

Guidelines for CRefCs: the Key Aspects of the Role

Get involved and support your referees
They need **you...**



**THIS IS
RUGBY.**



RFU

TEAMWORK RESPECT ENJOYMENT DISCIPLINE SPORTSMANSHIP

1. Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to take on the role of Club Referee Coordinator (CRefC) at your club. This is a new role geared towards supporting referees in your club who don't belong to a Referee Society.

Referees have a central role to play in the development of Rugby Union. The old cliché "without the referee, there would be no game" holds true and it is acknowledged that the better the quality of the refereeing, the more likely players are to enjoy their match experience.

There are 38 Referee Societies in England, comprising in the region of 3200 referees. Society Referees are appointed to matches based on their ability and potential and are able to access a wide range of training and development opportunities through their Societies.

However, there are many thousands of referees who are not Society members, but who referee at their clubs some week in week out, others less frequently. They might be parents whose children are playing mini or youth rugby, coaches of junior teams or club members who referee their clubs' 3rd or 4th XVs on a Saturday afternoon. It is these "club referees" that you as the CRefC will help to support.

I do hope therefore you are looking forward to undertaking the new and important role at your club. These initial guidelines have been designed to help you get into the role; however, please don't hesitate to contact your Referee Development Manager (RefDM) if you need any support. A contact sheet is can be found as **Appendix 1** of these guidelines



Richard Glynne-Jones
Referee Manager

2. Key Components of the CRefC Role

The table below outlines the key components of role. Don't panic - you don't have to do this all at once, or indeed, everything shown below!

	'Staged' Responsibilities as you grow into the role	Summary
<div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Basic Role</div> <div style="font-size: 2em; margin: 10px auto;">↑</div> <div style="font-size: 2em; margin: 10px auto;">↓</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Enhanced Role</div> </div>	To act as a point of contact for the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and/or the local Referees' Society.	The CRefC will receive information from either the Referee Department at Twickenham or the local Referees' Society and be responsible for its dissemination to the club's referees e.g. Law changes.
	To publicise and promote RFU awards, courses and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities to club referees.	Details of any RFU courses and events will be sent to the CRefC for dissemination to the club's referees.
	To establish and maintain accurate club referee membership information on the RFU database, RugbyFirst.	The CRefC will take responsibility for ensuring that accurate information on club referees is maintained on RugbyFirst.
	To coordinate the establishment of a Club Referee Section.	Club Referee Sections comprise club referees who, primarily, referee junior and youth rugby. The CRefC will influence the establishment of a section at his/her club.

You will be encouraged to do as much as your time and/or expertise allows. There is no compulsion to fulfil each of the responsibilities listed above! Nevertheless, these guidelines have been created to provide you with the basics associated with the components of the role.

Key Role 1:

To act as a point of contact for the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and/or the local Referees' Society.

As the CRefC you will be the key contact for the receipt of information from the Referee Department at Twickenham or your local Referees' Society for example, Law changes or information about local Referee Society meetings. Clearly, you will need to disseminate this information to referees at your club. Whilst it is entirely up to you to decide the best way to do this, we would encourage you to make use of RugbyFirst for this purpose. Separate guidelines will be available to help you with this process.

However, in terms of the first part of the role regarding the receipt of information, you will need to have been assigned the correct role within RugbyFirst – that of 'Club Contact/ Referee Coordinator'. There should be someone at your club who is the RugbyFirst Webmaster who can assign you this role or your Regional Referee Development Manager (RefDM) can also help. Either can supply you with your own login details if you don't already have them.

It is important that your contact details are correct within RugbyFirst as the Referee Department will be using the system to communicate with you, mainly via email, using your contact details within the system. Again, the separate RugbyFirst guidelines will guide you through the process of keeping your contact details up-to-date if you are not familiar with using RugbyFirst.

Key Role 2:

To publicise and promote RFU awards, courses and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities to club referees.

The Referee Department has a variety of products to support the development of officials at all levels. Below is a list of those which are the most relevant at club level. These courses can be run just for your club, assuming sufficient numbers can attend, so please discuss this with your RefDM.

a) Entry Level Referee Award (ELRA)

The ELRA course offers an outstanding introduction into the refereeing of rugby union. It is designed to provide new referees with the core skills to be able to referee at any level. It is a two day course that can develop into a later stage if the referee decides to join his/her local referee society.

If, however, candidates wish to remain only within your own club then they need only complete ELRA Days 1 & 2, which consider the following aspects of refereeing:

- Laws of the Game
- Management and Control
- Problem Solving
- Refereeing the Key Phases of the Game
- Positioning and Communication

Crucial to learning is that a significant part of both stages is practically based and candidates will have the opportunity to observe refereeing in practice, whilst demonstrating their own skills on the field of play.

The ELRA costs £50 per person (£60 including Mini/Midi elements). An individual application form is available as **Appendix 2** or can be downloaded from:

<http://www.rfu.com/TakingPart/Referee/Courses/AccessingAnELRACourse.aspx>

There is also a 'frequently asked questions' document about ELRA as **Appendix 3**.

b) Referee Education Evenings/ Continuous Referee Development Award (CRDA)

As part of its commitment to the support and training of club referees, the Referee Department began the delivery of Referee Education Evenings several years ago. These were aimed at those club referees wishing to develop their knowledge and understanding of key areas of the game. The creation of CRefC role has been done in tandem with the development of regional Club Referee Developers (CRefDs). The CRefDs have a Society Refereeing background, are experienced trainers and will be offering Referee Education Evenings to your clubs, at which the Continuous Referee Development Award (CRDA) modules will be delivered.

The CRDA has been developed from the ELRA course and a number of themes and approaches are common. It ensures that referees keep up to date with law variations and training and will hopefully aid their rugby development. It is modular in design, some of which may be done by distance learning. The course is 'continuous' and we never reach a point where we, as referees and observers of referees, cannot improve and take in more. Dependent upon the needs of the delegates and amount of time available, some modules can be added to or parts omitted. (See **Appendix 4** for a list of available modules)

Course Cost - £5 per person/ module.

Please note that some of your club referees may possess the 'National Foundation' qualification. This qualification no longer exists, having been superseded in 2006 by the ELRA.

c) Officiating Courses for Society Match Officials

Further courses are available for Society referees and referee observers. Please contact your RefDM for further information.

Please note that details on all RFU Match Official Awards, courses and products can be found at <http://www.rfu.com/TakingPart/Referee.aspx>

Key Role 3:

To establish and maintain accurate club referee membership information on the RFU database, RugbyFirst.

The separate guidance to be provided by your RefDM will explain this part of the CRefC role.

In summary, however, it is crucial that those involved in refereeing at your club are registered on RugbyFirst, whether they have a refereeing qualification or not.

The benefits are as follows:

- You will be able to communicate effectively with your club's referees through RugbyFirst
- You will be able to identify which of your club referees have (or do not have) a valid CRB check. Please note that some Child Protection Guidelines are included as Appendix 7

- You will be able to track how many referees you have at 'each level'. This will allow you to monitor the 'refereeing' requirements of Mini and Youth Seal of Approval i.e. that you have a minimum of one RFU qualified referee in the Mini section and one in the Youth Section.

Key Role 4:

To coordinate the establishment of a Club Referee Section and/or Cluster Scheme

The role of referees is an important one to the development of the game. They ensure the safety of players; promote enjoyment of all involved; and act as a guide to players and spectators regarding the laws of the game. Recognising their efforts and supporting their development as well as encouraging more to take-up the whistle is critical if we are to ensure that better officials lead to a better game.

Whilst Referees Societies around the country provide an excellent service to their member clubs, appointing referees to a wide range of matches each week, there remain fixtures to which Societies cannot appoint on a regular basis e.g. Intra mural University matches, lower level senior games and junior matches on Sunday mornings. These non-Society referees, many who no doubt are officiating at your club, can access the RFU Entry Level Referee Award (ELRA) and Referee Education Evenings. To support this large group of referees, the Referee Department is now promoting the creation and development of schemes for all those who lie outside of the remit of a Referee Society.

Relevant schemes developed to date fall into two categories: the Club Referee Section and the Club Cluster Referee Scheme. Details of the schemes are as below:

a) Club Referee Section

Club Referee Sections comprise of individual referees at a club who may referee junior matches e.g. parents and coaches. Ideally, such referees should all have undertaken the ELRA. Branded referee kit can also be provided to the referees and links created with the local Referees Society, ensuring the Club Referee Section members are invited to training meetings and receive information available to Society referees e.g. law change updates. Please see **Appendix 5** for information on the Ealing RFC Club Referee Section.

Club Referee Sections can be developed for any sized club and may contain anything from a couple of keen referees to all club members that officiate within a club or group of clubs.

b) Club Cluster Referee Scheme

These schemes have been established to provide club referees with opportunities to referee senior 3rd/4th XV matches on a semi-regular basis at different clubs within a close geographical region. Such a scheme has been operating in the North West for some time and involves clubs such as Vale of Lune, Fleetwood, Fylde, Preston Grasshoppers and Blackburn. Fixtures between these clubs, to which Society referees are not appointed (usually 3rd and 4th team fixtures), are pooled so that the club referees have the opportunity of refereeing at clubs other than their own, and refereeing teams other than their own club's teams. For example, a Fylde 3 v Preston 3 match might be refereed by a Referee from the Fleetwood club.

Appendix 1 - Contact Details and Support Networks

Name	Title	E-mail	Phone
Paul Renton	RefDM North West	paulrenton@rfu.com	07739 300438
Will Halford	RefDM North East & Yorks	willhalford@rfu.com	07894 790340
Steve Harland	RefDM South West	steveharland@rfu.com	07738 029107
Nigel Cowley	RefDM South	nigelcowley@rfu.com	07894 783378
Alan Biggs	RefDM Midlands West	alanbiggs@rfu.com	07894 783372
Paul Freestone	RefDM Midlands East	paulfreestone@rfu.com	07738 029262
Dave Broadwell	RefDM South East	davebroadwell@rfu.com	07802 435745
Ed Turnill	RefDM London	edturnill@rfu.com	07894 783373

Rugby Development Officers/ Community Rugby Coaches

Please use this section to record the contact details of people in your area that can support you.

Rugby Development Officer (RDO)	
Club Referee Developer (CRefD)	
Community Rugby Coach (CRC)	
Local Referee Society Contact	

Appendix 2 ELRA Individual Application Form

Please complete all sections in BLOCK CAPITALS

First name			Surname		
Gender	M/ F	Date of Birth		Age (if 18 or under) You must be aged at least 14 to attend an ELRA course	
Full Postal Address					
Postcode					
Previous address if moved in last 3 years					
Email Address (please print clearly as this will be used to confirm course)					
Contact Telephone Number					

Course Details

Course applied for Tick one	ELRA Days 1 and 2 (£50)		
	ELRA Days 1 and 2 with Mini Midi (£60)		
Course date		Course fee attached Payable to RFD Ltd.	£
Course venue			

Course Confirmation

Please note that submission of this form constitutes confirmation of your place on your chosen course, unless otherwise notified

You will receive joining instructions by e-mail 5 working days before the course start date

The course will be closed to new applicants 5 working days prior to its start date

Non-Attendance

Your payment will be processed 5 working days before the course start date. If you are unable to attend the course after that date, you will receive no refund; however you will be offered the opportunity to relocate to another course

If you do not notify lindsaypiper@rfu.com of your intention not to attend, you will receive neither a refund nor the opportunity to relocate

Payment

Please return this form, with a cheque made payable to RFD Ltd. or credit/debit card details to Lindsay Piper at lindsaypiper@rfu.com or, by hard copy, to Rugby Football Union, Referee Department, Rugby House, Rugby Road, Twickenham TW1 1DS

Payment Type (Please indicate)	Cheque	Visa	Mastercard	Switch	Maestro
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Card Number

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Valid From		Expiry Date		Security No		Issue No	
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Ethnicity

I would describe my ethnic origin as:

Asian British Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other white	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian British Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian British Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	White British	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	White European	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	White Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Black	<input type="checkbox"/>	White Non European	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Mixed Background	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Disability

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes / No

Referee Society If you do not belong to a Society, please state the county in which you live	
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Club/School/University (please indicate if teacher or student)	
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Data Protection

The RFU will use your personal data (including potentially sensitive data and that of your parents/guardians) for the purpose of your participation in rugby and for regulatory reasons and to send you information by post. To make your choice as to the categories of commercial information you would wish to receive, you should tick or leave blank the relevant box below.

Subject to your election, the RFU may also use such personal data for the following purposes:

- If you **do not** wish to receive, by electronic mail (including e-mail, SMS or image messages etc), information about tickets, special offers, opportunities, products and services available from RFU companies or RFU subsidiaries, tick here
- If you **do not** wish to receive, by electronic mail (including e-mail, SMS or image messages etc), information about products and services available from current RFU sponsors, tick here
- If you **do** wish to receive, by electronic mail (including e-mail, SMS or image messages etc), information about products and services available from any subsidiary or associated company of any RFU sponsor, tick here

Appendix 3 –ELRA FAQs

1. How much does the ELRA cost?

The current price is £50 as of the 1st of July 2008. This cost covers all parts of the 2 day course basic ELRA course. Should you wish to do the mini/ midi element as well the cost is £60.

2. Do candidates have to do all parts?

The ELRA course is a two part course which must be completed in full to be eligible for qualification. Usually the course is split into two days of approximately 6 hours,

3. Where can I find out more about the courses?

Further information is available through www.rfu.com including course calendar with times and venues, contents of the course and other useful documents. If you require more information please contact your regional RefDM.

4. How do I book on a course?

If you haven't already got an application form, these can be downloaded from the RFU website or from your RefDM. Alternatively please contact Lindsay Piper at Twickenham (0208 8316637 or lindsaypiper@rfu.com)

5. What refereeing can I do with the qualification?

The ELRA course is designed to give everyone a better understanding of how to referee and helps you for all levels from 13 up to and including senior rugby. You will not be able to cover senior league games, except in emergency, until you join a Referee Society. With the Mini/ Midi element of the course you will have more of the tools required to referee rugby at any age group.

6. What is the minimum and maximum age to go on the course?

The minimum age to do the course is 14. There is no maximum age.

7. Can we arrange a course for our club?

In most instances the answer to this would be 'yes'. It shouldn't conflict with any pre-arranged courses and the minimum number to hold a course is 10. If your club has a fair number and it can be opened to the wider community then it will help to generate the minimum numbers. Please contact your RefDM for details on how to do this.

Appendix 4 - CRDA Topics

1. Law & Principles
2. Match Preparation & PRDP
3. Understanding the Game
4. Communication & Management
5. Scrum
6. Lineout
7. Maul
8. Tackle/Ruck
9. Advantage
10. Practical Refereeing
11. Managing Captains & Coaches
12. Assistant Referee
13. Feedback & Debrief
14. Discipline Report Writing

Appendix 5 – Example of a Club Referee Section (Ealing RFC)

Ealing RFC's innovative programme to develop rugby referees has been hailed as "a model for other clubs to follow".

The Ealing Club Referees Section, believed to be the first of its kind in England, has won the RFU President's XV award and was established by Pete Paterson in 2005 to a) provide referees for matches and festivals in the mini, midi and youth sections, and to b) give aspiring referees help and support if they wished to progress to the London Referee Society beyond.

61 club members of all ages are now qualified as RFU referees (to National Foundation 1 and 2 or ELRA standard), 32 of whom referee at mini/midi level and 29 at the youth level. Between them they handle age groups from six to 16, both at Ealing and at other local clubs who request their services. Eleven of the referees are also members of the London Society.

Ed Turnill, the RFU RefDM for London described the section as a "model for clubs to follow" and that has been echoed within Middlesex with Teddington, London Welsh, Grasshoppers and Harrow among those running similar sections.

Applying the laws of the game is only one aspect of the thinking behind the idea as Pete Paterson, who decided to qualify as a referee himself when he was coaching a midi team, pointed out: "These are our kids and we owe them the best duty of care"

"We used to go to other clubs and not be happy with the standard of refereeing. We had to raise the bar and Ealing as a club have been very supportive. I always use the term 'RFU referee' to highlight their status. It is as applicable at junior levels as at the top of the game."

Pete is particularly pleased to have identified a significant reduction in the number of playing injuries since the section began. He also urges clubs keen to follow suit with their mini and midi teams not to be put off if they find themselves supplying home referees.

Since Paterson and the Middlesex County RFU set up a panel of referees to officiate at mini festivals within the county, Ealing has been the majority provider due to their willingness to be involved and desire to promote the ethos of higher refereeing standards.

Appendix 6 - Child Protection

When refereeing young players, match officials should:

- Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when officiating young players.
- Provide verbal feedback in a positive way during games.
- Appreciate the needs of the players.
- Be a positive role model.
- Recognise that safety is paramount.
- Explain decisions – most young players are still learning.
- Do not tolerate verbal abuse.

Officials should not:

- Change in the same area as young players.
- Shower with young players – agree with the coaches a timetable.
- Be alone with young players at any time – if a young player comes into the dressing room ensure another adult is present.
- Check studs without the coach being present.
- Administer first aid.
- Allow a young player to continue playing if you have doubts about their fitness.
- Tolerate bad language from young players.
- Engage in any inappropriate contact with young players.
- Give a lift to a player unless there are other young people or adults in the car and the parents are aware.
- Take a young player to your home.
- Overtly criticise young players or use language which may cause the player to lose confidence or self esteem.
- Make sexually explicit remarks to young players even in fun.

Officials must always:

- Report, in writing, to the Club or CB Welfare Officer and/or Society Secretary, behaviour by adults with you feel contravenes RFU Child Protection Policy
- Verbal bullying by coaches/parents/spectators.
- Physical abuse by coaches/parents/spectators.
- Inappropriate or aggressive contact by an adult to a young person.
- Verbal abuse directed at you by young people or adults.

Remember “The welfare of all young people is paramount.”