



Roles of officials

Different sports require different types of official, each with their own roles and responsibilities. Some sports require more officials than there are players, such as tennis, in which there are up to eleven officiating during a competitive match. In other sports there may be very few officials.

Umpires

An example of a sport that uses umpires is cricket. Traditionally there will be two umpires per match and they are in charge of all decision made on the pitch. For example, the umpire makes the decisions regarding whether or not a batsman is out, or whether a shot has been hit for four or six runs. The umpires ensure that the match is played in accordance with the laws of the game.

Referees

The role of the referee is to ensure that all of the rules (or laws) of the game are followed by performers. The referee can apply the rules on the field of play, although a referee can also manage the game from off-field. An example of when a referee is used is in football.

Judges

Sports such as gymnastics and boxing use judges to officiate. In gymnastics, the judge observes the performance of the athlete and assesses the demonstration of the skill or technique against a set of **criteria**.

Timekeepers

Some sports have a restriction on the amount of time allocated to a match or competitive situation. In basketball there are official timekeepers to record the duration of the game and to start and stop the clock at specific stages of the game. For some sports it is a requirement that every time the ball is out of play or play stops, time is stopped and not started again until play resumes. The timekeeper has the sole responsibility to stop and start the clock.

Starters

In sports such as swimming and athletics the starter plays a vital role. It is the starter who informs the participants in a race when to start. The starter is also in charge of monitoring false starts and sanctioning performers appropriately when the starting rules are broken.

ASSESSMENT

For your end of unit (half term) assessment, you will be required to complete the following task:
Multiply choice test on the roles and responsibilities of officials.

Responsibilities of officials

Appearance- For most sports it is a requirement that officials wear a specific uniform. This uniform differentiates them from the performers and reinforces their importance. The uniform worn by officials must not clash with the colours of the sports performers.

Equipment- If specific equipment is required to support the application of the rules and regulations of the sport, it is each official's responsibility to bring the appropriate kit to every competition or game. For example, a netball umpire will need to arrive at a game equipped with a whistle, a scorecard, a stopwatch, a coin and a pen.

Qualifications- For some sports, the official must hold a recognised officiating qualification. Properly trained officials help to ensure that the game is played within the laws stated and takes place in a safe and appropriate environment.

Fitness - For some sports it is a requirement for officials to be on the field of play and keep up with the play to ensure that they are close at hand to make quick decisions. This requires a high level of fitness as play can be very fast.

Interpretation and application of the rules- One of the major responsibilities of an official in any sports is the ability to apply the rules and regulations. If they spot that the rules of the sport have been broken, officials must take appropriate action and apply sanctions as stated within the laws of the sport.

Control of players - An official will demonstrate control of the sports performers and ensure that they are safe during the competitive situation by applying regulations correctly. In some sports, if the laws are broken because of serious foul play the officials have the power to discipline the players by sending them off the field of play.

Effective communication - In some sports there are numerous officials involved in competitive situations. It is important for them to communicate clearly, and listen carefully to each other.

Accountability to spectators- Spectators who observe sports often come to watch a specific individual or specific team. Therefore, it is important that the official demonstrates an unbiased opinion at all times.

Health and safety- A major responsibility of officials in sport is to ensure that every event is carried out safely, in order to protect players, spectators, coaches and officials. Checks on equipment and facilities will be carried out to ensure there is no risk in injury to sports and spectators.

Fair play- Officials should promote fair play at all times through respecting the sports performers that they are officiating, respecting the coaches and spectators observing the sport, and applying the rules fairly and consistently to both teams.

Use of technology- As technology has developed, more sports have moved towards using it to apply laws consistently.