



# OFFICIATING DODGEBALL

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## Referee's Manual



# Introduction

Referees play a pivotal role in the enjoyment and wellbeing of players of all ages and abilities in our sport. This manual covers a variety of topics including the role of main and assistant referees, standard operating procedures (SOP's), and frequently asked questions in order to encourage the development of high level referees who operate in a standardised manner throughout the UK.

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# Referee Standards & Terminology

## Referee Standards

Referees play a pivotal role in the enjoyment and wellbeing of players of all ages and abilities in our sport. The [British Dodgeball Referee Standards](#) have been created to support the development of match officials in the UK. These standards assist in providing high quality, constructive developmental feedback in a consistent manner across the following 5 areas:

1. Rules Application
2. Game Management
3. Communication
4. Safety
5. Core Values:
  - a. Demonstrating a Professional Attitude
  - b. Adopting a Learning Culture
  - c. Understanding the Bigger Picture of how each dodgeball event and positive player experience promotes the sport in the UK

Everything a referee does can be measured against these standards in order to encourage learning, development and strong refereeing performances.

## Referee Standards

## Terminology

### Main Referees

One or two neutral centre referee who take/share overall responsibility for the officiating of the match, including briefing assistant referees and coaches/captains, conducting safety checks, recording sanctions, and sanctioning assistant referees if ever required. They also make sure the match runs to schedule.

### Allocated Referees

Teams must provide up to 5 allocated referees to act as assistant referees (and a centre referee if this is required). Referee allocations are provided on each event schedule.

### Centre Referees

Centre referees are positioned on either side of the court near to the centre line, and officiate the match, including managing timings and making decisions to keep the game flowing. These may also be main referees, or may be allocated from the assistant refereeing team depending on the event.

### Assistant Referees

Assistant referees are allocated from the assistant refereeing team. Teams need to provide up to 5 assistant referees: 2 return line assistant referees, 2 back line assistant referees and possibly also a centre referee depending on the event.

- **Return Line Referees:** Return line referees are positioned by the return line and look out for line faults & plays, and assist centre referees in making decisions where required.
- **Back Line Referees:** Back line referees are positioned by the back line and look out for line faults & plays, and assist centre referees in making decisions where required.

### Near-Side Referees & Far-Side Referees

Each playing team has one centre referee, one back line assistant referee and one return line assistant referee who primarily focus on observing them. These three referees are said to the team's near-side referees. The centre referee, back line assistant referee and return line assistant referee who primarily focus on observing the team's opponents are said to be the team's far-side referees.

# Role of Main Referees

## Positioning & Monitoring:

Main referees will always position themselves as centre referees and assume the same responsibilities as a centre referee in addition to that which is outlined in the next section.

## Role:

They must fulfil the role of centre referees in addition to having overall responsibility for player safety and matches taking place.

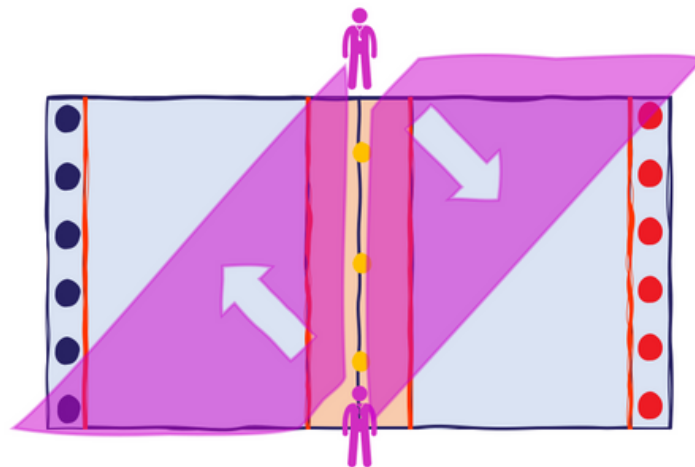
## Additional Responsibilities:

- **Timing & Scoring:**
  - Ensure matches are played within their allocated time
- **Recording:**
  - Record scores as required & ensure captains sign scoresheets
  - Record all sanctions as required
- **Safety & Sanctions**
  - DUTY OF CARE: Be responsible for player safety at all times
  - Conduct pre-match player & equipment safety checks and assistant referee briefing
  - Sanction assistant referees and spectators as required in line with current rules
  - Ensure sanctions that assistant centre referees give to players are in line with current rules
- **Communication**
  - Inform event coordinators if sanctions must be fulfilled in future matches (e.g., yellow & red cards)
  - Notify event coordinator immediately if you observe any safety issues



# Role of Centre Referees

## Positioning & Monitoring:



Stand near the centre line. Move up to 2 metres either side to get the best angles on events.

### Focus on the following in order of priority:

1. Near-side team (team to the left) for eliminations (hits/catches/line faults etc.) and non-eliminations (blocks, near misses, bounces etc.)
2. Near-side ball retrievers (ball retrievers to the left) for retriever errors etc.
3. Follow balls thrown by near-side team to far-side team when near-side team is at no clear risk of elimination. Watch for eliminations (hits/catches/line faults etc.) and non-eliminations (blocks, near misses, bounces etc.)

## Role:

- **Timing & Scoring:**
  - Time set/half & keep track of time, announcing time left as necessary
  - Announce scores & update scoreboard
- **Rush:**
  - Start sets
  - Watch for false starts to the left
  - Watch for line infringements on the centre line
- **Gameplay:**
  - Manage near-side team's 'Play Ball' count, and act as back up for far-side team's count
  - Watch all play as outlined above for hits, catches, blocks, bounces and line faults
  - Independently & actively call players out
  - Watch for retriever errors
  - Pause game when necessary to clarify a decision or prevent a build-up of events
  - Confer with all referees as required, and make decisions in line with Decision Making Process.
- **Safety & Sanctions**
  - DUTY OF CARE: Monitor player safety at all times, pausing the match immediately if you observe an issue
  - Sanction players, coaches and ball retrievers as required in line with current rules.



# Refereeing Standard Operating Procedures - SOPs

## Introduction

The British Dodgeball Rules are designed to facilitate a safe, free-flowing game. These SOPs should be followed by all referees to ensure a consistent and standardised experience for all players, coaches, assistant referees and spectators across the UK.

## Pre-Match

1. Announce warm-up time
2. Conduct safety checks:
  - a. Equipment – dodgeballs are at the standard specified in the rules.
  - b. Space – the court and surrounding space is as described in the rules.
  - c. Check players for jewellery & items of clothing not adhering to regulations.
3. Brief assistant referees (see below)
4. Give the 'home' team their choice of side for the first half.
  - a. Where there is no home team, conduct a coin toss to determine the home side.
  - b. Where you have no coin, hide a whistle in one hand behind your back and ask a team representative to guess which hand you have it in. If they are correct, they may have choice of side.
5. Give 1-minute warning to teams & tell teams to line up when scheduled.
6. Begin match.

## Allocated Referee Briefing

1. Confirm there are enough allocated referees and basic retrievers if required). Allocated refereeing team to source additional referees before the match starts if not.
2. Outline expectations:
  - a. What to focus observations on in order:
    - i. Near-side team line faults (& return line referee: ball activation & out box order)
    - ii. Near-side team eliminations & non-eliminations
    - iii. Near-side team retrievers
    - iv. Follow balls to far-side team if near-side team is in no danger
  - b. How to call players out: verbal & non-verbal to inform players & referees
  - c. Discussions: Tell centre referees if you see something that hasn't been called correctly. Only contribute during decision clarification discussions if they had a clear view of an event.
  - d. Outline possible sanctions for poor allocated refereeing e.g. lack of attention, interrupting play.
3. Opportunity for allocated referees to ask questions

## Starting & Stopping Sets

As you must start and stop time in sync with another referee for most match formats, you should use a uniform process each time:

### Starting a new set:

1. Hand in the air (announces intent to begin to other referee & teams)
2. "Teams Line Up", "Ready", Blow whistle (shout "Go" if no whistle)

### Stopping a set mid-way:

1. Blow whistle and do a T-sign.
2. Stop your watch; other referee will also stop their watch.

### After mid-set stoppage:

1. Announce time remaining in set.
2. Hand in the air (announces intent to begin to other referee & teams)
3. Blow whistle (shout "Go" if no whistle)

### Finishing a set:

1. Provide a suitable countdown warning so other referee knows the set is imminently ending if time is elapsing.
2. Blow whistle (or shout "Time" if no whistle)
3. Announce final player numbers and winning team/draw.

# Refereeing Standard Operating Procedures - SOPs

## Between Sets

1. Announce & record score
2. Record sanctions (if any)
3. Announce time remaining
4. Tell teams to line up after 20 second reset period
5. Begin next set

## Half Time

1. Time half-time stoppage
2. Announce & record score
3. Record sanctions (if any)
4. Provide feedback to assist referees if required
5. Give 1-minute warning to teams & tell teams to line up when scheduled
6. Begin second half

## Stoppages

### Clarifying Decisions

1. Call refereeing team in for a decision clarification
2. Ask clear question (e.g. "Did you see X get hit before they made the catch?", or "Are you sure they line faulted?")
3. Expect assistant referees to answer quickly & concisely – anyone that did not clearly see a play should not contribute to the discussion
4. Make decision using the Decision Making Process
5. Announce the decision to teams or captains/coaches

### Timeouts

1. Announce timeout if a team requests this before 'line up is called to begin the next set.
2. Time stoppage
3. Give ten-second warning to teams & tell teams to line up when scheduled

### Injury Stoppage

1. Assess player's injury – report to event coordinator for medical attention if required
2. See if player can move from court so play can resume
3. Confirm & announce team's injury substitute

### Sanctions:

1. Announce and record sanction given if blue/yellow/red card, e.g., 'blue card to J Jones #2'. Warnings, turnovers & outs do not require recording, but it is recommended for progressive sanctioning purposes.
2. Inform player when they can return to play, e.g., after next set ends (blue card), 12 minutes and 35 seconds left in match (yellow card).
3. Ensure any yellow card timings last for five minutes of match time and do not include timeouts or half time stoppages.

## Post-match

1. Announce & record final score
2. Record sanctions (if any)
3. Get captains to sign scoresheet
4. Provide feedback to assistant referees, if required
5. Submit scoresheet to event coordinator & inform of any yellow or red cards given out in case of sanctions needing to be fulfilled during remainder of event

# Refereeing Standard Operating Procedures - SOPs

## Safety: Managing Injuries

1. If a player is injured on court, assess the situation and see if they can continue without pause in the game.
  - a. If they are in a position which may compromise the safety of other players, pause time and see if they can continue immediately or must make an injury substitution.
2. If a player announces that they cannot continue to play or must seek medical attention, see if they can move outside the playing area independently or with support.
  - a. If they cannot safely move outside the playing area e.g. due to a head or neck injury, then inform the Event Coordinator immediately.
3. Confirm and announce the team's injury substitute if this is needed. The substitute assumes the player's position on court or in the out box queue.
4. You may disqualify an injured player and insist that a substitute player replaces them, should that player present an unreasonable risk to themselves and/or other players.
5. For blood injuries, refer to the Rules.

## Safety: Sanctioning Headshots

1. Sanction players who make a headshot which is at close range (less than approximately 4 metres); a direct attempt; and at a target who is in a static standing position or in a static high kneeling position before the attacker begins their throwing motion, and remains static until contact is made between the ball and their head, or a target who is retreating backwards in a straight line away from the thrower without changing the height or relative position of their head by ducking, diving, jumping or sidestepping.
2. Where there is a cause for concern, first give a warning and then you may apply further sanctions for multiple repeated head-height attempts even at ranges longer than 4 metres. A cause for concern may be where a player of significant throwing ability repeatedly throws at a newcomer or player with far less ability (e.g. in mixed league).
  - a. Take the target's dodging movements into account when making this decision i.e. if the thrower is aiming high because the target often jumps then this would not be classed as a repeated headshot.

## Safety: Managing Suspected Concussion

1. If a player's head makes contact with a ball, another player, the ground or any other external surface, there is a risk of concussion.
2. Time should be paused for all head injuries where the player is showing signs of concussion, even if the player is off-court, in order to call a first aider or contact emergency services as necessary.
3. Play can continue once the player is in a safe position, ideally away from the playing boundaries. Injury substitutions may be made as necessary.
4. The player must undergo a concussion assessment by the team or event first aider as outlined in the Rules.
  - a. If the player does not exhibit any signs of concussion, they may return to play after the current set has ended. Monitor the player throughout the rest of the day for visual signs or symptoms of concussion.
5. You may disqualify a player with suspected concussion and insist that a substitute player replaces them, should that player present an unreasonable risk to themselves and/or other players.



# Decision Making Process

## Rationale

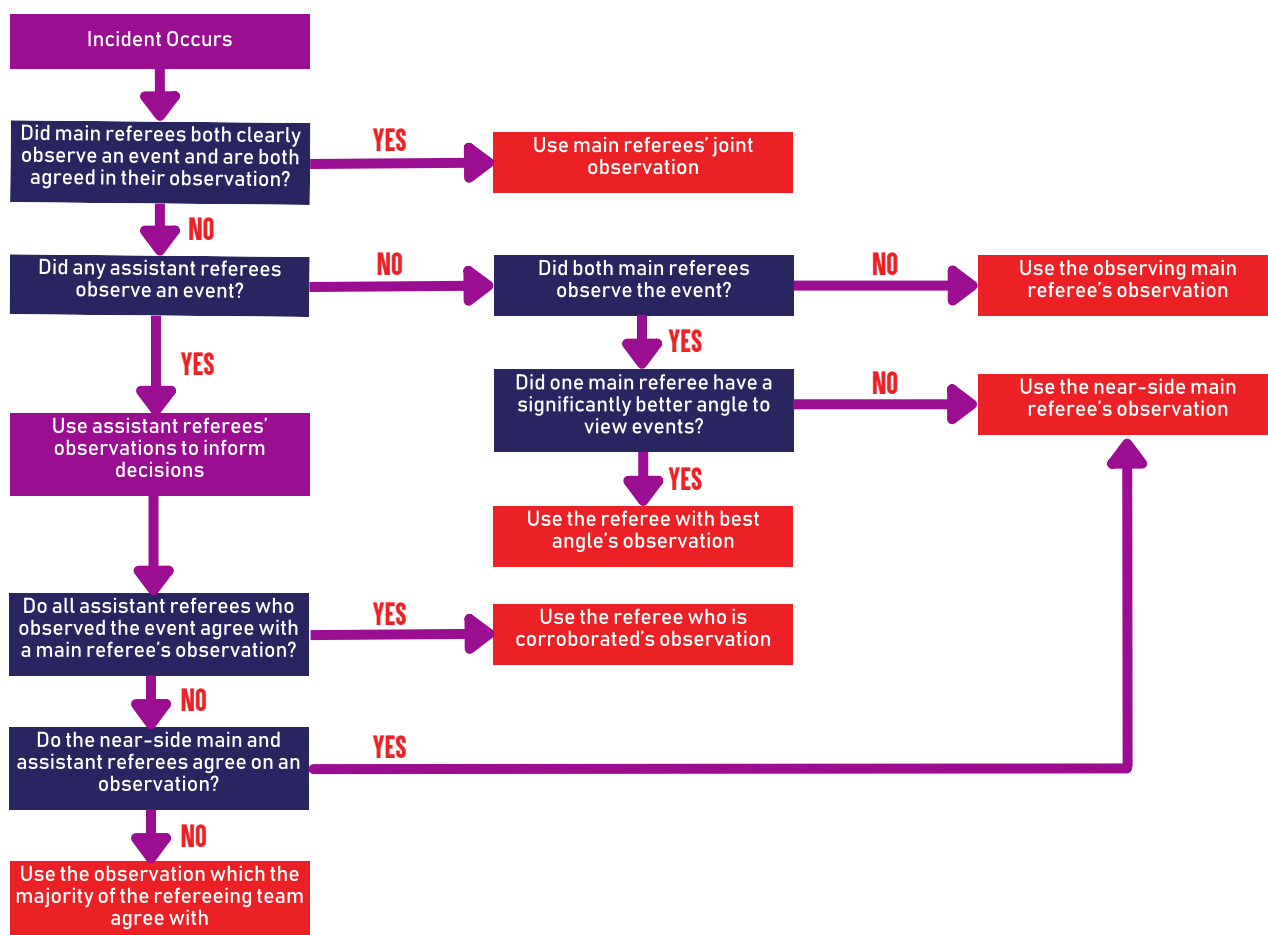
Dodgeball is a fast moving sport where multiple objects are thrown at high speeds in different directions. The difference between entire matches can sometimes come down to mere millimetres, or milliseconds. As such, referees may have different perceptions of what happened during an event. Issues can be compounded when referees have not worked together before, or are unwilling to listen to another's point of view. In order to aid the refereeing team to come to fast, effective decisions, this Decision Making Process should be followed:

## Strategy 1: Fast Clarification

Should be used where possible e.g. for simple decisions such as a standalone hit vs bounce decision. Play is not paused during this process. The referees that made differing decisions should try to solve the issue quickly without pausing time or taking focus off the game and allowing other events to build up, and can be achieved with fast verbal or non-verbal communication. This can often be as easy as the referee viewing from the better angle saying, "It definitely bounced." for example. The referee who is less confident on what they saw, had a worse viewing angle or was refereeing the far-side team should go with the other's decision. The centre referee may override an assistant referee's decision when they are extremely confident in their own observation, but it is good practice to listen and take assistant referees' observations on board if they observe an event from a better angle. If a quick decision cannot be reached, then Strategy 2 should be used instead:

## Strategy 2: Decision Discussion

Should be used for more complicated sequences of events or where an agreeable outcome from a fast clarification can not be reached. Play is paused during this process and centre referees should ask questions that allow the following process to be followed:



# Inclusive Refereeing

## Inclusive Refereeing

To aid in the development of the sport, we encourage all referees to adopt an inclusive approach. This links with Referee Standard V.5: Bigger Picture: Referee inclusively to foster a love of the game.

We are committed to ensuring that dodgeball is an inclusive game which anybody can enjoy playing. A large part of a player's enjoyment can be influenced by a referee; if they show a degree of empathy, treat players with respect and take the time to explain rules to players where relevant, then all players are more likely to remain calm and enjoy the game. 7 examples of inclusive practices are shown below:

### Before The Match:

#### Be welcoming



Make an effort to introduce yourself to teams, or team officials, before a match. This can help to put new teams at ease.

#### Assess extra needs



Ask a team official beforehand if anyone new to you has extra needs. This allows you to adapt how you communicate.

### During The Match:

#### Commentate



Use clear hand signals and verbal announcement when players have been hit. Where possible, provide extra information on non-events such as near misses and where a dead ball hits a player. This allows everyone to understand your view of each situation and keeps a game flowing. e.g., "There was a line fault first, so the catch doesn't count."

#### Common sense approach



If a new player doesn't understand a rule, you may choose to provide an additional warning and explain this before applying sanctions e.g. if a new player rolls a ball across to their opponents without knowing this is an invalid attempt you may tell them this isn't allowed before calling them out. Take care to only apply leniency to situations where the set result is unlikely to be affected.

#### Emotion coaching



This provides you with a structure to aid with de-escalation, using the understanding that an emotional outburst is not a negative, but a learning opportunity. The key to this technique is finding common ground with an emotional player using the following steps:

1. Name the emotion e.g. "It seems like you're feeling frustrated..."
2. Show empathy e.g. "...I'd be frustrated too if I'd been hit before making that catch..."
3. Set boundaries e.g. "...but even when we're frustrated, we can't shout at the referee or you'll be given a yellow card..."
4. Plan for next time e.g. "...What should you do next time?"

### After The Match:

#### Explain rules



If you make a decision regarding a new player and they look confused when called out or sanctioned, take 30 seconds after the match to explain relevant rules to them to help them understand for next time.

#### Encourage



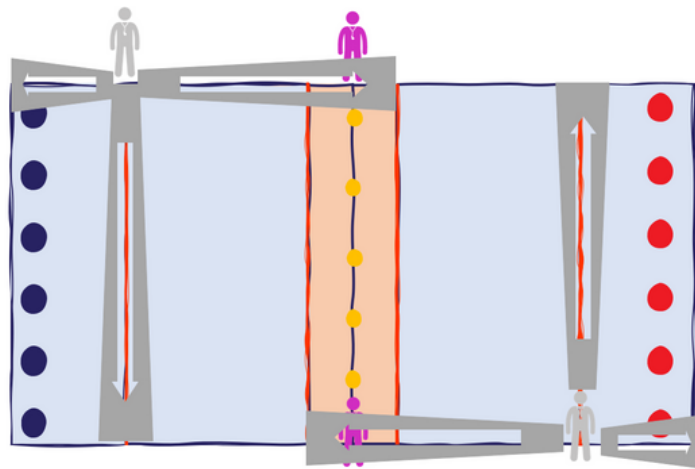
Provide encouragement or positive feedback about a new team's gameplay or adherence to the Dodgeball Code (honesty, fair play etc.) in order to encourage this behaviour in the future.

Refereeing Standard: V.5: Bigger Picture: Referee inclusively to foster a love of the game

Outstanding Application: Able to consistently & effectively use inclusive refereeing practice to adapt communication to clearly explain and encourage younger/newer players

# Role of Return Line Referees

## Positioning & Monitoring:



Stand near the return line.

### Focus on the following in order of priority:

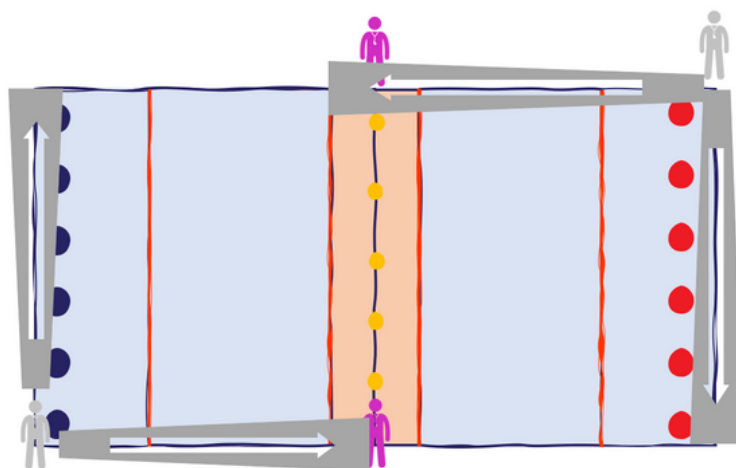
1. Near-side team (team to the left) for line faults (see line you are responsible for above) & return line ball activation when being returned to play/from the rush
2. Near-side team (team to the left) for eliminations (hits/catches etc.) and non-eliminations (blocks, near misses, bounces etc.)
3. Near-side ball retrievers (ball retrievers to the left) for retriever errors etc.
4. Follow balls thrown by near-side team to far-side team when near-side team is at no clear risk of elimination. Watch for eliminations (hits/catches/line faults etc.) and non-eliminations (blocks, near misses, bounces etc.)

## Role:

- **Starting Sets:**
  - Watch for false starts from the team on your half
  - Watch to ensure balls are made live on the opening rush
- **During Sets:**
  - Watch all play as outlined above for hits, catches, blocks, bounces and line faults
  - Independently & actively call players out, using non-verbal signals to show centre referees your decision
  - Watch for retriever errors
  - Watch to ensure balls are made live when returned to court by a retriever
  - Confirm your point of view to main referees when you have a better viewpoint, and confer with all referees as required so centre referees can make decisions in line with the Decision Making Process
  - Keep track of the outbox queue order in case a catch is made
- **Ending Sets:**
  - Be aware of player numbers on court at the end of sets to help confirm set scores
  - Reset balls between sets & inform centre referee if a player/retriever is delaying this process
- **Safety:**
  - Monitor player safety at all times, informing a centre referee immediately if you observe an issue

# Role of Back Line Referees

## Positioning & Monitoring:



Stand near the back line.

### Focus on the following in order of priority:

- Near-side team (team to the left) for line faults (see line you are responsible for above)
- Near-side team (team to the left) for eliminations (hits/catches etc.) and non-eliminations (blocks, near misses, bounces etc.)
- Near-side ball retrievers (ball retrievers to the left) for retriever errors etc.
- Follow balls thrown by near-side team to far-side team when near-side team is at no clear risk of elimination. Watch for eliminations (hits/catches/line faults etc.) and non-eliminations (blocks, near misses, bounces etc.)

## Role:

- **Starting Sets:**
  - Watch for false starts from the team on your half
- **During Sets:**
  - Watch all play as outlined above for hits, catches, blocks, bounces and line faults
  - Independently & actively call players out, using non-verbal signals to show centre referees your decision
  - Watch for retriever errors
  - Confirm your point of view to main referees when you have a better viewpoint, and confer with all referees as required so centre referees can make decisions in line with the Decision Making Process
  - Keep track of the outbox queue order in case a catch is made
- **Ending Sets:**
  - Be aware of player numbers on court at the end of sets to help confirm set scores
  - Reset balls between sets & inform centre referee if a player/retriever is delaying this process
- **Safety:**
  - Monitor player safety at all times, informing the main referee immediately if you observe an issue

# Allocated Referee FAQs

## Should allocated referees call players out or tell the main referees if they see a hit?

- All assistant referees and centre referees should 'Independently and actively call players out'.
- If you see something, then tell the player directly, with a quick explanation of why they are out e.g. 'hit'.
- Assistant referees should also make calls on non-hits in order to help play run smoothly and clarify events during gameplay e.g. 'bounce', or 'block'.
- Use non-verbal hand signals can help to show both players and centre referees your decision quickly, thus aiding game flow.

## Can assistant referees give sanctions?

- Assistant referees cannot directly provide sanctions such as:
  - Giving players a warning
  - Calling players out for anything other than a gameplay event e.g. a hit, catch or line fault
  - Giving players a penalty set
  - Giving players a yellow or red card
- Assistant referees are encouraged to still be involved in the sanctioning process by reporting anything deemed as inappropriate or sanctionable behaviour in line with the current [rules](#) to the main referees; main referees can then use this information to provide sanctions as required.

## Can assistant referees be sanctioned?

- Assistant referees can be sanctioned for actions such as:
  - Not paying attention to the match whilst they are fulfilling assistant referee duties
  - Interfering with play e.g. stepping on to court during a moment of action
  - Teams can also be sanctioned for not providing enough assistant referees to fulfil their allocated duties.

For more information, please see the current [rules](#).

## How do we give feedback on other allocated refereeing teams?

- We encourage teams to provide feedback about both main referees and assistant refereeing teams by completing the [Referee Feedback Form](#). This feedback is collated and monitored.

## How is allocated referee feedback used?

- Where deemed appropriate, feedback is sent out to Club Referee Leads to share with their club.
- British Dodgeball may provide further support, sanctions or put mandatory course requirements in place for teams who fail to adequately fulfil their assistant refereeing duties.

## What should I do if I feel I have been mistreated by a team as an allocated referee?

Abuse towards referees is not tolerated by British Dodgeball, and is directly in contravention of the British Dodgeball Code of Conduct. We encourage all assistant referees to report any abusive behaviour they experience to main referees during the match in the first instance. Failing that, they are encouraged to file a complaint using the process outlined in our [Complaints & Disciplinary Policy](#).



## Further Resources

[Referee Hub](#)

[Referee Standards](#)

[Referee Feedback Form](#)

[Become a Paid Referee](#)

[Referee Apparel – Kitlocker](#)

[Referee Mentors](#)

[Rules](#)

[Sanctioning Guidelines](#)

[Regulations](#)

[Court Diagrams](#)

