



**FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND (FAI)**

**REFEREE REGULATIONS**

**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016**

## **I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Article 1 – Scope, Definitions and Interpretation**

1. These Regulations are established in accordance with FAI Rules.
2. These Regulations may be amended by the FAI Board from time to time.
3. FAI Referee Regulations are binding on all Referees, Referee Specialists, Referee Administrators, Referee Observers, Referee Instructors, Referee Liaison Officers and all other persons involved with refereeing operating under the jurisdiction of the FAI.
4. These Regulations establish the organisational structure of Refereeing under the jurisdiction of the FAI and govern the following matters:
  - a. Terms of Reference for the FAI Referees Committee, the Regional and Elite Referees Committees and their sub-committees.
  - b. Referees Administration
  - c. Referee Education, Performance and Assessment
  - d. Referee Allocations
  - e. Disciplinary, Disputes and Complaints Procedures
  - f. Ethics and Codes of Practice.
5. Except where the context otherwise requires words denoting the singular include the plural and vice versa; words denoting any gender include all genders; words importing persons shall include bodies.
6. Definitions not provided hereunder but contained in the FAI rules, regulations and codes, and the FIFA and UEFA Statutes are incorporated in these regulations where appropriate. In these regulations the following Definitions are also used:
  - a. 'Referee' is deemed to include all Referees, Assistant Referees and Fourth Officials under the jurisdiction of the FAI.
  - b. 'Referee Specialist' is deemed to be a person who has had a minimum of ten years active refereeing experience. A referee specialist operating at elite level shall have had at least five years refereeing experience at elite level and shall also have obtained additional training and/or experience relevant to the administration and/or development of refereeing.
  - c. 'Referee Administrator' is deemed to include all persons engaged or involved in the administration of Referees and the committee and bodies established under these regulations.
  - d. 'Chief Referee Observer' is deemed to mean the person overseeing the selection, education, operation and administration of 'Referee Observers'.

- e. 'Referee Observer' is deemed to mean designated persons charged with coaching, mentoring, evaluating, grading, appointing and allocating referees.
- f. 'Referee Instructor' is deemed to mean a designated person charged with educating, training and testing referees and who has approved instructor qualifications and is listed on the current register of FAI Referee Instructors.
- g. 'Referee Liaison Officer' is deemed to mean all persons engaged in liaising with leagues on behalf of referees or with referees on behalf of leagues.
- h. 'Referee Licence' is deemed to mean the licence granted to a Referee on completion of the requisite qualification which allows a Referee to referee under the jurisdiction of the FAI in accordance with Article 6.
- i. 'Grade' is deemed to mean the level of the licence a Referee is granted.
- j. "Registered Referee" is deemed to mean a Referee who is registered with the Football Association of Ireland in accordance with Article 5.
- k. 'Elite Referee' is deemed to mean a registered referee who is a member of the National League Panel.

## **II ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Article 2 – National Referees Committee**

1. The National Referees Committee (Referees' Committee) is established by the FAI Board as the principal body for the control and management of Referees and shall have authority over all matters pertaining to Referees, Referee Specialists, Referee Administrators, Referee Observers, Referee Instructors, Referee Liaison Officers and any person directly involved in refereeing matters save where specifically excluded or delegated to another body under these regulations.
2. The Composition of the Referees Committee shall be in line with the UEFA Referee Convention and have no more than nine persons, eight of whom shall be appointed by the FAI Board. At least one of the eight appointments by the Board shall be from each of the regions by which refereeing is administered (Dublin, Leinster, Munster and Connacht/Ulster). The Board may consult with the Regional Committees in this regard. The National League Executive Committee shall nominate one member to the FAI Board for appointment. The Chief Referee Observer, Lead Referee Instructor and Female Development roles shall make up the final three Board appointments. The remaining member of the Referees Committee shall be nominated by the Irish Soccer Referees Society and approved by the FAI Board.

3. The Committee shall be formed for a period of two years.
4. The Referees Committee shall elect a Chairman from amongst its own committee members at its opening meeting who shall hold office for a period of two years.
5. The Chairman of the Referees Committee can be re-elected for a further two year term. However, at the end of the second term, there must be a break of at least one term after which that person can seek re-election as Chairman.
6. The Chairman shall assign the role of Chair for the following committees
  - a. Elite Referees Committee Chairman
  - b. Munster Regional Referees Committee Chairman
  - c. Dublin Regional Referees Committee Chairman
  - d. Leinster Regional Referees Committee Chairman
  - e. Connacht/Ulster Regional Referees Committee Chairman
7. The Chairman shall then allocate the following tasks to himself and the other members of the Referees Committee. Members may be given more than one task.
  - a. Allocations
  - b. Grading and Licensing
  - c. Observers
  - d. Registration
  - e. Regulations
  - f. Recruitment & Retention
  - g. UEFA Convention
  - h. Welfare
  - i. Women's Refereeing
8. Those who are allocated tasks are required to ensure that the Referees Committee policies are being implemented and updated reports should be submitted for each meeting of the Referees Committee.
9. Tasks may be added or deleted as required by the Referees Committee.
10. The Chair of the Regional Referee Committees and the Elite Referee Committee shall hold office for a period of two years.
11. The Referees Committee shall, where practicable, meet at least once every month and shall have a quorum of five. Meetings may be transacted by conference call or other medium of communication where all participants can communicate clearly with one another.
12. The Referees Committee shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to refereeing including but not limited to:-

- a. overseeing the implementation of the UEFA Convention on Referee Education and Organisation
  - b. facilitating a process and then approving a strategy for refereeing at all levels of the game, in line with the overall strategy of the FAI
  - c. be responsible for the recruitment and retention of Referees
  - d. be responsible for enhancing and promoting the role of Referees
  - e. be responsible for the appointment, control, management and development of Referee Observers, Instructors and Liaison Officers, the appointment of a Chief Referees Observer and the formulation of guidelines and direction for these roles
  - f. approving educational structures for Referees and Refereeing Specialists to guarantee a unified level of education by delivering a comprehensive training and development programme from grassroots to professional football, specifically in the areas of recruitment and retention of referees, referee observer system, talent and mentor programme and education of referees at grassroots and elite level
  - g. governing the appointment, evaluation and grading of Referees
  - h. be the final decision-making body regarding education, fitness and training, performance and assessment, appointments and allocations and the general equality of and selection of referees
  - i. ensuring that the selection, promotion and appointment of Referees and Referee Specialists is conducted in a transparent, uniform, equitable and ethical manner that is amenable to quality assurance and audit
  - j. be the custodian and controller of all Referee Licenses' and shall be the final decision-making body regarding the suspension or removal of a licence save as otherwise provided for in these regulations
  - k. proposing changes to these regulations or other matters pertaining to Referees to the FAI Board
  - l. reporting directly to the FAI Board on its activities.
13. The Referees Committee may establish and carry out and/or delegate its functions through the following committees:-
- a. Elite Referees Committee
  - b. Regional Referees Committees:
    - (i) Munster Regional Referees Committee;
    - (ii) Dublin Regional Referees Committee;
    - (iii) Leinster Regional Referees Committee;
    - (iv) Connaught/Ulster Regional Referees Committee.
  - c. Or through any other panel, committee, sub-committee or working group it deems necessary. Membership of any committee, established in this regard, shall be subject to approval by the Referees Committee.
14. The Referees Committee or committees under its jurisdiction shall be supported in its functions by the FAI Referees Department, Referee Specialists or such other persons deemed appropriate.
15. The Referees Committee shall refer all matters more appropriately under the remit of the FAI Disciplinary Bodies to those bodies in accordance with FAI Rules. Decisions of the FAI Disciplinary Bodies shall be binding on Referees

and the Referees Committee. For the avoidance of any doubt, matters pertaining to education, performance, assessments, allocations, remuneration, registrations, licences or other such matters not being related to a breach of FAI Rules are matters entirely within the control of the Referees Committee, whose decision shall be final and binding and not subject to any further review or appeal.

16. Matters concerning child protection shall be referred to the FAI Child Welfare Officer in the first instance for initial evaluation and consideration and, if necessary, possible referral.
17. The Referees Committee shall where they deem it necessary seek guidance from the FAI Legal Department in relation to any query regarding its remit.
18. The Referees Committee may review and amend any decision made by any committee it has established.
19. The Referees Committee has the authority, where appropriate, to set a fee to be paid in order to participate in any activities organised by them or any committee under its jurisdiction in the performance of their functions including but not limited to fitness tests and seminars.
20. The Referees Committee shall make final and binding decisions in relation to any matter under its remit.

### **Article 3 – Regional Referees Committee**

1. The Regional Referees Committees (Regional Committees) shall each be composed of five Referee Specialists nominated by the Referees Committee and one Referee Specialist nominated by the Irish Soccer Referees Society.
2. Each Regional Committee shall, where practicable, meet once every two months and at least four times a year and shall have a quorum of four. Meetings may be transacted by conference call or other medium of communication where all participants can communicate clearly with one another. The Chairmen of each Regional Committee shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Referees Committee at the opening meeting of his term of office.
3. Each Regional Committee shall:
  - a. be responsible for the implementation of the Referees Committee strategy at regional level
  - b. be responsible for enhancing and promoting the role of Referees at regional level
  - c. be responsible for the control, management and development of Referee Observers, Instructors and Liaison Officers at regional level
  - d. implement development/education programmes for Referees and Referee Observers at regional level
  - e. govern the appointment, evaluation and grading of Referees at regional level

- f. endeavour to resolve all issues pertaining to education, fitness and training, performance and assessment, appointment and allocation of Referees at regional level prior to referring matters to the Referees Committee
  - g. have the power to order that a Referee not be allocated matches in cases where a Referee has not met the required performance or professional standards
  - h. have the power to set up such working groups it deems necessary
  - i. report directly to the Referees Committee
  - j. provide the Referees Committee with a report of its activities on a monthly basis.
4. The Regional Committees are empowered to establish sub-committees of Referee Specialists within its region to investigate and make recommendations to the Regional Committee in relation to matters within its remit. Each such sub-committee shall include one member of the Regional Committee.
  5. Each Regional Committee may be supported in its functions by the FAI's Referees Department, Refereeing Specialists or such other persons deemed appropriate.
  6. The Regional Committees may refer matters outside their terms of reference to the Referees Committee.
  7. Each Regional Committee shall refer all matters more appropriately dealt with under the remit of the FAI Disciplinary Bodies to the Referees Committee for referral to the FAI Disciplinary Bodies in accordance with FAI Rules. For the avoidance of any doubt matters pertaining to regional issues regarding education, performance, assessments, allocations, remuneration, registrations, licences or other such matters not being related to a breach of FAI Rules are matters entirely within the control of each Regional Committee, with leave for a final review to the Referees Committee whose decision shall be final and binding and not subject to any further review or appeal.
  8. Matters concerning child protection shall be referred to the FAI Child Welfare Officer in the first instance for initial evaluation and consideration. If necessary the Regional Committees shall seek guidance from the National Referees Co-ordinator in relation to any query regarding its remit in specific cases.
  9. Decisions of a Regional Committee shall be reported immediately to the Referees Committee through the FAI Referees Department.
  10. The Referees Committee may review and amend any decision made by any Regional or other committee it has established.

#### **Article 4 – Elite Referees Committee**

1. The Elite Referees Committee (the Elite Committee) shall be composed of:
  - a. Three elite Referee Specialists nominated by the Referees Committee;

- b. One elite Referee Specialist nominated by the National League Executive Committee;
  - c. The FAI Chief Referees Observer.
- 2. The Elite Committee shall, where practicable, meet at least once every month and shall have a quorum of three. Meetings may be transacted by conference call or other medium of communication where all participants can communicate clearly with one another. The Chairman of this Elite Committee shall be the nominee of the National League Executive Committee. Representatives nominated by the Referees Committee and the National League Executive Committee must be approved by the FAI Board.
- 3. The Referee National Coordinator must attend all meetings of the Elite Committee but shall not be a member of the Elite Committee.
- 4. The Elite Committee shall:
  - a. be responsible for the implementation of the Referees Committee strategy at elite level
  - b. be responsible for enhancing and promoting the role of Referees at elite level
  - c. be responsible for the appointment, control, management and development of Referee Observers, Referee Instructors and Liaison Officers at elite level
  - d. implement educational structures for Referees as approved by the Referees Committee at elite level
  - e. govern the appointment, evaluation and grading of Referees at elite level as approved by the Referees Committee
  - f. have the power to order that a Referee not be allocated matches in cases where a Referee has not met the required performance or professional standards
  - g. endeavour to resolve all issues pertaining to the development, education, fitness and training, performance and assessment and allocation of Referees at elite level prior to referring matters to the Referees Committee
  - h. identify and support promising international referees and oversee the progression of Referees to the FIFA Panel and their continued development at international level
  - i. be responsible for the promotion and ranking of referees at the elite level
  - j. be responsible for making proposals to the Referees Committee in respect of the FIFA International Panel
  - k. have the power to set up such working groups it deems necessary
  - l. report directly to the Referees Committee
  - m. provide the Referees Committee with a report of its activities on a monthly basis
- 5. The Elite Committee are empowered to establish sub-committees of its own members to investigate and make recommendations to the Elite Panel regarding matters within its remit.



6. The Elite Committee may be supported in its functions by the FAI staff and Referee Specialists or such other persons deemed appropriate.
7. The Elite Committee may refer matters outside its terms of reference to the Referees Committee.
8. The Elite Committee shall refer all matters more appropriately under the remit of the FAI Disciplinary Bodies to the Referees Committee for referral to the FAI Disciplinary Bodies in accordance with FAI Rules. For the avoidance of any doubt, matters pertaining to Elite Referees education, performance, assessments, allocations, remuneration, registrations, licences or other such matters not related to a breach of FAI Rules are matters entirely within the control of the Elite Committee with leave for final review to the Referees Committee whose decision shall be final and binding and not subject to any further review or appeal.
9. Matters concerning child protection shall be referred to the FAI Child Welfare Officer in the first instance for initial evaluation and consideration.
10. The Referees Committee may review and amend any decision made by the Elite Committee.
11. Decisions of the Elite Committee shall be reported immediately to the Referees Committee.

### **III REFEREE ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Article 5 – Register of Referees**

1. The FAI Referees Department shall be responsible for the administration of all matters relating to Referees and shall keep an accurate and up to date database of Referees (the “Register”). The Register shall contain:
  - a. the names and addresses of such Referees,
  - b. their details including their education, training and current grade within the game, and
  - c. any other details necessary to keep the Register accurate and up to date.
2. This Register shall be the definitive record of all Registered Referees and all committees and Referee Specialists shall immediately inform the Referees Department of any local/regional data changes to assist with keeping the database up to date and accurate. Such data shall be held in accordance with Data Protection Legislation and the FAI Data Protection Policy.
3. Referees must apply annually to be listed on the Register. The criteria for admission to the Register shall be decided by the Referees Committee and shall include but not be limited to the applicant providing:
  - a. A copy of their relevant refereeing licence
  - b. A valid Garda Vetting Acceptance Letter

- c. Evidence of completion of an FAI/ISC Child Protection Basic Awareness Programme
4. Application for admission to the Register must be made on an official referee registration form and submitted to the FAI Referees Department together with:
  - a. the documents referred to in Article 5.3 above,
  - b. the fee as determined by the Referees Committee which shall be refunded if the registration is not accepted, and
  - c. any other documentation as determined by the Referees Committee.
5. The Referees Committee reserve the right to refuse, defer and otherwise deal with an application to be included in the Register. Each application entered in the Register will receive an official confirmation of registration with the Association. An Applicants registration is not complete until such confirmation is received.
6. Registration as a Referee does not automatically authorise a Referee to officiate in matches. A licence to officiate at a particular level must be held by the Referee. Referees not yet awarded or in possession of a licence shall apply to the FAI for same.
7. Referees convicted of any criminal offence which is likely to negatively impact on their position as a Referee with the FAI may be removed from the Register of Referees by the Referees Committee.
8. Inclusion on the Register of Referees does not automatically entitle a Referee to officiate in matches.
9. The Referees Committee shall have the authority to remove a Referee from the Register of Referees.
10. Referees must immediately notify the FAI Referees Department of any change in contact details.
11. The Referees Department shall forward an up to date list of Registered Referees to its committees on an annual basis.
12. Referees removed from the Register shall be entitled to appeal this decision to the FAI Appeal Committee pursuant to FAI Rules.

#### **Article 6 – Licence to Officiate**

1. On successful completion of an FAI approved Referees Beginners Course, a Referee will be issued with a Referees Licence which will enable them to register with the FAI.
2. Registered Referees should only officiate in leagues affiliated to the FAI and in competitions and games sanctioned by the Association or one of its affiliates.

It is the responsibility of Referees to ensure that they only accept such appointments.

3. All Referees must apply to renew their licence on an annual basis.
4. All licenced Referees will be assigned a grade when they register annually and may only officiate at or below the grade specified in their licence. A Referees Observer may approve a temporary appointment to a higher grade in order to assess a referee's suitability for promotion or to deal with an emergency situation.
5. The Referees Committee shall determine the standards required for each grade of Referee to obtain, retain or improve their grade / level of licence.
6. The Referees Committee shall decide the grade of Referee that is appropriate to operate at each level of the game.
7. Referees shall be classified according to one of the following grades: -

**Associate**

**Referee:** An Associate Referee may referee schoolboy football up to and including under 14 years of age and the lower level division of the League they are assigned to. They may only be allocated games when all available Referees within their league have been allocated to games. Associate Referees licences are governed by a protocol as determined by the Referees Committee.

**Grade 5** Referees assigned this grade are entitled to Referee schoolboy football up to and including under 14 years and games at the lower level divisions of the league they are assigned to. Existing Referees may elect to be assigned to this grade. Grade 5 licences are governed by a protocol as determined by the Referees Committee.

**Grade 4** Referees assigned this grade must have a minimum of 6 months experience as an active Referee and are entitled to Referee the small sided game, schoolboy football up to and including under 16 years and games at the lower level divisions of the league they are assigned to. Grade 4 licences are governed by a protocol as determined by the Referees Committee.

**Grade 3** Referees assigned this grade are entitled to Referee the small sided game, schoolboy football up to and including under 18 years and games at the lower level divisions of the league they are assigned to. Grade 3 licences are governed by a protocol as determined by the Referees Committee.

**Grade 2** Referees assigned this grade are entitled to Referee the small sided game, schoolboy football up to and including under 18 years and games below the top division in the League to which

they are appointed. Grade 2 licences are governed by a protocol as determined by the Referees Committee.

**Grade 1** Referees assigned this grade are entitled to Referee at all levels of Grassroots and Intermediate Football. Grade 1 licences are governed by a protocol as determined by the Referees Committee.

**Senior Grade 1** Referees assigned this grade are eligible to Referee at all levels of Grassroots and Intermediate Football. Senior Grade 1 licences are governed by a protocol as determined by the Referees Committee.

**Elite** National Elite Referees are entitled to officiate at all grades of football as referred to in this Article 6.7 and to be considered for appointment to officiate at games at the Senior Level of Football commensurate with their experience, readiness and suitability, as determined by the Elite Referee Committee.

8. All licences shall be subject to Referees meeting the minimum standards set down by the Referees Committee in areas such as education, performance and assessment, pertinent to the grade the Referee is assigned. Referees who fail to meet these minimum requirements may have their licence removed or suspended or have their grade amended by the Referees Committee as they see fit. Any decision of the Referees Committee in this regard is final and binding and not subject to any further review or appeal.
9. A Referees Licence and registration is held subject to compliance with FAI rules, these regulations and any other Codes of Practice, Guidelines or Directives issued to Referees from time to time, by the Referees Committee.

### **Article 7 – Appointment to League Panels**

1. Licensed Referees may be appointed to league panels on an annual basis by the appropriate Referee Observer. These appointments shall be reported by the Observer to the relevant Regional or Elite Committee and the FAI Referees Department shall be advised.
2. Appointment to a league panel one year does not automatically entitle a Referee to an appointment the following year.
3. Appointment to a league panel one year does not automatically entitle a Referee to an appointment to the same league panel the following year.
4. Referees seeking a transfer from one league panel must do so in accordance with the transfer policy as determined by the Referees Committee.

5. Referee Observers may recommend to a Regional or Elite Committee the transfer or removal of a Referee from a league panel.
6. All issues relating to appointments to league panels or transfers shall be referred to the appropriate Regional or Elite Committee for consideration with leave for a final review to the Referees Committee. The Referees Committee decision shall be final and binding and not subject to any further review or appeal.
7. Referees may be assigned by the Referees Department to officiate outside their appointed league. All such assignments shall take precedence.

### **Article 8 – Allocations**

1. Referees shall be allocated matches by the league/s they have been appointed to or by the Referees Department.
2. The allocation or non-allocation to matches shall be at the discretion of the relevant League/s in consultation with the Lead Referee Observer. A licence or league panel appointment grants no automatic right to be selected to officiate at any match. In making his decision or recommendation, a Referees Observer shall take into account assessments, match administration, ranking, education, fitness, availability, location, the type of match, or any other reason which may be relevant.
3. Referees unable to accept any allocation must notify, no later than 72 hours prior to the match, the relevant competition organiser of his inability to officiate. If within 72 hours of the match he is unable to officiate, he must immediately inform the competition organiser (preferably the league allocation officer) of the exceptional circumstances which have occurred. Any referee who fails to notify a competition organiser within this timeframe of his inability to officiate may face disciplinary action.
4. All issues relating to allocations shall be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration with leave for a final review to the Referees Committee. The Referees Committee decision shall be final and binding and not subject to any further review or appeal.
5. Each League shall ensure Referees are only allocated to matches commensurate with the Grade held by the Referees except in circumstances covered under Article 6, Section 4 of these Regulations.
6. The chair of the Referees Committee will nominate a senior Referee Observer to undertake responsibility for the appointment of match officials for all national grassroots competitions. The appointed Observer shall consult with the FAI National Referees Co-ordinator and local Grassroots Observers in this regard.
7. In March of each year, Regional Referee Committees should form a panel of Referees suitable to referee the final stages of national competitions each year

and submit same to the Referees Committee and the National Referee Co-ordinator.

### **Article 9 – Match Fees**

1. Match fees and expenses for Grade 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and Senior Grade 1 Referees shall be agreed from time to time between representatives of Referees, as recognised by the FAI, and the FAI Domestic Committee. Such agreed fees shall be notified to the Referees Committee and approved by the FAI Board.
2. Match fees and expenses for Elite Referees shall be agreed from time to time between representatives of Referees, as recognised by the FAI, and the FAI National League Executive Committee. Such agreed fees shall be notified to the Referees Committee and approved by the FAI Board.
3. Referees shall not accept or claim payment in excess of that authorised for such games.
4. Referees claiming match fees or expenses shall ensure these are submitted on time in accordance with the relevant league instructions.
5. All issues relating to match fees or expenses shall be referred to the relevant Regional Committee or the Elite Committee as appropriate and if necessary, to the Referees Committee for review.

### **Article 10 – Match Administration**

1. Referees shall ensure that each team fills in the relevant sections of the match card prior to kick off.
2. Referees shall complete the match card and any necessary report and forward it by the stipulated deadline in accordance with the instructions given by the competition organiser.
3. Referees are responsible for ensuring match cards, where practical, are legible and that the details entered are accurate. Referees may be requested by the competition organisers to clarify any matter pertaining to their match card.
4. Referees entering match cards online must ensure all details are inputted accurately and forwarded to the competition organiser, by the stipulated deadline, together with any hard copy documentation that may be required.
5. Referees may be required to attend disciplinary hearings regarding their match card and/or report.
6. Referees failing to comply with the provision of this Article shall be reported to their Regional or Elite Committee.

## **IV REFEREE ASSESSMENT**

### **Article 11 – Referee Observers**

1. Referees shall be coached, graded and assessed by Referee Observers who shall be appointed annually by the Referees Committee.
2. On successful completion of an FAI approved Referee Observers Beginners Course, a Referee Observer will be issued a Referee Observers Licence.
3. In order to meet the requirements of their licence, Referee Observers shall attend all development modules, workshops and seminars organised by the Chief Referee Observer. Non-attendance, without an acceptable explanation, may result in the removal or suspension of their licence.
4. Elite Referees shall be assessed at every elite level match officiated by them. All other Referees shall be assessed as required, or at the request of a Referee subject to the availability of the Referee Observer.
5. A Referee shall be entitled to adequate post match analysis and feedback from the Referee Observer.
6. A Referee shall be entitled to receive a copy of the Referee Observer's Report. At regional and local level this report shall be sent to the Referee within five working days of the match at which he was assessed. At elite level this report shall be sent to the Referee within two working days of the match. A copy of the report shall also be retained by the Referee Observer.
7. At Grassroots level, Referee Observers shall on a monthly basis forward a summary sheet of their assessments to the Regional Referees Committee. This summary shall contain information about each assessment game; referee(s) mark(s) and positive & development points.
8. Each Regional Referees Committee shall maintain a record of all assessments conducted in their region and report this information to the Referees Committee on a monthly basis via the Referees Department.
9. The process or manner in which a Referee has been assessed may be reviewed by the Chief Referee Observer. This review shall not be subject to Appeal.

### **Article 12 – Marks**

1. A marking system shall be implemented by the Referees Committee for use in assessing Referees at all levels.
2. The awarding of a mark rests solely with the Referee Observer who is assessing a Referee in a match.

3. Marks shall be used by the Referee Observer to make recommendations and decisions in relation to overall grading, licence level, training, education, match allocations or other related matters.

### **Article 13 – Fitness**

1. Referees shall maintain a level of fitness consistent with the ‘fitness test’ for the level of football they are licensed to officiate at and their assigned grade.
2. For the avoidance of doubt, it is the responsibility of each individual Referee to ensure that they maintain the necessary level of fitness and to ensure that they are medically fit to carry out the task of refereeing.
3. Referees may be assessed by Referee Observers on their level of fitness in order to obtain or retain their licence.
4. Failure to achieve the necessary fitness required may result in non-selection of a Referee for matches until a satisfactory improvement has been made. In such cases, a Referee may be allowed to continue refereeing at a lower licence level. In some cases, a licence may be removed or suspended by the Referees Committee.
5. Referees shall be required, if necessary, to attend fitness training sessions organised by their Regional or Elite Committee. Non-attendance, without an acceptable explanation, may result in the removal or suspension of their licence or the non-allocation of matches.
6. The Referees Committee shall determine the appropriate fitness test and level of fitness required to operate at each grade.

### **Article 14 – Development**

1. In order to meet the requirements of their licence, Referees shall attend such development modules, workshops and seminars organised by their Regional or Elite Committee. Non-attendance, without an acceptable explanation, may result in the removal or suspension of their licence or the non-allocation of matches.

## **V GENERAL OBLIGATIONS**

### **Article 15 – Code of Ethics**

1. Referees, Referee Specialists, Referee Administrators, Referee Observers, the Chief Referee Observer, Referee Instructors, Referee Liaison Officers and all other persons involved with refereeing shall adhere to the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Referees as appended in the FAI Rule Book and these Regulations.
2. The appropriate Regional/Elite Committee may investigate and sanction any breaches of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Referees unless



the matter falls under the remit of the FAI Disciplinary Committee. The procedure followed in any such investigation and sanction shall be that outlined in the Complaints Procedure.

3. Any decision of the appropriate Regional/Elite Committee in relation to breaches of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Referees may be appealed in writing to the Referees Committee within 4 days of such decision being received and payment of an appeal fee of €100.

#### **Article 16 – Conflict of Interest**

1. A Referee may not officiate at a match in a league or competition if he is a member of a club or associated with a club within that league or competition or be a member of a committee within that league.
2. Referees may not be members of the FAI Council, the FAI Referees Committee or League Committees, unless they are nominated by The Irish Soccer Referees Society to take a position allocated to the Irish Soccer Referees Society as their representative on such committees in accordance with FAI Rules. For the avoidance of doubt, such Referee does not have to be a member of The Irish Soccer Referees Society.
3. No Referee can hold an executive position or be an officer of a committee or hold a position within their primary league that conflicts with their refereeing role.
4. No Referee Observer or Referee Specialist can hold an executive position, be an officer of or sit on a committee of any FAI affiliate that conflicts with their role.

#### **Article 17 – Uniform**

1. All Referees must officiate in Official Dress as approved by FIFA, UEFA and the FAI.
2. All Referees must wear the current FAI Referee badge when officiating at all games.

#### **Article 18 – Rules and Regulations**

1. Referees shall abide by the Laws of the Game.
2. All Referees, Referee Specialists, Referee Administrators, Referee Observers, the Chief Referee Observer, Referee Instructors, Referee Liaison Officers and all other persons involved with refereeing shall be bound by FAI Rules, Regulations, the FAI Child Welfare Policy and all other FAI Policies and Codes of Practice.
3. Referees shall be conversant with the specific rules of any competition in which they are officiating.

## **VI DISCIPLINARY, DISPUTES AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

### **Article 19 – Complaints**

1. Complaints against Referees must be made in writing, within 7 days of the incident which is the subject of the complaint occurring, to the FAI Referee Department. Complaints shall be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Procedure outlined at Schedule 1 of these Regulations.
2. Complaints involving a breach of FAI Disciplinary Rules shall be a matter for referral to the FAI Disciplinary bodies.
3. The Regional Committee or Elite Committee may consider and take decisions on matters, within their terms of reference, in accordance with the Complaints Procedure. Matters outside their terms of reference must be referred to the Referees Committee for decision or referral to another appropriate body.
4. Decisions may be appealed to the FAI Referees Committee in accordance with the Complaints Procedure on payment of an appeal fee of €100.
5. Complaints involving children shall be referred to the FAI Child Welfare Officer in the first instance. The FAI Child Welfare Officer shall have jurisdiction to handle the complaint in accordance with FAI Child Welfare Policy, to refer the complaint to the FAI Disciplinary Bodies if necessary or to refer the complaint back to any of the Referees Bodies if the matter is more appropriately heard under their remit. The FAI Child Welfare Officer has full authority to assess individual cases and determine the appropriate process for such complaints, including the issuing of Stand Down Orders in accordance with the FAI Child Welfare Policy.

### **Article 20 – Disciplinary**

1. Referees shall be subject to disciplinary sanction in accordance with FAI Rules by the FAI Disciplinary Bodies for any breach of FAI Rules, codes or regulations.
2. Matters pertaining to performance, education, assessment, allocations, appointments, or other matters under the jurisdiction of the Referees Committee are not subject to review by the FAI Disciplinary Bodies.
3. The Referees Committee shall have authority to liaise with the Disciplinary Control Unit of the FAI to determine whether a matter is of a disciplinary nature.

### **Article 21 – Disputes**

1. Any disputes or disagreements involving Referees not otherwise dealt with above must be made in writing to the FAI Referees Department who shall refer the matter to the appropriate Committee.

2. The appropriate Committee shall attempt to resolve such disputes by facilitating a meeting between the relevant parties to the dispute with a view to resolving the problem. The FAI Referees Department shall be available to guide and assist in this process.
3. If the matter has not been resolved within 14 days of the initial meeting, the dispute shall be referred to the Referees Committee for consideration. If the Referees Committee are unable to resolve the dispute within 14 days, the Referees Committee may establish an independent Referees Commission.
4. The Referees Commission shall be made up of three members selected by the Referees Committee from a panel of ten persons, one of which will be nominated as Chairman. The panel shall be appointed by the Board of the FAI on an annual basis.
5. The Referees Commission shall:
  - a. Convene a hearing with all parties to consider the dispute
  - b. Make such enquiries or requests to all parties as it deems appropriate
  - c. Shall hear from such persons they deem appropriate
  - d. Shall make such recommendations or binding decisions to any party to the dispute
  - e. Refer any disciplinary matters to the relevant FAI Disciplinary Bodies if necessary
6. The Referees Commission decisions are final and binding. No appeal or alternate dispute resolution process shall be made available to any party following a Referees Commission hearing and decision.

## **Article 22 – Final Provisions**

1. Any matter not provided for in these regulations shall be settled by the FAI Board.

## **Schedule 1 Complaints Procedure**

### **1. Receipt of Complaints**

- 1.1 All Complaints relating to Referees must be sent by the League in which the Referee officiates by email or post to the National Referees Co-Ordinator within 7 days of the matter being complained of occurring.
- 1.2 A complaint is not deemed to have been received until confirmation of receipt has been sent by the National Referees Co-Ordinator to the League who lodged the complaint.

### **2. Allocation of Complaint**

- 2.1 On receipt of the Complaint the National Referees Co-ordinator will review and determine whether or not:
- a. the complaint complies with Clause 1.1 above,
  - b. the complaint is purely performance related or
  - c. the complaint requires a full investigation.
- 2.2 If the complaint is deemed not to comply with Clause 1.1 above then the National Referees Co-Ordinator will reject the complaint.
- 2.3 If the complaint is deemed to be purely performance related it shall be dealt with in accordance with Clause 3 below.
- 2.4 If the matter requires a full investigation, the National Referees Co-Ordinator will send to the appropriate committee for investigation. In certain instances the National Referees Co-Ordinator may determine at his sole discretion that the complaint is of such a serious nature that it should be dealt with directly by the Referees Committee. On receipt of the complaint the relevant committee shall appoint a 3 person Investigation Committee to investigate the complaint and issue a decision.

### **3. Performance related Complaints**

- 3.1 If a complaint relates solely to the on pitch performance of a Referee the National Referees Co-Ordinator shall refer the matter to the local Referee Observer and notify the Regional Referees Committee that he has done so.

3.2 The local Referee Observer shall review the complaint and review the Referee's recent performance history. If the Referee has been observed within the previous 12 weeks and there is no issue in relation to his performance the complaint will be dismissed.

- 3.3 If the Referee's performance has not been reviewed in the previous 12 weeks or there is a concern relating to his performance then the Referee shall be reviewed by the Referee Observer who shall discuss the Referee's performance with him and strive to bring his performance up to an acceptable level and the complaint shall be deemed finalised.
- 3.4 If the local Referee Observer feels that the Referee's performance does not improve to an acceptable level after the coaching and guidance given under Clause 3.3 above or if there are a series of complaints relating to the Referee then the Referee shall be observed by a Referee Observer not involved in his league and both that Referee Observer and the local Referee Observer shall submit reports to the relevant Regional Referees Committee.
- 3.5 Once a referral has been received in accordance with Clause 3.4 above, the Regional Referees Committee can make the following decisions:
- a. The Complaint be dismissed
  - b. The Referee(s) be advised about his / their future performances
  - c. The Referee(s) licence be suspended for a period of time
  - d. The Referee(s) licence be downgraded
  - e. The Referee(s) license(s) be withdrawn
  - f. Or any other action deemed appropriate and within the remit of the Referees Committee as outlined in the Referee Regulations.
- 3.6 In all instances the Referee and the complainant shall be made aware of the final outcome of the complaint. An appeal shall only be permitted where a decision has been made under Clause 3.5 c-e above.

#### **4. Investigation Committee**

- 4.1 The Referees Committee shall appoint Referee Specialists to a pool for selection to the Investigation Committee for a renewable two year term.
- 4.2 Members of the pool shall be required to provide details of their football and professional background and/or any conflicts of interest they may have.
- 4.3 Each Investigation Committee shall consist of one member of the appropriate Committee and two members of the Investigation Committee pool.

#### **5. Procedure of the Investigation Committee**

- 5.1 On receipt of the complaint the Investigation Committee shall:
- a. Notify all parties to the complaint of the complaint and that they are investigating the matter and request that any further evidence supporting the complaint be furnished to them within 5 working days.
  - b. On receipt of any further documentation the Investigation Committee shall review the matter in full and determine what further investigation if any is required.
  - c. On completion of their investigation the Investigation Committee shall issue a decision to all parties to the complaint and the Committee that appointed them.

## **6. Powers of the Investigation Committee**

6.1 In carrying out their investigation the Investigation Committee may:

- a. Contact any party they deem relevant to such investigation
- b. Request a personal meeting with any party they deem relevant to such investigation
- c. Seek a report from the match observer at the game (if any)
- d. Review the Referee's previous record
- e. Take any other reasonable action they deem necessary to complete the investigation

## **7. Decisions**

7.1 The Investigation Committee may make the following decisions. That:

- a. The Complaint be dismissed
- b. The Referee(s) be advised about his / their future performances
- c. The Referee(s) licence be suspended for a period of time
- d. The Referee(s) licence be downgraded
- e. The Referee(s) license(s) be withdrawn
- f. Or any other action deemed appropriate and within the remit of the Referees Committee as outlined in the Referee Regulations.

## **8. Appeal**

8.1 An appeal may be lodged to the Referees Committee against a decision of the Investigation Committee established by a Regional Referees Committee or the Elite Referees Committee or a decision of the Referees Committee unless that decision was made on appeal. For the avoidance of doubt no appeal may be lodged against a decision made under 3.5 a or b.

8.2 Appeals must be sent by registered post to the National Referees Co-ordinator within 4 days of the date on which the written notification of the decision being appealed against was received. For the avoidance of doubt time limits begin from the day after receipt of the notification. The appeal documents must include a copy of the decision being appealed, the appeal fee of €100 in the form of a bank draft or postal order and the reasons for making the appeal.

8.3 The National Referees Co-ordinator may determine that an appeal is out of order should all of the requirements of Clause 8.2 not be complied with.

8.4 Once the appeal is in order the National Referees Co-ordinator will furnish all of the appeal documents to the Referees Committee who on review shall appoint a 3 person Appeal Committee to determine the appeal.

**9. Appeal Committee**

- 9.1 The Referees Committee shall appoint senior Referee Specialists to a pool for selection to the Appeal Committee for a renewable two year term.
- 9.2 Members of the pool shall be required to provide details of their football and professional background and/or any conflicts of interest they may have.
- 9.3 Each Appeal Committee shall consist of one member of the Referees Committee who shall be chairman and two members of the Appeal Committee pool.

**10. Procedure of the Appeal Committee**

- 10.1 Once appointed the Appeal Committee shall:
  - a. Notify all parties to the appeal that they are investigating the matter and request that any further submissions be furnished to them within 5 working days.
  - b. On receipt of all submissions the Investigation Committee shall review the appeal in full and determine what further investigation is required.
  - c. On completion of their review of the matter the Appeal Committee shall issue a decision to all parties to the appeal and the Committee that appointed them unless any party to the appeal has requested that a hearing take place to determine the appeal.

**11. Powers of the Appeal Committee**

- 11.1 In determining the appeal the Appeal Committee may:
  - a. Contact any party they deem relevant to such appeal
  - b. Request a personal meeting with any party they deem relevant to the appeal
  - c. Seek a report from the match observer at the game (if any)
  - d. Review the Referee's previous record

**12. Hearings**

- 12.1 If any party to an appeal requests a personal hearing such hearing will be convened as soon as possible.
- 12.2 All parties to the appeal shall be invited to attend the appeal and the Appeal Committee shall consider all evidence that it deems relevant to the appeal.

**13. Decisions**

13.1 The Appeal Committee may make the following decisions which are final and binding on all parties. That:

- a. The appeal be dismissed
- b. The appeal be upheld
- c. The appeal be upheld and varied

13.2 All parties to the appeal shall receive notification of the decision of the Appeal Committee within 5 days of a decision being made or where a hearing has taken place within 5 days of the hearing.

13.3 The decision of the Appeal Committee of the Referees Committee is final and binding and shall not be subject to any further review or appeal.



## ***Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct for Referees of the Football Association of Ireland***

***The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Referees should guide all registered referees<sup>1</sup>, Observers<sup>2</sup>, association officials<sup>3</sup> and members<sup>4</sup> of the Football Association of Ireland with regard to ethical behaviour and professional conduct. The Code should be read in conjunction with the FAI Rules.***

### **Preamble**

Integrity in sport is a core value underpinning the notion of 'Fair Play.' Integrity is also a fundamental and core value underpinning the task of refereeing. Failure to uphold this value can result in the principles of objectivity, honesty and independence breaking down. Consequently everyone associated with the sport has a duty and responsibility to ensure that the core values associated with fair play are upheld.

It is not alone the practice and art of refereeing a football game that these values apply but also to all administrative, training and development functions.

The code equally applies and should be adhered to by all personnel immediately associated with these functions and also to all participants in the sport both actively and administratively.<sup>5</sup>

## **Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct for Referees**

**This Code consists of four overall ethical principles, which subsume a number of specific ethical standards.**

### **1.0 Integrity**

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<sup>1</sup> Referee refers to a registered match official regardless of duties assigned in a particular game.

<sup>2</sup> Observer refers to all personnel involved in instruction, training and development of referees.

<sup>3</sup> Association Official refers to all administrative personnel including appointments officers, disciplinary committee members, league officials and employees of the FAI.

<sup>4</sup> Members of the FAI refers to registered players, technical staff, managers, directors and administrators of teams and clubs.

<sup>5</sup> For ease of writing the term 'referee' is used throughout the code but all of the values principles and standards of behaviour referred to apply equally to the personnel mentioned in footnotes 1, 2, 3 &4.

**Principle:** Referees are obliged to be honest, impartial, objective and professional in carrying out their duties as outlined in the Laws of the Game and in terms of representing the Football Association and the League to which they are assigned.

Specifically, referees shall: -

- 1.1 Conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and carry out their duties to the best of their ability
- 1.2 Seek support/ guidance advice from peers, colleagues, mentors and / or Observers with regard to issues that may hamper their performance as a referee.
- 1.3 Avoid situations or engage in activities or behaviour, which might oblige them or lead to them contravening the provisions of this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
- 1.4 Ensure that they and others accurately represent and reflect the body of knowledge and training of their profession.
- 1.5 Not accept or attempt to secure fees or benefits over and above those agreed with the Football Association of Ireland and their representatives.
- 1.6 Honour all refereeing commitments except in the case of serious illness or unexpected circumstances whereby their ability to perform their duties would be impaired and in such circumstances to notify, in a timely manner, the appropriate personnel or where appropriate to make alternative arrangements.
- 1.7 Not exploit any relationship to further their own or others personal or professional interests including the soliciting of appointments.
- 1.8 Be aware of the nature of dual relationships and where possible avoid such positions that could lead to the undermining of the *Integrity of Refereeing* or the good name of the Football Association of Ireland.
- 1.9 Act to stop or limit the activities of a colleague, Observer or official that is clearly harmful or unethical and bring such actions to the attention of the association.

## **2.0 Competence**

Referees shall strive to ensure and maintain high standards in the application of their duties. They shall adhere to the professional standards and attain the relevant competencies required appropriate to the level of football at which they are qualified to officiate. They must maintain and update their professional knowledge and skills in accordance with the licensing system. They shall recognise the limits of their competence in the context of the licensing system and take care not to exceed these limits by officiating at games outside the parameters of their particular license.

Specifically referees shall: -

- 2.1 Comply with the rules of the licensing system and develop the skills and knowledge required appropriate to the level they wish to officiate at.
- 2.2 Engage in continuing professional development in terms of all aspects of refereeing, e.g. physical fitness, knowledge, application and interpretation of the Laws of the Game.
- 2.3 Accept the obligation to know, understand and to operate the provisions of this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
- 2.4 Recognise the limits of their competence and take care not to exceed these limits by officiating at games outside the parameters of their particular license.
- 2.5 Participate in and contribute to the continuing development of refereeing.
- 2.6 Refrain from officiating when their ability to carry out their duties in a professional and competent manner is impaired by physical, medical or other reason.
- 2.7 Seek relevant, competent and professional assistance to ameliorate and remedy any difficulty that prevents or inhibits their ability to carry out their duties in a professional and competent manner.

### **3. Respect**

Referees shall honour, respect and uphold the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all participants, officials and spectators of the sport. They shall be mindful and respect difference based on age, gender, ethnicity, race, culture, religious belief or other difference.

Specifically, referees shall: -

- 3.1 Treat all players, coaches and officials as persons of intrinsic worth and respect any difference based on age, gender, ethnicity, race, culture, religious belief or other difference.
- 3.2 In the course of their duties safeguard the respect of players and coaches based on age, gender, ethnicity, race, culture, religious belief or other difference and deal with any infringements of these rights in the context of the Laws of the game or the rules of the Football Association of Ireland.
- 3.3 When involved with children adhere to Child Care Legislation, 'codes of conduct' and the policy and procedures of the Football Association of Ireland.
- 3.4 Take the necessary preventative actions so as not to allow themselves to be compromised by events or situations where individuals respect or dignity could be undermined in the context of age, gender, disability etc.

#### **4. Responsibility**

The 'Laws of the Game' and the Football Association of Ireland bestows authority and power on Referees. Thus this privileged position must be taken seriously and managed with dignity, respect, responsibility and professionalism. Referees carry responsibility to themselves, their profession, the Football Association and the League in which they operate.

Specifically, referees shall: -

- 4.1 Be aware of their professional responsibilities to the players and teams in the game at which they are officiating and to the League to which they are assigned and to the Football Association of Ireland.
- 4.2 Shall be responsible for their actions, and assure themselves, as far as possible, that they carry out their duties to the best of their ability.
- 4.3 Shall carry out their duties in a responsible, professional and respectful manner.
- 4.4 Behave in professional activities in such a way as not to undermine public confidence in their profession.
- 4.5 Protect the reputation of the profession and the Football Association of Ireland by ensuring that all professional activities carried out conforms to the provisions of this Code of Ethics & Conduct.