

IDENTIFYING THE GENERIC COMPETENCIES OF RUGBY UNION REFEREES

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SUMMARY

IDENTIFYING THE GENERIC COMPETENCIES OF RUGBY UNION REFEREES

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The Blue Bulls Rugby Referees' Society has experienced difficulty identifying the competencies required for individuals to become successful referees at national and international levels. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to identify the generic competencies required by a referee to become successful at the highest level. Competencies therefore, according to this study, are a prerequisite for successful rugby union refereeing.

The two main research strategies used are the quantitative and qualitative research methods. In this study quantitative research is predominant, but qualitative research was also used to identify the competencies employed in the questionnaires.

Interviews were conducted with the management of the Blue Bulls Rugby Referees' Society, and with the players to gather input based upon their knowledge. Interviews with approximately ten senior coaches were also conducted to obtain their views. The information gathered from these interviews, together with personal experience and inputs from De Beer (2003: unpublished interview) were utilised to draw up a list of competencies.

In this study survey research was used, using the Delphi technique to determine what the Blue Bulls referees' opinions are about the required competencies of a successful referee, and to ensure that important competencies were not excluded. The Blue Bulls referees' inputs were incorporated and a final questionnaire

compiled. This questionnaire consisted of 36 competencies, which could be rated on a 5 point Likert scale.

The total population for the study was 223, with 181 referees and 42 Currie Cup players. A weighted competency index was determined from these responses and the ten most important generic competencies, required to be a successful referee, from these responses are:

- **Objectivity / Impartiality** (*being able to treat both sides the same*)
- **Consistency** (*consistency in the way rules are applied during a match*)
- **Concentration / Focus** (*ability to stay focused during a match and not allow the mind to fluctuate*)
- **Honesty / Integrity** (*the ability to be honest with players, on and off the field*)
- **Commitment** (*dedication to do the best when preparing for games, know the rules, and always giving the best when refereeing a match*)
- **Judgement** (*ability to evaluate and judge situations during a match correctly*)
- **Fitness** (*fitness in terms of physical ability to keep up with play during a match*)
- **Trustworthiness** (*ability to make the players trust you and know that you will apply the laws consistently and fairly*)
- **Decisiveness** (*ability to reach quick and firm decisions*)
- **Composure** (*to be calm during difficult situations*)