

REFEREE COMMISSION

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

The main purpose of Referee Commission is to develop, support and monitor referees at all levels of volleyball competition. A lack of volunteers means that, again in the 2004-2005 season, we were able to be only partially successful in meeting our goals for these activities. Without professional support specifically for referees, and without replacing the volunteers we lose each year, it will continue to be difficult to maintain the level of support for referees – and for the game as a whole – that we'd all like to see.

The Development Programme continues to show good progress; there has been an increase in the number of newly-qualified Grade 3 referees, although the number of Grade 4 Award courses was not as high as last year. The reduction in new Grade 4 referees is a potential problem, unless we can convert a higher proportion of these into active, practising officials. A shortage of experienced staff referees and assessors must be addressed, if we are to halt this downward trend. It seems likely that the goal of appointing referees to all NVL matches remains just out of reach, until we can find a way to address the shortage of competent NVL referees.

Referees do not just “appear from nowhere”; the vast majority of existing officials were connected to volleyball clubs. Clubs have a vested interest in helping the Commission to raise the standards of refereeing, and they can do this either actively, or passively. The most constructive role would be for each team to persuade one or two players to do some refereeing; not only would this benefit the club itself, it would also benefit the leagues in which they play. Leagues, areas and regions should consider the introduction of regulations to promote higher standards of officiating in this way, and Referee Commission is geared to support players who decide to help out by volunteering their services.

Even if clubs do not wish to be part of the solution, they could help us all by trying not to be part of the problem; we continue to lose (or demotivate) our learning referees by the attitudes we adopt towards them. The demographic age profile of our most experienced officials suggests that we will already be suffering the significant effects of retirement in the next few years; if we add to this the premature loss of referees who give up on volleyball because they are abused, hassled and made to feel unwelcome, nobody wins.

During the season just ended, a disgruntled NVL club secretary told me, as President of the EVA Referee Commission, that she was my “customer”. Well, I've been Commission President for a long time, but I honestly never realised I had “customers”. If there's nobody to replace me when I stop, I wonder where this particular “consumer” will go, when the EVA shop has to close its doors due to staff shortages? Without more volunteers, volleyball is nothing.

Bernard Kilkenny
President

AWARD COURSES, REFEREES AND REGISTRATIONS 2000-2005

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	
Grade 4 Award Courses	13	11	10	18	10	
New Grade 3 Referees	17	22	18	21	34	
New Grade 4 referees	156	164	120	236	115	
Registered Referees	320	296	288	295	284	
International Referees	7	5	3	3	2	
National Referees		9	8	11	11	11
Grade 1 Referees	15	14	14	9	13	
Grade 2 Referees	21	20	20	19	16	