



# SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY UNION ("SARU")

## Ball Retrievers Guideline

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## **1. Scope**

This guideline applies to all members of SARU, including the members of the South African Rugby Referee Association (SARRA), responsible for administrating the operations of the Ball Retrievers in SARU competitions and tournaments (Includes World Rugby, Rugby Africa and any international competitions hosted in South Africa).

## **2. Purpose**

The need for a “Ball Retriever” service is to ensure that the official match balls are immediately available for the match to restart or for line-outs to commence without any delays, thus preventing any time wasting that could affect the match's outcome.

The individuals who want to fulfill this role need to be educated and trained so that no teams achieve an unfair advantage from this service and that the match flows without any unnecessary stoppages, thus providing the best professional service.

## **3. Definitions**

**Ball Retriever Liaison Officer:** Reports to the Match Manager and oversees the operations, performances, and logistics of the Ball Retrievers.

**Ball Retrievers:** Performs the ball retrieval service and is administrated by the Local Union or the Referee society.

**First Class Fixtures:** All World Rugby/Rugby Africa Internationals, international competitions, Currie Cup Premier, and Currie Cup 1<sup>st</sup> Division matches played in South Africa.

**International Competition:** This means those rugby competitions in which national, provincial, or regional teams from South Africa and teams from any other country participate regardless of the name by which they may be referred.

**Minors:** These are persons classified as age 17 and younger.

**Referee Society:** Refers to the referee Society/Association affiliated with the local Rugby Union that coordinates this service.

**Union:** Refers to a Provincial Rugby Union that is a member of SARU.



## 4. Criteria

This task can be fulfilled either by a male or by a female. However, they need to adhere to the following criteria:

- 4.1. For all first-class fixtures, age from 13 years - His or her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday year will be deemed as the initial year of providing the service.
- 4.2. Undergo a Ball Retrievers course.
- 4.3. The parent or guardian signed a consent and indemnity form for minors.

## 5. Discipline Code

The following discipline code needs to be adhered to by the Ball Retrievers on and during match day:

- 5.1. Be Punctual: Punctuality is very important and therefore the individuals fulfilling the “Ball Retriever” services need to report to the appointed venue one (1) hour prior to the kick-off time.
- 5.2. Dress Accordingly: The individuals fulfilling the Ball Retriever services will adhere to the dress code as mentioned in paragraph 6.
- 5.3. Refrain from Unnecessary Interactions:
  - 5.3.1. Do Not engage in unnecessary discussions with other Ball Retrievers, match officials, side-line operational personnel, or the spectators.
  - 5.3.2. Not allowed in any players and match officials changing rooms.
  - 5.3.3. Do Not play around in any form. This implies that the match balls may not be kicked or played around in any form prior to the kick-off starting time and during the match.
- 5.4. Use of Electronic Devices: No electronic devices that can record media content, in any form, are allowed within the playing enclosure, tunnel, and Foyer.
- 5.5. Use Acceptable Language: Use of foul language will not be allowed.
- 5.6. Not Use beverages or meals: Use of beverages and meals will be taken at a dedicated area catered for this.

## 6. Dress Code

The following dress code needs to be adhered to:

- 6.1. When reporting to the venue, the individuals fulfilling the Ball Retriever service will arrive in suitable attire or as directed by the hosting Union or local Referee society responsible for this service.



6.2. The Ball Retriever Liaison Officer will provide the following match kit according to the competition sponsorship requirements:

- 6.2.1.1. Optional: Foul Weather Jacket or Tracksuit (pending weather conditions)
- 6.2.1.2. Jersey / “T” Shirt
- 6.2.1.3. Shorts
- 6.2.1.4. Socks

(Above dress wear will be neat, clean, and respectable)

6.3. The Ball Retriever footwear will either be Running Shoes or Togs as directed by the hosting Union or local Referee society responsible for this service.

6.4. The Ball Retriever kit provided will be handed in immediately to the Ball Retriever Liaison Officer after the last match – if applicable.

## **7. Logistical Requirements**

The Ball Retriever Liaison Officer:

7.1. Will coordinate the Ball Retrievers requirements with the Match Manager. This includes:

- 7.1.1. Accreditation.
- 7.1.2. Beverages and Meals – these are supplied as per fixture and only those Ball Retrievers appointed to these specific fixtures may help themselves to the beverages and meals provided at the dedicated area and time.
- 7.1.3. Kit for Ball Retrievers.
- 7.1.4. Match Balls – three (3) in total.
- 7.1.5. Towels for wiping off match balls.

7.2. Will coordinate the management of the Ball Retriever Changing Room Facility. The following is recommended:

- 7.2.1. Dedicated changing room adequate to accommodate nine (9) persons with a locking facility.
- 7.2.2. Access to Toilet facilities.

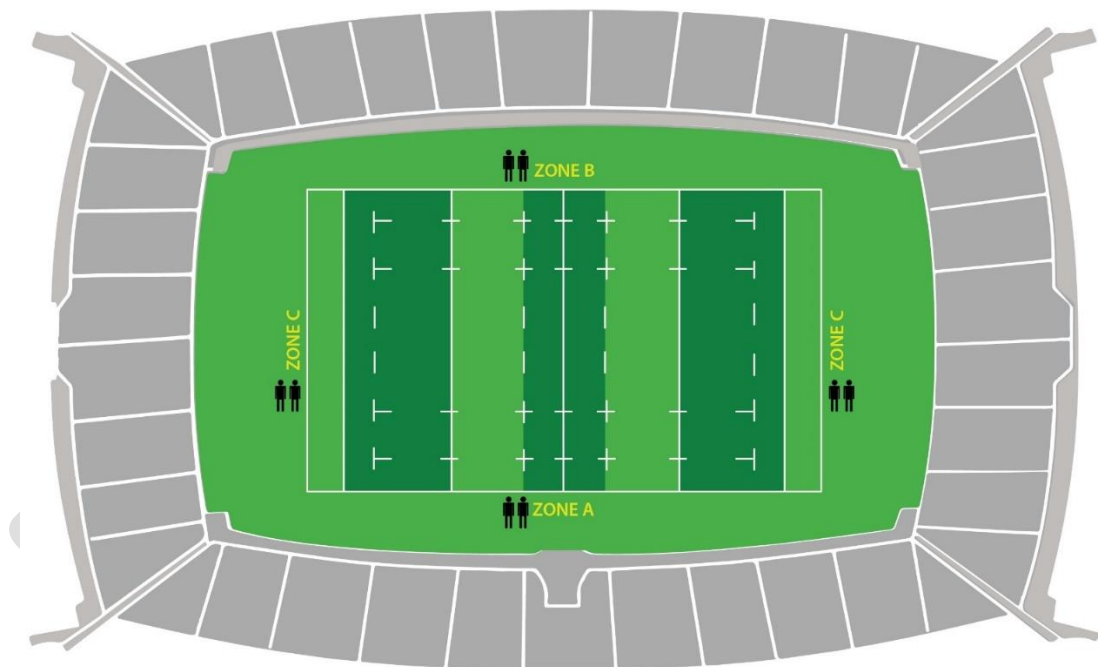
*(No other persons are allowed to enter the Ball Retrievers changing room on match days)*

7.3. Will coordinate separate main field entry/exit points which are different from the team’s entry/exit points.

- 7.3.1. If the stadium does not allow for a separate entry/exit point, a separate run sheet time slot must be established to ensure no interaction between players and Ball Retrievers exists.

## 8. Ball Retriever Operations

- 8.1. A minimum of six (6) Ball Retrievers are required to provide the services.
- 8.2. Pending the outlay of the playing enclosure in relation to the stadium structure, a maximum of eight (8) Ball Retrievers may be required to provide the services.
- 8.3. To simplify the operations, the field is marked into three Zones serviced by Ball Retrievers as follows:
- 8.3.1. Zone A – Main Grandstand (2 Ball Retrievers)
  - 8.3.2. Zone B – Opposite Stand (2 Ball Retrievers)
  - 8.3.3. Zone C – In Goal Stand (1 or 2 Ball Retrievers)



**(Should six (6) Ball Retrievers be used – only one (1) Ball Retriever is required in ZONE C)**

- 8.4. The ball placement is as follows:
- 8.4.1. One at Zone A – Main Grandstand
  - 8.4.2. One at Zone B – Opposite Stand
  - 8.4.3. One in the middle of the field as follows:
    - 8.4.3.1. Before the start of the Half being played with the following exceptions:
      - 8.4.3.1.1. Should there be a team mascot the team mascot usually runs with the home team onto the field with the kick-off ball.



- 8.4.3.1.2. In the presence of foul weather or heavy dew (evening matches), the ball must not be placed in the middle of the field. The ball will be given to the team kicking off prior to them running onto the field.
  - 8.4.3.2. After a successful goal kick is completed.
  - 8.4.3.3. After a successful penalty goal is completed.
  - 8.4.3.4. After a successful drop kick is completed
- 8.5. Towels to be used in foul weather to assist in providing a dry ball.
- 8.6. When the ball is kicked into touch from general play or from a free kick, the Ball Retrievers may not under any circumstances touch the ball until it's out of play (Key: Observe the players running towards the ball or who are near to play it quickly). The ball is out of play when:
- 8.6.1.1. The ball has gone outside the playing area and remains there.
  - 8.6.1.2. The referee has blown the whistle to indicate a stoppage in play.
- 8.7. When the ball is being kicked into touch from a penalty kick, the Ball Retriever anticipates where the ball will land to retrieve it as quickly as possible. The second Ball Retriever stands ready to place the spare ball or hand the spare ball over to the hooker where the Line-out will commence.
- 8.8. When an attempted Penalty or drop goal takes place, the ball must not be touched until the ball is out of play.
- 8.8.1. Should the attempted Penalty or drop goal be successful the ball may be retrieved.
  - 8.8.2. One of the Ball Retrievers in Zone A or B moves to the corner flag to retrieve the ball from Zone C to ensure that a ball is always available along both touchlines.
- 8.9. When a conversion goal is attempted, the ball may be retrieved.
- 8.10. The Ball Retrievers must ensure, where practically possible, that they do not move in front of the video and photographic cameras (including not stepping on video cables), technical zones, and in front of spectators.
- 8.11. The Ball Retrievers assist by ensuring all the balls provided for the match are retrieved at Half Time and at the conclusion of the match.

## **9. Compliance**

All members of "SARU" and "SARRA" shall ensure compliance with the implementation and further development of the Ball Retrievers Guideline as prescribed. For further information or advice regarding this guideline, please contact the Referees Office.