



## **Television Match Official (TMO) Global Trial Protocol**

### **August 2019**

#### **Introduction**

The current Law 6 provides the opportunity for match officials to utilise the TMO to assist in the adjudication of decisions when the team in possession of the ball has, or may have, touched the ball down in their opponents' in-goal area and any of the match officials have a view that there was a potential infringement in in-goal. The Global TMO Trial extends the jurisdiction of the TMO in two ways:

- The adjudication of decisions when the team in possession of the ball has touched the ball down in the in-goal area and any of the match officials have a view that there was a potential infringement in the field of play with limitations
- The review of potential "clear and obvious" acts of foul play or to assist in the determination of sanctions for foul play.

#### **Guiding principles**

- The TMO is a tool to help referees and assistant referees. The referee should not be subservient to the system. The referee is responsible for managing the TMO process
- The referee is the decision-maker and must remain in charge of the game
- Any relevant information taken into consideration must be CLEAR and OBVIOUS and in the context of materiality
- The application of the TMO system must be credible and consistent, protecting the image of the game.

#### **Global Trial Law 6.15 and 6.16 TELEVISION MATCH OFFICIAL / LAW AMENDMENT TRIAL**

- (a) The referee may consult with assistant referees about matters relating to their duties, the Law relating to foul play or timekeeping, and may request assistance related to other aspects of the referee's duties including the adjudication of offside
- (b) A match organiser may appoint an official known as a Television Match Official (TMO) who uses technological devices to clarify situations relating to:
  - i. Where there is doubt as to whether a ball has been grounded in in-goal for a score or a touchdown
  - ii. Where there is doubt as to whether a kick at goal has been successful
  - iii. Where there is doubt as to whether players were in touch or touch-in goal before grounding the ball in in-goal or the ball has been made dead
  - iv. Where match officials believe an infringement may have occurred leading to a try or in preventing a try providing that the potential infringement has occurred no more than two phases (rucks or mauls) before the ball has been grounded in in-goal
  - v. Where match officials believe foul play may have occurred

- vi. The clarification of sanctions required for acts of foul play
  - vii. To confirm any red card decisions which are linked to the referee's use of the High Tackle Sanction Framework
- (c) Any of the match officials, including the TMO, may recommend a review by the TMO. The reviews will take place in accordance with TMO protocol in place at the time which will be available on [worldrugby.org/laws](http://worldrugby.org/laws)
- (d) A match organiser may appoint a timekeeper who will signify the end of each half
- (e) The referee must not consult with any other persons
- (f) If a match official has requested a review by the TMO and stadium screens are present then the referee may short-cut the extended TMO process (see section 1 below) as long as the offence is CLEAR and OBVIOUS and included in the list of offences (2.3).

## **1. Decisions relating to in-goal**

- 1.1. The TMO may be used when the referee requires confirmation with regard to the scoring of a try. Decisions relating to in-goal should be an on-field decision for which the referee is responsible. The referee may use their team of four to contribute where there is conclusive evidence which will inform the referee's ultimate decision.
- 1.2. The TMO may also be consulted as to the success or otherwise of kicks at goal.
- 1.3 The referee will blow time out and make a "T" sign to indicate "time-out".
- 1.4 The referee will make a "square-box" signal with their hands and at the same time inform the TMO through the two-way communication what advice will be required
- 1.5 The referee will then state the on-field decision and ask the TMO for any specific footage, either to confirm or overrule the on-field decision. e.g.:
- "My on-field decision is a try, but can you check the grounding"
  - "My on-field decision is foot in touch and defensive team 5m lineout, but can you check that foot in touch"
- The TMO will then liaise with the TV director and look at any specific footage in order to support the referee's specific question.
- 1.6 The broadcaster must provide all the angles requested by the TMO.
- 1.7 When the analysis has concluded the TMO will provide the match referee with the advice and recommendations. The referee should repeat the TMO's recommendation to ensure absolute satisfaction with what has been recommended before making the decision.
- 1.8 The TMO will then advise the referee as to when to go ahead and signal the decision. (This process is important in order to allow time for TV to focus their cameras on the referee for their decision).
- 1.9 The referee will then communicate the decision in the correct manner. Play will then continue, and the time clock restarted.
- 1.10 Where large on-ground video screens are available the TV director may also communicate the decision.
- 1.11 In the absence of a video screen some grounds may use red and green lights to advise the crowd.
- 1.12 The important and primary method of communication still rests firmly with the referee who will indicate in the normal way after receiving the TMO's advice.
- 1.13 The TMO should be "on microphone" for any formal reviews.

## **2 Potential infringement by the team touching the ball down in opposition in-goal**

- 2.1 If, after a team in possession of the ball has touched the ball down in their opponents' in-goal area (including after a try is awarded and before the conversion is struck), any of the match officials (including the TMO) have a view that there was a potential infringement, within the list of offences (see 2.3) before the ball was carried into in-goal by the team that touched the ball down, they may suggest that the referee refers the matter to the TMO for review.
- 2.2 The potential infringement must have occurred between the last restart of play (set-piece, penalty/free-kick, kick-off or restart) and the touch down but not further back in play than two previous rucks and/or mauls.
- 2.3 If the referee agrees to refer the matter to the TMO, there will be an indication of what the potential offence was and where it took place. Potential infringements which must be CLEAR and OBVIOUS are as follows:
- Law 8.1. Scoring points
  - Law 9.1 to 9.6 and 10.11 to 10.23. Foul play: obstruction, dangerous play, tackling a player without the ball
  - Law 10.4 Offside: player in front of the kicker
  - Law 11 Knock-on or throw forward
  - Law 15.5 to 15.9 Ruck: offside at the ruck – players not joining the ruck
  - Law 16.5. Maul: offside at the maul – players not joining the maul
  - Law 18.1 and 2. Player in touch
  - Law 18.3 to 18.7. Lineout: quick throw
  - Law 21 In goal (including ball grounded by a defending player)
  - Law 21.7 and 21.8 In goal: Grounding the ball and double movement.
- 2.4 Referee judgment decisions for all other aspects of the game are not included in the protocol and may not be referred to the TMO.
- 2.5 In reviewing the potential offence, the TMO must use the criterion on each occasion that the infringement must be CLEAR and OBVIOUS, if the advice to the referee is to not award a try. If there is any doubt as to whether an offence has occurred or not the TMO must advise that an offence has not occurred.
- 2.6 For forward passes the match officials must adjudicate on the direction of the ball leaving the hands.
- 2.7 If there has been an infringement, the TMO will advise the referee of the exact nature of the infringement, the recommended sanction and/or where play will next restart.
- 2.8 The TMO may mention issues viewed in addition to those requested by the referee if it is appropriate to the situation under review.

## **3. Potential infringement by the defending team preventing a try from being scored**

- 3.1. If the match officials have a view that there was a potential infringement in the field of play by the defending team that may have prevented a try being scored, they may suggest that the referee refers the matter to the TMO for review.
- 3.2 The potential infringement must have occurred between the last restart of play (set-piece, penalty/free-kick, kick-off or restart) and the touch down but not further back in play than two previous rucks and/or mauls.
- 3.3 If the referee agrees to refer the matter to the TMO, there will be an indication of what the potential offence was and where it took place. The offences will normally be an act of foul play such as obstruction or playing a player without the ball.
- 3.4 In reviewing the potential offence, the TMO must use the criterion on each occasion that the infringement must be CLEAR and OBVIOUS and that but for the infringement a try would probably have been scored if the advice to the referee is to award a penalty try. If there is any

doubt that a try would be scored the TMO must advise the award of an appropriate sanction in accordance with Law.

- 3.5 The TMO may mention issues viewed in addition to those requested by the referee if it is appropriate to the situation under review.

**4. Potential acts of foul play**

- 4.1 The match officials may suggest that the referee refers the matter to the TMO for review if they observe a CLEAR and OBVIOUS act of foul play (either serious or dangerous) where:

- They may have only partially observed an act or acts of foul play
- They are unsure of the exact circumstances
- The views of the match officials reporting the act(s) of foul play differ
- There is doubt as to the appropriate sanctions to be applied.

- 4.2 Match officials can review foul play up to when the game restarts – lineout for example – when a penalty-kick is kicked to touch, and the foul play footage then becomes available.

- 4.3 If the referee agrees to refer the matter to the TMO, an indication will be given to the TMO to review the potential act(s) of foul play and to make a recommendation as to the appropriate sanction(s).

- 4.4 In reviewing the potential offence, the TMO must use the criterion on each occasion that the infringement must be CLEAR and OBVIOUS especially where sanctions may apply where a player is removed from the field of play, either temporarily or permanently.

- 4.5 The other match officials may utilise the in-stadium screens (where available) to form a judgment in this matter.

- 4.6 If the referee determines that a dangerous high tackle or shoulder charge warrants a red card, then the referee must firstly verify the decision with the TMO. Both the referee and TMO should use the High Tackle Sanction Framework to determine whether a red card is the correct sanction.

In accordance with Law 6.5 a, the referee will remain the sole judge of fact and Law during a match.

**Match officials' pre-match "team of four" talk must underline the above approach and must not include areas of jurisdiction that do not appear in this protocol.**