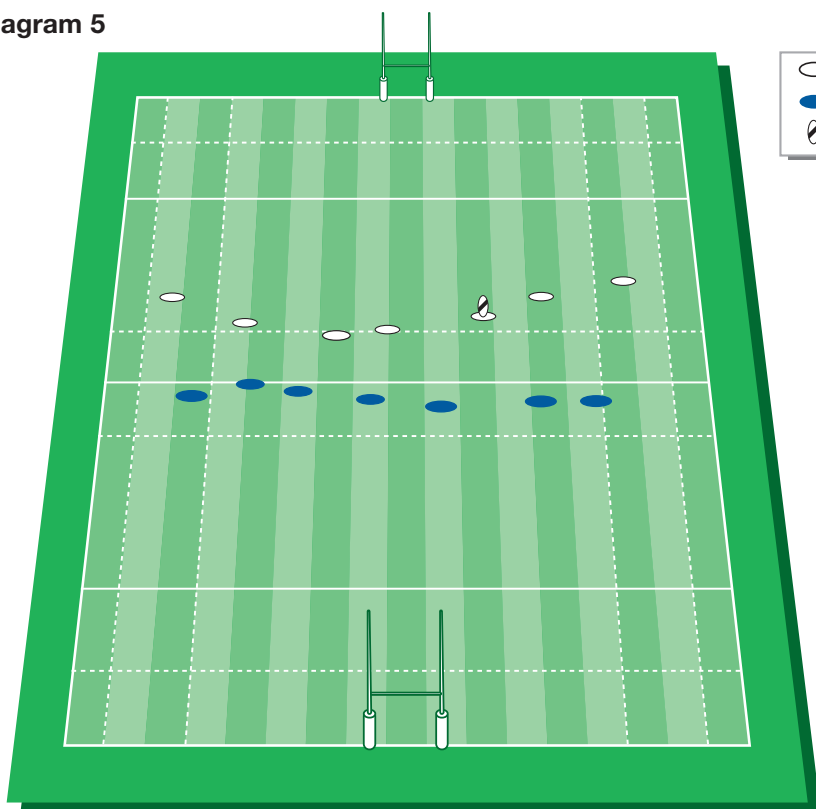
	ATTACKING PLAYER
	DEFENDING PLAYER
	BALL POSITION

Diagram 4



	ATTACKING PLAYER
	DEFENDING PLAYER
	BALL POSITION

Diagram 5



	ATTACKING PLAYER
	DEFENDING PLAYER
	BALL POSITION

Advantage

In Sevens, quality possession **is** advantage. The purpose of advantage is to make play more continuous with fewer stoppages for infringements.

Unpressured possession with options is generally considered advantage for scrum infractions, regardless of position on the pitch.

Clean possession to the gain line is generally considered advantage for penalty infractions.

In Fifteen-a-side Rugby, the analysis of the advantage is much more complex because more factors have to be considered and the prevention of penalty kicks is more important.

Whereas in Fifteen-a-side Rugby, a good number of breakdown offences are not material and have no real impact on the contest for possession, in Sevens, up to 100% of all infringements at the breakdown seem to be material. The basic function of the referee in Sevens is to be there and make a decision instantly, whereas in Fifteen-a-side Rugby, the referee might have that extra little bit of time to arrive at the tackle area and make the decision.

Advantage in Sevens is therefore usually shorter in duration, as opposed to fifteen-a-side Rugby. However, do not be afraid to play a long advantage when called for, even if the attacking side appears to be going backwards. It may take them a while to work their way through the defence. At the 2009 Rugby World Cup Sevens in Dubai, over half (52%) of the tries scored in the men's tournament originated in the scoring team's own half.

No matter how play develops, always call out "**Advantage, BLUE, penalty!**" and when over, "**Advantage over!**". Clear communication to the players is important. It lets the player know you are aware of the infringement, but are willing to allow the non-offending team's actions to determine play.

Forward passes

The modern defensive pressure generates offensive tackles that require the tackled players to pass the ball very quickly and that is where the forward pass usually happens. In addition, assistance from the assistant referees is complicated because of the speed of the game.

Non-detection of this circumstance generates a huge advantage for the team in possession of the ball: it allows the attackers to keep the ball behind the tackle line of the defenders and the chance for the defenders to recover the space and to be back in a good defending position is reduced.

As a result, an undetected forward pass in Sevens is very likely to result in a try.

Task 2

Your Educator will show you seven video clips where the referee clearly indicates advantage. Analyse the actions of the players and evaluate the decision making of the referee.

Clip	Is there an advantage?	What is the referee's decision?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Tackle

In Sevens, referees look out for the availability of the ball as in Fifteen-a-side Rugby. The following points act as a reminder:

No tackle. Has there even been a tackle?

Availability. The ball should be made available immediately. If ball carriers do what they should do, the ball should emerge. If it does not come out quickly, then something is wrong.

Through the gate. Be vigilant for players entering the tackle zone from the side. Do not let the defence run back through the tackle zone as it impedes or slows down play.

On their feet. Insist that arriving players stay on their feet.

Communication. Use clear verbal communication to identify whether each breakdown is a tackle or a ruck.

Offside lines. Be careful not to create phantom offside lines. When there is no ruck, there is no offside.

Direction of play. Players wide of the tackle, i.e., more than a metre away, are allowed to play without regard for the direction in which they approach to play.

Isolated tackled players holding on to the ball. A ball carrier isolated from teammates and not releasing after the tackle must be penalised. From a long body ruck, or squeeze ball, the ball must come out immediately.

One-on-one tackles. Be aware of tacklers using the tackled player or the ball as leverage to help themselves get up from the ground. They must release the tackled player and get up without such assistance. (Look for some separation.)

Third player diving on top. As a tackler rolls away, a third player dives over the player. It may look accidental, but this slows down the release of the ball and it must be penalised. Players must stay on their feet.

Turning of a tackled player. Tacklers must make an effort to release tackled players and/or the ball. Tackled players must be able to lay the ball down on the ground behind them - and back towards their own team.

Tackle definitions

1. You have to be clear as to what constitutes Law 14 - ball on the ground (no tackle) and what constitutes a tackle.
2. You have to be clear as to the distinction between players who make a tackle but remain on their feet, and therefore are deemed not to be tacklers, and those who go to ground to become tacklers

Task 3

Your educator will show you seven video clips, where tackles are shown. Analyse the actions of the players and evaluate the decision making of the referee.

Clip	What happens in the tackle?	What is the referee's decision?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Scrum

Possession is vital in Sevens and the set scrum is one of the major first-phase situations in which the ball is contested. Only the kick-off occurs with comparable frequency.

With just three players on each side, Sevens scrums may prove more difficult than in Fifteens. Most Sevens forwards are not traditional (Fifteens) front row players, and it can be somewhat unnatural for them to play in the scrum.

Be sure to manage scrums correctly, because poorly managed scrums will destroy the game. Be demanding and precise at the pre-engagement, every time; early and consistent standards will pay dividends. The object for the referee is to get the ball back in play quickly.

Make certain that both props are binding on their hooker, and on the body of their opposing prop - not the shorts or thighs. The hooker must independently bind to each of the props and may legally overbind or underbind. Be aware of hookers unbinding early and leaving 'by the back entrance'. Allowing the hooker to leave the scrum early eliminates space and is a detriment to the game. The defending team is more likely to offend in this way.

Do not allow the loose-head prop (from the team not throwing in the ball), to sabotage the scrum by standing up and boring in. This is a common tactic in Sevens to spoil scrums. Make sure that the props drive straight and remain in the scrum.

Ensure a fair contest for the ball with a straight credible feed. Manage this aspect of the game. Verify that scrum halves are square to the scrum and lined up with the tunnel. Verbally remind them of their responsibility for a straight throw-in. Remember, teams may throw the ball into the scrum from either side.

Do not allow the opposing hooker to spoil possession by kicking the ball through the scrum. Deal with hookers who strike for the ball early, and those who have their hooking foot in the tunnel before the ball is thrown in.

Take measures so that the opposing scrum halves do not interfere with each other. No contact should be allowed between the two before the ball has emerged from the scrum.

Ball retention from the scrum

In the 2008 / 2009 IRB Sevens World Series, the team throwing in the ball had an 85% retention rate.

The hooker...

...must independently bind to each of the props. *The props should not bind on each other. The hooker may legally overbind or underbind.*

...must remain in the scrum until the scrum is over.

Allowing the hooker to leave the scrum early eliminates space and is a detriment to the game.

Task 4

Create a scrum checklist for Sevens. Identify points to look out for and describe the required action of the referee in each situation.

Look out for	Referee action

Task 5

Your Educator will show you seven video clips featuring scrums. Analyse the actions of the players and evaluate the decision making of the referee.

Clip	What happens in the scrum?	What is the referee's decision?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Competency-based review process

The competency-based review process aims to be as comprehensive and objective as possible, with all factors focused on helping the referee to improve his/her performance going forward, including game knowledge, officiating skills and personal attitude of the match officials.

Overall, the criteria in that competency approach are factual and concrete data for the individual referee. They define a standard to describe a professional profile which is needed to respond to the practical challenges of Sevens officiating. The standard is set with a deep practical relevance and experience, including theoretical concepts in the context of the way the game is played, the Laws of the Game and the Playing Charter.

Overall 21 criteria for general/management aspects and the more technical criteria of the game represent a meaningful spread of performance review. Given the nature of the competency approach, the same format is used for feedback from team coaches and self-reflection from the referees.

Criteria
1. Effective presence at each tackle & ruck, i.e., being there to enable preventative communication
2. Ensured tackler(s) released & moved away
3. Ensured tackled player(s) made ball available immediately and moved away
4. Ensured players entered the tackle and ruck phase from the correct side and on their feet
5. Applied advantage without undue pressure on the non-offending side
6. Allowed play to continue when the advantage was gained
7. Communicated advantage and advantage over by signal
8. Ensured all restart kicks were taken correctly and players were onside, and ensured 10m space was available at penalties and free kicks
9. Managed offside players in general play
10. Detected all obvious forward passes and knock-ons
11. Managed offside lines for non-participants at ruck, maul, scrum and lineout
12. Indicated the mark and ensured "Crouch, touch, pause, engage" sequence was followed
13. Ensured scrums were stationary, square to touch and players bound correctly
14. Effectively managed the lineout
15. Effectively interacted with assistant referees and other match officials
16. Effectively communicated all decisions made using referee signals, vocals and body language
17. Effectively took up position (ball-line running and ball-inside-outside)
18. Followed 'Refereeing what matters' (contextual and material judgements)
19. Fulfilled the touch judge duties
20. Detected foul play and communicated with the referee following correct protocol
21. Supported the referee in all his/her duties as directed

IRB Sevens Series review process

At the IRB Sevens Series, the review process is based on observations in three technical areas: Tackle, Scrum and Advantage. The reviewers will also add notes about the nature of the particular match and any incidents that are critical in the context of that match. The process is based on a coaching model (“How do we improve performance?”) rather than a pure assessment model and involves the following:

1. The referee, prior to each pair of tournaments prepares a tournament plan.
2. At the end of each Sevens game the referee is encouraged to reflect on his/her own performance.
 - What went well?
 - What could have been done differently?
 - Were there any serious errors? If so, what caused them?
3. After each game and before the next game, the referee meets briefly with the performance reviewer. Ideally three performance reviewers are used, who do two games on and then four games off. The performance reviewer has a simple one page coaching report form to use. The performance reviewer observes the referee’s performance focussing on the key areas of the Sevens game, i.e., the breakdown (tackle / ruck) / scrum and lineout / advantage / management including communication / critical incidents. The referee and the performance reviewer meet informally for a few minutes, about an hour after the game. The performance reviewer uses the form to record some brief comments which are then used (the referee doesn’t receive a copy) when later meeting with the referee to discuss:
 - What went well?
 - What areas of the game need improvement?The performance reviewers hand in their notes to the referee manager at the end of each day’s matches.
4. Each referee is provided with a DVD approx 30-45mins after each game and they have a PC or laptop available so that they can review the game prior to their next match. Again, they seek to identify what went well and which areas of their game they need to improve.
5. At the end of each day the referee is encouraged to write up a brief review of performances. Each referee usually has three games on day one and a further two to four games on day two.
6. The same process is followed on day two.
7. Between the first and second tournament the referee manager meets formally one-on-one with each referee to discuss the first tournament. This one-on-one review lasts about an hour and the performance reviewer’s report forms and video clips are part of the review.
8. At the end of the two tournaments each referee completes his/her tournament plan and self review and sends them to the referee manager.
9. The referee manager, using all the information assembled during the two tournaments, including referee statistics, then writes up a summary review and forwards the completed tournament plan and self-review back to the referee and his/her own referee manager.

IRB Sevens Series - Coaching / performance review notes

Referee:	Match no:
Teams:	Date:
Brief description of the game: <i>e.g. top of the pool clash / intensity of fixture / player skill levels, etc</i>	
Tackle / breakdown: <i>e.g. positioning / accurate decisions / ruling 1st infringement / quick ball</i>	
Scrum / lineout: <i>e.g. positive set up / fair contest / offside managed</i>	
Advantage / game management: <i>e.g. minor vs major advantage / timing / player management</i>	
Critical Incidents: <i>Check that referee is aware of incident. Discuss how it could have been better handled.</i>	
Matters requiring further self review / improvement:	
Coach's name:	

Brief one-on-one discussion held with referee? **Yes / No**

Encourage the referee to lead the discussion

Please hand your notes to referee manager at the end of each day. Thank you.

Module four - How to assist in Sevens

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Learning outcome

At the conclusion of this module, you will have described the distinctive features of three major areas of refereeing assistance in Sevens:

- Assistant referee positioning
- Triangulation
- Communication.

You will have performed practical tasks relating to these areas. You will see that while your experience from Fifteen-a-side Rugby is a very valid tool, many of the required skills for the Sevens Game differ in their detailed application.

Introduction

The concept of timing, tolerance and space described in Module 3 will apply to referee assistance in a similar way. While no specific Laws with regard to touch and foul play exist in Sevens, the changing features of the Game require assistant referees to be even more alert and accurate in their positioning and decision making than in the Fifteens Game.

Referee support and communication need to be adapted to the speed at which Sevens is played, but Sevens also features an additional role to support these processes: the in-goal judge.

The skill of working with a team of five is a very important tool for match officials. However, as with any other tool, it needs practice and match experience to make full use of the two additional match officials.



Assistant referee positioning

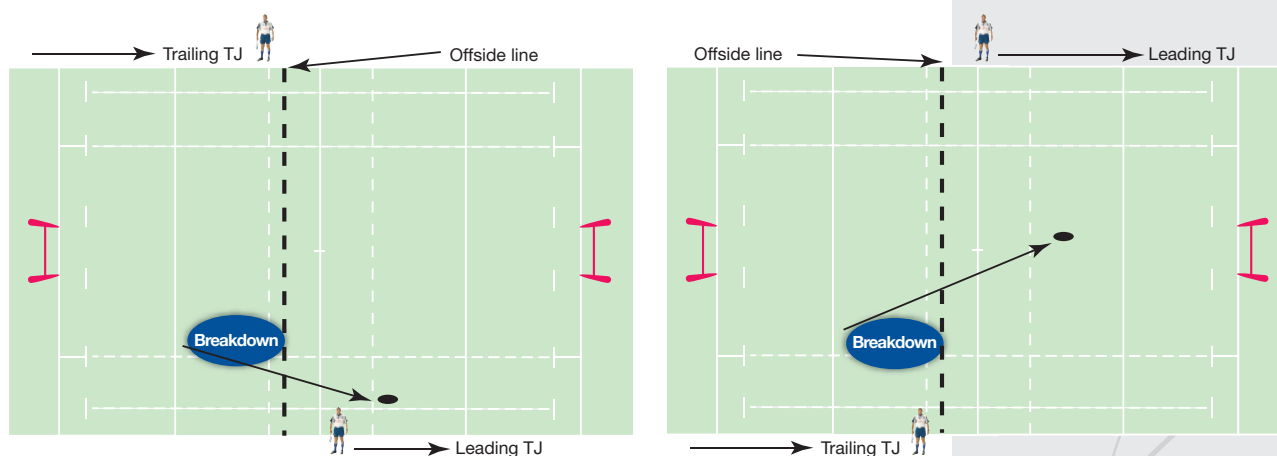
Touch judges will be known as assistant referees and can, at the discretion of the referee, be assigned additional responsibilities. This allows assistant referees to provide referees with additional information to assist in their decision making. The referee and the two assistant referees need to clearly communicate and understand their duties and responsibilities.

Assistant referees are able to assist the referee in any way that the referee requires. To do so, they have to be in the best position at any time. When observing touch judges / assistant referees in a match, you should be able to apply the following checklist to carry out a key factor analysis for different situations:

- Where are you?
- Is the ball in touch?
- Where did it go into touch?
- Have you used your flag with the appropriate signal?
- Have you determined the location of the throw-in?
- Have you ascertained whose throw-in it is?
- Where is the ball now?
- Who has handled it since it went into touch?
- Is there an attempted quick throw-in?
- Has the throw-in been executed correctly (by the correct team, and with the thrower having both feet behind the touch line)?

The touch judge who is on the touch line to which the ball is travelling is the leading touch judge. The touch judge who is on the touch line from which the ball is travelling is the trailing touch judge. Both touch judges should remain either slightly ahead of or slightly behind play to avoid being taken out by a tackle.

Leading and trailing touch judges



Other practical tips on positioning

Quick lineouts / quick throw ins

Assistant referees can assist by signalling and getting to the mark quickly. Remember, while a quick throw-in does not have to be straight, it must not be thrown forward towards the opponent's goal line. Make sure the ball is only handled by the player taking the quick throw-in.

5m offside

Help by marking the five-metre offside line. In order to be onside, both sets of backs (except the half backs) must be five metres behind the hindmost player of their team.

Kicks

Trailing assistant referees, in particular, should be in position to assist with any incidents of obstruction or the taking out of players after a kick or pass. They will also be critical in observing late, high or dangerous tackles. Shoulder charges and tackles around the collar, including from behind the ball carrier, must be reported to the referee.

Scrum

Be watchful that no players are being held in the scrum after the ball has been cleared. The ball-winning front row is likely to hold in the opposition in order to give their attack more space.

Time wasting

Be alert to the possibility of either team throwing the ball away beyond touch or the dead ball line. Report incidents to the referee, who will then make a decision.

Foul play

Make a foul play call regardless of whether you believe the referee has seen the offence(s). However, you need to be absolutely certain that an offence has occurred; no guessing or being influenced by the crowd. While observing the ball, be aware of the environment around the ball carriers. Have they been tripped, etc., in in-goal, thereby preventing them from getting closer to the posts? This is very important in Sevens, with conversions being drop kicks.

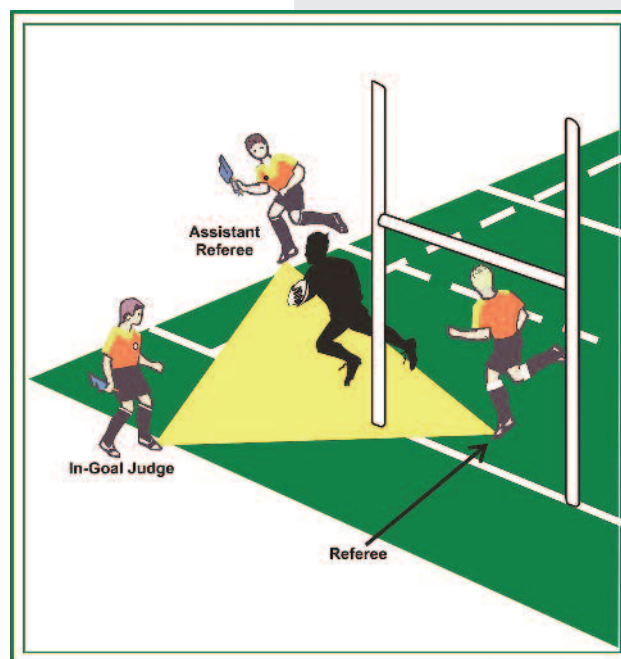
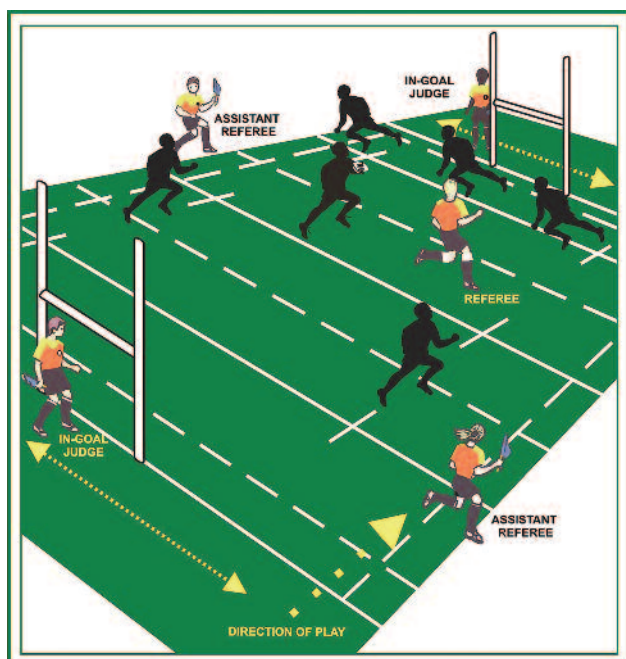
Triangulation

In-goal judges were introduced in 1996 to keep up with the growing demands of international Sevens. The first Sevens World Cup in which they were used was in 1997 in Hong Kong.

Teamwork between the referee, assistant referees and in-goal judges is absolutely essential. Again, teamwork starts with positioning. The responsibility of the in-goal judge covers quite a large area and while play is often far away from in-goal, concentration has to be maintained for the full period of 2x7 (or 10) minutes.

In-goal judges will basically move on the goal line, but it is perfectly acceptable to take a position inside the in-goal area to gain a better vantage point. Make sure you are out of the way of play. Move as quickly as possible to the position where you anticipate the try is going to be scored. Follow / be in line with the player who is attempting to get closer to the posts.

In any case, co-ordinate your positioning with your assistant referees and your referee. In an ideal situation, the concept of triangulation will provide the best possible positioning.



Task 1

Your Educator will show you seven video clips on triangulation. Analyse the actions of the match officials and evaluate the positioning of the assistant referees and the in-goal judges.

Clip	Is there triangulation?	What are the assistant referees' / in-goal judges' positions?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Communication

The referee, the touch judge and the in-goal judge have different responsibilities and accountabilities for their performances during a match. The referee may take advice from his/her touch judges and in-goal judges, but the referee has to accept the ultimate responsibility for all the 'team of three' decisions.

For different levels of competition and/or for separate tournaments and leagues, there should be a clearly defined protocol whereby no-one is in doubt about the designated roles. This protocol is designed to ensure:

- correct information and action
- clarity and speed of communication
- that justice prevails.

While the primary role of the touch judge is clearly described in the Laws of the Game, the other ways in which the touch judge can offer help to the referee need a closer look. There is a potential secondary role to aim for - that of assistant to the referee - on important decisions and calls.

Any form of such secondary assistance must not intrude on the primary responsibilities of the touch judge and in-goal judge. The advice for the referee should be clear, positive and directly connected to the relevant part of the game. The advice should cover observed trends from that game and only be communicated at stoppages in play.

However, the touch judge should communicate to the referee any obvious infringement where the referee was unsighted and where the infringement has had a material effect. All incidents of foul play should be signalled irrespective of whether the touch judge believes that the referee has witnessed the offence.

In Sevens, clarity and speed of communication need to match the speed of the game. Always remember, every second you spend in communication with your referee feels like 10 seconds to any outside observer; it is perceived as slowing down the game, and sometimes therefore as weak decision-making by the match official team.

Reporting foul play

When a touch judge reports foul play to the referee, the following information must be provided:

- who committed the offence
- the number(s) of the player(s) and the team(s) for which they play
- what the offence(s) was or were
- where the offence(s) occurred.

The referee may ask for a recommended sanction which could be:

- admonishment
- caution
- ordering off.

The referee may, of course, decide on a different course of action from that which is recommended.

Communication awareness

You must recognise that when reporting incidents of foul play, the body language and voices of the referee and touch judges may be observed and/or heard by anyone watching or listening. Therefore, the manner in which you communicate is absolutely critical.

Verbal

Calm, accurate, concise

Non-verbal

Relaxed, assured, confident

It is critical to maintain eye contact with the referee. Establish eye contact with the referee before offering any decision on play.

Task 2

Your educator will show you seven video clips on foul play. Pair up with a partner and report on the action by using the above protocol. Your actions in this role play should include verbal and non-verbal communication and if possible should take place in 'real space'.

Clip	What is the action of the players?	What is the correct report from the assistant to the referee?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		



NOTES

Evaluation questionnaire

Name (optional):

How well did course help you to:	LOW	HIGH
prepare to officiate Sevens matches, e.g., fitness?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
self-reflect on performance?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
identify best practise for officiating Sevens matches?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
be more aware of current concepts, e.g., materiality?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
set a high standard of personal behaviour?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
use preventative communication?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
apply, signal and communicate advantage?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
manage offside players and/or lines?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
effectively manage a Sevens scrum?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
effectively manage a Sevens lineout?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
act as a touch judge / assistant referee in a Sevens match?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS AS A SEVENS MATCH OFFICIAL?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
How satisfactory did you find the:	LOW	HIGH
pre-course administration?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
venue / lecture room?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
refreshments?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
course format?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
course pace?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
course workbook?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Please comment on the Trainer's skills:	LOW	HIGH
Creating and maintaining a learning climate	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Presentation skills	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Questioning skills	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Listening skills	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Feedback / review skills	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Technical knowledge	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Accuracy of assessment	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Investing in students	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	



In what way(s) could the Officiating Sevens Rugby course be improved?

What part of the Officiating Sevens Rugby course did you find most useful?

Thank you for completing this form fully and honestly - it will help us to continue the improvement of our training workshop administration, delivery and content.

PLEASE REMOVE THIS EVALUATION AND HAND IT TO THE COURSE ORGANISER BEFORE DEPARTING.