



Berkshire Rugby Referees 2023/24 Season AGM – Summary Report from County Representative

As County Representative, I act as a conduit between the CB and BRR.

As part of that function, I report to the County Exec on a monthly basis on refereeing matters, and vice versa where relevant. Here is a summary of my reports – mainly picking on the key efforts made by other committee members and which will be mentioned in others' reports (for which I take no credit).

It is worthy of note that all topics covered are the same as in prior year.

Tackle Height

Essentially, the introduction went well and we did not see major issues in tackle height adoption given the extensive training and proactive approach taken by the rugby community and our referees. There had been an expectation of significant numbers of red cards for high tackles arising from the change of law – this did not occur. There was anecdotally an increase in yellow cards at the beginning of the year, but these seemed to be tied up with an escalation process (eg. a YC being issued for what would, in isolation, potentially be a penalty-only offence; after a warning had already been issued).

Referee Shortages

This was a regular topic at the start of the season. Andy will discuss the detail, but we struggled on several weekend during the year and great thanks are due to the appointments team in solving issues. Sunday remains the particular problem. There has been a great deal of recruitment activity this year. Several ERRAs and Introduction to Refereeing courses have been held (although at least one was cancelled due to lack of numbers) and supported by our membership. I have promoted them through the County network. The issue is how to make sure attendees pursue their refereeing careers (many are YMOs or were from out of county); that clubs generate referees for club games; and also encourage onward membership of the Society. It's great to see so many new faces at our meetings and on the appointments list. Of course, once qualified we also need to be able to give referees experience, and lack of lower-level games continues to be an issue. I know this has been a focus of the appointments team – and once again thanks.

Club Referee Coordinator (CRefC)

In order to make sure referees are trained and supported at club level, and to be a liaison to the Society and the wider referee network we strongly believe that clubs should have a named individual to be a CRefC. Such a role is similar to the Club Coaching coordinators that most clubs have. County encouragement has led to almost all clubs having such a role this year, with Russ taking a lead role in their coordination.

Discipline and abuse

I will not repeat David's report, suffice to say that I report to County on specific issues, particularly abuse. That said, I frequently commented on the absence of red cards.

Paul Lee
BRR County Representative
4 May 2024

