



Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022

**RE: LAWS SUB-COMMITTEE - CLARIFICATION: REGULATION 6**

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to you to confirm the responsibilities of a referee in relation to the cancellation of a fixture. This issue has been brought into sharp relief by the current heatwave which, in many areas of the country, has resulted in extremely hard pitch conditions.

The latest RFU regulation (6.20) which came into force on August 1st spells out how the decision on whether a pitch is playable or not:

**Pre-Match**

**Suitability of the Pitch or Weather conditions (6.20/21)**

20. It is understood that Weather (as defined in RFU Regulation 1) conditions may preclude the safe playing of rugby and regulations 20-23 inclusive of this Regulation may be further supplemented by an Organising Committee's Administration Instructions. In all cases, the Match Official, or their representative, has primacy of decision as to whether a match should be played. The deciding Match Official must be independent of both clubs (unless otherwise agreed by the Organising Committee) and the decision must be made in as timely manner as possible with the travel considerations of the away team taken into account.

21. Where practicably possible, a decision by 5pm the day prior to a match should be taken, noting the practicalities of changing Weather.

***For avoidance of doubt, regulation 6.20 refers to a pitch inspection by the referee (or their nominee) well ahead of the scheduled kick off (often the day before) to prevent teams travelling long distances only to find the pitch unplayable. "Primacy of decision" means that the match official making the inspection is alone in making the decision in those circumstances only.***

**Within Three Hours of the Kick Off**

When a late decision as to the fitness of the pitch for playing a match is necessary, the decision shall:

- (a) Be made by the captains of the teams involved.
- (b) Even if the captains agree for the match to proceed, the Referee is still entitled to decline to referee any match on safety grounds or other substantial reason.
- (c) If one or both of the captains do not agree for the match to proceed, the match will not be played, and the matter will be referred to the Organising Committee to decide upon what action shall be taken in accordance with RFU Regulations.

***For the avoidance of doubt, the referee has no involvement in the decision of either team to refuse to play the match, but can refuse to officiate if they believe it is unsafe to do so.***

***Tim***

Dr Tim Miller  
Chair – RFU Laws Sub Committee  
[timmiller@rfu.com](mailto:timmiller@rfu.com)  
+44 7799 582646