



Berkshire RFU Referees 2022/23 Season AGM – Summary Report from the Chair

As both Simon & David have mentioned, this season saw the introduction of a revised league structure, and I would like to think that we have adapted well to it, despite the obvious challenges it presented – in fact, through the Southern Federation, we have helped establish a very effective and well managed SW Region 1 MOT, for which Simon (as the Appointments Lead for Berkshire, Southern Federation and now the SW MOT), must be recognised as a key contributor. There has been very positive feedback, both regionally and at a national level, on the positive and collaborative working that SW MOT has established and encouraged over the past year. It is also no coincidence that SW MOT was the only Region 1 MOT with 100% (BRONCO) fitness test compliance.

Simon Long continues to progress as a L5 referee and whilst it may mean that we see less of him in-county, it is good to know that he is proudly representing Berkshire Referees, across the South of England and beyond.

Having appointed to more than 400 games this season, special mention must go to Russ Clark & Dean Crossley, who each covered more than 30 Society appointments. Six new referees also took their first games for us, and I look forward to watching more of them, and other new faces, over the course of next season.

Russ & David have also mentioned the new referees we have welcomed this season – that is due, in no small part, to the fact that last season Berkshire put 115 candidates through 8 Introduction to Refereeing courses (second only to North Midlands, nationally), and I'd like to thank Russ, David, Dave Watkins and Laura Lewis, who have all joined me in completing the RFU Educator training, which allows us to either support or lead delivery of the RFU's refereeing courses in Berkshire. Russ has attended a number of ITR courses recently and we will be making sure that someone from Berkshire Refs attends the second day of the ERRAs being hosted locally, in the coming weeks.

Unfortunately, we have seen a significant increase in Red Cards/Sendings-Off: up from 21 last season, to 48 up to the end of April. Proportionately, the causes have not varied much, even if the volume has more than doubled; MOA has reduced, but is still an issue, and it is worth noting that – with the lowering of the tackle height effective from 1st July – the fact that more than a quarter (27%) of our sendings-off were due to dangerous tackles, there is a lot of work for clubs & coaches to do over the summer, if we are to avoid a flurry of RCs in the autumn.

We are already speaking to the clubs, through the CRefC network, and will share more information with you, in due course, on plans to familiarise ourselves, and also work with them, to help coaches & players understand the new requirements before next season kicks off in earnest.

This will, no doubt, require time and effort on everyone's part, to get right – and so I thank you in advance for your patience and contribution as we work through it together.



And finally, I need to thank all of my colleagues across the Exec and Full Committee, for the untold hours & effort they have given up, in support of the Society, its members, and the wider game, in the past year. We are very lucky to have such dedicated volunteers (though, of course, more are always welcome!) and I am ever-grateful for their contribution.

Yours, as always, in refereeing

Nick Curtin

Chair, Berkshire Rugby Referees