

**Berkshire Rugby Union Referees Ltd
(Operating as Berkshire Rugby Referees)**



REPORT FROM THE CHAIR – SEASON 2025/26

Within Berkshire, it's good to see that, despite a number of challenges, we have still covered almost 500 appointments, 30+ exchanges and had more than 50 games watched by coaches & advisers. As a result, 12 referees were upgraded at the mid-season review and there were a further 14 in the end of season review; Andy (in the Appointments report) has mentioned the need to exchange games at a higher level than last year; this trend looks set to continue and is, from our perspective, a 'good' problem to have as it points to our newer referees developing their skills as they referee more games. One clear example has been Sam Peters, who quickly rose to L6 with us and on to Region 1 with SW MOT though, due to him having moved house; he will now be continuing that progression next season with London Society – I'm glad that we were able to support his efforts as he established himself at L5, this season, and I look forward to seeing how that continues with our colleagues in the Capital. Jamie Payne has also progressed well, in the Southern Federation (as well as completing the AMOA)

Beyond our county, I've also continued to be involved in work on a number of initiatives, across the Southern Federation (Berks, Bucks, Hants & Oxon RefSocs), the RFRU, and with the RFU – just as David Levy has done with regard to RFU Discipline (wearing his 'Berks RFU Discipline' hat) – which will hopefully deliver a positive contribution to the game and refereeing in particular.

We have seen the David Rose selected as the RFRU's new RFU Council Rep – the first ever Council Rep of colour to be elected – and it looks like he'll have his work cut-out for him: following yet another RFU SGM, the RFU Board's proposals (which needed a super-majority of 60% to pass) were actually rejected by the majority of RFU members (including us), since they sought to remove any oversight of the Board and make it far more difficult for RFU members to hold them to account. After last year's SGM, we'd hoped they would learn some good lessons... it appears they still have a way to go on that front.

On a more positive note, I am attending an RFRU Development Day next weekend, in Coventry, and there is a clear effort to shift the focus within the RFRU Board to be more supportive of RefSoc activities within the Community Game, leverage best practice, and add value – we will continue to participate in these efforts, to ensure that our CB delivers what we want & need from it over the coming seasons.

The Board and RFU Council Rep have repeatedly sought our counsel on a range of topics, so it's nice to know that our perspectives and opinions continue to be valued far beyond our borders, and at the highest levels of the game.

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Back in Berkshire, Russ deserves massive credit for the number of R2R courses he has delivered within and beyond Berkshire (as does Granville, for his efforts); I would also like to thank our members for making those who have joined us this season feel welcome.

Of course, I need to thank all of my colleagues across the Exec and Full Committee, for the untold hours & huge effort they have given in support of BRR, 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.

We continue to evolve how we operate, to better-meet the needs of our members (as referenced in Jamie's report) and the clubs we support – to that end, will see some further changes to our Committee roles & responsibilities season:

- Russ Clark will continue to focus on Safeguarding & liaising with CRefCs across the clubs in Berkshire, but will have specific support on YMOs from Toby Stapleton, who has also offered to take over Social Media from Dave Elliott
- Fergus Mackenzie, who did a thorough piece of research that he presented to the Exec in April, will take the lead on Recruitment going forward. He has looked at what other RefSocs have done and has some great ideas to improve how we recruit and look after new members – look out for more on that in the coming months...

And finally, my thanks to all of you, for whatever you have done over the past season: whether out with a whistle, flag, or clipboard; you've enabled a huge number of matches to take place and allowed many thousands of players to enjoy our great game of rugby.

Nick Curtin

Chair, Berkshire Rugby Referees

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