



# REFEREE PROTOCOL AND PROCEDURE

A Guide for Referees

# US Quidditch Referees

Referees maintain order and gameplay at events, and are an integral part of the sport of quidditch. It can be a difficult and thankless job, but we do it for the love of the game (and hey, getting paid doesn't hurt).

## PROGRAM GOALS

The major goals of the referee program are safety, quality, fairness, and stewardship of the sport. We want players, coaches, spectators, and all others confident that the referees are going to be impartial, knowledgeable, consistently making the right calls, and keeping the game fair and safe for themselves, players, and spectators. In order to become a head referee, you must pass both a written test and a field test. It is critical that you take these tests seriously and we strongly encourage you to study and seek out any resource available to you for improvement.

In order to maintain quality, it's critical to receive and learn from feedback. We strongly encourage all players and referees to fill out feedback forms for the refs with whom they interact—both positive and negative feedback are welcome! As a referee, if you do receive negative feedback, we urge you to seriously reflect on it. Think about which parts of the feedback might be valid and what you can do to improve your skills; then, when you receive positive feedback, you will know you have earned it.

## COMPENSATION

Regular season ranked games, regional championships, World Cup, and additional scheduled tournaments require USQ-certified head referees to be paid **\$20 per match**. Make sure you know who is responsible for paying you (generally the TD, but occasionally this duty will fall to the teams), when you will be paid, and in what form.

**Referees are required to accept the \$20;** a head referee is not allowed to volunteer to ref a ranked game.



# Before the Game

One head referee, one snitch referee, two assistant referee, two goal judges, and a scorekeeper are essential for USQ official games. Work with tournament or event staff to recruit qualified volunteers as necessary.

## 10 MINUTES BEFORE GAME TIME

All referees should arrive at the playing field with their requisite equipment (preferably with no team or school paraphernalia visible):

- A referee jersey with even white and black stripes
- Black shorts or pants
- Whistle (the recommended whistle for USQ quidditch matches is the Fox-40; at the very least, a similarly loud and piercing whistle must be utilized)
- Blue, yellow, and red cards
- Bean bag

Recommended additional equipment includes:

- Coin
- Watch
- A device, such as a double-sided baseball counter, to keep track of the score

USQ has partnered with Get Official to provide the required equipment to USQ referees at a discounted rate.

Work with tournament staff and the rest of your referee team to confirm that both teams are on the field and in the right place. Make sure you are aware of USQ forfeit procedures in advance.

Meet with your referee team:

- **Ensure that every referee knows their responsibility.** It is critical to meet with your officiating team before the match and determine their experience level—establish their knowledge of the recognizable signals. Make sure that your assistant referees are comfortable getting your attention during the game and know the best way to do so.
- **Ensure that all of your referees are easily distinguishable from the participating teams.** Players dressed in similar-color uniforms to game officials can often have trouble differentiating between fellow players and the officials; in such a case, you should find a pinnie for your assistant referees to wear.
- It is good to review complicated rules such as third bludger guarding (7.4.2.6) before games.

Confirm status of equipment; make sure everything is in its proper place, adheres to USQ equipment requirements per Rulebook 8, and is in good working condition.

- Measure the hoops.
  - The center of each hoop must be **7'8" apart**. Consistency of distances between the hoops on both sides is critical.
  - Both hoop sets should be equidistant from the midfield line. Event directors are primarily responsible



for setting up equipment, but you should always inspect your field before the game.

- Ensure all game balls, as well as replacement balls in case of damage/loss, are accounted for, properly inflated, and properly set up before the game.
- Work with the tournament director to replace or repair any defective game equipment.

## 5 MINUTES BEFORE GAME TIME

Perform an equipment check on the players of both teams. You may choose to forego the equipment check for a team if they have received one earlier in the day.

- All jewelry is strictly prohibited and must be removed before the game starts—no exceptions. If a player has jewelry that cannot be removed, that player cannot participate.
- If a player is wearing padding, it must pass the following tests:
  - It must be one inch or less in thickness.
  - When you rap on it with a knuckle, it should not make a knocking sound.
  - It must bend easily when a minimal amount of force is applied to it.
- Athletic braces are allowed but must generally meet the standards of padding above. A brace may include a hard element, but any hard plastic or metal in a brace must be covered at all times during a game.
- Visit the USQ website for the full list of equipment policies.

## 2 MINUTES BEFORE GAME TIME

Call both team captains to the center of the pitch.

- Point out unique characteristics of playing field, terrain, and boundaries.
- Invite questions, and make sure to inform each team of the questions asked by the other; it is important that everyone is on the same page.
- Discuss any potential snitch spectacles.
- Ask the captains if there is anything else you need to be aware of, such as ambiguity with respect to the “four maximum gender rule.”

Toss the coin to determine each team’s defensive end. The team with the lower rank makes the call; if this ranking is unknown or if the rankings are tied, the team that has traveled the farthest calls the coin toss.

Tell teams how much time they have to complete the rest of their pre-game procedures—most likely they have one minute or so until “Brooms Up.”

Shake hands!



# Game Start

Make sure that spectators are located outside the hard boundary lines and warn them of the physicality of quidditch and the possibility of balls flying in their direction.

Encourage captains to position their teams a few seconds before scheduled game time, unless directed otherwise by the event director.

**During brooms down**, verify that all players are located behind the starting line and that they remain stationary.

Direct the start of the game by utilizing the follow script:

“[Away Team], are you ready?!”

After an affirmative answer—“[Home Team], are you ready?!”

“Brooms down.”

Once all players for both teams have complied, state “The snitch is loose.” When the snitch has left the player area, call “Ready,” wait a few seconds, and call “Brooms up!”

**During brooms up and the initial rush**, watch closely for illegal or excessively dangerous play. This part of the game can inspire some of the most dangerous play of the match, and penalties should be called accordingly.



# Responsibilities During the Game

## HEAD REFEREE

### POSITIONING

The head referee should position themselves behind and just to one side of quaffle action.

- The head referee's primary goal is to at all times establish the best angle from which to view the quaffle, the quaffle-carrier, and any players interacting with the quaffle-carrier. The head referee should do so without hindering gameplay in any way.
- If a dogpile situation occurs, the head referee should approach the action in order to watch for illegal activity.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### QUAFFLE PLAY

The head referee is responsible for all actions associated with quaffle play. If there is no chance of an immediately impending play on the quaffle, the head ref can take that time to observe other players, but they are still always responsible first and foremost for the quaffle.

These quaffle actions include, but are not limited to:

- Physical contact with the quaffle-carrier
- Beats on the quaffle-carrier, including natural motion on releases during beats
- Goals
  - The head referee should be positioned at an angle in order to make accurate calls on most goal attempts. Goal judges are present to help in the event that you do lose your angle on the goal.

Throughout the game, the head referee should communicate clearly by using the hand signals and by projecting their voice so that all players, officials, announcers, and fans are aware of all calls.

- Keep your eyes out for calls made by the assistant referees; they should attempt to get your attention by raising a hand, or another previously agreed upon method.
  - When appropriate, stop play.
  - Listen to what the other official has to say, and make calls accordingly.

#### STOPPAGE OF PLAY

The head referee is in charge of all stoppages of play except for the snatch catch. The head referee's command of the game stems from their privilege and responsibility to stop play when necessary.

**Blow the whistle with repeated short blasts to stop play.** If players don't stop, move them back to where they were positioned when play was stopped; use your assistant referees to help. All movement should cease before you administer any penalties.

Reasons for stoppage of play include, but are not limited to:



- Yellow, red, or blue card penalties
- Quaffle presence in spectator area or on dangerous terrain
- Injury
- External game interference

In many of the above situations, including injuries, the head referee should wait to blow the whistle until the play in which the quaffle is currently being utilized ends.

- This is called **advantage**, and is a call that the head referee must be very comfortable making.
- Advantage should not be called if it benefits the fouled team.
- For more information on calling advantage, please review this guide.

**After a goal is scored, restart play** with one short blast as soon as the previously defending keeper has possession. Indicate a goal scored with one long blast on the whistle and the “good goal” signal (extend both your arms vertically and perpendicular to the ground).

- Check the scoreboard to verify that the accurate score is represented. If there is no scoreboard, announce the score.

**After a snitch catch**, confirm the validity of the catch with the snitch referee and all other officials. Once confirmed, indicate the end of regulation by blowing the whistle for three long blasts. Only end the game after you are positive that the game is indeed over.

## ASSISTANT REFEREE

### POSITIONING

#### *WITH TWO ASSISTANT REFEREES*

Remain on opposite sides of the pitch along the opposite quadrant diagonal (opposite sides of the pitch in quadrants diagonally across from each other). If all beater play has moved to one end of the pitch, cheat up closer to where the bludgers are.

#### *WITH THREE ASSISTANT REFEREES*

This positioning is similar to that with two assistant referees, except two referees are positioned on the same side of the field so that they will not need to move up and down the field as much. One of those referees will become the snitch referee once the snitch has entered the playing field.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### *BLUDGER ACTIVITY*

Enforce bludger hits on opposing players by yelling “beat!” and physically indicating the player if necessary by pointing or tapping them on the shoulder if necessary.

- Repeat or rephrase if necessary (i.e. “Beat! Number nine! Drop it! Back to hoops!”). Don’t be afraid to be loud when you call bludger hits; players will not often hear you in the heat of the action.
- If there is a near miss on a beat, you can yell “safe.”



## *ASSISTANCE IN MONITORING GAMEPLAY*

Enforce calls on plays in your jurisdiction. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Making illegal physical contact
- Guarding the third bludger
- Dismounting from the broom

Send the player back to hoops if you witness any infraction.

- If play should be stopped for any reason (yellow card or injury, for example), raise one hand in the air.
- If you are having difficulty getting the head referee's attention, you can yell the head referee's name or enlist a fellow assistant referee's help. If it's an important call that needs to stop play immediately, you can leave your position and approach the head referee to explain.

## *ASSISTANCE IN FIELD MANAGEMENT*

- Before brooms up, stand at the starting line to make sure players are properly positioned relative to the line. Watch for false starts.
- Ensure that players do not move while play is stopped, and assist the head referee in readjusting their positions if they try.

## **SNITCH REFEREE**

### **POSITIONING**

When the snitch returns to the pitch, the snitch referee should never be closer than the closest seeker. The snitch referee should do their best to remain behind the snitch runner at all times so that they have a clear view of the snitch tail. The snitch referee should be ready to move! Most snitches are very fast and will run constantly; snitch referees are expected to keep up with them, as well as the seekers.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### *SEEKER ACTIVITY*

The snitch referee must monitor and regulate interaction between the snitch and the seekers, including but not limited to:

- Monitor and penalize illegal physical contact between seekers or between a seeker and the snitch runner. Notify the head referee of any infractions worthy of penalty cards or play stoppages.
- Call beats on the seekers and call beats on the beaters who are attacking the seekers.
- Warn the snitch runner when the snitch runner is ignoring the seekers' or spectators' safety or is giving an advantage to one team.
- Make a confident call when the snitch runner is down and count the three second head-start for the snitch runner. Project and speak clearly so that all players, referees, and interested spectators can hear.

#### *THE SNITCH CATCH*

When the snitch is caught blow two short whistle blasts immediately.



- **If the catch is valid**, give two big ol’ thumbs up so the head referee can see and immediately blow their whistle to end the game.
- **If the catch is in contention**, bring the referee crew together and consolidate your information to determine the validity of the catch.
- **If you are positive that the catch is invalid**, then do not issue two whistle blasts—quaffle play does not need to stop while you reset the snitch.

### *ASSIST IN MONITORING GAMEPLAY*

Monitor the opening rush for fouls, including illegal physical contact and illegal touching.

- Draw the attention of the head referee when you observe something that requires a stoppage in play (including escalating contact/retaliation) by raising one hand into the air. Quickly explain what happened, as well as the applicable penalty and why you believe it is appropriate.
- If you are having difficulty getting the head referee’s attention, you can yell the head referee’s name or enlist a fellow assistant referee’s help. If it is an important call for which play should be immediately halted, you can leave your position and approach the head referee to tell them the issue.

## GOAL JUDGE

### POSITIONING

Stand about six (6) yards behind the hoops, halfway between the hoops and the back of the pitch. Only one goal judge is allowed on each side of the field to avoid distractions and contradictory calls.

- If play enters that area, try to move directly backwards. If possible, do not move except when play come towards you; your best view is usually from behind the center hoop.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### GOALS

Confirm goals scored and shots missed, and make a signal every time the quaffle comes near the hoops. Give a big, confident “good” or “no good” signal on whether the quaffle went through so that the head referee can see. Hold the signal until you’ve received confirmation.

- The “good” signal is made by raising both arms vertically into the air, above the head and perpendicular to the ground.
- The “no good” signal is made by raising both arms to shoulder height, parallel to the ground.
- If you could not see whether or not the goal was good, defer the call by pointing straight to the head ref. Do not shrug or appear indecisive.

#### KEEPER AREA MAINTENANCE

- When the head referee confirms a goal and the scored quaffle leaves a pitch, the goal referee can and should **retrieve the quaffle** and deliver it to the keeper.
- **Fix the hoops** when quaffle play moves out of the area, even if they appear only slightly tilted.



## ASSIST IN MONITORING OF GAMEPLAY

Verbally warn players to touch the hoops properly if they are not doing so. If there is blatant cheating, do what you can to encourage the player to follow the correct procedure by identifying them by name or number. If the player persists, alert the head referee during a stoppage of play.

## SCOREKEEPER

### POSITIONING

The scorekeeper should remain at the score table throughout the duration of gameplay.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### CLOCK TIMER

The scorekeeper is responsible for managing the official game time.

- Start the game clock timer when “Brooms Up!” is called.
- **Stop the game clock timer** whenever the referee blows two short whistle blasts indicating stoppage of play. **Restart the game clock timer** when the referee blows one short whistle blast indicating restart of play.
  - Neither a goal scored nor the restart of quaffle play after a goal affect the game clock.
- Keep the head referee updated on game time.
- **Inform the snitch and seekers** when the 17 minute mark is approaching. **Release the snitch** at 17 minutes, and **release the seekers** at 18 minutes.
- Stop the game clock timer at the end of the game and record the time of regulation, overtime, and sudden death.

#### SCORE

Keep track of score tallies on the score sheet after confirmed by the head referee (one long whistle blast and the “good goal” signal) and immediately update the visible scoreboard so the current score is visible to both teams.

- Even if the tournament doesn’t have pre-prepared scoresheets, make sure scores are written down and submitted to headquarters. The USQ-recommended scorecards are located on the website.
- Ensure the visible scoreboard and official scorecard match.
- Be prepared to report the score to announcers and referees at any time.

#### COMMUNICATION

Inform the field (especially the seekers) when the snitch runner checks in at the 17 minute mark and be prepared to announce seeker release at the 18 minute mark.

Inform the field (especially captains/coaches) when there are three minutes left and one minute left in the first overtime, and as many times as convenient.

Confirm the final score with the head referee and other field staff after the game has ended.



**Report the score to the appropriate tournament staff member and turn in the score sheet.**

In certain tournaments, if resources allow it, the tournament staff may ask scorekeepers to keep track of certain statistics, such as who scores each goal. Write down the name or number of the individual accomplishing each stat requested.

#### *YELLOW CARDS AND RED CARDS*

Look at the time indicated on the game clock timer when play is stopped for a **yellow or red card card penalty**.

- For yellow card penalties, release the player after one minute or when the opposing team scores, whichever occurs first.
- For red card penalties, release the substituted player after two minutes.



# Important Reminders

**Safety is paramount.** In the end, none of the referee responsibilities are more important than preventing serious injury. For this reason, there is flexibility in the rules so that officials may make judgement calls against unnecessarily violent and reckless play. Keep players safe.

**Move!** The easiest way to lapse into poor officiating, including failing your field test, is to stand still. Continuously move in order to place yourself in the best viewing position. Always look for the best angle.

**Exhaustion is not an excuse for poor officiating.** If you are playing on a team in a tournament and do not think you will be able to successfully play and officiate, make the decision before the tournament not to sign up as a referee.

**Keep stoppage of play brief.** Call a penalty with the requisite explanation “yellow card, back contact!” perform the hand signal, and send the offending player to the box. Never let anyone argue with you while play is stopped; restart play and let them talk to you from the sideline as you watch play, if they need further explanation. If you have to explain a call, do it fast!

**Be ready for anything.** Don't let a fast shot or a surprising foul take you aback; expect to have to make a call at any moment, and make it confidently.

**Respect players and they will respect you.** Acknowledge that a player's objection was heard, but do not agree or disagree. Players on the bench are never allowed to enter the field space, even if to discuss something with the referees.

**Injury as an advantage call.** Injuries create complicated officiating situations, generally requiring a judgement call. If a player is on the ground, but they are not hampering game play and it does not seem to be a serious injury, let the play finish. If you see blood, a head or neck injury, or another injury that requires immediate attention, you should stop play immediately. Injuries often become apparent out-of-sight of the head referee; you will hear “injury!” calls from your assistants and other players, but you must always remain cognizant of quaffle play.

**Establish command of the field.** Utilize a variety of strategies, including maintaining your confidence and clear communication, in order to gain respect and understanding from players.

- Blow the whistle using the correct whistle calls (two short blasts to stop play, a long blast for a goal, a short blast to resume play), and remember that you can never blow the whistle too loudly.
- Do not let players move when play is stopped.
- If you have to defer a call to another referee, do so without hesitation. Quickly jog to your fellow referee to discuss the play, and announce the call as quickly and as confidently as possible.

**Your referees are your team.** If a referee makes a bad call, talk to them quickly, and try to give them the power to reverse the call. If you are a goal judge or assistant referee, do not be afraid to speak your mind to the head referee. Review this guide to learn more about reversing calls.



# Resources

See our website for comprehensive referee resources, including evaluation forms and certification information:

**<http://www.usquidditch.org/get-involved/referee-resources>**



