



Berkshire Rugby Referees 2023/24 Season AGM – Summary Report from Appointments Lead

Farewell – Simon Bourne

We must all recognise and appreciate the end of an era: Simon's 22 years' service as Appointments Lead has now drawn to a close. Simon has done an excellent job and leaves Appointments (& the Grading Committee) in superb shape. Simon will continue to assist behind the scenes as long as we need help or direction. Simon's relationship with Berkshire will hopefully grow even more over coming seasons as he heads up Region 1 Central & South-West (L5) along with appointments for National 2 (L4) South West AR's. We all wish him the best in his new roles.

Farewell – Robert Reilly (Midweeks)

It is with great sadness that Rob has decided to step down as mid-week appointer, however it was wonderful to see him back out with a whistle this season and he will continue to referee.

On the subject of midweeks, we had 126 requests (118 in 2022/23) for Referees this year, we were able to provide a Referee for 88 games (69 in 2022/23). Cancelled for various reasons 22 (23 in 2022/23), and we were short of Referees for the remaining 16 (26 in 2022/23).

*All numbers for the 2023/24 season do include age grade games.

It has been a great achievement this year in covering an extra 19 games. A huge thank you to all those Referees who made the effort to be available for midweek games. The Appointments Team recognise it can be hard with all the other commitments people have during the week, with work etc. All schools and Reading Uni really appreciate your efforts. So, once again, thank you.

Exchanges – Richard Flower

My thanks go to all the Referees Societies we exchanged with for being helpful and amenable with their appointments. This includes East Midlands, Eastern Counties, Hertfordshire, Somerset, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

Thank you for all the travelling that you have done, I hope you enjoyed the experience of refereeing different clubs and everyone has put Berkshire in good light with some very good and solid performances.

Re-Appointments – Dave Elliott

The first year for Dave and at times very challenging. Dave has implemented a WhatsApp group to advertise when referees are needed and where, this has proved very effective and will continue for the foreseeable future.

Dave continues to download from WTR and send out a weekly mail to our clubs and schools at the start off the week to inform them of the fixture we are aware of. Unfortunately, every week we seem to get more requests for referees. This needs to be managed better next season and lines of communication to the clubs will have to improve.

In the second half of the season the weather played havoc with pitches and made re-appointments extremely difficult and a big thank you to Dave for working hard and being available at all hours to make sure WTR and the referee is kept up to date.

Finally, thank-you for all the support you have given to BRR and the Appointments Team. Your understanding and volunteering for matches at the last minute has been very much appreciated.

Appointments Summary – Andrew Green

The best news this season was that Berkshire didn't have to rely on any help from another Referees



Society due to a lack of referees. It does seem we have turned a corner since COVID and the subsequent loss of several referees. BRR Appointments were able to cover just over 470 games in the 2023/24 season.

A big thank you to Hampshire and Oxfordshire RefSocs, at the end of the season, in enabling extra exchange fixtures to get our referees the appropriate games, with MOD reports, to support a possible re-grading.

The biggest challenges for the Appointments Team still remain:

1. Cancellations of L10 fixtures on Saturdays
2. Availability on Sundays
3. Cancellations of Colts & Ladies matches on Sunday.
4. The new RFU League structures, are still providing some very one-sided fixtures
5. Smaller leagues and a shorter League season = less games (at lower levels especially).

Highlights from this season were being able to cover 22 matches on the 23rd March (3 were then cancelled), but it demonstrates how willing our members can be, given enough notice. Team of 3 appointments seem to be well received at Rams 2's, the Colts National Cup quarter final and a few mid-week games too – again, great to see our members willing to take part.

The Season ended with the 'Papa Johns' Community competitions, which gave us some very short-notice appointments. Unfortunately, many clubs chose not to participate, but we hope for more success next time.

My thanks to the Appointments Team (Richard, Robert and Dave). Also, thanks to David Levy for his guidance and input with appointments of the MO Developers (both Advisers and Coaches). My personal thanks go to Simon Bourne – without his help and direction none of this would have been possible.

As always, thank you all, for your support, and I hope you enjoy the off-season

Andrew Green
BRR Appointments Lead
12th May 2024