

**2018 Procedure
Manual for Clubs
Utilizing the
East Penn Rugby
Referee Society**

Coach's Edition



Purpose of the Manual

The Eastern Penn Rugby Referee Society (EPRRS) annually publishes and makes available the following manual to more effectively communicate all of our policies and procedures to the Clubs and Club Personnel that utilize our services.

We have done our best to communicate everything “rugby refereeing” to our Clubs each year at the Mandatory Meeting, but find ourselves running into the same questions each year. Our hope is that this manual will provide all of our Policies and Procedures in a form that can be digested by the individuals requiring the information especially as officers change within the Clubs. This also provides a vehicle to distribute the USA Rugby Refereeing Game Management Guidelines that have been introduced for the calendar year.

This manual is designed to get the information out to the persons associated with your Club that perform tasks relative to the Referee Society. This manual provides information to the officers that need it. We in the EPRRS are attempting to remove many of the awkward interactions that have transpired between us and the Clubs. It is the responsibility of the receiver of this manual to treat it as it is intended.

This manual continues to reduce the number of mishaps within the clubs and the intent of the EPRRS is to continue to publish some version of this annually to continue that momentum. If there are items that continue to puzzle you at the Club level, reach out and we will not only address, but integrate into next year’s version.

No More Excuses

The primary objective of placing all of this in writing is to remove the Club’s excuse that “We didn’t know!” Now you know. Now we know we have told you. These manuals have been referenced at the annual meeting, a version for each officer has been loaded to the EPRRS website, and a copy of all has been sent to the officers we have on file for you. In any case, the onus is now clearly on the Clubs – NOT the Referee Society.

Laws

A current version of the Laws can always be found at the following address:

<http://laws.worldrugby.org/>

Most smart phone providers also have a World Rugby Law app for download.

Please make note that published Laws will not show any Law Trials being conducted. We currently are operating under certain Law Trials for the 2017-2018 competitive season.

Law Clarifications

World Rugby publishes Law Clarifications in addition to maintaining the current version of the Law Book online. If a Union in membership wished to challenge an aspect of Law it may submit a request for a Clarification in Law to the World Rugby Designated Members. All Clarifications as far back as 2002 are viewable along with the associated response from the Designated Members. On occasion, Clarifications in Law will result in a Law amendment.

The Law Clarifications can be found at the following address:

<http://laws.worldrugby.org/index.php?domain=10>

Game Management Guidelines

The current version of the Game Management Guidelines can be found on the EPRRS Website (www.eastpennrugby.org) by selecting **Published Documents** from the **Documents** menu.

This document is of critical importance to the clubs as it explains the direction given to the referees by USA Rugby concerning how to officiate the Laws. It will also reflect any Law Trials that are in play.

Referees at Practice

For many years, the EPRRS has offered all Clubs the opportunity to have a referee attend a practice and go over any aspects of Law or Management that the Club desires. In all of these years, only a handful of Clubs have taken us up on this offer. This is a tremendous wasted opportunity for a Club. Many referees are willing to do this just to get in a run and share in some camaraderie. For Clubs with a larger number of players, you could easily make use of the referee in a question and answer session and then a light scrimmage. To reiterate, we would love to be overwhelmed with these requests.

Along with practice, we would be happy to attend meetings of Clubs to perform the same function. We could be present for a video session and unless under severe duress, we could get the actual match referee. High Schools and Age Grade could also utilize this to educate parents and have them ask a referee questions.

Referee Abuse from the Coach's Chair

Referee Abuse is one of the largest obstacles for the Society as we attempt to retain referees. Clubs must be mindful that newer referees may be assigned to their match and that abusing the referee is not a productive way to vent frustration. Tournament situations will almost always offer any number of inexperienced referees. Coaches and Club Administrators should be mindful not to create a culture that tolerates the abuse of referees or opponents by their Club, their staff, or their spectators.

It is the responsibility of every Club in the Union to curb referee abuse. This is a responsibility of players, coaches, and spectators. The individual Clubs are responsible for the actions of all persons associated with them. Referees are continually instructed to aggressively report all instances of referee abuse.

The EPRRS is happy to report that we have done an exceptional job as a rugby community in cleaning up referee abuse in our area. It becomes more evident as referees travel to other parts of the country or when Clubs from the outside come here to play. That said, the battle continues. We have, in the past, sent warnings to individuals, Clubs, and entire divisions explaining that if the abuse did not stop, referees would no longer be assigned to the Home or Away matches of the trouble Club(s). This is a policy that will continue for any Clubs unable to police themselves.

As a Coach, you set the tone for your Club. Simply put, if you demonstrate to your players that it is okay to address referees in a disrespectful manner, they will do the same. Good coaches should have the ability to learn the tolerance, management, and skill levels of the referees on the field and convey that message to their players. While the constant criticism is a clear destructive behavior, "playing the referee" can be quite the advantage to a team. None of this is to say that a play or call will not so exacerbate you that have no choice but to yell. It is the continued pattern that causes the concern.

In addition to the players, the Coach can also set the tone for the spectators. While there can be very little expectation that a Coach would try to manage players and spectators at the same time, the example of the Coach drives the

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behavior. This is increasingly true at the High School and Age Grade programs. The Coach is the figurehead and the High School and Age Grade parents are tremendous offenders in terms of Referee Abuse. Sadly, these are the people that tend to have the least knowledge of Rugby but have somehow learned how to berate the man in the middle. This is a culture problem that the Coach really needs to help eliminate.

For the Clubs with more extensive coaching staffs, we tend to find that the assistants are many times the greatest offenders. Do everyone a favor and remove them from the sideline. It is an unnecessary risk if uncontrolled.

Referee Courses

The EPRRS will conduct Level 1 Referee Courses as demand dictates. We are extremely interested in creating new referees, but we do not bear the burden of recruiting bodies. We do our best, but Clubs need to help us identify potential referees and have them reach out to us to express their interest.

Believe this or not, but Clubs gain great benefit out of having referees in their fold. It becomes a very enlightening experience to have members of their Club with knowledge of the Laws and what referees are instructed to look for. At one point, the EPRU mandated that each Club have a certified referee. While that is no longer a requirement, it is still certainly a best practice. We continually strive to have more referees than matches, but we need your help to do so.

If any Clubs identify an individual who would be interested, please contact Tom Colucci (tomc@cncsolar.com). Tom has graciously agreed to consolidate indications of interest and act as the point on organizing Level 1 Officiating courses in the area.

For Clubs, Divisions, or Organizations that may be interested in hosting a Level 1 Referee Course, the USA Rugby Website contains a page with a great deal of information on what is needed to host a course and the benefits to the various pieces of the rugby community.

This information can be found at the following address:

<http://usarugby.org/host-a-ref-course>

EPRRS Officer List

Below is the list of current EPRRS Officers and their email addresses:

Title	Name	Email
President	Jim Rogers	presidenteprrs@gmail.com
Vice President	Chris Rubinate	CRubinate@gmail.com
Treasurer	Don McAlpine	treasurereprrs@gmail.com
Assignment Secretary – East	Matt Bluske	matt.bluske@gmail.com
Assignment Secretary – West	Sherri Magnuson	oschist@hotmail.com
Recording Secretary	Lance Orndorf	lJORndorf@verizon.net
Training Officer	Len Borcky	lennyb06@gmail.com

This information is updated as necessary and can be found on the EPRRS website (www.eastpennrugby.org) by selecting **Executive Committee** from the **Referee Information** menu.

Clubs can also contact the EPRRS at our generic email address (eastpennrefs@gmail.com).

EPRRS Outward Communication

The EPRRS Communicates to all of you throughout the year three separate ways. The more you take advantage of, the more you assure that you will not miss an important announcement.

1. EPRRS Website – All meeting notices and important information is posted on the Home Page of our website (www.eastpennrugby.org)
2. EPRRS Facebook – We have managed a Facebook account this year to blast out to all who Like and Follow us. Conveniently, many of the Facebook posts will direct you to the relevant article on our website. The EPRRS Facebook address is <https://www.facebook.com/EPRRS>
3. EPRRS Email Blasts – We have created an email list that sends information to whomever you wish. There is no limit to the names we can add for your Club. We have traditionally looked to capture the President, Coach, Treasurer, and Match Secretary. It is up to you to keep your information current.
 - The EPRRS suggests creating generic email addresses (eastpennrefs@gmail.com; presidenteprrs@gmail.com; treasurereprrs@gmail.com; etc.) for your Club and providing that email address to us for the sake of continuity.

Club Contact List

It is the responsibility of the club to supply the EPRRS with updated contact information for our email blast list. We have traditionally looked to capture the President, Coach, Treasurer, and Match Secretary, but will take as many email addresses as the Club is interested in providing. If your club is not receiving emails from the EPRRS (EPRRS Boss), we do not have correct contact information from your Club. We highly recommend creating generic email addresses (eastpennrefs@gmail.com; presidenteprrs@gmail.com; treasurereprrs@gmail.com; etc.) for your Club and providing that email address to us for the sake of continuity.

The EPRRS has only this method of communicating directly with the Clubs. We desperately need your help in keeping this information current. Please let us know if you elect new officers and provide us with the current information.

EPRRS Clinic and Training Documents

The EPRRS posts any substantive documents from our monthly training meeting on our website. We also post every presentation shown at the Mandatory Meeting. In fact, this very document will be added until replaced or updated.

Our current library of documents of interest to the Clubs is as follows:

- EPRRS Document Folder
 - o EPRRS Clinic Documents
 - 2018 Clinic Presentation
 - 2017 Clinic Presentation
 - 2016 Clinic Presentation
 - 2015 Clinic Presentation
 - 2014 Clinic Presentation
 - 2013 Clinic Presentation
 - 2012 Clinic Presentation
 - o EPRRS Training Documents
 - Same-ness
 - Playing the Referee
 - Tackle Progression
 - Tackle vs Ruck
 - o EPRRS Meeting Documents
 - 2017 Law Trial Training
- EPRRS Procedure Manuals
 - o 2018 Procedure Manual – Captain
 - o 2018 Procedure Manual – Coach
 - o 2018 Procedure Manual – Match Secretary
 - o 2018 Procedure Manual – President
 - o 2018 Procedure Manual – Treasurer
- Game Management Guidelines (the most current versions are added as they are released by USA Rugby)
 - o 2018 Game Management Guidelines

All of these documents can be found by selecting **Published Documents** from the **Documents** menu.

Referee Review Report Form

The EPRRS strongly urges all Clubs to get into the habit of submitting Referee Review Reports so that we can hear how our referees are performing. We do not have any ability to see all of our referees – you do. Below is the procedure for utilizing the site to submit a report on the referee’s performance through the EPRRS website (www.eastpennrugby.org).

Please know that we will take these seriously if they are submitted in a thoughtful way. Submissions that list every aspect of the Referee as Excellent or Poor are not as informative to us as you would think. Take the time to consider each of the items. As you submit more, we are obviously going to get a sense of your reliability and will take your comments as a fair assessment. Sending the one off very poor review after losing a close match will obviously not carry the same weight.

Click the **Your Voice (Use our Referee Review Report)** button located on the upper right of most pages of the EPRRS website. You can also select **Referee Review Report** from the **Referee Information** menu.



There are four “parts” of this feedback form that are completed. The first part provides us the information on the referee and the match as shown below.

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EPRRS: Referee Feedback Form

* Required

Referee Name *

Match Date *

Home Team *

Home Team Score

Away Team *

Away Team Score

The next part asks you to evaluate the referee in the many aspects of refereeing. We do this on a five grade scale ranging from Excellent to Poor. Again, please give these real thought.

Please grade the referee's performance in the following categories:

Restart Kicks

Excellent
Above Average
Adequate
Below Average
Poor
Excellent

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The aspects that we ask you to evaluate are as follows:

- Restart Kicks
- Scrums
- Lineouts
- Tackle
- Ruck/Maul
- Advantage
- General Play
- Communication
- Control
- Fitness
- Overall

After the grading on the individual aspects, we have provided an additional comment section for you to give us free form comment. Feel free to tell us any and everything. We will read these.

Additional Comments

Finally, we ask for some basic information on the submitter. This allows us to reach back to you if needed. It also helps us in determining what your frame of mind may be when writing. We understand that the losing Club is often not fond of the refereeing performance and have to frame your feedback appropriately.

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Your details

We will contact you if the EPRRS Referee Educator needs additional information to help advise the referee.

Your Name *

Your Club Affiliation *

Your Email Address *

After completing all of the fields, click .

Just to reiterate, we really and truly hope that every Club submits one of these each week. As you build up your “street cred,” we will take your feedback increasingly seriously.

EPRRS Monthly Meetings

The EPRRS conducts meetings the first Wednesday of every month during the Fall and Spring seasons. Each meeting involves a training session that covers Laws, Law Interpretations, Refereeing Techniques, and/or Tricky Situations.

All of these meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. and have food and drink available. We aim to meet in a centralized location and currently meet at Dave & Busters in the Plymouth Meeting Mall. Everyone is invited to attend the meeting and bring up questions about topics being presented and anything on your mind from a Rugby Refereeing perspective. Please refer to the EPRRS Website (www.eastpennrugby.org) for more information.

State of the EPRRS

Currently, the EPRRS has, at most, 40 full-time referees. We regularly have 20 referees available on any given day. On Saturdays, we typically cover 30-35 matches with referees doing multiple matches. Sundays, we have upward of 40 matches that we are sometimes able to cover with the additional help of referees who either play or coach on Saturday.

The lesson in the mathematics presented in the first paragraph is that we may very well be unable to cover all of the matches on a given day. As we mention every year, Clubs that do not play nice with the Referee Society will find themselves on the bottom of the Assignment priority.

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Teams of Three

If requested by the Clubs or League, the EPRRS will attempt to supply Assistant Referees (ARs) along with the assigned referee if availability allows. The rate for an AR is typically \$50 per match or \$80 a day to be paid by the home Club/division. We may also assign individuals to referee and AR at which point the rate will be \$150 for a referee full day.

For championship events, teams of three can be easily accomplished by placing several matches at the same venue. The EPRRS can find ways to staff creatively to allow for teams of three at the more important matches as determined by the match organizer.

Problem Refs

As you can imagine, the EPRRS does not have the human resources to keep an eye on all of our referees. We have created the Referee Review Report Form to identify any issues that our referees may have on the field. We continue to urge Clubs to use this form every week to tell us the good and bad as well as establishing your Club's credibility in assessing the performance of our referees.

In addition to that tool, we also recognize that there is the ability for referees to act untoward in arenas not directly tied to the on-field performance. If such an issue was to arise, we ask that you contact any of our officers immediately for reconciliation. We do take these matters and the referee's responsibility for professionalism very seriously. We will listen to what you have to say and address it with the individuals involved.