

The 31st Participant

Working with Match Officials to get the best out of the game for all participants



No 31

- There are 30 players on the field.
- There are numerous coaches and support staff in the technical area
- But there is always a 31st participant.
 - The referee is not separate from the game, they are part of it.



Why It Matters

Better relationships with officials create:



Rugby Is Different

RUGBY HAS ITS CORE VALUES

BUT BEYOND THE WORDS
ON POSTERS AND CLUB WALLS,
WHAT DO WE EXPECT IN
THE GAME ITSELF?



RESPECT

We respect teammates, opponents, officials and the game.



COMMUNICATION

We speak, listen and share clearly. On and off the field.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our actions and our roles.



DISCIPLINE

We play by the laws and control what we can control.



SAFETY

We protect ourselves and others so everyone can enjoy the game.



SENSE OF COMMUNITY

We belong to something bigger. We support, include and look after each other.



STRONGER TOGETHER. BETTER RUGBY FOR ALL.

ONE GAME | ONE COMMUNITY | ONE STANDARD



The game works best when disagreement never becomes abuse.

The Human Behind The Whistle

REFEREES ARE PEOPLE FIRST.

We all have a story.
We face challenges.
We juggle commitments.

But we're continuing our rugby journey in different lane.

Thought bubble contents:
 - Excited ✓
 - Ready to perform
 - What if I make a mistake?
 - I've got this
 - Focus on what I can control
 - They won't be happy ☹️
 - Stay calm Breathe
 - Why do I do this?


VOLUNTEERS
 We give our time because we care.


STUDENTS
 We study hard and escape in rugby.


PARENTS
 We support our families and yours.


WORKERS
 We want to leave pressure at work.


YOUNG MATCH OFFICIALS
 We're learning, growing and improving every game.


RETIRED
 We still have our passion for rugby.


FORMER PLAYERS/COACHES
 We know this game, this is our new lane.

Different lives. One community. Stronger together.

We all have the unseen journey to the ground

Nerves are part of us wanting to do our best



I love this game

My team are behind me ❤️

I've got this

Be confident

Make the right calls

Stay calm

FOCUS ON WHAT I CAN CONTROL

It's okay to feel nervous ❤️

They might not like every decision

Do it for the love of the game ❤️

Enjoy it 😊

HUMAN.
DEDICATED.
UNSTOPPABLE.

Every game. Every decision.
Every time.

Everyone Shapes The Environment

POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS

USUALLY INCLUDE:



CALM CAPTAINS



They lead by example and set the tone for the game.



CONTROLLED COACHES



They stay calm, model respect and help their players do the same.



RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION



Everyone speaks to each other with respect, on and off the field.



SUPPORTIVE SIDELINES



Encouragement, not criticism. We support every decision.

*POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS BUILD BETTER GAMES, BETTER PEOPLE, **BETTER RUGBY.***

Negative environments affect everybody.

Captains Matter

STRONG CAPTAINS

Great captains don't just lead their team. They lead the game with respect and composure.



“Leadership isn't about being the loudest. It's about bringing the best out of everyone.”



LISTEN PROPERLY



- ✓ Give your full attention.
- ✓ Take in different views.
- ✓ Show you value others.



MANAGE TEAMMATES



- ✓ Keep your team focused.
- ✓ Stay calm and set the tone.
- ✓ Lead by example.



ASK CLEAR QUESTIONS



- ✓ Get the information you need.
- ✓ Be clear and respectful.
- ✓ Help everyone understand.



ADAPT QUICKLY



- ✓ Read the game.
- ✓ Adjust your approach.
- ✓ Make smart decisions fast.

STRONG CAPTAINS. STRONG TEAMS. BETTER GAMES.



The objective is understanding – not winning arguments.

Coaches Set The Tone

COACHES SET THE TONE

Great coaches don't just call the plays. They lead people. They build trust. They create the environment where *players, officials* and *the game* can thrive.

*Your attitude. Your words.
Your actions. Every time.*



LEAD WITH RESPECT



- Treat everyone with respect
- Value the referee and opposition
- Build trust through your actions



COMMUNICATE WITH PURPOSE



- Be clear, calm and consistent
- Communicate expectations
- Listen as much as you speak



CREATE A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT



- Encourage effort and attitude
- Celebrate the right things
- Keep it positive, win or lose



HOLD STANDARDS EVERY DAY



- Set high standards
- Address issues early
- Be fair, consistent and accountable



COACHES SET THE TONE. PLAYERS FOLLOW. GAME THRIVES.



Are we creating clarity or pressure?
Would a new referee want to return to our club?

Respect ≠ Silence

CONSTRUCTIVE CHALLENGE
IS PART OF RUGBY.



HEALTHY COMMUNICATION



CALM

Stay composed.
Keep emotions in check.



RESPECTFUL

Treat everyone with respect.
Focus on the issue, not the person.



SPECIFIC

Address the action, not the individual.
Be clear and concise.
Help understanding.



UNHEALTHY BEHAVIOUR



ABUSE

Name-calling and swearing has no place in our game.



SARCASM

Undermines respect and creates tension.



INTIMIDATION

Threats, aggressive gestures or body language are unacceptable.



PUBLIC CRITICISM

Embarrasses others and damages relationships.



BETTER COMMUNICATION
BETTER RUGBY.



The Spectator Effect

YOUNG REFEREES HEAR EVERYTHING.



**POSITIVE TOUCHLINE
BUILDS THEM UP**



FEEL CONFIDENT

Encouragement helps them believe in themselves.



STAY INVOLVED

A positive experience keeps them coming back.



ENJOY THE GAME

Respect and support make the game more enjoyable.



MORE WILL PARTICIPATE

Great environments attract and retain new officials.



**OUR BEHAVIOUR TODAY,
THEIR EXPERIENCE TOMORROW.**



**NEGATIVE TOUCHLINE
BREAKS THEM DOWN**



LOSE CONFIDENCE

Criticism and abuse make them doubt themselves.



QUIT EARLY

Negative experiences drive young officials away.



STOP ENJOYING IT

Stress and hostility take the fun out of the game.



FEWER GET INVOLVED

Bad behaviour drives people away from officiating.



This impacts us all but particularly YMOs, FMOs and referees with less experience.

Development Environments



It's Simple Really

WE ALL PLAY OUR PART IN CREATING THE RUGBY ENVIRONMENT

Everybody contributes to the
quality of the match experience.



Strong clubs build inclusive,
welcoming communities.



Players show respect,
teamwork and pride.



Coaches lead by example
and shape the culture.



Spectators create the atmosphere.
Support, don't undermine.



Officials do their best
to add value.



Volunteers keep rugby running
behind the scenes.



Every action, every word,
every time. It all matters.



BETTER ENVIRONMENTS. BETTER EXPERIENCES. BETTER RUGBY.



Rugby Values In Action

**PRESSURE
RISES...**



- VERBAL ABUSE**
Undermines respect and confidence.
- LOSS OF CONTROL**
Leads to poor decisions and regret.
- POOR BEHAVIOUR**
Creates a negative environment for everyone.
- NEGATIVE IMPACT**
Drives people away. Harms enjoyment and the game.

TRENDS



TEAMWORK



RESPECT



ENJOYMENT



DISCIPLINE



SPORTSMANSHIP



**VALUES PROTECT.
BETTER OUTCOMES.**



- STRONGER TOGETHER**
We achieve more when we work as a team.
- SHOW RESPECT**
Everyone deserves to be treated with respect.
- ENJOY THE GAME**
Positive attitudes create lasting memories.
- PLAY BY THE RULES**
Discipline keeps the game fair and safe for all.
- BE A ROLE MODEL**
Good sportsmanship leaves a positive legacy.

VALUES MATTER MOST WHEN PRESSURE RISES.

Final Reflection

FINAL THOUGHTS
WHAT ENVIRONMENT
DO WE WANT TO CREATE:
THIS IS RUGBY!

I CHOOSE TO...

- Support my teammates
- Encourage others
- Lead by example

Every action shapes the environment.

I CAN CONTROL...

- My attitude
- My effort
- My reactions
- My respect

Focus on what I can do, not what I can't.

AFTER THE GAME...

- Celebrate the good
- Learn from the rest
- Thank those who help

Growth happens in reflection.

I WILL...

- Bring energy, not negativity
- Add value, not pressure
- Lift the standard

Be part of the solution, not the problem.

I REMEMBER...

- We're a team
- It's just a game
- Enjoy the moment

Perspective keeps rugby positive.

TOGETHER WE...

- Create pride
- Build belonging
- Leave a legacy

Better today.
Better tomorrow.

HOW WE PLAY. HOW WE BEHAVE. WHO WE ARE. | LET'S CREATE THE RUGBY ENVIRONMENT WE'RE PROUD OF.