



WORLD
RUGBY



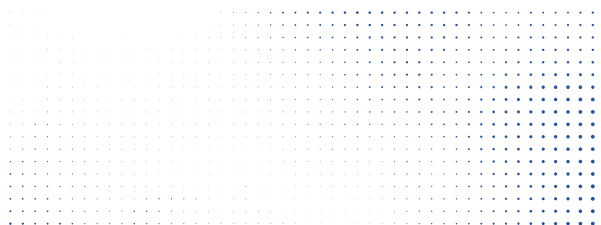
Rugby Match Officials Education & Development Global Mapping Report

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Foreword

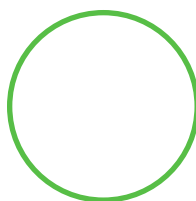
World Rugby is committed to the development of Match Officials in all our member Unions; after all no referee means no game! Following the recent publication of the *Rugby Coaching Qualifications Global Mapping and Equivalency Report* we decided to undertake the same exercise for Match Officials to explore and analyse referee education and development globally.

This comparative study, entitled *Rugby Match Officials Education and Development Global Mapping Project*, is a groundbreaking piece of work as there has never been any previous attempt to map match official education in our member Unions. The Report analyses Match Official education and development pathways in countries where the World Rugby Match Officiating education programme is delivered, and in those countries where the Union has their own qualifications and pathway. It has been interesting to note the role of observation and review of performance on the pitch, alongside formal education and informal learning, in the progression pathways for referees in many countries.

The mapping and equivalency project resulting in this Report was implemented by the European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE) as a trusted external organisation. EOSE is a European Network organisation, specialising in vocational education in the sport and physical activity sector. World Rugby would like to thank EOSE for their work in liaising with the Regional Training Managers and member Unions around the world to compile this Report.

This Report, including the Global Match Official Education Equivalency Table, will aid Unions when dealing with mobility of Match Officials and their respective qualifications and provide a reference point for their continued development – although it should be noted again that progression to the highest levels of officiating is not solely based on formal education in many leading unions.

World Rugby is pleased to provide this guidance document for use by member Unions and Regional Associations.



Jock Peggie

Head of Education,
Laws and Compliance
World Rugby

Acknowledgements

World Rugby and EOSE would like to thank the representatives of the 21 member Unions who actively supported the project by taking part in an online interview and providing supporting documentation about their match officials' progression pathways and education programme. The project would not have been possible without their enthusiasm and commitment.





Executive Summary



Following discussions between World Rugby and EOSE it was decided to include 21 countries in the *Rugby Match Officials Education and Development Global Mapping Project*.

These were divided in to two groups. First, the **“Mapping Countries”** which are those where the member Union offers their own match officials education courses, and those courses could be mapped for equivalency against the World Rugby Match Officials Education Programme.

📌 **Mapping Countries:** Australia, England, France, Italy, Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, Wales

Next, a group of 13 countries were identified which would be referred to as the **“Exploring Countries”**. The 13 Exploring Countries all deliver the World Rugby officiating courses, in some cases using different formats and approaches to meet their specific national context.

📌 **Exploring Countries:** Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, USA.

Following an extensive period of data collection with the 21 member Unions, through online calls and submission of course information to EOSE, the main outcome of the project is the Global Match Officials Education Equivalency Table (see page 9 and reproduced at the end of this summary) which shows the equivalent courses at each level when mapped against the World Rugby match officiating courses. Courses delivered by member Unions who have their own awards are not identical to World Rugby courses but have enough commonalities to give World Rugby and member Unions confidence that holders of these awards have met the competencies of the equivalent World Rugby course.

This report also includes a summary of the World Rugby Match Officials Courses and Accreditations which were used to map against the national programmes from each country where the member Union has their own courses, and which many other member Unions implement at the national level.

A key section of this report is the section titled “Mapping and Equivalency - Key Themes” which explores a range of themes which were uncovered by the work to map and compare match officiating education in each of the 21 countries. First, there is a discussion of the Mapping Countries where the following issues are explored with examples from various countries:

- Match Officiating Frameworks and Pathways
- Role of formal education in match officials' development and progression
- Role of other development activities in match officials' development and progression
- Mapping to World Rugby Level 1
- Mapping to World Rugby Level 2
- Mapping to World Rugby Level 3
- Entry-requirements / pre-requisites
- Introductory courses below Level 1
- Links to World Rugby Courses
- Match Officials' Coach, Tutor, Developer and Educator.

A similar discussion follows of key themes for the Exploring Countries who all deliver the World Rugby courses; the following issues are explored with examples from various countries:

- World Rugby courses
- Focus on Level 3
- Certification
- Timetable and format
- Part of national match officiating framework/ pathway
- Link to national frameworks, Introductory courses (below Level 1)
- Match official progression outside formal education
- Ideas for the future.

This fascinating exploration of similarities and differences will be of interest to all those involved in the delivery of rugby match officiating awards and match officials' pathways at the national and international level.

The final part of this Report features a national summary of the match official pathway and education system in the 21 countries that were included in the project, eight in the Mapping Group and 13 in the Exploring Group.

Global Match Officiating Education Equivalency Table

This table is based on the analysis of match officiating courses and mapping against the World Rugby courses and accreditations.

| | WORLD RUGBY LEVEL 1 | WORLD RUGBY LEVEL 2 | WORLD RUGBY LEVEL 3 |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Australia | Game Facilitator (Introductory Course to Match Officiating) | Community (Officiating Adult Rugby Course) | Performance (Intended to include World Rugby Level 3 Award) |
| England | Introduction to Refereeing | England Rugby Refereeing Award | England Rugby Advanced Match Official Award |
| France | Formation Arbitre Stagiaire Niveau 1 (Trainee Referee Training Level 1) | Formation Arbitre Régional Niveau 2 (Regional Referee Training Level 2) | Formation Arbitre Fédéral Niveau 3 (Federal Referee Level 3 Training) |
| Ireland | IRFU New Referee Course | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 2</i> | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 3</i> |
| Italy | Referee Training Course | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 2</i> | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 3</i> |
| New Zealand | Associate Referee Course | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 2</i> | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 3</i> |
| Scotland | Introduction to Match Officiating | Aspiring Match Official Course | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 3</i> |
| Wales | Referee Level One Course | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 2</i> | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 3</i> |

Note: In most nations, levels of match officiating formal education courses is not the same as the levels and designations of match officials in the game at the national level. All nations have a progression pathway from community to elite/ international level – however this is not always supported at each level by a formal education course and accreditation. Instead, progression pathways up to international level in many nations is based on informal learning, mentoring, experience, and assessed observation of on-pitch performance.



1

Introduction

1.1 • Rationale

Rugby Union is a global sport, played in **over 130 countries across six continents**. World Rugby, based in Dublin, Ireland, is the world governing and law-making body comprising of 132 member Unions affiliated through six regional associations.

Match officials are essential for the sport of rugby to thrive and grow, it is recognised that no match officials = no game. World Rugby is keen to support each member Union and the entire global community in their efforts to recruit, train and retain match officials.

World Rugby serves the global match officiating community in a variety of ways. As a leading international sport federation, it was decided to explore the match officials education and development pathways in a range of member Unions around the globe. The aim of such investigation is to examine the equivalence of match officiating education programmes and enhance transparency and trust between member Unions, as well as to understand the pre-requisites to progression of match officials across the leading nations of the world from community to elite level.

This **Rugby Match Officials Education and Development Global Mapping Report** published in March 2025 is the result of a global study commissioned by World Rugby to research and analyse match officiating education and development pathways worldwide.

This Report can be used by member Unions to benchmark against other nations and learn from others to inform future developments of their own system. It can also serve as the basis for discussion and agreement between nations about the equivalence and acceptance of qualifications gained within other member Unions – including those who have studied within the World Rugby match officiating education programme.

This Report can potentially support the mobility of rugby match officials internationally based on match officiating qualifications. This report will also make it clear that promotion, recognition and achievement as a rugby match official is often based on more than formal education alone – in many countries, progression of match officials from community to elite/ international level is based on informal learning, mentoring, experience, and assessed observations of on-pitch performance, in addition to participation in a formal education programme.

1.2 • Approach/ Methodology

World Rugby approached the **European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE)** as a European Network organisation specialising in workforce development and vocational education in the sport sector to contact member Unions around the world and deliver the mapping project. The project was implemented through the following stages.

Stage 1

Inception

The project began with an inception meeting between **World Rugby and EOSE** to agree the approach and methodology to be applied. It was decided to create two groups of member Unions; first a group of eight countries which would be referred to as the **“Mapping Countries”**. The eight Mapping Countries include all the member Unions who have their own match officiating education system and qualifications.

🌊 **Mapping Countries:** Australia, England, France, Italy, Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, Wales

Next a group of 13 countries was identified and referred to as the **“Exploring Countries”**. The 13 Exploring Countries all deliver the World Rugby match officiating courses and accreditations, in some cases using different formats and approaches to meet their specific national context.

🌊 **Exploring Countries:** Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, USA

Finally, this inception stage involved **informing the Regional Training Managers** about the work and gaining their support to contact member Unions.

Stage 2

Data collection

This stage involved contacting the **21 identified member Unions** and gathering information about how rugby match officiating education operates in their country, using a prepared script for an online interview and requesting supporting documents to be sent by email. This stage also involved the creation of a short summary of match officiating education and development in each country under consideration, resulting in the 21 Match Officials Education and Development Summaries which can be found in this document (pages 44 to 62 for Mapping Countries and pages 63 to 78 for Exploring Countries).

Stage 3

Production of Global Match Officiating Education Equivalency Table

Using the detailed information which was provided by each member Union from the mapping countries, it was possible to create the **Global Match Officiating Education Equivalency Table** which can be found on page 9. This was possible by analysing and comparing key aspects of match officiating courses where they exist as part of an overall match officials development pathway, including content, assessment, duration, pre-requisites and mapping to the competency transcript of the World Rugby Match Officiating Course at Level 1, and at Levels 2 and 3 where relevant. The World Rugby levels and competences were used as a central benchmark to map other countries against – an overview of the World Rugby Match Officiating Courses and Accreditations can be found on page 14 to 31. The evidence for equivalency from each nation was presented to World Rugby and signed off.

Stage 4

Discussion of Key Themes.

The final stage was to produce the discussion of **key themes and comparative analysis** of the main features from rugby match officiating courses from around the world, as well as other aspects of match officials development and progression. This can be found for both the mapping countries and exploring countries on pages 45 to 79.



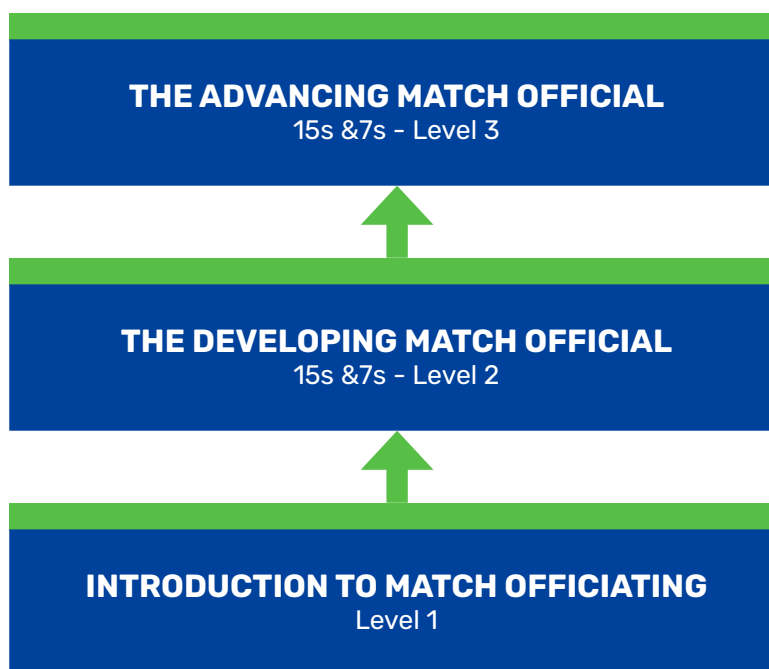


2

World Rugby Match Officiating Courses and Accreditations

World Rugby works in conjunction with its **Regional Associations and member Unions** to deliver a portfolio of attendance/accreditation courses for match officials. World Rugby's face-to-face courses and accreditations are delivered by **a network of Licenced Trainers and Educators**. This network delivers courses on behalf of, and on the approval of, both their member Unions and World Rugby. They are trained, quality assured, and licenced by World Rugby.

The overall structure of the World Rugby match officiating awards can be seen in the following diagram:



These awards can be summarised as follows:

- Introduction to Match Officiating (Level 1). Full-day, non-assessed, attendance-based course which helps the novice referee to referee the basic components of the game in a practical-based environment.
- The Developing Match Official (Level 2). 2-day, competency-based accreditation course which builds on the Level 1 course to help further develop the referee in a practical-based environment.
- The Advancing Match Official (Level 3 15s / Level 3 7s). 4-day, competency based accreditation course.

The following course is also offered by World Rugby:

- Coach of Match Officials. Full-day, competency-based accreditation course which provides an introduction into how to help develop referees.

World Rugby Level 1

Course Title

Introduction to Match Officiating

Course Aims and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of both an online module and the face-to-face course participants should be able to demonstrate basic officiating skills and to officiate aspects of the game in a modified context.

The aim of this course is to introduce the learner to officiating both the Sevens and Fifteens game in a safe, competent, practical and enjoyable manner. This course is an entry level to the World Rugby Match Official Development Pathway.

By the end of the course the learner should be able to:

- Demonstrate safe refereeing
- Referee the technical aspects of the game with accuracy
- Communicate in an effective manner
- Apply the laws in context
- Review own performance as a match official in match scenarios
- Self-reflect on own performance
- Plan to improve own performance and apply to own practice.

Delivery

Firstly, the course uses generic elements to enhance the game knowledge of Match Officials, giving opportunities to discuss principles of the Law and to identify the role of the referee in the game. This section is provided as an online-learning module for the participants to work through before the course.

Secondly, it uses several different modules to explain, demonstrate, practice, perform and analyse officiating skills. This section is delivered in a purely practical way by using game-based officiating scenarios which facilitate explanation, demonstration, and problem solving.

The course is all about the experience of being a referee. Participants use mini-games and officiating scenarios to practice, explain, perform, explain, demonstrate and analyse officiating skills. The course is not about details of Law.

Pre-requisites

Candidates should complete the following online learning modules prior to the face-to-face course where possible:

- 🏉 RugbyReady
- 🏉 Concussion Management for the General Public
- 🏉 Introduction to Match Officiating (pre-level 1).

Assessment

Online Module: When a candidate has finished reading all the sections, there is a test to complete. Upon successful completion of the multiple-choice test, they will be able to download an awareness certificate. It is necessary to complete this test prior to attending the face- to-face course.

Face-to-face component: Non-assessed, attendance based.

Target Group

It is recommended that Learners should be over 14 years of age and have interest in becoming a match official.

Educator/ participant ratio

Educator: Participant ratio should ideally be no more than 1:16, with the course delivered by licenced World Rugby Educators.

Course duration

Online module plus one full day face-to-face (6 hours)





Transcript of Competencies

The L1 Officiating course is a participation programme and therefore does not use a World Rugby competency transcript to assess the participants.

Topics covered in online module:

- Principles of Rugby – Conduct, Spirit, Object of the Game, Contest and continuity
- Principles of the Laws – A Sport for All, Maintaining the Entertainment
- Principles of Attack and Defence – Attack, Defence, Contest for possession
- A Game of many aspects – Rewards and penalties
- Officiating
- Role of the referee
- Referee preparation
- Referee support.

Curriculum guidance for face-to-face component:

- Safety
- Materiality
- Sevens and fifteens
- Positional play
- Technical skills delivered as practical tasks. Inventory of practical tasks:
 - Starting and restarting the game
 - Open play ball in air: The need for space
 - Open play ball in hand: The need for space
 - Contact One to One: The need to contest
 - Contact in groups: The need to contest
 - Why do you need to stop the game?
 - Restart from a scrum
 - Ball in touch
 - Restart with lineout.

World Rugby Level 2

Course Title

The Developing Match Official

Course Aims and Learning Outcomes

To develop officiating skills in a safe and enjoyable manner and to work towards achieving accreditation against a recognised standard.

On successful completion of the course a match official will be able to:

- Demonstrate safe refereeing
- Referee the technical aspects of the Sevens and Fifteens game with accuracy
- Assistant Referee with accuracy
- Communicate in an effective manner
- Apply the laws in context and manage the players appropriately
- Plan and prepare for matches
- Review own performance as a match official
- Self-reflect on own performance
- Plan to improve own performance and apply to own practice.

Delivery

Delivery of the course focuses on:

- Generic elements to enhance the game knowledge of Match Officials, giving opportunities to discuss principles of the Law and identify the role of the referee in the game.
- Modules to explain, demonstrate, practice, perform and analyse officiating skills. This section should be delivered in a mostly practical way by using game-based officiating scenarios which facilitate explanation, demonstration and problem solving.
- Both versions of the game 7s and 15s – making reference to the difference in officiating approach required with key elements of the game.

Throughout the course participants should be provided with multiple opportunities to practice their officiating skills and receive feedback from their peers and the Educator.

Slides and video clips are supplied as additional tools, but where possible, live matches and live practices should be used as preference.

Assessment of their officiating skills in live situations is necessary.

Pre-requisites

- Be actively officiating for minimum of 2 years
- Over 18 years of age
- Online learning modules:
 - Concussion management for the general public
 - RugbyReady
 - Laws of the Game
 - Match Observation Programme.

Assessment

Competency based assessment using formal transcript.

Target Group

Match officials in the club or school context.

The course aims to develop match officials who have already gained some refereeing experience.

Educator/ participant ratio

Educator: Learner ratio should be no more than 1: 8 where possible, with the course delivered by licenced World Rugby Educators.



Course duration

40 notional hours including two/ three days face-to-face course (16 hours).

Module structure

Module One – Principles of Play

Module Two – Refereeing Principles

- The whole referee
- The role of the referee
- Pre- and post-match officiating

Module Three – Continuous Development

- Match and season goals
- Match review
- Match official coaching
- Match official fitness

Module Four – Technical Officiating Competences

- Refereeing foul play
- Refereeing the tackle
- Refereeing the ruck
- Refereeing the maul
- Refereeing the scrum
- Refereeing the lineout
- Refereeing open play
- Refereeing advantage
- Assistant refereeing



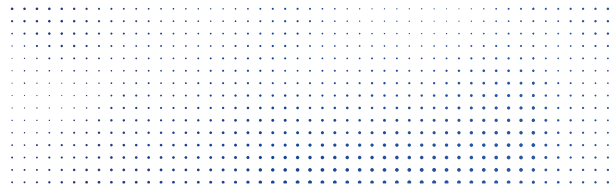
Level 2 Transcript of Competencies

| Competency | Criteria / Standard |
|--|---|
| A. Planning and Preparation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Develops appropriate personal goals for a match and season2. Provides evidence of practice to support personal goals3. Perform a logical and accurate pre-match briefing to teams / players4. Identify and describe the fitness elements for 15s and sevens games |
| B. Game and officiating knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none">5. Identifies and describes the technical aspects of refereeing the scrum6. Identifies and describes the technical aspects of refereeing the lineout7. Identifies and describes the technical aspects of refereeing the breakdown (tackle / ruck / maul)8. Identifies and describes the technical aspects of refereeing space9. Identifies and describes key considerations for positioning10. Identifies and describes the use of advantage law11. Identifies and demonstrates the correct signals to support whistle and verbal communication12. Identifies and describes the roles and responsibilities within the officiating team |
| C. Ethical behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none">13. Demonstrates a high standard of personal behaviour14. Promotes, and operates in accordance with, the values of the game |
| D. Referee and self- reflection | <ul style="list-style-type: none">15. Seeks, and responds positively to, feedback16. Uses statistics and video evidence to support self-reflection17. Writes honest and accurate self-reflections18. Provides a self-reflection report (see competency 20)19. Creates action plan to make changes to own officiating behaviour |
| E. On-field performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">20. Assessed as competent or excellent in all criteria of either 15s or sevens World Rugby Referee Review Competency Report |

Level 2 Technical Competencies

The below technical competencies are also assessed during the course.

| FIFTEENS | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| General Aspects and Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sets high standards of personal behaviour with respect to the principles of refereeing in accordance with the playing charter b. Effective communication of all decisions made using referee signals, vocals and body language c. Follows «Refereeing what matters» and «Clear & Obvious» (Contextual and material Judgements d. Effective management of potential and/or actual conflicts including foul play, including the use of captains e. Effective positioning (ball line running and ball-inside-outside) f. Effective interaction with ARs and other match officials |
| Technical aspects of refereeing | |
| Tackle & Ruck | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effective presence and each tackle & ruck i.e. «being there» to enable preventative communication 2. Ensured tackler(s) released and moved away 3. Ensured tackled player(s) made ball available immediately and move away 4. Ensured players entered the tackle and ruck phase from the correct side and on their feet |
| Maul | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Ensured mauls were formed and ended correctly 6. Ensured players joined the maul correctly |
| Open play | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Ensured all restart kicks were taken correctly & players were onside 8. Ensured 10m space was available at PK & FK 9. Managed off-side players in general play 10. Detected all obvious forward oases and knock-ons 11. Managed offside lines for non-participants at ruck, maul, scrum and lineout |
| Scrum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Indicated the mark and ensured that the appropriate engagement sequence was followed 13. Ensured scrums were stationary, square to touch and player bound correctly 14. Encouraged a fair contest for the ball 15. Managed offside for participants |
| Lineout | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Effectively managed the lineout formation 17. Encouraged a fair contest for the ball 18. Managed across & along lineout offenses |
| Advantage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Applied advantage without undue pressure on the non-offending side and allowed play to continue when the advantage was gained 20. Communicated advantage and advantage over by signal and voice |



| SEVENS | |
|------------------------|---|
| Tackle and Ruck | 1. Ensured tackler(s) released & moved away and tackled player(s) made ball available immediately and moved away 2. Ensured players entered the tackle and ruck phase from the correct side and on their feet 3. Ensured all other areas of the tackle were refereed as per the law |
| Open Play | 4. Managed off-side players and obstructions in general play 5. Detected all obvious forward passes and knock-ons 6. Managed offside lines at ruck, maul, scrum and lineout |
| Scrum | 7. Ensure scrum engagement procedure was followed 8. Ensured scrum feeds were credible |
| Communication | 9. Effective communication of all decisions (including advantage and advantage over) using referee signals, vocals and body language |
| Advantage | 10. Identified and applied advantage without undue pressure on the non-offending side |
| General | 11. Is the standard of refereeing meeting the standard of the tournament |

World Rugby Level 3

Course Title

The Advancing Match Official (Analysis and Preparation for Match Officials)

Course Aims and Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to provide match officials with the skills and knowledge needed to referee senior matches up to and including national level dependent on individual Unions structures and systems.

On successful completion of the course a match official will be able to:

- Demonstrate technical and generic officiating skills at a higher level
- Apply management skills in all elements of officiating
- Use the game principles to develop a game plan relative to officiating aspects of competition
- Develop a team profile (strengths & weaknesses of their team) relative to officiating aspects of competition
- Plan and review the officiating season and use goal-setting strategies
- Plan for physical conditioning, nutrition and competition
- Use key factors analysis for skill improvement
- Demonstrate safe and highly skilled refereeing
- Demonstrate safe and skilled practise as an Assistant Referee (AR)
- Demonstrate high level of knowledge of officiating and the ability to discuss contemporary law issues
- Self-reflect on own performance as a match official using performance review and coaching feedback.

Delivery

Ideally the course should be split into two parts of three days with a three to six-month gap in between to allow the participants to complete tasks and to officiate matches within their union or region.



Pre-requisites

Minimum of three years refereeing experience within your Union.

Candidates should complete the following online learning modules prior to the course where possible:

- 🏉 Rugby Ready
- 🏉 Laws of the game
- 🏉 Keep Rugby Onside
- 🏉 Concussion Management for the General Public
- 🏉 Match Observation Programme.

Assessment

Competency based assessment using formal transcript.

Target Group

Match officials seeking to develop the skills and knowledge needed to referee senior matches up to and including national level dependent on individual Unions structures and systems.

Educator/ participant ratio

Learner ratio should be no more than 1:5 where possible, with the course delivered by licenced World Rugby Educators.

Course duration

100 notional hours. Pre-course online 10 hours, Course work 2x 20 hours, homework and 2 live assessment visits including match review.



Module structure

Module One – On-field performance

- The World Rugby Referee Model
- Performance

Module Two – Current trends in the game

- Refereeing the scrum
- Refereeing the breakdown
- Refereeing the space
- Specialist Workshop by Participants
- Specialist Workshop by Participants

Module Three – Game skills and knowledge

- Dealing with trouble
- Positioning
- Material effect and advantage
- Assistant refereeing

Module Four - Performance analysis

- Referee performance model
- Match statistics
- Performance review
- Coaching
- Self-reflection

Module Five – Planning

- Game planning
- Goal setting
- Self-management
- Physical demands of fifteens

Level 3 Transcript of Competencies

FIFTEENS

| Competency | Criteria / Standard |
|---|--|
| A. Planning | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides a written MO diary for the duration of this program 2. Identifies and describes key elements of the World Rugby referee model 3. Identifies own learning style and applies behavior to personal development 4. Provides a written individual development plan with a set of goals for the next 12 months 5. Identifies best practice examples for nutrition and hydration 6. Provides a written training and recovery plan including a season training fitness schedule 7. Develops a match official game plan for a given match |
| B. Game knowledge and skills | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Identifies and describes current trends refereeing the scrum 9. Identifies and describes current trends refereeing the breakdown 10. Identifies and describes current trends refereeing space 11. Shows awareness of current concepts of positioning (ball line running and ball- inside-outside) 12. Shows awareness of current concepts of advantage, materiality and contextual judgement 13. Uses on-field protocols effectively as an assistant referee and as a referee in a team of three |
| C. Ethical behaviour | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Manages themselves on and off the pitch as a learner and a team player 15. Identifies reasons for dissent and manages incidents effectively |
| D. Performance analysis | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Uses game statistics to evaluate performance 17. Describes the differences between coaching and performance review 18. Develops an action plan for specific performance criteria 19. Delivers and facilitates a specialist workshop in a chosen area including use of video evidence, key factor analysis and trend identification 20. Self-reflects honestly and with technical accuracy |
| E. On-field performance | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. General aspects and management 22. Tackle and ruck 23. Space 24. Scrum 25. Lineout 26. Advantage 27. Team of three |

Level 3 Transcript of Competencies

SEVENS

| Competency | Criteria / Standard |
|---|--|
| A. Planning | 1. Provides a written MO diary for the duration of this program 2. Identifies and describes key elements of the World Rugby referee model 3. Identifies own learning style and applies behavior to personal development 4. Provides a written individual development plan with a set of goals for the next 12 months 5. Provides a written training and recovery plan including a season training fitness schedule 6. Develops a match official game plan for a given match |
| B. Game knowledge and skills | 7. Identifies and describes current trends refereeing the scrum 8. Identifies and describes current trends refereeing the breakdown 9. Identifies and describes current trends refereeing space 10. Shows awareness of current concepts of positioning (ball line running and ball-inside-outside) 11. Shows awareness of current concepts of advantage, materiality and contextual judgement 12. Uses on-field protocols effectively as an assistant referee and as a referee in a team of three |
| C. Ethical behaviour | 13. Manages themselves on and off the pitch as a learner and a team player 14. Identifies reasons for dissent and manages incidents effectively |
| D. Performance analysis | 15. Analyses own refereeing performance with technical accuracy 16. Challenges own refereeing performance in the context of the match / game situation 17. Uses game statistics to evaluate performance 18. Self-reflects honestly and with technical accuracy 19. Develops an action plan for specific performance criteria |
| E. On-field performance | 20. General aspects and management 21. Tackle and ruck 22. Space 23. Advantage and context refereeing 24. Team of five |

Level 3 Technical Competencies

The below technical competencies are also assessed during the course.

| | |
|--|---|
| General Aspects and Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sets a high standard of personal behaviour with respect to the principles of refereeing in accordance with the playing charter b. Effective communication of all decisions made using referee signals, vocals and body language c. Follows "Refereeing what matters" and "Clear and obvious" (Contextual and material judgements) d. Effective management of potential and/ or actual conflicts including foul play, including use of captains e. Effective positioning (ball line running and ball-inside-outside) f. Effective interaction with Ars and other match officials |
| Technical aspects of refereeing | |
| Tackle & Ruck | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effective presence at each tackle and ruck 2. Ensured tackler(s) released and 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 |
| Maul | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Ensured mauls were formed and ended correctly 6. Ensured players joined the maul correctly |
| Open play | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Ensured all restart kicks were taken correctly and players were onside 8. Ensured 10m space was available at PK & FK 9. Managed off-side 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 |
| Scrum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Indicated the mark and ensured that the appropriate engagement sequence was followed 13. Ensured scrums were stationary, square to touch and players bound correctly 14. Encouraged a fair contest for the ball 15. Managed offside for participants |
| Lineout | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Effectively managed the lineout formation 17. Encouraged a fair contest for the ball 18. Manage across & along lineout offences |
| Advantage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Applied advantage without undue pressure on the non-offending side and allowed play to continue when the advantage was gained 20. Communicated advantage and advantage over by signal and voice |



Coach of match officials course

World Rugby also includes a “Coach of match officials” (CMO) course in its portfolio of match officials courses.

The purpose of this accreditation course is to develop coaches of match officials with technical and generic skills to plan, facilitate and review coaching of match officials over time.

Pre-requisites for the CMO course are:

- Laws of the game
- Concussion Management for the General Public
- Introduction to Coaching
- Match Observation Programme.

Coaches of match officials hold a position of genuine influence over match official development and ultimately the players’ safety and game enjoyment.

This course is for individuals with knowledge and experience of the game who wish to support the development of match officials and have an active involvement in coaching match officials.

This CMO course aims to build on the knowledge and skills participants will bring to the course. The course is delivered using three different modules to explain, demonstrate, practice, perform and analyse coaching skills. These modules are:

- Module 1 - Values and beliefs
- Module 2 – Review of Performance
- Module 3 – Support strategies and task design.



3

Global Match Officiating Education Equivalency Table

Global Match Officiating Education Equivalency Table

This table is based on the analysis of match officiating courses and mapping against the World Rugby courses and accreditations.

| | WORLD RUGBY LEVEL 1 | WORLD RUGBY LEVEL 2 | WORLD RUGBY LEVEL 3 |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Australia | Game Facilitator (Introductory Course to Match Officiating) | Community (Officiating Adult Rugby Course) | Performance (Intended to include World Rugby Level 3 Award) |
| England | Introduction to Refereeing | England Rugby Refereeing Award | England Rugby Advanced Match Official Award |
| France | Formation Arbitre Stagiaire Niveau 1 (Trainee Referee Training Level 1) | Formation Arbitre Régional Niveau 2 (Regional Referee Training Level 2) | Formation Arbitre Fédéral Niveau 3 (Federal Referee Level 3 Training) |
| Ireland | IRFU New Referee Course | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 2</i> | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 3</i> |
| Italy | Referee Training Course | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 2</i> | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 3</i> |
| New Zealand | Associate Referee Course | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 2</i> | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 3</i> |
| Scotland | Introduction to Match Officiating | Aspiring Match Official Course | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 3</i> |
| Wales | Referee Level One Course | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 2</i> | <i>No direct equivalent course to World Rugby Level 3</i> |

Note: In most nations, levels of match officiating formal education courses is not the same as the levels and designations of match officials in the game at the national level. All nations have a progression pathway from community to elite/ international level – however this is not always supported at each level by a formal education course and accreditation. Instead, progression pathways up to international level in many nations is based on informal learning, mentoring, experience, and assessed observation of on-pitch performance.



4

Mapping and Equivalence Key Themes

Part 1: Discussion of Mapping Countries (8 nations)

Introduction

As part of this study, the match officiating education and development pathways of the member Unions of the following countries were analysed and where formal education courses exist, they were compared against the World Rugby match officiating courses and accreditations (these are the nations who do not use the World Rugby courses).

Australia, England, France, Italy, Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, Wales.

The main result of the analysis is the table of equivalent courses contained above on page 32. To support the mapping of formal education courses and understand the wider development pathways in each country, information was gathered from each member Union:

In relation to formal education courses:

- Purpose / aim of formal courses
- Main course objectives / learning outcomes
- Entry requirements
- Course duration
- Content / syllabus – knowledge and skill components
- Assessment criteria
- Educator / participant ratio
- Tutor / Educator criteria
- Link to national frameworks
- Introductory and higher-level courses where they exist.

And in relation to wider development activities in support of national match officials pathways:

- Structure of levels for referee development at the national level
- Role of refereeing societies and mentoring/ experience
- Informal learning related to progression pathways
- Progression based on assessed observation of on-pitch performance.

Following analysis of these aspects, it is interesting to discuss some key themes and areas of commonality and difference between the education and development pathways for match officials across the different nations.

Key themes for discussion

Note: for each theme discussed, the intention is not to describe the situation in every country, but to give examples and give an overall impression of practice related to each theme around the world.

— Match Officiating Frameworks and Pathways

In **Australia** there is a Community Match Official Framework which supports investment in the capacity and capability of match officials across three levels: Game Facilitator, Community and Performance.

In **England**, progression as a referee is linked to the three main education courses which closely align with the match official courses from World Rugby.

In **France** the match officials' pathway extends from a status known as ACF which translates as "Referee in Training" and progresses through the ranks of Trainee Referee, Territorial Referee, Pre-Federal Referee, and Federal Referee. The Federal Referee level includes progression to 3rd federal division to the highest (international) level.

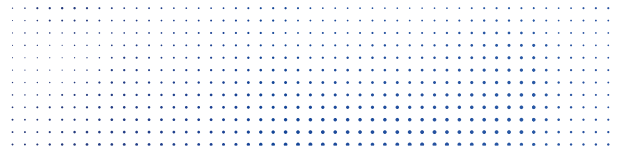
In **Italy** there are five main levels in the Referee Progression Chart, beginning with Trainee Referee and progressing through Active Referee, Development Panel (Serie C), Serie B, and Serie A, with this final level divided into referees of the 2nd Division and the Main National Championship.

In **Ireland** there are six main levels in the IRFU refereeing pathway, with progression from Trainee Referee through four levels (Levels 1,2,3,4) and culminating in High Performance referees operating in the Professional Game.

In **New Zealand** NZR are currently developing a Community Rugby Referee Development Framework. For referees this has four roles: Community (divided into five sub-levels); Development; Performance; and High Performance.

In **Scotland** there is a system of categories for rugby referees with seven categories with Category 1 being the highest. Categories 7, 6 and 5 operate at regional society level, with referees at Category 5 being able to be nominated and invited on to the national panel, this can facilitate transition to Category 4, and above which covers the men's national game.

In **Wales** there are three main levels of referee, with level 3, which contains 9 grades within it, being the highest. A performance pathway also exists in Wales for elite referees above Level 3.



— Role of formal education in match officials' development and progression

Education plays a crucial role in all the match official frameworks and pathways outlined above. However, the extent to which formal, compulsory education forms a part of referee progression differs between nations. This can be seen clearly in the Global Match Officiating Education Equivalency Table on page 32.

England, France, and Australia all have at least three levels of compulsory education which is a requirement of progression through the levels of referee development in those countries.

Other countries such as **Wales, Ireland, Italy, and New Zealand** have a mandatory education course at the entry level, with progression through the levels of referee development in those countries then being based on other factors other than mandatory education (see next section).

— Role of other development activities in match officials' development and progression

Development activities for match officials other than formal education is prevalent in most of the Mapping Countries in this study.

In **Australia** for example, at the Performance level, while it is intended to include the World Rugby Level 3 certification, it also involves national pathway webinars, on-field development, individual season plans, MO Developer interaction, and physical training.

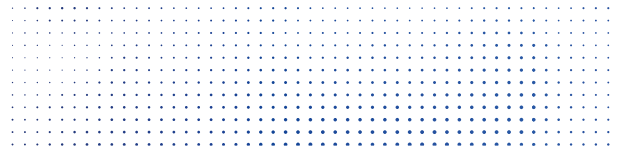
England embed webinars, e-learning, communities of practice, networking sessions, and practical observations alongside the formal education courses across three levels. In the same way, France utilises on-field assessments, physical tests, and technical meetings in conjunction with their formal educational courses. Italy embeds a mentoring programme, on-pitch evaluations and workshops into their development pathways.

In **Ireland**, referees move up the levels based on on-pitch evaluations and reports considered by referee branches in each Province, workshops are organised regularly throughout the season to help improve refereeing standards across all levels of the game.

In **New Zealand**, beyond the basic level, training and education for referees is delivered on a topic-by-topic basis, and not through formal mandatory courses. Self-assessment and game observation by a MO coach observer is carried out on a continual basis.

In **Scotland** a key feature of the development system is the six referee societies supporting recruitment, development and deployment of referees within their region.

In **Wales** the WRU has developed an educational pathway for referees through formal, non-formal courses and continuous professional development sessions. They have also developed a digital platform that supports the referee through videos and best practice, and a mentoring process that supports the development of the referee.



Mapping to World Rugby Level 1

At this level each of the eight Mapping Countries have an award that can be seen as equivalent to the World Rugby Level 1, this is seen in the equivalency table as follows:

| WORLD RUGBY LEVEL 1 | |
|---------------------|---|
| Australia | Game Facilitator (Introductory Course to Match Officiating) |
| England | Introduction to Refereeing |
| France | Formation Arbitre Stagiaire Niveau 1 (Trainee Referee Training Level 1) |
| Ireland | IRFU New Referee Course |
| Italy | Referee Training Course |
| New Zealand | Associate Referee Course |
| Scotland | Introduction to Match Officiating |
| Wales | Referee Level One Course |

These courses have different formats and assessments, but all can provide a solid introduction and base level of competence for the first level match official.

In **England** the six-hour blended learning course provides development and learning around refereeing Rugby Union safely and effectively. The **French** course equivalent to World Rugby Level 1 is composed of ten modules of two hours with an exam at the end of the course. The **Italian** Referee Training Course at this level is 16 hours covering safety, rules and communication. In **Ireland, Scotland and New Zealand** the WR Level 1 equivalent courses are around half a day in length for in-person training and cover the essential core topics for this level. In **Wales** the Level 1 course is made up of one evening of studying theory and one day practical delivery, it aims to equip candidates with the skills and confidence to be able to referee the game.

Mapping to World Rugby Level 2

There are fewer courses from the Mapping Countries which have been deemed to be equivalent to World Rugby Level 2. These are as follows:

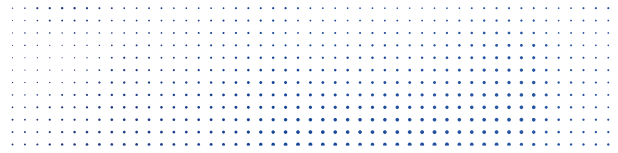
| WORLD RUGBY LEVEL 2 | |
|---------------------|---|
| Australia | Community (Officiating Adult Rugby Course) |
| England | England Rugby Refereeing Award |
| France | Formation Arbitre Régional Niveau 2 (Regional Referee Training Level 2) |
| Scotland | Aspiring Match Official Course |

At this level the **England** Rugby Refereeing Award is run over two days and four webinars, each followed by a community of practice, which supports learning from the webinar. Covering all aspects of the game, the course considers how to simplify refereeing by using “processes”, how to communicate decisions effectively and how to ultimately be safe in all aspects of the game. The **French** course at this level is made up of 10 modules of two hours. In **Scotland** the Aspiring Match Official Course has been developed to be equivalent to World Rugby Level 2. It is a two-day course, and particular focus is on decision making processes. It covers all aspects of the game including positioning, tackle, ruck/maul, scrum, lineout, advantage, and communication, as well as refereeing philosophy, strength and conditioning, live refereeing. The **Australian** Officiating Adult Rugby Course embeds on-field assessment and is designed to be equivalent to World Rugby Level 2.

Mapping to World Rugby Level 3

| WORLD RUGBY LEVEL 3 | |
|---------------------|---|
| Australia | Performance (Intended to include World Rugby Level 3 Award) |
| England | England Rugby Advanced Match Official Award |
| France | Formation Arbitre Fédéral Niveau 3 (Federal Referee Level 3 Training) |

Australia intends to include the World Rugby Level 3 award at their Performance level, alongside other developmental activities. **France** has a further 20 hours of learning at this level with an exam, for referees who obtained rank of regional referee and who wish to obtain rank of federal referee. The **England** Rugby Advanced Match Official Award is a four-day course which fully maps to World Rugby Level 3. Other nations do not have a directly equivalent formal education award at the level of World Rugby Level 3.



— Entry-requirements / pre-requisites

In most nations there are some pre-requisites or pre-course requirements to be completed before someone embarks on their journey in referee education and on-field practice. In **Australia** the Rugby Australia Smart Rugby course is the minimum requirement and pre-requisite to all referee levels. To become an Affiliate Referee in **Ireland** the World Rugby Laws of the Game and Concussion Awareness online modules must be completed, as well as the online IRFU Affiliate Referee Course. In **New Zealand** all registered referees must do the NZR Rugby Smart Course, this is a safety and injury prevention course which covers scrum, tackle, ruck, head knocks/concussion, and warm up.

— Introductory courses below Level 1

The entry level course in **France** below the level of World Rugby Level 1 is called Arbitre en Cours de Formation (Referee in Training Course) and is made up of four modules of 2 hours for anyone wishing to start refereeing from 14 years old. In **Ireland** there is an Affiliate Referee Course below level 1 which is for adults to become qualified to referee matches involving a club or school to which they are affiliated. In **New Zealand** NZR run an Associate Referee Course which is a three-hour introduction to refereeing course - it is designed for club and secondary school people who are not registered referees but are a resource that can be used to referee if for whatever reason an official referee cannot be appointed to a fixture. In **Scotland**, Scottish Rugby offer a Mini Rugby Referee course as an entry level programme aimed at those who referee / game coach mini rugby festivals, up to primary seven age group (age 11/12).

— Links to World Rugby Courses

In **Australia**, Rugby Australia intend to offer the World Rugby Level 3 as part of their Performance level. In **France**, FFR sometimes offer World Rugby awards for referees in overseas territories which are affiliated to France. All other nations in the Mapping group for this study have their own suite of match official education and development activities.

— Match Officials' Coach, Tutor, Developer and Educator

All nations have a workforce of match officials' coaches, tutors, developers and educators. Some examples include the following:

Rugby **Australia** has a Match Official Developer Framework. This includes a mentor programme, which is a replica of the World Rugby Coach of Match Officials Programme; Level 1 Developer; Level 2 Developer; and is currently building the Level 3. **France** has an award called Formation Formateur de Secteurs for referee trainers. In **Italy**, FIR is constantly selecting National coaches and educators from former referees and/or other professional profiles. Monthly dedicated classes are run to improve skills, knowledge and competencies while tutors usually start their mission at provincial level. In **Ireland**, the IRFU refereeing department works to further develop evaluators and referee coaches - new referee educator course is in development. In **New Zealand**, NZR is developing courses for Referee Reviewers and Referee Coaches at the national level. There is also an intention to run the World Rugby Referee Coach course.

Part 2: Discussion of Exploring Countries (13 nations)

Introduction

Exploring countries in this study were those who are delivering the World Rugby education programme and deliver World Rugby match officiating courses at levels 1, 2 or 3. The aim was to explore how they are being implemented and any similarities and differences in the delivery models. As part of this study, the ways in which the World Rugby suite of match officials' education courses are delivered in the following countries were analysed:

Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, USA.

Key themes for discussion

Note: for each theme discussed, the intention is not to describe the situation in every country, but to give examples and give an overall impression of practice related to each theme around the world.

World Rugby Courses

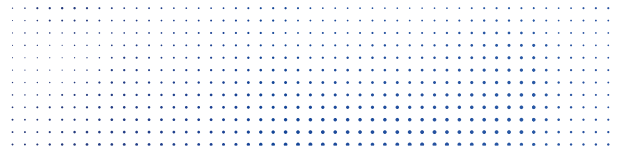
Most of the countries in the Exploring Group offer World Rugby Levels 1 and 2 match officiating courses – in several countries delivery is mostly restricted to Level 1. In **Sweden** only the Level 1 is offered, while in **Canada** the full suite of World Rugby awards at Levels 1, 2 and 3 is delivered.

Where the national market is limited for Level 2 some collaborations can be seen across countries, such as reported by the federations in Denmark and Sweden who collaborate through the Nordic regional hub of Rugby Europe for delivery of Level 2.

Focus on Level 3

In **Belgium** at Level 3, the course is delivered at the national level with the process for nomination to Level 3 being via Rugby Europe and the course being run as a regional course supported by international educators from World Rugby.

Indeed, progression to Level 3 for match officials in most of the Exploring Group countries is through regional courses organised by World Rugby at the regional level. This is the case for **Germany** where any referee who holds the World Rugby Level 2 can be nominated to attend a regional World Rugby Level 3 award organised by Rugby Europe. This is the same for **Luxembourg and Netherlands**.



In **Portugal** there is a national Level 3 award, which is different to World Rugby Level 3, holders of this award can be nominated to the regional World Rugby Level 3. A similar situation exists in **Spain** where they have a national Level 4 award taught in the federal structure which would be similar in level to World Rugby level 3 but is not regarded as equivalent. The Spanish federation will nominate referees who have completed the Spanish Level 4 to undertake the World Rugby Level 3 course, which is run at the regional level in Europe through Rugby Europe.

— Certification

Some countries such as **Argentina** issue two certificates to successful candidates from World Rugby courses, one from World Rugby and one from the national federation. This is also the case in the **Netherlands** where a certificate from the national federation is issued linked to the National Qualifications Framework in addition to the World Rugby certificate. There are also examples of countries who only issue the World Rugby certificate, such as is the case in **Germany**.

— Timetable and format

In most countries the standard delivery format of World Rugby is used – Level 1 over one day etc. One exception is **Argentina** where Level 1 is delivered through two-hour modules over several days, 100% attendance is still required.

Rugby **Netherlands** has implemented a new requirement for Level 1 certification: candidates must officiate a match as a referee, which can be at the U12 level or above, as part of the qualification process. Following this, candidates are required to submit a reflection on their first match (minimum of 20 minutes).

— Part of national match officiating framework/ pathway

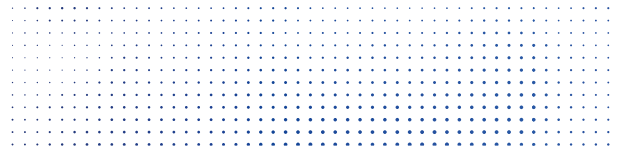
In several countries, including **Argentina, Denmark, Luxembourg, South Africa, Sweden, and USA** the World Rugby match official awards are offered in their own right without any links to a wider match officials education pathway. Countries where World Rugby awards are embedded into a wider match officials education pathway include:

Germany, where the Rugby Deutschland Referee Pathway is made up of four levels: “D”, “C”, “B”, “A”. World Rugby Level 1 is included in the “C” level known as Regional Referee. Referees who have obtained the B license can enrol on to World Rugby Level 2 award and join what is known as the Development Group.

In **Japan**, The JRFU has five levels of rugby referee:

- Start Referee
- Mini Rugby Referee (MRR)
- C -grade Referee
- B -grade Referee
- A -grade Referee

Referees need to complete the World Rugby Level 1 course to be a JRFU B referee, and World Rugby Level 2 to be a JRFU A referee.



In **Portugal** there are three grades of referee: Formação (beginners), Desenvolvimento (development) and Avançado (elite). To become a registered referee, it is necessary to complete the World Rugby Level 1, the referee can then begin on the referee pathway.

Spain has a four-level rugby referee education system. Spanish Level 2 is linked to World Rugby Level 1 with a longer course length of 12 hours. Spanish Level 3 is linked to the World Rugby Level 2 curriculum. Spanish Level 4 is taught within the federal structure which is linked to national competitions (1st and 2nd division, men's and women's).

— Link to national frameworks

In the field of match officiating, it is less common than in the field of coaching for the delivery of courses to be linked to a framework from a national sporting body or a National Qualifications Framework. One exception is the **Netherlands** where a Rugby Netherlands certificate linked to the National Qualifications Framework of the Netherlands (NLQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is issued. Some content is added at each level from the national context to ensure the courses are in line with the national structure.

— Introductory courses (below Level 1)

In **Denmark**, the DRU has its own Kids First game manager course, which is a short course for parents, youth coaches and other leaders. Those who have completed this course can operate as a game manager (match official) for Under-8s to Under-16s.

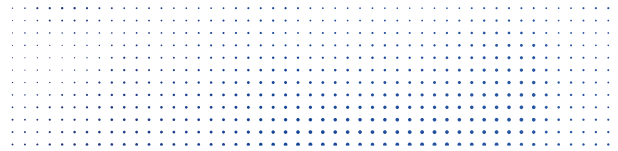
In **Germany**, the D level, "Jugend Referee" includes an introduction to refereeing half day national course aimed at parents and youth players interested in refereeing junior or children's rugby.

In **Japan**, Start Referee is a qualification given to those who wish to become rugby referees. Those who have obtained this qualification will be able to act as a touch judge in official matches hosted by associations, and as a referee in non-contact rugby (such as tag rugby). The JRFU Start Referee Course is conducted through e-learning. The duration is approximately 90 minutes.

In **Luxembourg**, the federation has built a small step below the level of World Rugby Level 1. This is a three-hour workshop linked to adapted domestic schools competitions, and the workshop covers management of the game which includes the role of the trainer and role of the official.

In the **Netherlands**, Rugby Netherlands has its own awards for Game Coach Under 12s.

In **Spain**, the Spanish Level 1 is at a level below World Rugby Level 1 and is linked to the under-12 competitions and the training regulations for these categories (M6, M8, M10 and M12), and has a regional federation qualification. These are four-hour courses.



— Match official progression outside formal education

In the same way as the Mapping Countries in this study, many of the Exploring Countries have systems and processes for the progression of match officials through the various levels of the game outside of formal education, this can include assessed observation on the pitch, experience, informal CPD and networking. Examples include the following.

In **Canada** there are mandatory e-learning courses and certification via completion of transcript through observation. An example from **Germany** stipulates that advancement to the Development Group is by invitation and referees must have three years or 30 matches of experience at the Bundesliga level. In **Japan**, recognition at each level is awarded to those who have acquired the knowledge and skills appropriate for the qualification for that level and is also based on the results of training sessions and practical tests. In **Portugal** progression through the three Portuguese grades of referee is based on formal education through World Rugby courses but also observation on the pitch, where beginner referees can be observed and monitored.

— Ideas for the future

Examples of potential future initiatives include the federation in **Sweden** who would like to see a standardised match officials CPD system developed by World Rugby, including online modules. In **South Africa** there is a will to move to the development and delivery of a national suite of referee certifications.



5

Mapping Countries Match Officiating Education and Development Summaries

• Australia



Australian Rugby Union

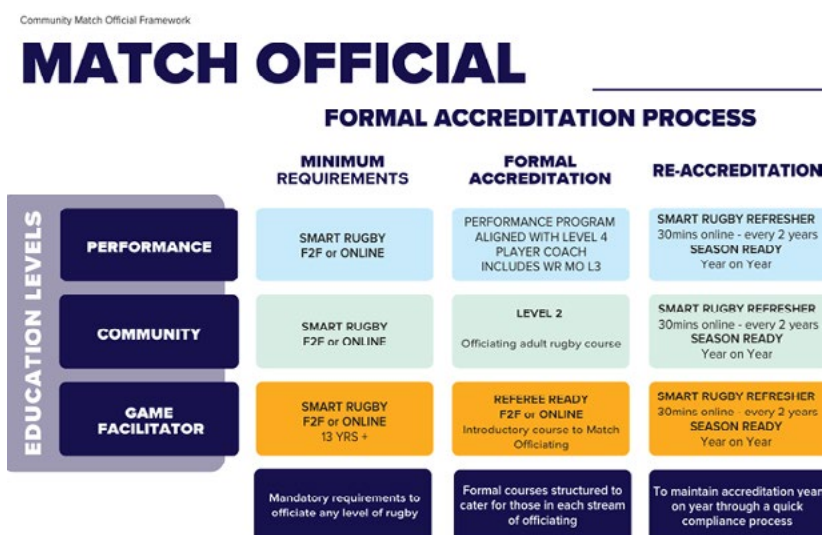
Rugby Australia have in place a Community Match Official Framework which aims to facilitate a stronger connection between match officials and key stakeholders within the game and invest in their capacity and capability.

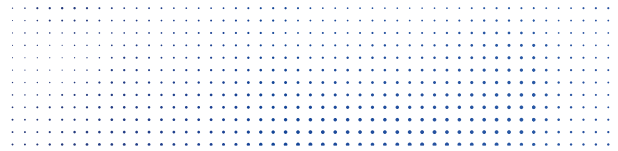
As part of the Framework, Rugby Australia is building an education and training framework that places the referee at the forefront of their development and is designing national learning opportunities through accessible delivery.

Rugby Australia defines three levels in the community game as:

- Game facilitator - Match Officials who are starting their MO journey. The focus is on safety, laws and how these are applied within the spirit and level of the game
- Community - Match officials who are regularly refereeing community participation rugby. These MOs are facilitating the laws, safety and frameworks with relevance in game
- Performance - Performing the role within a pathway or premier environment. Delivering sound game understanding and management through emotional intelligence and authenticity.

These levels appear in the Rugby Australia Referee Accreditation pathway as follows:





The Rugby Australia Smart Rugby course is the minimum requirement and pre-requisite to all referee levels.

The Game Facilitator level is achieved through gaining a Referee Ready course (Introductory Course to Match Officiating) or Game Facilitator CPD plus on-field assessment. This results in RA Level 1 Referee Accreditation and is equivalent to World Rugby Level 1.

The Community level is achieved through a face-to-face course (Officiating Adult Rugby Course), CPD or hybrid course plus on-field assessment. This results in RA Level 2 Referee Accreditation and is equivalent to World Rugby Level 2.

It is intended for the Performance level to include the World Rugby Level 3 certification. It involves National Pathway Webinars, On-Field Development, Individual Season Plan, MO Developer Interaction and Physical Training.

A detailed syllabus of content exists for each of the three levels.

Rugby Australia also has a Match Official Developer Framework. This includes a mentor programme, which is a replica of the World Rugby Match Observer Programme; Level 1 Developer; Level 2 Developer; and is currently building the Level 3. These are equivalent to the World Rugby Levels 1, 2 and 3.

The frameworks as described above will come into effect in the final quarter of 2024.

• England



Rugby Football Union (RFU)

The England Rugby refereeing courses are delivered across three levels, which closely align with the match official courses from World Rugby.

The three main courses can be summarised as follows:

— England Rugby Introduction to Refereeing

The England Rugby Introduction to Refereeing course provides development and learning around refereeing Rugby Union safely and effectively. In this six-hour course, candidates learn the basics of how to referee elements of the game and how to communicate effectively with players, coaches and volunteers, to ensure that everyone involved is playing in a safe and enjoyable environment.

With three hours online learning and three hours face-to-face learning, this blended approach allows candidates to learn from home whilst being able to put into practice refereeing skills in the face-to-face session. Courses are run by RFU Educators.

The course involves practical application of theory for candidates to demonstrate the principles of refereeing – SELL (Safe, Equitable/Enjoyment, Learning & Laws).

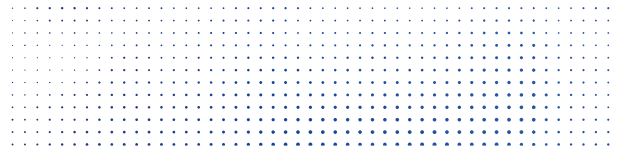
— England Rugby Refereeing Award

The England Rugby Refereeing award is a Level 2 qualification and is a competency-based qualification providing the knowledge, skills, and attributes to referee young players and adults safely and effectively. Covering all aspects of the game, the course considers how to simplify refereeing by using “processes”, how to communicate decisions effectively and how to ultimately be safe in all aspects of the game.

The format of the course involves two face-to face days, with several webinars and networking sessions in-between. The England Rugby Refereeing award looks to develop candidates in a practical based environment, providing blended learning.

This is a competency-based course. Two days delivery interspersed with four webinars, each followed by a community of practice, which supports learning from the webinar.

Activities on the course include effective communication, refereeing the contact area, refereeing the set piece, refereeing kicks, delivering sanctions, materiality and advantage, practical refereeing.



England Rugby Advanced Match Official Award

The England Rugby Advanced Match Official Award at Level 3 is a competency-based assessment course run over four days face-to-face, supplemented by webinars and e-learning and incorporating practical observations and community of practice events.

The programme is aimed at active match officials who have completed the England Rugby Referee Award (or equivalent) and wish to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to officiating Rugby Union. The aim being to develop the individual through four main components: Level 3 Match Officiating Qualification, Sport Science, Practical Officiating and Supporting others.

This is a season long programme, completing various modules. Once the candidate has completed the workbook/evidence to the required standards, they are invited to attend a final in-person presentation.

Modules of the course include Principles of refereeing, core values, developing match officials, communication, game management, foul play, team of three, breakdown, scrum, lineout & maul, space.

• France



Fédération Française de Rugby

The FFR Match Officials National Direction (DNOM) has implemented a national training plan. The aim is to offer uniform training according to the level of experience of the referees. Training for referees in France is ongoing regardless of the referee's level. It is carried out in person (indoor and outdoor) and remotely.

Referees regularly have supervisors visit to observe matches. Supervisors have the mission of evaluating the performance of referees, this evaluation then being used for possible promotions, or demotions.

The referee education programme in France begins with a status called ACF, "Referee in Training". This ACF then attends training in their League before being validated to direct their first matches. At the end of their first season, the referee has to pass the Level 1 exam which gives the rank of trainee referee (AN1), otherwise he is not allowed to officiate anymore (ACF is a temporary status valid for the first season only).

The programme will then lead the referee to the rank of Territorial Referee (AN2) which will be acquired after passing the Level 2 exam. The referee can then become a Pre-Federal Referee (AN3), again after passing the Level 3 exam. These different stages of the programme are punctuated by refereeing matches, field assessments, passing physical tests, and technical meetings.

The Level 3 referee (pre-federal) can then be presented by their League Refereeing Director (DAL) to the Level 4 training. Successful completion of Level 4 allows the achievement of the rank of Federal Referee (AN4). Obtaining this Level 4 allows a referee to officiate during federal level matches, if the referee's performance level meets specific performance criteria, starting with 3rd Federal Division. Then the referee will progress from this 3rd federal division to the highest level (international) if their performances are in line with these different levels (3rd Federal Division then 2nd Federal Division then 1st Federal Division then Nationale 2 then Nationale then PRO D2 then TOP 14 then International). These different evolutions are validated by different structures, DAL up to 2nd Federal Division then DNOM up to Nationale then High-Performance Cell up to Top 14 and by World Rugby (international federation) for the international level.



The following training courses are available for match officials in France:

— Referee in Training Course (Arbitre en Cours de Formation)

- For anyone wishing to start refereeing activity (from 14 years old).
- Four modules of two hours.
- Goals: learn basic essentials related to safety of players, administrative rules, laws of the game.

— Trainee Referee Training Level 1 (Formation Arbitre Stagiaire Niveau 1)

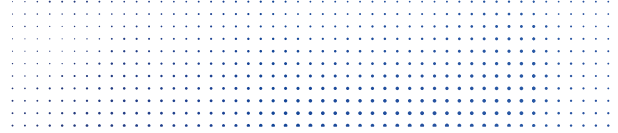
- For referees who have the Referee in Training course and wish to become a trainee referee or stay at Level 1 as part of continuing education. Holders of Referee in Training course are obliged to become a trainee referee at end of first season of refereeing.
- Ten modules of two hours, two seminars (start and mid-season) exam at end of course after continuous assessment approval.
- Goals: learn basic rules of the game, introduction to game knowledge, administration, match management, position on the field.

— Regional Referee Training Level 2 (Formation Arbitre Régional Niveau 2)

- For trainee referees who wish to become a regional (county) referee or stay at Level 2 as part of continuing education.
- Ten modules of two hours, two seminars (start and mid-season) exam at end of course after continuous assessment approval.
- Goals: Learn rules of the game, game knowledge, match management, role of assistant referee, position on the field.

— Pre-Federal Referee Level 3 Training (Formation Arbitre Pre-Fédéral Niveau 3)

- For referees who obtained rank of pre-federal referee, who wish to obtain rank of federal referee, are DAL referred and can boast at least 4 games at the highest county level.
- 9 refereeing in practice 2-hour video sessions, 3 seminars (start, mid-season, pre-exam) exam at end of course after continuous assessment approval.
- Goals: Learn rules of the game and guidelines, interventions on game knowledge and match management, duties of assistant referees, placement and movement.



— Coached Federal Referee Training (Formation Arbitre Fédéral Coaché)

- For high ranking and high-potential referees
- Individualised training
- Goals: improving referee skills on the field through coaching; long-term work plan, video work, skills development.

— Assistant Referee Training (Formation Arbitre Assistant)

- For ranked assistant referees (1st Federal Division to Top 14) by the DNOM and/or the High-Performance Cell at the start of each season
- Four one-day courses
- Goals: develop assistant referee skills on the field, team of three, video assignments.

— Video Referee Training (Formation Arbitre Vidéo)

- For ranked video referees (Pro D2 and Top 14) by the DNOM and the High-Performance Cell at the start of each season
- One day per month
- Goals: Improving the performance of assistant referees on the field and increasing their skill.

— Rugby 7 Referee Training (Formation Arbitre Rugby à 7)

- For referees wishing to officiate during rugby 7s tournaments
- Two-hour course, continuous training and assessment throughout the season by the Sevens Development Cell
- Goals: learn rules and specific guidelines for rugby 7s, role of 7s assistant referee, placement and movement.

— Area Educator Training (Formation Formateur de Secteurs)

- For referee trainers
- Delivered throughout the season
- Goals: to improve referee skills by being trained to lead face-to-face educational training sessions with referees of all levels.



Federazione Italiana Rugby (FIR)

Referee progression in Italian rugby can be described through the following seven levels and activities:

1. Trainee Referee

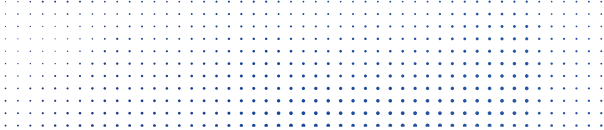
To become a Trainee Referee the candidate must attend a two-day course “Referee Training Course” (16hrs) at Provence Level. This course is open to all with no age limits (minimum 15 years old). It is not necessary to have previous rugby experience. The objectives of this entry level course are to provide basic concepts of the three key areas: Safety - Rules of the Game - Communication. If the candidate passes the final exam, along with a certificate of competition of the World Rugby Concussion Training and appropriate doctor’s note, they are registered to the regional list of available referees and can participate at the weekly meetings with the local (provincial) referee group where a regional tutor-trainer provides guidance and direction to the group.

At this level the referee can also be a player or Coach or member of any Rugby Club/ Team and can officiate only Juniors Regional Games and only under the supervision of a regional Tutor, Coach, Selector or Educator.

Active Referee

After two seasons of activity as Trainee Referee, the Local Regional Referee Manager, can submit a request of Progression to the next Level. This is based on the results achieved and verified by a mentoring programme, which consist of minimum two on-pitch evaluations for each season and acceptable attendance and participation in the workshops. After the final evaluation test with a National Trainer Member, the referee is officially registered as Active Referee and can officiate at the interregional level

At this point the referee must be able to understand not only the basics but also has to be able to follow the National Standards and guarantee good performance for this level, Safety, Space, Speed, Scrums and Lineouts are the target areas. The Referee is subject to a narrative assessment and score-based assessment. The referee must attend trainings and workshops and is subject to performance and competency-based evaluation and mentoring.



The referee can officiate any game at Regional Level. They cannot be a player/coach if they are registered as Active Referee. They must attend a regional annual pre-season course every year (eight hrs) Objectives of the course: updates and directions for the season, meeting the tutors, educators and trainers

— **3. National Development Panel (Serie C, 4th Division)**

Active Referees are appointed to officiate games, and their progress is monitored and submitted to the National Board through online platform/APP along with videos of the performance and performance reports. Monthly meetings increase knowledge of the rules and other skills. Each month one specific aspect of the art of refereeing is discussed. The Manager of the National Development Panel analyses all the data and decides if the referee is ready to be added to the Development Panel and officiate Interregional Matches and Serie C level (4th division). Age, attitude, Potential and Talent are the factors considered for this selection. All the nominations are submitted to the National Board. The referee must attend online workshops and an annual course that includes written and athletic tests. (Speed and Bronco Test). They must attend the pre-season meeting. (in person - 16 hrs.). Objective: updates, meeting the selectors and educators.

— **4. Serie B (3rd Division)**

After at least one year in a National Development Panel, if the referee shows potential and has collected good evaluations and reports, they can move to the National Serie B Panel (Italian 3rd division). FIR runs workshops regularly throughout the season to help improve refereeing standards across all levels of the game. A coaching System is applied to development referees with potential to reach higher grades. They must participate in training classes and be able to perform and pass athletic and knowledge tests.

The referee must attend online workshops and an annual course that includes written and athletic tests. (Speed and Bronco Test). They must participate at the Preseason National Meeting. (in person, 16 hrs.). Objective: introduction to the “development performance path” with ad hoc assignments.

— **5. Serie A (2nd Division) and Serie A Elite (Main National Championship)**

The process to step up through the levels is similar for the levels of Serie A - Serie A elite. Progression through the levels depends on performance and attitudes and must be supported by data. Referees are regularly monitored.

FIR has an on-line digital platform dedicated to all level referees with trainings, video, reports and evaluations, along with all the most recent inputs from World Rugby. Content is updated weekly and can be consulted at different levels of access. Workshops, courses and online conferences are organised and sorted by levels, run by the Educators or coaches under the supervision of the RDO and the National Referee Coordinator. The referee must attend online workshops and an annual course that includes written and athletic tests. (Speed and Bronco Test). They must participate at the Preseason National Meeting. (16hrs in person) objectives: advanced High performance classes.

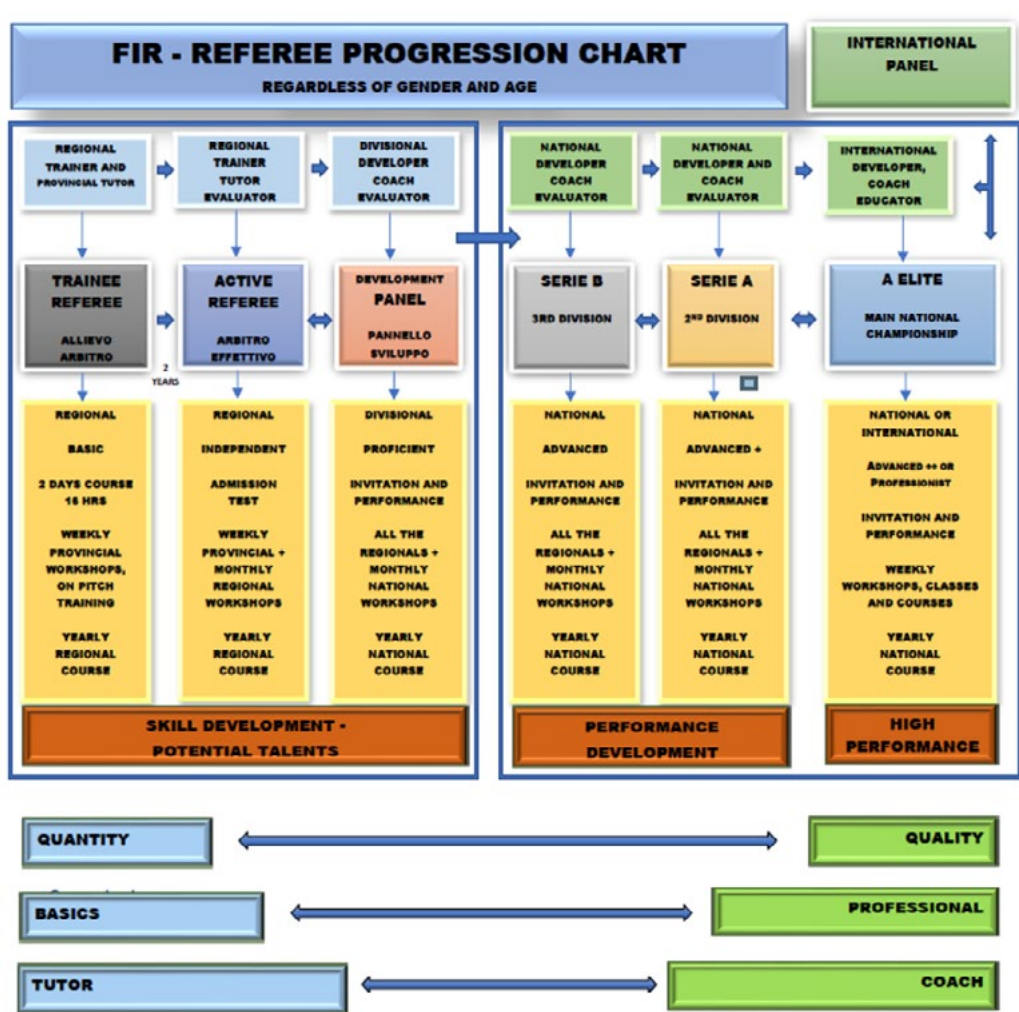
6. Assistant Referee and TMO

FIR has specific classes for the AR and TMO. They also work with the Referees at same Level they belong starting from Serie A. The referee must attend online workshops and an annual course that includes written and athletic tests. (Speed and Bronco Test). They must participate at the Preseason National Meeting. (16 hrs., in person)

7. Coach, Tutor and Educator

FIR is constantly selecting National COACHES and EDUCATORS from former referees and/or other professional profiles. Monthly dedicated classes are run to improve skills, knowledge and competencies while tutors are usually starting their mission at provincial level. Supporting referees and developing clarity and consistency are the goals. Monthly Training is provided.

Tutors must have experience as referee (any level), excellent knowledge of the laws of the game and must be familiar with the local rugby environment. They must be empathetic and must be up to date with new laws and interpretation. Good informatic skills. Annual refresh training is mandatory, a Coach is normally a retired referee with experience at high level. Educators are chosen from a list of candidates and are required to have full knowledge of the rules and interpretation, informatic and teaching skills. Annual refresh training is mandatory. Their mission is to develop the best possible performance system to each level of each competition

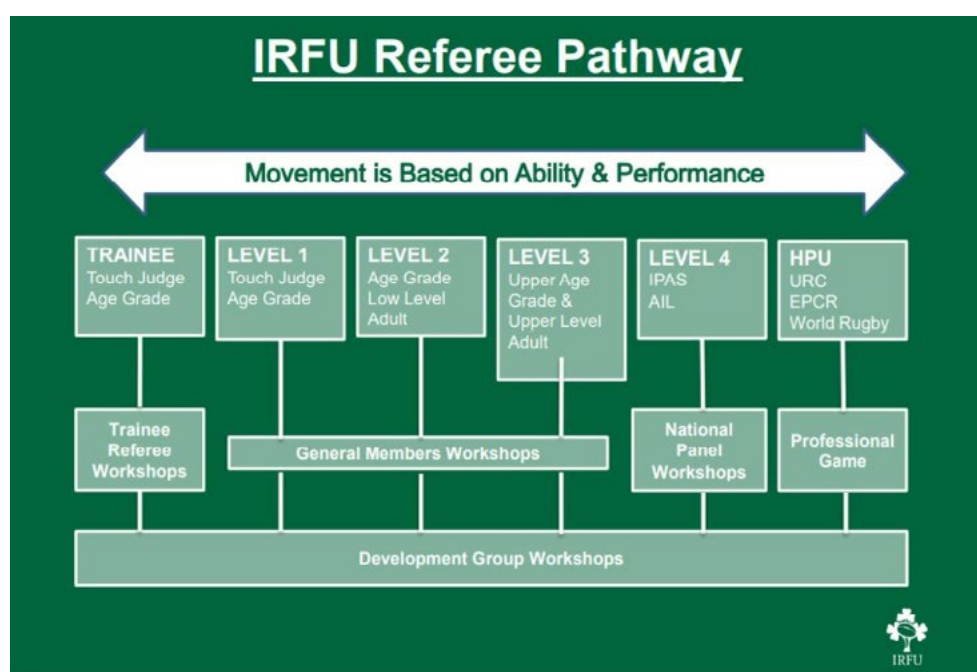


• Ireland



Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU)

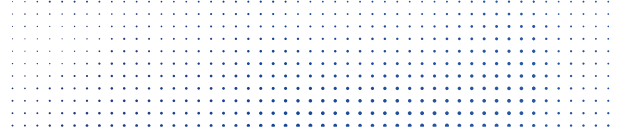
There are six main levels in the IRFU refereeing pathway, which can be seen in the following diagram:



Below the level of Trainee there is the Affiliate Referee who is an adult who is qualified to referee matches involving a club or school to which they are affiliated. To become an Affiliate Referee the World Rugby Laws of the Game and Concussion Awareness online modules must be completed, as well as the online IRFU Affiliate Referee Course.

To become a Trainee referee the half-day, face-to-face, IRFU New Referee Course must be completed. A Trainee Referee will normally operate initially as a touch judge before refereeing in age-grade rugby and will have access to Trainee Referee workshops.

A Level 1 referee can officiate matches up to under-15 level. Level 2 is for under-16 and low-level adult referees. Level 3 is for upper age grade rugby and a higher level of adult player. Referees at Levels 1, 2 and 3, as well as those at Level 4, are subject to performance and competency-based evaluation and mentoring.



The aim is for a minimum of two on-pitch evaluations for referees at each level. At Levels 1 and 2 there is a narrative assessment, and at levels 3 and 4 it is a score-based assessment.

Referees move up the levels based on on-pitch evaluations and reports considered by referee branches in each Province.

The IRFU Referee Department run workshops regularly throughout the season to help improve refereeing standards across all levels of the game. Workshops are run on different topics defined by the need. Typical workshop hours for each level are:

- Trainee – 15 hours
- Level 1 and Level 2 – 10 hours
- Level 3 – 10-15 hours
- Level 4 – 15 hours.

The key to moving through the levels is game-based evaluation. The objectives of evaluation are:

- To support the referee
- To judge and quantify the performance of the referee
- To assist and participate in the education and development of the referee
- To facilitate selection and grading.

Up to trainee/ level 1, the term “mentoring” is used for the game-based evaluations and providing supportive feedback.

Referee coaching is applied to development pathway referees with potential to reach higher grades.

The IRFU refereeing department also works to further develop evaluators and referee coaches. A new referee educator course is in development.

• New Zealand



New Zealand Rugby Union (NZR)

New Zealand Rugby (NZR) are currently developing a Community Rugby Referee Development Framework. It will be a three to four-year process to complete the framework with all the training and development resources to support it.

The Referee Ecosystem in New Zealand is made up of the following roles:

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Performance Referees • Performance Referees • Development Referees • Community Referees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referee Reviewers/ Coaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators of Referee Reviewers/ Coaches |
|---|--|---|

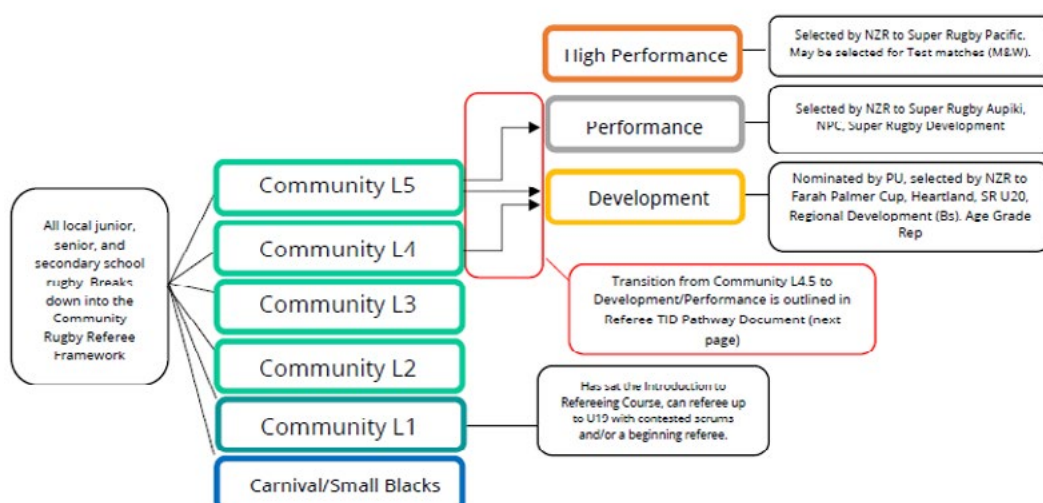
The World Rugby Educator course is delivered for Educators of Referee Reviewers/ Coaches.

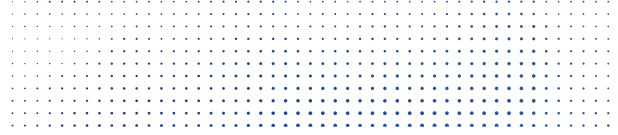
NZR is developing courses for Referee Reviewers and Referee Coaches at the national level. There is also an intention to run the World Rugby Referee Coach course.

Referee performance is reviewed across six pillars: technical, tactical, management, physical, mental, law.

The NZR Rugby Referee Development Pathway can be seen in the following diagram:

Rugby Referee Development Pathway





In terms of referee education, all registered referees must do the NZR Rugby Smart Course, this is a safety and injury prevention course which covers scrum, tackle, ruck, head knocks/ concussion, and warm up.

NZR run an Associate Referee Course which is a three-hour introduction to refereeing course. It is designed for club and secondary school people who are not registered referees but are a resource that can be used to referee if for whatever reason an official referee cannot be appointed to a fixture. This course covers: The Role of the Referee; Key Referee Attributes; Game Management (Communication); Safety (Rugby Smart); Advantage; Tackle/Ruck; Set Pieces; Positioning; Scoring Points; Foul Play.

NZR also have an Introduction to Refereeing Programme which is for first-year referees and is used as a resource on the Associate Referee Course. It is a booklet with information and questions to fill by the referee. It is not run as a course, but referees are taken through the content when they meet.

All other training and education for referees is delivered on a topic-by-topic basis, and not through formal mandatory courses.

• Scotland



Scottish Rugby Union

Scottish Rugby has three levels of match officials' education. A fourth level for Performance was planned but has so far not materialised. The three courses are:

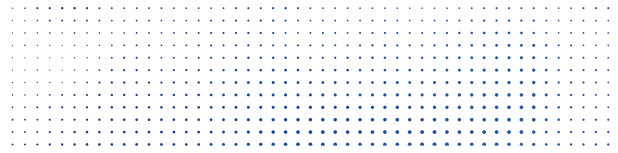
- Introduction to Match Officiating Course
- Aspiring Match Official Course
- Advancing Match Official Course.

— Introduction to Match Officiating

Introduction to Match Officiating has been designed to be equivalent and almost identical to World Rugby Level 1. It aims to equip match officials with fundamental refereeing skills and tools and is made up of a one-hour online course followed by a three-hour face-to-face practical component. It is not formally assessed but there is a set of competences that need to be ticked off – covering positioning, tackle, ruck/maul, scrum, lineout, advantage, and communication. It is an entry level programme and qualifies individuals to referee rugby in the youth and adult game.

— Aspiring Match Official Course

Aspiring Match Official Course has been developed to be equivalent to World Rugby Level 2. It is a two-day course and is held twice per year. A particular focus is on decision making processes with modules on how and why of decision making. It covers all aspects of the game including positioning, tackle, ruck/maul, scrum, lineout, advantage, and communication, as well as refereeing philosophy, strength and conditioning, live refereeing. The course includes refereeing of four games with self-assessment, one of which is videoed. If the referee is in a referee society an MO coach observes games on a continual basis and is allocated a coach. If they are not in a society the video is sent to the Union for assessment purposes. There is no certificate at this level, but the referee is signed off on the national database.



— Advancing Match Official Course

Advancing Match Official Course is designed for those referees who have been identified as being able to transition to Category 3 or above (see discussion of categories below). It is intended to challenge referees and covers situational awareness, technical competence, game management, leadership, safety etc. It is delivered through two full day sessions a month apart, and up to ten online evening sessions with topics including contextual judgement and situational awareness, team analysis and strategies, advanced positioning, lineout and maul, space, self-analysis.

There are six referee societies throughout Scotland supporting recruitment, development and deployment of referees within their region.

In Scotland there is a system of categories for rugby referees with seven categories with Category 1 being the highest. Categories 7, 6 and 5 operate at regional society level, with referees at Category 5 being able to be nominated and invited on to the national panel, this can facilitate transition to Category 4 which covers the men's national game. There is a competency framework for Categories 4 and higher up to Category 1.

Scottish Rugby also offer a Mini Rugby Referee course as an entry level programme aimed at those who referee / game coach mini rugby festivals, up to primary 7 age group.

• Wales



Welsh Rugby Union (WRU)

The Welsh Rugby Union is responsible for recruiting, developing and producing referees and match officials to officiate over games and matches at all levels within Welsh Rugby. Welsh Rugby Union match officials participate in elite level test matches and in all elite tournaments including the World Cup, The Rugby Championship, Six Nations and the World Sevens series. However, it is at the grass roots level of the game that referees are recruited, trained and learn the game from a refereeing perspective.

WRU has developed an educational pathway for referees through formal, non-formal courses and continuous professional development sessions. They have also developed a digital platform that supports the referee through videos and best practice, and a mentoring process that supports the development of the referee.

There are three main levels of referee in Wales:

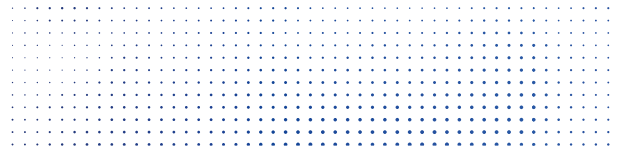
Level 1

To become a qualified referee candidates must attend a level 1 refereeing course. The course consists of practical refereeing and knowledge of the laws. Successful completion of the course allows individuals to referee club rugby up to the age of 16 and Schools rugby up to under 18.

The Level 1 course is made up of one evening of studying theory and one day practical delivery, it aims to equip candidates with the skills and confidence to be able to referee the game.

Level 2

Progression from Level 1 to Level 2 is achieved by means of a mentoring system. Prospective level 2 referees are allocated a mentor who will accompany them to games to support them and give them advice and guidance. Once deemed competent the referee will then be allocated a level 2 status and be able to referee youth team players, under-18, second team male and female games up to the level below the Premiership.



Level 3

Progression to level 3 is based on performance and invitation. Level 2 referees are regularly monitored and those showing promise are promoted to level 3. There are nine grades within level 3 from 3P to Elite. Progression through the grades depends on performance.

Online CPD and non-compulsory conferences are organised for referees at Levels 2 and 3.

A performance pathway also exists in Wales for elite referees above Level 3.



Exploring Countries

Match Officiating
Education and
Development
Summaries



• Argentina



Union Argentina De Rugby (UAR)

In South America all countries are using the World Rugby referee courses and accreditations.

In Argentina the World Rugby courses are delivered, along with some other material developed at the national level.

At Level 1 the World Rugby course is delivered in its entirety, however this is normally delivered through two-hour modules over several days and not all on a single day. Participants must attend 100% of the sessions.

The ARU has its own presentation for Level 1, covering all World Rugby content plus some of their own ideas and content.

World Rugby Level 1 online pre-requisites are required, and participants are entered in the IRIS system.

Two certificates are issued to participants – from ARU and World Rugby.

There are 25 provincial Unions in Argentina, and the aim is to have one referee educator in each Union. Theory can be delivered in clubs before bringing referees together for practical components.

Level 2 is occasionally offered, and this is the World Rugby course. Three Level 2 courses were delivered in 2023. Level 3 is rarely delivered.

• Belgium



Belgium Rugby

The sport system in Belgium is that of a federal state where sport has been allocated to the Flemish-speaking, French-speaking and German-speaking Communities. The Communities, their Sport Ministers and their Sport Administrations are responsible for sport policies at grassroots and elite levels. They subsidise the Community sport federations, which means that every national sport federation is divided into two sub-federations (German-speaking people are members of the French-speaking sub-federation).

Consideration of rugby match official education in Belgium must take into account this federal structure, where the two relevant organisations responsible for rugby are Rugby Vlaanderen for the Flemish-speaking Community and Ligue Belge Francophone de Rugby (LBFR) for the French-speaking Community.

Overall, in Belgium the World Rugby structure of education for match officials is used, and World Rugby match official courses are delivered.

At Levels 1 and 2, World Rugby match official courses are organised separately by each of the two community sport federations – Rugby Vlaanderen and Ligue Belge Francophone de Rugby (LBFR).

At World Rugby Level 3, the two communities come together, and the Level 3 course is delivered at the national level. The process for nomination to Level 3 is via Rugby Europe and is run as a regional course supported by international educators from World Rugby.

For all courses delivered in Belgium participants are registered on the World Rugby Passport system, and they are certificated only by World Rugby.

Belgian educators deliver all World Rugby content but make some small adaptations to the national context. In the Flemish speaking community Rugby Vlaanderen ask referees to undertake a concussion management module as an extra requirement.



• Canada



Rugby Canada

Rugby Canada believes the development of match officials across Canada is paramount to the sustained success of rugby across the country.

Rugby Canada use the entirety of the World Rugby match officials' courses and accreditations.

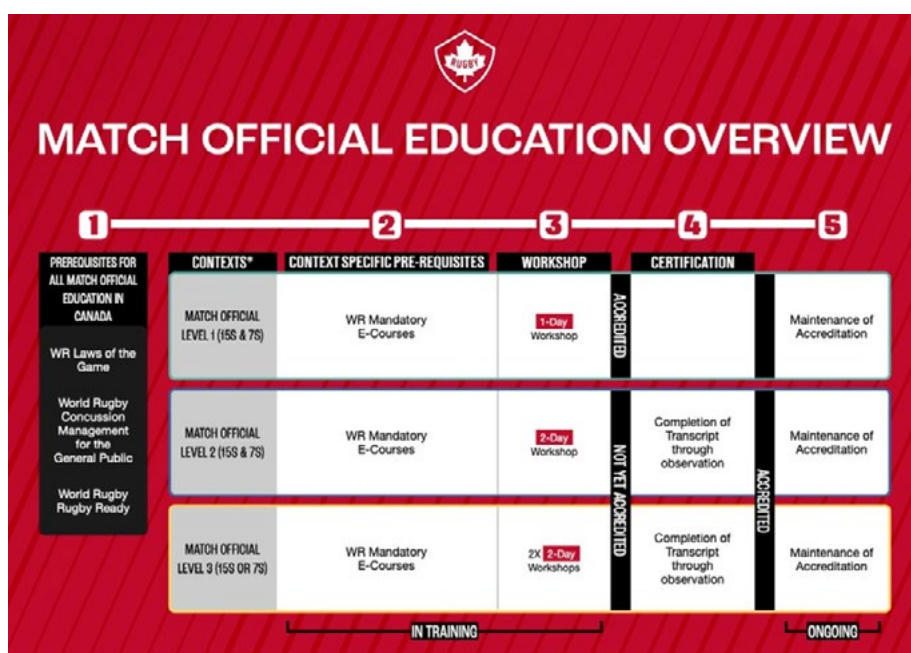
Pre-requisites for all match official's education in Canada are made up of the World Rugby e-learning courses Laws of the Game, Concussion Management for the General Public, and Rugby Ready.

In line with World Rugby regulations Level 1 is delivered over one day, Level 2 over two days, and Level 3 over two, two-day workshops.

Full accreditation is gained through attendance only for the Level 1 course, for level 2 and 3 a candidate is not accredited until they have completed a transcript through observation.

For all levels match officials must undertake activities to maintain their accreditation.

This can be summarised in the following diagram:



• Denmark



Dansk Rugby Union

DRU offer World Rugby Levels 1 and 2.

Level 1 is for XV rugby from Under-16 to senior players. The course is offered one or two times per year for new referees.

Level 2 is for active match officials with experience in games. In 2024 DRU are aiming to work with Rugby Europe and other countries in the region plus Poland to run a joint Level 2 course.

In addition to the World Rugby courses DRU has its own Kids First game manager course, which is a short course for parents, youth coaches and other leaders. Those who have completed this course can operate as a game manager (match official) for Under-8s to Under-16s. The content for this course focusses on the role of a MO/ game manager, positioning on the pitch, and introduction to laws from Under-10 to Under-18.

• Germany



Rugby Deutschland

The Rugby Deutschland Referee Pathway is being rebuilt to fully incorporate World Rugby education courses, the system is being changed to include World Rugby standards. This is currently on trail and will replace a previous national system which was separate to World Rugby.

The Referee Pathway in Germany is made up of four levels: "D", "C", "B", "A".

D = Jugend Referee. Introduction to refereeing. Half day national course aimed at parents and youth players interested in refereeing junior or children's rugby. No experience necessary. Status at this level is maintained by refereeing two tournaments per year.

C = Regional Referee. This level includes World Rugby Level 1 award with all World Rugby content but with the additional requirement to pass the course a game must be refereed. To maintain this status at least five games per year should be refereed. After first year with this status participation in regional development course is required.

B = Bundesliga Referee. To obtain the B license referees must be refereeing for two years or 20 matches at regional level and attend a minimum of four regional development courses per year.

Referees who have obtained the B license can enrol on to World Rugby Level 2 award and join what is known as the Development Group. Advancement to the Development Group is by invitation and referees must have three years or 30 matches of experience at the Bundesliga level.

A = National Panel. Members of the Development Group can be nominated for level A which is for international referees and oversees development of the Development Group. They would be working in their region to aid development – they assist with the development of other referees when needed.

Any referee who holds the World Rugby Level 2 can be nominated to attend a regional World Rugby Level 3 award organised by Rugby Europe, provided they have the potential to successfully complete the course.

For the national delivery of World Rugby Levels 1 and 2, World Rugby educators are used, and participants are issued one certificate at the end of the course which is the World Rugby certificate.

• Japan



Japan Rugby Football Union (JRFU)

A new referee qualification system was established by JRFU in Japan in 2020. This enables matches to be officiated by “certified referees” who have specialised knowledge and skills. JRFU have their own referee awards at the introductory level, and also deliver the World Rugby Level 1 and Level 2 awards.

The JRFU has five levels of rugby referee:

- Start Referee
- Mini Rugby Referee (MRR)
- C -grade Referee
- B -grade Referee
- A -grade Referee.

These can be described with links to qualifications as follows:

- The Start Referee is a qualification given to those who wish to become rugby referees. Those who have obtained this qualification will be able to act as a touch judge in official matches hosted by associations, and as a referee in non-contact rugby (such as tag rugby). The JRFU Start Referee Course is conducted through e-learning. The duration is approximately 90 minutes.
- Mini Rugby Referee (MRR) is a qualification to referee rugby matches for players under 12 years old (mini rugby). With this qualification, in addition to being a Start referee, you can also referee mini rugby matches hosted by each association.
- In addition to the MRR matches, C- class referees can also serve as referees in matches for junior high school students and above (junior rugby) hosted by prefectural associations.
- In addition to officiating C- class matches, B- class referees can also serve as referees for official matches hosted by branch associations (Kanto, Kansai, Kyushu).
- A -class referees will be responsible for B -class matches as well as for matches hosted by the Japan Association.

Referees need to complete the World Rugby Level 1 course to be a JRFU B referee, and World Rugby Level 2 to be a JRFU A referee.

Recognition at each level of referee is awarded to those who have acquired the knowledge and skills appropriate for the qualification for that level and is also based on the results of training sessions and practical tests, etc. Recognition at each level is valid for four years.

• Luxembourg



Luxembourg Rugby Federation

In Luxembourg for the training of match officials only the World Rugby education pathway and levels are used. There are no domestic requirements or pathway.

World Rugby Level 1 and Level 2 match officials courses are delivered by the federation. At Level 3 candidates are nominated to attend the regional Level 3 course organised by Rugby Europe.

At Level 1, one or two courses of around 10 participants are organised each year, at Level 2 the course may not be organised each year, depending on demand.

The federation has built a small step below the level of World Rugby Level 1. This is a 3-hour workshop linked to adapted domestic schools competitions, and the workshop covers management of the game which includes the role of the trainer and role of the official.

• Netherlands



Rugby Netherlands

Referee education in the Netherlands is aligned with both the World Rugby education system and the national qualification system for the Netherlands, which is connected to receiving funding from the National Olympic Committee (NOC).

Rugby Netherlands offers both World Rugby Level 1 and Level 2. At the end of the courses, referees get a certificate from World Rugby, and a Rugby Netherlands certificate linked to the National Qualifications Framework of the Netherlands (NLQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Some content is added at each level from the national context to ensure the courses are in line with the national structure.

Rugby Netherlands has implemented a new requirement for Level 1 certification: candidates must officiate a match as a referee, which can be at the U12 level or above, as part of the qualification process. Following this, candidates are required to submit a reflection on their first match (minimum of 20 minutes). Upon submission of this reflection, they will receive their national certification from NLQF.

At Level 3, national referees who hold the Level 2 award can be nominated for the regional Rugby Europe Level 3 course.

Below Level 1 Rugby Netherlands has its own awards for Game Coach Under 12s.

Education is also offered for coaches of match officials (CMO).

• Portugal



Federação Portuguesa de Rugby

The match official education system in Portugal follows the World Rugby standards. World Rugby Level 1 and Level 2 are delivered at the national level, with some adaptations to the national context. At Level 3 candidates are nominated for the Regional World Rugby Level 3 course.

The federation would like to experiment and develop a Portuguese Level 3 at the national level, then referees who have completed the national Level 3 could be nominated to the regional World Rugby Level 3.

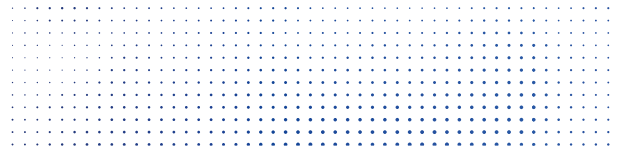
In Portugal there are three grades of referee: **Formação** (beginners), **Desenvolvimento** (development) and **Avançado** (elite). These are shown in the following graphic.



To become a registered referee, it is necessary to complete the World Rugby Level 1, the referee can then begin on the referee pathway.

Between Level 1 and Level 2 referees may officiate Under-16 and Under-18 games. There should be a minimum of one year between completing Level 1 course and being eligible for Level 2 course.

Once level 2 is completed the referee can join the **DESENVOLVIMENTO (development)** grade of referees, and officiate different types of competitions, also depending on performance. They would take part in a full season assessed/coached around their performance review.



Ongoing CPD is provided on topics such as laws, breakdown, psychology, strength & conditioning.

Progression through the three Portuguese grades of referee is based on formal education through World Rugby courses but also observation on the pitch, where beginner referees can be observed and monitored and subsequently apply for Level 2 and Level 3 courses. Many referees may finish their refereeing journey at Level 2.

The federation also offer a recruitment programme for referees titled **#EuApito**, for referees of Under-10s, Under-14s or Under-18s women – this does not involve the need for a formal course, to get involved with, but they are required to do so on the soonest course available on the calendar.

• South Africa



South African Rugby Union (SARU)

There are 15 provinces in South Africa where the Provincial Union manages rugby affairs, and they all have a Referee Society. The Provincial Unions run referee recruitment drives and recruitment is going well.

For referee education South Africa currently relies heavily on the World Rugby education programme. World Rugby accredited educators deliver Level 1 in their respective Unions and Societies. The aim is for every Province to have at least one accredited World Rugby referee educator.

There is a large amount of Level 1 courses delivered in South Africa.

There is an issue with regards to Level 2, and it has been difficult to achieve implementation of Level 2. The requirements and conditions to pass the Level 2 course have presented a problem for many referees, the material is seen as too tough at that level. Delivery of World Rugby courses is not always financially viable.

There is a will to move to the development and delivery of a national suite of referee certifications. There is a push to develop national content for referee courses. This could potentially have a link to the South African qualifications' framework.

In South Africa the World Rugby CMO course is not used, instead a national course is delivered called the blueprint course.

There is also education developed at the national level for touch judges and assistant referees.

• Spain



Federación Española de Rugby

Spain has a four-level rugby referee education system.

Level 1 is linked to the under-12 competitions and the training regulations for these categories (M6, M8, M10 and M12), and has a regional federation qualification. These are four-hour courses.

Level 2 is linked to the World Rugby (L1) curriculum and participants who have successfully completed these courses are given a World Rugby L1 certificate, this course is longer than the hours specified by World Rugby, being 12 hours (World Rugby L1 specifies eight hours), this allows for a deeper understanding of core topics and additional subject areas. It is linked to competitions for children from 14 to 18 years.

Level 3 is linked to the World Rugby (L2) curriculum and participants who have successfully completed these courses are given a World Rugby L2 certificate, the face-to-face hours of this course are 16 hours. Linked to regional adult competitions.

Level 4 is taught within the federal structure. This course lasts 32 hours in-person and 4 match evaluations of 1st and 2nd division matches. And it is linked to national competitions (1st and 2nd division, men's and women's).

The Spanish federation will nominate referees who have completed the Spanish Level 4 to undertake the World Rugby Level 3 course, which is run at the regional level in Europe through Rugby Europe.

• Sweden



Svenska Rugby Forbundet

In Sweden only the World Rugby match officiating education system is used. The federation organises and delivers the World Rugby Level 1 match officials award. Three World Rugby qualified educators are in place covering the regions of Sweden.

At World Rugby Level 2, the federation takes advantage of the Nordic regional hub of Rugby Europe, and recently sent three referees to complete the Level 2 in Denmark.

There is no national expectations Sweden from the sport ministry or Olympic committee so no mapping to national requirements.

At the national level online match officials' meetings are organised by the federation.

One further activity the federation would like to see in place is a standardised match officials CPD system developed by World Rugby, including online modules.



USA Rugby

The USA Rugby Match official education programme prepares match officials to make the game safer and more enjoyable for the players, providing a valuable service to the game.

USA Rugby offer the following rugby referee accreditations:

— USA Rugby Introduction to Refereeing

This is a USA Rugby course for individuals who want to become referees, or are considering becoming a referee, or players who are keen to learn more about the Laws and refereeing. Minimum age for the course is 13 and it is made up of two and a half hours of live and interactive learning online using Zoom.

— World Rugby Level 1 Referee

This course is for individuals who wish to referee forms of rugby that involve tackling. Minimum for the course is age 13 and it is delivered through an eight-hour in-person course. The course contains mostly practical elements as well as covering aspects of Law knowledge. In addition to attendance, the course requires completion of several online courses taken through World Rugby's Passport website, ideally before the course.

— World Rugby Level 2 Referee

This course is for individuals who have been a Level 1 Referee for a year or more, who wish to move to the next stage of refereeing accreditation. Minimum age for the course is 18 and it is delivered through a two-day, 16-hour, in-person course. The course explores further topics such as positioning, advantage, materiality, and other techniques to advance as a referee. This course is more involved than the Level 1 with respect to pre-coursework, the in-person clinic, and post-course field test in a live game.

Level 1 and 2 are offered in line with all World Rugby criteria, with some USA specific content delivered through the presentations. World Rugby Level 3 referee course is currently not offered in USA although this could be an aspiration for the future.

USA Rugby also has its own **USA Rugby Level 1 Referee Coach** course for individuals who wish to coach referees. This is an eight hour in-person course.

USA Rugby also has its own **USA Rugby Level 1 Assistant Referee** which is for individuals who wish to act as an Assistant Referee, it is an online course consisting of three modules covering Team of three requirements, Touch Law, and foul play reporting.





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