ASSISTANT REFEREE MENTAL CHECKLIST (with priorities in bold)

KICK OFF/RESTARTS

* Watch for players in front of kicker (if requested)
* **Move forward and watch the contact around the landing area not the ball**
* **Look for obstruction on chasers and defenders**

# OPEN PLAY KICKS

* Taken back into 22 and no subsequent tackle/ruck/maul?
* Where was the kicker?
* Were any chasers in front of the kicker (timing on box kicks?) or players remaining within 10?
* **Watch the backfield and dwell - is there a late/dangerous challenge on the kicker?**
* **Look across the field – are chasers or defenders impeded?**
* **If catcher in the air - is he challenged before he lands? Is challenger off ground? Contest for ball?**

# TOUCH

* **Has the ball carrier touched/crossed the touch line?**
* **If caught – Where were the catcher’s feet? Where was the ball when caught/picked up?**
* **If deflected- where were deflector’s feet when he jumped? If in touch, where was the ball when deflected?**
* **What happens to the ball after it crosses the touchline?**
* **What happens to the players?**
* Is quick throw possible/legitimate (same ball/not touched/correct position/not in field/not forward?)

# LINE OUT

* Is the gap established and maintained? Is the hooker delaying the throw?
* Is the hooker stood in the correct place? Is he looking to throw straight down his own line?
* Is the hooker’s opponent stood 2 and 2? Is there one?
* Is the receiver 2m back? Does he join line out before ball thrown in?
* Did the ball go 5 metres?
* (If requested) was the throw straight?
* **Is a jumper or support player taken out/impeded? Is a player thrown across the line?**
* **Does contact with other player(s) impact on quality of possession/safety?**
* **Does a support player get ahead of the catcher and obstruct defenders?**
* If ball caught inside 15 m, do both sides respect 10 m?

# KICKS AT GOAL

* **Can I see the ball, the post, my fellow AR?**
* **Whose primary responsibility is the call?**
* Is there anything useful I need to say to player(s)? to referee? or to other AR (for equity on both sides of the pitch)?

# SCRUM

* Do the props follow the engagement instructions? Is there a stable platform?
* Look at the body shape of the props (straight back? Looking up/down? Feet too far back?)
* **How are the front row players binding (watch TH on arm; LH elbow down/ hand on leg or floor)?**
* How are the back row players binding (Firmly? Continuously? On locks? Slingshot at no.8?)
* Is there a strike for the ball?
* **What are the body angles of props (are they pushing straight or do hips go out? is there hinging?)**
* **Are the flankers making deliberate contact with opposition players?**
* **Are the scrum halves in contact/onside/kicking ball from hand/obstructed?**
* Where are the backs standing (5m)? Do they retreat if scrum advances?
* **Do the players move away safely?**

# RUCK

* Are joining players coming through the gate or in at the side?
* **Are players joining ruck/cleaning out legally (use of arms not shoulder)?**
* **Are players being tackled too far beyond the ball? Or driven back too far beyond the ball?**
* **Look at feet - is rucking legal (backward motion/near the ball)? Is ball kicked out of ruck?**
* Where are the guards standing (defensive and offensive)?
* Where are the “backs” standing (space – look for player never onside)?
* **Do players move away safely? Are they released and able to move away?**

# MAUL

* Are joining players coming through the gate or in at the side? Defensive or offensive.
* Does a player lose/change bind and “swim up the side”?
* Look for obstruction in the set up or in any shift drive (where is the ball?)
* **Are players pulling opponents heads/legs?**
* **Are players pulling opponents out of the maul?**
* **If collapsed, by which number (if requested)?**
* Where are the guards standing (defensive and offensive)?
* Where are the “backs” standing (space- look for player never onside)?
* **Do players move away safely? Are they released and able to move away?**

# OPEN PLAY

* **Has the passer been challenged late?**
* **Has a receiver/support player been tackled early/obstructed?**
* **Is it a legal tackle (must attempt to grasp; look for contact above the shoulders; seat belt tackle)?**
* **If tackled player is lifted above the horizontal is he safely brought to ground?**
* **Is a defender being obstructed/held back?**
* Is the referee unsighted when a clear/obvious “offence” occurs? If a knock on – was it deliberate?

# FOUL PLAY

* Can I prevent this? (If not, I must be able to see it)
* **What exactly did I see? (who, what, where/ think about perpetrator/retaliator)**
* **Look for players running in to incidents (consider “one from each side”)**
* **Aim for seamless communication for PK; flag should be yellow or above**
* **Inform ref of FP by… Do I need to stop the game (my call only if unsafe to continue)?**
* **Keep watching and running touch until game stops – something else may happen**
* **Where applicable, what will I say in my report? (team(s), number(s), offence(s) Use plain language**
* **If requested, what will I recommend as a sanction? Do we need TMO clarification?**

# PENALTIES/FREE KICKS

* **Is it safe to leave the players at the point of the offence?**
* Are they looking for and complying with my 10 metres?
* Are the attackers prevented from taking the kick quickly (ball kicked away?)?
* **Do I need to get deep to judge a kick to touch? Need to keep players in view as I move.**

# COMMUNICATION

* Is this a trend or key incident (clear and obvious)?
* **Does the referee need to know it (credibility)? Does he need to know it now eg can it wait for half time?**
* **When should I tell him? (Downtime for info; game time for action)**
* **Consider who else is listening to the communication.**
* How should I phrase it for maximum clarity (help ref process immediately) and remain concise?
* Aim for SEAMLESS communication – calm/concise/accurate leading to correct decision and low profile
* Aim for CONSISTENT phraseology – consistent with other ARs and so easily processed by referee
* Can I help ref/AR position penalty/scrum/ LO accurately? Keep a mental note when advantage(s) played
* (where applicable) do I need to advise the referee to use the TMO (think protocol) –check, check ; can I help him ask the correct question ? Provide support and a sounding board if necessary. Look at the screen.

**PERFORMANCE MINDSET**

* Am I performing with blue thinking? Do I recognize if red is taking over? How do I return to blue effectively?