COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE

Ground Manager Handbook

Creating a positive experience for both home and visiting teams

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Positive, confident, calm

Do everything possible to ensure the safety and wellbeing of players, officials and spectators while they are at the venue

If at any time you need clarity or reassurance on a ruling, matter or incident, you should contact your Local League Administrator

Who can be a Ground Manager?

- Must be registered club volunteer
- Must be at least 18 years old
- Must have a processed Working With Children (WWC) Check
- Completed the Patrons Of The Game – Link here
- Completed Community Ground Manager Induction Course – Link here

Duties of a Ground Manager

As a Ground Manager, you will be responsible for the off-field environment of matches, and the compliance of the NRL National Code of Conduct, including managing spectator behaviour (both home & visiting) at games, and always ensuring the safety and wellbeing of everyone.

Ground Managers should ALWAYS be wearing the supplied Ground Manager vest/shirt.

Ground Managers should set a reasonable standard of dress, including closed in footwear.

Ground Managers must not consume alcohol whilst on duty and should decline the role if they have consumed any alcohol prior to the game.

What are the ideal attributes of a Ground Manager?

Knowledgeable - understand competition rules, policies, procedures, facility layout, emergency contacts etc

People Skills - good communication skills, cooperative, positive and friendly. It also helps if you are confident to manage a variety of situations from various personalities

Organisational Skills & Time Management - ability to manage game days to ensure a positive, safe and family friendly environment that functions smoothly and efficiently

Conflict Resolution - ability to deal with difficult people and personalities and possibly manage an unwanted situation with either your club, the visiting club or both

Observation & Perception - ability to detect situations that may lead to some risk of injury

As a Ground Manager, you are bound by the following Club Officials standards

Uphold the integrity of the game of Rugby League at all times

Make a decision in the best interests of the game of Rugby League

Place the safety and welfare of the players and officials as the top priority

Accept responsibility for all decisions made

Always act in a sportsmanlike manner, respecting opposition players, team. club officials and spectators

Do everything possible to ensure the safety and wellbeing of players, officials and spectators while they are at the venue

Supporting Match Officials – the Ground Manager should do the following:

- Ensure the safety and welfare of match officials
- Introduce themselves to all individuals officiating on the day
- Supervise (accompany if necessary) match officials to and from the field, at all breaks
- Monitor the environment to identify any potential risks to match officials
- Ground Managers should address any individuals who are directing comments towards the match officials and communicate the consequences for this type of behaviour.

Key roles of a Ground Manager:

- Manage the sidelines
- Closely observe interchanges
- Manage and report sin bins and send offs
- Implement the mercy rule (as per local league rules)
- Undertake crowd control
- Identify and defuse negative spectator behaviour

Managing Game Day

- Ensure all equipment is present
- Ensure teams are on the field on time
- Ensure games start on time
- Ensure rules are enforced
- ENSURE EVERONE IS HAVING A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

In the case of serious incidents and emergencies, is it better to be over cautious, than have people in an unsafe environment

If there is a hazard on the field that cannot be rectified, contact your President first, then together, contact the League Administrator or land owner as soon as practical to arrange relocation of the days games.

Check of Playing Surface Facilities

Ground Manager undertakes an inspection of the venue and the playing surface. A simple walk over the playing surface will allow you to identify:

- Trip hazards - any large holes, divots, sprinkler heads etc on field
- An overly wet or dry surface
- Materials on the field that could cause injury - glass, plastic, rocks
- You should ensure that the field is marked appropriately and post pads, field markers and ropes are in place

Fencing – to keep spectators at a safe distance from field of play

• Do fields have permanent fencing?

• Fields with temporary fencing (roped off) – area of a playing field is constructed at a minimum three (3) metres from the external perimeters of the field of play.

On Field Safety Personnel

AGE	MINIMUM PERSONNEL REQUIRED	MINIMUM ACCREDITATION REQUIRED
U6-7	One (1) x First Responder for up to four (4) matches being played on an International Field.	• League First Aid; or • NRL Level 1 Sports Trainer; or • NRL Level 2 Sports Trainer
U8-9	One (1) x First Responder for up to three (3) matches being played on an International Field.	
U10-12	One (1) x First Responder per match	
U13-15	One (1) x First Responder per team for each match.	
U16+	One (1) x First Responder per team for each match.	• NRL Level 1 Sports Trainer; or • NRL Level 2 Sports Trainer.

• Each venue has appropriate safety personnel in attendance

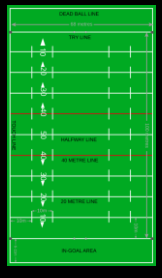
• Each team has appropriate safety personnel in attendance

• On field safety personnel are marked on the sign on sheet

• On field safety personnel have signed the sign on sheet, prior to commencement of the game

Before games commence the Ground Manager is to ensure that the following Game Day Equipment is on hand to facilitate the days games:

Goal post pads, corner posts, officials tables, clocks (recommended 3 - game clock, sin bin clock & time off clock), officials vests, sirens (to signal time), benches, first-aid kits, ice, modified rules vests, footballs



Rules can change each year – you should ensure that you read the Laws each season

Checking players/officials identity

- Sign on sheets for all home and visiting teams (if you are not using digital versions)
- Check appropriate accreditations and player identification (team manager should present to the Ground Manager to show their MySideline player cards and also identification/accreditations for associated team staff, at the prescribed time from the League Administrator)
- Do not allow games to commence without the necessary, suitably qualified sports trainer and coaches as per the NRL On Field Policy

Managing the Sideline

- Reserve players should be seated on their respective sides of the official's table. They should be seated, not standing, and they should not impede the view of the table officials
- Coaches should remain at the bench at all times and should not directly comment to any match official or opposition, during games
- First responders and Leagusafes are to be seated at the reserves bench, unless they are performing their duties in accordance with the rules and NRL On Field Policy
- They are not to pace up and down the sideline, unless they are performing an approved duty

Player Interchange

When players are being interchanged during a match, the Ground Manager should ensure the correct procedures are followed:

- Interchange may only occur during general play
- A maximum of two (2) interchange players may take place at any one time
- A replaced player must cross the touchline or dead ball line, prior to their replacement taking the field and do so from an on-side position
- An interchange must not be made after the referee has ordered a scrum, until the scrum has been completed unless it is to replace an injured or bleeding player and the referee has:
  - signalled a stoppage in play
  - the trainers have advised the referee that the interchange is to take place

Best practice – 3 Ground Manager's (one can patrol team benches, another patrols the perimeter in a clockwise direction, the other patrols the perimeter in an anti-clockwise direction.

Sin Bin

- When a player is sin binned, they are required to sit out of the game for 10 minutes or the required time as per local league competition rules
- The Ground Manager should have a designated place where sin binned players can sit during their time off field (unless requiring medical attention)
- The Ground Manager should ensure that the player remains in the designated place during their time off the field
- The sin bin clock should be started when the player has crossed the sideline and the referee has signalled time back on
- The player should be notified when there is one minute remaining on their sin bin clock

Send Off

- When a player is sent off by the referee, they are unable to take any further part in the game
- The player should be directed to leave the enclosed playing area and remove their playing jersey immediately
- The send off, should be marked against the player on the online portal or sign on sheet
- The Ground Manager should ensure the player does not re-enter the enclosed playing field
- The Ground Manager should also maintain harmony between any sent off players and the opposition, when the game is finalised and all players leave the enclosed playing field area

Mercy Rule

In community Rugby League, matches can be terminated when there is a very large points differential. Please check with your Local League to know the correct number. If that number is achieved, the Ground Manager should ensure that full time is signalled as soon as the differential is reached. Should both coaches agree to continue play, the game may continue, but no further scores will be recorded.

Incidents

- Incident (breach of NRL National Code of Conduct) – provide a detailed recount of the incident to your League Administrator by completing a Ground Manager Report
- Encourage witnesses to complete a detailed written account of the incident, by completing a written statement.
- Ensure written records of all ‘authorised persons’ (except coaches, trainers, team managers & players) allowed inside the spectator fence, are kept and present them upon request to the League, if required

Crowd Control

- Spectators should be kept outside of the playing enclosure, at all times
- The only people allowed inside the playing enclosure, are players, match officials, accredited coaches, sports trainers, and team managers, who are participants in the current match
- The safety of referees, officials and players is paramount, when it comes to crowd controls
- Should anyone enter the field of play without permission, the referee should be alerted immediately and the game should be stopped, until the offending person has been removed
- In the event of an on field injury, especially to a junior player, parents should be reminded to stay outside of the playing enclosure while the player is assessed by a first responder

Inclement Weather

- The Ground Manager should confer with the referee with regards to continuation of play
- The Ground Manager should uphold Heat Guidelines – consult with sports trainers and referee negotiate breaks.
- In the event of localised electrical storms, games can be terminated or suspended for a period of time, if the referee and/or Ground Manager are concerned about lightning.

Termination of Games

- The Ground Manager has the authority to request the termination of a game by the referee, due to safety or security issues
- If there is a breach of the rules of the NRL National Code of Conduct that cannot be rectified, or that is repeated after notification by the Ground Manager, the nearest touch judge should be approached and asked to alert the centre referee to the situation. If there are no touch judges, you will need to gain the attention of the referee as soon as it is safely possible
- If a match is terminated, the Ground Manager should complete a Ground Manager report

Identification of Team Staff or Spectators

- To identify a person that commits a breach of the rules, the Ground Manager is authorised to approach the coach, sports trainers and team management of the team that the offending person is supporting, and request the offenders name/details
- If the coach, sports trainers or team management refuse to identify the person concerned, or if they hinder efforts to obtain the identity of the person they will be in breach of the NRL National Code of Conduct

Suspended Person in Attendance

If you become aware that a suspended person is in attendance you should:

- Take a photo of the suspended person, if possible
- Approach the suspended person, with another club official, and ask them to leave the venue
- If they refuse to leave, through the nearest touch judge gain the attention of the referee, and ask them to stop the game
- Again, approach the suspended person, and inform them that the game will not recommence until they leave the venue
- If they still refuse to leave, call the police
- In all circumstances, even if the suspended person leaves immediately upon request, the incident should be reported to the League Administrator

Serious Incident Reporting

Although extremely rare, as a Ground Manager, you may need to deal with a serious incident at your ground. It is important to ensure:

- If a person requires medical attention, that people are providing the relevant first aid. Ensure they are removed from danger and stop the game if required
- Move people away from incident and return teams to dressing shed, if required and safe
- As Ground Manager, if an ambulance is required for injury, please get the first responders to call 000. Ensure the venue is accessible and not obstructed by vehicles and crowd. Enlist people to help manage this process
- As Ground Manager, oversee the incident. Reassure people and parents. If police are required, call 000
- Remember, the safety of all participants is paramount, so ensure teams, match officials and everyone is safe
- If the incident is of a serious nature, the League Administrator should be informed immediately
- As Ground Manager, be vigilant in monitoring who has witnessed the event, as you may need to get reports from these people
- If there are offenders involved in an incident, the Ground Manager will need to try and identify these people or speak to witnesses to ascertain their identity
- Ground Manager should also obtain any footage of the incident to assist with disciplinary matters
- The Ground Manager should ensure that everyone is cooperating and assisting the emergency services teams
- In all cases, ground manager forms, witness statements, match reports and photos, should be provided to relevant League Administrator.

Many tasks to juggle!! Be confident, direct people, ask for help when required

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References and Resources

- **NRL Code of Conduct**
- **Junior League Laws (6-12's)**
- **International Laws (13+)**
- **Other Laws of the Game**
- **Patrons Of The Game**
- **Community Ground Manager Course**
- **Ground Manager Report Form**
- **NRLWA Code Of Conduct Procedures**
- **NRLWA Judiciary Procedures & Penalties**
- **NRLWA Tough Love In League Policy**
- **NRLWA Our House Rules**