

CHAPTER 2

COMPETENCIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of rugby union referees is to continuously strive for greater success, for a more professional approach and to hold the respect of players, coaches and supporters. The most effective way to achieve this goal is to identify the competencies that make a rugby referee successful at the highest level. Before such competencies can be identified, the term “competency” should be clearly defined, and the difference, if any, between “competency” and “competence” must be clarified.

In this chapter an operational definition of the term “competency” will be presented, even though the term has not yet been clearly defined in the literature. Various approaches to the term will also be discussed.

Other topics addressed in this chapter are Dickson’s (2000: personal e-mail) related research on the competencies of rugby referees in Australia, and lessons for this research will be drawn from Dickson’s study.

Referees are an integral part of the human resources of their sport organisations, e.g. unions, and consequently their competencies also need to be discussed. This chapter will endeavour to identify clearly the competencies of rugby referees.

2.2 DEFINITIONS OF THE TERM “COMPETENCY”

There are various definitions of competencies. Berge, de Verneil, Berge, Davids & Smith (2002: 43-61) wrote the following about the different definitions of competency: “Providing for a competent workforce has led to the general inquiry about competencies as a basis for a common language. This goes beyond the changing roles and titles found across organisations. There are many different definitions of competency – with definitions dependent on how the concept is used. Early on in the defining of competency, it was believed that clearly defined competencies would systematically ensure job performance. Many different definitions have been proposed resulting in a wide range of frameworks and definitions in the literature of various fields. Not all these definitions are compatible and consequently the debate continues.”

Human resource practitioners often consider that competencies describe the characteristics of a person, as stated by Green (1999: 5). He provided a definition of this use of the term: “An individual competency is a written description of measurable work habits and personal skills used to achieve a work objective”.

Green (1999: 5) further indicated several implications of the above definition:

- An individual competency is different from organisational competencies, capabilities, values and priorities.
- A written description of at least twenty words communicates exactly what is meant by the competency.
- Measurable work habits and personal skills mean that the competency can be used to measure reliability and accurately predict a person's actions.
- Individual competencies contribute to achieving a work objective, but they are often part of a work system that may be the primary cause of the results gained.

After he had reviewed the literature Hoffmann (1999: 275-286) concluded that three main positions were taken towards a definition of the term “competency”. Competencies were defined as either:

- I. observable performance (Boam and Sparrow, 1992; Bowden and Masters, 1993 in Hoffmann, 1999: 275-286)
- II. the standard or quality of the outcome or the person's performance (Rutherford, 1995; Hagar et al, 1994 in Hoffmann, 1999: 275-286)
- III. the underlying attributes of a person (Boyatzis, 1982; Sternberg and Kolligian, 1990 in Hoffmann, 1999: 275-286)

Some of these authors used more than one of these positions to describe the concept (Hoffmann 1999: 275-286).

The first definition viewed competency in terms of observable performance or the outputs of the learning process. This definition was concerned with whether the person was competent in accordance with the written standards. The focus, therefore, is on the output, or tasks, to be completed.

The second definition viewed competency as a standard, or quality, of outcome. According to Hoffmann (1999: 275-286), there are several ways in which standards for quality of performance may be applied in the workplace. In the case of this study, the standard for referees on the field might be interpreted as follows:

- o A standard could refer to a minimum acceptable level of performance, for example, a referee must pass all criteria set by his union/society to qualify as a referee, although these criteria do not necessarily make the person a good referee.
- o A standard could refer to higher levels of acceptable performance than had previously existed, for example, a referee's society/union may rate referees

not only according to minimum standards, but also according to performance on the field.

- A standard could be used to manage change.
- A standard could refer to the need to standardise performances, for example, all referees across South Africa, and not only in one union, might be required to qualify according to the same training and evaluation criteria.

The third definition of competency refers to the underlying attributes of a person, such as their knowledge, skills or abilities. This definition creates a focus on the required inputs of individuals in order for them to produce competent performances.

In Berge *et al* (2002: 43-61) various examples of the term competency are quoted which are very similar to the conclusions of Hoffmann, in the sense that performance is emphasised.

- Mirabile (1997: 74 in Berge *et al*, 2002) defined competency as a knowledge, skill, ability, or characteristic associated with high performance on a job, such as problem solving, analytical thinking, or leadership.
- Parry (1998: 74 in Berge *et al*, 2002) expanded on this by stating that to identify certain traits and characteristics might be helpful to recruiters and interviewers, but it is not the trainer's job to assess or develop them. Additionally, Parry (1996: 49 in Berge *et al*, 2002) stated that most HR experts believe that training programmes, performance appraisals, and wage and salary administration should focus on performance, not personality.

Garcia and Associates (2002: <http://www.garcianassociates.com>) also describe competency in relation to the underlying attributes of a person in their definition: "Competencies are specific knowledge, skills, behaviours, attitudes and other attributes required for effective performance of particular tasks. Concepts of

competency identification and application have had significant effects on the design of performance management systems and are now becoming more widely used.”

Weightman (1994: 2), in turn, defined competencies as the underlying behaviours thought necessary to achieve a desired outcome. A competency is something you can demonstrate – for example: “change gears while driving a car” – where it is clear when the behaviour is successful.

After taking all the above definitions into consideration, the following operational elements can be used to formulate a definition of the term “competency” with regards to the competencies of rugby union referees:

- Individual competency is a written description of measurable work habits and personal skill used to achieve a work objective. The competencies of successful referees need to be stated in writing so that the success or failure of a referee on the field can be measured.
- A competency is observable performance or high performance.
- A competency is something that can be demonstrated.
- A competency must indicate the standard or quality of the outcome of a referee’s performance.
- Competencies are the underlying attributes of a referee, which involve the knowledge, skill, ability or characteristic associated with high performance.

2.2.1 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TERMS “COMPETENCY” AND “COMPETENCE”

After defining the term competency it is important to note the difference between the terms competency and competence, and Rowe (1995: 12-17) too states that it is important to distinguish between “competence” and “competency”. He observed that some dictionaries combine the terms and treat them as interchangeable, but he suggests that it is useful to let “competence” refer to skill and the standard of performance reached, and to let “competency” refer to the behaviour by which it is achieved. In other words, one describes what people can do while the other focuses on how they do it.

Figure 2.1: The interface between competence and competency.

COMPETENCE	COMPETENCY
Skilled-based	Behaviour-based
Standard attained	Manner of behaviour
What is measured	How the standard is achieved

Rowe (1995: 12-17)

According to Rowe (1995: 12-17), a better distinction between the concepts of “competence” and “competency” would permit more effective use of any models that might be employed. The main difference between competence and competency, therefore, is that competency is the behaviour necessary to reach a certain standard of performance.

2.2.2 UTILITY VALUE OF THE TERM COMPETENCY

Within the spectrum and context of the term competency, there are certain usages and stakeholders involved. There are many reasons to utilise or focus on competencies according to Weightman (1994: 1). Some of these reasons are as follows:

- There may be a top management initiative to look at core competencies as the basis for strategic planning.
- There may be a desire for strategic human resource management.
- The need to improve recruitment procedures or training.
- An initiative to try and ensure fairness and equality of employment.

It is for these reasons, among others, that Weightman (1994: 1) considers it necessary to study competencies.

Hoffmann (1999: 275-286) found that a variety of stakeholders use the term competency, each for their own agendas. These stakeholders employ the terms as follows:

- *Psychologists* are concerned with the concept as a measure of ability (Sternberg and Kolligian, 1990 in Hoffmann, 1999: 275-286) and whether the observable performance of a person represented their underlying traits or capacity.
- *Management theorists* apply a functional analysis to define how organisational goals are to be best achieved through improved individual performance (Burgoyne, 1993 in Hoffmann, 1999: 275-286).
- *Human resource managers* view the concept as a technical tool to implement strategic direction through the tactics of recruitment, placement, training, assessment, promotion, reward system and personnel planning (Burgoyne, 1993 in Hoffmann, 1999: 275-286).

- *Educationists* attempt to relate the idea of work preparation and professional recognition with that of a broad education (Bowden and Masters, 1993 in Hoffmann, 1999: 275-286).
- *Politicians*, including trade unions, particularly in the UK and Australia, have used the concept as a means to improve the efficiency of the labour market (Burgoyne, 1993 in Hoffmann, 1999: 275-286).

Meyer (1996: 32) is of the opinion that the term competency is essentially an abstract concept. According to him, the problem is compounded by the variety of contexts in which the term is used, each of which suggests a different meaning or connotation. Some of the numerous usages of competency, according to Meyer, include:

- the core competence of the organisation in the context of strategy and organisational design.
- competency-based qualifications – in South Africa these would be prescribed by the South African National Qualifications Framework, of the South African Qualifications Authority.
- competencies for the assessment of potential and managerial development form the basis of assessment and learning centre technology.

Green (1999: xiv) is of the opinion that behavioural language should be used to build core competencies that describe, guide and link actions at work, when he describes:

- what was done, we are better able to measure and predict during interviews and performance management.
- what is being done, we are better able to coach and train.
- what needs to be done, we define selection standards, performance expectations, coaching goals, and instructional objectives.

Thus, behavioural language helps us to be more specific about what we intend to say and do.

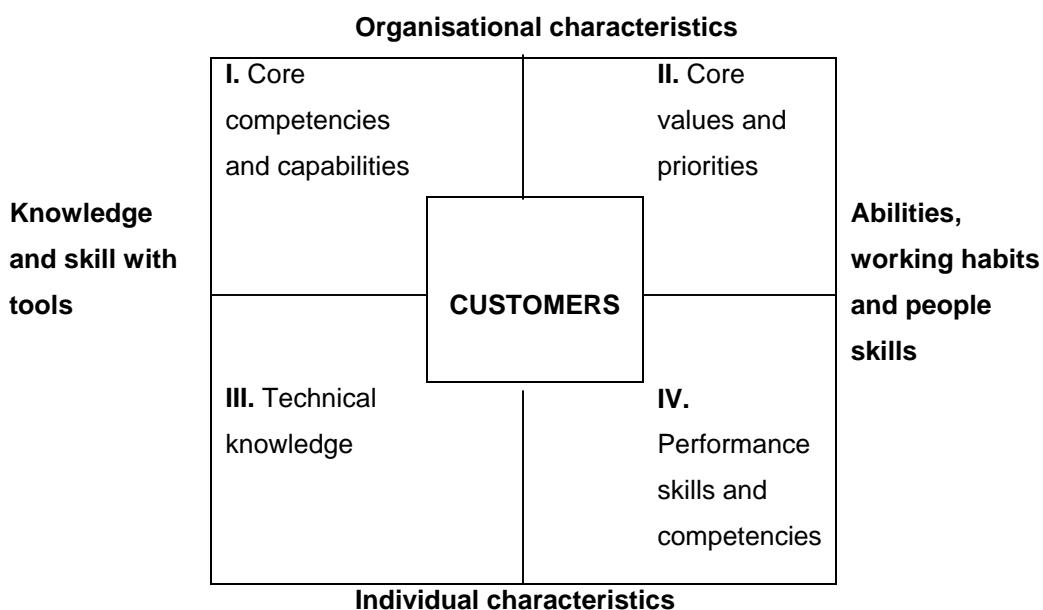
It is therefore clear that the term competency has various uses and that there is more than one stakeholder using the concept. Within the context of these uses and stakeholders it is necessary to define the scope of competency.

2.2.3 THE SCOPE OF COMPETENCY

Green (1999: 23) developed a scope for the term competency because, according to him, the ways in which the term competency is used by human resource professionals and business strategists has become confusing.

Green's scope for the term competency is a model that will help organise important meanings around the word competency.

Figure 2.2: The Scope of Competency.



Green (1999: 23)

The scope of the term competency, illustrated in Figure 2.2, can be elucidated as follows:

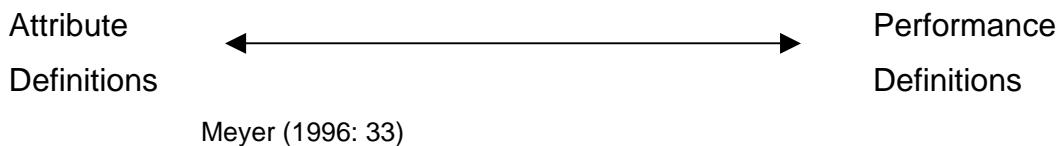
- Quadrant I: Core competencies and capabilities are ideally expressed in a mission statement that specifically communicates what the organisation/institution wants. The core competencies and capabilities must help to implement the purpose of the organisation/institution (Green 1999: 24).
- Quadrant II: Core values complement the technical aspects of work by explaining why the work is performed. It is experienced as the “feel” of an organisation – what it is really like to work in that organisation. Priorities reflect an organisation’s emphasis on the use of individual competencies such as working habits and people skills to make business processes and work systems more efficient or effective (Green 1999: 25-26).
- Quadrant III: Individuals use their technical knowledge to carry out their job responsibilities. These skills are typically learned in a formal learning situation and differ greatly across industries and jobs. Technical knowledge and job skill should be in support of the organisation’s core competencies and capabilities. Technical skills training provides a logical way for an organisation to maintain and extend its core competencies and capabilities (Green 1999: 27).
- Quadrant IV: Performance skills and competencies include work habits, communication styles, leadership, and teamwork. They are easily transferred across different industries and jobs, and they reflect a person’s efficiency or effectiveness in using technical knowledge and skill. A performance skill can be directly observed and described at a behavioural level (Green 1999: 28).

Together with Green's scope of competencies, Meyer (1996: 33) developed a continuum for definitions on competency. This continuum also helps to clear up confusion regarding all the various definitions.

2.2.4 CONTINUUM FOR DEFINITIONS ON COMPETENCY

Definitions of competencies can be categorised along a continuum. At one end of the continuum, one finds attribute definitions, while at the other end performance definitions are the order of the day. Meyer (1996: 33) developed a continuum that can be used to locate definitions.

Figure 2.3: Continuum for definitions



Attribute definitions infer underlying competencies or characteristics from behaviour. Typical attribute definitions include:

- A job competency is an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and or superior performance in a job (Spangenberg, 1990 in Meyer, 1996: 33).
- A job competency is an underlying characteristic of a person in that it may be a motive, trait, skill, aspect of one's self-image or social role, or a body of knowledge which he or she uses. The existence and possession of these characteristics may or may not be known to the person. In this sense, the characteristics may be unconscious aspects of the person (Boyatzis 1982 in Meyer, 1996: 33).

Performance definitions are defined in terms of the required performances. Therefore, the need to define, understand and measure underlying constructs becomes unnecessary. Some definitions, which use a performance-based approach, include:

- the ability to perform the activities within an occupation or function to the standard expected in employment (Australian National Training Board, in Meyer, 1999: 34).
- job competence is the employee's capacity to meet or exceed a job's requirements by producing the job outputs at an expected level of quality within the constraints of the organisation's internal and external environment (Dubois, 1993 in Meyer, 1996: 34).

Meyer (1996: 34) concludes that the attribute approach to competencies focuses largely on the individual as a person with all the difficulties associated with that, whereas the performance-based approach focuses on the demonstration of required behaviour, largely in the work context, which in turn imposes certain limitations on its usefulness.

After taking the above definitions and theories into account, Meyer (1996: 34) developed a working definition of competency, which can apply to a variety of contexts or situations:

“Competency is the integration of knowledge, skill and value orientation, demonstrated to a defined standard in a specific context.”

Once the scope and definition of the term competency is clear, certain models on how to identify and list competencies can be developed. Some of these models are generic and can be used across a broad spectrum.

2.3 COMPETENCY MODELS

Groups of individual competencies are organised into competency models. Some competency models are generic lists of individual characteristics that can be used in human resource systems. Other competency models are specifically designed for a particular organisation, or have a strong research basis that goes beyond any one organisation (Green 1999: 8).

According to Green (1999: 8), a competency model can be mostly verbal, mostly graphic, or a mixture of the two. An example of a competency model is included in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. An example of a competency Model

PERFORMANCE SKILLS
ADAPTABILITY Shows resilience: Rebounds from conflict and difficult situations; treats a negative experience as a learning opportunity; responds to time pressures and interpersonal conflicts with problem-solving actions; withholds negative comments and emotional outbursts; is respectful of others, even under pressure. Accommodates change: Responds open-mindedly to change initiatives; looking for ways to help the organisation; offers opinions about changes in a supportive manner; follows team agreement on changes in ways that help their effectiveness; resists changes that may be unsafe or illegal.
INTERPERSONAL Participates in teamwork: Works cooperatively with others and contributes to the group with ideas, suggestions, and effort; communicates acceptance or rejection of team commitments; does not talk about team members in a negative manner in their absence; is willing to confront performance problems of the team. Displays leadership: Communicates thoughts, feelings, and ideas to justify a position; encourages, persuades, or otherwise motivates individuals or groups; challenges existing procedures, policies, or authority responsibly.

Manages conflict: Expresses opinions directly and clearly without abuse or manipulation; listens to the opinions and feelings of others and demonstrates understanding by restating them; communicates disagreement to persons in authority as necessary; accepts negative feedback as a way to learn; negotiates agreements to resolve differences.

Accepts differences: Works effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds, behaves professionally and supportively when working with men and women from a variety of ethnic, social, and educational backgrounds, avoids using stereotypes when dealing with others; may correct others on the use of slurs and negative comments about other groups.

Provides service: Works and communicates with clients and customers to satisfy their expectations; adapts own needs and objectives to help others reach their objectives; presents difficult information in an attention-getting and persuasive manner.

WORK HABITS

Exhibits integrity: Gathers and uses information in ways that respect confidentiality, business ethics, and organisational secrets; makes truthful comments based on verifiable information; avoids using rumour, gossip, and subjective opinions in decision-making; is sensitive to perceived integrity issues; produces complete and accurate written documents.

Manages self: Uses standard operating procedures and work instructions to guide own actions without supervision; selects relevant, goal-related activities and ranks them in order of importance; allocates time to activities, and understands, prepares, and follows schedules; periodically makes decisions that are consistent with the job mission but not guided by policy and procedures.

Motivates self and others: Starts own work and gets others to start working; commits to a plan of action and shows a willingness to work hard and long to achieve measurable results; completes tasks quickly; competes productively against self, time allocation, and others.

Follows procedures: Understands, follows, and encourages others to follow prescribed policies and procedures, even when it is inconvenient to do so; improves performance by telling others where policies and procedures interfere with productivity.

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE AND JOB SKILLS

RESOURCES

Allocates money: Uses or prepares budgets, makes cost and revenue forecasts, keeps detailed records to track budget performance, and makes appropriate adjustments.

Allocates material and facility resources: Acquires, stores, and distributes materials, supplies, parts, equipment, space, or final products to make best use of them.

Allocates human resources: Assesses knowledge and skills and distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance, and provides feedback.

INFORMATION

Acquires and evaluates information: Identifies need for data, obtains it from existing sources or creates it, and evaluates its relevance and accuracy.

Organises and maintains information: Organises, processes, and maintains written or computerized records and other forms of information in a systematic fashion.

Interprets and communicates information: Selects and analyses information and communicates the results to others using oral, written, graphic, pictorial, or multimedia methods.

Uses computers to process information: Employs computers to acquire, organise, analyse and communicate information.

SYSTEMS

Understands systems: Knows how social, organisational, and technological systems work, and operates effectively within them.

Monitors and corrects performance: Distinguishes trends, predicts impact of actions on systems operations, diagnoses deviations in the function of a system/organisation, and takes necessary action to correct performance.

Improves and designs systems: Makes suggestions to modify existing systems to improve products or services, and develops new or alternative systems.

TECHNOLOGY

Selects technology: Judges which set of procedures, tools, or machines, including computers and their programs, will produce the desired results; helps others learn.

Applies technology to task: Understands the overall intent and the proper procedures for setting up and operating machines, including computers and their programming systems.

Maintains and troubleshoots technology: Prevents, identifies, or solves problems in machines, computers, and other technologies.

Green (1999: 9-10)

Green (1999: 8) adapted the model illustrated above from a verbal competency model of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), a project initiated by the U.S. Department of Labor.

This model made use of two main categories under which to classify competencies, namely performance skills and technical knowledge and job skills, and various sub-categories to indicate the competencies needed in detail. This study will concentrate mainly on the performance competencies of rugby referees and, therefore, the outcome will be a competency index rather than a competency model.

2.4 COMPETENCIES OF RUGBY UNION REFEREES

In a study done by Dickson (2000: personal e-mail), the competencies to officiate rugby union matches at senior level were identified. He also determined which competencies are most important for refereeing at different competitive levels of senior rugby, and which competencies require major focus in officiating education programmes. The study by Dickson provided some valuable lessons for this study.

In order to identify the essential competencies required for successful rugby refereeing, Dickson study (2000: personal e-mail) used a hybrid form of the Behavioral Anchored Rating Scale (BARS). BARS has been utilised to develop performance criteria for such diverse areas as university teaching, policing, firefighting and nursing.

The use of BARS methodology presented two advantages to Dickson's project:

- It has been clearly established that BARS methodology encompasses extensive occupational analysis.
- A whole range of occupational "experts" are used to identify competencies. The "experts" are selected on the basis of their knowledge, familiarity, expertise, and previous experience with the role under investigation.

In combination, these two points encourage diverse perspectives during the competency identification process, and thus ensure that the role of rugby refereeing is not biased towards any one stakeholder group.

The BARS process resulted in 41 competencies being identified, which were divided into five broader performance dimensions. The competencies, identified by the Dickson study (2000: personal e-mail), are discussed in section 2.4.1 – 2.4.5.

2.4.1 COMPETENCIES PERTINENT TO MANAGEMENT OF PLAY (ON THE FIELD)

The following competencies pertain to the management of the game (Dickson study, 2000: personal e-mail):

- Sanction players appropriately for transgressions of the Law.
- Demonstrate authority when controlling specific game situations.
- Judge player transgressions consistently.
- Be impartial to all players (e.g. ignore personality clashes, player status, etc.).
- Organise the mechanics of set plays (e.g. make sure the scrum packs safely).
- Work collaboratively with touch judges (e.g. making decisions, player management, etc.).
- Utilise captains and senior players to manage difficult players/situations (e.g. chat on the run).
- Be aware of field marking abnormalities.
- Discourage negative tactics (e.g. sledging, time-wasting).
- Maintain a safe environment for players (e.g. check studs for sharp projections).

The second competency refers to communication.

2.4.2 COMPETENCIES PERTINENT TO COMMUNICATION

The Dickson study (2000: personal e-mail) identified the following competencies for communication:

- Verbal communications of game requirements and decisions to players (e.g. instruct players at the breakdown).
- Non-verbal communication of game requirements and decisions.
- Use whistle loudly, clearly and appropriately.
- Demonstrate standardised signals correctly (e.g. try, scrum etc.).
- Maintain composure when communicating to players.
- Develop a positive rapport with:
 - players
 - coaches
 - administrators
 - officials (i.e. other referees and touch judges)
 - support staff (e.g. trainers)

The third competency refers to decision-making.

2.4.3 COMPETENCIES PERTINENT TO DECISION-MAKING

The following competencies pertain to decision-making (Dickson study, 2000: personal e-mail):

- Demonstrate consistency when applying the Laws.

- Adapt decision-making to the specific conditions of each game (e.g. weather, interpretation of Laws, playing surface, skill levels of different grades).
- Allow maximum application of the advantage Law to encourage positive play.
- Provide consistent application of the advantage Law to encourage positive play.
- Ensure the spirit of the Law is upheld (e.g. sin-bin for deliberate infringement).
- Adjudicate fairly and correctly throughout the game based upon an accurate knowledge and interpretation of the Law.
- Distinguish between intentional and unintentional foul play (e.g. a ball carrier, who, because of his rapid change in body position, is taken in a high tackle).

The fourth competency refers to game preparation and analysis.

2.4.4 COMPETENCIES PERTINENT TO GAME PREPARATION AND ANALYSIS

The following competencies, identified by the Dickson study (2000: personal e-mail) pertain to game preparation and analysis:

- Demonstrate outcomes of specific training programs undertaken (e.g. physical, psychological).
- Display a professional appearance at all times (e.g. indress, on and off the field, calm and controlled manner).
- Prepare conscientiously for each game (i.e. physically, psychologically, nutritionally).
- Demonstrate a level of athleticism appropriate to the standard of the game.
- Evaluate performance through:

- self-analysis (e.g. video, worksheets, referee coaching reports).
- referee-coach reports.
- player feedback.
- coach feedback.
- Demonstrate a willingness to implement lessons learned from suggestions and feedback (i.e. an “action plan” to improve performance).

The last competency refers to the knowledge of rugby law and understanding of the game (on and off the field).

2.4.5 COMPETENCIES PERTINENT TO KNOWLEDGE OF RUGBY LAW AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE GAME

The following competencies pertain to knowledge of rugby Law and understanding of the game (Dickson study, 2000: personal e-mail):

- Apply rugby Law definitions in game situations (e.g. definition of ruck, maul, tackle).
- Demonstrate an accurate knowledge of the Law in examinations.
- Take actions appropriate to specific situations (e.g. injury, collapsed scrums).
- Understand strategies and techniques used by players (e.g. player organisation in scrums and line-outs, variations, variations of binding etc.).
- Display effective positional play (e.g. best view of critical incidents, avoid impairing player movement).

Based on the list of competencies described above, a survey instrument which employed a 4-point Likert scale, was designed by Dickson (2000: personal e-mail) to assess competencies from the perspectives of importance, proficiency and

improvement priority. This survey was sent to a wide sample of rugby stakeholders, i.e. referees, referee coaches, referee managers, players and coaches, at several competitive levels of rugby.

The responses were analysed according to the Rasch Scaling Model. This technique is a relatively new form of analysis, and represents an advance on traditional techniques by its capacity to categorically or uncategorically identify the position of an item (i.e. competency) on a continuum, e.g. importance (Dickson study, 2000: personal e-mail).

The conclusions and overall findings of the research by Dickson (2000: personal e-mail) confirmed the variety of tasks referees are required to undertake. Numerous on-field roles and responsibilities (e.g. decision-making), plus expectations and obligations carried out away from the competitive arena (e.g. maintenance of fitness) were identified as essential to effective refereeing. One of the most important areas of referee performance to emerge from the research is the consistent application of Laws during a game.

The competencies identified in the study demonstrated the unique requirements of rugby refereeing at a number of levels, and confirmed the assumption that officiating requirements need to be developed specifically for each individual sport (Dickson study, 2000: personal e-mail).

2.5 COMPETENCIES WITHIN THE HUMAN RESOURCE CONTEXT

Rugby referees form an important part of the human resources of their different unions or societies and, therefore, it is important to study their competencies within the human resource context. "There is a growing interest in competency, competency development and the measurement of competency and therefore a

number of initiatives emphasising the importance of a competency-based approach have been taken in the management development area" (Elkin 2001: 20-25).

It is necessary to understand why competencies can be used to recruit or develop employees, in this case rugby union referees, for better performance and productivity. The competency-based approach, and how it came about, needs to be understood, especially in the human resource context.

It was during the 1980's that profound changes in competency-based development took place. In the past, survival had been the main concern of most organisations. Human resource development was often regarded as expensive and there was pressure to demonstrate that expenditure on human resource development would produce an acceptable return (Elkin 2001: 20-25).

There is increased emphasis on accountability and responsibility in all areas of management, including human resource development, and there has been a switch of emphasis towards individually based learning. Human resource practitioners have become much more learner-centered. There is now a situational imperative for human resource development practitioners to demonstrate their effectiveness (Elkin 2001: 20-25).

Management competencies are much more than the mere skills necessary to do the job; they are clusters of skills, knowledge and values. Lists of competencies can also include personal attributes, such as self-confidence, or a pro-active mind-set (Weightman 1994: 23). According to Weightman (1994: 23), the competency approach in human resource management emphasises that there is more than one way of being an effective or competent manager. It emphasises that instead of training managers in one particular technique we need to consider a variety of ways to develop the various competencies.

Weightman (1994: 23) went further and encouraged organisations to apply clusters to their own staff to find the particular management abilities statistically associated with good performance.

Ashton (1996: 14-19) described the interesting Holiday Inn Worldwide case-study in which a competency-based human resource strategy was successfully implemented. This case-study is discussed in more detail below.

2.5.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETENCY-BASED HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGIES

The following is a discussion of the process Holiday Inn Worldwide followed to implement a successful competency-based human resource strategy. When this case-study is extrapolated to rugby referees, it would be necessary to identify competencies according to past individual performances and future outcomes as well.

After the research of Ashton (1996: 14-19), Holiday Inn Worldwide successfully implemented competency-based human resource strategies, which directly link compensation and individual performance to business objectives.

According to Ashton (1996: 14-19) identifying competencies accurately was a critical task for this organisation. He defined these competencies as “effective predictors of job performance” relative to key organisational criteria, and then sought role models among employees to identify desired and proven attributes. High and low performers were selected by management for behavioural event interviews with external consultants. Through prompting, they described career highlights, job challenges and difficulties in behavioural terms, which enabled characteristics and patterns to emerge.

As a result, high performance role models were constructed and refined on the basis of nine core competencies of value to the organisation. The following seven competencies were initially piloted by Ashton (1996: 14-19) before group-wide implementation:

- i. *Customer service orientation*: Understanding and acting on the needs of others to better serve them.
- ii. *Flexibility*: Being able to adapt and work effectively in varied groups and situations.
- iii. *Commitment to organisational values*: Acting consistently, in accordance with corporate values and standards.
- iv. *Achievement orientation*: A desire for improved performance, challenging objectives and standards of excellence.
- v. *Initiative and proactivity*: Self-motivation, persistence and going beyond the job description for potential outcomes.
- vi. *Organisational influence*: Influencing others effectively.
- vii. *Creative problem solving*: Identifying patterns in problem situations that are not obviously related and finding solutions.

These initial seven competencies, each backed by a performance rating scale of one to seven, were then reinforced by two others:

- i. *Enablement*: Inspiring acceptance of added responsibilities and accountabilities.
- ii. *Developing others*: To enhance talent or performance.

2.5.2 COMPETENCY-BASED HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGIES WITH REGARDS TO RUGBY REFEREE COMPETENCIES

From the previous discussion of competencies, the competencies of rugby union referees may consequently be seen as effective predictors of job performance relative to key criteria set by the individual unions or the governing body, SARFU.

In the case of Holiday Inn, Ashton (1996: 14-19) identified seven competencies before their group-wide implementation. Holiday Inn supported these seven competencies by a performance rating scale, before introducing two more competencies. The same type of strategy will be followed in the identification of the most important competencies a high potential or successful rugby referee must possess.

Certain competencies will be identified and measured according to past experiences and performances, before a final conclusion will be made as to what encompasses the most important competencies that a rugby union referee needs in order to be successful at the highest level.

2.6 SUMMARY

The ultimate goal of rugby union referees is to be successful, to follow a professional approach and to win more respect from players, coaches and supporters. There is a need to support this goal by identifying the generic and most important competencies a rugby referee needs to possess in order to perform successfully at the highest level. To identify such competencies the term competency was defined.

Subsequently the main difference between competence and competency was found to be that competence refers to skill and the standard of performance reached, while competency refers to the behaviour by which it is achieved. Various uses and stakeholders involved with the term competency were discussed to indicate how widely varied the concept of competency is.

Various definitions and descriptions of the term competency were analysed and the following generic elements were derived:

- Individual competency is a written description of measurable work habits and personal skill used to achieve a work objective. The competencies of referees need to be in a written format to be able to measure the success or failure of a referee on the field.
- A competency is observable performance.
- A competency is something that can be demonstrated.
- A competency must indicate the standard or quality of the outcome of the referee's performance.
- Competencies are the underlying attributes of a referee, and involve the knowledge, skill, ability or characteristic associated with high performance.

The scope of competencies and an illustration of the competency continuum were discussed. An example of a competency model was provided which identified some competencies, especially for rugby union referees drawn from Scot Dickson in a research study similar to this one.

Referees are part of the human resources within their different unions and societies, so the role and understanding of competencies within a human resource context was also discussed briefly. A case-study of how Holiday Inn Worldwide implemented a competency-based human resource strategy was provided as an illustrative example.

This chapter dealt with the term competency and what is meant by competencies. This will make it easier to identify the generic competencies of rugby union referees that will help the Blue Bulls Rugby Union to best select aspirant referees.