



NORFOLK RUGBY UNION REFEREES SOCIETY MATCH OFFICIAL GRADING POLICY

A grading policy should exist to help ensure that referees are appointed to matches that they are suitably skilled to referee and they will enjoy their experience. The ambitions and abilities of every referee will vary, but the Society values all its referees, whatever their level. The number of referees at any grade is not associated with the number of games available at that particular level, but only with what is judged to be the level they are capable of refereeing at. Unfortunately this does mean that it is possible to have more referees at a level than games available for the society to appoint. The society does try to allocate fixtures fairly and equitably, however referees could be given priority appointments to assist in their progression.

One of the objectives of Norfolk Rugby Referee Society (here after known as NRURS) is to help all officials to reach their full potential and for them to gain enjoyment from their endeavours whilst officiating a safe game of rugby for all. This, hopefully, will lead to stronger player enjoyment and overall growth in the game of rugby.

The grading committee recognises that promotion within Levels 13 to 9 is largely about the application of law and of learning the art of refereeing. Promotion to L8 and above is about match management, being in the correct position to make decisions and at the same time showing a stronger understanding of the game for what players are trying to achieve.

This policy is to offer a clear grading process for all active match officials within NRURS through a Grading Committee authorised by the society committee. Match officials will be graded based on their proven ability to add value at each level of the game and displayed behaviours in line with the RFU Descriptor Matrix (hereafter known as "the matrix"). Development will be offered where requested or required, subject to the availability of developers. The matrix can be found on the RFU website currently at <https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/refereeing/referee-resources>

It is the intention that all active officials will be formally 'Observed' at least once a season, but hopefully more frequently depending on available resources. Referees may also be 'informally' observed by a Referee Mentor to help with skill training and development. The society has a responsibility to ensure that referees are safe in maintaining player welfare, are skilled to the required standard and suitably appointed, and that their potential is recognised.

1. GRADING OF MATCH OFFICIALS

- I. Recently qualified match officials will receive a grade of LEVEL 13 on achieving sign off from their initial 15 a side refereeing qualification (ERRA) and their 6 experience matches.
- II. All incoming qualified match officials will maintain their grade for no less than half of one season after which their grade will be aligned to expectations within NRURS by way of performance reviews.
- III. Any match officials returning from a period of absence from officiating the game of 2 years or longer will achieve the level of at least one lower than their previously recorded level.
- IV. When returning from injury, the match official will maintain their previously recorded level but will not necessarily receive league/cup appointments at that level until the required fitness and standard expectations are displayed by way of assessment and/or performance review and/or feedback. If the period of absence through injury is longer than 6 months, a member of the grading committee will attend a match and review the performance of the match official in question. The grading committee may defer this responsibility to other, relevantly trained and experienced developers.

2. REGRADING OF MATCH OFFICIALS

- I. For LEVEL 6 - LEVEL 9: Any match official can request a grading review at any time between 1st August and 31st May. A grading review must be submitted to the Chair of Grading for consideration by the Grading Committee. The society membership may only request a grading review for themselves and not another match official. Evidence for these grading levels will be from RFU Form 1 & 2 reports which could be supported by other credible resources. The Chair of Grading reserves the right for the Grading Committee to review any match official grading at any time.
- II. For LEVEL 10 - LEVEL 13: Any match officials can request their grade be reviewed. A grading review should be submitted to The Chair of Grading for consideration by The Grading Committee. The society membership may only request their own grade be reviewed, and not that of another member. Formal evidence for these grading levels would still be based around RFU form 1 but other informal evidence may play more of a role. The Chair of Grading reserves the right for the grading committee to review any match official grading at any time.
- III. A grading review is the formal process in which a match official may submit evidence, as detailed in appendix A below, to the grading committee for the purpose of their grade being reviewed and amended accordingly.
- IV. The grading committee shall be comprised of Chair of Grading, Appointments Officer and Training Officer. All outcomes will be documented for scrutiny. Any grading decision must be agreed between 2 of the 3 committee members.
- V. The Grading Committee will also meet no less than twice a year to review the evidence requirements and to consider the grades of the active match officials. These meetings can be in person or virtual.
- VI. All outcomes from the grading committee will be communicated to the relevant officials by email, and outcomes will fall into three categories.
 - a. Upgrade to next level
 - b. Suitable graded

- c. Consider for development review
- VII. All outcomes will be supported by reason/evidence and documented.
- VIII. All evidence submitted must be no more than 12 months old and further evidence from the match official may be requested by the Grading Committee if required. The Grading Committee has the right to use any information available to it.
- IX. Evidence submitted should clearly identify behaviours that meet the expectations as detailed in the top two boxes within the RFU Development form matrix.
- X. Where the evidence submitted is deemed to be inconclusive, the Grading Committee will attend a match and review the performance of the match official in question. The Grading Committee may defer this responsibility to other appropriately trained and experienced developers.

3. FITNESS REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADING

- I. Fitness testing is not currently part of the society grading process although its use is common in other referee societies and might therefore be added when required. Appendix A gives an idea of the appropriate levels of fitness for each grade.

4. EVIDENCE

- I. Match officials will be required to gather and submit their own evidence.
- II. To obtain evidence at the higher levels, the match official will have to be highlighted as being "tested at the next level". This can be at the request of the match official, Coach or Chair of Grading. These requests can be made to the Chair of Grading or Appointments Officer.
- III. All opportunities to be tested at a higher level will be decided based on recent performance, feedback, availability of match officials and availability of matches. The Appointments Officer has overall responsibility for all appointment decisions. The grading Committee reserve the right to review all performance evidence available through WTR when making grading decisions.

5. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW OF A MATCH OFFICIAL

- I. There are three ways in which to trigger a development review of a match official.
 - a. Repeated poor feedback from Developers or Clubs.
 - b. Safety concern raised by a Developers or Clubs.
 - c. Poor performance review from club footage available to the society.
 - d. Reasonable grounds, drawn to the attention of The Grading Committee in the belief that the match official requires a development review. These grounds must be presented to the Grading Committee at the first available opportunity for their agreement of the suggested action.
- II. The match official has the right to appeal when subject to a development review. This must be done by email to the Society Chairman. Once submitted, the Chairman will ask the Management Committee, minus those that sit upon the grading panel, to consider the grounds for the review. The decisions of the Management Committee are final.
- III. The match official must be notified they are under review by the Chair of Grading prior to the review commencing and made aware of the element or areas of the match official's performance are being reviewed.

- IV. A match official under review will be watched by a member of the grading committee. If the match official is operating with Eastern Counties at L7 or L6, the grading committee reserves the right to ask Eastern Counties to appoint a senior developer to watch the match official. If the match official is L8 or below, they will be watched by a senior NRURS developer.
- V. Existing match official and developer appointments may be changed to facilitate a review.
- VI. Any match official under review will be offered a developer to personally support them through the review process.
- VII. All reviews will be recorded with one of the following outcomes:
 - a. Review complete – Suitably graded
 - b. Review complete – Down grade to lower level
 - c. Review incomplete - Continue for further games (no more than 3 additional matches)

Any review cannot be longer than 6 matches in duration.

APPENDIX A

POTENTIAL LEVEL	BRONCO RFU GUIDELINES (2023/24) 5 Sets of 1x 60m,1x40m,1x20m shuttle (1200m)		REQUIRED EVIDENCE
	Male	Female	
13	9min (guide time only)		SIGN OFF FROM INITIAL TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE MATCHES
12	8min (guide time only)		3X DOCUMENTED FEEDBACK FROM DEVELOPERS
11	7min30sec (guide time only)		1X DOCUMENTED FEEDBACK FROM DEVELOPERS @ L12 2X DOCUMENTED FEEDBACK FROM DEVELOPERS @ L11
10	7min		1X DOCUMENTED FEEDBACK FROM DEVELOPERS @ L11 3X DOCUMENTED FEEDBACK FROM DEVELOPERS @ L10
9	7min		2X FORM 1 @ L10 2X FORM 2 @ L9
8	7min		2X FORM 1 @ L9 3X FORM 2 @ L8
Recommend to be tested at Level 7 with Eastern Counties	7min		3X FORM 2 @ L8 (Not same reports as above)
7	7min		3X FORM 2 @ L8 3X FORM 2 @ L7

6	6min 15sec	6min 45sec	4X FORM 2 @ L7 4X FORM 2 @ L6
5	5min 15sec	5min 45sec	4X FORM 2 @ L6 REFERRAL MADE TO REGIONAL GROUP

EVIDENCE GUIDELINES:

- All documented performance evidence submitted must have been completed by suitably trained and experienced developers.
- Digital/video evidence will be considered when available. It's the strongest type of evidence to support a review request and to display the required behaviours.
- No evidence should be more than 12 months old, newer evidence is stronger for proving current behaviours.
- Evidence can only be used on one occasion and not reused in the next stage of development.
- PDP's are a great form of additional evidence to show your approach to self-development.
- Documented self-reflection is a powerful development tool and evidences your personal learning that is not always obvious in a performance review.
- Submit evidence that shows a breadth of ability and showcase the headlines within your feedback so they stand out (make it easy to see the best bits).
- Approach the evidence gathering process with 'outside eyes'. Think "what would someone else make of this" when they were not at the game and may not know you on a personal level.
- Be honest with your expectations and double check your evidence, before submitting.
- Any/all well-presented performance evidence may be submitted in support of a grading review.
- Positive feedback from clubs and suitable others can be submitted in support of a grading review.

Approved: 27th September 2023

Note:-

Request Template: - Norfolk Society Grading Review Request