



## **BSRFC : REFEREEING POLICY**

The BSRFC club referees have produced this policy in response to the new Herts Rugby guidance and rules on pitch side behaviour in age grade rugby.

The policy document says that *Adults MUST NOT enter the pitch for any reason while an age-grade game is in play without being invited by the referee (except for a clearly identified emergency first aider to treat an injured player and only when it is safe to do so)*. This raises a number of issues on which the referees group has established a consistent policy which needs to be communicated to and complied with by the youth coaching groups.

This policy document is about safety and also the maintenance of good working relationships referees and coaches. We are sure that all of the youth coaches will embrace both the detail of this policy and the reasons for it.

**Coaches** : The starting point is that coaches cannot come onto the pitch during the game (they obviously can come on to talk to their players at half time). Our exceptions allow a coach onto the pitch (i) when there is a clear stoppage (eg while an injured player is being assessed) or after a try has been scored and (ii) in order to assess an injured player alongside the team medic. Coaches may not approach the referee during those breaks in play.

**Technical Areas** : RFU and Herts Rugby rules require technical areas to be provided and observed on any pitch that is being used for a competitive youth game. We are extending that to apply to all friendly matches as well.

In any game on pitch 1, where technical areas are clearly marked out, coaches and replacements must (except when a coach comes onto the pitch to assist with a medical assessment or treatment for an injured player) stay in the technical area. On other pitches where no area is marked, coaches and replacements must stay within an area between the centre and 10m lines and 2m back from the touchline.

Coaches are not permitted to follow play by walking up and down the touchline and are not permitted to stand in or behind the in goal area.

**Half time** : Coaches are not entitled to approach the referee during half time, unless the referee wants to initiate a discussion.

**Full time**: Approaches by coaches to the referee immediately after the game are inappropriate and unhelpful. We will not discuss issues out on the pitch but will always make ourselves available in the marquee or clubhouse after a short break for a constructive discussion. A break of say 15 mins after the full time whistle will allow everyone to calm down and gather their thoughts. A coach who wants to initiate a discussion should be prepared for their interpretation of the laws and refereeing practice

to be challenged by the referee when what the coach is saying is contrary to what we practice as a group.

**Dissent** : Everyone in the referees group is well versed on the need to deal with dissent on the pitch. We should not have to tolerate loud criticism of our decisions from coaches on the touchline. A coach who repeatedly challenges our decisions will in the first instance be invited to reflect on the poor example that they are setting to the players and to keep their comments to themselves. A coach who persists in complaining loudly about refereeing decisions will be asked to remove themselves from the vicinity of the pitch.

**Medics** : Our referees will introduce ourselves to each team's medic well before the kick off and brief them that they should come onto the pitch as soon as they see that a player is down and not wait for formal permission from the referee. A player who has a head injury or who shows any signs of concussion injury **must be removed from the pitch when it is safe to do so and cannot return under any circumstances.**

The Laws entitle the referee to require a player to be replaced if the referee doesn't think that the player is safe to continue even if the coaches and medic disagree.

**Stopping play for injuries** : There is no rule, contrary to what most players, coaches and spectators believe, that play must stop as soon as an injured player is down. It is always a matter of judgement for the referee depending on how serious the injury looks, the location/direction of play and whether play is likely to move close to the injured player and medic.

**Keith Edgeworth/ Peter Brady**

**BSRFC**

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