



# NSW COUNTRY RUGBY UNION

## REFEREES ASSOCIATION

### COMMUNICATION - WHISTLE

The whistle is the most important communicating tool for a referee. Believe it or not, but both the players and spectators may assess a referee by how the whistle is used. The whistle should be made to 'talk' to signal the different infringements, etc.

#### USEFUL HINTS

Always carry a spare whistle, particularly in wet weather or muddy conditions. Sometimes after a fall, the referee can blow the whistle to no avail; only to find it clogged with mud.

A large type of metal whistle, called the Acme Thunderer Size 58.5, is recommended.

Attach the whistle to the wrist by a small piece of cord so if the referee falls or is bumped, the whistle is not dropped.

The type of whistle that attaches to a finger is not recommended as it can cause injury to a finger and it is much harder to make the 'rugby' sounds.

Keep the whistle clean. Some referees boil their whistles and then put them in the freezer. Don't let the pea dry out.

The whistle should be tried out before the commencement of each game.

#### MAKE THE WHISTLE 'TALK'

The angle of the whistle in the mouth gives different tones as follows:

- Up for a higher note. Down for a lower note.
- A quick circular movement gives a resonating tone.
- Moving the thumb over the edge of the whistle will also change the tone.

A combination of both these techniques incorporated with a long hard blast is very effective but it does need practice.

The tone can be shortened or lengthened by quickly withdrawing the whistle from the mouth or equally effective is putting the tongue to the front of the mouth to block the whistle's opening.

With practice (or if you play the trumpet or a woodwind instrument) tongue tipping can be used. This is the technique of moving the tongue rapidly back and forth to the mouthpiece of the whistle. To practice this technique, try saying the letter "T" rapidly.

## WHISTLE SOUNDS

- **A loud long blast** - Commencement or resumption of the game, a Penalty kick, a Mark for a fair catch, or foul play/dangerous play or a player or players' safety is in jeopardy.
- **A 'happy' loud blast** - A try and a goal.
- **A short blast** - An infringement requiring a scrum or Free Kick, and when the ball or a player is in touch and player are continuing to play.
- **A series of short loud blasts** - To emphasise a stoppage of play if the players have not heard the first whistle, or to gain the attention of the players when they are not responding to your requests (e.g. not forming the lineout correctly), or to call for medical assistance.

When the referee has blown the whistle it is important to ensure all players have heard it. Watch the players to see they disengage and come towards the place of the infringement.

Remember :-

- Players don't like excessive whistle blowing, so don't blow the whistle unnecessarily (such as when the ball is obviously in touch).
- Be precise and definite in your variations of blowing the whistle.
- Be sure not to blow too early for an infringement so you can judge whether it is appropriate to play advantage.
- Remember the sequence:- "Whistle" "Signal" "Talk".

*Taken from:*

*Refereeing In Practice 2020 pp:61-62*