

REFEREE COMMISSION

Commission: Allan Diplock, Stewart Dunne, Diane Hollows, Bert Jones, Bernard Kilkenney, Denis Le Breuille, Brian Stalker, Dudley Williams

All those years we had lots of volunteers, great big strategic plans and no money. For the first time in a long while, funding for the work of Referee Commission has not been a problem. We've still got great big plans of what we want to achieve, but now we have no volunteers. Actually, even that isn't quite true – there are enough people who want to help, even quite a few who are competent enough to do a good job, but none of us seem to have enough spare time to commit.

The traditional model of two or three volunteers who spend large amounts of their own personal time keeping everything afloat for everybody else, is history. What Referee Commission needs now is a dozen or so experienced referees who are willing to donate a small amount of their time to be responsible for a small project each; volunteers know where to contact me. The only alternative route would be the appointment of a professional "Referee Administrator", in much the same way that we have employed officers to look after Competitions or Coaching, but this doesn't seem to have found much support at Executive Board level.

The Association is also short of referees, although this time it's a question of quality rather than quantity. The demographic profile of NVL referees has held warning signs for some time, in terms of the likely retirement of many of our more experienced referees on age grounds. Although there are some good, younger referees starting to come through the system, it takes a long time to obtain the necessary training and practice to officiate at the highest levels. We are just not attracting the experienced ex-players that we need, and it's possible that a degree of compulsion may be necessary.

Nev Lewis, Dan Dingle, Perry Joseph, Brian Jones, Dudley Williams, Jeff Brehaut, Brian Stalker, Phil Mintoft and Stewart Dunne; who wants to be the next English International Referee ? (Does anyone else share my view that the names I've just given represent several lifetimes of pure dedication to the game of volleyball ? Apart from any other observations, the list includes six Presidents or Vice-Presidents of the English Volleyball Association. These are people who knew the meaning of voluntary service.)

In the 2005-2006 season Referee Commission maintained a steady level of activity. The number of Grade 4 Courses and newly-qualified Grade 3 Referees stayed roughly in line with the 5-year trend, as did the total number of registered referees. We're pinning hopes that the new e-learning platform will help us to deliver a more efficient training programme for all those referees and other officials that will be needed for the 2012 Olympic Games, but this too will need volunteers with the necessary expertise in both technical and refereeing areas, not just for indoor volleyball but in Beach Volleyball and also the standing / sitting game.

The Development programme continues to show good progress, thanks to the work of its Director, but we remain short of experienced match observers. There seems to be no obvious reason why experienced coaches could not help to perform this function, and I shall be investigating this possibility during the year. There are promising signs of progress on the Junior Referee award system, and this gives some cause for future optimism. But, for the present, the goal of appointing referees to all NVL matches remains just out of reach.

Bernard Kilkenney, President, Referee Commission

AWARD COURSES, REFEREES AND REGISTRATIONS 2001-2006

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Grade 4 Award Courses	11	10	18	10	9
New Grade 3 Referees	22	18	21	34	27
New Grade 4 referees	164	120	236	115	135
Registered Referees	296	288	295	284	283
International Referees	5	3	3	2	2
National Referees	8	11	11	11	10
Grade 1 Referees	14	14	9	13	14
Grade 2 Referees	20	20	19	16	19