



**Refereeing:
A Professional Way Forward**

The LMA and PFA Working Party

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01

INTRODUCTION





1.0 INTRODUCTION

It has been a privilege chairing the working group set up by the League Managers Association (LMA) and the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) to examine ways of improving both Refereeing in the English game and the working lives and job satisfaction of Match Officials. There is little doubt that being a Referee at the top level of football is a much harder task today than it was twenty or even ten years ago (as the report explains in section 4) and recently there has been a relentless spotlight shone on the relationship between Match Officials, Players and Managers with an increased focus on Refereeing standards, particularly with regard to key decisions.

The LMA and PFA decided that the best response to this emotive and increasingly polarised public debate was to establish a working group which could meet in a consensual environment where it would be possible to air views, examine research and determine actions with the aim of coming up with a series of proposals which would, we believe, improve the relationships between the different stakeholders in Professional Football and, at the same time, improve the overall standard of Refereeing. The aim of the group was not to bandstand or attract easy headlines; the aim was to produce a set of serious proposals which would improve the selection, training and professionalism of Referees at the top level of English football. We have not examined in any depth technological ways of helping Referees because, although they could help, we wanted to produce a series of recommendations which could be implemented relatively quickly in the English game. We believe the current problems need to be addressed with some urgency and technological change would require international support and would be difficult to deliver even in the medium term.

I take this opportunity to welcome you to this review of our findings. I am sure you will find the report interesting, but my hope is that you will also find its conclusions and recommendations compelling. I would like to thank the Professional Game Match Officials Limited (PGMOL) for their cooperation and provision of information and I hope they, in particular, will accept this report in the spirit of mutual respect in which it is meant. Thanks are due to my fellow working group members and the executives and staff of the LMA and PFA for all their hard work.

Greg Dyke





02

OVERVIEW





2.0 OVERVIEW

- This paper has been initiated by the LMA and PFA complementary to the “Respect Programme”. The clear purpose was to evaluate the whole system of control of the Professional game and to make positive recommendations. These, we believe, will remove many of the current frustrations by improving the standards of Match Officials and improving the entertainment value of the game. The LMA, in its desire to support Match Officials in Professional Football called a meeting in November 2008 at which a significant percentage of serving Managers attended to present their views and suggestions to improve standards. Managers and Players can see necessary improvements to be made to the existing system of selection, training and assessment of Referees.
- English football now showcases some of the best Players and Coaches in the world and this paper, and the subsequent Working Party, reflects the views of Managers and Players to ensure English football also demonstrates the highest standards of Match Officials.
- The paper relates only to Referees and Assistant Referees in Professional Football in England as defined by the Premier League (PL) and Football League (FL).
- The core argument of the paper is that to improve Referee standards in Professional Football it is necessary to develop a set of agreed competences which serve as the basis for talent identification, training and quality control of Professional Football Referees.
- Having agreed the competences, it is argued that there should be ‘tests’ of competence, as is commonly used in many professions and that the prior learning of Players and Managers wishing to be assessed for such awards should be accredited towards their achievement.



- Key themes and words emphasised throughout this paper :
 - PGMOL (**Professional Game Match Officials Limited**). Formed in 2001 to provide Match Officials for all Professional Football matches played in England. The Board of PGMOL is made up of the Chief Executives of the Football Association, the Premier League and the Football League with a Non-Executive Chairman.
- The term 'Key Stakeholder 'is used in this paper and refers specifically to Managers and Players.
 - "Talent Identification" of Professional Referees, not selection.
 - "Quality Control" not merely assessment.
 - The development of open, transparent systems and processes through collaboration and communication in order to support Officials in Professional Football.



03

SUMMARY OF THE 10 MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS





3.0

SUMMARY OF THE 10 MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The PGMOL to employ Match Officials and to make match appointments in the PL and FL from a pool of Licensed Professional Football Referees.
2. Licensed Professional Referees to be encouraged to establish their own Association and be recognised by the Football Authorities as the professional body acting on behalf of all Professional Referees in England.
3. A new, more effective system to be established in relation to selection, training and assessment for Professional Referees including Referee Performance Analysis (video) for every game in the PL and FL.
4. The FA to re-define the Professional Football Technical Review Committee responsible for recommending to the Professional Game Board of The FA proposed Law changes to submit to the International Board. This Technical Committee should include representatives of the PFA, LMA and Professional Referees Association.
5. A Referee Academy to be established preferably, at the National Football Centre (NFC) to meet the needs of Professional Football Refereeing with the responsibilities for research, talent identification, training, continuous professional development and quality control for Licensed Professional Refereeing. This institution would be established with its sole purpose to support Professional Football Refereeing in England. The FA, PL and FL together with the PFA, LMA and Professional Referees Association to provide the members of the Board of the Referee Academy.
6. The Referee Academy Board to appoint a Director of Professional Referee Training, to include all the responsibilities of research, talent identification, training, continuous professional development and quality control concerning Licensed Professional Football Referees. The Director of Professional Referee Training (DPRT) should report to the Board of the Referee Academy and also sit on the PGMOL.



7. The DPRT to establish and chair a Working Party of technical stakeholders and industry experts as required in the following areas:

- Research.
- Development of Competences towards the status of 'Licensed Professional Referee.'
- Talent Identification.
- Training with high emphasis upon practice in simulated training sessions.
- Continuous Professional Development.
- Quality Control, including Internal and External Verification.

Each Working Party should include representatives of The FA, PL, FL, PFA, LMA and the Professional Referees Association.

Under the direction of the DPRT the Working Parties to achieve specific outcomes within the set time.

8. An appropriate number of Referee Academy Staff Tutor Assessors to be appointed, based preferably at the NFC, reporting to the DPRT.

9. A formalized Complaints and Feedback Service for Clubs, Managers and Players to be established.

10. Employment:

- There should be professional contracts for Licensed Professional Referees.
- A Career Pathway to be presented to all full-time Professional Referees.
- All games in the Premier League and Football League Championship should be refereed by Licensed Professional Referees.
- All existing Match Officials on the Select Group should be accredited automatically as Licensed Professional Referees.
- Licensed Professional Referees are required to devote their time exclusively to Professional Referee performance and training.
- Referee Academy Staff Tutor Assessors to be employed on a full-time basis.
- A long-term professional budget to provide for such changes and a transition period.



04

RESEARCH





4.0 RESEARCH

4.1 THE DEMANDS OF PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL GAMES IN ENGLAND

Some of the changes in the demands of Professional Football are itemised below. The overall effect is to produce a spectacle that involves the Players in running further and quicker with an increased number of dribbling and turning actions.

A summary of changes in the game (*) would include the following:

Distance and Speed:

- Increased distances covered in all positions and increased distances covered at high speed (both 50% greater than in 1965).
- Increased speed and power - (higher intensity).
- Game is played at quicker pace – (ball & Player speeds).
- Number of sprints per game in Premier League has doubled since 2002.
- Average number of high intensity activities has almost doubled since 2002.

Attacking:

- More teams keep possession more frequently.
- More teams keep possession for longer passing sequences.
- More passing and receiving situations are evident.
- More goals are scored from longer, passing sequences.
- More passes are now played below head height.
- More turns, dribbles and runs with the ball are made.
- More goals are scored from central approaches.
- More teams are regaining possession deeper and counter-attacking quicker.



Defending:

- Offside now occurs deeper.
- Longer defending phases.
- More defensive decisions per game.
- More defensive “shifts” (directional changes) to make during a game.
- More defending decisions and shifts to make per game at high speed particularly over shorter distances.
- “Last second” changes of decision, direction and action.
- Increased demand for mobility range in lower body especially.
- Excellence in defending alone in counter attack situations (i.e. at speed, with some 30-40 yards from goal) moving backwards, sideways etc.
- Increased demand to defend against quick interplay near to goal.

(* Provided by Richard Bate, FA National Coach in his presentation to FA Learning Tutor Day in November 2008 summarising current objective data to outline changes in the Professional Game in England

All these changes have created different demands and requirements on Professional Referees. As the demands of the game changes for Players then this is equally the case for Match Officials and the number of decisions per game increase.



4.2 THE 10,000 HOUR HYPOTHESIS

The formulation of the 10,000 hour “rule” derived from a study done by Dr. Ericsson (*) and colleagues that was published in the Psychological Review in 1993.

Ericsson’s now famous ‘Theory of Deliberate Practice’ suggests that 10,000 hours of practice are required to reach top level performance in any domain. The necessity to accumulate this amount of practice has been found in many domains of expertise, across many activities and in many sports. Consequently, the amount of practice acts as a powerful rate limiter on performance. As an example, 10 000 hours corresponds to approximately 3 hours of practice per day, 7 days per week, with 3 weeks off per year, for 10 years. This means that to reach expertise by approximately 18 years of age, an intensive practice schedule must have started by about 8 years of age. Research has shown the differences in expertise and practice time for Professional, semi – Professional and amateur footballers.

To be effective Ericsson formulated that practice had to be deliberate specific and focused.

Ericsson’s work and that of countless other scientists who have replicated his findings across many activities strengthen the saying ‘practice makes permanent’ and also add the target of 10,000 practice hours as a threshold to achieve for ‘expert level’ performance to be reached.

It would be estimated that Professional Footballers achieve the 10,000 hours of deliberate focused practice by 21-23 years of age.

» The estimated time is practice time – not performance time. The 10,000 hours of practice would be augmented by approximately an overall average of 40 games per year from 8 years of age providing in excess of 600 games by 23 years of age Thus 10,000 practice hours + an estimated 900 performance hours. «

(*) Ericsson, K. A., R. Th. Krampe, and C. Tesch-Römer, 1993, ‘The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance.’ *Psychological Review*, 100: 363-406. HYPERLINK "<http://www.psy.fsu.edu/faculty/ericsson/ericsson.exp.perf.html>"<http://www.psy.fsu.edu/faculty/ericsson/ericsson.exp.perf.html>



4.3

THE PROFILE OF HIGH LEVEL FOOTBALL REFEREES AND ASSISTANT REFEREES IN ENGLAND

The Working Party has surveyed the Match Officials on the current Select Group List.

The average ages they achieved the following stages is noted below:

- They began refereeing when they were 18 years of age.
- They were promoted to the National List of the Football League at 32 years of age.
- They were promoted to the Select Group at 36 years of age.

Assuming that a Referee would referee on average 50 games per year this would provide the following average estimated profile of Referees in the Select Group.

By 32 years they have refereed 700 games or 1050 hours of football.

By 36 years when promoted to the Select Group, they would have refereed 200 games in Professional Football (300 hours) and in total 900 games or 1350 hours of all football.

»» The estimated time is performance time – not practice time. Working Party found no records concerning practice time for Referees««



4.4

TIME-KEEPING IN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL

Research data provided to the Working Party by video match analysis indicates the following exact time for Premier League games in the current season (2008-9).

First Half: 46.6 minutes.

Second Half: 48.7 minutes.

Research suggests that timing is done generally rather than precisely.

4.5

YELLOW AND RED CARDS

The Working Party has analysed data provided by the PGMOL in relation to Yellow and Red Cards issued by Referees from the Select Group refereeing in the Football League and the Carling Cup for the current season.

The results of the analysis are that Select Group Referees performing in the FL issue on average per game approximately one yellow card more than National List Referees who officiate in the Football League all the time. Select Group Referees when refereeing in the FL also show red cards 30% more often than National List Referees. Though it should be noted that usually the Select Group Referees are given the most potentially difficult games.



4.6 OFFSIDE DECISIONS

The PGMOL has commissioned research to assess the accuracy of offside decisions made by Assistant Referees in the PL 2007/08. The research compares the decision by the Assistant Referee against video evidence. This research has been provided by the PGMOL to the Working Party.

The results are as follows:

- There were on average 30 offside/onside situations per game.
- 82.5% have been shown to be correct and 17.5% incorrect. An average of approximately 1 in 5 incorrect decisions or between 5 and 6 errors per game.
- Time in match was found not to be significant to errors through fatigue, as in fact, most errors in 1st 15 minutes.

4.7 EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN OTHER SPORTS

The Working Party has investigated the following:

- Cricket: (ECB in conjunction with the Association of Cricket Officials)
 - Mirrors the model developed by the ECB for Cricket Coaches.
 - Competence-based.
 - Recognised on the Government's Qualification Framework (QCA).
 - System of Internal Verifier and Independent External Verification.
- US Baseball (MLB):
 - Dedicated 'Umpire' schools.
- American Football (NFL):
 - Large usage of video tapes in Quality Control.
 - Considerable investment in Referee training and employment.



05

EVALUATION





5.0 EVALUATION

5.1 CURRENT STRENGTHS

5.1.1 Laws of the Game

- The Laws of the Game are in the main simple to understand and apply.
- In common with a number of other team games the Laws of the Game for Association Football have been amended over the past 15 years to facilitate a faster, more exciting spectacle for Professional Football e.g. Backpass Rule, tackle from behind, 3 points for a win, increase in the number of substitutes, yellow card for delaying restart etc.
- Players' safety has become paramount within the Laws of the Game.

5.1.2 Administrative Processes & Systems

- Communication by PGMOL Officials to Managers after controversial decisions is appreciated but doesn't cover all instances and also does not address the accountability of Assessor reports.
- The availability of Referee for discussion with Managers, 30 minutes after the game.
- The use of video match analysis technology by PGMOL staff to provide data and support for Referees including minute by minute analysis.
- Club Visits by PGMOL Officials – vehicle for discussion and sharing of viewpoints. Helps to diminish the 'them and us' scenario.
- Nationwide, pre-season meetings, organised by PL and FL, where PGMOL inform Managers of Law changes and Referee Directives that will affect them during the coming season.
- For the first time this season (2008-9) Clubs on request will receive Assessor's report on specific Key Incidents.
- Match Video Analysis of all PL games and selected FL Championship games.
- Operational advice is provided to Referees through their Coaches' analysis of Assessor/Delegate reports.



- The Delegate System has had a positive impact – it consists of representatives of the PFA (all experienced former Players) and the LMA (former Managers) and administrators. Such Delegates attend every PL game and review the Referee's performance from a Player's and Manager's perspective in addition to the Assessor (a former Referee) who reviews from a Referee's perspective. The WP believes that the Delegate system as applied in the PL has assisted in improving a number of aspects, in particular, man-management.
- Assessors are now required to use video evidence before making their judgement of Key Incidents (although still not identifying enough Key Incident errors made by Match Officials).
- The Technical Committee does provide a forum for discussion on Refereeing issues (but not an effective forum to propose changes to the Laws of the Game).
- The use of DVD and video of matches has led to better identification of Key Incident errors.

5.1.3 Referee Performance

- The integrity of the current Match Officials, particularly in consideration to Match Officials in some other countries.
- The acceptance of the need for Professional Football Referees.
- The more recent fast-tracking of potentially talented, young Referees.
- Fitness of Referees has improved and is continually measured.
- Recovery after matches is a priority.
- Implementation of Officials Intercom Systems.
- Introduction of Officials working in teams in the PL.
- Select Group Referees especially, receive in depth data on their performances - Extensive statistics on fitness, speed, proximity to ball and incident, numbers of red and yellow cards etc. (but no objective data on proficiency of decision-making).
- PGMOL have developed excellent information for Match Officials on how to handle specific match situations i.e. DOGSO, final third Free Kicks, Advantage, Simulation etc (This is precisely the information which should be pulled together and used to codify a set of competences for Professional Refereeing – see next section).



- Emphasis has been given to detailing the principles involved in differentiating between challenges that are fair and those that are not.
- The improved PGMOL Professional System of PGMOL Managers. The Select Group Referees receive through the PGMOL management structure more and better support, advice and information than they ever have.

This paper will subsequently argue that the current system of selection, training and quality control of Professional Referees has flaws. This should not, however, diminish the view that there are some first class Match Officials working in the PL and FL. Rather the argument is that the system should support their development better relative to the needs of the game.

5.2 **CURRENT WEAKNESSES**

5.2.1 Laws of the Game

- The ambiguity of the current Offside Law.
- Consistency in the interpretation with regard to "deliberate hand ball."
- The Penalty Box Triple Jeopardy: a mistimed tackle in the penalty box can result in a red card, suspension and a penalty, whereas same incident in midfield would only merit a free kick.
- Resistance to the use of technology to assist the Referee e.g. goal line technology.
- Limited progress regarding 'Temporary/Blood Substitute'.
- Limited progress regarding injustice of 'fouled, injured Player having to leave field for treatment, leaving his team with 10 men.'
- Limited progress regarding 'SIN BINS,' further examination of the 9.15 metre advancement for dissent (without a yellow card).
- Time keeping in Professional Football is not precise. The time is decided subjectively by the Referee against criteria provided. It would appear, however, that irrespective of the nature of the game, they last approximately the same time. Games vary but the time played appears to change very little.



5.2.2 Administrative Processes & Systems

- The involvement of Managers or Players in discussion concerning Law amendments has had limited effect. Whilst the LMA and PFA are part of the PGMCO Technical Committee any suggestions from this group on changes to the Laws of the Game must be submitted to the PGMCO Board and then to The FA Referees Committee which has the authority on behalf of The FA to recommend any potential changes in the Laws of the Game to the FIFA International Board as they would affect Professional Football and indeed football as a whole. The FA Referees Committee includes many ex-Referees, esteemed administrators, and representatives from the Referees Association but no representatives from Players or Managers.
- It is a weakness in English football that this critical forum is unrepresentative of key stakeholders. It is comparable with only consulting with Chief Police Officers and the Police Federations before drafting Laws for all UK citizens. It is a weakness that Managers and Players do not have an effective voice in any changes in the Laws but also a weakness that The FA Referees Committee does not have the value of the years of experience of Players and Managers who have to work with the changes once implemented.
- The English Football Association has an enviable position in the shaping of the Laws of the Game. As the Association that developed the Laws of the Game and later codified them, The FA is a key member of the FIFA International Board. There is a greater need, therefore, for The FA to improve its consultation with stakeholders regarding Law change proposals to the IFAB.
- In 1991 the Football Association after over 18 months research and consultation published 'The Blue Print for the Future of Football' This report heralded one of the greatest sea-changes in Association Football in England including, as it did, the recommendation to establish the "FA Premier League."
- The Blue Print for the Future of Football covered all aspects of the game including Refereeing and recommended that:
"Consideration should be given to the reinstatement of a Technical Committee to monitor and recommend amendments to the Laws of the Game. Such a committee should include representatives of Players and Managers"



This Technical Committee is in operation but has had limited success regarding changes to the Laws of the Game.

“The Blue Print for the Future of Football” also made specific proposals with regard to Refereeing and on page 84 made the following recommendations:

- A Research and Development Department is urgently required, to collect and analyse data concerned with the changing needs of football.
- Expansion is needed in the provision in computer provision for the improvement and efficiency in the business of Refereeing.
- Consideration should be given to the provision of an in-house video editing suite and the appointment of a qualified technician.

These FA recommendations dating back to 1991 have not been extensively actioned and the specific Referee Research and Development Department has not been established.

- The PGMOL does at times, initiate research but this is commissioned with very limited consultation with technical stakeholders and the results are not circulated as a matter of course.
- There appears to be an inconsistency in performance of Referees officiating in the PL v those in the FL.
- Most individuals work best in teams that have the opportunity to work consistently together. Referees and Assistant Referees do have this opportunity in the PL but not throughout the FL.
- There are established channels of communication between Managers and Referees but these do not formally involve Assessors.
- There appears to be ambiguity as to aspects concerning the Technical Area (TA):
 - Perceived difference in information to Clubs/Managers and Match Officials – rectified August 2008.
 - It is accepted that any ‘public berating’ of Officials is unacceptable, with perpetrators being sent from the Technical Area.
 - It is, however, surely reasonable that minor, frustrations and dissensions, of decisions should be consistently managed by the Forth Official e.g. quiet word.
 - PL, FL and Conference can have different consequences for Technical Area personnel breaching regulations.
 - Inconsistent management of the TA by the Forth Official (some experienced and some novice).
 - Perceived inconsistencies in FA charges regarding the Technical Area.



5.2.3 Referee Performance

5.2.3.1 Overall

It would be useful initially to establish the terms to be used in this section.

- **'Competences'**: In most industries in UK and Europe specific competences have been identified. These are standards for doing a specific job in a specific industry. Specific competences have been identified as criteria and codified over the years in all trades and increasingly in the professions. Within football for example there are specific written competences for coaches, medics, and even crowd safety stewards. Competences are usually classified as criteria under specific headings and also arranged with a view to assessing such competences - for example the competences that driving test examiners use to assess driving test candidates. Thus there may be a number of specific criteria to assess under each competence. It is also likely that each criteria will have a maximum number of marks assigned thus providing weighting for each criteria. Competences in the work place are referred to as **Vocational Competences (VC's)**.
- Where a number of Vocational Competences are grouped together they are known as **National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's)**.
- Knowledge is assumed to underpin the display of competences.
- **Quality Control (QC)** involves the assessment, appraisal and inspection of VC's. Quality Control is normally provided by a combination of **Internal Assessment (IA) and External Verification (EV)**.
- Most Industries in the UK now have such systems. For example in education there are specific written criteria for teachers to achieve when training to become teachers and to continue to meet whilst teaching. Teachers are then subject to internal assessment and external verification via OFFSTED. The performance of schools and their teachers are published publically on an annual basis. Similar processes exist in key public services like health, social services, police, and transport and are used widely in the private sector. As a very simple example - there are clear competences that one has to meet to pass one's driving test or to become an electrician, doctor or football coach.

There is no set of criteria, no national standards and no list of specific competences to become a Referee in Professional Football and the case will be made below that the lack of such a system is a weakness of the current support given to refereeing in Professional Football.



5.2.3.2 Competences

- There is some agreement that the key competences in Professional Refereeing revolve around decision-making but nevertheless this is not reflected in the development of a set of key competences for the industry.
- In the absence of a set of VC's for the industry the PGMOL document 'GUIDELINES for PGMOL Referee Assessors for the 2008/09 Season is the nearest to a set of industry guidelines. Under the title 'Useful guidelines/reference points for Referees' there is a list of over 50 criteria, organised under only two headings and with no weighting attached to any of the 50 + criteria. Over 25% of the criteria do not refer to decision-making e.g.
 - "Excellent physical shape, running well from start to finish."
 - "Able to sprint over short and longer distances."
 - "Close to play but not interfering or getting hit unnecessarily by the ball."
 - "Flexible line of patrol."
 - "Thoughtful viewing angles to enhance recognition of foul play."
 - "Good positions for set play situations."
 - "Anticipation of play and reading of the game."
 - "Ball and play between the Referee and Assistant Referee whenever possible."
 - "Recognises all Assistants' signals and reacts promptly and appropriately."
 - "Good eye contact technique with the Assistant Referees."
 - "Good sharing of authority within the team (fouls in the Assistant's vicinity)."
 - "Correct acknowledgement of signals without stopping play in advantageous situations."
- To further underline the argument that the whole issue of competences have not been addressed the PGMOL in the same document as listed above adds:

'These points are not exhaustive but should help the Assessor identify a Referee's qualities and aspects for development/improvement.'

This in effect allows the Assessor, on his own whim, to add additional competences.

- In recent years the concept of 'Key Incidents' has been introduced (without consultation).
- The concept of focussing on the competences of Professional Match Officials around their ability to make effective Key Decisions is a step in the right direction but:
 - The 'Key Incident' concept is an addition onto an existing vague collection of requirement skills: it is additional to the list provided by PGMOL and augmented by Assessors.
 - The list of 'Key Incidents' has not been developed as a result of exhaustive research or consultation with key stakeholders.



- Even though there has been no consultation with the key stakeholders as to the development of a set of competences for Refereeing in Professional Football, PGMOL through the excellent material it has developed to advise Referees on how to deal with the 'Key Incidents' etc. has the basis for vocational competences.
- Critically, therefore, there would not appear to be agreement of the nature of the Key Decisions:
 - What are the most common Key Decisions?
 - Where on the field do they occur?
 - When during the game do they occur?
 - With whom do the most common Key Decisions occur? (i.e. Players in which positions?)
- It is a weakness in the industry that there is insufficient research into these questions.
- It is also a weakness that the research commissioned by the PGMOL into the effectiveness of decisions by Assistant Referees is not extensively applied to Referee decision-making.
- It is reasonable to assume therefore that there is no definitive list of Vocational Competences for Professional Referees: the football industry has agreed competences for a whole range of its occupations but specifically not related to 'What are the characteristics of a good Professional Referee?'
- The PGMOL have devised and published a document: 'Fourth Official Standard Expectations' which succinctly outlines 12 expectations as criteria under 4 major headings which clearly represent Vocational Competences for Fourth Officials. No such prescribed expectations are however provided for Referees.
- The argument may be offered that 'you can't specify exactly the expectations of a Referee. The Referees have to think on their feet and solve and manage problems.'

Establishing a set of VC's is not a panacea but it would provide the core competences – which would include key decisions, problem solving, man management etc. Other industries and other professions in much more demanding circumstances have been able to define, categorise and list clearly expected competences for that job. There are for example clear competences that one has to meet to pass one's driving test and the airline pilot thankfully does simulated practice before their first solo flight.



5.2.3.3 Selection & Training

- Without a clear simple set of criteria for industry agreed Vocational Competences, the process of selection and training of Professional Referees is more difficult as there are no clear VC's on which the learner and those training the learner can focus.
- Without a Talent Identification Strategy for Professional Football Referees those assessing Referees at lower levels are doing so only to meet their perceived needs at local levels – without the benefit of any national expectations.
- There appears to be no general agreement that competences lie at the heart of Professional Referee training: the relationship between knowledge and competences does not appear to be fully accepted in the training of Referees for the Professional Game.
- As there is no general agreement of the role of competences there isn't general agreement of the key competence of decision-making.
- If one accepts that the key competence of Refereeing is decision-making then it would be logical to organise focus upon:
 - Those Referees with the potential for effective decision-making.
 - Training those selected to improve their decision-making.
- If one accepts the premise that decision-making is the key competence and that the Professional Game needs to identify and train those individuals with the potential to officiate at the Professional level then it is an illogical weakness that the process is not open to anyone who has this potential.
- It is unreasonable that this process does not incorporate ex Professional Players who – as part of their daily training – are required to make decisions regarding the Laws of the Game.
- There will always be instances of Professional Players not displaying full knowledge of the Laws of the Game but effective Professional Footballers cannot achieve such competences without not only the knowledge of the Laws but clear decision-making skills. (The PFA are keen that all apprentice Professionals be required to take not only level 2 Coaching but also a commensurate level of qualifications regarding Refereeing and the Laws of the Game. Additionally, apply CPD for all Professional Players at the start of the season in particular with regard to any Law changes.)
- The concept of 'Accredited Prior Learning' is commonly accepted in many industries where prior experience is accepted for entrance into academic and vocational programmes. Professional Footballers train their decision-making skills daily, yet in the absence of a set of industry competences for Refereeing, these skills are not recognised in the identification of potential Referees for the Professional Game. (Apprentices who do not make the grade or Professionals prematurely injured should be encouraged to look at Refereeing as an alternative profession and where appropriate be fast-tracked.)



5.2.3.4 Selection: talent identification

- In all professions the key test for selection is whether the prospective candidate meets the requirements for the job.
- With regard to the selection of Referees for Professional Football in the absence of clear set of Vocational Competences potential candidates are required to submit themselves to a series of stages and processes before they can be considered for the elite levels. To apply the same logic for Players would result in the very best young Players compelled to play a required number of Under 17, Under 19 and Reserve games before they could be considered for selection for the Club first team.
- The emphasis in selection and promotion is not towards meeting industry based standards of competence but progressing through a series of obligatory grades – irrespective of the potential of the individual Referee. In an age of individual learning plans there is little evidence of tailored learning plans for potential Professional Referees, where critical weaknesses can be addressed through practice in non-performance situations.
- Within Refereeing there are, for example, 10 grades/levels in descending order from 10 to 1. The reality is that this system, which delays and impedes the progress of potentially gifted Referees, retains a pool of Referees in the non-Professional Game. It seems designed to meet the needs of the non-Professional 'National Game' where there is a shortage of Referees.
- The needs for talent identification for Professional Referees are different than the needs of the non-Professional Game. The nature of recreational football (excluding Professional and semi-Professional Football) has changed dramatically in the last 20 years. FA participation figures show that there are considerably more participants in children's mini-soccer and adult 5-a-side football than there is in adult 11-a-side football. The numbers playing Saturday 11-a-side football are now dwarfed by the numbers playing small sided football and Sunday recreational football. There is no longer therefore a seamless line between recreational and Professional Football. The majority of recreational football is now small sided football: the needs of the recreational and Professional Games for Referees are radically different.
- The 10 Referee grades include review by local Assessors and at the critical 3/4 level the process requires the Referee to be selected and 'be successful' at an oral interview.



- It is therefore a weakness that whilst there is assessment and oral interviews there is no objective test of competency for potential Referees in the Professional Game against an agreed set of competences. There is no apprenticeship to learn specific skills but rather a system of fixed period indenture which is not focussed upon identifying and progressing potentially talented Referees for the Professional Game.
- The identification of talented, potential Referees involves limited use of techniques common in football or other sports e.g. personality testing, profiling, reaction time, dynamic visual acuity etc.
- The identification and development of talented Referees is not as effective or quick as the identification of talented Players, Coaches or Managers.

5.2.3.5 Training

- Critically without a set of agreed VC's aspiring Referees for the Professional Game do not have clear objectives to focus upon: There is no 'test' to become a Professional Referee and there are no specific criteria to aim for. It is therefore difficult to develop vocational training if there are no specific vocational competences.
- There is a system of Government recognised vocational qualifications for Coaches from Level 1 to 5. There are Nationally recognised vocational qualifications for Referees but only available in football for Levels 1 and 2 (L1CSOF & L2CSOF *see Box) – some way short of the competences required for Professional Football, which would require a Level 3 or 4 of National Vocational Qualification. Nevertheless the awards at Level 1 and 2 whilst developed in conjunction with The FA have not been promoted by the Refereeing establishment. Whilst Vocational Qualifications on the government's qualifications framework (<http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk>) have been utilised to add to FA and UEFA Coaching qualifications in Coaching and medicine, Refereeing training has not taken these opportunities. The English Cricket Board in conjunction with the Association of Cricket Officials has, however, taken the opportunity to use Vocational Qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework in the training and assessment of Umpires.



Example: Referee Vocational Qualification

An Example of Vocational Qualification available for use in football at Level 2 but not currently used in Referee Training QCA Qualification Accreditation Number: 1st4sport Level 2 Certificate for Sports Officials: 500/2354/8
Officiating Football pathway Unit 6: D/501/0988

The L2CSOF is awarded by **1st4sport Qualifications** and has been developed in partnership with The Football Association's (The FA) Referees' Department. Officiating Football is a pathway unit of the 1st4sport Level 2 Certificate for Sports Officials and is accredited at Level 2 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Structure, Delivery and Assessment of the L2CSOF Qualification Structure

It is recommended that a delivery programme for the L2CSOF should include a minimum of 68 notional guided learning hours.

The qualification is composed of the following six units:

- Unit 1 Develop and maintain own ability to apply the rules/Laws within the spirit of the sport/activity (QCA No: F/501/0983)
- Unit 2 Contribute to the health and safety, safety and protection of participants and others (QCA No: J/501/0984)
- Unit 3 Establish and maintain effective working relationships (QCA No: L/501/0985)
- Unit 4 Apply rules/Laws during sport/activity (QCA No: R/501/0986)
- Unit 5 Handle and communicate information in sports officiating (QCA No: Y/501/0987)
- Unit 6 Officiating football (QCA No: D/510/0988)

Assessment: Internal assessment comprises:

- A written examination on the Laws of Association Football
- An observed assessment of the candidate's Refereeing of at least three open-age (11 v 11) football matches to the required standard, by an appropriately qualified Assessor.

Independent assessment comprises:

An assessment of the candidate's portfolio of evidence, which must include:

- a log of 20 open-age (11 v 11) matches
- oral questioning covering all three units of the qualification.



- Nevertheless the basic educational priorities of the transfer of training to performance involve practising those aspects as required in the performance environment. Critically, Referees do not practice their decision-making competences. It seems, the only practice Referees have training their key decision-making competences – is when they perform.
- If Players spend hours each week practising their decision-making in simulated game situations then it is clearly a weakness Referees do not have the same opportunity.
- The concept of the need for 10,000 hours of training outlined in the Research section of this paper has been accepted as essential to develop elite sportspeople. Assuming decision-making is the key competence the 10,000 hour concept of practice is not part of Refereeing training.
- In any training situation there should always be a place for work experience but the vast majority of Refereeing training with regard to decision-making is based around “on the job” training without the hours of required practice. It is training by trial and error in the performance environment, instead of trial and success.
- Full time training is not available to the Referees on the Football League National List.
- Almost all games in the Premier League and Football League are now filmed on video and yet with regard to the Football League these videos are used to a limited degree in Referee training for National List Referees.

There is also a clear need to use the results from the commendable research on the performance of Assistant Referees to influence talent identification and training for Assistant Referees.



5.2.3.6 Continuous Professional Development

- Whilst there is an emphasis on Referee fitness the Professional Development of Professional Match Officials seems not to include practice in decision-making.
- Has limited rather than extensive development of Mental Training or Dynamic Visual Acuity used now for elite sports people which includes training with regard to Eye Tracking, Peripheral Vision, Fusion Flexibility and Stamina (the ability to keep both eyes working together even under high speed, physically stressful situations) Depth Perception and Visualization.
- Whilst there are professional associations in Professional Football for Players, Coaches, Managers, Club Administrators and Sports Medics there is no association specifically and exclusively for Referees working in Professional Football. Their only voice as Professional Referees appears to be via their employers, the PGMOL.

5.2.3.7 Quality Control

- Current Quality Control systems in most industries involve the following processes:
 - A set of industry agreed competences.
 - An Internal Assessment Process involving:
 - Assessment against industry agreed standards by trained Assessors.
 - In-house requirements.
 - An External Verification Process
 - A robust, external review of the Internal Assessment Procedure by External Assessors using the fullest range of assessment tools available.
 - Identification of strengths and weaknesses in relation to the agreed set of competences.
 - The Publication of results of assessment.
 - A Complaints Procedure.
- Such systems operate in Education and Health but not in the Quality Control of Referees in that:
 - There are no agreed industry Vocational Competences.
 - There is a system of assessment but not against agreed competences.
 - All Assessors must be ex-Referees (some cases ex-Assistant Referees) and there is not a transparent system of external verification of the Assessors.
 - Assessors have limited training.
 - In the absence of a set of competences, the identification of strengths and weaknesses by the Assessors can be at their own choice: they can choose any aspect to highlight.
 - Assessors are not mandated to view a video of the game before providing their assessment except for Key Incidents that are highlighted by the Assessor.



With the availability of video for every PL and FL game it is recommended that video match analysis is extensively used in Referee assessment.

- The results of the assessment are not made public or indeed shared fully with key stakeholders e.g. Players and Managers.
- Without an effective Quality Control System the performance review process becomes merely self-fulfilling and not robust as further witnessed by these examples:
 - From recent information received from PGMOL, in 160 PL games the Assessors had deemed the Referee to have made an error in a Key Incident on 16 occasions.
 - From approximately 670 FL games (30th Nov 2008) there have only been 16 instances where the Assessor has indicated that the Referee has made a Key Incident error.
- The existing Quality Control System also does not provide effective feedback. In the absence of a set of agreed competences to use as standard assessment criteria and the lack of effective training, Assessors are providing generous cosmetic assessments of Referees' performance. This not only produces unreliable data (e.g. the Assessors' Merit Table in which genuine good Referees could go unnoticed) but also denies Referees important feedback on the performance.
- Whilst there are no performance standards and clear indications as to how Referees in the Professional game can gain and acquire marks as a result of their performance there are clear forfeits if (in the opinion of the Assessor) Referees make the wrong decision at what is described as a Key Decision. Thus whilst Referees know how they can lose, at least, 10 marks for each error on 'Key Decisions' there is no clear indication as to how they can gain marks.
- The "Forfeit" system is both unfair and ineffective :
 - A Referee may make the correct decision 20 times in a game but make two incorrect key decisions and forfeit, at least, 20 marks.
 - The Assessor decides to ignore the error or deem it not to be a Key Incident error to ensure the Referee's score stays above 59%.



- The threshold of 59% is an important one for Referees as :
 - The PGMOL deems this to be a standard performance which falls below the expectations at this level.
 - A mark below 60% can jeopardise a Referee's potential appointments and retention as a Select or National List Referee.
 - A score of below 60% denies the Referee any bonus payment.
- Whilst the Assessor's marks are kept private the Working Party understands that Assessors are reluctant to mark below 60 as this deems the performance to be less than expected. The LMA and PFA are aware that for example in a sample mentioned above of over 650 recent games in the Football League; Assessors marked only 2.4% of Referee performances at below 60%. These assessment marks do not correspond to a normal distribution of marks and it is suggested that is because of an ineffective Quality Control System involving no set of agreed competences and the arbitrary imposition of the forfeit system.
- The lack of a transparent External Verification Process indeed highlights the need for this paper. Without a robust review system it is likely that systems and processes do not have the opportunity – on a regular basis – to review themselves. This need has been identified in the UK with the establishment of a number of “watchdogs” for both the public and private sector e.g. OFSTED, The Health Commission, and OFFCOM etc.
- There is also no effective complaints service regarding Quality Control. The PGMOL in effect provide a service for Professional Football – that of the provision of talent spotted, effectively trained Referees subject to a robust Quality Control System. There is however limited respect shown to the complaints Managers lodge in respect of the Referee's performance or the Assessors review.
Managers can wait weeks to receive a reply in connection with a complaint they have made. The Working Party is aware that Managers and Players are dissatisfied that no further investigation is initiated when the Assessor's view supports the Referee after the Manager has indicated a Key Incident error.
- August to December 2008, of 165 requests made by Football League Managers for Assessor's Key Incident reports, 32 Assessors felt that the Referee had made an error. Of the remaining 133, no further feedback was received.



- The Delegate System is an attempt to initiate an External Verification Process:
 - The Delegate System does not apply in the Football League where there is an Assessor only.
 - Delegates have limited training and there are no agreed competencies for the Delegates to assess.

The current Assessor system is not supporting Referees and is discourteous to Players, Managers, Referees, Fans and the Laws of the Game. 'Halo' marking by Assessors denies Referees effective assessment of their strengths and weaknesses and totally questions the accuracy, validity and accountability of the current Assessor system including Assessor reports and merit tables. With the availability of video it would also call into question whether every game needs to be attended by an Assessor in person.

5.2.3.8 Employment

- Whilst a small number of approximately 20 Referees in the Select Group, are "Professional" in that they receive a salary to allow them to dedicate their working life to Refereeing, this group are not exclusively in full-time employment in Professional Refereeing in that a number are allowed to continue in their own occupations e.g. policemen and those with their own business.
- The system of Professional Referees does not impinge to any large extent into the Football League where Professional Games are controlled by part-time Officials often earning as little as £100 per game.
- The Select Group of Referees is employed by PGMOL but the selection of Referees is only open to Referees within the system in England. Referees at a similar level from elsewhere in the UK and EU are unable to apply for employment opportunities restricted only to Referees within the English system. Without an open and transparent 'test' of competence such practice may be considered to be in breach of UK and EU Employment Law.





06

ANALYSIS





6.0 ANALYSIS

6.1 LAWS OF THE GAME

- There is ambiguity and lack of consistency in the decision-making concerning the following decisions:
 - Offside.
 - 'Deliberate' hand ball.
- Certain offences result in disproportional sanctions e.g. the Penalty Area Triple Jeopardy.
- There is evidence that the time-keeping of games is not objective and does not reflect the nature of the game.
- There is a deep rooted resistance to innovation and change to discover solutions to relatively simple problems e.g. goal line technology and other issues easily solved by video replays.

6.2 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS

- Players and Managers are stakeholders in Professional Football: they are also Professional colleagues of Referees but channels of communication between Players, Managers and the PGMOL Board need to be improved. Overall the same would apply to the ongoing consultative process for stakeholders to provide an effective input into current practices and possible changes to the Laws of the Game.
- The FA recommendation from 1991 to establish a dedicated Research Unit to support Referees has not been specifically actioned and there is no apparent Strategic Research and Development Plan for Referees.
- There appears to be inconsistencies in the performance of Select Group and National List Referees in FL games.
- There is only a limited, pro-active development strategy to research and review potential improvements.
- There is ambiguity as to aspects concerning the Technical Area.

There is a lack of consultation and collaboration afforded to Players and Managers which does not maximise the use of their wealth of experience and expertise.



6.3 REFEREE PERFORMANCE

6.3.1 Competences

- There has been no consultation with key stakeholders to develop a set of competences for Professional Football Refereeing.
- There has been no research on the nature of the Key Decisions as part of the competences required to be a Professional Football Referee.
- The current criteria are vague and neither evidence-based nor specific. There are no sets of criteria, no national standards and no list of specific competences required as a Referee in Professional Football.
- Although deemed important, decision-making is not recognised as the core competence in Referee performance.
- As a result of improved Player and match analysis techniques there are now clear evidence based performance criteria for Players: there are for example now objective bench marks available for each playing position. There is now available a much greater range of objective tools to assess a Player's performance and yet whilst there is much greater development of objective assessment of Player competences there has been no corresponding development in objective performance assessment for Professional Football Referees.



6.3.2 Selection: Talent Identification

- The Talent Identification Strategy for Professional Football Refereeing does not:
 - Identify potential Professional Football Referees at an early age.
 - Progress quickly enough, potentially talented Referees.
 - Include the consistent use of available selection tools.
 - Provide an open and transparent system of access including a test of competence against industry agreed standards.
 - Recognise as Accredited Prior Learning the experiences of Professional Football Players.

The system of assessment, appointment and promotion of Referees are not based on competences and are not transparent, therefore from time to time flaws and perceived bias can appear to be evident.

A more open, effective, transparent system of talent identification is clearly required.

6.3.3 Training

- The Training Programme for Professional Football Refereeing does not include training to meet the requirements of a set of agreed competences agreed by the industry.
- The Training Programme does not involve training for Vocational Qualifications as recognised on the Government's National Framework of Qualifications although the opportunity exists to develop them. Generic Vocational Competences have been established in the field of Sports Officiating and are approved by Skills Active the Government's Sector Skill Council for the Sport and Leisure Industry. These have been developed for football by The FA (in conjunction with an Awarding Body) at level 2 but then not promoted or utilised by the existing Referee training establishment. This appears to be both a weakness and is illogical, especially as there is considerable public funding to support these initiatives.



- Furthermore, there is a feeling that the current system of training for Match Officials does not include the following aspects:
 - Recognition of the 10,000 hours practice concept.
 - Appropriate training in decision-making outside of match performance situations: there is a high emphasis on knowledge of the Laws of the Game and fitness but limited opportunity to develop critical decision-making skills in simulated match conditions. Players every week practice certain key attacking and defending situations repeatedly (e.g. Set plays, crosses, aerial challenges, play in the final third, turning, preventing opponents turn etc.) These are practised under adherence to the Laws as to do otherwise would not provide realism. If Professional Players practise in these simulated environments on a regular basis, it is logical and essential that Referees devote the same amount of time to practising their Professional decision-making skills.
 - Extensive use of Dynamic Visual Acuity Training and current Psychological Mental Training.
 - The extensive involvement of professional educationalists and trainers as well as former Players and Managers.
 - The establishment of a Research Unit and full use of video analysis techniques for the FL and PL.
 - Comprehensive training for Assistant Referees.

If a Player requires practice in a specific skill or competence, specific training (e.g. drills, practices and conditioned games) is organised for him to improve this weakness. Hours of practical training practice are devoted to improving this skill.

For the Referee the only practical practice they may have in the competence they need to improve may be the next time they Referee. They may wait weeks for the opportunities to occur in games which could have been re-created for them to practice in training.

The perceived limited training and practice for Professional Referees – and the reliance on match situations for practice in decision-making skills – could be considered discourteous to the Laws of the Game, the Players, Managers, Fans and the Referees' own Professional development.



6.3.4 Quality Control

- The Quality Control System for Professional Refereeing does not include the following aspects:
 - Assessment against a set of industry agreed competences.
 - A full-time occupation for Assessors.
 - An Independent External Verification System.
 - A Complaints Service.
 - Comprehensive training for Assessors.
 - Sharing the results of quality control with stakeholders.
 - Include obligatory video review as part of the system.
 - Demonstrate a full use of the range of assessment marks.
- The Quality Control System for Professional Refereeing does not provide a consistent indication of their strengths and weaknesses or how Referees can attain marks but does include a forfeit system if – in the opinion of the Assessor – the Referee has made an error in a Key Incident.
- In the current system and in the absence of a set of competences for Professional Football Refereeing, the Quality Control System does not provide sufficient feedback into the 'loop' that includes research, talent identification and training.

The existing Quality Control System appears to provide the facade of Quality Control without the outcomes associated with effective Quality Control Systems.

6.3.5 Employment

- Currently there is no long-term Career Pathway in the profession of Refereeing Professional Football.
- Employment for Professional Referees is restricted mainly to the Premier League and then only to a maximum of 2 year contracts.
- Employment as a Professional Referee may involve other jobs: it may be paid but Professional Refereeing is not exclusively a full-time occupation.
- Current entrance requirements may breach EU employment Law as entrance to employment in England has no objective assessment test and is open only to those products of the English Refereeing system.
- There are no full-time opportunities for Assessors.





07

DEDUCTIONS





7.0 DEDUCTIONS

7.1 LAWS OF THE GAME

In recognising the difficulties in affecting the opinions of the International Board in relation to Law changes, the LMA and PFA would like the opportunity to assist The FA in this process, in particular with regard to interpretation and potential change for example:

- The Offside Law.
- 'Deliberate' Handball.
- The Penalty Area Triple Jeopardy.
- Time-Keeping.

With regard to the Technical Area there is a need for clarification e.g. Minor cases of dissent should result in a warning from the Fourth Official, stating that further indiscretion will result in the Referee being informed and the perpetrator being sent from the TA (As previously practised).

Fourth Officials should not 'micro-manage' and be able to distinguish between shows of frustration and actions of dissent.

- The LMA and PFA would welcome the opportunity to support pilot initiatives involving innovation and change to discover solutions to relatively simple problems e.g. goal line technology and use of technology regarding other decision-making situations.



7.2

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS

- Previous FA recommendations, developed after considerable research and consultation should be actioned with regard to a Dedicated Research Unit.
- The Technical Committee to have more responsibility for any proposed amendments to the Laws of the Game.
- There is an ongoing need for the Technical Committee to review and clarify areas of ambiguity regarding the Technical Area.
- There is a need to review the employment of the Select Group of Referees in the FL and the role of Match Officials working in teams in the FL.
- Overall there is a need within the industry to ensure the system provides ongoing consultative processes to ensure the input of stakeholders.



7.3 REFEREE PERFORMANCE

7.3.1 Competences

- There is a clear need for dedicated research into the demands of Professional Football Refereeing. The modern Professional Game has different needs and – as identified by The FA in 1991 – a Dedicated Research Unit is required.
- A set of evidence-based competences needs to be agreed by all the stakeholders involved in Professional Football - Players, Managers, Referees, Employers.
- Such competences - accepted as Industry Standards – should be the basis for talent identification, assessment, training and quality control of Professional Football Referees.

7.3.2 Talent Identification

- Without compromising the needs of the non-Professional Game, Referees for Professional football need to be talent spotted earlier, quicker and more effectively. The emphasis needs to focus on identifying talent and not selection. The process needs to be transparent, competence based and pro-active based on objectivity for the needs of Professional Football and not through a re-active process of selection and interviews.
- The LMA and PFA are happy to commit themselves to work with The FA to develop Refereeing for the non-Professional Game but The FA needs to accept the urgent need to provide a more transparent, competence based effective system to identify and promote potentially talented Referees for the Professional Game.
- The full use of Video Analysis needs to be used to talent spot potential Professional Match Officials before entry on to the National List.



7.3.3 Training

- Training of Professional Referees needs to utilise the benefits of a Dedicated Research Unit (including video analysis of all PL and FL games) and utilise the expertise of professional educators (including ex Referees, Players, Managers, Coaches).
- The concept of 10,000 hours practice needs to be accepted and practice needs to involve specificity and repetition. Players train in match situations in simulated practice precisely because it is un-professional to rely upon match situations to perfect decision-making skills. Furthermore it is necessary to practice certain skills as match conditions may not provide sufficient occurrences to practice. Thus the Professional Referee needs to be provided with much more opportunity for specific repetitive practice of key events.
- Once a set of Competences for Professional Refereeing has been established there is the opportunity to develop Vocational Qualifications in Sports Officiating in the context of football as available on the National Qualifications framework. Training of Referees needs to involve consistent use of all the most relevant forms of training available e.g. Dynamic Visual Acuity Training, Mental Training, Visualisation Techniques etc.

7.3.4 Continuous Professional Development

- There is a need for an organised forum and employee association representing Professional football Referees.
- Professional training needs to be made available to a larger group of Professional Referees.



7.3.5 Quality Control

- The Quality Control System needs to be more robust and demonstrate the outcomes expected of Quality Control. The Quality Control System needs to meet the following needs:
 - Assessment against a set of industry agreed competences.
 - Comprehensive training and a full-time occupation for Assessors.
 - An Independent External Verification System.
 - An effective Complaints Service for Clubs and Managers (Referees already have a system in place to appeal against Assessors' marks).
 - Demonstration of a full use of the range of assessment marks.
 - The results of Quality Control to be shared with stakeholders.
- Quality Control needs to be part of the system that includes research, talent identification, training and continuous Professional development. Results of Quality Control need to be effectively fed back into the system.
- The Quality Control System needs to clearly support the development of a set of competences and then these competences form the basis of the Quality Control System.
- With the widespread use of video there would appear to be no compulsory requirement for every game to be attended by an Assessor. Every Referee Performance needs to be subject to Quality Control but this could be achieved more efficiently through the use of a team of highly skilled and experienced individuals analysing games on video.



7.3.6 Employment

- To attract and retain the very best potential Professional Referees, there needs to be a longer defined Career Pathway in Professional Refereeing.
- The Career Pathway in Professional Refereeing needs to involve individuals committed exclusively to Professional Refereeing.
- English football attracts some of the world's leading Players, Coaches and Managers and there could be value in the use of leading Referees from other UK and EU countries and vice versa.
- The emphasis should be upon providing employment opportunities to provide the best Professional Refereeing System in world football.



08

RECOMMENDATIONS





8.0

RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1

EXISTING PRACTICES RECOMMENDED TO BE MAINTAINED

- The PGMOL to employ Match Officials and to make match appointments in the PL and FL from a pool of Licensed Professional Football Referees based on the outcomes of the revised Quality Control System. The number of Licensed Professional Referees available will need to considerably exceed the number of opportunities for appointment.

8.2

EXISTING PRACTICES RECOMMENDED TO BE IMPROVED AND ENHANCED

8.2.1 Laws of the Game and Administrative Processes

The FA to re-define the workings of the Professional Football Technical Review Committee (PGMO Technical Committee) responsible for:

- Recommending to the Professional Game Board, proposed rule changes to submit to the International Board.
- Conducting a new, thorough, game-wide study on the use of goal line technology to review previous rejected proposals and the reasons for the rejection in order to produce a compelling case for its introduction.
- Clarification of any ambiguity of the Laws of the Game relative to Professional Football in England e.g. Regarding the Technical Area, the Working Party is aware that the International Board are to consider permitting one person to convey tactical information and then be allowed to remain in the TA without being required to return to the bench area. This is already being practiced by some Fourth Officials and is clearly a commonsense approach, which we hope will be supported by The FA at the next International Board (IFAB) meeting.
- Pro-active piloting of potential improvements and solutions including, but not limited to, Referees and Assistant Referees working in teams in the FL, Match Officials only working in designated leagues, and use of video technology where appropriate.
- The Professional Football Technical Review Committee should include representatives of The FA, PL, FL, PFA, LMA and Professional Referees Association as the combined wealth of knowledge and experience can help improve the game as a whole.



8.2.2 Referee Performance

- Licensed Professional Referees to be encouraged to establish their own Association exclusively for Professional Referees and be recognised by the Football Authorities as the Professional body acting on behalf of all Professional Referees in England.
- PGMOL to appoint Licensed Professional Referees (see below) once the system of licensing is established.
- Professional contracts provided to Licensed Professional Referees and to be extended to the FL.
- Professional contracts to be provided to Referee Academy Staff Tutor/Assessors.
- A new, more effective system to be established in relation to selection, training and assessment for Professional Referees.

8.2.2.1 Employment

It is recommended that:

- There should be Professional contracts for Licensed Professional Referees.
- A Career Pathway to be presented for full-time Professional Referees.
- All games in the Premier League and Football League should be Refereed by Licensed Professional Referees.
- Licensed Professional Referees are required to devote their time exclusively to Professional Referee performance and training.
- All existing Match Officials on the Select Group should be accredited automatically as Licensed Professional Referees.
- Referee Academy Staff Tutor Assessors to be employed on a full-time basis.



8.3

NEW PRACTICES RECOMMENDED TO BE INITIATED

- A Referee Academy to be established preferably, but not necessarily at the National Football Centre to meet the needs of Professional Football Refereeing with the responsibilities for research, talent identification, training, continuous professional development and quality control for Refereeing. This Institution would be established with its sole purpose to support Professional Football Refereeing in England. The Referee Academy to be funded by - The FA, PL, FL and public funding through the provision of vocational qualifications as part of the Government's National Qualifications Framework.
- The FA, PL and FL together with the LMA, PFA and Professional Referees Association to provide the members of the Board of the Referee Academy.

The Referee Academy Board to appoint a Director of Professional Referee Training to include all the responsibilities of research, talent identification, training, continuous professional development and quality control concerning Professional Football Referees. The Director of Professional Referee Training (DPRT) should report to the Board of the Referee Academy and also sit on the PGMOL.

The DPRT to establish and chair a Working Party of technical stakeholders and industry experts as required in the following areas:

- Research
- Development of Competences
- Talent Identification
- Training
- Continuous Professional Development
- Quality Control

Each Working Party to include, where appropriate, representatives of The FA, PL, FL, PFA, LMA and the Professional Referees Association. For ease of administration working parties may combine their functions as required.



Under the direction of the DPRT the Working Parties to achieve, the following outcomes:

8.3.1 Research Working Party

- To identify and archive all previous and current research as it is applicable to the field of Professional Football Refereeing.
- To establish a Research Unit and research protocols to establish and monitor the key needs of Professional Refereeing.
- To assist in the development of a set of competences for Professional Refereeing.

8.3.2 Development of Competences Working Party

- To develop a set of competences for the designation of 'Licensed Professional Football Referee.'
- To develop the competences into Vocational Awards approved by Skills Active, the Sector Skills Council for Sport and Leisure.

8.3.3 Talent Identification Working Party

To develop a Strategic Talent Identification Plan for the identification of Licensed Professional Referees to include the following factors:

- Assessment against the agreed competences using wherever available, video analysis.
- Accredited prior learning for former Professional Players and Referees from other UK and EU countries.



8.3.4 Training Working Party:

- To provide, through the Referee Academy, training to meet the required competences with individual assessment plans and learning pathways for candidates to achieve Licensed Referee status.
- To investigate the possibilities of developing Vocational Qualifications as part of the National Framework of Qualifications as part of this process (*).
- The training provided would include substantial periods of residential study at the National Football Centre coupled with work experience as Referees: public funding would be accessed to support this training and assessment.
- The training would place emphasis upon specificity and repetition in training and regular simulated match practice situations at the NFC (using young Professionals from Midlands Clubs as subjects). Training situations would be created to replicate game situations and subsequent repetitive practice provided e.g. practices on crosses to replicate 100 aerial challenges, attacking play in the final third conditioned to dribbling and turning to produce 100 potential penalty award situations in one training session. Included in the training programme would be all other relevant disciplines – mental, visual etc.
- Training at the NFC to be augmented by visits to train at Professional Clubs which would include structured practice time organised to meet the needs of the Referee.
- Training to encompass all aspects of decision-making and how decision-making could be influenced by a variety of factors (e.g. Crowd, Players, big or home team, score at that, time etc).

The Training Working Party is also required to:

- Review the training for Assistant Referees.
- Outline the job descriptions and proposed terms and conditions for the appointment of a team of full-time Referee Academy Staff Tutor Assessors.

(*The opportunity exists for the PFA and LMA in conjunction with an Accredited Awarding Body which is approved by Skills Active the Sector Skills Council for the Sports and Leisure Industry to develop the Sports Officiating Awards already on the National Qualifications Framework specifically for Professional Football Refereeing. Once developed these awards could be used as the basis for the training of Professional Referees. Whilst such a move would support government vocational training policies every effort should be made in the first instance to develop such initiatives with PGMOL, The Premier League, Football League and Football Association.



8.3.5 Continuous Professional Development Working Party

- To define the requirements to maintain Licensed Referee Status.
- To provide a programme of Continued Professional Development and Assessment to meet these requirements.

8.3.6 Internal Quality Control Working Party

To develop a Quality Control System for Professional Football Refereeing that includes the following aspects:

- An appropriate number of Referee Academy Staff Tutor Assessors conducting Referee Performance Analysis (video) for every game in the PL and FL.
- The Assessment to be against the set of industry agreed competences.
- By using a smaller team of Referee Academy Staff Tutors Assessors as Quality Controllers the system will be more standardised and will be part of the loop that includes research, talent identification, training and continuous professional development. Results of Quality Control need to be effectively fed back into the system. Quality Control exclusively via video by a small team of trained, experienced Quality Controllers represents the best solution to provide accurate assessment and valuable feedback.
- The input of the PFA (experienced former Players) and the LMA (former Managers) into Quality Control should be continued in the PL and extended throughout the PL and FL.
- The Academy Staff Tutor Assessors are required to provide a written Quality Control report within a set time, of the game, to the Referee.
- Comprehensive training and a full-time occupation for Referee Academy Staff Tutor Assessors.
- The results of Quality Control need to be shared with stakeholders.
- The recommendations for an External Verification System.



8.3.7 Quality Control: External Verification

- As part of the Quality Control System an Independent External Verification system is required to verify that the Quality Control System is operating to the practices and policies agreed by this Working Party and approved by the Board of the Referee Academy.
- The External Verification System to be managed by the PGMOL but include representatives of the LMA, PFA and Professional Referees Association.
- The External Verification System should have a full-time External Verifier and an Independent Chairman.

The results of External Verification should be frequently published.



8.4 COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK SERVICE

This whole section identifies recommendations concerning Referee Performance. Lessons from football, other sports and other industries show clearly that performance can be improved as a result of improved research, talent identification, training, continuous professional development and quality control.

It is not unreasonable to assume therefore that the volume of complaints and feedback will be reduced.

Nevertheless the Working Party proposes the following complaints and feedback service:

- Each PL and FL club to receive a copy of the Quality Control Report by Referee Academy Staff Tutor/Assessor for every game within the set time of the game.
- If the Club wish to submit a complaint regarding either the performance of the Referee or the Quality Control report this must be submitted in the first instance to the DPRT within the set time of receiving the Quality Control Report.
- Regarding any other complaint on Refereeing issues, Clubs or Managers to send a submission direct to the DPRT.
- The DPRT is required to respond within a set time of receiving the complaint.
- If the Club wishes to appeal in relation to the response of the DPRT then this must be submitted to the External Verifier within the set time.
- The External Verifier is required to respond within the set time of receiving feedback.

All communication to be provided in e-mail within a password protected Extranet.



