Devon Rugby referees Society

Guidelines on grading and advancement

Over review:
DRRS grades its members currently from L6-L14. These gradings correspond with league levels so a L6 referee would be considered competent to routinely officiate in SW1 league games and a L9 referee routinely in Devon 1 games. L5 is reserved for group referees. The group is a trailing ground for potential “RFU officials” who operate at L4 and above.

**DRRS grades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L14</td>
<td>New referee passed ELRA parts 1+2 but not completed 5 games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L12</td>
<td>All new referees starting off ELRA part 3 completed and 5 games officiated and officiating mostly 2nd and 3rd XVs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L11</td>
<td>1 year experience confidently officiating all junior 2nd XVs and some senior merit table XVs</td>
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<tr>
<td>L10</td>
<td>2 years experience can confidently officiate all 2nd XVs can expect some junior 1st XVs games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L9</td>
<td>3 years experience can confidently officiate junior 1st XVs U18 matches and senior 2nd XVs</td>
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<tr>
<td>L8</td>
<td>Is expected to confidently referee Devon and Cornwall league games some better quality Schools games</td>
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<tr>
<td>L7</td>
<td>Is expected to confidently referee most games in Devon Cornwall Somerset and routine western counties league matches</td>
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<tr>
<td>L6</td>
<td>Is expected to confidently referee all games below L5 in the southwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5</td>
<td>Group officials only</td>
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<tr>
<td>L4-L1</td>
<td>RFU (PNR) officials</td>
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</table>

**Grading guidelines**

**L12**: very much a learning grade. You will watched by an advisor or coach reasonably frequently. Their reports are for training and help. Expect to officiate mostly 2nd and 3rd XVs

**Criteria considered for advancement to L11**: Routine providing
Regular refereeing at L12, enthusiasm, attendance at laws meetings or completion of two modules of the referee development program, progression and correction of law errors and highlighted areas for improvement on assessments.

**L11**: Still a learning grade. You will be exposed to more difficult games and different situations. An advisor will still see you reasonably frequently. Expect to officiate junior 2nd XVs and some senior merit able 2nd XVs games

**Criteria considered for advancement to L10**: Routine providing
Regular refereeing at L11, attendance at laws meetings or completion of two modules of the referee development program, few law errors, enthusiasm and development of signals and communication progression and correction of highlighted improvement areas on assessments

**L10**: 3rd year of training should now be a confident and competent official in all 2nd XV games. Can expect to be offered some junior 1st XV games. You will seen by an advisor at your better games to assess competency above your grade
Criteria considered for advancement to L9: Routine providing
Regular refereeing at L10, attendance at laws meetings or completion of two modules of the referee development program, no routine law errors, improved signalling, attention to areas highlighted for improvement proactive verbal instruction simple effective pre match briefings

L9: Should be attained after three years refereeing but may be attained earlier with those referees showing high potential and rapid improvement. Should be a competent referee at L9 games i.e. junior 1st XVs merit table matches and U18 games. Depending on progress may be offered some L8 games. The grading secretary will endeavour to arrange an advisor to see you at better games in particular those above your grade

Criteria considered for advancement to L8:
Advancement is no longer automatic. Games now become physically and mentally quicker. Advancement thus requires a degree of physical fitness appropriate to the next level. There are no standards but reports that indicate physical fitness is inadequate often reported as “slow to the break down” are an indicator the appropriate level of fitness is not being attained. Additional to regular officiating at L9 law errors should be rare occurrences, secondary signalling and proactive instructions well developed. The referee shows appropriate communication and behaviour to players during the game and supporters/coaches after the game, is appropriately dressed does not pick and choose fixtures and shows an understanding of the game.

L8: A competent Devon official able to referee Devon and Cornwall league games. Depending on ability may be offered some L7 games and can expect to be watched in these games. Assessments become less of a training issue and more judgemental

Criteria considered for advancement to L7:
Improved physical and mental fitness from L8 and appropriate to L7 games this will be a major criteria. Secondary signalling and proactive instructions will be fully developed. The referee regularly officiates at L8 shows appropriate communication and behaviour to players during the game and supporters/coaches after the game, is appropriately dressed does not pick and choose fixtures and has a willingness to go on exchange. The referee will start to understand trends in particular penalty awards and appropriate use of the YC as a management tool. The referee will start self-analysis and have a development plan (PDP) in place and starting to learn TJ duties

L7: An extremely competent society referee able to officiate most games in the southwest, Depending on ability and fitness will be offered L6 games. Can expect to be advised at L7 and L6 games. Assessments become more focused on overall game management

Criteria considered for advancement to L6:
Improved physical and mental fitness from L7 and appropriate to L6 games this will be a major criteria. DRRS have defined a level of fitness necessary to officiate at L6 and this must be met before any other criteria are considered. The referee will regularly officiate at L7 and may be on development or federation squads. Exchange fixtures will be regular. The referee will show a
greater understanding of what teams are trying to achieve and match awareness. Penalty trends will be analysed and understood, effective measures to address and counteract these trends will be in place, proactive/preventative sanctions will be as important as punitive sanctions. The referee will have mastered the use of the YC as a management tool. Self-analysis and a development plan are essential. TJ duties will become more commonplace and the referee should consider mentoring new recruits. Pre during and post match conduct will be exemplary.

**L6**: expected to officiate at all games below national level. Will be assessed at L6 games and assessment will heavily focus on overall match management.

Criteria considered for advancement to L5:
Level 5 is a training ground for potential PNR referees. As well as regularly officiating at L6 the referee must fulfil the criteria (decided by the national panel managers) necessary to join the PNR. The referee must pass a designated fitness test by the 31st August, be working through his PDP, show willingness to interact with coaches advisors/assessors for self development, show mental fitness and maintenance of concentration and manage a team of three. The referee will be aware of trends and their importance. Good reports at L6 from other societies, in particular those in the SWG, will be an essential part of the portfolio necessary for advancement.

The criteria for advancement are not exhaustive. Grades can be jumped with referees showing high potential and rapid sustained improvement.

Each referee should attain a level he is comfortable with. Advancement is unlikely if

1) Fitness is highlighted in reports
2) Assessment reports continually highlight the same deficiencies
3) ND/SD appears on reports at games at current grade
4) Inappropriate dress i.e. not smart and casual
5) Inappropriate verbal communication pre during or after the game
6) Inappropriate behaviour at any time when representing DRRS

**Grading:**
A level awarded to a referee means that referee can be appointed routinely to matches at that level. Occasionally referees will be offered games above their grading and frequently games below their grading. It is usual to be offered two games at or above grade during the month and two/three other games. This does depend on the availability of fixtures at that grade and the number of other referees at the same grade.

**U18 games**
All referees grade L9 and above will be expected to officiate U18 games. Unwillingness to officiate at these games may be a detriment to advancement.

**Injury**
Short-term injury. This usually will not affect grading. Repeated short-term injury may be viewed as long-term injury.

Long-term injury
Defined as generally greater than 2 months or repeated short term injuries. Injuries clearly can affect fitness and referees L8 and above will be assessed for physical mobility as soon as possible when they return after long-term injury. Impaired mobility may result in reduced level of fixtures being offered and possible downgrading at the main grading meeting.

Referees joining from another society
On joining DRRS the society will endeavour to contact the former society for grades. If assessment reports can be provided showing proficiency at the appropriate grade in the last 12 months then DRRS will recommend the new referee retains that grade. Where assessment reports are not offered, or are not appropriate to grade, or not within the last 12 months the society may recommend the referee is graded one grade below his current grading until he has been assessed at his preceding grade.
Where the referee is returning from long-term injury or has not refereed for some years the society will downgrade by one grade until they are satisfied the referee has reached the criteria necessary to regain his old grade. This is more important at L8 and above and will be applied less rigidly below L8.

Fitness: Above L8 the referee should have fitness appropriate to the level of game. DRRS does not specify what that level should be except at L6 where the current specification is 10 on the bleep test or 16 on the yo-yo test. Therefore all current L6 referees and aspiring L7 referees must pass the fitness test before the season commences i.e by 31st August. In the event of injury or some other reason that prevents completion the referee will remain at L7 until the fitness test has been passed. Aspiring L6 referees must pass the fitness test before being upgraded. Those L6 referees not passing the fitness test before the season commences can expect reduced or very little exposure to L6 games whilst the test remains uncompleted.
Level 7 referees with or without the L6 fitness criteria may be appointed to L6 games at the discretion of the executive but cannot hope for regular L6 appointments or substantive L6 grading without passing the fitness test. Referees below L7 may also take this test if they wish as part of their PDP. Passing this fitness test will not guarantee upward progression or games above their grading unless the other criteria are met.

Grading Meeting:
The main grading meeting is in May when every referee is evaluated on the season’s performances.
The mid season grading meeting occurs at the December executive meeting. This is for minor readjustments, a referee showing exceptional progress, new recruits, and cases where the grading in May was inappropriate for whatever reason. Not all referees are scrutinised only a few changes will be made.

Down grading:
This will occur from time to time and should not come as a surprise to a referee. The main reasons the committee consider for downgrading will be:
  1) Failure to achieve the L6 fitness criteria
2) Fitness inappropriate for the game at L7/L8
3) Not routinely officiating at the current grade (L6/L7/L8)
4) Long term injury and/or impaired mobility
5) ND/SD on assessments at current grade

It is unlikely a referee will be down graded from L9 the most likely downgrading are L6 to L7 and L7 to L8, rarely L8 to L9