



Television Match Official (TMO) Global Trial Protocol

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 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.A.7 – Referee Consulting With Others

- (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 referees 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) after the potential infringement and 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.
- (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
- (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. The TMO may also be consulted as to the success or otherwise of kicks at goal.
- 1.2 The referee will blow time out and make a “T” sign to indicate “time-out”.
- 1.3 The referee will make a “square-box” signal with his hands and at the same time inform the TMO through the two-way communication that he will require his advice.
- 1.4 The referee will then ask the TMO one of three questions:
- 1) Is it a try – yes or no?**
 - 2) Can you give me a reason why I cannot award a try?**
 - 3) But for the act of foul play – probable try or no try?**
- 1.5 The TMO will then liaise with the TV director and look at all available footage in order to gather enough information in order to provide informed advice.
- 1.6 The broadcaster must provide all the angles requested by the TMO.
- 1.7 When the TMO has concluded his analysis he will provide the match referee with his advice and recommendations. The referee should repeat the TMO’s recommendation to ensure that he is absolutely satisfied that he has heard what has been recommended.
- 1.8 The TMO will then advise the referee as to when he may go ahead and signal his decision. (This process is important in order to allow time for TV to focus their cameras on the referee for his decision).
- 1.9 The referee will then communicate his 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.

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 he will indicate what the potential offence was and where it took place. Potential infringements which must be CLEAR and OBVIOUS are as follows:
 - Law 9.A. Scoring points
 - Law 10.1, 10.4. Foul play: obstruction, dangerous play, tackling a player without the ball
 - Law 11.1 (b, c). Offside: player in front of the kicker
 - Law 12, 12.1. Knock-on or forward pass
 - Law 16.5 (d). Ruck: offside at the ruck – players not joining the ruck
 - Law 17.4 (d). Maul: offside at the maul – players not joining the maul
 - Law 19.5 (a, b). Player in touch
 - Law 19.2 (d). Lineout: quick throw
 - Law 22. In goal (including ball grounded by a defending player)
 - Law 15.5 (f, g). 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 he is to advise the referee not to 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 he will indicate 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 he is to advise the referee 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 an act of foul play (prior to the next restart in play) 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 If the referee agrees to refer the matter to the TMO he will indicate that he wishes the TMO to review the potential act(s) of foul play and to make a recommendation as to the appropriate sanction(s).

4.3 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.

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

In accordance with Law 6.A.4, the referee will remain the sole judge of fact and Law during a match.

Please note: Communication guidelines will be issued together with online education.

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.