

Handbook for Mentors

The Early Stages in a Referee's Development



Get **into** Refereeing





Introduction

Mentoring is a powerful tool in the education and development of referees at all levels. Successful referee education programmes change the behaviour and practices of referees- whether they are newly qualified or international referees. For this change to occur, learning must take place. Mentoring supports the learning process. Mentoring, quite simply means a one to one relationship supporting the development of another referee. The concept is as broad as necessary and as inclusive as possible.

Mentoring is not the same as teaching. It does not revolve around providing solutions. Mentoring means different things with individual referees at different levels. With newly qualified referees and junior referees mentoring should be about empowering and helping referees to control the learning experience for themselves. With more experienced referees it focuses on challenging their beliefs and values they have developed so that they come to a deeper understanding of their role, task and the application and interpretation of the laws.

Learning comes in many different guises. Referees sometimes cannot recognise the learning opportunities that lurk behind the problems, chance occurrences and run of the mill events that happen almost every day. Mentors can help a referee recognise and grasp the learning opportunities presented to them. The role of the mentor is to help make the referees learning experience less accidental.

Referee education, unlike training in the workplace that occurs mainly on the job, by necessity removes referees from their surroundings and transports them to a centralised location. This education tends to occur in isolated blocks of time, often months- if not years- apart and is, in the mind of the referee, largely unconnected. Referee instructional programmes operate under constraints of time and resources. All this produces a referee education gap. This can be described in two areas:

From much of the material that referee instructors wish to transmit is theoretical. Refereeing is a practical activity. This allows a transition for the referee to make between materials received and the referees own practical application.

Context referee instruction occurs in a training location far removed from the refereeing environment. This transmission of context can be difficult to make. Things that seemed to make complete sense in the training environment suddenly become difficult when referees attempt to implement them on the field of play.

In an attempt to bridge this gap in referee education the mentoring process needs to find a way parallel to the referee instructional programmes.

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Scope

This particular handbook focuses upon the early stages of a referee's development; to support those first few refereeing experiences.

The handbook offers a framework to facilitate bridging the gap. It includes advice for the mentor and the process of managing a mentor scheme

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The Aim of Mentoring during the early stages.

To encourage individuals fresh from the induction process into refereeing and thereby promote enjoyment, success and retention.

The Objectives of the Mentor

To support the referee; providing guidance and encouragement to develop skills and confidence to become better, eventually, in all aspects of their game and being able to deal, in a professional manner, with all those whom they come into contact with.

The Role of the Mentor

Credibility is a key factor and ideally the mentor should have referee experience, and may be an active or non active referee.

The mentor is a more experienced and trusted advisor who provides a one to one relationship supporting the development of another referee.

The mentor should be a friend, approachable and patient. The mentor should also be readily available either in person or on the telephone.

A key feature in the learning process is the creation of an open environment in which support, help and advice can be provided.

The mentor must be proactive during the early stages, taking the lead with communication and support. From the moment the mentor is assigned to the mentee, the mentor should make contact, arrange to meet, to agree the strategy for the first few games.

The mentee referee's first game is of prime importance and every effort should be made by the mentor to accompany the mentee, or make arrangements for another to attend. Encouragement should be offered en-route and before the game at the venue. Support should be offered at half time, delivered in a reassuring manner and offering advice in response to issues from the referee that may arise. Following the game, in a relaxed environment, further support should be offered.

After the match the Mentor must congratulate the mentee, "Well Done! A fine performance. You did three things particularly well, and I'd like to suggest just one area for you to think about before your next game."

The mentor then briefly expands upon all four points, and in that order, but also ensure the referee has plenty of opportunity to raise their concerns and issues.

Further games accompanying the mentee may follow, expanding the areas discussed regarding support and development. At no time should the advice be directly critical or cynical, rather, it should always be offered in an encouraging manner. The mentee should have the opportunity to question the advice offered, contributing too or questioning.

If active, the mentor should be prepared to take the mentee referee along with them to their games for experience.

The mentor should find that after around ten games the mentee will have taken the leading role, and the level of contact will reduce. This indicates the level of confidence of the new referee in the learning process.

In summary, a mentor should aim to be a friend and confidant, someone in whom the mentee can develop complete confidence and trust. The essence is for an expectation to achieve frequent communication between the two, and where appropriate they should attend the local Referees Society together.

The mentor's advice and support should not focus solely upon match day skills but should consider providing advice concerning the following:

Check List of Contents for the Early Stages

Suggested topics (This list is not exhaustive, the mentor may identify something more appropriate: to cover with the mentee referee:

Match Preparation (Kit, Ground details, Pitch Inspection)

Correspondence / Administration / How to deal with Club Officials

Discipline (Before, During, After; and Reporting Procedures)

Law queries

Practical Match Refereeing Applications

Assistant Referees and Club Assistant Referees (Co-operation)

Attending Training Seminars

Importance of joining the Referees' Association and attending the local Referees' Society

Fitness.

Check List for the Early Stages in a Referee's Development

Suggested topics (This list is not exhaustive, the mentor may identify something more appropriate: to cover with the mentee referee:

Match Preparation (Kit, Ground details, Pitch Inspection)

- Does the referee have a check list and pack their own kit in plenty of time.
- Does the referee ensure their kit is in good condition and appropriate for the conditions, particularly footwear.
- Does the referee check the venue with the home club secretary and plan the route, with an alternative should there be traffic problems.
- Does the referee leave home in plenty of time; to arrive at the ground well before the time they need to be there.
- Does the referee check mileage and calculate expenses before leaving the car. Always introducing themselves upon arrival to the club secretary / representative.
- Does the referee inspect the pitch before anything else allowing time for corrective action should it be required.
- Does the referee when inspecting the pitch, make the safety of players and their enjoyment the top priority. Allow for the age range of players in severe weather conditions.

Correspondence / Administration

- Does the referee understand that good communication is a prerequisite to enjoyment and success.
- Does the referee know the accepted protocol and have introductions to Competition Secretaries and the County F.A. secretary been made.
- Does the referee respond to correspondence within 24 hours and communicate at the very earliest opportunity.
- Does the referee keep a diary and maintain it; keeping it up to date at all times.
- Does the referee retain copies of important information, information they can make use of again.
- Does the referee make you aware of the games they are to officiate.

How to deal with Club Official

- Is the referee aggressive or demanding. The referee should be encouraged to be courteous, polite but yet firm in their requirements.
- Never expect to receive any hospitality before the game, half time or after the game.

Discipline (Before, During, After; and Reporting Procedures)

Before the Game

- Self discipline; provide advice to arrive in good time to report to the club secretary / representative and inspect the field on play.
- Is the referee aware of the competition regulations they will be working too.

During the Game

- Is the referee firm but pleasant when speaking to players; and do they appreciate the beneficial effect of Please and Thank You.
- Unless a disciplinary offence has occurred, does the referee try to manage situations without use of the notebook.
- However, should there be a need to caution or dismiss a player does the referee remain calm, in control and making sure the correct procedure is followed.
- Advise they must remember that a player cautioned a second time in the same game must be dismissed.

After the Game

- Advise the referee to check carefully all the facts they will need to be able to compile disciplinary reports. Suggest they confer with their Assistants (If any are provided and they consider appropriate) or the home club secretary should they need too.
- Suggest that as a courtesy, they inform the club secretary of reports they intend making.
- Advise that it is essential that all players cautioned or dismissed are reported to the County Football Association.
- Advise that they should always seek advice from you their mentor when compiling a report; suggest use of the Football Association "Guide to Report Writing".
- Should they be required to attend a personal hearing then advise them to seek advice from their mentor who will probably accompany them to the hearing.

Reporting Procedures

- Advise completion of misconduct report forms to arrive at the appropriate County FA Headquarters 48 hours after the game.
- Ensure they are aware of the County F.A. requirements regarding report forms; these can differ between one county and another.
- Advise that misconduct report forms should only be used when reporting player misconduct; this includes the substitutes whether used or not.
- In addition that all other reports should take the form of a letter outlining their reasons for the report (The facts.)

Law queries

- Reassure the referee not to worry if they make a mistake in law, ensure they learn from it.
- Suggest they check it out themselves by consulting the Laws of Association Football or the Interpretation
- Whether they find the answer or not, encourage them to discuss with their mentor.
- Advise that they join their local Referees' Society. They have experienced almost all problems and can give sound practical advice.

Practical Match Refereeing Applications

- Does the referee appreciate that the nearer you are to an incident, the more readily will the players accept the decision.
- Advise that they apply the law firmly and without fear.
- Reassure the referee that virtually ALL player appeals are more in hope than expectation encourage them to make their own mind up!
- Does the referee avoid hesitation in signalling a decision.
- Is the referee alert to the previous history between teams.
- Is the referee alert to the developing relationship between players.
- Does the referee have confidence in himself: the Law says the referee is right!
- Does the referee maintain a firm but friendly manner in all situations.
- Does the referee appear cool and dignified: aloof from the emotion of the match.
- Does the referee treat all players alike.

Working with Assistant Referees attached to Clubs

- Is the referee friendly; and does the referee, smile, shake their hand, TRY to memorise their first names.
- Is the referee able to remember the instructions to give Assistant Referees from the Induction Course.
- How does the referee overcome situations when assistants gave contrary advice to the referee's instruction.
- Discuss the provision of clean flags for the Assistant Referee at every game.

Offer advice on the benefits of joining the Referees' Association and attending the local Referees' Society. The following list is not exhaustive.

- Insurance
- Kit at reduced prices
- Local and National Magazines
- Guest speakers at meetings
- Meeting new colleagues
- Social events arranged
- Exchange of ideas
- Law queries and match incidents answered

Fitness

(Use the Fitness Handbook for Reference)

Provide advice on why the referee should keep fit:

- Health Benefits
- Increase Concentration and Awareness
- Enhances Positioning: Right Place-Right Time
- Improves Communication Skills
- Builds Confidence
- Maintaining contact with play
- Enjoyment

The Mentor's Skills and Qualities

Skills

Positive Communication: Active Listening, Questioning and Feedback, encourage reflective review.

Professional behaviour in all aspects of the role

Knowledge of the referees role and responsibilities

A willingness to engage in professional dialogue with referees

Observation Skills: identification of Strengths and Development areas in a referee's performance.

Coaching Skills.

Counselling Skills.

Current knowledge of the Laws of Association Football and their application.

Feedback skills: to offer advice challenging the mentee referee's development areas and offer possible options to consider whilst retaining empathy.

Action Planning and target setting: Knowledge of the Improvement Process to include the cycle of objective setting, performance, review.

Credibility as a referee.

Personal Qualities

Empathy

Patience

Objective

Trust

Empower

The Management of the Scheme

Schemes will usually have an organiser or co-ordinator with a team of mentors.

The Co-ordinator will communicate with others to decide those to be mentored and will then start the ball rolling, contacting the mentor and the person to be mentored.

The mentor will then establish contact, arranging a get-together. It is essential that the mentor takes the lead as the mentee will await contact.

As the relationship develops the lead role in promoting communication will move from the mentor to the mentee, but the mentor must ensure the process is continuous, and the Co-ordinator should be informed of any problems.

There is an expectation of feedback from the mentor to the Co-ordinator and to facilitate this, records and forms are suggested. Note there is no formal written advice to the mentee. It is considered essential that the mentor/mentee contact is maintained on an informal, friendly basis rather than a formal structured process.

The "Mentor Summary of Advice Record" that is shown on page 12 is offered to the mentor as a means of recording development of the mentee.

The "Scheme Feedback Form" that is shown on page 13 is offered as a means of communicating observations from the Mentor to the Co-ordinator.

- Information concerning particular problems and issues arising for the mentee referee can be helpful to the Instructor Training Team for use in referee and assistant referee training and education events.
- Comment upon the guidance offered by assessment appraisals can be helpful to the Assessor Training Team for use in providing feedback to the assessor.

At some point a mentee referee may outgrow the relationship with the mentor assigned and it is important that the mentor is aware that this situation may occur. The mentor should inform the co-ordinator and allow the mentee to move on for further development.

At this point the Co-ordinator will usually offer the mentor the next individual to be helped.





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