

REFEREES STANDING COMMITTEE – Main Points communicated by Chair: Carlo Graser

The FFV Referees Standing Committee has met on a number of occasions, to date, to discuss the major issues confronting our body. We have forwarded our concerns to the FFV and below are a brief summary of the issues that were raised.

Tribunal / Appeals Bodies

- There appears to be no definite policy on attacks on referees. In the past there were either 10 years or life sentences and this policy seems to have elapsed. Although it was advised that this assumption is incorrect and that two players this season [2007] had received “life bans”.
- It was felt that the powers of the tribunal should be expanded in dealing with rogue clubs, players and club officials.
- The comment was made that there should be a presence of ex-referees on the tribunals.
- The various assaults on referees greatly affect the morale of our referees, especially when the appropriate justice is not dispensed. This also affects the recruitment of new referees.
- It was of great concern that when a club/player appeals a tribunal decision, the appeals process automatically reduces the penalty. FFV is aware of this and are investigating amendments for 2008.
- It was suggested that a NRL/AFL scale of penalties with mandatory suspensions be imposed. FFV Grading System covers this.
- It was also agreed that monetary application when someone appeals should be much higher than the current figure in operation.
- It was felt that if a Club or player went through the appeals process and found not guilty, then the sentence should be reduced to nil. However, if still found guilty a bigger sentence should be given. It was advised that FFV are exploring this for 2008, but mandatory 1 week for a red card must remain.
- Certain referees are not attending tribunal hearings. Is it because of late notification to attend? This is to be brought to FFV Disciplinary Department’s attention.
- It is a concern that clubs obtain copies of referee’s reports, yet the referee does not get a copy of any report submitted by the club.
- The quality of referees’ reports, an eternal problem, needs to be addressed. Maybe there needs to be a session held at the regional general meetings. Assistance should be available for referees to complete a proper report and attend any hearing.
- Players are sometimes represented by a barrister and the questioning of the referee is not done in the appropriate manner (through the chairperson). This fact will be reiterated to FFV Disciplinary Department.
- Concern was expressed that FFV premises do not allow for the proper facilities to conduct hearings. It was advised that, as from next year, the tribunal hearings will be held away from FFV premises.

Elite Referees – FIFA / A League

- Concern was expressed about the lack of Victorian officials on the elite panels and the pathway for developing the younger and upcoming referees. This will be raised at the National RSC level.
- It was explained that there has been a Talent Officials Program (TOP) in existence for the past two years, which has identified some of our younger and better referees who will move forward in 2008.
- It was agreed that there needs to be proper training and tuition for referees at **all** levels in the form of Panel Meetings.

Physical Training of Referees

- It was recommended that no referee should be appointed to do any game next year until a fitness test was completed successfully.
- It was also recommended that the “Training Committee” be reformed to look into matters pertaining to training and fitness tests. The committee has met and will have another meeting soon.
- A query was raised on how we train our referees. Should we conduct drills which mirror what is required on match day, e.g. for assistant referee. This matter is to be referred to the Training Committee.

Inspectors

- There is a need for an increase in the numbers of inspectors. It was noted that there has been a substantial increase in the number of inspectors this year.
- It was felt that for the amount of time involved, inspectors should be paid more than they currently receive. There is a great amount of time travelling, watching the game and writing up the reports.
- There was a recommendation that inspectors should meet at least twice a year to discuss any issues pertaining to inspections.
- There should be a channelling of information from the coaches’ panel to ALL inspectors.

Development Levies

- It was revealed that certain Regions had, as at late last year, yet to pass on development levies to FFV. The referees section on FFV website shows the exact amounts that each Region has sent in as development levies.
- Chris and Ian have now ensured that all Regions have sent in levies.
- It was noted that the monies raised through the levies are starting to be used in the relevant areas.

Retention of Referees is very important

This involves:

- Providing information to them so they can improve
- Put policies in place that assist referees
- Creating particular pathways to improve referee skills such as
 - Report Writing
 - Fitness Training
 - Security measures when carrying out refereeing
- Development of Referees is a high priority
- Lacking numbers – it is important to reach a higher level of numbers of referees. Then we can “weed out” the referees that are letting us down.
- Behaviour of parents, coaches and spectators at games is pushing referees out of the game and intimidating new/young referees

There are a number of young referees are dropping out after short periods due to:

- Abuse from parents, coaches and spectators
- No mentoring of their skills so they develop with the sport
- Clubs do not support them in their development

Referees' courses

With the introduction of the Level 4 course for new referees, the Level 5 course has changed to a self teaching unit. It has been decided to review this method of educating referees in preparation for the entrance examination. It was decided that the original method of educating aspiring referees, three nights of classes, will be re-instated from 2008 onwards. This will provide a better service in teaching those applicants the laws of the game.

Assistance in Helping Referees

There needs to be a building up of the pool of coaches/assessors etc so they are sharing the load. There are too few doing too much at present.

General Issues

Passes for Finals - After a recommendation by the RSC, the FFV will allow referees to use their FFV passes to attend finals matches.

A low number of Referees are keeping fit and training consistently.

Victorian referees are the best paid in Australia.

There is a need to recognise those referees that have supplied a number of years service to the refereeing organisation.

What are some of the steps that can be taken to improve on these issues?

- Creating a cultural change to a culture that does not support poor behaviour.
- Need to publicise the poor culture of people/clubs to a wider football audience (website naming).
- Involving Clubs in the promotion of better treatment of Referees.
- Seeking assistance from the FFV to combat the poor behaviour by coaches against referees.