



2025 to 2027 (inclusive)

REGIONAL MEMBER AND COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE

VOLUNTEER MATCH OFFICIAL GUIDELINES AND SUGGESTED HONORARIUMS

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING VOLUNTEER MATCH OFFICIALS

PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline the steps Community Rugby League Associations (Associations) should take to ensure that volunteer match officials (Referees) are properly treated as volunteers.

We recommend that all Leagues, Associations, Clubs or other affiliates follow these guidelines in respect of engaging, managing and making honorarium payments to Referees.

Please do not hesitate to contact your Zone or Regional Manager should your League, Association, Club or affiliate have any questions in respect to these guidelines or managing Referees generally.

1. WHO IS A VOLUNTEER?

The key distinction between volunteers and other types of engagements (such as employees or contractors) is that volunteer engagements do not create any legally enforceable employment obligations between the parties. Each of the below guidelines is consistent with this important principle.

2. ENGAGING VOLUNTEER REFEREES

a) From the outset of the voluntary engagement, it is important to communicate with Referees to ensure they are aware of the voluntary basis of the arrangement, and what that means. This communication can be verbal or in writing. We recommend the affiliate issue a short, written communication to all new Referees that confirms the following:

(i) that the Referee is a “volunteer” and that they are not an employee;

(ii) that the Referee is not required to meet any set level of productivity or output (i.e. officiate in more than 50% of games in a season);

(iii) that the Referee can give notice to cease being a volunteer at any time; and

(iv) that any ‘honorarium payment’ made to the Referee in their role as a volunteer is a nominal amount paid in recognition of their contribution to the affiliate body and the Rugby League community.

3. MANAGING VOLUNTEER REFEREES

a) It is not necessary to have a written arrangement in place with a Referee.

b) The affiliate should communicate expectations to Referees in respect of how they will perform their volunteer duties. It is important that the affiliate communicate the expectations and functions of the volunteer role consistent with the voluntary nature of the position. While an affiliate can provide directions, instruction and supervision to a Referee who is performing their volunteer duties, an affiliate cannot “compel” or “demand” the Referees to undertake certain tasks, due to the voluntary basis of the Referee position. Further, an affiliate should never threaten any legal action against a Referee for a failure to perform their duties.

5. Where a Referee is failing to perform their duties adequately and the affiliate wishes to end the volunteer arrangement, the affiliate can do this at any time. While every situation will be different, we recommend the affiliate end the volunteer arrangement on a “no fault” basis (simply say that the affiliate is no longer seeking any further voluntary contribution) and thank the Referee for their contribution when ending a volunteer arrangement.

6. When referring to Referees, whether that be verbally, by text or email, avoid referring to them as ‘employees’ or ‘workers.’ Emphasise the word ‘volunteer’ or ‘volunteering’ in whatever communication the affiliate has with them.

HONORARIUM PAYMENTS AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES TO VOLUNTEERS

7. An affiliate may (but are not required to) provide Referees an ‘honorarium payment,’ which is a payment to show gratitude for the Referee’s service. This is not a payment that is intended to remunerate them for their hours of work performed, or the skill or level of expertise exercised in performing their volunteer duties. Do not refer to these payments as ‘salary,’ ‘wages’ or ‘compensation for hours of work/services performed.’

8. Any Referee who does not wish to receive any monetary or other payment for their voluntary service should not be paid an honorarium.

9. If an affiliate body is going to provide ‘honorarium payments,’ whether by cash or by electronic fund transfer, they should record these payments as an ‘honorarium.’

10. The affiliate body may also (but are not required to) reimburse Referees for expenses they incur in the performance of their voluntary duties. The reimbursement of expenses can be made by way of cash or electronic funds transfer. Expenses can be reimbursed by cash or electronic funds transferred, and should be recorded as ‘reimbursement for volunteer duties’.

11. If an affiliate body intends to make ‘honorarium’ payments to Referees, please consider the guidelines at Appendix A which outline current applied standard suggested honorarium payments amounts.

This guideline should be read in conjunction with the following resources:

- Justice Connect - Guide to managing volunteers
- Fair Work Ombudsman factsheet - Unpaid work

Grade/Age Group	Full-game suggested		Finals suggested	
	Referee	T/J	Grand Finals Referee	Grand Finals T/J
APPENDIX A – Suggested Match Official Honorarium payments				
U/6 Tag Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 x 8min quarters Coaches on field Referee not required under laws of game 	\$20 Optional	N/A	N/A	N/A
U/7 Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 x 8min quarters Coaches on field Referee not required under laws of game 	\$25 Optional	N/A	N/A	N/A
U/8 – U/9 Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 x 8min quarters Safe Play Code 	\$30	\$15 Optional	N/A	N/A
U/10 – U/12 Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x 20min halves Safe Play Code 	\$40	\$20 Optional	N/A	N/A
U/13 – U/14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x 25min halves Safe Play Code 	\$50	\$25	\$70	\$35
U/15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x 25min halves Safe play code 	\$60	\$30	\$90	\$45
U/16 – U/17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x 30min halves 	\$80	\$40	\$120	\$60
U/18 – U/23 (60mins)	\$100	\$50	\$150	\$75
Open Age or Res Grade/3rd grade (Amateur) (60mins)	\$100	\$50	\$150	\$75
Open Age or Res Grade (Amateur) (70mins)	\$120	\$60	\$180	\$90

Grade/Age Group	Full-game suggested		Finals suggested	
Open Age or Res Grade (Amateur League) (80mins)	\$150	\$75	\$230	\$115
Open Age (NSWRL PPIS 100 points) (Limited interchange) (80mins)	\$200	\$100	\$300	\$150
Over 35's Tag (50mins)	\$60	\$30	\$90	\$45
Open Age Tag (50mins)	\$60	\$30	\$90	\$45
13s – 18s Tag (50mins)	\$50	\$25	\$70	\$35
10s – 12s Tag Development (40mins)	\$30	\$15		
8s – 9s Tag Development (32mins)	\$25			

Suggested travel subsidy where volunteer referees elect to seek honorarium for volunteer duties is \$0.50 per Kilometre for distances more than 80km (return trip).

EXAMPLE COMMUNICATION TO VOLUNTEER REFEREE

Dear Volunteer Match Officials

Thank you for your interest to volunteer as a Match Official in the (Competition) in 2025.

We would like to clarify that as a volunteer referee or touch judge, you are not an employee or contractor of (AFFILIATE or INSERT LEAGUE NAME).

However, we note that a volunteer Match Official may accept an honorarium payment as a nominal amount paid in recognition of your contribution to the (INSERT LEAGUE NAME) and the Rugby League Community. Honorarium payments are made on a match-by-match basis.

Because of the volunteer nature of your position, you can let us know if you wish to cease being a volunteer at any time. Similarly, (AFFILIATE) can end its volunteer arrangement with you at any time.

Community Match Official Accreditation expectations are as follows:

- Promote positive on and off field behaviour
- Maintain appropriate Match Official accreditation
- Have a valid WWCC or WWVP clearance
- Complete Patrons of Game Child Safe Education
- Register on the My Sideline Database

We look forward to working with you to make positive contribution in helping Community Rugby League.

Yours sincerely

EXAMPLE COMMUNICATION ENDING A VOLUNTEER ARRANGEMENT

Dear Volunteer Match Official

Please be advised the affiliate no longer seeks your voluntary contribution and is ending your volunteer arrangement with (affiliate body).

We thank you for your contribution.

Yours sincerely