

Team Referee Information Paper

Why do we have referee shortages in senior competitions?

Referee shortages are one of the biggest challenges across the sporting and football landscape. Locally, via research and surveys referee shortages can be attributed to the following:

- player participation continues to increase expanding the number of games scheduled each weekend;
- as players continue to play longer (via Masters competitions) there are less ex-players making a transition to officiating;
- Senior Junior referees (within the 16-21 year old bracket) do not continue refereeing due to work, study and other commitments – this was evident in a survey sent to referees that did not register and via phone calls to referees that did not register again in 2023;
- One third of referees give up the game each year due to abuse;
- Some experienced junior referees have no interest in refereeing senior games and prefer to officiate junior games only;
- In 2023, of the FSC Appointed referees (ie Non Team Referees), on any one week there is 50% availability of referees (due to their own work and family commitments); and
- Many referees also play, which especially impacts on Youth Grade competitions both in Men's / Women's Premiership and Junior Competitions.

What are we doing to address these shortages?

- Implementation of the Referee Development Panel where talented / potential junior referees officiate representative fixtures with ongoing mentoring to transition to senior football;
- Working with Junior Referee Club Coordinators to identify junior referees that can officiate as Assistant Referees in senior games;
- Calling referees that have not registered to determine if they would consider to re-register;
- Recruitment drives each year for referees of all ages;
- Training and education for all registered referees;
- Implementation of policies such as the Spectator Management Policy to influence and encourage better behaviour from crowds and spectators

The other initiative implemented in the Community League in 2022 was the Team Referee initiative. This has proven to be very positive in terms of:

- In 2022, game coverage across the CL competition increasing from 35% to 86% with similar results in 2023;
- A number of Team Referees have assisted junior clubs in officiating older age groups (eg U17/U18 where most of the experienced junior referees are playing) and women's games;
- Ensuring all referees are accredited with Level 4 training and offered coaching;
- Building relationships between junior and senior clubs to assist where required;
- Clubs were able to engage ex-players, ex-referees or other individuals that were able to undertake the role and become registered referees (therefore managing the 'black' market of referees); and
- Black market referees were previously utilised to fill these roles, their replacement by Team Referees has centralised governance and processes.

There is an opportunity expand this concept in 2024 across other competitions and the purpose of this paper is to outline the implementation of this model.

Which clubs need to nominate a Team Referee?

- Men's and Women's Premiership Youth Grade – Optional with the exception of new clubs participating in the 2024 competition where a nomination will be mandatory.
- Men's and Women's Community League - Mandatory

Who can be nominated as Team Referee?

- The nominee must be over 18 years of age and be prepared to undertake the relevant course-work if they don't already have a Level 4 qualification.
- Be available for at least 50% of home games of the nominating club.
- This can be a player, an ex-player, an ex-referee, or anyone else that might be interested in becoming a referee.
- A current referee officiating junior games who are over 18 years of age. Referees that are under 16 will need to be part of an assessment process and this will be dependant on the competition.

How many Team Referees are required per club?

- If the Team Referee is not a player, this referee can be nominated as a team referee across two tier competitions (ie All Age First Grad and Second Grade) or any number of games across the club.
- If the Team Referee is a player within the club, the Club must nominate one referee per team so that the player can officiate games other than the ones they are scheduled to play in.

What is required in the coursework?

- The nominee will need to complete an online [Laws of the Game quiz](#) as a pre-requisite.
- The nominee will also need to partially complete a workbook, attend a theory and practical session.
- Both sessions are compulsory.

How much is the Registration Fee and what do they get for it?

- The course and referee membership is a cost of \$110 per person. This covers course fees, membership and insurance.
- For first year Team referees there will also be an approximate cost of \$125 for uniform (shirt, shorts and socks) and equipment (whistle, cards and flags).
- All referees will need to register to FSC Referees through Play Football.

Who pays for the Registration Fee?

The club may choose to pay the fee, or alternatively the nominated referee is able to pay this.

What are the Referee Payments per game?

Referees will receive payments. In 2023 these were as per the attached link, however may be subject to review.

[Microsoft Word - 2023 FSC Referee match Fees \(footballsouthcoast.com\)](#)

How will team referees get paid per game?

FSC will pay the referees directly monthly through their nominated bank account with clubs invoiced for their services as applied.

How will appointments work?

- Referees will be appointed through our new Competition Management app – Dribl. Referees will (in most cases) be appointed to their host club where a neutral referee cannot be appointed.
- FSC will try and appoint referees to an alternate game where teams ground share allowing the referee to perhaps partake in the other game as a player (if registered as such).
- Referees can make themselves available for other fixtures i.e., midweek or Sunday games or for other games when their home club is playing away.

Will nominated referees be required to run lines in other games at the same ground?

This will not be a mandatory requirement however, if referees wish to run lines at other games and expect to be paid for it, they should check with the host club in the first instance.

Can a club seek an exemption from this process?

Football South Coast is willing to consider written exemption requests from clubs where they have unique circumstances.

What happens if a club does not nominate a Team Referee?

Men's and Women's Community League

- The nomination of a Team Referee will be condition of entry into the competition.
- If a club does not nominate a Team Referee or nominates a Team Referee who does not make themselves available for at 50% of their home games, if required, this will be a point of consideration for acceptance into FSC competitions in subsequent seasons.

Premiership Youth Grade (Men and Women)

- Given this will be option, clubs will be required to advise why they are unable to nominate a team referee.
- FSC may also assign a Team Referee to the club if appropriate.