



MATCH OFFICIAL TEAM

COVID-19 Law variations 2020/2021

REFEREE PRE-MATCH BRIEF

(To be read in conjunction with the England Rugby MO Match Day Guidance)

Match Officials are empowered to ensure COVID measures are in place on the field of play only. This means adhering to and applying the revised law variations & sanctioning as prescribed. *It is solely the club's responsibility to manage & ensure it is compliant with central and local Government & RFU requirements.* Match officials can be re-assured that the RFU insurance policies are fully in place.

Match Officials can further support COVID measures through reinforcing the need for players to avoid on field team huddles and celebrations. Here are some guidelines for your player/coach briefing.



- We will be encouraging the ball carrier to make the ball available quickly, although not compelled
- The tackler(s) should not look to hold up a player and should be bringing the ball carrier to ground
- Binding onto a player in possession of the ball by a team-mate is illegal. You should make sure that captains & coaches understand this
- Risk of Penalty sanction



- Replaced by a free kick against a "set" defence
- No quick taps from a scrum free kick. Must pass unless on the 5m goal lines
- We will be looking to give "advantage over" quickly following a knock on or forward pass, as we believe it more advantageous to play against a broken defence rather one that has had time to set
- Quick tap allowed from FK other than a scrum awarded



- Defending team must match numbers between 5 and 7 players
- Attacking team to be encouraged to give numbers asap
- The player winning the ball must either pass/release it immediately to another player, or leave the line out as soon as they land or drive through the lineout
- Quick Throw has not been varied

Don't forget the other Laws – There are 17 which remain unchanged

- There is no change to the law relating to taking a penalty kick, which can be played immediately, and the kicker may run with the ball
- Referee foul play as before which includes yellow and red cards. These **must** be reported in the normal way
- Apply the World Rugby Decision Making High Tackle framework as before - [Guidelines Link](#)

Other Refereeing considerations

- Preventative communication is critical. The use of terms 'use it' & 'release' need to be used early where players are likely to come into face to face contact
- Think about your positioning, referee the priorities, putting yourself in a good position to see offside players
- Above all we encourage players, coaches, and everyone to embrace "the spirit of the game"