
ENGLISH VOLLEYBALL ASSOCIATION

REFEREE CODE OF CONDUCT

Administration

Referees should make every attempt to attend to Commission business efficiently. In particular, they should:

- register at the appropriate time (April each year)
- respond promptly to correspondence from the Commission, the National Office, event organisers, Regional Referee Administrators and individual clubs.
- confirm matches with club secretaries appropriately and maintain such commitments wherever possible
- if unable to fulfil an appointment due to exceptional circumstances, inform the home club or organiser as soon as possible; in the case of National League matches which are appointed centrally, also inform Referee Commission (For single matches, where non-attendance may affect other referees, it is desirable to inform the second-named official. Where non-attendance may cause a particular difficulty, the referee should make some effort to find a replacement referee personally.)
- submit match reports, where applicable, as soon as reasonably possible after a match
- have a thorough knowledge of the relevant competition rules for any match
- pay proper attention to the noting of disciplinary points / sanctions and suspensions on both the scoresheet and on the individual player or coach cards, and to the noting of defective equipment and other infringements of competition rules on the scoresheet.
- in cases where a participant is expelled or disqualified from a match, make a full written report immediately to Referee Commission.
- claim and ensure prompt payment of the appropriate match fees and expenses, as laid down in the relevant competition regulations.

Staff Referees must ensure that Award Course and Upgrading Assessment procedures conform to current Commission guidelines in respect of proper notification, marking, submission of results/recommendations and all financial arrangements.

Matches

Qualified referees are expected to referee in a totally unbiased manner, making all decisions based only on the evidence presented and without reference to any incidents which may have occurred at an earlier date. They should, at all times, referee within the true **spirit** of the game and not only to the simple **letter** of the laws.

Referees should arrive in due time, properly dressed, prior to a match so that the necessary check on equipment, facilities etc. can be effected.

During a game, the referee should deal with players and coaches showing respect, even in cases where this courtesy is not reciprocated. It is a matter of personal style and preference what kind of social contact a referee chooses to have with players and coaches before and after a match; overt demonstrations of friendliness should not, however, leave a referee open to accusations of non-neutrality.

Heated exchanges with players, coaches or spectators, whatever the cause and under any amount of provocation are to be avoided at all costs. If disputes which seem likely to result in such exchanges cannot be avoided, every effort must be made to conduct such dialogue in private.

Under no circumstances should a referee participate at an official match, in any capacity, whilst under the influence of alcohol or any other prohibited drug.

The standard of behaviour required of referees by the English Volleyball Association is rightly higher than that expected from other participants; Referee Commission accepts that this is entirely as it should be.

When refereeing in schools or junior competitions, referees must make every effort to liaise with the appropriate commissioner in order to help enforce the Code of Conduct ratified by the Youth Commission. Referees in such events should be aware of Child Protection issues and should officiate in a manner appropriate to the age of the participants.

Regulatory Procedures

All complaints, comments and reports relating to the behaviour and performance of **qualified** referees should be made, in writing, to Referee Commission, with a copy of any complaint sent to the referee concerned (comments relating to **unqualified** officials must be addressed to the Commission responsible for the particular competition).

Specific categories of report are classified under **proficiency, bias, and behaviour**.

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Proficiency

The **first** report received concerning the competence of a referee is filed and remains current for the remainder of the season in progress. No action is taken. If no further reports are received during the same season, the initial complaint is removed from the current records and will not normally be relevant to any future complaint.

If a **second** report is received, concerning a separate incident, the matter may be referred to the next meeting of the Referee Commission, which may decide either to take no further action or to write a warning letter to the referee concerned; in the latter case, it may be decided to make an entry on the referee's file, although this will not be done without first consulting the referee and giving an opportunity to comment on any complaints which may have been received.

For the **third** and subsequent reports, the referee must be contacted and informed that the matter is being referred to Referee Commission, and asked for any written or verbal submission which he/she may wish to make. Arrangements will be made to offer advice and support to the referee from regional staff or senior referees and to have performance assessed impartially. On completion of this process, the Commission may decide to:

- take no further action and/or monitor further performance
- recommend attendance at an appropriate referee clinic
- recommend downgrading from present grade

Bias

Allegations of bias, either against individuals or against clubs/teams, will be treated most seriously by the Commission. For this reason, clubs are advised to consider carefully before making such accusations against a referee, and honest efforts should be made to distinguish between a claim of non-neutrality and one of lack of proficiency.

All such reports will be referred to Referee Commission. Where any action is deemed to be appropriate, full written reports will be required from **all** other participants, including opposing teams, other officials etc., for the match in question.

Should it be decided that a club has made spurious and unsubstantiated allegations against a referee under this heading, Referee Commission reserves the right to refer the matter to a Disciplinary Sub-Committee for possible further action.

Behaviour

Reports from any source - players, coaches, officials, spectators or outside agencies with a relevant interest - which allege breaches of the Referee Code of Conduct will be referred initially to Referee Commission for analysis. Written reports will be requested from other individual parties and witnesses, with a specific deadline for response; all such submissions will be treated in confidence.

For minor violations of the Code, Referee Commission may decide upon:

- a warning letter advising as to future conduct
- a request for a written apology to any injured party
- the levy of a fine
- withdrawal of appointments or loss of status

For major violations of the Code, Referee Commission may refer the matter directly to the E.V.A. Judicial Panel.

Disciplinary Process

Where complaints are made against a referee, on the basis of alleged lack of competence, the main thrust of Commission action, if any, will focus upon the re-education and training of the referee concerned; the sanction of downgrading will be imposed only after other attempts to rectify the situation have been tried. (This does not apply to grades requiring annual assessment or re-selection, such as National Referee).

In cases of proven bias or misconduct, where disciplinary action is deemed necessary, the following principles shall apply:

1. no individual with any direct involvement in the matters(s) under consideration whether a member of the Referee Commission, the English Volleyball Association Judicial Panel or Competitions Commission - shall take part in the judgement of the case; whilst such individuals may make appropriate contributions to the submission of the case, they should withdraw from any meeting whilst a decision is being made.
2. in any meeting where disciplinary action is being considered against a referee, the individual concerned shall have the opportunity to make a statement in defence or in mitigation, either verbally or in writing, before a final decision is reached; this can take the form of either a written statement or attendance in person.

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The procedures laid down in this Code of Conduct are held to apply to all referees claiming qualification under the procedures laid down by Referee Commission of the English Volleyball Association; this includes officials with qualifications gained via other Federations but who, for the purposes of any particular competition of the English Volleyball Association, are deemed to have 'equivalent' status under a normal reciprocal agreement.

In the first instance, all cases will be considered by a designated member of Referee Commission; should it be deemed necessary, the case will be referred to a sub-committee of Referee Commission, consisting of a minimum of three full members of the Commission. Should any disciplinary action be recommended, this decision must be ratified by Referee Commission before being implemented. For serious breaches of the Code, cases may be referred to the Judicial Panel of the English Volleyball Association.

(Procedurally, it is anticipated that the referee concerned will be invited to make a **written** statement to any preliminary enquiry; should the matter be referred to Referees Commission or Judicial Panel, the individual may then be invited to appear in person, make a second written submission or be represented by a colleague, if appropriate.)

Where any meeting of the Judicial Panel is considering the work of any qualified referee, at least one member of this Panel should be a full current member of Referee Commission.

If a sanction is to be imposed on an individual, the referee concerned shall be informed of any decision within fourteen days of the decision being taken. For any sanction involving the levy of a fine or downgrading, this notification must be in writing.

The right of appeal to the Executive Board (who may delegate responsibility for hearing the appeal to its constituted Judicial Panel) of the English Volleyball Association against any sanction imposed by Referee Commission is available to a referee, on condition that this appeal is made, in writing, within fourteen days of the notification of disciplinary action. (Note that a deposit is required on making this appeal.) The President of Referee Commission must also be notified of the intention to appeal, within fourteen days of the notification of any sanction which has been imposed.

The above procedure is intended to apply to the disciplinary process; it does not apply where there are existing Commission guidelines covering the non-disciplinary workings of Referee Commission; for example, in the allocation of refereeing appointments, where the criteria may exist for determining the allocation to be made. Where a referee does not meet the necessary conditions for appointments (e.g. by failing to meet schedule deadlines, failure to register or by lack of refereeing activity etc.), any subsequent non-allocation of matches is **not** deemed to be part of a disciplinary procedure and is therefore not subject to the conditions above.

General Conduct

Any statement/comments made 'on the record' by referees, or articles written for the intended purpose of publication, should not be phrased in such a way as to be deemed likely to cause offence or be detrimental to the reputation of others.

Comments made at volleyball events, privately between referees (or by referees to others) should be inaudible to those not involved in the discussion; this applies particularly to comments relating to the competence, performance or behaviour of fellow referees.

Under no circumstances should referees, unless acting in a privileged capacity (such as match commissioner, staff referee, jury member etc.) make derogatory public statements concerning the performance of colleagues or other participants, except where such comment is expressly required by Referee Commission and its constituted sub-committees, or is made in the presence of the referee concerned.

There is no desire on the part of the Referee Commission to infringe upon the individual personal liberty of referees to attend, spectate at and enjoy any volleyball match; indeed, referees are encouraged to support the game in this way. However, the shouting of loud abuse or unwarranted advice, or the deliberate heckling aimed at participants during a game, although not an offence under any competition rules, may constitute a violation of the Referee Code of Conduct.

When officiating abroad, or at national/international events as a representative of the English Volleyball Association, referees must, at all times, act in such a way as to bring neither the Association, nor fellow referees, into disrepute. Any referee invited to officiate outside England should inform the Referee Commission President in advance.

Registered referees may not participate, in any capacity, in unofficial or 'pirate' leagues which are not sanctioned by the Association. Similarly, referees should not accept invitations to officiate in leagues, non-registered tournaments or events which operate in

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contravention of the Association's policy on unacceptable sponsorship. Referees should always attempt to support Association matches and tournaments, before committing themselves to work in non-Association events.

In view of the Commission's express policy of encouraging women to participate more fully in all aspects of its work, referees are advised to avoid actions or words which would be construed as derogatory or insulting to women, or which constitute an act of discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex.

The Association is committed to equality of opportunity for all individuals, without reference to racial or cultural background or sexual orientation. Within the limits of normal physical requirements of the sport, age and disability are not necessarily a handicap to participation. Any referee deemed to have caused an offence, either by written or verbal communication or via any public action or demonstration, will be disciplined according to the most serious breach of the Code of Conduct.

Referees must continuously be aware of the **educational** role in the promotion of volleyball as both a participant and spectator sport; this aspect is an important addition to the role of impartial arbitrator. Referee Commission believes that referees who set high standards of personal behaviour can act as examples for both less experienced colleagues and other participants to follow; at all times in their dealings with other parties, referees should demonstrate courtesy, politeness and respect and must, at all times, avoid actions which could bring discredit to the reputation of referees in general.

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CODE VIOLATIONS

CATEGORY A - 'ADMINISTRATIVE INEFFICIENCY'

- A1 Failure to register before the end of August in the registration year
- A2 Failure to meet correspondence deadlines from Referee Commission, National Office, event organisers and Regional Referee Administrators
- A3 Withdrawal from refereeing commitment, without an acceptable reason
- A4 Failure to inform Referee Commission of a change to N.V.L. appointments
- A5 Late submission of N.V.L. match reports to Referee Commission or relevant Commissioner
- A6 Failure to submit a written report, following expulsion or disqualification
- A7 Failure to report serious defects or dangerous equipment at official matches
- A8 Late arrival at official matches, without an acceptable reason
- A9 Acceptance of an invitation to officiate outside England without informing Referee Commission
- A10 Failure to wear acceptable uniform for all refereeing appointments

CATEGORY B - 'CONDUCT UNBECOMING A REFEREE'

- B1 Repetition of Category A code violations during the same season
- B2 Failure to register before the end of December in the registration year
- B3 Failure to inform home club immediately on becoming unavailable to meet agreed commitment
- B4 Failure to submit a match report within seven days of receiving a reminder
- B5 Failure to referee within the true spirit of the rules of the game
- B6 Failure to demonstrate due respect during matches to players, coaches and officials
- B7 Issuing of public statements, or articles written for publication, which are deemed likely to cause offence or be detrimental to the reputation of others
- B8 Making derogatory public statements on the competence of colleagues or others
- B9 Failure to maintain confidentiality, or unauthorised disclosure of information

CATEGORY C - 'BRINGING REFEREES INTO DISREPUTE'

- C1 Repetition of Category B code violations during the same season.
- C2 Non-arrival at a match without informing the club, having accepted the appointment
- C3 Failure to officiate in a manner which is totally impartial and without reference to any incidents which may have occurred at an earlier date
- C4 Engaging in heated exchanges with players, coaches, administrators, event organiser, spectators, referees and all other officials
- C5 Bringing the English Volleyball Association into disrepute in any way
- C6 Acting in such a way as to lower the professional standing of referees in volleyball
- C7 Officiating in non-approved matches or in leagues / events not sanctioned by the Association

CATEGORY D - 'GROSS MISCONDUCT'

- D1 Repetition of Category C code violations during the same season
- D2 Officiating in a manner which is clearly biased
- D3 Participating in an official match, in any capacity, whilst under the influence of alcohol or any other prohibited drug
- D4 Participation, in any capacity, in unofficial leagues or matches not sanctioned by the English Volleyball Association, having received a warning
- D5 Discrimination, or malicious comments or actions which cause offence based upon the sex, race or cultural background of volleyball participants
- D6 Abusive, obscene, aggressive or violent gestures, comments or actions