

IRFU Affiliate Referee Policy (Effective from 1st July 2022)

It is IRFU policy that all rugby matches played under the Laws of the Game (incl. U19 Variations) are refereed by:

- Members of the Branch Referee Associations/Society.
or
- I.R.F.U. Affiliate Referees (appointed by their club / school).

AFFILIATE REFEREE CRITERIA

- Aged 16 and under the age of 60.
- Hold a current IRFU affiliate referee qualification.
- Appointed by a school or club, to which they are affiliated, to referee a match or training session, in which that school or club is participating, home or away.*
- It is the club or schools responsibility to ensure that all affiliate referees appointed, are qualified and suitable.
- Appointed by a school or club, to which they are affiliated, to referee at a 'blitz' or similar tournament in which that school or club is participating.*
- Any school or club with an affiliate referees aged 16 and under the age of 18 must meet the criteria below

*Exception – Branch Development staff, who hold an affiliate referee qualification may, in the course of their duties, referee matches outside of their own club or school.

AFFILIATE REFEREES AGED 16 AND UNDER THE AGE OF 18

- Affiliate referees aged 16 and under the age of 18, must only be appointed to games within their school or club at an agreed level. Regardless of ability, no affiliate referee will officiate a game at a higher age grade than identified.
 - Example:
 - 16 year olds can referee up to U15 games.
 - 17 year olds can referee up to U16 games.
- Referees must be appointed by their club / school to games that reflect their ability and not just linked to their age.

ESSENTIAL COMMITMENT FROM SCHOOL OR CLUB

- Be familiar with safeguarding responsibilities as per IRFU guidelines, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/>
- Ensure IRFU Safeguarding 'Best Practice Guidelines are implement, <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/best-practice/>

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IRFU

- Appoint a suitable delegate to attend every game refereed by an affiliate referee aged 16 and under 18 years of age to assist with monitoring of welfare of all those involved.
 - The appointed delegate will also monitor the behaviour of players, coaches, parents etc towards the referee and act accordingly if necessary.
 - Club/School to ensure all safe guarding requirements have been met.
- <https://www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/spirit-of-rugby/safeguarding/>

AFFILIATE REFEREES

- Are a refereeing resource within their own club/school only. Responsibility for their appointment rests with their club/school.
- Are not available for appointment to matches by the Branch Referee Association/Society.
- May also apply, if they wish, for full membership of their Provincial Referee Association/Society.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

I.R.F.U Affiliate Referees qualify by:

- Registering on the I.R.F.U e-learning platform, Gainline.
- Completing the Laws of the Game **and** Concussion Management for General Public modules on the World Rugby Passport portal.
- Completing the I.R.F.U. Affiliate Referee course through Gainline.
- Qualification is valid for 2 years from date of course completion.

BENEFITS

- IRFU third party liability insurance.
- Accreditation certificate with re-validation (expiry) date.
- Registered on IRFU/Provincial database as an Affiliate Referee.
- Regular updates from the I.R.F.U. on changes to the Laws of the Game.

OVERALL RATIONALE

- Improve refereeing standards.
- Address safety issues.
- Formalise the status of these referees.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Affiliate Referees must:

- Keep up to date on all Law Changes & Rulings (these are updated regularly on both www.irishrugby.ie/referees and on World Rugby Website).
- Ensure their re-accreditation once qualification expires.
- Maintain appropriate fitness levels to allow them to safely officiate their assigned matches.

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AFFILIATE REFEREES – RETIREMENT POLICY

The rationale for the following policy is to meet the essential duty of care owed to, and to endeavour to ensure the health and safety of all participants, both match officials and players.

- It is IRFU policy that referees will not officiate past their 60th birthday.
- This policy extends to Affiliate Referees.
- It is recognised that there may be occasional exceptions where an affiliate referee demonstrates a continued high level of fitness and ability levels. Therefore, if a club/school is satisfied to appoint an affiliate referee to officiate after his/her 60th birthday, the affiliate referee must supply, to the club/school, a medical certificate indicating medical fitness to referee. This would be an annual requirement. In no case, however, should an affiliate referee be appointed past his/her 65th birthday.

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