



Television Match Official (TMO) Protocol

Updated: May 2022 Operational: 1 July 2022

The intention of the Protocol is not to enable the TMO to drive decision making, but instead allow the TMO to support and enable the on-field team to make better, more accurate refereeing decisions where, by circumstance, situation or human error, they are in need of such support.

World Rugby Law 6 currently provides the opportunity for match officials to use the TMO to assist in the adjudication of decisions across the game.

Section 1: Guiding principles

- The referee remains the lead decision-maker of the refereeing team. The intention of the protocol is to provide the referee, their assistant referees and the TMO (commonly referred to as the Team of 4) with a technology-based solution to collectively make better and more accurate decisions. The protocol is not intended for the referee to absolve themselves of their decision-making duties and obligations.
- The protocol aims to deal in the space commonly defined as **“CLEAR & OBVIOUS.”** For clarity purposes, this is defined as an incident that is unlikely to be refereed in any other way. It refers to an incident during the game that is easily identifiable in terms of the Laws of the Game.
- The application of the TMO system must be credible and consistent and in doing so, contribute to maintaining the integrity of the game, while attempting to deal with the **Clear and Obvious and ‘Big Moments’ during a game of rugby.**
- Should a referee request the use of a TMO and a stadium screen is present, then the referee and their assistants may use the screen to aid in the TMO decision making process.
- It is intended that the referee should aim to lead the TMO referral process by creating an environment within which the Team of 4 (TO4) are able to provide them with the applicable facts of the referral. The referee will then collate all the information and lead the decision-making process.
- The protocol is intended to enable the TO4 to make formal referrals where discussions are needed in order to decide on the best game decision, but at the same time also allow a TMO to make live calls where they are in no doubt as to what the outcome of a particular incident may be. These live calls are further defined in Section 2.

Section 2: Types of Referrals

- Any member of the TO4 may refer a matter/incident for TMO referral, including the TMO themselves.
- Referrals are classified as either formal referrals, or live referral contributions.
- Formal referrals:
 - Where any member of the TO4 wishes to formally refer an incident, which, on face value, meets the principles contained in *Section 1: Guiding Principles*, then the referee will call a formal **time out**, create the ‘T’ signal with their hands, followed by the hand signal of a TMO box, and engage the TMO formally.
 - In such instances where the referral relates to the scoring of a try, the referee (and the assistants where applicable) will state an on-field decision and ask the TMO to provide specific broadcast angles that help in the making of the decision. For clarity purposes, the on-field decision may comprise one of two scenarios:
 - On field decision “**Try**”, with reasoning to substantiate such.
 - On field decision “**No Try**”, with reasoning to substantiate such.
 - Should the broadcaster provide an angle after a conversion takes place but before the restart has been taken, that clearly shows an infringement has taken place, then the TMO/referee should use the video referral process to deal with the infringement.
 - In such instances where the TO4 are unable to establish an on field decision of “Try” or “No Try”, the referee does have at their disposal the ability to indicate that the on field team are *unsure as to whether a try has been scored nor not*, and request the TMO to provide angles from which they can collectively make a more accurate decision.
- Live referrals:
 - Where any member of the TO4 is able to make an accurate call without having to formally refer to the TMO.
 - This referral is intended to only be used where an incident occurs, in line with the provisions contained in *Section 3: Protocol Detail* relating to live referrals, where it is clear that the on-field team have missed a clear and obvious incident/decision that does *not* need formal referral.
 - This may be a live call by the TMO after reviewing a video assisted replay or delay screen.
- The parameters relating to each of these referrals are further detailed in *Section 3: Protocol Detail* below, where those laws underlined shall apply in the instances where a live referral may be conducted.

Section 3: Protocol Detail

- A match organiser may appoint an official known as a Television Match Official (TMO) who together with the Referee and Assistant Referees, uses available technological devices and video replay systems, within the intents of the guiding principles, to clarify situations relating to:
 - *General play:*

Where match officials believe a *Clear and Obvious* infringement may have occurred in the immediate two phases of play leading to a try being scored, or in the preventing of a possible try from being scored. In referrals classified as *Formal Reviews*, sections of Law that may be checked within this period include:

○ *Law 8: Scoring*

- All incidents relating to the grounding of the ball in-goal, whether by the attacking or defending team, including whether a ball has gone dead or not.
- All incidents relating to the act of scoring a try, including;
 - Where a player is tackled short of the line and there is doubt as to whether their movement into in-goal was a continuous one or not.
 - Where a player is tackled short of the goal line and there is doubt as to whether they immediately reach out and scores/grounds a ball.
- All incidents relating to whether a kick has been successful or not.
- All incidents relating to whether a penalty try should be awarded or not.
- All incidents relating to whether a player was in touch or touch in-goal in line with provisions relating to the timeframe within which this is applicable.

○ *Law 10: Offside in Open Play*

- All *Clear and Obvious* offside infringements within two phases leading to a possible try.

○ *Law 11: Knock-On or Throw Forward*

- All *Clear and Obvious* knock-on or throw forward infringements within two phases leading to a possible try.
- All *Clear and Obvious* knock-ons where the on-field team have awarded the scrum to the incorrect team to feed the ball.

○ *Law 15.4 – 15.9: Offside at a Ruck*

- All *Clear and Obvious* offside infringements, specific to “**Joining a Ruck**” within Law, and within two phases leading to a possible try.

- *Law 16.4-16.7: Offside at a Maul*
 - All *Clear and Obvious* offside infringements, specific to “**Offside at a Maul**” and “**Joining a Maul**” as defined within Law, and within two phases leading to a possible try.

- *Law 18.2 – 18.7: Touch, Quick Throw & Lineout*
 - 18.2 – 18.7:
 - All touch or touch in-goal decisions relating to the attacking and defending players. For clarity purposes, this includes whether a ball is in touch or not, and furthermore who should throw the ball in at a lineout.
 - It also includes whether a quick throw is applicable, and whether it has been taken correctly or not.
 - 18.8:
 - All lineout related referrals relating to who should throw the ball in at a lineout, and the mark at which a lineout should take place.
 - 18.30 – 18.36:
 - All *Clear and Obvious* offside infringements as defined within law, and within two phases leading to a possible try.

- *Law 19.27-19.33: Offside at a Scrum:*
 - All *Clear and Obvious* offside infringements, specific to “**Offside at a Scrum**” and as defined within Law, and within two phases leading to a possible try.

- *Law 21: In-Goal:*
 - All items relating to In-Goal for both the attack and the defence, including;
 - Grounding
 - Actions leading to the legal scoring of a try
 - Touch and Touch In-Goal
 - Corner flag post decisions
 - Goal line drop-out restarts

At any stage of the game (i.e., not limited to within two phases prior to a possible scoring of a try) the following items of Law may be referred to the TMO by the TO4, but should be before the start of the next phase of play. It should be within, and relating to, the guiding principles as defined in Section 1.

Law 9: Foul Play

All *Clear and Obvious* acts of Foul Play (excluding **Law 9.19 “Dangerous Play in a Scrum”**) may be referred up until the game restarts (for clarity purposes, this includes a lineout after a Penalty Kick, should footage only become available then) including but not limited to;

- Obstruction (where material affect is determined, and in line with the guiding principle of *Clear and Obvious*).
- Unfair Play & Repeated infringements.
- Dangerous play (where consideration should be given to possible processes contained within additional documents such as the Head Contact Process (HCP) document).
- Cynical play including intentional knock-ons.
- Issuing of Yellow and Red Cards.