

You are going to read a magazine article about four women who are referees or umpires in different sports. For questions 16–30, choose from the women (A–D). The women may be chosen more than once.

- A Bentla D’Couth
- B Ria Cortesio
- C Dr Gill Clarke
- D Grace Gavin

Which woman

- mentions concentrating on her job and not paying attention to anything else?
- was appointed to do a job which she knew would be her last?
- remembers her feeling of confidence when she started refereeing?
- mentions one quality she has that is appreciated by male players?
- gives an example of the sort of tests she has had to go through?
- felt the need to prove to others that she was well suited to the job?
- says people feel more positive about her refereeing after seeing her in action?
- intends to do something so that other women can reach her position?
- feels that the general public is unaware of the demands of her job?
- remembers the excitement of learning about an appointment?
- mentions her good relations with other sports professionals?
- behaves differently when she’s actually doing the job?
- refers to the lack of financial motivation in their work?
- admits one of her skills needs to be better to referee in men’s matches?
- recognises an employer’s positive attitude towards her sporting commitments?

16 B

17 C

18 A

19 D

20 C

21 D

22 A

23 B

24 B

25 D

26 B

27 A

28 C

29 D A

30 D

Bentla D’Couth football referee

When you first meet Bentla D’Couth, the first woman football referee in India, appearances can be deceptive. She is soft-spoken and appears shy and unassuming, in sharp contrast to how she is on the field, where she appears loud and aggressive. Bentla was always interested in football, but it was only at the age of eighteen that she learnt that women’s football existed. ‘In my first refereeing job, I knew that I was very well aware of every detail of the game and that’s why I could not go wrong. I was sure I wouldn’t make a wrong decision,’ she says. ‘It doesn’t happen now, but I guess earlier people did have that “what would she know” attitude. But once they saw me on the field refereeing a match, they would start coming to me for tips to improve their game. I can say that I haven’t had any bad experiences so far.’ Bentla knows she needs to improve on her positioning, though. ‘Boys play very fast, so it can be a little taxing to keep up with their pace.’

Dr Gill Clarke Olympics umpire

‘Sydney was actually my third Olympics and this was a unique achievement as until then no British woman had ever umpired at three Games. It seemed a long time since my first Olympics in Barcelona in 1992, and then Atlanta in 1996.’ A World and Olympic panel umpire’s performance is assessed in all international matches, and they have to score a minimum 8 out of 10 every time if they want to maintain their position. ‘Factors included in the assessment are such things as control, signals and cooperation with the other umpire on the pitch and fitness,’ explains Clarke. She arrived in Sydney early to get over the stresses and strains of the flight, ready for the pressures of the two weeks of the Olympic hockey competition, knowing too that it would be her final tournament as she had decided to retire at what she hoped was the top. ‘Increasingly, there is more at stake,’ she says, ‘it is big money for the players and the coaches but for umpires only personal satisfaction at a job well done.’

Ria Cortesio baseball umpire

Ria Cortesio, a native of Davenport, Iowa, is one of five women to have umpired in professional baseball. She is hoping to open doors for others to follow her. Asked what drove her as a young person to become an umpire, she referred to ‘the challenge’. ‘I don’t think that people realise what it means to work games day in and day out at the professional level, always on the road,’ she said. ‘It’s you against the world during the season.’ Asked about her interactions with fans during the game last Sunday, she said she was so focussed on her work that she didn’t have time to consider her surroundings. ‘It really doesn’t make any difference being a woman on the field – or even off the field. I do feel a great responsibility to get girls and women involved. The one group of people that I haven’t had a single problem with are the players, coaches or managers. If anything, there are some that are more respectful to me than usual.’

Grace Gavin rugby referee

When Grace Gavin was accepted as a referee for the Women’s Rugby World Cup, she found out via her mobile phone on her way to the airport. ‘I almost bounced myself out of the taxi,’ she says. Grace combines her refereeing with a full-time job. ‘I strongly believe that if we referee world-class athletes, we must train like world-class athletes. This is difficult to manage when work occupies fifty to sixty hours of my week. My firm is very supportive, though. Of course, my boss was happy when I retired from playing because the black eyes that I sported some Monday mornings were not going down well with clients.’ Early in her refereeing career, somebody told her that she would always be handicapped by the perception that she was not fast enough to referee men’s rugby. ‘I have worked constantly to defeat this perception,’ she says. ‘Surprisingly, many players like having me as a ref because they can hear my voice. They can pick it out and are able to respond in the heat of the match.’

Part 3: Women referees

- 16** B: 'so focussed ... she didn't have time ...'
- 17** C: 'knowing too it would be her final ...'
- 18** A: 'I was sure I wouldn't make a wrong decision'
- 19** D: 'they can hear my voice ...'
- 20** C: 'Factors included in the assessment ...'
- 21** D: 'I have worked ... to defeat this perception'
- 22** A: 'once they saw me on the field ..., they would start ...'
- 23** B: 'hoping to open doors for others to follow'
- 24** B: 'I don't think that people realise ...'
- 25** D: 'I almost bounced myself out of the taxi'
- 26** B: 'The one group ... I haven't had a single problem with ...'
- 27** A: 'in sharp contrast to how she is on the field'
- 28** C: 'for umpires only personal satisfaction ...'
- 29** A: 'needs to improve on her ... Boys play very fast ...'
- 30** D: 'My firm is very supportive, though'