

## **Ref praised for abandoning game before kick off**

A referee who abandoned a club rugby match before a ball had been kicked has been praised by SARU president Oregan Hoskins for setting a positive example for the future of the game in the country.

Raymond Buys – a referee in the Border region – abandoned the match between Dowu Village and Old Collegians before kick-off. He took the decision because the hosting club did not supply the required safety equipment and medical personnel for the match.

Old Collegians – who had driven more than two hours to fulfill the fixture – backed the referee's decision.

"No one wants to see rugby matches being called off and players missing out on their pleasure and enjoyment in the game," said Mr Hoskins. "But if minimum medical support standards cannot be met for managing a potential catastrophic injury, then so be it.

"The highest management risk of potential serious spinal injuries is in rural, under-developed areas and we have to make it quite clear that players should not be placed at risk. The pressures on referees in these circumstances are enormous but we commend Mr Buys for his strong action and the example he has set."

Dr Wayne Viljoen, manager of SARU's national rugby safety programme, BokSmart, came out in support of the referee and visiting club's actions: "It is important that all clubs, schools and teams involved in rugby ensure that they meet the minimum necessary requirements for a safe match environment."

"Visiting teams, management and referees should stand their ground if these minimum requirements are not met. With this in mind, I would like to commend both parties in this instance for having done just that, however unpopular the decision might have been. This will ensure that all hosting clubs and teams make sure that they meet these requirements in preparation of pending matches at their venues."

Clint Readhead, Medical Manager at SARU said: "For any school, club or community level matches to take place, the following basic minimum requirements are expected: 1) A first aider, equivalent or better qualified medical support staff in attendance; 2) a spinal board, neck collar, spider harness and head blocks; (3) telephonic access to standby medical emergency transport; (4) as of 1 January 2011, all coaches and referees must be BokSmart certified." For more information on these guidelines, go to the BokSmart website at [www.boksmart.com](http://www.boksmart.com).

SARU has also introduced a whole raft of safety measures to ensure that all the key participants in rugby matches in South Africa prioritise player welfare. Key BokSmart regulations approved by SARU's provinces are:

- As of 1 January 2011, Provinces, clubs, rugby bodies and schools shall not be allowed to host any match without ensuring that all match officials and participating coaches are BokSmart certified.
- Provinces, clubs, rugby bodies and schools must comply with these regulations and ensure that they inform all their members of the regulations and their obligation.
- Provinces, clubs, rugby bodies and schools must ensure that all affiliated match officials and coaches are BokSmart certified and their details recorded.
- As of 1 April this year, players younger than 18 years old shall not be allowed to play senior rugby in any position, at any level of rugby under the auspices of SARU or any of its provincial unions, without special waiver.
- As of 1 April this year, players younger than 19 years old shall not be allowed to play senior rugby in the front row at any level of rugby under the auspices of SARU or any of its provincial unions, without special waiver.
- Only players who have been identified within the provincial or national structures with the potential to play at elite provincial level or above can apply for a waiver.

### **Issued by SARU Communications**

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