



REFEREE GRADING MANUAL

2010

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USA RUGBY MATCH LEVELS

2010 USA RUGBY MATCH LEVEL GRADING TABLE

Match Level	Senior Men	College Men	Senior Women	College Women	U19 Boys
1 International and National Panel Grade	Churchill Cup ARC Super League Playoff Match				
2 National Panel Grade	Territorial Select Sides Super League League Match Division 1 National SF & F				
3 Territorial and NFG Panel Grade	Division 1 Territorial Final CR Playoff Match National Final 16 & QF Division 2 National SF & F	Territorial Select Sides Division 1 National SF & F	Territorial Select Sides Premier League Playoff Match & National Final		
4 Territorial Panel Grade	Division 1 LAU & Territorial League Match Division 2 Territorial Final National Final 16 & QF	Division 1 National Final 16 & QF CR Playoff Match Territorial Final	Premier League League Match Division 1 National SF & F	Division 1 National Final 16, QF, SF, & F Division 2 National Final	National U19 Domestic Match Club National Playoff Match
5 Local Area Union Grade (L1)	Division 3 Territorial Final National SF & F	Division 1 LAU League Match Division 2 National SF & F Territorial Final	Division 1 Territorial Final National Final 16 & QF	Division 1 Territorial Final Division 2 National Final 16, QF, SF, & F	Club Territorial Final
6 Local Area Union Grade (L2)	Division 2 LAU League Match Division 3 LAU League Final	Division 2 LAU League Match Division 3 Territorial Final	Division 1 LAU League Match	Division 1 LAU League Final Division 2 Territorial SF & F	Club LAU League Final

ABBREVIATIONS:

ARC = Americas Rugby Championship

CR = Competitive Region (there are 4 in USA Rugby)

LAU = Local Area Union (there are 35 in USA Rugby)

QF = Quarter Final

SF = Semi-Final

F = Final

REMINDERS

1. The USA Rugby Match Levels Table is meant to serve as a guideline, not an arithmetic recipe. If you feel the match level should be different than what is indicated by the table, assign the match level you think is appropriate. Your rationale for assigning it should be included on page one of the report, in the Description of the Game section.
2. In Scoring, remember the Note found on page 23, under Grading Criteria for Each Unit Competence.
“Note: It is anticipated that most of the time a referee who is performing at grade will get unit scores of 4. A unit score of 5 should reflect extremely meritorious performance. A unit score of 3 will indicate some problems, but nothing significant. **Unit scores of 1 or 2 reflect significant problems and should be noted on the front page of the written report.**”
3. Annotate on the front page whether a Referee Coach was present, if one was present, who it was and whether you spoke together.
4. On national appointments, the report should be submitted within two weeks to

The referee

The Chair of Evaluation Committee

- a. The Chair of the Evaluation Review Subcommittee
 - b. The Chair of the Selection Committee
 - c. The Chair of the referee’s Territorial Referee Organization
5. On evaluating a member of the National Panel or National Focus Group in a match other than RSL, written reports need to be submitted to the *National Panel Manager* in addition to those listed above.
 6. In observing a member of the National Focus Group or a Territorial referee, if you have the sense that the referee’s performance is well below his grade level continue with your evaluation. At your debriefing provide coaching points and then send the referee a written coaching report. If the written evaluation was to be forwarded to the Chair of Evaluation Committee and National Referee Development Officer, submit a full written evaluation report with evaluations even if the score was below 65.

WHAT TO WATCH

COMPETENCE BASED METHODOLOGY

There are four principles that guide the game of rugby. The principle with the highest priority is protecting the safety of the players. The remaining three principles are taken directly from the Object of the Game. Thus the top four principles of the game of rugby are

1. Safety
2. Observing fair play
3. Playing according to the laws
4. Sporting spirit

Since these four principles are fundamental to the game itself, it naturally follows that they become the very basis from which referees officiate throughout the match. The laws define the parameters within which players and referees are expected to operate. The laws provide a platform for the game, but they are not the game itself. **It is important that referees do not referee the laws; they must referee the game.**

There are three general areas to consider in evaluating a referee's performance: **Continuity, Restarts, and Management.** *Continuity* is a very important aspect of the game and the three components that contribute to Continuity are Tackle, Advantage, and Ruck/Maul. The *Restart* components include Kicks, Scrum, and Lineout. The key components of *Management* include Control and Communication. In total, there are eight components to consider in evaluating a referee's performance. Each component is called a Unit of Competence. Within each unit of competence, there are key elements that a referee must apply. The content and organization of these units and the key elements within each unit are very similar to those used by the International Rugby Board. The major distinguishing features are discussed below.

(1) *Key elements for various levels of referees*

The IRB has within each unit several key elements that must be enforced by the referee. The IRB form is intended for use in evaluating international referees. The American form is intended for use in evaluating referees of grades L2 through NP. The American system recognizes the fact that lower-grade referees do not master certain key elements. As such, the key elements to be mastered by each grade of referee are delineated. For example, L1 referees should consistently manage all aspects of lineouts whereas the nuances of managing all aspects of the tackle situation are not mastered until the National Panel level. Thus, for the lower grades of referees, the American system is not as demanding as the IRB system. On the other hand, both systems are equal when dealing with international referees. One aspect of having progressive steps of key elements for increasing levels of referee grades is that within each unit there exists a distinction between lower-grade key elements using the word "observed" and higher-grade key elements using the word "ensured" or "managed." "Observed" connotes the referee saw what happened and reacted accordingly. "Ensured" or "managed" connotes the referee anticipated a problem and acted to prevent its occurrence.

(2) *Onside*

The IRB system treats offside of participants (e.g., forwards) in set and loose pieces within the set and loose piece units (scrummage, lineout and ruck/maul). However, the IRB treats offside of non-participants (e.g., backs) in set and loose pieces in a separate "offside" unit. The IRB "offside" unit also includes offside in general play such as might occur in kick situations. The USA system includes offside for non-participants within the set and loose piece units (scrummage, lineout and ruck/maul). The "Restart Kicks & Open Play" unit in the USA system also includes offside in general play such as might occur in kick situations.

(3) *Foul Play*

The IRB system and now the USA system place “foul play” under key Component of Control. Thus, the American form has Units of Competency for elements of “foul play” (obstruction, unfair play, repeated infringements, dangerous play, & misconduct) that upholds the top four principles of the game that was mentioned above, delineates key elements to be mastered a different grades, and compiles them under one component.

(4) *Positioning*

The IRB system places very little emphasis on positioning with the singular exception of requiring scanning in its “Offside” unit. In fact, the IRB does not include positioning within the key elements of the appropriate units. Whereas the American system previously included key elements on positioning within the pertinent units of competence, they primarily are now shown as coaching points, rather than key elements. For instance, the referee may not have had problems with immediate release of the ball after tackle situations even though he was too far away to manage the problem if it had occurred. The players simply played according to the spirit of the game and didn’t challenge the referee. In this case, the American system is designed to help the referee so that he will be prepared in future games if he is challenged.

The objective of breaking the referee’s performance down into units using key elements of competence is to ensure a consistent approach to evaluation. Many elements within each unit have not been identified as key elements of competence. These other elements should not be ignored, but they have low priority. This competence-based system is not meant to generate a comprehensive review of all the units and all of their associated elements of competence. The vital few messages (key elements) must not be lost in the trivia of detail (minor elements). By following the methodology taught in this course, it is expected that the evaluator will be consistent and fair with each referee he watches and that greater consistency among all evaluators will be achieved.

It is recognized that there are two general approaches to observation and evaluation.

(1) *Holistic Approach*

The holistic approach understands the whole game and its dynamics, and then focuses on the various pieces of the game.

(2) *Segmented Approach*

The segmented approach understands the dynamics of the pieces of the game and then puts them together to understand the whole game.

Both approaches are valid methods to use when evaluating a referee. In either approach the pieces of the game will come into consideration. Thus the performance of the referee in adhering to the key elements of each unit will be measured in accordance with the competency-based evaluation process.

CONTINUITY

TACKLE

Key Elements of Competence

L2 Elements

- Observed arriving players leaving their feet.
- Did not permit pileups to continue after ball was buried.
- Awarded scrum put-in to the correct side when ball became unplayable.

L1 Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Observed killing of the ball by tackler and ball carrier.
- Observed players lying on the ground interfering with ball availability.
- Observed players lying on the ground interfering with players on their feet.

Coaching Points

- Positioned out of the way of arriving players.
- When play is stopped, positioned close enough to administer effective corrective action.

T-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- * Observed and prevented tackler infringements that delay the immediate availability of the ball. It is recognized that at lower-level territorial matches the speed with which the tackler conforms to expectations will be slower than at higher-level territorial matches.
- * Observed and prevented ball carrier infringements that delay the immediate availability of the ball. It is recognized that at lower-level territorial matches the speed with which the ball carrier conforms to expectations will be slower than at higher-level territorial matches.
- * Observed and prevented infringements by other players (i.e. non-tackler and non-ball carrier) that cause the ball not to be immediately available.
- Able to distinguish between other players entering the tackle with the intent to remove players on the ground and make the ball available and who may themselves end up on the ground. (a legal action) versus other players leaving their feet when they enter the tackle to secure (or slow) ball recycle (an illegal action).
- Able to recognize and prevent illegal zone entry. Understands that the tackled ball carrier does not have to release to a player who entered illegally.

** Observed and prevented was chosen because it best expresses the expectation of a T-Panel referee. Failures in observation are clear errors and are scored as such.*

Preventative actions fall into two areas:

- *Actions taken at each tackle (preventative voice and/or positioning). These are treated primarily as coaching points.*
- *Actions taken to prevent patterns of offenses. These are addressed in the control section.*

Coaching Points

- Initial position is close enough to manage the immediate availability of the ball.
- Final position anticipated which team would win the ball.
- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent tackle infringements from becoming material during the final stage of the tackle.
- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent infringements during the formative stage of the tackle.

National and International Panel referees are expected to meet all elements listed above.

ADVANTAGE

Key Elements of Competence

L2 Elements

- Recognized distinctions of advantage for penalty kick infringements versus scrum infringements.
- Did not return play to the original infringement after territorial advantage had been gained.
- Played advantage with consideration of players' safety.
- Played advantage in all appropriate situations.
- Communicated advantage with voice and signal (without reference to specific details as listed below).

L1 Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Did not stop play before the non-offending was afforded the time to establish a tactical advantage from an obvious opportunity.
- Played advantage gained once the non-offending team had an obvious opportunity to play the ball as they wished.
- Did not bring play back when the non-offending team had gained a tactical advantage but then made an unforced error prior to capitalizing on the opportunity.
- Played advantage based on a clear and real opportunity rather than on a hope for some opportunistic event.
- Played advantage without putting non-offending players under pressure.
- *Communicated when advantage is being played with signal and specific communication regarding the reason for the advantage (scrum or penalty)

T-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Recognized when infringements were not material and allowed play to continue without playing advantage.
- Played advantage with proper consideration for the preference/temper of each team.
- * Identified the player, team and infringement while communicating that advantage is being played (e.g., "Blue 10 leaving his feet").
- * Communicated when advantage was gained.
- Communicated to offender (and usually the captain) about the infringement if an advantage was gained.
- Communicated to offender (and usually the captain) about the non-material infringement if play had been allowed to continue after the infringement.

Scoring note

*Communication elements (marked with *) should not be scored as individual errors. Rather they should be viewed as a competency that is either met or not met. One omission does not impact scoring. This is a one-time glitch. More than one omission counts as one error.*

National and International Panel referees are expected to meet all elements listed above.

RUCK/MAUL

Key Elements of Competence

L2 Elements

- Correctly managed static mauls (including mauls moving laterally).
- Observed flagrant illegal collapsing of the ruck or maul.
- Observed other unsafe play.
- Awarded scrum put-in to the correct side when the ball became unplayable.

L1 Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Observed players who failed to remain on their feet.
- Observed players who used their hands to win the ball in a ruck.
- Observed players who joined the ruck/maul from in front of the hindmost teammate.
- Observed players who obstructed in advance of the ball.
- Observed defenders who unbound and affected play.
- Observed offside by defending non-participants, including loiterers.

Coaching Points

- Positioned out of the way of arriving players.
- Initial position was appropriate to manage the contest for the ball.
- Final position was appropriate to manage offside by participants and other destructive play by participants.

T-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- * Observed and prevented players from entering the ruck or maul with their heads and shoulders below their hips.
- * Observed and prevented tactical illegal collapsing of ruck/maul.
- * Observed and prevented attackers who loitered at the side of the ruck/maul (“Sentinels, Pillars, Posts, etc”).
- Immediately and accurately (Not at a tackle or hug) communicated *ruck* or *maul*.
- Proactively prevented ruck/maul offenses from occurring at individual ruck/mauls. Preventing patterns of offenses is a **control** element.

** Observed and prevented was chosen because it best expresses the expectation of a T-Panel referee. Failures in observation are clear errors and are scored as such.*

Preventative actions fall into two areas:

- *Actions taken at each tackle (preventative voice and/or positioning). These are treated primarily as coaching points.*
- *Actions taken to prevent patterns of offenses. These are addressed in the control section.*

Coaching Points

- Positioned out of the way of the outlet pass.
- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent ruck/maul infringements from becoming material during the final stage of the ruck/maul.
- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent ruck/maul infringements during the formative stage of the ruck/maul.

National and International Panel referees are expected to meet all elements listed above.

RESTARTS

RESTART KICKS & OPEN PLAY

Key Elements of Competence

L2 Elements

- Observed restart kicks (i.e. penalty kicks, free kicks, kickoffs, dropouts) that were taken incorrectly (method and place).
- Observed non-kicking team players who failed to retire 10 meters or who were not put outside by actions of other players at restart kicks.
- Observed offside kicking-team players at restart kicks.
- Observed forward passes and knock-ons.

Coaching Points

- Position & orientation were appropriate to observe offside at restart kicks.

L1 Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Proactively prevented offenses at static restart kicks from occurring.
- Observed players lying on the ground (Law 14) interfering with ball availability.
- Observed players falling over a player on the ground with the ball.
- Observed offside players in open play when ball was kicked ahead.
- Observed accidental offside in open play.
- Recognized willful knock-ons.
- Facilitated quick tap penalty and free kicks.

Coaching Points

- Positioned even with ball carrier with suitable adjustment in anticipation of next phase.
- Positioned even with the front wave of players approaching the receiver of a kick.

T-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Proactively prevented offenses at quickly taken restart kicks from occurring.
- Proactively prevented offenses in open play from occurring.

National and International Panel referees are expected to meet all elements listed above.

SCRUM

Key Elements of Competence

L2 Elements

- Awarded scrum at the correct position.
- Observed and ensured fair competition for the ball.
- Enforced proper engagement procedures.
- Observed and ensured that after engagement, the scrum was stationary and square to touch until the ball was put in.
- Did not allow repeated collapsing or lifting of scrums.
- Used and acted upon "Use it or lose it" at static scrums.
- Observed and ensured scrumhalf remained onside and stayed out of the pocket.
- Observed back row unbinding early.
- Observed offside by non-participants.

Coaching Points

- Final position was appropriate to observe offside and destructive play.
- Body orientation & scanning provided good view of all non-participants.

L1 Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Observed and ensured binding between opposing props was correct.
- Observed and ensured that heads and shoulders were above the hips until the scrum was over.
- Observed and ensured that the body and feet of all front row players were in a normal position to make a forward shove.
- Did not have repeated reset of scrums. In other words, the problems causing reset scrums were identified and solved.
- Ensured back rows remained bound until the scrum was over.
- Ensured non-participants remained onside.

Coaching Point

- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent scrum offenses from occurring.

Referees graded Territorial, National and International Panel referees are expected to meet all elements listed above.

LINEOUT

Key Elements of Competence

L2 Elements

- Awarded the lineouts at the correct place.
- Established correct positioning of the thrower, the thrower's opposite and the receivers (if any) prior to the throw.
- Observed improper numbers of players in the lineout
- Observed unfair competition for the ball.
- Observed jumpers jumping early or remaining supported in the air prior to the throw-in.
- Observed destructive offenses across the lineout and made this a priority.
- Observed offside infringements by participants.
- Observed illegal support of jumpers.
- Observed offside by non-participants when ball was held in the lineout.
- Observed improper quick throw-ins.

Coaching Points

- Positioned is such that referee is visible to backs when ball is held in the lineout.

L1 Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Ensured jumpers did not jump early or remain supported in the air prior to the throw-in.
- Ensured there were no destructive offenses across the lineout.
- Ensured participants remained onside.
- Ensured proper support of jumpers.
- Ensured non-participants remained onside when ball is held in the lineout.
- Ensured that players of the team throwing in do not obstruct prior to forming of a maul at a lineout.
- Managed quick throw-ins.

Coaching Point

- Positioning and communications were appropriate to prevent lineout offenses from occurring.

Referees graded Territorial, National and International Panel referees are expected to meet all elements listed above.

MANAGEMENT

CONTROL

Key Elements of Competence

L2 Elements

- Observed dangerous tackles (e.g. high or no-wrap).
- Observed late tackles on kicker.
- Observed early tackles on the receiver of a kick.
- Controlled unsafe behavior and foul play promptly and effectively.
- Candidly admitted mistakes, but did not try to compensate for them.
- Behaved professionally both on and off the playing enclosure.
- Observed trampling of players at tackles

L1 Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Observed late or early tackles.
- Observed obstruction and players who obstructed prior to a maul being formed.
- Observed use of a teammate as a "pick" or shield.
- Observed unfair play and applied the appropriate punitive measures.
- Observed dangerous play and misconduct and applied the appropriate punitive measures.
- Observed individual acts of cynical infringements and applied appropriate sanctions, including caution and sin bin and/or penalty try (without prior warning).
- Used appropriate punitive measures.
- Communicated with captains/players so that they complied with his requests upon formal prompting (i.e., players were compelled to comply).
- Remained calm in tense situations.

T-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Identified flash points and dealt with them effectively.
- Managed observed repeated team infringements effectively by applying appropriate sanctions, including caution and sin bin (usually after prior warning has been given). Repeated team infringements can be:
 - A number of similar offences in a short period of time
 - A pattern without time limit (e.g. offences occurring close to the goal line throughout the match)
- Managed observed repeated infringements by individuals by applying appropriate sanctions, including caution and sin bin (usually after prior warning has been given). Repeated infringements by the individual are without time limit. Once a warning has been given it stands in effect for the remainder of the game
- Recognized when infringements were not material and managed them, without stopping the game, so they would not recur.
- Resolved problems without continually penalizing for the same offense.
- Communicated with captains/players so that they willingly corrected problems upon formal and informal prompting.
- Demeanor was one of confidence.

National and International Panel referees are expected to meet all elements listed above.

COMMUNICATION

Key Elements of Competence

L2 Elements

- Whistle tone was distinctive according to decision.
- Primary signal (penalty kick, free kick, or scrum) was clear and given simultaneously with whistle

L1 Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Secondary signal was clear and given simultaneously with verbal explanations promptly after the whistle was blown.
- Explanation for penalty was concise, specific and clearly understood by players.

T-Panel Elements

- All elements listed above.
- Communicated no infringement had occurred in situations where there was a possibility of doubt.
- Communicated effectively with other match officials.
- Communications applied at the moment of infringement should not be repetitive. For example, *Ruck* or *Hands off* (at a ruck) should be said only once.

National and International Panel referees are expected to meet all of the elements above.

NOTE:

Certain aspects of COMMUNICATION are found within other units. For example:

- Communications in TACKLE, RUCK/MAUL, RESTART KICKS & OPEN PLAY, SCRUM, and LINEOUT that pertain to the preventive nature of infringements at the moment of the infringement.
- Communications in CONTROL that pertain to the prevention of future infringements.
- Communications in ADVANTAGE that are designed to facilitate play after an infringement has been observed.

COMPETENCE-BASED EVALUATION SUMMARY

Each evaluator has his own style of observing and assessing a referee. The game can be observed as a whole and then broken down into the various aspects of the game. Or the game can be observed as pieces and then added up to get the game as a whole. In either approach, the pieces must be considered.

The objective of establishing criteria (key elements of competence) within each aspect (unit) of the game is to ensure consistent measurement of every referee's performance. Within each unit, the key elements of competence are sorted by expectations for each grade of referee. The expectations increase as the grade of the referee increases. The choices of words for each element are meant to reflect this increasing level of expectation. An example of this is reflected in the following discussion of the tackle unit:

A L2 referee does not permit pileups to continue after the ball is buried, but the ball is still buried on occasions. A L1 referee ensures pileups do not occur by keeping arriving players on their feet, but he may still not have the ball available due to actions of the tackler or tackled ball carrier although he should be able to observe ball killing. A Territorial Panel referee is expected to ensure immediate ball availability. T-Panel referees will display a range of abilities in this area as they gain experience and expertise. The referee's current skill within this range will be reflected in the unit score.

Many elements within each unit have not been identified as key elements of competence. These items should not be ignored, but they have low priority. This competence-based system is not meant to generate a comprehensive review of all the units and their associated elements of competence. The vital few messages (key elements) must not be lost in the trivia of detail (minor elements).

In the course of a game, there are a great many things to observe. If the referee got all the key elements of competence correct but missed a few minor points, then you might talk to him about the minor points after congratulating him on a fine performance. If the referee had some minor points that he missed but if he also missed a few key elements of competence, then the conversation should focus on the key elements. The important thing to remember is that the evaluator must apply the same standard to every game. This standard is reflected by the key elements of competence listed within each unit.

GRADING THE PERFORMANCE

GRADING CRITERIA FOR EACH UNIT OF COMPETENCE

The competence-based system is designed to facilitate the grading of a referee's performance. The game is broken down into eight units with each unit having key elements that must be met. The key elements are tabulated so that it is clear what is expected for each level of referee. The descriptors of the key elements are brief, but the concepts have specific meaning. For instance, if the referee is expected to "observe" an event, this is different from the expectation that he "manage" the event. Observation has two meanings: (1) actually see the event, and (2) penalize it when no advantage has been gained. Management of an event means applying other criteria to avoid penalizing the event as well as applying preventive refereeing to avert the occurrence or reoccurrence of the event.

Each unit of competence has its own set of key elements that are categorized by expectations for various levels of referees. A referee of a given level is expected to meet the criteria for his level. The score awarded for each unit ranges from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest level of performance and 1 being the lowest. The score must be an integer – decimal points or fractions are not permitted. The score must be awarded based on how the referee performed with respect to the key elements. There are many expectations for each unit that have not been identified as key elements. Performance of the referee in adhering to elements not identified as key elements should not be considered in determining the grade for each unit. The evaluator may elect to discuss non-key elements with the referee, but only key elements should be used to determine the grade for each unit.

Five of the units can be scored by counting the number of incidents of non-compliance. These units include tackle, ruck/maul, restart kicks/ open play, scrum, and lineout. The first table on the following page lists the scoring criteria for these units. Errors that contribute to determining the score in a unit must be documented in the report.

Three of the units (advantage, control and communication) cannot be scored by counting incidents. Instead, they must be scored more qualitatively as indicated by the second table on the following page.

**SCORING CRITERIA FOR TACKLE, RUCK/MAUL, RESTART KICKS/OPEN PLAY,
SCRUM, AND LINEOUT**

Grade	Performance criteria for an individual unit of competence
5	Complied with the key elements on almost all occasions during the game. Complied with the key elements for his grade with no more than 1 lapse during the game. In order to get a score of 5 the referee must also demonstrate an understanding of the key elements for the next level of requirements. If there are no such infringements in the game, then the referee should be credited with a unit score of 5.
4	Complied with the key elements on most occasions during the game. Complied with the key elements for his grade with 2 to 4 lapses during the game.
3	Some evidence of non-compliance with the key elements during the game. Complied with the key elements for his grade with 5 or 6 lapses during the game.
2	Non-compliance with the key elements on many occasions during the game. Complied with the key elements for his grade with 7 or 8 lapses during the game.
1	Non-compliance with the key elements throughout the game. 9 or more lapses during the game.

SCORING CRITERIA FOR ADVANTAGE, CONTROL, COMMUNICATION

Grade	Performance criteria for an individual unit of competence
5	Complied with the key elements for his grade 95%+ of the time (on " nearly all occasions ")
4	Complied with the key elements for his grade 85% to 94% of the time (" most occasions ")
3	Complied with the key elements for his grade 75% to 84% of the time (" regularly ")
2	Complied with the key elements for his grade 65% to 74% of the time (" not regularly enough ")
1	Complied with the key elements for his grade < 65% of the time (" too infrequently ")

Note:

It is anticipated that most of the time a referee who is performing at grade will get unit scores of 4. A unit score of 5 should reflect extremely meritorious performance. A unit score of 3 will indicate some problems, but nothing significant. **Unit scores of 1 or 2 reflect significant problems and should be noted on the front page of the written report.**

SIMPLE GRADING EXERCISE

A L1 referee is consistently out of position due to a perceived fitness problem. The evaluator observed that on more than ten occasions during the game he was in poor position for tackles. The cause of his problem was that he was taking shortcuts and reading the game wrong. This caused him to miss sealing of the ball at the tackle on seven occasions. The referee did not allow pileups to occur, but he awarded scrums when he should have awarded penalty kicks. You believe the cause of his problem may be his fitness, particularly his ability to be on his toes, read the game and accelerate quickly.

How would you score the referee's performance in the "Tackle" unit?

SIMPLE GRADING EXERCISE ANSWER

Tackle = 2

A L1 referee is expected to ensure that both the tackler and the ball carrier conform to law and make the ball available. The issue we have in this referee's performance is sealing of the ball, not slowing down of the ball's availability. Ensuring **immediate** availability of ball is a T-Panel key element, but preventing sealing of the ball is a L1 key element. This referee failed to comply with this key element on seven occasions during the game. The appropriate unit score is 2.

For the front page of the report, because of the Unit Score of 2 being given, it is necessary to add a comment about the score in the Comment section. The following would be appropriate:

“In this instance, it appeared that fitness hindered the referee to properly read these tackle violations. The referee's travel lanes, late arrivals, and initial positioning prohibited him from seeing players sealing the ball. As a result scrums were set for unplayable ball rather than penalizing the perpetrators.

The referee should concentrate on his/her footwork and movement at breakdowns, so that he/she can read and anticipate the next phase or movement. In training, quick acceleration exercises should be put into practice coupled with sprints to breakdowns set at various distances to improve steeper angles of approach.”

For this Unit, where the data leads to the score, the report should include specifics about the observer's observations. The bare minimum would be a list of the observed errors, with the time noted (to the nearest minute).

OVERALL GRADE

The overall score places greater emphasis on some units than others. Each unit score is multiplied by its appropriate weighting factor as tabulated below:

Tackle	x 4
Advantage	x 2
Ruck/Maul	x 3
Restart Kicks/Open Play	x 1
Scrum	x 3
Lineout	x 2
Control	x 4
Communications	x 1

The overall score of a referee is calculated by adding up the weighted scores for the eight units. An example is offered below.

Continuity

Tackle:	Unit score = 3, Weighted score = $3 \times 4 = 12$
Advantage:	Unit score = 5, Weighted score = $5 \times 2 = 10$
Ruck/Maul:	Unit score = 3, Weighted score = $3 \times 3 = 9$

Restarts⁴

Restart Kicks/ Open Play:	Unit score = 5, Weighted score = $5 \times 1 = 5$
Scrum:	Unit score = 4, Weighted score = $4 \times 3 = 12$
Lineouts:	Unit score = 5, Weighted score = $5 \times 2 = 10$

Management

Control:	Unit score = 4, Weighted score = $4 \times 4 = 16$
Communication:	Unit score = 4, Weighted score = $4 \times 1 = 4$

Overall Score = $(12+10+9+5+12+10+16+4) = 78$

Once the overall score is calculated, the next step depends on the current grade of the referee. For T-Panel (and higher) referees, only the score is reported. For a Local referee (L1 or L2), the evaluator needs to determine the *match grade*. The grade awarded defines the referee's performance for that game only. It is not the same as the grade an evaluation committee awards the referee at the end of the season based on a series of observations.

On page 3 is a table that identifies match levels and indicates the match capability for each referee's grade. We would expect a referee to be overly challenged by matches that are higher than the standard for the referee's grade and inadequately challenged by matches of a lower level. In awarding a match grade, one must consider the match standard of play in relation to the referee's grade. **The evaluator needs to gauge the quality of play in the match and has the right to assign a match level other than the one indicated by the match level table if appropriate. In this case, there needs to be a clear explanation as to why the assigned match level is different from the table.**

It is very difficult to assign a match grade for an overall score when the disparity between the referee's grade and the match standard is large. If the referee is officiating a match that is within one level of that which is appropriate for his referee's grade, the table on the following page may be used. **The table is meant to serve as a guideline, not an arithmetic recipe.** If you feel the match grade should be different than what is indicated by the table, assign the match grade you think is appropriate.

The table reflects the following premises:

- The referee will have increasing problems as he officiates matches increasingly above his match capability.
- The referee will have few problems if he officiates a match within his match capability.
- It is very difficult to assign a match grade above the referee's current grade if the referee is officiating a match that is one level below his match capability.
- Matches that are more than one level below a referee's match capability are not reliable in terms of a grading process. The evaluator may be able to provide feedback, but grading is difficult.

MATCH GRADE MATRIX

For use in awarding a match grade for local referees (L2 - L1) and for promotion to T-Panel based on the level of the assigned match and the overall score for the referee's performance. This system is not designed for evaluating L3 or L4 referees and should only be used with L2 referees who are ready for the step to L1.

Grading Matrix for L2 and L1 Referees

Match Level Versus Referee's Capability	Match score in this range indicates the referee performed below grade	Match score in this range indicates the referee performed at current grade	Match score in this range indicates the referee performed above grade
+ 1	54 – 64	65 - 75	76 - 86
0	64 – 74	75 - 85	86 - 96
- 1	69 – 79	80 - 95	>96

USA Rugby is now using a generic T-Panel referee grade for territorial referees. The grades of B3, B2 and B1 are no longer applicable. This matrix is used to guide the match grade awarded in evaluations on locally graded referees.

There is a range of match levels the T-Panel referee may be assigned to. When writing an evaluation, the evaluator will report on the match level and the numerical score achieved. The evaluator will not assign a Match Grade, as ranking T-Panel referees as well as promoting or demoting them, is the purview of the Territorial Selection Committee.

For Territorial Panel referees, a score of less than seventy (70) indicates a below grade performance.

The table is meant to serve as a guideline, not an arithmetic recipe. If you feel the match grade should be different than what is indicated by the table, assign the match grade you think is appropriate. Listed below are three examples of factors that may cause an evaluator not to follow the guidelines.

The level of play may not conform to the standard indicated in the match level matrix. For instance, a Division 1 A side may field a mixture of A & B players and play at a lower level.

External factors such as weather, crowd pressure, and importance of the match may affect the challenge faced by the referee. For instance, it is very difficult for a referee to perform well in freezing rain on a muddy pitch.

Unit grades of 1 or 2 may override the overall score. For instance, the referee may have failed to detect the cause of 10 collapse scrums (unit score for scrum = 1), and in such a circumstance it may cause his match grade to be lower than indicated by the overall score.

WRITING THE REPORT

THE WRITTEN REPORT

The written report becomes a permanent record for use by a wide variety of parties:

- **The Referee**

The referee uses this report as reference for development

- **The Evaluator**

The evaluator uses this report to document his observations for all parties, himself included.

- **The Referee Society**

The Referee Society uses the report to help the referee by providing the appropriate resources.

- **The Evaluation Committee**

The Evaluation Committee uses the report in making its recommendations to the Selection Committee for the promotion and relegation of members of the National Panel and the National Focus Group. It uses the report internally in its consideration of an evaluator's future appointments and promotion possibilities, as well as for meeting requirements for the evaluator's re-calibration.

- **The Evaluation Review Subcommittee**

The Evaluation Review Subcommittee reviews territorial level reports for internal consistency. The subcommittee handles Territorial and National Evaluators' requests for report reviews for DVD re-calibration.

- **The Appointments Committee**

The Appointments Committee uses the report to develop the referee by providing appropriate matches.

- **The Selection Committee**

The Selection Committee uses the report to decide whether the referee meets promotion or relegation criteria.

The report needs to be approached with a great deal of care. Evaluators are trying to inform, guide, and counsel a number of independent persons or groups so they may help the referee improve. In view of this fact, the evaluator should meet the following requirements for his report:

- He needs to be honest
- He should be clear in his choice of words, thus avoiding ambiguous interpretation
- He should clearly differentiate between fact and opinion
- He should distinguish the important from the trivial
- He should be consistent with what he said to the referee after the match

The evaluator must own his report – it is his report and it bears his signature. The fact that the referee may not agree with all or part of the report should not influence the way the report is written. In each report, the evaluator's credibility is on the line and he must not be afraid to stand behind his opinions. It is important the evaluator makes the report worthy of himself.

The report should be constructive – anybody can be negative, not everybody can create. Such comments as “offside missed” offer little value. A more constructive comment would be “offside around rucks/mauls missed due to being too close to play.”

The report is two pages (or more): the first page provides an overview and the following page(s) provides the commentary and scores for each of the eight units of competence and the supporting data.

On page one, the section dealing with the description of the game is meant to provide the reader with a general view of how the game was played. It is not meant to discuss the referee's performance. That part of the report is covered on subsequent pages. The discussion on the description of the game should remark on such things as

- Playing conditions
- Players' attitude
- Players' skills
- Playing styles of each team
- Significant moments
 - Flashpoints
 - Momentum
 - Scores (answered or unanswered)

The Comment section on page 1 of the report should be used to discuss the referee's performance on a general basis. Mention areas that were handled particularly well, as well as those that caused unusual problems, including noting those components for which a unit score of 1 or 2 was given. A unit score of 1 or 2 makes “above grade” unlikely regardless of the scores in other units. If the match grade does not follow the matrix, there should be an explanation. The observer should also include a prognosis based on this observation. (Examples)

- This referee is capable of higher-level matches.
- This referee is comfortable at this level match.
- This referee needs further development for this level match.

In filling out page 2 of the report, it is important that the remarks for each unit of competence be consistent with the score awarded. The statistics for each unit must be calculated, and the comments need to be written **before** a score is given – the words should lead to the grade.

Coaching Advice

Any coaching advice should be offered in the narrative for the relevant unit. It should be presented as a separate paragraph(s) so that the advice is not intermingled with the observations being reported. The referee is, of course, free to accept the advice or not, but evaluators bring a wealth of experience to the table and should feel free to offer suggestions if they can.

Required Supporting Data

The following is the minimum required data to validate the unit scores and to assist in analysis of patterns in the match (time-specific means to nearest the minute):

- A time-specific list of all penalties, free kicks and successful penalty advantages
- Time specific notation of all referee errors that affect scoring the report
- Number of advantages played and number of advantages gained
- Number of scrums and lineouts
- List of all reset scrums including the time and reason for resetting



USA RUGBY
Referee Performance Report

Referee _____ Society _____ Grade _____ Date _____
Match (Score) _____ v. _____
Match Type _____ Match Level _____ Venue _____
Assistant Referees _____

Description of the game:

Comment:

Match grade _____

Overall Score _____

Evaluator _____

Date _____

	Unit Score	Weight	Weighted Score
TACKLE		x 4	
ADVANTAGE		x 2	
RUCK & MAUL		x 3	
RESTART KICKS/ OPEN PLAY		x 1	
SCRUM		x 3	
LINEOUT		x 2	
CONTROL		x 4	
COMMUNICATION		x 1	

Key Points:

-
-
-

APPENDIX

Grade Characteristics

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF REFEREE GRADES

Local Area Union Grades

Ref Grade	General Characteristics	Match Level
L3	This is the first formal grade for a referee. Typically, this referee has significant development needs in some very basic aspects. He may be new to refereeing and just beginning to gain a feel for the game. He lacks mastery of the Laws of the Game. He has significant positioning problems. His communication skills will need some improvement.	
L2	This referee has a basic understanding of the laws. He knows the letter of the laws and applies them within his abilities. He may have significant problems in any aspect of the game, which can be corrected with coaching. Typically, his perspective and decisions are affected by inconsistent pace or positioning or by an over-zealous application of the letter of the laws.	6
L1	Fitness is a requirement for this referee. He may lack pace in quick play, but he knows running lines to get himself into position. He is able to manage games without significant problems in the games appropriate for his level. He may influence the way the game is played, but he will be consistent and fair to both sides. The players will have to adjust to some areas of the referee's application of laws, but having done that, they will be able to play the game accordingly.	5

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF REFEREE GRADES

Territorial Grades

Ref Grade	General Characteristics	Match Level
T-Panel (entry)	This referee has begun the transition from officiating a game according to his standard to allowing the players to play according to their abilities. There may be instances of imposition of his standard, but they are the exception, not the norm. Pace has been added to fitness. He applies advantage well in games that are played in good spirit. He is learning how to use advantage while maintaining control of an intense, fast-moving game.	4
T-Panel (mature) and NFG	This referee is able to prevent, as well as correct, problems. He has developed a style and a philosophy of refereeing that consistently work for his personal characteristics. He consistently gets players to perform according to their abilities and desires for the day. He is learning how to help players lift their game to a higher level than they may have manifested early in the match. He knows what it means to be a leader on and off the field in any level of national competition. His exposure to international competitions will help him develop the experience and confidence to represent his country well. He is learning what it means to be an ambassador for his country.	3

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF REFEREE GRADES

National Grades

Ref Grade	General Characteristics	Match Level
Nat'l Panel	This referee has mastered the art of refereeing. He consistently creates the best game of rugby at all levels of competition except those higher levels of international competition where the players refuse to respond to his clear efforts to enhance the game. He is continually refining his style to lead players out of their uncooperative spirit. With his refinement will come the ability to consistently create the best game of rugby in the most competitive of international test matches. He is an ambassador for his country and a leader both on and off the field.	2
Elite Squad	This referee always creates the best game of rugby even at the highest level of competition. He is calm and effective even in the tensest moments of international competition. He is an ambassador for his country and a leader both on and off the field.	1

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF REFEREE GRADES

Local Area Union (L-Panel) Referees

In defining the characteristics of the Local Area Union (L-Panel) referees, it is recognized that these referees are progressively learning to manage the fundamentals of the game. The general themes in determining the distinguishing characteristics for Local referees are as follows:

- A L3 referee is still learning the game and in a given match may have problems with any aspect of the game.
- A L2 referee should be able to manage the safety aspects of the game. He should be able to apply the whistle/signal sequence of communication. He should be positioned correctly at scrums, line-outs and situations that occur near the goal line. He should be able to prevent pileups after tackles, but he will have problems in dealing with the initial players arriving at a post-tackle situation. He should conduct himself with good demeanor both on and off the playing enclosure.
- A L1 referee should be able to manage all of the above items as well as those aspects of the game that relate to offside. He should be able to manage the participants arriving after a tackle, but he may have problems ensuring the ball is immediately available. He should provide concise and specific explanations for penalties that are clearly understood by players. He should be fit and in proper position for all aspects of play with the possible exception of faster-paced tackle situations. He should be confident in his management of the players, and he should establish clear priorities for the players.

The distinguishing features of Local referees are compared and contrasted in the table entitled *Distinguishing Characteristics, L-Panel Referees*.

Territorial (T-Panel) Referees

In defining the characteristics of Territorial referees there are three areas of law which discern the level of the referee:

- Ball availability (tackle situations)
- Space to play (offside and onside)
- Game flow (advantage and management of players)

The distinguishing features of T-panel referees are compared and contrasted in the table entitled *Distinguishing Characteristics, T-Panel Referees*.

National (National Panel and Elite Squad) Referees

A significant part of reaching the top level in refereeing is the ability to achieve mastery of all the key elements across the complete spectrum of team styles and tactics. The fundamental feature of top-level performance is consistency of excellence independent of the skill level or attitude of the players. The top-level referees promote the best games the players are capable of, independent of their attitude for the day.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF REFEREE GRADES
L-Panel Referees

Aspect of Game	L3 Referee	L2 Referee	L1 Referee
Positioning	Inconsistent	Positioning at set pieces is correct as well as at rucks and mauls that are slow in recycling the ball. Properly positioned at goal lines. Some inconsistencies in positioning at tackles and quick rucks due to lack of pace or poor running lines.	Fitness is a requirement for this referee. He may lack pace in quick play, but he knows running lines to get himself into position. His arrival time for tackles or quick rucks will be satisfactory, but his choice of initial position may be inconsistent with respect to seeing the ball or being out of the flow of players.
Scrum & Lineouts	Inconsistent	At scrums, there may be some instability caused by front row maneuvering that go uncorrected, but the scrums are kept safe. The scrumhalf is kept onside, out of the pocket, but flankers may unbind, and backs may encroach the offside line. At lineouts, destructive (across the line) offenses are detected, but there may be inconsistencies in managing other offenses.	Competency in all aspects
Ball Availability (tackles)	Inconsistent	Pileups are not permitted and safety of players on the ground is protected. There will be inconsistencies in keeping the next participants on their feet as well as making sure the ball is immediately available.	Arriving players will be kept on their feet. This referee is learning how to make the ball immediately available and is able to do so when play is slow. Faster paced play will cause him problems.
Space to Play (offside & onside)	Inconsistent	Flagrant offside is detected, but generally speaking this referee is inconsistent in controlling both forwards and backs.	All offside at scrums and lineouts are detected, as is flagrant offside at rucks/mauls. Some inconsistencies at rucks and mauls may occur.
Game Flow (Advantage & Management)	Inconsistent	This referee has a basic understanding of the laws, but inconsistent positioning or an overzealous application of the letter of the laws may affect his decisions. Advantage is usually applied inconsistently.	This referee is able to manage games at his level without significant problems. Players will have to adjust to his application of law; but having done that, they will be able to play accordingly. The referee may have only one standard for advantage that will not be adjusted to the game.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF REFEREE GRADES
T-Panel Referees

Aspect of Game	T-Panel Referee (entry level)	T-Panel Referee (mature level)
Positioning	Competency in all aspects	Competency in all aspects
Scrum & Lineouts	Competency in all aspects	Competency in all aspects
Ball Availability (tackles)	This referee will be properly positioned for ball killing tactics. In faster paced games, he will be inconsistent in identifying the real culprit. He may often set a scrum for dead ball rather than identifying the problem.	This referee has gained the ability to identify and deal with the causes of killed ball as well as subtle slowing of ball availability. He is able to influence play to make the ball available.
Space to Play (offside & on-side)	This referee is consistent in his application of the offside law, but he may have difficulty with the more subtle forms of spoiling play in rucks and mauls such as side joining and tactical collapsing.	This referee not only corrects the problems leading to loss of space he is also able to influence play to create space for tactical execution.
Game Flow (Advantage & Management)	This referee will make good use of advantage, but there may be inconsistency in his application of it in multi-phase recycling of ball at rucks and mauls. This referee may try to achieve flow through allowing advantage when he should be pulling the game in to reduce the temper of the game.	This referee is able to create a flowing, open game through his consistency of decisions, his communication, his positional presence, and his management skills. He seldom has a bad game. His biggest challenge is to avoid being frustrated by particular team tactics or approach to the game at the high-skill levels of play.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF REFEREE GRADES
National Panel and Elite Referees

These referees will demonstrate excellence in all aspects of the Game.