



Game Preparation

Greg Garner





Pre-Match

Pre-Match



- Analysis and development
- Mid Week
- Match day

Thoughts of L10+ Groups



- Confirmation of fixture
- Team colours
- Preparation of kit (clothing, whistles, watches, score cards, RC / YC etc.)
- Where is the game, route information, possible hold ups, roadworks, local events.
- What can you find out about the teams that is useful.
- Competition regulations
- Review your previous performance and check any laws etc.
- Speak to other referees who may have refereed the teams previously.

Thoughts of L8/9 Group



- Confirmation of fixture
- Team colours
- Preparation of kit (clothing, whistles, watches, score cards, RC / YC etc.)
- Competition regulations, age grade regulations
- Check team studs

Thoughts of L6/7 Group



- Game confirmation.
- Team research
 - Previous matches
 - League positions
 - Shirt colours
 - BE AWARE OF PRE-CONCEPTIONS
- Discussion with own referee coach
- Reflect on previous games
- Set objectives
- Visualisation
- Arrive 90 mins before KO
 - Fit in around team
 - Talk to captains / coaches
 - Brief TJ's and first aiders

Thoughts of assessors



- Do homework on League positions, previous history, other recent Referee experiences of teams.
- Look smart before, during and after match.
- Check location of ground and any possible other delaying events.
- Arrive in good time (at least one hour before kick off and 1 ½ hours for more senior games).
- Make contact with captains/coaches upon arrival to agree times for briefings.
- Check colours of team shirts.



Greg's Thoughts



Level of game

The level of a game is always going to play a part in how you prepare.

However, it doesn't matter what role I'm in, or if I am on a Championship fixture or an age grade Sunday morning game.

I ensure that I am at my peak focus before the start of the game and see that through to the end.

I owe it to both the players and myself.



Analysis and development

- Analyse previous game(s) and identify any areas for development, never be afraid to admit you were wrong!
- Read up on law, speak to other referees, match observers, coaches etc. to see how they may have done it.
- Add your findings to match day checklist

Mid Week



- Confirmation of Fixture – Teams, shirt colours, kick off time, venue, directions any potential hold up.
- Current form, key players, history between the two teams.
- Laws / rules / regulations the match is to played under.
- Kit prep

Match Day



- Journey time
- Image is key! Whatever you decide to wear, look the part: and be confident.
- Establish contact with captain / coach and arrange. timings for pre match briefings and find out who is running touch (talk to them too).
- Pitch inspection / orientation.
- Warm up, stretching exercises
- Mental Preparation, visualisation exercises and run through
- Calling teams out to the pitch, are there other teams with the same KO time do you need to liaise with other referees? (2nd, 3rd, colts, vets get out first, allow room for the 1st team, also = hot showers).
- Game Time!

Front Row Briefing



Thoughts of L10+ Groups



- Check experience of players
- Know the regulations of age grade
- Keep it short
- SAFETY
- Talk about engagement sequence
- Tell them your expectations
- Get agreement
- Ask for any questions

Thoughts of L8/9 Group



- Keep it simple
- Safety points
- Confirm agreement

Thoughts of L6/7 Group



- Talk to all FR including replacements
 - Hooker left of mark
 - LH square hips stay connected to hooker, bind up,
 - TH square, bind up.
 - ELV's must strike for the ball.
- Also talk to No9 re ball out and use it calls.
- No10 keep backline 5m.
- Seek agreement of players, then you can refer back to it if they are not complying

Thoughts of assessors



- Remember that this is probably the first opportunity that players have of judging you.
- Agree specific time for the briefing and don't be late
- Get full attention of players.
- Keep briefing clear and concise.
- Look confident and comfortable.
- Make presentation 'fresh'.
- Keep eye contact.
- Get acceptance of what is being asked of them.



Greg's Thoughts



• You are the referee!

- Do your homework, understand what you are talking about, be credible (practice your brief so it becomes natural, and ensure the players feel part of the process by engaging them).
- Level of game, age and competence of players will dictate the depth of brief and who you involve. (Suitably brief is the key).
- Establishing safety is always the No1 priority!
- Don't set yourself up to fail by saying too much.
- Say what you want to see (not what you don't want).
- Attain confirmation of your request (A subtle change of wording, as you may not get **agreement**, but that is not your issue).
- Do not compromise, see point 1.



Captain's Brief

Thoughts of L10+ Groups



- Introduce yourself
- Ask their playing position
- Tell the captain they can approach you during down time / suitable time
- Confirm who is making decisions i.e. is there a pack leader etc.
- Tell the captain you will talk to them about discipline
- Explain the use of colours in your calls
- Do this early so they can explain to their players
- Explain timings for kick off etc.
- If a junior game encourage the captain and work with them

Thoughts of L8/9 Group



- Introductions
- Team discipline
- Replacement process
- Coin toss

Thoughts of L6/7 Group



- Meet with captains as early as possible, talk to both captains at the same time.
- Establish first names and position of captain.
- Timings for out 5m then 2m knock.
- Establish your expectations of them
- Inform them of the colours you are going to call them in your preventative calls.
- Place responsibility on them for discipline of their players

Thoughts of assessors




- Agree time to do briefing and don't be late.
- Speak to both captains together if possible.
- Keep eye contact.
- Be confident and comfortable.
- Use the contact to begin building empathy with captains.



Greg's Thoughts



You are the referee!

- Confirm as soon as practicable when they would like to do briefs etc.
- Try to talk to both captains at the same time, this allows you more personal prep time and also helps keep them from trying to influence you with 'observations' about the other team.
- Establish what you want from them.
- Confirm when and how they interact with you.
- What position do they play, is there a need for a pack leader to make decisions on scrum / lineout issues or decisions.
- They are responsible for their players, coaches, water carriers etc. not you! (**Ensure they know that**).
- Engage with them but do not allow them to lead or hijack the brief.
- Do not compromise, see point 1. 



As suggested on the night. I would apply the process of putting at least as much preparation time in to your game as the players do.

e.g. if the team trains once a week for 1 hour, I would suggest you do at least 1 hour prep.

Twice a week for 1 hour then you put 2 hours in etc.



If anyone would like further discussion on this please feel free to give me a call.



Any questions?

Please contact Tom Brucciani or Greg Garner
Contact details are in the hand book.

